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"HUMAN RIGHTS AND MIGRATION STUDIES"

Dissertation

"Gender-based violence during the pandemic. Feminist discourses and practices in Greek public space".

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PART D-ANNEX & BIBLIOGRAPHY

Are you listening, Annisa and Constantina?
Garifalia, Dora and Elona
Stabbed, strangled
cut up in a hiding place.
You hear me, Helen, and you, Caroline.
Maria, Monica and Nectaria
Your anguish is a river
that is muddied by indifference.
It's not passion, it's not fury, they just call it femicide.
It's not passion, nor fury, they just call it femicide.
(song)[1]

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[1] Femicides, Mitsotakis, D., 2022, Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jJ-T1NRJoJE&ab_channel=DimitrisMitsotakisOfficial

<center>**PART A- THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**</center>

1. INTRODUCTION

In 2020, the world faced an unprecedented health crisis due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This global event exposed significant weaknesses in the health sector and highlighted instances of neglect by various states (McKee & Stuckler, 2020). Certain vulnerable groups, such as individuals with underlying health conditions, the impoverished, precarious workers, healthcare professionals, and the elderly, were particularly susceptible to the virus (Chatzidakis, Hakim, Littler, Rottenberg & Segal, 2020). The pandemic also brought with it uncertainty and socio-economic instability (Godinić & Obrenovic, 2020), leading to widespread fear among a large portion of the population. However, amidst the challenges, it also presented an opportunity to thoroughly examine the complexities that arise when a crisis intersects with pre-existing social issues and phenomena.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the measures taken to combat it significantly impacted the dynamics within households, with the domestic space becoming a focal point for both safety from the virus and an unfortunate setting for heightened risks of domestic violence and femicide (Peglidou, 2021). In Greece, during 2020, there was a notable rise in reported incidents of gender-based domestic violence, while in 2021, the number of femicides nearly doubled compared to the previous year (femicide.gr).

The recurring presence of gender-based violence, particularly the distressing increase in femicide cases, within Greek society serves as evidence of deep-rooted systemic problems and a lack of genuine dedication to advancing gender equality. The prevalence of such reprehensible acts highlights an enduring and complex issue that necessitates immediate and widespread public discussion about the entrenched gender disparities and patriarchal norms that persist in the country.

In the context of this study, the fundamental factors, and underlying causes of femicides in Greece through the lens of feminist discourse prevalent in public discussions are

examined. By analyzing key parameters, the research seeks to shed light on the phenomenon of femicide and explore ways to resist, react, and call for action and preventive measures. The study draws from the principles and perspectives of feminist discourse to understand the complex dynamics that contribute to femicide cases, with the ultimate goal of advocating for effective interventions and measures to prevent such violence in the future.

The thesis consists of two parts. The initial portion delves into an analysis of the COVID-19 pandemic's timeframe, emphasizing the occurrence of femicides within the specific span of 2020-2021. This section is complemented by an exploration of the fundamental theoretical underpinnings of feminist theories concerning femicides. These theoretical foundations serve as essential tools for interpreting the empirical data at hand. Continuing within the first part, there is a comprehensive evaluation of Greece's successive crises, notably the economic downturn that transpired from 2010 onwards. Building upon the preceding section, an extensive assessment is conducted regarding the consecutive crises experienced by Greece, particularly the economic recession that unfolded from 2010 onwards. The examination of these crises encompasses both introspective analysis, which explores their implications, and an exploration of their role as catalysts for the emergence or resurgence of sociopolitical movements that advocate for reform and transformation. Concluding the initial part, the preceding section provides an analysis of the importance of public space and the emergence of counter-narratives. The counter-discourses mentioned serve as linguistic instruments employed to challenge dominant hegemonic narratives and their dynamics are intensified through their dissemination via various media platforms.

The subsequent section of this research endeavor presents the outcomes derived from the examination of feminist discourses in response to the femicides that occurred during the aforementioned timeframe. These findings are organized and discussed per thematic categories of analysis. Subsequently, the main findings are presented thoroughly, supplemented by overarching observations and reflections on the core research topic, specifically the transformation in public discourse surrounding the utilization of the term "femicide" and the visibility of this phenomenon.

More specifically, the Greek feminist movement played a pivotal role in introducing and popularizing the term "femicide" during the unique context of the Covid-19 pandemic. This concept, which refers to the intentional killing of women based on gender-related motivation, has come to stand as a central theme in discussions concerning gender-based violence and discrimination. The feminist discourse, in its transition from theory to practice, appears to be designed to facilitate societal transformation. This organic relationship between memory and assertion is contingent upon a linguistic adaptation that facilitates the transition of the narrative from a personal, isolated concern to a more encompassing issue of public significance. While statistical information reveals that femicide in Greece is a concerning reality, the heightened attention to the issue is attributed to the diligent endeavors of feminist activists who effectively elevated the significance of a disturbing phenomenon that had previously been ignored in the national discussions. Therefore, this action can be perceived as a fortunate initiative to bring attention to a previously overlooked matter that lacked political attention, into the domain of public discourse that was displaying a growing interest in gender-related matters.

Furthermore, the convergence of the femicide discourse with the timing of the pandemic represents a significant milestone in Greek feminist discourses, as it successfully garnered substantial media coverage for the grave consequences arising from the most intimate expressions of gender-based violence, particularly its most extreme manifestation of lethal violence. A discernible association exists between the discourse on femicides and the dissemination of inflammatory and potentially contentious content within the media. Nevertheless, it is feasible to employ the media in a manner that is more constructive and advantageous within this specific context. This research brings out the influential role of media institutions in shaping public discourse through their strategic alignment with particular causes, achieved by providing extensive coverage of mobilization campaigns. Editorial writers and public intellectuals play a significant role in shaping public discourse by utilizing opinion pieces and participating in media events to articulate their viewpoints on this crucial societal issue. The manifestation of this phenomenon has likewise been recorded in Greek media amidst the emergence of the "femicide" discourse. This accomplishment was not limited to the domain of political and theoretical discussions; it expanded to encompass the development of journalistic

narratives. Newspapers characterized by a left-wing political orientation, such as Avgi, Efsyn, have exerted a notable influence in disseminating feminist perspectives on institutionalized sexism. Daily Press, for instance, began regularly reporting cases of lethal gender violence that, before 2020 were not even recognized by the largest portion of journalists as distinct and significant in the context of femicide. Journalists have noticeably incorporated the term "femicide" into their coverage of murder cases involving women as victims. The surge in media attention was primarily driven by the increased visibility of the societal issue of gender-based violence and femicides within public discussions as a politically correct alternative to the previously used gender-neutral term "homicide" and informal phrases like 'crime of passion' and 'raptus/loss of control' (Signoretti and Lanzoni, 2011).

This widespread and thorough usage of the term within the Greek communication sphere underscores feminist groups' capability to engage in a comprehensive analysis of both the public and private spheres, where symbolic and direct forms of violence intersect. At the same, it is essential to recognize the media's contribution to amplifying the discussion on femicides as many individuals form their understanding of femicides from the media rather than directly from activists which underscores the significant influence that the media exerts on public opinion and perceptions. (Gilliam & Iyengar 2000, 2005). The multidimensional context of the covid 19 pandemic crisis and the increasing incidents of gender-based violence and femicide qualified the discussions on femicide in Greece as a significant "discursive event" (Jäger and Maier, 2009:48-49).

2. Femicide and period of crisis

2.1. Femicide: Why Theory Matters

Femicide is defined as the killing of women and girls because of their gender (European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), 2017a). The World Health Organization (WHO) defines femicide as the intentional homicide of women because of their gender, and notes that femicide is at the end of the spectrum of violence against women (World Health Organization/WHO), 2012), i.e. it is the most extreme manifestation of gender-based violence. Femicide has been addressed in different contexts, including intimate partner violence, stranger violence, rape, and other sexual violence, and so-called honor and dowry practices, as well as murders associated with gang activity and political violence. According to the European Institute for Gender Equality[2], the term "femicide" is understood as: 1) the murder of women as a result of domestic violence/intimate partner violence, 2) the torture and misogynist slaying of women, 3) the killing of women and girls in the name of "honor", 4) targeted killing of women and girls in the context of armed conflict, 5) dowry-related killings of women and girls, 6) killing of women and girls because of their sexual orientation and gender identity, 7) the killing of aboriginal and indigenous women and girls because of their gender 8) female infanticide and gender-based sex selection femicide, 9) genital mutilation related femicide, 10) accusations of witchcraft and 11) other femicides connected with gangs, organized crime, drug dealers, human trafficking, and the proliferation of small arms.

