

GESTURE

Rereading gender studies and activisms in Greece. Encounters on gender related violence

Work Package 5: Local Gender Politics, Translocal Connections – The Example of Crete

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Abstract (in Greek)

Το Πακέτο Εργασίας 5 (WP5) εστιάζει στη μελέτη των τρόπων με τους οποίους οι αντιλήψεις και προσεγγίσεις σχετικά με τη βία λόγω φύλου διαμορφώνονται στο ιδιαίτερο κοινωνικοπολιτικό και πολιτισμικό πλαίσιο της Κρήτης. Η έρευνα βασίστηκε σε εκτεταμένη επιτόπια εργασία στις πόλεις του Ηρακλείου, του Ρεθύμνου και των Χανίων, όπου υπάρχουν δραστήριες φεμινιστικές και ΛΟΑΤΚΙ+ συλλογικότητες, καθώς και ισχυρές αντιρατσιστικές πρωτοβουλίες που συνδέονται με το ευρύτερο ελληνικό αντιρατσιστικό κίνημα. Η μελέτη περιλάμβανε δύο βασικά ερευνητικά στάδια: τη συλλογή δεδομένων μέσω ημιδομημένων συνεντεύξεων και ομάδων εστίασης, και την ανάλυσή τους με εργαλεία φεμινιστικής ανάλυσης λόγου. Στόχος ήταν η διερεύνηση των αφηγήσεων, των πρακτικών και των εννοιολογικών πλαισίων που σχετίζονται με τη βία λόγω φύλου, τόσο στον ακτιβιστικό όσο και στον ακαδημαϊκό χώρο. Εξετάστηκαν επίσης οι αλληλεπιδράσεις μεταξύ φεμινιστικών, ΛΟΑΤΚΙ+ και αντιρατσιστικών ομάδων, καθώς και ο ρόλος της κοινωνίας των πολιτών στην ανάδειξη του φαινομένου.

Η Κρήτη αποτελεί μια περιοχή όπου συνυπάρχουν οικονομική ανάπτυξη και κοινωνικοί μετασχηματισμοί, με την τουριστική της ζώνη να γνωρίζει έντονη αστικοποίηση, ενώ η ύπαιθρος παραμένει σχετικά απομονωμένη. Παράλληλα, το νησί διατηρεί ισχυρές ετεροπατριαρχικές πολιτισμικές δομές που επηρεάζουν τη διαμόρφωση των έμφυλων σχέσεων και των μορφών βίας. Μέσα από τη χαρτογράφηση των τοπικών κινημάτων και τη σύγκριση με ευρύτερες φεμινιστικές και queer θεωρητικές προσεγγίσεις, η έρευνα προσφέρει μια κριτική ανάλυση του τρόπου με τον οποίο η βία λόγω φύλου γίνεται αντιληπτή και πολιτικά διαχειρίσιμη στο τοπικό πλαίσιο. Τα αποτελέσματα της έρευνας αναμένεται να συμβάλουν στη σύνδεση της ακαδημαϊκής γνώσης με την ακτιβιστική δράση, καθώς και στην ανάπτυξη πιο συμπεριληπτικών στρατηγικών αντιμετώπισης της βίας λόγω φύλου στην Κρήτη και ευρύτερα.

I. Introduction

Description of Research in Work Package 5

Work Package 5 focused on investigating how understandings and approaches to gender-related violence are shaped within the specific socio-political and cultural context of Crete. The research was conducted through extensive fieldwork in the cities of Heraklion, Rethymno and Chania, all of which have active feminist and LGBTQ+ collectives, as well as a long-standing tradition of antiracist organizing closely connected to the wider Greek antiracist movement. These networks provided a rich environment for exploring how gender-related violence is framed as a significant social issue. Additionally, civil society initiatives, including teachers' associations and university student groups, were approached to map key nodes within social movements and civil society that play a crucial role in raising awareness about gender-related violence at the local level.

The research consisted of two main tasks:

Task 5.1 (Data Collection), now completed, involved conducting qualitative interviews and focus groups over a period of five months (see Appendix: Table 1). Specifically:

- 10 semi-structured interviews were held with members of feminist and queer collectives, activist groups in the cities of Heraklion and Chania.
- 6 semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers and teachers' associations in Heraklion, Rethymno and Chania.
- 1 focus group was conducted with feminist activists in Heraklion. Of the 2 focus groups with activists of the Technical Document, only one was conducted, because the semi-structured interviews already covered to a large extent the activist engagement.
- 5 biographical interviews were held with key older feminist activists and gender scholars.
- 2 focus groups were conducted with students at the university campuses of the University of Crete, in Heraklion and in Rethymno, providing insights into how academic engagement with gender issues intersects with activism.

Task 5.2 (Data Analysis) This task is also completed. The analysis focused on the systematic examination and interpretation of the collected data. This process involved transcribing the interviews and focus group discussions, identifying key thematic nodes, unpacking the dominant discourses, practices, and conceptual frameworks related to gender violence. The data was coded, analysed and compared with the use of atlas.ti software.

The analysis presents how gender relations, identities, and experiences of violence are understood and articulated within both activist and other social contexts in Crete, including the university, and the particularities of the specific context were highlighted and interpreted.

The deliverables for Work Package 5 include this Research Report (D5.1) and the production of a podcast (D5.2). Since Work Package 4 also includes a podcast (D4.2), which follows the same methodology, we have decided to develop both simultaneously. They will be completed by the due date of D4.2, which falls in the 19th month of implementation. Consequently, an extension will be needed for the due date of D5.2.

State-of-the-Art: Local Gender Politics, Translocal Connections – The Example of Crete

The development of gender studies in Greece is deeply rooted in feminist praxis and activism, beginning with the post-junta Autonomous Women's Movement, which ignited contemporary feminist debates and politics (Dialeti, et al., forthcoming). Initially, gender-related violence was framed mainly as violence against women, focusing on rape and domestic abuse, with feminist mobilizations driving legal reforms and protective measures for survivors (Kouroutsidou, Gkasouka, 2021).

Over the past two decades, the field has expanded through the emergence of feminist and queer collectives, civil society initiatives, and NGOs that both engage with and challenge academic feminism. Public events like Athens and Thessaloniki Pride, alongside antiracist activism by migrant women, have broadened the discourse to include intersections of gender, sexuality, migration, and citizenship (Kambouri et. al, 2015; Kantsa et. al, 2010). Following the 2008 economic crisis, new generations of scholars and activists have introduced critical perspectives that expose gaps within mainstream academic narratives, emphasizing how gender intersects with class, nationalism, and precarity to influence the visibility and normalization of various forms of violence. The #MeToo movement in Greece¹ has further highlighted these tensions, revealing the complex socio-political dynamics between institutionalized academic discourses and grassroots activism in addressing gender-related violence.

