

GESTURE

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

Work Package 4

***Intersections between academia
& activism: Metropolitan outlooks***

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Nelli Kambouri

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Abstract

Στόχος του Πακέτου Εργασίας 4, «Διασταυρώσεις μεταξύ ακαδημίας και ακτιβισμού: Μητροπολιτικές οπτικές», ήταν να αναλύσει τις κυρίαρχες προσλήψεις της έμφυλης βίας στο πλαίσιο των σπουδών φύλου και των ακτιβιστικών φεμινισμών από το 2000 και έπειτα, με επίκεντρο την Αθήνα. Η έρευνα προσανατολίστηκε αφενός στην ακαδημαϊκή εμπειρία και αφετέρου σε κινηματικούς λόγους και πρακτικές, ενώ επεκτάθηκε και σε κέντρα όπου υπάρχει μια παράδοση σπουδών φύλου, όπως ο Βόλος, η Θεσσαλονίκη και η Μυτιλήνη. Το θεωρητικό πλαίσιο διαμορφώθηκε από τρεις βασικές παραδοχές: (α) μια συμπεριληπτική κουηρ προσέγγιση της έμφυλης βίας, (β) μια διπλή θεώρηση της επισφάλειας ως εργασιακής και οντολογικής συνθήκης και, (γ) την έννοια της επιστημικής βίας, όπως αυτή αναπτύσσεται το πλαίσιο της μετααποικιακής θεωρίας και κριτικής. Ενώ, το εμπειρικό υλικό αναλύθηκε μέσα από την έννοια της «συναισθηματικής οικονομίας» (S. Ahmed). Υιοθετήθηκε ποιοτική μεθοδολογία έρευνας με συνεντεύξεις και ομάδες εστιασμένης συζήτησης. Συνολικά, διενεργήθηκαν έντεκα βιογραφικές συνεντεύξεις με καθηγήτριες/τες σπουδών φύλου διαφορετικών βαθμίδων, είκοσι μία ημιδομημένες συνεντεύξεις με φεμινίστριες και ΛΟΑΤΚΙ ακτιβίστριες, δημοσιογράφους και ερευνήτριες/τα, δύο ομάδες εστιασμένης συζήτησης με διδακτορικές φοιτήτριες/τα σπουδών φύλου και καλλιτέχνιδες από τον χώρο του θεάτρου, των εικαστικών, και της λογοτεχνίας/ποίησης.

Ως προς τη σχέση μεταξύ φεμινιστικών κινημάτων και σπουδών φύλου στην Ελλάδα, τα ευρήματά δείχνουν ότι σε αντίθεση με το κυρίαρχο μοντέλο αφήγησης, όπου ο φεμινιστικός βίος μοιάζει να ακολουθεί μια γραμμική εξέλιξη από τα κινήματα στη θεσμική αναγνώριση και καταξίωση, στις βιογραφίες των φεμινιστριών καθηγητριών η σχέση μεταξύ φεμινιστικής δράσης και σπουδών φύλου είναι, σε πολλές περιπτώσεις, πιο σύνθετη και αμφίσημη. Φαίνεται ότι υπάρχουν κρίσιμες εντάσεις, διαφωνίες και δυσκολίες σύνδεσης της ακτιβιστικής και της ακαδημαϊκής ζωής, ενώ παράλληλα, πολλές καθηγήτριες βιώνουν σεξισμό, ομοφοβία και τοξικότητα στα ακαδημαϊκά περιβάλλοντα όπου εργάζονται.