It is important to acknowledge that although male individuals are typically the perpetrators, instances of femicide can also involve female individuals. Though, femicide occurs in patriarchal societies, characterized by male dominance and female subordination, through the social and political construction of masculinity as active and aggressive and the social construction of femininity as receptive and passive. Even if men

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[2] Retrieved from: https://eige.europa.eu/thesaurus/terms/1128

experience higher rates of homicide compared to women, it is uncommon for them to be targeted solely based on their gender.

The text "Politics of women killing" was the first systematic treatment of the concept of femicide, giving visibility to crimes that had previously been considered gender-neutral (Corradi et al., 2016). Russel herself demonstrates the necessity of naming a crime as femicide, as she herself states "You cannot mobilize against something that has no name" (Corradi et al., 2016). According to Radford and Russell (1992), the term "femicide" is defined as the intentional killing of women by men, driven by various motivations including but not limited to hatred, contempt, pleasure, or a perception of ownership over women. This phenomenon necessitates examination within the broader framework of the systemic subjugation of women within a patriarchal society. Femicide manifests in diverse forms, encompassing instances like racist femicide (where black women are victimized by white men), homophobic femicide (involving the targeted killing of lesbian women), marital femicide, and femicide carried out by strangers. Additionally, the concept of femicide extends to situations where women lose their lives due to botched abortions, with a notable tendency for female babies to be disproportionately affected compared to male infants. Furthermore, the neglect or starvation of female children also falls under the purview of femicide, as elucidated by Radford and Russell (1992) in their influential work.

During the 1990s, Latin American activists popularized the term "feminicidio", which is the Spanish translation of "femicide", to increase awareness and politicize the matter of femicide (Toledo, 2017). The anthropologist Marcela Lagarde and Julia Monnarez Fragoso have conducted extensive research on the issue of femicide, specifically focusing on the cases of missing women and girls in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, commonly referred to as the "City of Disappeared Women". The objective of the authors was to draw attention, nationally as well as globally, to the distressing circumstances surrounding the violent killings of numerous employed women in the border city of Ciudad Juarez, Mexico (Corona and Domínguez, 2010). Additionally, they sought to highlight the involvement of the state in these acts, asserting its accountability for its inability to prevent these heinous acts and effectively punish the perpetrators.

In 2004 Lagarde translated into Spanish the book by Russell and Radford. With the consent of Russell, Lagarde employed the term "feminicidio" instead of "femicidio", with the intention of preserving the fundamental meaning conveyed by the original Anglo-Saxon term "femicide". Lagarde (2008, p. 216) posits that the term "femicidio" is used to denote the act of killing an individual of the female gender, similar to how the term "homicidio" is employed to describe the act of taking someone's life. In this regard, the term in question possesses a politically neutral connotation, thereby concealing the true motivation behind these criminal acts. It is noteworthy that women are specifically marked as targets due to their gender, as highlighted by Russell and Radford.

The selection of the term "feminicidio" in the Spanish language was considered more suitable due to its etymological connection with the adjective "feminine". This association broadens the scope of the concept to include not only the act of killing women but also individuals who possess feminine characteristics. As a result, it acknowledges the inclusion of trans women or individuals who possess male sex but exhibit feminine attributes (Monarrez, 2020). This approach highlights the infringement upon women's human rights through the act of femicide, categorizing it as a crime against humanity. In drawing a comparison to the internationally recognized crime of genocide, as initially expounded by Segato (2006), Lagarde emphasizes that femicide can be understood as a form of genocide specifically targeting women. This occurs when prevailing historical conditions facilitate acts of violence that jeopardize the physical welfare, health, freedoms, and very existence of girls and women (Lagarde, 2008, p. 216).

Nowadays, there is a growing global discourse and a series of organized efforts, primarily led by feminist and women's groups, aimed at acknowledging, and rectifying the aforementioned phenomenon. The Latin American movements are currently leading the mobilizations, as the available evidence indicates the intensity of this phenomenon within the region's countries (Gasouka, 2020). The term is presently employed within the legal systems of Latin American nations, including Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Mexico, and the Dominican Republic. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that European legislation has not yet incorporated "femicide" as an independent

offense within its criminal code, as evidenced by the findings of the EIGE study conducted in 2021.

In various regions across the globe, particularly in Europe, the use of the term has been predominantly confined to the realms of feminist scholarly inquiry and advocacy for a considerable period. In recent years, the discourse surrounding this issue has gained significant traction in public discussions, leading to the emergence of legislative proposals in various European nations including Spain, Italy, Belgium, and France. The vigorous discourse that took place in France during the previous year, while not resulting in the formal incorporation of the concept into the Penal Code, nonetheless contributed to the advancement of legal scholarship through the introduction of new perspectives and compelling arguments.

2.2. Femicides during the Pandemic-19

The COVID-19 outbreak was designated a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) in March 2020, denoting a global public health emergency that has affected millions of people worldwide. Since then, the virus has profoundly changed how people live, having a long-lasting effect that will influence societies for a long time. Its sudden and unexpected outbreak caught societies, healthcare systems, and governments off guard. The virus's erratic behavior prompted a rush to find remedies, such as vaccine development, social isolation strategies, and lockdowns, to stop its spread and lessen the devastating impact on human lives.

According to UN Women, gender-based violence (GBV) incidents rose in both developing and developed economies during the lockdown. A startling number of women and girls, aged between 15 and 49, experienced sexual and/or physical violence committed by an intimate partner in 2020 during that time when roughly half of the world's population was placed under COVID-19 lockdown, totaling at least 243 million cases. Because of the pandemic's special circumstances, including lockdowns and social isolation, victims have had limited access to resources and have found it challenging to seek help or flee abusive situations (UNWomen, 2021).

General Secretariat for Demography and Family Policy and Gender Equality data also suggested that levels of violence increased in Greece, as in March and April 2020 there was a rise in calls to the 15900 hotline regarding incidents of violence. This crisis might have contributed to a higher incidence of violence and criminal behavior with several risk factors involved in this trend, such as heightened media coverage of femicides leading to imitation, social distancing, and isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic, longer periods of interpersonal exposure between cohabitants, the challenging socioeconomic situation causing financial stressors for Greek citizens, and increased levels of alcohol and substance consumption within residences due to extended restrictive measures related to catering and entertainment, even after the lockdowns were lifted (Karakasi et al, 2023:4).

The "Stay at Home, Stay Safe" campaign, while aimed at promoting safety during the pandemic, had an unfortunate and tragic outcome for many women, as it led to a rise in reported incidents of gender-based domestic violence (Peglidou, 2021). Factors like stress, anxiety, financial strain, and uncertainty about the future can worsen existing tensions in relationships, leading to more abusive behaviors (Mittal, S., & Singh, T. 2020). Other factors, such as inadequate measures in the labor sector and social welfare, as well as the strain on an already burdened public health system, have also played a role in exacerbating gender-based violence (Xatzigiannakis, 2021).

However, it's essential to note that the increase in domestic violence during the pandemic is not solely due to these exceptional conditions. Instead, the pandemic tended to aggravate pre-existing violent behavior, making it more frequent and severe. Individuals with a history of being verbally, psychologically, financially, or physically abusive are more likely to escalate their aggression during this period (Diotima, 2023).

In 2021, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) estimated femicide prevalence is a challenging task due to fragmented data collection and sharing practices in many countries. It was also reported that national patterns of femicide often exhibit instability and thus emerging data on femicide trends have presented a varied and complex landscape that proves challenging to interpret.

Femicide and the coronavirus share common characteristics as widespread issues impacting all societies indiscriminately and spreading rapidly (Weil 2020). While

COVID-19 is a deadly virus, femicide is equally lethal and requires urgent eradication, says Weil. However, femicide is a chronic and ongoing issue that plagues societies across the world. Unlike COVID-19, femicide is not a new phenomenon; it has been a consistent part of the fabric of patriarchal societies, and its occurrence can often be predicted based on patterns of violence and discrimination against women.

During the period of 2020-2021, the Greek public was deeply disturbed by femicides, the brutal and deadly incidents of gender violence. These shocking acts captured widespread attention, highlighting the gravity of the problem and its devastating impact on society. According to the quantitative data from the Greek Section (femicide. gr) of the European Observatory of Femicide, there were 19 femicides in total in 2020, with 15 of them occurring in domestic or companionable environments. In 2021, the number increased to 31 femicides in total, with 27 of them taking place in domestic or companionable settings. In 2021, Greece witnessed a notable increase in femicides, despite observing a declining trend in the overall crime rate.