Work Package 5 builds on this evolving field by focusing on the local context of Crete, a region with vibrant feminist, queer and antiracist activism, which has so far not been studied in the context of feminist sociological research. This WP seeks to explore how local gender politics in Crete are shaped by translocal connections and broader national and global movements, while rooted in local socio-political dynamics.

Crete exhibits all the traits of a tourist destination, with its coastal northern region experiencing economic and cultural growth, while the rural inland remains economically underdeveloped. Simultaneously, a deeply rooted heteropatriarchal culture persists and continues to be reinforced. There is a notable gap in academic research regarding gender-based violence, particularly in Crete. Although the severity of the issue is acknowledged in conferences and workshops organized by local institutions—such as the Region of Crete Gender Equality Committee's events for the International Day Against GBV², often in collaboration with the University of Crete's Centre for the Study of Gender—there has been insufficient systematic study of the problem.

One of the few specialized studies focusing on Crete that includes an analysis of domestic violence, as well as an in-depth investigation of cultural patterns of masculinity and male identity in the mountainous Cretan hinterland, is the ethnographic research of Ourania Astrinaki (2002) titled: *Does the man make the kin or does the kin make the man? Identities, violence, history in the mountainous western Crete*. This work significantly contributes to the understanding of gender identities and forms of violence in this specific social and cultural context. Other excellent examples of ethnographic research on masculinities in the Cretan context, are Michael Herzfeld's monograph *The poetics of manhood. Contest and Identity in a Cretan mountain village*

¹ Some information on the #MeToo movement in Greece can be found on the digital publication: Media Jokers (2021) Ελληνικό #MeToo & δημόσιος λόγος (Ειδικό τεύχος). *Ας μιλήσουμε για τα ΜΜΕ*, 4. ENA - Ινστιτούτο Εναλλακτικών Πολιτικών. [Greek #MeToo & public discourse (Special issue). *Let's talk about the media*, 4. ENA - Institute for Alternative Policies]. Retrieved from https://enainstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Media-Jokers_26042021-1.pdf

² 16 ήμερες Δράσεις από την Περιφέρεια Κρήτης για την Πρόληψη και Καταπολέμηση της Βίας κατά των Γυναικών και των Κοριτσιών, 25 Νοεμβρίου έως 10 Δεκεμβρίου 2024 (δελτίο τύπου). [16 days of Actions by the Region of Crete to Prevent and Combat Violence against Women and Girls, November 25 to December 10, 2024 (press release)]. Retrieved from <https://www.crete.gov.gr/16imeres-draseis-apo-tin-perifereia-kritis-gia-tin-prolipsei-kai-katapolemisi-tis-vias-kata-ton-gynaikon-kai-ton-koritsion-25-noemvrioy-eos-10-dekemvrioy-2024/>

(1985), as well as Aristeides Tsantiropoulos' thesis on the concept of the Vendetta on mountain villages of Crete (2000). These anthropological studies highlight the cultural significance of a hegemonic heterosexual aggressive masculinity within a local tradition of rebellious resistance to state and other authorities, which remains relevant to the present day, contributing to the reproduction of heteronormative gender relations and gender-related violence.

By mapping the interactions between local grassroots initiatives, civil society organizations, and academic discourses, the research, conducted within the framework of Work Package 5, aims to analyze how competing narratives and practices surrounding gender-related violence are constructed, negotiated, and contested in the specific context. Crete's unique socio-cultural setting provides a critical lens through which to examine the interplay between local gender politics and the broader transformations within Greek gender studies and activism, providing a situated understanding of the development of the field.

Objectives:

- **To investigate how understandings and approaches to gender-related violence were shaped through specific local politics, focusing on the island of Crete.**

This objective explored the ways in which local socio-political dynamics influenced perceptions, narratives, and responses to gender-related violence. Crete provided a particularly compelling case study due to its distinct socio-cultural context, shaped by historical, cultural, and political factors that impacted both public discourse and institutional responses to such violence. The research examined how local traditions, power structures, community norms, and broader political dynamics contributed to the formation of attitudes and practices related to gender-related violence. By focusing on Crete, the study shed light on the interplay between localized understandings of gender and violence and the broader national context in Greece.

- **To identify feminist, LGBTQ, and antiracist activist groups, as well as civil society initiatives involved in raising awareness and/or mobilizing against gender-related violence, and to investigate how the interactions between them—and with the wider Greek gender-scape—shaped dominant and/or competing approaches to gender politics and violence at the local level.**

This objective focused on mapping and analyzing the landscape of activism and civil society initiatives in Crete that were engaged with gender-related issues. The research identified key actors, including feminist and LGBTQ collectives, antiracist groups and other civil society organizations that worked to combat gender-related violence. Beyond identification, the study explored the dynamics of interaction both within and between these groups, as well as their connections with national networks and movements across Greece. Special attention was given to how these interactions influenced the development of dominant narratives, resistance strategies, and competing discourses related to gender politics and violence. The research analyzed collaboration patterns, potential tensions and alliances within activist and academic spaces to understand how diverse voices contributed to shaping local gender politics. Additionally, it investigated how translocal and global feminist and queer discourses intersect with local activism in Crete.

- **To analyze local activist and civil society discourses and practices from an intersectional perspective in order to highlight different thematizations of gender-related violence and to determine whether Gender Studies influenced how gender relations and identities were understood.**

This objective critically examined the discourses and practices deployed by local activist groups and civil society organizations in addressing gender-related violence. Using an intersectional framework, the research

explored how various forms of inequality and identity markers—such as gender, sexuality, race, class, ethnicity, and migration status—intersected to shape both experiences of violence and the responses to it. The study uncovered how different activist groups framed gender-related violence: whether as an issue tied solely to patriarchal structures, or through broader lenses that included racism, homophobia, transphobia, economic inequality, and other forms of systemic oppression.

Furthermore, the research investigated the extent to which academic gender studies influenced local understandings of gender relations, identities, and violence. This included assessing whether concepts and theoretical frameworks from gender studies—such as intersectionality, queer theory, and feminist epistemologies—were reflected in the discourses and practices of activists and civil society actors. The study analyzed whether academic knowledge was translated into activist strategies and if it contributed to shaping public awareness and policy demands related to gender-based violence. Ultimately, this objective aimed to bridge the gap between academic knowledge production and grassroots activism, highlighting how they informed and challenged each other within the specific socio-cultural context of Crete.