Από τη δεκαετία του 2000, οι σπουδές φύλου στην Ελλάδα έχουν αναπτυχθεί σημαντικά και εδραιωθεί πλέον στις κοινωνικές επιστήμες, ενώ το ακαδημαϊκό προσωπικό ανανεώνεται, νέα μαθήματα εντάσσονται στα προγράμματα σπουδών, η έρευνα διευρύνεται και ιδρύονται εξειδικευμένα μεταπτυχιακά προγράμματα. Ωστόσο, η έρευνα ανέδειξε ότι υπάρχουν ουσιαστικές θεωρητικές και πολιτικές διαφωνίες μεταξύ καθηγητριών που ακολουθούν την παράδοση των γυναικείων σπουδών και εκείνων που εγγράφονται στις σπουδές φύλου και υιοθετούν πιο διαθεματικές και κουηρ προσεγγίσεις. Ταυτόχρονα, φαίνεται ότι υπάρχει περιθώριο για την οικοδόμηση συνεργασιών μεταξύ τους στο πλαίσιο μεταπτυχιακών προγραμμάτων σπουδών και των νεοσυσταθέντων Επιτροπών Ισότητας των Φύλων των ιδρυμάτων. Από τις συνεντεύξεις επιβεβαιώνεται ότι το φοιτητικό ενδιαφέρον για τις σπουδές φύλου έχει αυξηθεί σημαντικά λόγω της επιρροής του #Metoo και των ΛΟΑΤΚΙ κινημάτων, ενώ η δημιουργία ασφαλών χώρων, η επίβλεψη διδακτορικών και η διεξαγωγή ερευνητικών προγραμμάτων με τη συμμετοχή ακτιβιστριών και ακτιβιστών αποτελεί για τις καθηγήτριες των σπουδών φύλου προτεραιότητα και πηγή έμπνευσης και ενθουσιασμού.

Από την άλλη, στις συνεντεύξεις με ερευνήτριες και ακτιβίστριες αναδεικνύεται ότι η παραγωγή γνώσης αποτελεί βασικό διακύβευμα των φεμινιστικών πρακτικών που ακολουθούν. Για κάποιες συμμετέχουσες, είναι σημαντικό η θεωρητική γνώση να παράγεται συλλογικά και συμμετοχικά στο πλαίσιο των κινημάτων, ενώ άλλες προκρίνουν τις διδακτορικές σπουδές και την ένταξή τους σε ερευνητικά προγράμματα, κάτι που εμπλουτίζει το ακαδημαϊκό πεδίο των σπουδών φύλου. Εντούτοις, η έρευνα εντόπισε ότι οι «συναντήσεις» μεταξύ ακαδημαϊκής έρευνας και φεμινιστικών κινημάτων δεν είναι πάντοτε εύκολη. Τα κυριότερα εμπόδια που αντιμετωπίζουν οι φεμινίστριες ερευνήτριες/ακτιβίστριες είναι πρώτον η εργασιακή και οντολογική επισφάλεια και δεύτερον η επιστημική βία που αντιμετωπίζουν κυρίως όσες/α υιοθετούν κουηρ φεμινιστικές προσεγγίσεις, καθώς και οι ερευνήτριες και τα ερευνητά της δεύτερης γενιάς.

Ως προς την έμφυλη βία, η έρευνα ανέδειξε ότι αποτελεί έναν από τους βασικούς τομείς με τους οποίους ασχολούνται τόσο οι σπουδές φύλου όσο και οι φεμινιστικές δράσεις στην Ελλάδα. Διαπιστώθηκε ότι το μεγαλύτερο μέρος της ερευνητικής και κινηματικής παραγωγής εστιάζει στη βία κατά των γυναικών και παράγεται στα τμήματα όπου κυριαρχούν οι γυναικείες σπουδές. Παρόλο που τα τελευταία χρόνια έχουν δημιουργηθεί αρκετές νέες κουηρ φεμινιστικές ομάδες, οι οποίες έχουν φέρει στο προσκήνιο και άλλες μορφές έμφυλης βίας, κυρίως ενάντια σε ΛΟΑΤΚΙ άτομα και κοινότητες, η συμπερίληψη αυτών των μορφών έμφυλης βίας δεν έχει ακόμα επηρεάσει την έρευνα στα πανεπιστήμια και τα ερευνητικά κέντρα. Τέλος, ως σημαντικό αναφέρθηκε το ζήτημα της έμφυλης βίας στο ίδιο το πανεπιστήμιο, κάτι που αναδείχθηκε με την άνοδο του #Metoo και αποτελεί προτεραιότητα των δράσεων των Επιτροπών Ισότητας των Φύλων, καθώς διαπιστώνονται κενά στην εφαρμογή μέτρων για τη λήψη και αντιμετώπιση καταγγελιών.