During this period, one notable case involved the femicide of Garoufallia in Folegandros, which took place while she was on vacation with her partner. The incident was attributed to the dissolution of their relationship, specifically, the perpetration declared that their relation "did not work out". The case of Sweet Waters in Athens, where a setting of apparent prosperity failed to shield Caroline from becoming a victim of lethal violence, was another heinous incident. The distressing incidents of brutalism did not stop there. In Alexandroupouli, Jevrie and was beaten to death by her husband with an iron, and in Ierapetra, Crete, a man killed his ex-wife Nektaria with multiple stab wounds. In the majority of cases, there exists a lack of knowledge regarding essential details, such as the precise working environment, the presence of exploitative economic associations, the utilization of social services and the nature of the aid provided, the history of reporting previous instances of violence, and the individuals approached for support during previous incidents. Additionally, details on whether they were provided sheltered housing by social service providers are often absent. The only cases in which we gain insights into the history of violence are femicides, as they attract significant public attention due to their dramatic nature. The lack of comprehensive data hampers a deeper understanding of

the complexities surrounding domestic violence and its underlying causes (Peglidou, 2021).

2.3. The crisis as an existential condition of reconstruction

The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic came on top of a prolonged period of economic recession in Greece that started in 2010, becoming a deep organic crisis of the state and, in sum, a crisis of hegemony (Kouvelakis 2011). The long-lasting period of severe budget cuts and economic constraints experienced in Greece has resulted in significant transformations that are evident in various aspects of society. This complex situation acted as a catalyst, magnifying long-standing divisions and inequalities that had been deeply rooted in society for decades, thereby exacerbating an already existing situation characterized by a humanitarian crisis.

Predictably, the individuals most profoundly impacted by these circumstances were those classified as belonging to the "vulnerable segments of the population". Their vulnerability stemmed primarily from their membership in non-dominant or subordinate social categories, rendering them particularly susceptible to various forms of adversity. In reality, the extent of an individual's disadvantage was directly proportional to the number of non-sovereign categories they belonged to. For instance, being a woman, a migrant, a person with disabilities, and living below the poverty line resulted in a compounding effect of categorizations, discrimination, and challenges—each of which reached its maximum magnitude (Daleziou, 2021).

The implemented measures, subject to ongoing modifications, have been primarily focused on protecting European capital and utilizing Greece as a testing ground to shape the specific manifestation of neoliberalism in the current era (Sakellaropoulos, 2012). To suppress resistance, the state and its various institutions have adopted a strategy centered around exacerbating divisions among different segments of the most marginalized social groups. Consequently, a social mechanism emerged that specifically targeted these vulnerable groups, giving rise to a rhetoric of dichotomies.

The implementation of institutional reforms during the period of austerity in Greece has had detrimental effects on gender equality. These measures have exacerbated disparities in employment, perpetuated gender gaps across various domains which disproportionately burdened women while indications suggest that gendered violence, which encompasses a range of forms including domestic violence, rape, human trafficking, and sexual assault, may have witnessed an upsurge during the period of economic and social crisis. Similarly, austerity measures have placed excessive strain on women's social welfare and reproductive rights. (Kosyphologou, 2019).

The repercussions stemming from the crisis, including but not limited to social inequalities, discrimination, social exclusion, gender and racial violence, poverty, food insecurity, destitution, and stigma, have also become integral components of the narratives of individuals who have endured the health crisis of COVID-19.

But do these interwoven crises that reproduce cracks in the already existing structured divisions serve as a profound and transformative experience? Athanasiou (2012) suggests that the austerity policies were designed to address issues of lack of productivity at both the micro and macro levels by making comprehensive cuts, in order to restore social and political stability while at the same time, offering an opportunity to unveil and enhance the underlying strength and vitality of society. In this respect, the concept of crisis as an ongoing situation occurring within a state containing contrasting dynamics at play, prompts us to consider how we wish to live, a search for meaning that (re)appears every time conditions deteriorate.

Kosyphoglou (2019) provides us with the multifaceted nature of resistance to austerity, encompassing both far-right entities, the visibility gained by the Golden Dawn forces, seeking to exploit societal discontent and on the other hand, a mass radical movement that brought the forefront in this struggle intersecting issues of race, gender, and class and employs new forms of organization to assert its demands politically with. a strong element of self-organization. (social health clinics and pharmacies, solidarity networks, housing associations, housing associations, etc., housing for refugees, etc.).

The recognition of the gender dimension within the social crisis by left-wing parties and collectives reflected the historical relationship between the left and the feminist

movement (Gaitanou, 2017). She argues that in the first years of the crisis 2010-2011 there were interventions by political organizations and anarchist groups who responded to incidents with sexist or homophobic connotations that can be characterized as reactive and defensive but lacks permanent actions within political organizations and trade unions that could facilitate mass engagement of women in a self-liberating struggle. And this is apparent if we rethink the internal functioning of parties and political collectives, which lacks an alternative feminist perspective that could develop an inclusive participatory model: of decision-making involving individuals from marginalized groups and prioritize their voices in shaping policies and strategies (Kosyphoglou 2019). Daleziou, tell us that we should pay attention to the illusion of progress and equality, often through symbolic gestures and tokenistic measures, created by the state to maintain the status quo and prevent substantial changes to the existing power structures. Building a common movement "language" requires a concerted effort to reclaim and reaffirm the radical roots of feminism, challenging the superficial and performative gestures made by the state. It involves creating spaces for critical dialogue, amplifying marginalized voices, and forging alliances with other social justice movements to challenge the systemic inequalities that underpin anti-feminist attitudes.

However, in the last years, there has been a significant revival of feminist discourse and actions in the political landscape. This resurgence can be seen as connected, albeit indirectly, to earlier movements, even if those movements did not explicitly embrace a distinct feminist agenda. The renewed focus on everyday life as a subject of political importance, the examination of the interplay between personal experiences and political engagement, the recognition of social reproduction and caregiving as integral components of political activism, and the stress on self-empowerment and achieving emancipation through active political involvement have collectively set the ground for the potential reemergence of feminist ideas and activities (Gaitanou, 2017).

Another aspect shaping the trajectory of the Greek feminist movement in recent years was the influence of global feminist mobilizations and the interconnectedness of feminist movements across countries. These movements brought together diverse feminist organizations and collectives from different traditions and ideologies, creating a unified

front for common practices and debates. also highlighted the intersection of labor issues and women's demands and struggles, emphasizing the need for radical and combative means of resistance.

The mobilizations in Greece included protests against rape culture and responses to specific acts of violence against women, not only in Athens but also in other Greek cities. These events showcased the emergence and development of various resistance movements and collectives that strive to overcome limitations and achieve a hegemonic discourse and practice (Gaitanou, 2017)

It remains for us, therefore, to set out below the ways the feminist discourse has been constructed and what resistance it brings in relation to gender issues and specifically to femicide as the COVID-19 crisis has hindered the realization of gender equality in all important areas of the domestic sphere, economy and politics. In Greece, a novel and transformative feminist and LGBTQ+ movement surfaced, presenting a challenge to several facets of male-dominated leftist activism, left-wing political parties, and political organizations. The emergence of this movement has sparked a positive shift in the country's political landscape and discourse (Kosyfoglou 2021). By advocating for gender equality and LGBTQ+ rights, this movement has initiated important conversations and brought attention to previously overlooked issues. As a result, it has begun to reshape the political agenda, foster more inclusive policies, and promote a broader understanding of social justice and human rights within Greek society.

3. Public Sphere

3.1. Theoretical foundations that inform the understanding of counter-publics within Discourse Theory

In a conversation between Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze in 1972, Deleuze acknowledged Foucault's contribution to the importance of "speaking of others" (Kay, 2006). Foucault's counter-discourse theory (1970) revolves around the possibility and necessity of shaping a space where narratives from marginalized groups can emerge. The theory posits that language is not a neutral entity; but rather it is influenced by prevailing discourses that are often manipulated by individuals in positions of authority. This manipulation of language has significant effects on an individual's understanding of the world and their own position within it. In light of this, the desire to create counter-discourse can be seen as a reaction to the ways in which dominant discourses critique systems of power and dominance (Moussa & Scapp, 1996).

Mousa and Scapp (1996) argue that the establishment of a counter-discourse requires more than mere theoretical contemplation of oppression and power dynamics. Despite attempts by various writers to oversimplify and depict Foucault's work as a detached and abstract theory lacking any relevance for political engagement, these two scholars have established the foundation for what is now known as "Foucauldian activism" Contrary to the aforementioned criticisms, they contend that counter-discourse surpasses mere passive observation and intellectual detachment. The concept of "political theorizing" as posited Mousa and Scapp, encompasses a pragmatic approach that necessitates active and transformative involvement with reality. This engagement entails individuals expressing their dissent vehemently against oppressive narratives and structures.