II. Basic concepts and theoretical resources

The study seeks to understand how approaches and conceptualizations of gender-based violence take on specific meanings within the social, political, and cultural context of Crete (Koukiadaki, 2022). It is based on contemporary feminist and queer theories, intertwining analyses with the region's social and historical reality. The island's three largest cities—Heraklion, Chania, and Rethymno—along with their rural hinterlands, serve as representative cases of contemporary Cretan society. With a rich cultural heritage and a history of social and political struggles, these urban centers form a distinctive geographical unit of the country. At the same time, Crete is part of the broader southeastern Aegean region, which has experienced significant tourism and economic growth, making it one of Greece's most developed areas (Dimanopoulos, 2016).

Within this framework, both the unique characteristics of Cretan society and its similarities to other regions that have undergone rapid and unregulated tourism development are recognized. The concept of the "tourism showcase" from contemporary sociology of tourism highlights the tendency for development to concentrate in coastal zones while leaving the rural hinterland marginalized. Greek studies on tourism have underscored its profound impact not only on the economy but also on social structures, including the persistence of a dominant masculine culture and the reinforcement of lawlessness due to rapid social transformations (Tsartas et al., 2020). Crete exhibits intense urbanization, with its northern cities experiencing rapid growth while the interior remains predominantly rural and economically less developed. Urban population growth has been fueled both by migration and the relocation of rural populations to cities, although social and economic ties with the countryside remain intact.

Acknowledging this complex social reality, the study examines approaches to gender-based violence through an intersectional lens (McCall, 2005; Cho et al., 2013; Zavvou, 2021), exploring the interplay between academic and activist feminism (Irvine et al., 2019; Yuval-Davis, 2006, 2011). This perspective views gender-based violence as a phenomenon shaped by intersecting power relations and inequalities linked to gender, race, class and nationality. The island's social environment makes this approach particularly fruitful, as it allows for the study of gender-based violence in a setting marked by contradictions and rapid social change. The study also reevaluates gender studies and research on gender-based violence in the local context, shedding light on both the local perceptions of the phenomenon and the connections between grassroots activism and broader theoretical and policy developments.

As part of this research, the perceptions of secondary school teachers in Heraklion, Chania, and Rethymno are also examined. Teachers play a crucial role as social agents, often encountering incidents of gender-based violence both in schools and within families, as reflected in students' behavior (Kouroutsidou & Raptis, 2021). Furthermore, public school educators are key figures in shaping and socializing young people (Matsagouras, 2008), making it essential to understand their perspectives and capacity to address gender-based violence through educational practices (Hopf & Hatzichristou, 1999). Schools and educational knowledge intersect with broader societal developments, reinforcing the need for a comprehensive approach to the phenomenon.

III. Methodology

The work package investigates, through qualitative empirical research, how the relationship between gender studies and activism influences the understanding and struggles against gender-based violence today. The fieldwork includes biographical narrative interviews and semi-structured interviews with individuals who have played a significant role in feminist and LGBTQ+ activism in Crete (Mason, 2011; Tsiolis, 2014), as well as focus groups. Extensive empirical research was conducted in the cities of Heraklion, Rethymno, and Chania, based on a qualitative feminist methodology (Igglesi, 2001; Thanopoulou & Petronoti, 1987), primarily employing academics, feminist and queer activists, civil society representatives, gender studies students, and young researchers.

The selection of participants for the semi-structured interviews was carried out using the snowball sampling method. After identifying feminist and LGBTQ+ groups on the island, potential informants were mapped to facilitate access, given that grassroots groups are often cautious toward external observers. Initial contact with group members began in May 2024, two months before the official start of WP5 (month 8), as establishing connections before conducting interviews was deemed necessary. Researchers met informally with feminist and LGBTQ+ group members in Heraklion, Chania, and Rethymno, as well as with individuals who were active in feminist initiatives during the post-junta period but are now inactive.

The semi-structured interview guide, developed in collaboration with WP4, which is based in Athens, consists of four thematic sections: (1) the subject's general relationship with gender issues, whether academically or through activism; (2) perceptions of gender-based violence and the surrounding issues; (3) activist or professional practices and resistance strategies; and (4) national and local differentiations, as the program examines both metropolitan and regional perceptions and actions regarding gender-related violence. A detailed overview of all interviews can be found in Table 1 (Appendix), while the interview guide is included in Table 2 (Appendix).

In total, 10 semi-structured interviews were conducted, of which 7 took place online, while out of the 5 biographical interviews, 4 were also conducted online. The duration of the interviews varied from one hour to two hours. Two focus groups with students were held at the University of Crete campuses in Heraklion and Rethymno and one focus group with lgbt+ activists was conducted in Heraklion.

Regarding the biographical interviews, the target group consisted of gender studies professors who played a pivotal role in the establishment of the field, as well as significant figures of the feminist movement. Additionally, 6 semi-structured interviews were conducted online with secondary school educators from public schools in Heraklion, Rethymno and Chania to assess their knowledge and stance on gender-related violence. Educators, through their interaction with students, play a crucial role in mapping gender-based violence both within schools and in students' families. These interviews highlight the experiences and perspectives of educators from both urban and rural schools, covering various types of secondary education

institutions, while also shedding light on their beliefs regarding gender-based violence and the potential intersection of academic and activist feminism with specific social categories.

IV. Research findings & results

1. Feminist and LGBTQ+ Movements in Crete: History, Actions, and Social Dynamics

1.1. *Feminist and LGBTQ+ Groups in Crete: a rich, varying field*

Groups formed at a social level to address issues of gender-based violence—whether focused on cis women, queer individuals, or other communities—perform an important social role. They operate as spaces for empowerment, identity-building and the creation of protective frameworks, as well as arenas for reflection and theoretical inquiry. Some groups are active within universities as student organizations, while others are embedded in local communities, participating in initiatives linked to anarchist movements and broader social interventions, such as the sports club *Tiganitis* in Heraklion.

The groups we engaged with included a transfeminist group and a gender and sexuality group in Heraklion, an LGBTQ+ group in Chania and a feminist group in Rethymno. Furthermore, we discovered the existence of three feminist groups that were active during the second-wave feminist explosion in Greece, till the mid-80's. There is going to be further discussion for these specific second wave feminist groups later on. There are other feminist and queer groups in Heraklion, but were not willing to be interviewed. This is also going to be addressed later on.

The multiplicity of grassroots feminist groups is considered a positive thing, according to our interviewees. B. from the transfeminist group states that *"For me, it is important to have many colors, many voices, and plurality. We are not interested in unity in theory; we are interested in unity in practice, and that is something we have. I wish there were a feminist group in every neighborhood. I wish there were 25 feminist groups in Heraklion. Because that would mean that more and more people would become aware and participate"*.