Συμπερασματικά, η έρευνα εστίασε στις σύγχρονες σπουδές φύλου στην Ελλάδα και στις καίριες προκλήσεις που αντιμετωπίζουν. Οι φεμινιστικές συναισθηματικές οικονομίες που διαμορφώνονται στο πλαίσιο ακαδημαϊκών και κινηματικών πρακτικών αποτυπώνουν όχι μόνο εντάσεις αλλά και μορφές συλλογικότητας, συν-ύπαρξης και συν-στοχασμού. Η ανάδυση ενός νέου κουηρ φεμινιστικού κινήματος, το οποίο συνδέεται τόσο με ΛΟΑΤΚΙ ακτιβισμούς όσο και με πιο γυναικοκεντρικές φεμινιστικές παραδόσεις, αποτελεί εξέλιξη που χρήζει περαιτέρω μελέτης. Στο πλαίσιο αυτό, σημαντικοί είναι οι ασφαλείς χώροι, εφήμεροι μεν αλλά σταθερά προσβάσιμοι, που έχουν αναπτυχθεί την τελευταία δεκαετία στο πανεπιστήμιο. Παρόλα αυτά, οι κουηρ φεμινιστικές υποκειμενικότητες συνεχίζουν να βιώνουν εργασιακή επισφάλεια, εχθρικές συνθήκες και θεσμική έλλειψη υποστήριξης εντός των πανεπιστημιακών και ερευνητικών δομών. Οι δυναμικές αυτές αντανακλώνται και στο δημόσιο λόγο για την έμφυλη βία, όπου παρατηρούμε ότι μετά το #MeToo η έμφυλη βία κατά των γυναικών έχει καταστεί ένα από τα πιο κεντρικά ζητήματα που απασχολούν την κοινή γνώμη, ενώ η βία κατά ΛΟΑΤΚΙ υποκειμένων παραμένει αποσιωπημένη και άλλες διαθεματικές παράμετροι—όπως η φυλή και η εθνοτικότητα—συνεχίζουν να υποβαθμίζονται.

I. Introduction

The aim of WP 4, “Intersections between academia & activism: Metropolitan outlooks”, was to investigate dominant and marginalised understandings and approaches to gender related violence in the context of the relationship between academic gender studies and the feminist and queer movements in Greece, focusing especially on the period from 2000 onwards. WP4 involved research in metropolitan areas. Fieldwork consisted of two strands: The first focusing on gender studies scholars across Greece, problematised how personal and political experiences have shaped their academic and/or activist trajectories. The second strand focused on activist groups and civil society organizations, as well as university students, to understand how discourses and practices against gender-related violence are articulated and expressed in specific metropolitan settings. The fact that we included research participants who worked, did research and/or lived mainly in Athens, but also in Thessaloniki, Volos and Lesvos made it easier for us to map important academic, social movement and civil society nodes, which play (or have played) a key role in developing gender studies in Greece and in raising the issue of gender-related violence.

GeStuRe's overall objectives were:

- To research the relationship between gender studies and gender activism in contemporary Greece, highlighting antitheses, contradictions and/or synergies between the two fields as far as the issue of gender-related violence is concerned.
- To highlight different understandings and interventions concerning gender-related violence, especially those marginalized or erased by more legitimized/authoritative/validated positions in academic gender studies, gender activisms, or civil society, in order to address the intersections between the social and the epistemic aspects of gender violence.
- To understand the intersections between gender, sexuality, ethnicity, class and violence, in order to raise awareness of the many different forms of gender-related violence.

More specifically in relation to WP4, objectives were:

- To investigate the current relationship between academic gender studies and feminist and queer movements in Greece, focusing especially on the period from 2000 onwards, using gender-violence as a lens for identifying dominant and marginalised positionalities, approaches and experiences in the field.
- To map and analyse the development of academic and activist discourses and practices on the topic of gender-related violence from an intersectional perspective.
- To critically evaluate and reflect on academic, social movement and civil society engagements with gender studies and gender-based violence, with particular emphasis on how the intersections of gender, race, class and sexuality have shaped the trajectory of feminism in Greece.

II. Basic concepts and theoretical resources

Gender-based violence

Most studies on gender-based violence in Greece focus on violence against women. The concept of gender-based violence that we used in WP4 is based on an intersectional approach to violence that is not limited to violence against women but includes also violence against LGBTQI persons and groups, and the specific forms of discrimination they face. Moreover, the usage of the term implies sensitivity not only to gender but also to race, nation, class, age, and sexuality.