The movement of counter-discourses toward the center of public discourse, however, is not inevitable and is often contested by powerful actors who seek to maintain their dominance over public discourse. Feminists, human rights activists, and organizations that condemn violence against women through various channels, including the media,

protests, mobilized marches, and digital space, can challenge and subvert dominant discourses by encouraging and amplifying counter-discourse.

Fraser (1990), a scholar in the field of feminism, argues that the existence of feminist counterpublics provides a platform for individuals to express their marginalized or silenced experiences and perspectives within the dominant public sphere. Counterpublics, as set by Warner (2002), demonstrate an understanding of the significance of actively participating in a wider public sphere, instead of existing in isolation or being limited to particular subcultures. By engaging in such actions, individuals have the potential to cultivate a feeling of empowerment and solidarity among marginalized populations, concurrently aiming to exert an impact on the broader domain of public discourse. They function within the domain of discourse, utilizing a range of rhetorical tactics to question established power dynamics and hierarchies while redefining their own identities, interests, and necessities. Fraser's theoretical framework (1990) places emphasis on the notion that needs should not be understood solely as individual or biological in biological terms, but rather as socially and politically constructed. The formation of needs is influenced by power dynamics and can serve as a contested domain within a given society.

Within the realm of debates wherein counterpublic narratives emerge, the interplay between counterpublics and mainstream reactions defines the way in which the prevailing public sphere responds to and interacts with these alternative narratives. In certain instances, the prevailing reactions from the dominant public may disregard or diminish the concerns expressed by counterpublics, thereby perpetuating additional marginalization. In other instances, there is a possibility of integrating components from these alternative perspectives, which can subsequently result in modifications to societal discourses and policies.

Furthermore, the scholarly contribution of Butler (1990) regarding the performative aspects of gender and the construction of identity has significantly impacted our comprehension of the functioning mechanisms of counterpublics. She argues that gender is not an inherent or fixed category but rather is continually generated and perpetuated through performative actions and social exchanges. Her analysis offers a theoretical

understanding of the performative elements of political and social speech acts in this context, arguing that counterpublics create transformative political opportunities. Furthermore, Butler's theoretical framework of performativity reveals the embodied actions and linguistic structures that shape the collective identity of the movement, as well as its engagements with the wider societal context. It acknowledges the dynamic and context-dependent nature of identities and illuminates the transformative potential of feminist activism in challenging and reconfiguring societal norms and power structures.

From the perspective of identities within a feminist movement, Yegorova (2017) explores #NiUnaMenosBolivia's counterpublic discourses for combating gender-based violence as a result of an oppressive power that formulates a collective action. Her interest lies in examining the movement by considering its extensive range of political, ethnic, and social elements. This analysis provides insight into the historical background of the movement and emphasizes the importance for academic discussions to engage in introspection and embrace decolonial and intersectional methodologies. The acceptance of internal differences within the counterpublic of the feminist movement #NiUnaMenosBolivia may present challenges as it could potentially create a hostile perception of those outside the movement (2017:79). Despite the development of group identities and adversarial relationships, the analysis acknowledges this feminist movement's capacity to foster forums for discussion, expression, and the investigation of various and conflicting discourses and identities. Feminist movement #NiUnaMenosBolivia effectively navigates internal divergences within its counterpublic sphere, while simultaneously functioning as a vehicle for expressing shared counter-arguments and cultivating a collective sense of identity in the wider fight against patriarchal hegemony. In this context, the collective encounters of indignation, dissatisfaction, and sorrow foster a feeling of camaraderie and cohesion among individuals involved in the movement, while also positioning them in opposition to perceived societal forces and structures that are seen as oppressive.

3.2. Communication networks as a tool for questioning the dominant paradigm.

The media, including newspapers, radio, television, and the Internet, are identified as primary spaces, providing various communicative levels for public engagement, to different audiences and facilitating various types of discussions (Butsch, 2007). Communication networks, both traditional and new, serve as powerful tools for spreading dissident messages and advocating for rights and justice (Sener, 2021).

In contemporary societies, the realm of public discourse is predominantly shaped by a collection of institutions commonly referred to as the "mass media." Although there are additional contributing factors, it is indisputable that mass media wields considerable influence in molding public discourse through its ability to choose and distribute information, ideas, and assertions. The entity in question possesses a significant capacity to exert influence in the process of shaping public discourse, representations, and perceptions, and may also possess the ability to impact the political landscape (Ferree, 2002). The significant impact of this phenomenon has prompted certain academics to posit that a shift is taking place from conventional party democracy to a concept they refer to as "media democracy" (Meyer & Hinchman, 2007).

The adoption of feminist viewpoints in media studies has demanded the development of a feminist voice distinct from the traditional binary oppositions such as male/female, man/woman, or masculine/feminine. Feminist media scholars have recognized the limitations of such binary thinking and have worked to create alternative spaces of discourse, allowing to rewrite cultural narratives that have historically been dominated by male perspectives and redefine terms and concepts from a different vantage point. The concept of adopting an "elsewhere" perspective, as coined by feminist scholar Teresa de Lauretis (1987, p. 25), emphasized the need to step outside the dominant cultural norms and discourses to gain fresh insights and understandings.

The need for this communication stems from a thorough assessment of the prevalent global structure and an aspiration for a more equitable and fair prospect. This entails the questioning and contestation of prevailing power dynamics, as well as the promotion of a transformation in media portrayals that sustain gender disparities. Feminists develop

communication and networking strategies that are in line with their overarching objectives for social transformation, with the aim of envisioning a society that is more inclusive and equitable. (Bhasin, 1994, p. 4). Through the formulation of counteractive and proactive alternatives, women have effectively exerted influence over language, representations, and communication technologies, thereby posing challenges to established power structures and patriarchal norms (Riano, 1994; Gallagher, 2003).

These initiatives have enabled activists to utilize diverse media forms as their "repertoires of communication" (Mattoni, 2013), to advance their struggles, assert their rights, encourage introspection, and promote diverse representations. In response to this, radical feminism places significant emphasis on the establishment and promotion of autonomous communication platforms for women, providing them with the opportunity to express themselves in a self-directed manner. The aforementioned concept is situated within a theoretical framework that places significant emphasis on the notion of personal autonomy, communal accountability, and the imperative of actively participating in voluntary endeavors aimed at tackling various concerns, such as gender-based violence, abuse, pornography, and the exploitation of women, including the trafficking of women and children (Athanasatou, 2014).

The use of communication technologies has been pivotal in facilitating this process. The emergence of digital media and the internet has presented women with unparalleled possibilities to enhance the reach of their voices and establish connections with audiences on a global scale. In the early stages, the dissemination of messages and perspectives within the women's movement primarily relied on print and publishing as the principal formats. Over the course of the last twenty years, there has been a significant increase in the incorporation of diverse forms of media, including music, radio, video, film, and more recently, emerging communication technologies (Gallagher, 2003). It is noteworthy that this active involvement has resulted in a greater inclusion of diverse viewpoints within mainstream media content.

Menéndez's observation (2010) has indicated that the media as a powerful actor in the public sphere, has the capacity to shape social narratives, representations, and discourses concerning violence against women (VAW). The media can contribute to societal

discussions, public debates, and policy changes aimed at combating VAW by giving survivors and experts a voice and bringing the realities of VAW to the forefront of the public consciousness. Within the framework of participatory communication (Barranquero, 2017) this study aims to elucidate the utilization of media channels as a means for spreading the voices of activists and individuals who actively engage in generating understanding. The objective is to redefine prevailing narratives, dispel detrimental misconceptions, and shed light on the intricate nature of femicides.

PART B-METHODOLOGY

1. Conceptual underpinnings

This essay is based on a series of conceptual steps aimed at capturing the dissemination of feminist ideas that serve as effective counter-discourse tools, as examined in the theoretical section of this paper. The development of counter-discourse and feminist movements at the national, European, and international level has been a major impetus behind the research questions posed in the present study.

Undoubtedly, the COVID-19 pandemic and its repercussions have highlighted deficient aspects of the societal response to gender violence, a phenomenon of dire proportions. In addition to other concerns, the pandemic has exacerbated the risk of violence against women, prompting a call for inclusive and equitable measures to combat the phenomenon. Setting the specific timeframe of the COVID-19 pandemic, with its consequences still ongoing, the pandemic appears to have served as a supplement to a collective effort to reposition deeply held beliefs. The necessity of adopting a substantial approach to the production of discourse as a society is imperative, as it would highlight the underlying dimensions of this trend in an effort to combat and prevent it. As we delve deeper into the analysis of these beliefs, an opportunity arises to question and dismantle the prevailing ideology that enables various forms of abuse against women, with femicide representing the most severe manifestation.