Specifically, in Heraklion, the research identified a core group of individuals who have been involved in or have formed various initiatives over the years. As one of them states: *"Now I am in [name of the group]. I have been part of "Conquer". I was involved from the beginning in the initial initiative to create the first Crete Pride. Later, this evolved into Heraklion Pride, where I participated for a year. [...] I have also been part of other feminist group formations in Heraklion—various efforts and initiatives that did not have names or had yet to be named."*

Storm, lgbt activist from Chania mentions: *"The most significant organizations I have participated in as a member and in their activities are the "Polychromo Scholeio" (Colorful School), "Emfylys Ataxies" (Gender Disruptions), and "VyziBalls"."*

Sometimes these initiatives are short-lived and other times the individuals decide for various reasons to withdraw and form different initiatives. What is underlined in these excerpts is the fact that even though the groups may be short lived, there is always an urge to act, a political commitment to feminist and queer action.

The groups we identified claim various activist purposes. The transfeminist group in Heraklion, as well as the feminist group in Rethymno are very strongly advocating against gender related violence and offer means of support to gender violence survivors. The LGBTQ+ groups we interviewed, even though they are publicly discussing gender related violence, are more oriented towards LGBTQ+ visibility.

Relationships between these groups may be shaped by political alliances formed around shared goals and concerns, such as advocating for equality and visibility in public spaces. Temporary alliances between different collectives and organizations have been observed in response to incidents of gender-based violence or other activist initiatives.

1.2. *The Interaction Between Gender Studies and Social Movements*

Regarding the development of gender studies and their relationship with social movements and gender identities, interview material highlights a reciprocal connection between individuals and activist organizations. Dimitra Samiou, a historian, refers to the establishment of the feminist journal *Dini*, which emerged from activist and gender-related concerns, as well as the lack of gender studies programs in Greece. She describes: *"In '86, I reconnected with Angelika Psarra; at the time, Marianna Kondyli, Anna Fragoudaki, Mariliza Mitsou, and Eleni Fournaraki were also involved [...]. We decided to do something—to publish a feminist journal. There was a need, or at least that's how we felt—to express certain views and, at the same time, to publish our own texts on women's history, as there was no established platform for these studies to be shared. Thus, in 1987, the first issue of Dini – Feminist Magazine was released."*

This excerpt highlights the need, at the time, of a theoretical background to back up the lived experience of feminists. These individuals named by Samiou were all closely connected to the University as postgraduate students, but at the same time were active in leftist groups, and were some of the first to create the gender studies field in academia.

The development of gender studies has been closely linked to social struggles and the personal experiences of those involved. Academic theoretical production serves as a catalyst for identity exploration, while conversely, the search for identity can also guide theoretical inquiries. In Crete's local community, activist discourse has incorporated elements of queer theory and contemporary analysis of gender and gender-based violence. As a result, local groups engage with the latest theoretical frameworks, drawing from both domestic and international academic research.

KM2, activist from Heraklion, says: *"There is a strong connection [EN: between activism and academia], but not a direct one. I think that, first and foremost, the political discourse and direction of a movement emerge from assemblies, from the people affected, and from the streets. However, academia then takes this and structures it, amplifying it beyond the reach of grassroots movements. In assemblies—at least in my experience—we had many people with backgrounds in gender studies who contributed significantly. They could articulate ideas or navigate concepts that might be difficult for someone unfamiliar with formal academic studies. Additionally, they were often highly active. So, they played a crucial role by essentially bringing back the discourse that emerged from movements, but in a different form—one that enriched the movements. I think that is the most fundamental relationship."* In KM2's opinion, academia serves the purpose of theorizing the concepts that are essentially produced by grassroots action.

Nevertheless, the research also identified other groups and collectives that refused to be interviewed, highlighting their negative perception of academia and institutional bodies. An anarchist feminist group explicitly declined our invitation, saying that they are not interested in discussing with academics: *"[...] In general, we want relationships with people from the movement or individuals who want to approach the issue from the perspective of everyday life—even if they are not ideologically organized somewhere—and not with academic individuals"*.

It is interesting to observe that, in this discourse, academia is opposed to “everyday life” and we, the researchers, do not belong in everyday life or do not suffer, as cis women, in the same culture of heteropatriarchy. There are multiple degrees of association with academic institutions, but there is a tendency from grassroots feminist movements to be reserved and suspicious with academic bodies or research. MK, a young researcher who is also an activist, has encountered the same issue while doing their own research: *“Unfortunately, there are certain groups, certain parts of the anti-authoritarian space that have a great suspicion toward academia. [...] Queer movements have strongly criticized the assimilation of political agendas within the institution of academia, and I often experienced my position within academia with a lot of guilt. That is, I cannot always defend it exactly—or sometimes I don’t want to. [...] I hope that, to some extent, collaboration can be useful, but I also understand why there might be none at all”*.

As B. from the transfeminist group explains: *“No, we do not have relationships with institutional bodies, nor do we want to. Unless it’s to put pressure on something. We maintain a critical perspective on this because we do not see them doing their job particularly well.”* B. is critical of the ineffectiveness of the bureaucratic procedures of institutions. However, she demands from the institutions to “do their job well”, highlighting the importance of central social policy on gender related violence survivors. It appears that even though there is a negative stance on institutions, grassroots activists recognize the importance of state subsidized aid and prevention of gender related violence.

1.3. *The First Feminist Groups in Crete and Their Actions (1970s-1990s): Silenced initiatives*

A significant finding of the research is the presence of feminist groups in Heraklion and Chania during the early post-dictatorship period, with highly active and original initiatives. These groups constitute an essential part of local history that had remained uncharted and unexplored by academic research regarding this historical period. Some of these groups were integrated into the broader progressive movement of the period, while others operated autonomously, engaging in interventions both in urban centers and in rural areas. The fall of the dictatorship and the spirit of democratization and political engagement that characterized the first years after 1974 encouraged feminists and women to take public action and organize to claim equality and combat gender discrimination.

The research identified the existence of local branches of left-wing organizations with a focused interest in gender equality, such as the Federation of Women of Greece, affiliated with the Communist Party of Greece (KKE), and the Movement of Democratic Women, linked to the Renewal Left. Additionally, the existence of an autonomous feminist group in Heraklion was uncovered. Here we will focus on the last group.