Affect

We also drew on the concept of affect because it was very appropriate to explore how gender is formed in relational terms. Our analysis was based on Sarah Ahmed's notion of "affective economy" (Ahmed, 2017; 2014). The concept of affect allows for many theoretical and methodological questions and possibilities to be explored, as it seems open enough to allow us to include within it multiple visible and invisible manifestations of social relations, which arise from and are connected to often subtle and indistinct thoughts, moods, tensions, reactions, movements of bodies, emotions, and sensations. The multiplicity of affects, as well as the fact that it is not easily expressed through language, makes it a difficult concept to analyze. Ahmed does not approach affects as mental states that arise from within us and imprint themselves onto subjects, but as cultural practices that are relational and productive. For Ahmed, affects are not static characteristics that attach themselves to bodies, but dynamic elements that move from body to body, interacting with objects as well as with the natural and artificial environment. Negative and positive feelings—such as anger, fear, excitement, joy, or pride—"move" and acquire value, which through repetition in language causes them to accumulate and become autonomous from any particular body, turning into collective forces.

For example, Ahmed analyzes racism as an affective economy of fear, one that can potentially attach to and devalue any Black or brown body precisely because, in certain conditions, fear of the Other becomes pervasive and is shared by very different members of a community. Thus, the productivity of affects is expressed through embodied practices that both shape and are shaped by power relations. Affects manifest as negative relations of hostility, hatred, and fear of others, but also as positive relations of collectivity, community, and solidarity. In her book *Living a Feminist Life* (2017), Ahmed analyzes, through autobiographical stories, the affective dimensions of the feminisms she has experienced. On the one hand, she argues that feminisms constitute a shift in their relation to the world. Feminists are mobilized by the feeling that something is not right. Feminist action springs from uncomfortable feelings, from the need to turn against the obstacles and difficulties that women and LGBTQ face in their lives. At the moment one recognizes gender based violence, than one begins to reinterpret the world from a feminist perspective. We turn, for example, against gender-based violence whether we experience it directly ourselves or whether it is experienced by people in our family, workplace, or social environment.

Precarity and precariousness

The concept of precarity refers to a condition of insecurity and uncertainty about the present and the future characterized by inferior working conditions, lack of control over one's time, insufficient information about the terms of the labour relation, lack of protection and social security, and lack of access to health and other social goods. The concept of precariousness, on the other hand, describes a condition of insecurity that is much more ontological and relates to our common bodily vulnerability to violence (Lorey, 2015).

Epistemic Violence

The concept of epistemic violence originates in postcolonial feminist critiques of Western structures of knowledge production. Such critiques argue that subaltern subjects are constructed as incapable of speaking, and even when they do speak, their narratives cannot be heard because they are not considered credible or authentic. It therefore becomes important, across different cultural contexts and historical periods, to ask: who is recognized as a knower, who is regarded as an authority, and who is able to speak and be heard (Spivak, 2010). In Western universities, epistemic violence is directly connected to "affective injustice": because Eurocentrism is deeply embedded, voices that do not emerge from this tradition are either silenced or marginalized. Despite the theoretical opening toward postcolonial theory and the intersectionality of race, class, and nation, gender studies in Greece have not yet opened their doors in a clear and substantive way to subjects of different racial and national backgrounds.

These concepts and theoretical approaches helped us analyse the findings of the interviews.

III. Methodology

We employed a qualitative methodological approach, considering that quantification would not adequately address the core research questions—namely, the relationship between feminist movements and gender studies, and the significance of gender-based violence in Greece. In total, we conducted eleven biographical interviews with academics across different ranks; twenty-one semi-structured interviews with activists, journalists, and/or researchers and doctoral students in gender studies; as well as two focus groups: one with six PhD candidates and another with seven artists. All participants in the biographical and semi-structured interviews were white and held Greek citizenship, a fact that underscores the ethnocentric constitution of Greek universities and research institutions. Only three participants were of migrant background, all of whom belonged to the second generation.

The research design sought to facilitate our enquiry into the continuities and discontinuities, the connections, interdependencies, and ruptures produced between academic and activist feminisms, and to hone our analysis into how these shape movement practices and the production of gender-related knowledge in contemporary Greece. Data collection lasted for eight months. Priority was given to individuals who combine activist and scholarly work, or who conduct research and/or teaching with an explicit focus on social movements. We attempted to incorporate well-established

voices alongside others less “prominent” within the institutional landscape of gender studies and largely absent from official feminist archives. Our approach centered on the relations between movements and academic institutions as sites of practice, research and knowledge production, without presuming biographical continuity between the two fields.