In 2018, the term femicide was introduced in the Greek public sphere by feministic collectives, and women's affiliations (Vougiouka, 2019) provoking controversial rhetoric and creating a moral panic about whether the term is legitimized or not. With many trying to present it as a neologism that is used as a social hype achieved only to degrade women (Mihailidis, 2019) or as a feminazi[3] need to revenge on men, the rivalry around the term is well underway. Nevertheless, the use of the term femicide in Greek reality had a positive social response reflected in an increasing number of articles, speeches, and posts

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[3] "Feminazi" is a derogatory term used to describe feminists, which gained popularity through the efforts of politically conservative American radio talk show host Rush Limbaugh

as regards its correct deployment and the necessity of adopting the term. The public discourse reflected as well in social media platforms has set the stage for the debate to catch fire resulting in a valuable methodological tool for further studying the politicization and the dynamic of the term.

Certainly, social media have formed a vast vessel of divergent viewpoints but concurrently, they have engendered a novel and compelling environment where activists and like-minded individuals come together to converse about topics, exchange thoughts, coordinate events, and express their personal and group identities (Gerbaudo & Treré, 2015). This environment has also fostered a collective culture of calling out problematic patterns, in relation to femicides, gender-based violence, and other issues related to feminism and equality (Mendes, Ringrose & Keller, 2019: 24) that were previously disregarded by conventional media establishments. It can be assured that social media is a captivating domain that illuminates the perspectives of a subset of public opinion, as it fosters an evolving environment where individuals can freely express their thoughts, thus collectively influencing the public discourse. In addition, due to the fact that newer forms of media are (considered as) fertile ground to circulate a range of ideas to the public discourse, they have also the power to diffuse many of the concerns of the vox populi to newspapers, television, and radio. In this aspect, one can say that social media works as a counterbalance to the monolithic projection of news and views from mainstream media which might have a positive impact on journalism by revising the professional practices and/or possible omissions (Kaitatzi-Whitlock, 2013).

These contribute collectively to the improvement of ethical standards and overall quality in the dissemination of information regarding femicides. Additionally, in the context of the digital era, there is a notable emergence of specialized resources that are specifically dedicated to examining the media's role in addressing this particular societal issue. This encompasses the creation of databases and tools by experts to verify information, thereby confirming the significance of digital platforms in this particular domain (Liberia, Zurbano Berenguer, & Ibáñez, 2020). The significant benefits offered by emerging digital media technologies both in terms of content creation and audience engagement, have led to a profound transformation in contemporary journalism. The adoption of these novel

systems is characterized by the rapid dissemination of news, cost efficiency in distributing information, and the ability to establish more immediate and interactive connections with users (Flavian & Gurrea, 2006). The use of digital media facilitates individuals' access to news, particularly for those seeking specific information, leading them to naturally gravitate toward online news sources rather than traditional print newspapers. This preference is attributed to the Internet's distinguishing feature of providing ease in searching and comparing information (Brown, 2000). Consequently, the reader is afforded immediate and typically unrestricted entry to an essential information resource, encompassing a valuable instrument that offers timely updates on current events and streamlines the information retrieval process. In Greece, there's been a notable shift among the audience towards relying on online news websites for their daily information needs (Papathanassopoulos, S., Karadimitriou, A., Kostopoulos, & Archontaki, 2021).

While social media platforms offer a wealth of information, they also present challenges due to the overwhelming volume of shared content with the public. Given these circumstances, and for the purpose of this paper, the use of articles sourced from digital media has emerged as a primary approach compared to the initial idea of relying on material from social media. Media coverage is useful for measuring the rate of change in social and cultural norms, and the news media shapes society's perception of social problems as well as impacting public sentiment toward both victims and perpetrators (Sutherland, Easteal, Holland, & Vaughan, 2019). Furthermore, it became evident through the course of the investigation that the utilization of deconstructed television broadcasts was swiftly discredited due to the restricted ability of Greek television, with the exception of a handful of television shows and programs, to facilitate a platform for dissenting viewpoints that challenge deeply entrenched ideologies. Overall, it's evident that digital and social media now play an essential role in shaping and defining modern grassroots movements (Bakardjieva, 2015).

Furthermore, the publication of Ms. Kapsampeli's dissertation, entitled "Gender Eliminations in the Name of the Love of Misfortune and Madness: Femicide as a

Contemporary Greek Tragedy through the Analysis of Journalistic Discourse," served as an additional element that encouraged the genuine endeavor of this paper to portray the discourse surrounding femicide in the public domain. The dissertation deftly examines the issue of femicide and its distorted representation. Ms. Kapsampeli illustrated the favored linguistic and narrative technique of the news through a comprehensive and exhaustive analysis of the symbolic annihilation of women. The research concentrated on eight femicides that occurred in 2018-2019 and were conceptually and substantially deconstructed by the news media as unfortunate moments, tales of romance and rivalry, pathological conditions, and family tragedies.

The focus on "silence as discourse" (Kapsampeli, 2019: 127) and the media's decision to conceal the true magnitude of the phenomenon by producing "newsworthy" stories such as the cases of Topaloudi and Suzanne Eaton is the primary contribution of this research project to the current study, along with the personal observation during the period of Covid-19 of a tendency of the mainstream to use more "politically correct" arguments on these issues. Using this dissertation as a point of reference, the current study will explore, from a feminist perspective, the developments in the media context for the years 2020 and 2021, which coincided with the COVID-19 health crisis. The objective of this study is to assess the societal responses associated with the term "femicide" in order to identify indications of a heightened demand for societal transformation and a potential alteration in the public discourse surrounding topics like gender-based violence.

It can be posited that the need for change and the reevaluation of the prevailing ideology are fostered through the construction of an alternative discourse, characterized by a dialogue that draws inspiration from Foucault's concept of counter-discourse. Specifically, the utilization of various representations of the world serves as a method for challenging the prevailing monolithic interpretation of the social realm. In addition to the literature review presented earlier, the counter-discourse aims to delineate alternative perspectives on social matters that deviate from the prevailing ideology (Foucault, 1995). As soon as voices express themselves uniquely creatively, a counter-discourse automatically becomes involved in political struggles (Deleuze and Foucault, 1977). Similarly, Feltwell (2017) contends that counter-discourse takes the form of an activist

pattern applied to social media that enables individuals to have their voices heard and express diverse identities. The rewriting and creative claim to re-present the social dimension of gender violence through counter-discourse reframes the representation of the world and the traumatic experiences of people who have experienced violence.

Taking into account existing national and international feminist debate and activism, the media texts in this study serve as a methodological foundation for abandoning the prevalent misogynistic perspective and "deploying a feministic gender reading of public representations" of gender violence and femicide (Bandelli, Porcelli, 2016:4).

2. Design of research method

The design of the research method was based on two pillars: the extent to which the term femicide has gained ground in the media narratives regarding women's killing during COVID-19, and how this term has altered the way this social problem is discussed in the public sphere, including not only gender violence but also discrimination and inequalities against women. In a nutshell, the purpose of this empirical study is to examine the gender readings of violence in the media context as well as the feminist concepts embedded within them. Considering this, the first objective is to determine the frequency with which the term femicide is used in the media between 2021 and 2020. The second objective is to identify the discourses associated with the feminist struggle to enshrine the term and to frame the argumentation to evaluate the impact of the term on public discourse. To extract the results and develop the research design, the two fundamental pillars of the study are organized around four thematics, as described below:

A. To what extent is the term femicide used in Greek media space to present the killings of women?

B. After two years what shifts are observed in media narrative and what was the role of national feminist movements?

C. Which concepts were fostered and normalized through the use of the term femicide in the digital press?

D. Has the term femicide marked a change to the conservative hegemonic narrative regarding the endorsement of a traditional principle about women and men's roles and relations?

After identifying the primary research objectives, the questions were organized into two distinct analysis schemes. Initially, seven digital newspapers were chosen to provide quantitative data on the use of the term femicide in the context of acts of extreme gender violence committed during the aforementioned period, in Greece with few international references. Second, thirty articles from the same empirical sample were selected based on their relevance to the context of femicide analysis and their capacity to serve as a field of reflection on gender experience issues and to raise awareness of issues related to this topic.

Through their informed stance and empirical knowledge on gender and equality issues, these articles featured the voices of women who challenged the mainstream narrative opposing the legalization of the term. In this concept, these women, who represent academia, activism, arts, and other fields, are engaged in a concerted effort to shape the femicide narrative by deconstructing the strategies upon which female subjectivity is constructed and by highlighting the political dimension of women's killings.