The Heraklion Autonomous Women’s Group was formed in the early 1980s and remained active for approximately five years, focusing on combating gender-based violence and social inequalities. The group highlighted all forms of violence against women—physical, sexual, verbal, and psychological—while simultaneously challenging patriarchal structures and interpersonal inequalities. It provided a space for collective empowerment, where women shared experiences and promoted actions for social change. Their activities included distributing leaflets, intervening in legal cases, publicly challenging gender-based violence, and even organizing theatrical performances with devised texts. They also collaborated with other groups in Crete and Athens. The group focused on enhancing women’s independence and challenging social constraints, particularly in matters of sexuality and bodily autonomy, such as contraception and abortion.

By the mid-1980s, the fight for legal equality in marriage emerged as a key issue that attracted the attention and action of feminist activists, culminating in the passage of the landmark Family Law in 1983. The presence

of these groups and the activism of their members are directly linked to gender-based violence, particularly domestic violence, as well as to the persistence of a strong tradition of heteropatriarchy in the mountainous regions of the island.

After this big success of the Greek Feminist Movement in the 80's, the establishment of Family Law, these feminist groups declined and after some time disappeared completely. It is interesting to note that there hasn't been a significant event that terminated the existence of each of the groups, so an interesting further research question would be to discover what were the social and personal circumstances that made these initiatives vanish completely, leaving practically no visible seed to the current feminist movements.

From the 1990s onward, feminist theoretical explorations in Greece became enriched by queer theory and were influenced by struggles for LGBTQ+ rights. In Crete, similar concerns and reflections emerged within activist circles, following the broader trajectory of the feminist movement in Greece. Simultaneously, the establishment of the University of Crete created a space for critical thought and academic study, which contributed to the rise of student movement groups engaged in both theoretical discourse and activist action within the academic community and local society. A notable example is the collective Catsoules.

1.4. *Experiential and embodied dimensions of gender-based violence*

The study of individual cases reveals that personal experiences and lived realities serve as the primary catalysts for action and reflection on gender-based violence and gender relations. Experiences of gender inequalities from childhood, as well as the realization of one's sexuality, are crucial factors driving individuals toward activist organization and engagement.

A member of the gender and sexuality group in Heraklion shares: *"I think my interest started with my identity as a lesbian. [...] I remember reading, searching online—mainly to understand myself. Then I remember attending the first Pride in 2015. [...] Initially, I just wanted to be around members of my community, but I also felt the need to take action because we live in a province, because things don't happen often here, and because if we don't make them happen, no one will."*

Another participant states: *"The first point of entry that made me start thinking about gender issues more broadly was adolescence and the process of recognizing and discovering my sexuality."* These experiences can be either empowering or ones of exclusion and restricted freedom. In both cases, family dynamics and personal experiences within one's family of origin play a significant role in shaping attitudes and reflections on gender-based violence and discrimination.

Additionally, the broader political, social, and legal landscape, which often reinforces gender or broader social inequalities, influences individuals' lived experiences and engagement with society. KM3 explains: *"Within LGBTQ+ and feminist assemblies, the reason these people have gathered in a room to talk instead of just going to a café to drink coffee and have fun is the violence they have endured. That is the common factor that has united them. Listening to others' experiences in these meetings helps you understand your own experiences—even if you hadn't realized them until that moment."*

Dimitra Samiou reflects on the intense post-dictatorship years in Greece: *"I think that, at some point, around the age of 16-17, I already had something of feminism within me without knowing the word and without having read anything about it. At the time, there weren't even books available on these issues. So, I finished high school in '77 and entered university. Back then, we were very politically engaged. I was part of Rigas Feraios, that organization. We were always in the streets, constantly participating in protests, deeply political. But as young women, we also had our own worries. We feared many things, we felt oppressed."*

In Crete, the strong tradition of heteropatriarchy has posed unique challenges for activists, from the early post-dictatorship era to the present day. SZ reflects on the 1980s in Crete: *“It was then that issues of violence and rape started being discussed. As well as domestic violence. But these topics were still somewhat taboo. Especially when it came to domestic violence.”* The tradition of heteropatriarchy is a recurring theme in the narratives of research participants, emerging as a defining factor in their personal experiences and in shaping their activist journeys.

1.5. Local Specificities and Social Dynamics in Crete

An interesting finding of the research is the recognition, by some participants, of the local distinctiveness in the rural interior of Crete, specifically the unique position of women in the Sfakia region. According to the interviewees, these women are distinguished by their dynamism and significant roles both in the family and in the local community. Kynthia mentions the following about this: *“I was particularly sensitive about the issue of the role of women. And I was traveling back and forth to Loutro in Sfakia. Some things I experienced left an impression on me. One thing was that the woman at that time decided who her son would marry. She would find him a bride, as he was a sailor.”* Such roles, however, do not necessarily dismantle patriarchy, but may even reinforce it through the collusion of women in reproducing traditional family arrangements.

Indeed, the research highlights the influence of traditional gender roles and the male archetype of the *levéntis* (a figure representing masculine pride and dominance) in reinforcing gender-based violence. Participants agree that specifically Crete is a *“bad place for gender-based violence”*. As will be analysed below, Crete carries a strong tradition of heteropatriarchy, violence and social oppression against women. This reality creates, according to the interviewees, an urge to be more energetic against it. KM4 says: *“I’m saying that the excessive machismo we have here plays a huge role—more than in any other city in Greece, I think, and I’ve been to many. The fact that you walk down the street and see it so blatantly, almost spilling out everywhere, gives you the feeling that you have to do something more. You have to mobilize something. You have to respond to it”*.

At the same time, another participant highlighted the unique position of a large provincial city like Heraklion in relation to Athens. *“On the other hand, I don’t think Athens is a paradise for that. And on the contrary, my personal experience in Crete, because of the smaller community, because of the closer relationships that life here allows, creates an opportunity... How should I put it...I think the smaller community here creates a need for greater interaction...In Athens, I was mostly in groups that only dealt with queer issues. I had very little contact with other sectors, for example even with the anarchist movement. I could live in a secluded bubble. A bubble of relative safety, surrounded by people who are like me, and everything is fine. No, it wasn’t fine... In Heraklion, this possibility doesn’t exist, and I now perceive this as a positive thing because it forces me, in a way, to come into contact with people I wouldn’t have made an effort to meet in Athens.”* Athens, as a massive urban area, is characterized, according to the participant, by alienation and isolation, while Heraklion offers the opportunity for closer relationships and encourages individuals to expand their social networks, even with people and groups they would not have had the chance to meet in Athens.