We initiated the study with semi-structured interviews with activists and researchers, followed by the biographical interviews, during which we asked participating academics to narrate their life stories. We did not seek to reconstruct precise historical timelines or events; instead, we understood the narrated biographies as testimonies of the present through which the past becomes interpreted (Tsiolis, 2023). In the final stage of the research, we implemented two focus groups with participants selected for their significant role in gender studies and feminist movements in recent years. One group consisted of PhD candidates at Panteion University, and the other of artists working in theatre, visual arts, and literature/poetry. While the focus groups followed the structure of the semi-structured interview guides, we intentionally allowed greater space for dialogue among participants.

Our decision to combine these methodological tools was based primarily on the assessment that the group of activists and researchers was particularly heterogeneous and therefore required more focused interview guides to ensure coherence in the findings. Preliminary discussions also revealed that most participants were constrained by time and unable to commit to extended, demanding biographical interviews. Nevertheless, the interview guides incorporated numerous prompts inviting biographical reflection, which later enabled us to compare these interviews with the biographical narratives of the academics. For instance, the first question in the semi-structured interviews—“How did you first become involved with gender issues?”—was intended not to locate a common point of origin but to facilitate the retrieval of memories that may have been forgotten or repressed and to encourage participants to reinterpret them in relation to their present. Similarly, concluding questions in the biographical interviews addressed themes that had emerged as significant in the semi-structured discussions.

Prior to the interviews, we reviewed participants’ scholarly work. During the interviews, our primary aim was to listen attentively and provide sufficient time and space for participants to articulate their stories in their own terms. With many participants, however, a sense of familiarity was already present, as they were friends, acquaintances, or colleagues, and several interviews became opportunities for us to revisit feminist concerns and our own experiences. In such moments, we shared our reflections and dilemmas. We therefore avoided adopting the stance of the neutral, silent, and impassive researcher, and instead sought—often imperfectly—to cultivate an atmosphere of reciprocity and exchange, sharing with participants our research findings, concerns, and lived experiences (Oakley, 1981). It is noteworthy that following the public debate surrounding feminist transphobia in Greece, the focus of nearly all subsequent interviews shifted towards this topic.

Although most interviews were conducted remotely, they generated multiple affective responses that permeated the digital communicative milieu of the Zoom platform. We recorded and took fieldnotes in order to capture observations regarding the linearity and flow of the narrative, as well as bodily gestures, emotional reactions, vocal tone, and even our own thoughts and affective responses while listening. Temporality played a significant role in the affective dimensions of the

biographical interviews, as the memories reconstructed from the past—and the order in which they were recounted—were closely intertwined with participants' present circumstances. Particular attention was given to the segments that reactivated memories, as well as to the interactions between researcher and participant: silences, moments of hesitation, gaps, expressions of anger, defensive reactions, tensions, fluctuations in vocal tone, laughter, enthusiasm, and disappointment.

The data collected was recorded and then transcribed using atlas.ti software. Nodes were identified in order to unpack discourses, practices and concepts, and appropriate excerpts were selected and analysed using the methodological tools of feminist discourse analysis. We focused on the one hand on what was said and how it was said and on the other on what was silenced and omitted. We tried to include self-reflection in the process of analysis, problematising our own positionnalities. In addition, a podcast was created out of our discussion with the group of feminist artists.

IV. Research findings & results

1. Findings on the relationship between feminist movements and gender studies in Greece

The dominant narrative model of feminist lives in Greece typically presents a linear trajectory from participation in feminist movements to institutional recognition and professional establishment within universities and research centers.¹ However, GeSTuRe demonstrated that, in many cases, the biographies of feminist academics do not follow this linear path. Instead, they reveal tensions, disagreements, and difficulties in linking activist engagement with academic life. Additionally, many academics reported experiences of sexism, homophobia, transphobia and toxic behavior within their working environments.

Since the 2000s, gender studies in Greece have significantly expanded and consolidated their presence within the social sciences. Academic positions have been renewed, numerous courses are now offered, multiple research projects are undertaken, and three postgraduate programs focusing on gender issues currently operate nationwide. Nonetheless, the GeSTuRe findings indicate the presence of substantial theoretical and political disagreements between scholars following the tradition of women's studies and those situated within gender studies, who adopt more intersectional and queer approaches. Despite such differences, scholars from various traditions succeed in collaborating through postgraduate programs and through the University Gender Equality Committees that have been established and gained notable influence within Higher Education institutions and research centers.