More specifically, the exploration of the textual space allocated to feminists will be used as a tool to reveal the approaches that give the term feminism its meaning and unveil social pathologies that have persisted over time. Content analysis of articles in Greek digital newspapers that featured the term femicide or other keywords related to killings of women, for the period of 1st January 2020 to 31 December 2021, was chosen as the method for the in-depth examination of the aforementioned topic. It should be noted that the utilization of content analysis in newspaper coverage holds considerable value and adaptability, as it employs a methodology that facilitates the identification of recurring textual elements within a contextual framework (White & Marsh, 2006). In this regard, the process of categorization, which is a fundamental aspect of a content plan, aims to organize information into conceptual groupings that can facilitate the resolution of research inquiries while also stimulating deeper reflection and novel insights related to the topics under research. The initial set of research questions will be meticulously and

accurately transformed into a set of categories with the same or similar meanings extracted from the data. Therefore, the categories of analysis are treated as continuously utilized data sources from which a variety of additional processing can be performed (Mason, 2002).

In addition, the categories reflect perceptions and perspectives regarding femicides and gender-based violence, which were the themes of the analysis, and classify the entire text according to these themes. These reflections also encourage the analyst to go beyond the limitations of content analysis and depict a reality that incorporates the connotations of a phenomenon in an effort to reveal its true dimensions. At various points, the selected journalistic material enables a more extensive analysis of the discourse by scrutinizing textual aspects within a broad understanding of the content and its implications. These textual characteristics inevitably apply to discourse analysis as they demonstrate a critical awareness of the prominent values and ideologies that reflect the asymmetric social practices of women and men (Lazar, 2007). Critical discourse analysis will be used to meet the analytical objectives, although it is not the primary methodological approach in this essay. Furthermore, the discourse is not produced outside of a particular historical context, it cannot be studied without also examining the context in which it emerged (Fairclough, & Wodak, 1997). In this respect, the discourse on femicide examined in this paper is related to earlier discourses as well as contemporaneous national and international discourses. For instance, public discourse cannot maintain its ostensible neutrality in relation to its gendered dimensions because it already contains representations of social gender. Moreover, because discourse constructs social reality and vice versa, it is necessary to consider the context, specifically the structures of the social situation and how the COVID-19 health crisis influenced the production and comprehension of the produced discourse.

Notwithstanding the ambitious character of the aforementioned syllogisms, it is apparent that a more methodical and all-encompassing examination of the central inquiry is imperative, a task that is beyond the scope of this paper due to limitations in methodology and word count.

3. Sample selection method

The methodology of collection and processing is based on journalistic data that have been used as a field to explore the spectrum of feminist claims to the adoption of the term "femicide". Throughout the period of 2020-2021, there has been a noticeable surge in occurrences of gender-based violence and femicides. This trend has prompted inquiries into the underlying factors contributing to these incidents, as well as the responses of the governing institutions responsible for maintaining societal order. From this point of view, this study looks at the aspects that show changes in the narratives that manifest better and less abusive language such as the focus on victim-blaming used as a narrative pattern in the public sphere. To examine this claim and its various parameters, the sample collection is analyzed in terms of qualitative and quantitative features.

The first objective was to collect a total of twenty-three (23) articles from the following digital press Avgi, Documento, Efsyn, Ethnos, In.gr, Kathimerini, and the Press Project which were subsequently categorized into two groups: those that adhere to a conventional and liberal discourse or attract the highest number of visitors, and those that align with the progressive movement and frequently embrace perspectives from the feminist ideological   spectrum.
Mainstream media typically fall under the ownership of media conglomerates, depend on corporate advertising for financial support, avoid expressing explicit support for a particular political or ideological position, prioritize official sources of information, and cater to a broad audience. In contrast, alternative media sources typically operate independently from established institutions, exhibit a more explicit and openly supported political position, prioritize advocacy rather than neutrality, and offer increased representation to marginalized communities (Atton, 2001; Meyers, 2008). Nevertheless, there is still a desire to determine the degree to which newspapers, particularly those associated with politics, have embraced the term "femicide" and the feminist interpretations of this phenomenon.

The articles also highlight core axes around the social problem of femicide and the normalization of gender violence and offer a fertile ground for a new language to be

heard and used when referring to gender-based violence. The following thematic categories were formed after a detailed study of the aforementioned material:

1. Patriarchy and gender stereotypes

2. The private becoming public

3. Need for a holistic approach

The categories of analysis were derived from the systematic and iterative reading of the selected articles. A classification label is assigned to each article, according to its topic. Once the coding is completed for all articles, the central points are carefully examined and categorized into thematic clusters, which in turn give us the units of record and their subcategories. These data have been compiled with the help of the Microsoft Office Excel and the creation of two separate Excel worksheets, chronologically divided, in 2020 and in 2021.

The second objective of the data collection resulted in quantitative data pertaining to the frequency of articles that addressed the phenomenon of femicides from a feminist standpoint and/or articles, that explicitly employed the term "femicide" in their titles or content to refer to instances of women killings with gender motivation.

PART C-ANALYSIS

1. Quantitative data

It is noteworthy to acknowledge that although the methodology predominantly employs qualitative techniques, numerical data will be incorporated to contextualize the changes observed in media coverage concerning their reaction to cases of women's killings driven by gender-related motives, as well as the growing utilization of the term "femicide."

The quantitative content analysis was carried out using Google search as a tool to examine the data found within the online newspapers during the period from 2020 to 2021. After the establishment of a comprehensive set of guidelines for text retrieval, necessary modifications were implemented. These modifications encompassed the incorporation of search terms in a range of media formats, such as columns, commentaries/opinions, editorials, news summaries, political/general news articles, and the specification of the temporal scope of the search. The texts were then studied, resulting in obtaining results on the number of articles containing the specified keyword on each respective website with a positive connotation.

It is crucial to acknowledge that this particular methodological approach does not fully facilitate the development of robust hypotheses, as it necessitates an extensive comparative investigation encompassing various social and public channels. Nevertheless, it allows us to cautiously formulate approximations concerning distinct emerging patterns. It should also be noted that the statistical validity of the survey may be influenced by various factors, including the amount of data available, the changing acceptance of the terminologies used, the demographic makeup of the sample, and other relevant factors. Significantly, the survey's quantitative foundation gained prominence in approximately 2021, aligning with the establishment of observatories and initiatives aimed at disseminating information. This development stimulated a broader and more inclusive public discussion on the topic at hand. The recognition of these complexities emphasizes the intricate nature of the survey's results, highlighting the necessity for a thorough scholarly examination of its implications. Finally, it is vital to recognize that

this issue does not impact our research, as our primary objective is to elucidate the components of feminist discourse pertaining to femicide in the public sphere and the increasing attention it has received in the previous two years, unfortunately, associated as well with the escalation in femicides.
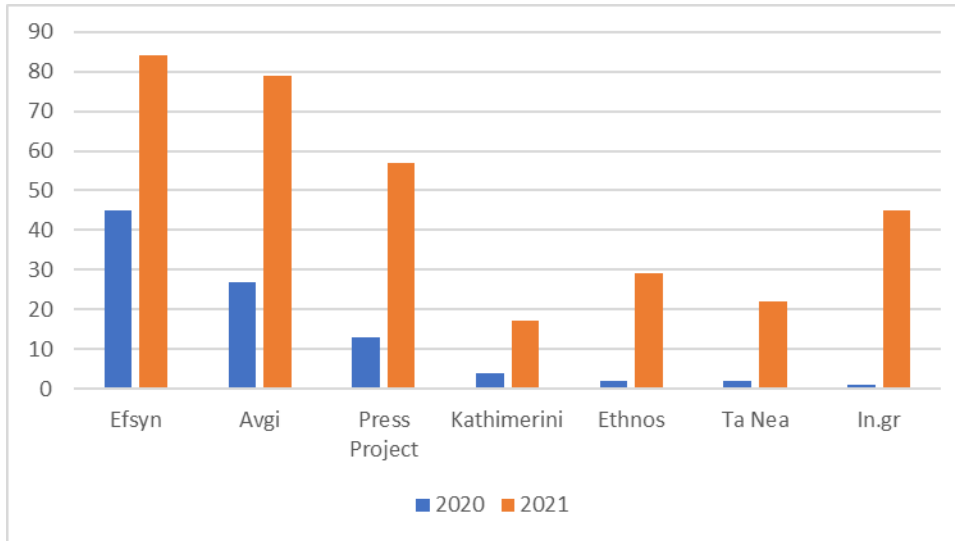
Graph 1.