2. Conceptualizations of Gender-Based Violence

2.1. *The Intersectional Perception of Gender-Based Violence and the Broadness of the Concept: From Femicide to Social Media Control*

The conceptualization of gender-based violence by activist groups and academics is based on a specific definition that is widely recognized as inclusive and intersectional. It does not solely concern femicide (a term accepted by all interviewees), but also addresses other forms of violence, such as emotional and verbal violence. KM1 from the queer group in Heraklion says: *“Gender-based violence, essentially, I think I can put it into a framework that has to do with violence, whether from the mildest behavior, not even verbal, to the physical expression of someone or a society, a social group, toward an individual or an entire group based on gender, discrimination, violence, any form, up to femicide or rape, in terms of gender.”*

An insightful description of gender-based violence, as a dynamic phenomenon that evolves and expands, is given by Mariza from the Catsoules: *“I think these definitions are shaped every day, because every person who experiences this brings me into response with my existing definition and in the process of thinking again about what gender-based violence is. From the violent form in the home of the dominant macho model we have in the family structure of Greece, to control on social media. It’s a spectrum that constantly opens up, and we keep adding things to it.”*

2.2. *Resistances to gender related violence: Care, Empowerment, and Public Discourse*

Regarding the activist practices followed by feminist and LGBTQI+ groups, they are focused on two different directions. Towards the interior of the group and towards society.

Practices towards the group were *“those of training, self-education, circles, and emotional circles”*, says Mariza. The concept of self-education was mentioned by activists as crucial in the formation of feminist and queer groups.

External practices often focus on care and protection for survivors, providing legal assistance where possible, and publicizing incidents to produce public discourse on gender-based violence. Participant B. mentions: *“First and foremost is care and protection. And that’s why we also aim to have personal contact with each person who reaches out. It’s very important because our analysis, why this happens, primarily for empowerment, is for the survivors to understand that this is not something that happens only to you, but happens for very specific reasons, because society is structured this way, the institutions, etc. We provide whatever tools we have, and whatever information we can find, and any person we have available to consult, the psychologist, the lawyer, whatever is necessary at the time.”*

The practices of discourse production and public protest do not differ from the usual practices employed by grassroots movements in general. As Storm from Chania writes: *“Marches/Protests/Banners/Flyers/Text/Events, etc.”*

2.3. *Intersections of gender-based violence with other inequalities and discriminations*

As mentioned earlier, a very big part of the grassroots initiatives is the prevention of gender related violence and the support of the survivors. Nevertheless, these groups are not uniquely concerned with a narrow definition of gender-based violence. There is a very clear discourse on the intersectional approach of the

feminist groups. MK notes that contemporary groups try more and more to be inclusive and to include, collaborate and converse with other marginalized groups or even with other kinds of violence.

B. mentions: *"Obviously, a feminist, transfeminist collective cannot be limited to just this. [...] But there are also all the other political issues that arise—the collapse of healthcare, the dismantling of education, the high cost of living. Tempi, the refugee crisis. All these issues concern us as political beings. The war in Gaza, the genocide in Gaza. These matter to us, and we have a political stance on these issues as well. We are not only interested in ending gender-based violence, and we don't believe that gender-based violence is something separate from all the rest. On the contrary, we understand that the worse things get in society, the more gender-based violence intensifies."*

3. Gender-Based Violence and Education: Challenges, Stereotypes, and Interventions

3.1. *The Strong Culture of Heteropatriarchy in the Cretan Countryside: Male Dominance and Stereotypes in Schools*

The research also highlights the fact that a strong culture of heteropatriarchy survives in the area, particularly in the rural Cretan countryside, as confirmed by the participating teachers. This culture emphasizes masculinity, violent behavior, and male dominance. Despina describes this male-dominant culture: *"In general, I see at school that especially the girls have a very hard time. For example, most of them can't wear shorts to school. We know, for example, they talk about how their mothers don't go to the café. There is no way a woman would go to the café in the village."* This culture is linked to a strong model of masculinity, which reflects on the behaviors and goals of secondary school students.

3.2. *Gender Discrimination and Violent Behaviors in Rural Schools: Contrasts with Urban Schools and Stereotypes in Education*

In the context of the school, especially in rural areas, students often exhibit gender-related violent behaviors. At the same time, they strongly reproduce gender discriminations in their language and practices. Participant K. comments on this oppressive atmosphere she encountered in rural Crete: *"...my female students, for example, were engaged at 18 years old, with people, say, 33-34 years old, as old as I was then. And their husbands would come and ask about their grades and their performance."*

Teachers with experience from both rural areas and developed urban tourist centers note that in city schools, there is more frequent and freer exploration of sexual identity/heteronormativity and the expression of diversity. K. comments on this: *"Now, in urban schools where I have worked, for example in Heraklion, this... with the non-binary, where one doesn't want, refuses to choose gender and wants to self-identify as neutral. We have seen this in the last 7-8 years and I've also seen a lot of girls who don't want to be girls. They adopt an identity where they want to be called by male names."*

3.3. *Domestic Violence and the Difficulty of Recording It in the School Environment: Challenges and Limitations*

Participants in the research also mention that within the schools they serve and through their daily contact with students, they notice the presence of domestic violence. While teachers are in direct contact with their students, the issues of domestic violence cannot be accurately documented. Despina highlights: *"I'm in a difficult school because I work in Mylopotamos, in Rethymno, and the community there is very closed, and the*

relationships between the genders are very difficult. We have several children whose mothers left them and left to escape, basically. We know it from the local gossip." The insufficient presence of psychologists and social workers makes communication between school and parents even more difficult, while also limiting the ability of teachers to get a clear picture of the living conditions of students. Danae comments: *"No, we don't touch on it because we can't. We can't intervene in family issues. This is how society here is. This is the image I got."* Cases of extreme domestic violence and potential criminal acts are handled by the police and judicial authorities.