The interviews with university professors conducted within the GeSTuRe framework showed that student interest in gender studies has increased considerably in the last decade, largely due to the

¹ Examples can be found in the interview collection included in the Women's Oral History Archive of the General Secretariat of Human Rights and Equality (accessed at: <https://isotita.gr/vivliothiki-thematwn-isotitas/arxeio-proforikwn-martyriwn/>), as well as in different publications concerning feminist initiatives for the establishment of Women's Studies and Gender Studies in Greek universities (e.g. Lada et al, 2024).

rise of the #MeToo movement and the influence of LGBTQ activism. Important events, such as the murder of the queer activist Jacques Costopoulos/ Zackie Oh, have triggered the mobilisation of younger feminists and the turn towards queer feminisms and intersectionality in order to address gender based violence. For some academics in gender studies, creating safe spaces, supervising doctoral research, and developing research projects in collaboration with activists from queer feminist and LGBTQ movements constitute priorities and sources of inspiration and motivation. Important knowledge communities have emerged that contribute to the development of alternative “safe spaces”, and spaces of care for activism and theory making (de la Bellacasa, 2012), within Universities but also in autonomous research/activist initiatives, like the women’s NGO DIOTIMA, or the Autonomous Feminist Centre (FAC).

Interviews with researchers and activists highlighted that knowledge production constitutes a central concern of feminist practice. Some participants emphasized that theoretical knowledge is produced exclusively within movements, collectively and participatorily. Others, however, prefered to be integrated into universities and research institutions, pursuing doctoral research and participating in funded projects. Through this work, they contribute to the renewal of academic institutions.

The GeSTuRe data demonstrated that “encounters” between academic research and feminist movements are not always smooth. The main obstacles faced by feminist researchers/activists are, first, labor and ontological precarity and, second, the epistemic violence encountered primarily by those adopting queer feminist approaches, as well as by second-generation researchers.

First, labour precarity is a very important issue for younger generations of researchers in Greece. Although gender studies continue to expand and offer resources to younger generations, higher educational institutions in Greece and internationally have been undergoing profound transformations due to the prevalence of neoliberal austerity measures and new forms of precarious labor. In many of the interviews with researchers and activists, feminist lives appeared suspended in the present—caught between the desire to participate in knowledge production and the restrictive material conditions of precarity within research environments. Working conditions are harsh, payments are delayed, and they are often insufficient given the labor and time required for the completion of each research project. Moreover, the very terms of funding, even in cases involving doctoral dissertations, frequently impose rigid timelines and inadequate remuneration. In some cases, research conducted in activist contexts is treated as an extension of one’s volunteer work, as a “hobby” that is not deemed deserving of compensation, formal working hours, or institutional recognition.

The production of feminist knowledge, at least in the case of early-career researchers, appears to be shaped both by material conditions and by the emotional vulnerability of the subjects who produce it. These individuals are compelled to work excessively, while often remaining for long periods without payment, recognition, or care (Burton & Bowman, 2022). Their feminist positionalities frequently lead them to practices of overwork, as they write, teach, and produce feminist artistic work. Within the “new” institutions of knowledge production—such as the “new” university or the

“new” artistic and cultural centers—research “outreach” to civil society is increasingly encouraged, while the time required of precariously employed researchers to meet their research obligations expands to such an extent that it potentially occupies their entire lives, ultimately diminishing their capacity for political and movement participation. Precarity concerns not only employment relations but the entirety of one’s existence, as it constitutes an “affective experience” that generates ongoing uncertainty regarding personal relationships, and activism. Feminist affective economies are shaped both by labor precarity and by the ontological precariousness of gender, race, and sexuality. Knowledge production under neoliberal conditions exacerbates intergenerational inequalities within gender studies, as the academic trajectories of precariously employed scholars remain static for long periods of time, lacking labor rights, prospects for advancement, or stable employment relations.