The data depicted in Graph 1 reveals a notable disparity between the two examined time periods. Specifically, there is a noteworthy increase in 2021 in terms of the publication of articles aimed at highlighting the problem of femicide and identifying gender-based crimes as femicide. The surge in question is notably remarkable, as it entails a threefold rise that has been observed within prominent mainstream media platforms, including In.gr, ta Nea, and Ethnos. These media platforms are commonly recognized for their conventional journalistic practices and are not commonly affiliated with feminist-oriented content. However, it seems that they have incorporated the term "femicide" into their journalistic vocabulary.

In contrast, newspapers such as Avgi, Efsyn, and the Press Project, which espouse left-center-left ideologies, demonstrate a comparable tendency towards adopting and utilizing the aforementioned term. The alignment observed can be expected, considering the significant convergence between this ideological sphere and the diverse expressions of

the feminist movement. Therefore, it is expected that these media outlets will adopt and employ the term "femicide". It is worth emphasizing that the adoption of the term "femicide" exhibits a discernible correlation with the political spectrum. Moving further towards the left of the spectrum, we observe a more effortless incorporation of this term into their reporting. This phenomenon underscores the intricate interplay between political ideologies and the terminology utilized in media discourse, especially when addressing sensitive and gender-related issues (Michalakeli, 2020).

2. Qualitative Data

2. 1. Patriarchy and gender stereotypes

2.1.1. Presentation in the media coverage

This thematic category consists of nine articles mainly from the progressive press, highlighting the media's response to the presentation of femicides as a family tragedy and their responsibility to produce stereotypical portrayals of victims and perpetrators.

Ms Koronaiou's [4] (2021) emotionally charged statements revealed the media's tendency to ignore the phenomenon of gender violence.

> *We are talking about the phenomenon of patriarchy and gender violence, and it is outrageous that instead of the media fighting against these phenomena, possibly in the way they present them, they support them and give them an alibi* (Press Project, The media adopts a class-based perspective on gender violence and patriarchy).

Upon further analysis, it becomes evident that the media's contribution to the discourse on the underlying factors of gender violence is minimal, if not counterproductive, as it

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[4] Sociology and Dean of the School of Social Sciences at Panteion University

inadvertently perpetuates the issue. Ms. Koronaiou's statement underscores the media's tendency to distort the social phenomenon of femicide by imbuing it with attributes that amplify preexisting inequalities and prejudices. The media's portrayal of gender violence and femicide is often characterized by misinformation and sexism. This perspective tends to classify these issues as private, individual experiences, as noted by Vega Montiel (2018) and Bullock (2007). Moreover, the media's coverage of these crimes often lacks the necessary contextual information, thereby hindering a comprehensive understanding of the issue and further perpetuating gender stereotypes.

According to Fauistini (1995), the nature of news extends beyond the mere description of a particular event, encompassing the associated connotations. The resulting news product is contingent upon the editorial decisions made by each media organization regarding the information to be presented about said event. In this context, the general population is regarded as an exception within a standardized setting where all actions are executed precisely as depicted in the media.

Anna Nini (2021), a columnist for Documento, mentioned in the article "Women's killers usually live with them", the media frequently employs phrases that associate femicides with familial tragedies, crimes of passion, and women's personal dramas and tragedies. Nini argues that such representations are misleading and serve to downplay the ideological dimensions of these crimes. The designations of "family tragedy" and "unfortunate girl" suggest the presence of a circumstance that seemingly conforms to societal norms and arises as a potential outcome due to fatalistic factors. This specific subject matter unveils elements of the Greek cultural context that are deliberately excluded by the media. The replacement of the term "tragedy" with "femicide" introduces a theatrical dimension to the crime, resulting in a political consequence of marginalizing gender-based killings and portraying them as extraordinary domestic conflicts (Kapsampeli, 2019). As a result, the phenomenon of femicide is often subjected to aestheticization, dramatization, and depoliticization through the frequent utilization of the term "tragedy" to characterize such acts of violence. In the final analysis, the media narrative presents all parties implicated in this calamity as individuals burdened by

tragedy, absolves the perpetrator of the crime, and hinders the audience's comprehension of the fundamental factors contributing to this phenomenon.

The article titled "Stories of shame with women in the background"(The Press Project, 2021) brings attention to the media's tendency to report femicides by emphasizing the killings of women perpetrated by individuals within their familial circle, a practice that has been observed since the 1980s and persists to this day due to its profitability. However, it is intellectually stimulating to analyze these discursive works within the context of the media, employing a feminist theoretical framework and reevaluating the texts through a gendered perspective, which allows for the examination of cultural memory. The concept of cultural memory is intricately intertwined with power dynamics, and gender is a socially constructed phenomenon that is deeply ingrained within the power structures of society. According to Hirsch and Smith (2002), the exclusion of the gender dimension in a narrative pertaining to cultural memory can lead to the eradication or marginalization of specific groups or viewpoints, particularly those that are already facing disadvantages or oppression. Upon careful analysis of the historical and institutional backdrop in which these texts were produced, it becomes evident that they contain veiled expressions of misogyny, often accompanied by acts of violence.

In addition, the commonly employed discourse of the "unlucky" victim theory, unfortunate circumstance, victim-blaming, and family tragedy is conducted in terms of spectacle.

> *The negative point is that the mainstream media are managing the issue in communicative terms. In all the time that the dramatic event of femicide has been shown, often theatrically, have you seen a serious debate on how to prevent it?" said Ifigenia Kamtsidou[5]* (Avgi, Femicide in the media as a problem of female vulnerability, 2021).

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[5] Associate Professor of Constitutional Law at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and member of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture of the Council of Europe

The communicative terms mentioned above are established within the context of the correlation between the narrative's worth and societal values. The portrayal of crime news is influenced by cultural factors, encompassing the operational constraints of news organizations as well as the prevailing assumptions and beliefs within society. According to the principles of news values, instances of opposition to the prevailing opinion tend to be marginalized, downplayed, and characterized as potentially hazardous (Meyers, 1997). This binary relationship plays a crucial role in shaping the content and scope of news that is disseminated to the public. There is an imbalance in the allocation of media coverage, with a significant emphasis placed on violent incidents, particularly those related to criminal activities. The degree of publicity and significance attributed to a story is contingent upon various factors, such as the narrative's perspective, including the dynamics between the perpetrator and the victim, the gender of the perpetrator, and the contextual framework within which the story is situated. (Nikunen, 2011).

In essence, a crime deemed deserving of journalistic attention should exhibit specific attributes that render it a poignant spectacle, captivating the nation's mass media for a prolonged duration.

Undoubtedly, the femicide of Caroline Crouch[6], and the controversial "Glyka Nera" case marked a turning point in the media's exploitation of such events for entertainment and rating purposes. This extensively debated case serves as a culmination of the endorsement of violence and prejudice and serves as a case study for analyzing the manner in which the public discourse has engaged with it. In Ethnos'article "Glyka Nera:The femicide compelled society to manifest its true self" femicide that gave us all a reason to show our faces", the columnist Ms. Axioti (2021), comments on the formal revelation that Caroline Crouch's husband is the perpetrator of her murder. Ms Axioti

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[6] On 11/05/2021, the femicide of 20-year-old Caroline Crouch occurred. According to the first information that came to light from the testimony of the husband, Haralambos Anagnostopoulos, in the early hours of the same day, three robbers who spoke broken Greek, broke into the couple's residence, gagged and tied up the victim's husband and then murdered his wife, in the presence of their eleven-month-old child. The perpetrators then hanged the family dog and fled. The victim's husband succeeded and after some hours alerted the authorities. However, after investigations, on 17/06/2021 the Hellenic Police Headquarters officially announces that the perpetrator of the aforementioned homicide is the 33-year-old husband of the victim, who confessed to the act. He was subsequently prosecuted for manslaughter with intent in a calm state of mind and cruelty to an animal in a calm state of mind.

emphasizes the significance of responsible reporting during this emotional period, highlighting the duty of those disseminating the news to honor the deceased victim. Subsequently, she posits that individuals responsible for overseeing public discourse ought to prioritize veracity and refrain from rationalizing the transgressor's actions, thereby suggesting blame on the part of the victim. Ms. Axioti asserts that media techniques are prevalent and linked to various factors that contribute to the perpetuation of gender violence. These factors encompass sexism and gender stereotypes, patriarchal structures, societal acceptance of gender violence, misogyny, and the presence of toxic masculinity.