3.4. Gender-Based Violence in Schools: Contradictions and Social Differences Between Urban and Rural Schools

The research also identifies differences in the manifestations of gender-based violence in schools in larger urban centers of Crete. Kostas comments on his experience from the schools in Chania: *"Now, regarding the urban centers. [...] If we look at this part, professionally, socially, class-wise, mostly you have, firstly, you have agricultural areas, meaning, from Tsikalara, Keramia, and so on, there are students who go to schools in suburban municipalities, because there are no middle or high schools there. Secondly, there are small businesses that are mostly family-owned or have one or two employees. And thirdly, there are police officers or military personnel. This arc, which you see in the schools, reproduces the far-right and these social groups much more."*

The school units differ depending on their geographical location, the type, and the level of secondary education they belong to in terms of forms of gender-based violence. The distinction between city and countryside is highlighted in the teachers' narratives. Danae comments: *"However, I have worked in both rural schools and urban ones. There is more tolerance, I can say, on this issue, not so much in terms of physical violence, but in other forms of gender-based violence. There is more tolerance in rural areas than in urban centers... In schools in disadvantaged areas, as well as vocational high schools (schools that the children of the more dominated classes attend), the school environment is particularly harsh with no tolerance for diversity, and physical strength remains central."*

3.5. Gender-Based Violence and Education: Opportunities and Limitations in Teachers' Interventions Through the Curriculum

The research also highlights the fact that teachers' interventions on gender-based violence are framed by the curriculum and their specialties. Biology and the cycle of theoretical subjects allow the dedication of teaching hours to issues related to gender-based violence and the biological determination of genders. Kostas, a biologist himself, discusses the opportunities he has to talk about the importance of gender and gender relations within the framework of his subject. *"In first year of high school, for example, where the material on the reproductive system is separate, there is objectively a field to raise issues of gender, how students perceive gender, if we are discussing genetic, medical, social, and biological terms, so there is a part related to that."* Anna observes the opportunities her profession, that of a philologist, gives her to address the issue of gender discrimination: *"Yes. Because I am a philologist, I have the opportunity through lessons like composition and literature to frequently bring up the general issue. In fact, recently, just as in the past, a student asked me, triggered by a literary text we were working on: "Teacher, how was it that women were considered inferior to men, how did this happen, when did it start, etc."*

However, the current curriculum, especially after the changes that took place from 2019 onwards (with the introduction of internal school exams, the minimum entry requirements, and the Question Bank), further

restricts the available time to address students' concerns. Kostas notes the following about these limitations: "[...] in the high school where I teach, there is usually a question bank; the pressure from the minimum entry requirements means you can't easily stray from the framework. Objectively, nevertheless, there are cases where you can give emphasis to issues related to the curriculum." Consequently, it becomes clear that teachers intervene in issues of gender-based violence primarily through their teaching and work in the classroom.

3.6. Gender-Based Violence and Diversity: How Teachers Perceive Its Different Forms

The research also highlights that teachers perceive the concept of gender-based violence as a broad phenomenon, which includes not only violence directed at women but also violence against the LGBTQ+ community and men, thereby recognizing the multifaceted and different expressions of gender-based violence in society.

Despina mentions how she defines gender-based violence: *"Gender-based violence has many forms. It starts with the fact that the man controls the money, that he has the family's finances and does not allow or, at least, does not let the woman have control. I consider this violence. And then it starts with simple words that the husband or partner may say to the woman, with insulting words, and it can go all the way to murder. Everything... That is, gender-based violence also includes the fact that a transvestite, for example, or a boy who has not yet figured out what gender they are, or even a girl who has not yet figured out what gender they are, may walk down the street and people whistle and make remarks. I have seen it. I have experienced it. And that is violence"*.

On the other hand, the systematic investigation of the presence and actions of teachers in the three districts of Crete (Chania, Rethymno, Heraklion), with the information gathered from both the networks of teachers and the feminist and LGBTQ+ groups active on the island, indicates that there are no communication or contact channels between the two parties, except for occasional interactions.

3.7. Experiences of Gender-Based Violence Among Educators: From Domestic Violence to Workplace Sexual Harassment

The research found that some teachers themselves have experienced various forms of gender-based violence, both within their family environment and in the workplace, mainly in the form of sexual harassment. Despina shares her experiences from her divorce: *"Of course, the main reason I didn't divorce was the financial issue, I knew my children wouldn't be able to live. And I saw from his behavior that he would make my life unbearable."* Especially regarding the school environment, the women participants note that they are recipients of sexist comments, sexual harassment, or demeaning behavior (due to their gender), mostly from older teachers. K. states: *"The context, you know, is that at work there are men much older, let's say, who are now approaching retirement age, raised in a traditional way... These men are more prone, in my opinion, to sexually harass."*

V. Conclusion

Summary

The research focuses on the case of Crete, which represents a typical case of a region undergoing a transition from economic underdevelopment, dominated by a traditional agricultural economy, to a developed tourist economy. In this context, the research highlights the persistence of strong elements of tradition, which in the case of Crete are closely linked to heteropatriarchy and the ideal of masculinity. At the same time, the island

has a rich cultural heritage and democratic culture, elements that have also been expressed through the development of feminist and LGBTQ+ organizations and movements since the early post-junta years. This trajectory illustrates the way in which Crete combines the conflict between traditional values and contemporary social and cultural rejuvenation.

The research utilizes intersectional theory to explore the perception of gender-based violence and the theoretical and activist actions that define local initiatives and societal responses to these phenomena. It examines the intersection of traditional values with new discussions around gender and gender-based violence, as well as the interaction between movement feminism and academic feminism. Special attention is given to studying the silences and social and cultural distances that exist between these two fields, as well as the synergies and interactions within the local social fabric.

The research identifies the presence of activist action since the early post-junta years and the emergence of new gender-related issues that reflect developments in the corresponding social and academic discussions. The significant activist movement on the island is closely tied to broader developments in feminist theory and gender studies. Starting from the recognition of gender inequalities, the research progresses to contemporary issues such as the construction of social gender and the fight for LGBTQ+ rights. Ideas presented in this brief report will be further developed in other publications during the dissemination of the project.

Further questions

The research raises several critical questions for further investigation based on the trajectory of the study and the analysis of the collected material. These questions seek to deepen our understanding of gender-based activism in Crete and its historical and contemporary dynamics and will be addressed in further publications.

1. **Activist Actions, Publications, and Key Texts:** What are the main actions, editorial efforts, reference texts, and demands put forth by activist organizations on the island? How have these elements evolved over time, and what challenges or transformations characterize the activist landscape of Crete today? This question aims to trace the historical development of feminist and LGBTQ+ activism on the island, identifying continuities, ruptures, and shifts in discourse and practice.
2. **Silencing of Feminist Action in Public Discourse:** How can we explain the absence of references to women's activism and feminist organizations from the early post-dictatorship period in Crete's public discourse? Likewise, what factors contribute to the marginalization or silencing of contemporary activist groups? This question is particularly relevant in understanding the mechanisms of historical amnesia, the role of dominant narratives in shaping local collective memory, and the broader socio-political factors that influence the visibility of feminist and queer movements in the region.

To explore these questions, the discourse analysis of the interviews, relevant publications, and archival material will continue even further. If necessary, additional interviews with activists, researchers, and local historians will be requested. A comparative approach with WP4 will also be employed to examine how similar processes unfold in the metropolitan framework of Athens. By addressing these issues, the study aims to contribute to a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of gender activism, historical memory, and the socio-political landscape of Crete.