Second, in several interviews we conducted with precariously employed feminists, participants described experiences of “epistemic violence” within Greek universities, research institutions, and artistic centers. On the one hand, epistemic violence is related to the inclusion of non Greek subjects in gender studies and feminist movements. Although during the 2000s there were significant collaborations between migrant women’s organizations and feminist groups in Greece, and although numerous academic studies focused on migrant women’s communities and practices, the production of knowledge on gender appears to remain largely in the hands of white Greek women. For earlier researchers and activists of the second generation, major feminist issues—such as gender-based violence—often constitute difficult and sensitive terrains that they frequently prefer not to address. This is mainly because they are divided between feminist and anti-racist commitments. Because Greek racism has targeted migrants as uncivilised perpetrators of gender based violence, migrant and second generation women and LGBTQs find it difficult to utter feminist discourses without reproducing racism.

On the other hand, epistemic violence is manifest when queer and LGBTQ subjects are trying to enter gender studies as members of academic communities. Although there are opportunities for them in research programs focusing on queer feminist themes, the inclusion of these themes in existing curricula of taught courses becomes a point of friction and often shuts the university’s door on them. It therefore becomes much more difficult for researchers working on sexuality issues to obtain more stable positions at universities, as is evident from the reluctance to adopt neutral forms of address in official documents and hiring procedures, as well as from the unwillingness to create safe spaces for the expression of fluid gender identities—particularly for non-binary and trans researchers in universities. In a context where anti-gender discourses and practices are multiplying and queer lives are threatened daily by the violence of far-right political groups, the inability of knowledge-producing institutions in Greece to take a clear stand against homophobia and transphobia constitutes a particularly troubling form of affective injustice.

2. Findings on gender-based violence

Gender-based violence is one of the central issues addressed both by gender studies in Greece and by feminist activism. The GeSTuRe research indicated that most feminist scholarship and action on gender-based violence focuses on violence against women and is produced primarily within departments shaped by the tradition of women's studies. In this context, valuable work has been done especially after the #MeToo movement to promote more positive responses, create an efficient system for the protection of survivors and to raise awareness on the causes and consequences of gender based violence. However, there are also very significant currents in feminist activism in Greece today that promote carceral approaches, especially the increase of prison sentences and the return of the death penalty for perpetrators of rape or femicide.

The study also showed that, in recent years, several queer feminist groups have brought increased visibility to other forms of gender-based violence, particularly the violence against trans women and men, lesbians, and gay men. These forms of violence, however, have not yet significantly influenced research conducted in universities and academic research centers. Queer feminist movements have raised public awareness on the intersectional aspects of gender based violence pointing out that gender intersects with other categories of vulnerability to violence, such as age, migrant status, race, class or ethnicity. However, in Greek academia, there are still structures, groups and individuals who raise objections and obstacles to the inclusion of research topics related to intersectionality and gender based violence.

Furthermore, the GeSTuRe project revealed that gender-based violence in university settings is a major issue that came to the foreground with the rise of the #MeToo movement and has become a priority for Gender Equality Committees. Although the topic has been highlighted through events and public discussions, substantial gaps remain regarding the implementation of mechanisms for reporting and addressing cases of gender-based violence within academic institutions. Interviewees told us that despite formal commitment to gender equality, there are still no effective mechanisms to document, check and address gender based violence in a more systematic way.

The research findings are disseminated through a chapter, in greek, in the edited volume published by the project, and an article, in english, in a international refereed journal. Moreover a podcast of the discussion with artists has been produced and included in the project website.

V. Conclusion

The GeSTuRe project collected important research material and developed analyses that shed a light on contemporary gender studies in Greece and the main challenges that they face. The feminist affective economies of academic and activist gender practices reveal tensions but also forms of being together and thinking together. Our analysis demonstrated in particular the emergence of a strong queer feminist movement with ties to both LGBTQ movements and more women-centred feminist movements, which has not yet been studied extensively in the literature on the past and present of

feminism in Greece. At the same time, it showed that there are important safe spaces, ephemeral but always open, that have been developed in Greek academia in the past decade to include queer feminist activists as researchers and thinkers. Despite these efforts, however, queer feminists often experience labour precarity, hostility and lack of support in universities and research centres. These dynamics are reflected in the ways in which knowledge about gender based violence has developed after the #MeToo movement. While violence against women has become one of the most publically discussed issues in Greece, violence against trans women and men, lesbians, and gay men is silenced, while other intersectional dimensions, like race and ethnicity are marginalised.

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