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VII. Appendix

Table 1. Interviews

Duration: 8 months

Researchers: Eleftheria Papastefanaki (WP Coordinator), Salam-Irini Ampoumogli, Pavlos Liaropoulos

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS WITH ACTIVISTS				
A/A	Name/Pseudonym	Role	Date	Place
1	B.	Activist	17.10.2024	Heraklion
2	D.N.	Activist	28.10.2024	Chania
3	Yvon Kosma	Professor, Head of UoC Gender Equality Committee	29.10.2024	Rethymno
4	M.K.	Young researcher-activist	2.11.2024	Heraklion
5	S.Z.	Activist-Federation of Women of Greece	14.11.2024	Chania
6	Emmy, Hemal	Activists-Democratic Women's Movement	15.11.2024	Chania
7	Storm	Activist	17.11.2024	Chania
8	Mariza	Activist	27.11.2024	Rethymno
9	M.D.	Activist	28.11.2024	Rethymno
10	V.S.	Activist, Autonomous Feminist Group Heraklion	10.12.2024	Heraklion

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS WITH EDUCATORS				
A/A	Name/Pseudonym	Role	Date	Place
1	Anna	Educator	22.12.2024	Heraklion
2	Despoina	Educator	29.12.2024	Rethymno
3	Danae	Educator	30.12.2024	Rethymno
4	KS	Educator	2.01.2025	Heraklion
5	Kostas	Educator	4.01.2025	Chania
6	Maria	Educator	21.1.2025	Chania

BIOGRAPHICAL INTERVIEWS				
A/A	Name	Role	Date	Place
1	Vassiliki Petousi	Professor, Director of Gender Lab, University of Crete	20.12.2024	Rethymno
2	Dimitra Samiou	Historian-Post doc researcher	3.01.2025	Athens
3	Anna Michopoulou	Historian-Delfis feminist Archive	7.01.2025	Athens
4	Korina	Activist, Autonomous Feminist Group Heraklion	20.01.2025	Heraklion
5	Eleni Fournaraki	Professor, University of Crete	10.02.2025	Rethymno

FOCUS GROUPS WITH ACTIVISTS AND STUDENTS				
A/A	Name/Pseudonym	Role	Date	Place
1.	KM1, KM2, KM3, KM4	Focus Group with activists	28.10.2024	Heraklion
2	Jason, M., MY, X, Mirto, Elena	Focus group in University Campus Heraklion	12.11.2024	In person
3	E., A., T., X., B., St.	Focus group in University Campus Rethymno	16.01.2025	In person

Table 2 Interview Guide**Interview Guide**

(estimated time: 1-1:30 hours)

General Information

Interview Date:

Location:

Start Time:

Name/Nickname:

Year of Birth:

Gender:

Profession:

Activism:

Introduction:

General information about the program and signature of the consent form.

General Questions about Gender

1. When did you first become interested in gender issues, and how did you start engaging with them?
2. Do you work professionally on gender issues? If yes, in which field, in what ways, and what are the most important issues that have occupied you?
3. Are you involved in activism related to gender issues? If yes, what kind and what are the most important organizations, groups, or actions that you are or were part of in the past?
4. (If part of LGBTQI movements) What is the relationship with feminist movements?
(If part of feminist movements) What is the relationship with LGBTQI movements?
How do you self-identify in relation to this, and why?
5. Does your professional or activist work on gender issues relate to your academic studies or academic research?

Issues of Gender-Based Violence

6. As part of your academic, professional, or/and activist journey, have you engaged with issues of gender-based violence?
7. What sparked your involvement with the issue?
8. Since you started working on gender issues in general and gender-based violence in particular, have you observed any social changes? If yes, in which areas do you see progress, and in which areas do you see setbacks?

Conceptions of Gender-Based Violence

9. Can you explain how you perceive the term "gender-based violence" and how you use it in your work?

(clarifying questions to be used only if their responses are not detailed or require clarification:

- Do you primarily perceive it as physical violence, or do you also include psychological and verbal violence?
 - Do you include (sexual and emotional) abuse?
 - Do you primarily focus on violence against women, or do you include other social differences such as gender, nation, class, sexuality? For example, do you address violence against LGBTQI individuals, violence against migrants, the ways in which social class or poverty influences the phenomenon of gender-based violence?
 - In your opinion, is gender-based violence connected to sexism, racism, nationalism, class inequalities, transphobia, or homophobia? How do you think these connections relate to gender-based violence?
 - Are there particular social spaces, such as sports, art, education, family, social media, where the phenomenon appears with greater frequency or intensity?)
10. Would you like to share any personal experiences of gender-based violence that have affected the way you perceive the issue? If yes, were these experiences personal/direct or related to individuals in your environment/indirect?
11. Are there any texts, theoretical or activist, films, plays, works of art, statistical data, or documentaries that have influenced the way you perceive gender-based violence? Which ones?
12. What is your opinion about the media discourse and social media discourse on gender-based violence? In what ways do you think this discourse affects you personally and society at large? Which social groups are affected by this discourse, and in what ways?
13. In your opinion, what are the characteristics of individuals who are most affected by gender-based violence? (Alternative wording: Which social categories, in your opinion, are most vulnerable to gender-based violence)? Do you use the terms "victims" or "survivors" when referring to them? Can you tell us why?

Activist Action

14. In which areas of gender-based violence does your professional and/or activist work focus? (e.g., institutions, politics, legal and criminal procedures, care, protection and support of victims, public discourse and public representations, others?)
15. Do these groups maintain any records? If yes, would you be interested in giving us access to them?
16. What activist practices do the groups you are involved with use? What is your experience with these practices?
17. How do you view the discourses and practices that have been developed in the last few years against gender-based violence?

Questions about Internal Group Processes/Practices

18. How do you work within the group? Do you follow current events and interact, start from personal experiences, or do you have a set agenda and plan?

19. How do you make decisions? (unanimity, conflicts-disagreements)
20. Where do you meet as a group? Do you collaborate or form alliances with other groups or spaces?
21. What do you think is the impact of your actions?

National-Local Differences

22. Do the groups, actions, or initiatives you participate in operate only locally, or do they participate in networks and mobilizations with other organizations or movements?
23. Do you think there are particularities regarding gender-based violence in the area where you live? What kind? (differences between Athens-Crete, capital-provincial areas)
24. Do you think the groups, actions, or initiatives against gender-based violence you participate in have any particularities in relation to others in other parts of Greece and internationally? What kind? (differences between Athens-Crete, capital-provincial areas)
25. Is there any mobilization you have participated in that left a particular impression on you and that you would like to mention?