Similarly, Ms Liliopoulou (2021) editor of Ehnos writes

> *They are not family dramas, they do not write the end titles to passionate relationships and they certainly have nothing to do with the "excessive love" invoked by the uncle of the perpetrator and suicide of the 11th femicide that Greece has counted in nine months*. (There is no bad moment - The cycle of violence before the femicides in Greece)

Respectively, Mr. Alexandris (2020) writes

> "*References to "crimes of passion, "jealousy that blinds men" cover the murder with a veil of embellished romance, as if they were not describing real deaths of real people, but fictional fantasies. They echo the idea that the murder of a woman by a man is not exactly the atrocious crime that any other murder would be, but something like extreme sensuality, a transgression that happens to be punishable by law* (Kathimerini, Dimensions)

In the above passage, the media too often make an indiscriminate reference to "murder of love" or "crime of passion" expressions, portraying femicides as stories of love and

passion with a bad ending (Lagos & Toledo, 2014). The prevailing discourse within both the media and society at large tends to focus on the concept of "crimes of love and jealousy" when discussing cases involving the murder of women, rather than delving into the underlying motivations behind such acts. The recurrence of these viewpoints influences the portrayal of the offense and forms social constructs pertaining to it. Irrespective of the number of allegations regarding abusive conduct that are disclosed to the public, the media consistently presents gender violence as a mere dispute, failing to acknowledge the role of the victim's gender as a contributing factor in cases of femicide. Terms such as "fights", "arguments", and "tensions" often obscure the historical context of repeated acts of violence experienced by the victim prior to the occurrence of femicide. This portrayal once again depicts the crime as a consequence of an "intense" relationship, rather than recognizing it as a manifestation of an imbalanced and abusive relationship that reflects broader social and structural issues. Hence, the act of idealizing gender violence serves to validate the perpetrator, portraying their actions as a product of intense emotions and positive sentiments, such as love, rather than acknowledging it as a complex social and structural issue.

The cessation of these practices constitutes a key requirement put forth by 19 women's organizations, as reported in an article published on November 25th by In.gr. These organizations advocate for the renunciation of gender-biased media standards and the enforcement of the corresponding code of ethics. In the realm of sexism and patriarchal ideologies, it is evident that the concurrent idealization of violence and disregard for the gendered aspects of homicide represents a prevalent manifestation of intolerance.

Last but not least, the portrayal of femicide is heavily influenced by the inclusion of the perpetrator's profile and the favorable treatment they receive from the media.

Mrs. Koronaios[7] expresses her dissatisfaction with the remarks made by a prominent journalist from a renowned channel regarding the controversial Glyka Nera case.

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[7]   Associate Professor of Constitutional Law at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and member of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture of the Council of Europe

I am saddened and angry because, behind the words of Ms. Mandrou, there is a profoundly classist attitude towards the victims, the murderers themselves. If the murderer had been an ordinary man or an Albanian and Georgian, then the media would have presented him as the monster.

The utilization of gender violence for the purpose of promoting a racist agenda is evident in the discourse surrounding the "marked foreigners" following the Caroline femicide incident. Mrs Koronaios flags the journalist's intention to portray the murderer in a positive manner, highlighting his qualities as a law-abiding individual and a socially amiable person who conforms to societal norms associated with dominant masculinity. In this instance, the media directed its attention toward the characteristics of the perpetrator, as he exemplified the expected standards of attractiveness, occupation, and socioeconomic status in terms of gender, sexuality, ethnicity, race, and class. Meanwhile, the media neglected to address the significant and serious societal implications surrounding Caroline's murder.

In contrast, when an individual who is perceived as suspicious fails to conform to the aforementioned societal norms or is of non-Greek origin, the media tends to depict them as a "other", "foreign", or "distinct", consequently labeling them as "mentally unstable", "perilous", or "deviant". The media's existing problematic attitude is further exacerbated by the vilification and xenophobic hate speech, as Galeano (p.170) aptly pointed out: "Racism and phallocracy draw from a common source and express themselves in similar rhetoric".

2.2.1. Institutional handling/inadequacies

The examination of the institutional framework in addressing gender-based violence and femicides has emerged as a significant aspect that warrants critical evaluation, as highlighted by a total of nine (9) articles.

Vassiliki Artinopoulou (2021), professor of criminology at Panteion University, states

Greece has a strong legislative arsenal and was one of the first countries to criminalize domestic violence with Law 3500/2006, which includes a broad definition of the family, as well as all forms of domestic violence (verbal, psychological, physical, and sexual (Ethnos, There is no bad moment" - The cycle of violence before the femicides in Greece).

In 2018, Greece became the 32nd nation to ratify the Istanbul Convention, which entered into force on October 1st with the National Law 4351/2018 for preventing and eliminating violence against women and domestic violence. The said legislation text has created a comprehensive framework to prevent violence, protect victims, and put an end to impunity for perpetrators, where has also provided the tools such as the existence of structures, hotlines, plans, and emergency strategies to ensure the protection and empowerment of women and girls.

Undoubtedly, the enactment of Law 4351/2018 signifies the culmination of a vigorous and collaborative endeavor aimed at advancing women's rights, as expressed by Ms. Sianou on behalf of the Greek Network for the Feminist Strike of March 8th. This achievement is attributed to the joint endeavors of feminist collectives in their pursuit to ratify the Istanbul Convention. Nevertheless, the efficacy of the state mechanism has been subject to scrutiny and criticism from various stakeholders including activists, academics, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), feminist movements, and journalists. They argue that the current system is insufficient, pointing to the concerning rise in such incidents. The Hellenic Network for the Feminist Strike of 8 March (2020) had endorsed *the letters to the competent bodies which contain specific measures that should be implemented by the state, and which result from the full implementation of the Istanbul Convention (Law 4531/2018) on domestic violence.* (Efsyn, Coronavirus kills, violence against women kills)

In the article "Glyka Nera: The femicide compelled society to manifest its true self" the columnist Ms Axioti (2021) quotes figures from the General Secretariat for Family Policy and Gender Equality that show an increase in incidents of gender-based violence during the lockdown citing as well other data about the gender of the victim and the perpetrator,

the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator, and the type of violence. Between 01 November 2020 and 30 September 2021, the 24-hour SOS 15900 line of the General Secretariat for Family Policy and Gender Equality recorded 5,942 "incidents of violence" of which 69% were calls from women survivors seeking support and 31% were from third parties seeking primarily helpful information (GSDFPGE, 2021), while the number of femicides quadrupled.

In response to concerning data indicating a rise in such occurrences, the women's association affiliated with the organization known as MOV has formally urged the General Secretariat for Family Policy and Gender Equality to promptly initiate a comprehensive awareness campaign via the 15900 helpline. The objective was to ensure that all women could readily access vital information during the extraordinary circumstances of a health crisis. Additionally, in April 2010, MOV produced and disseminated posters promoting the utilization of the SOS 15900 helpline, which serves as a support resource for victims of gender-based violence (Papagiannopoulou, 2022:52). Thus, the feminist initiatives has resulted in the successful establishment and promotion of a 24-hour helpline, thereby enhancing its accessibility and effectiveness.

Indeed, Greece successfully fulfilled the requirements outlined in the Istanbul Convention by establishing a national women's helpline that operates seven days a week and offers multilingual assistance in Greek, English, Arabic, and Persian languages (WAVE, 2021). Nevertheless, a debate revolved around the adequacy or scarcity of financial resources allocated to refugee and migrant women who have experienced gender violence and require specialized support in order to reintegrate into society after leaving the system that provides services to them (Choleva, 2021).

One of the concerns raised pertained to the necessity of the Department of Health, Justice, and Social Development to adequately prepare and respond, as outlined in Law 4531/2018. The discrepancy is underscored by Ms. Kefallinou (2021) who illustrates in Ethnos the example of a young female who fell prey to human trafficking in Ilioupoli and was provided with a duration of three months of psychosocial assistance. The limited assistance provided to the survivor flags the deficiencies within the victim support system, which fails to effectively facilitate the survivor's psychological processing of the

traumatic experience, their recovery, and their successful reintegration into society. This approach acknowledges the enduring nature of gender-based violence and emphasizes the need for a long-term commitment to changing societal attitudes, behaviours, and practices. Furthermore, the statements made by Ms. Kefallinou suggest the urgent requirement to establish clear policies and protocols for addressing incidents of violence. Additionally, it is crucial that survivors are provided with access to support services and a justice system that prioritizes the needs and well-being of survivors, ensuring that they are treated with the highest level of respect and dignity.

The government's lack of response and action in preventing and eliminating gender violence has frequently been cited as a critical factor to consider. The sample of selected articles provided a clear indication of the systematic effort required to address the phenomenon.

> *We say zero tolerance of gender-based violence, which includes institutional actors, takes time, perseverance and systematic action…..''A holistic institutional intervention is required.* (Avgi, Gender-based violence / Femicide is not a bolt from the blue, 2021).

> *The scourge of domestic and gender-based violence is perpetuated and the government is systematically inactive. It is no coincidence that our country ranks 98th in Gender Equality out of 156 countries based on the Global Gender Equality Index (*Avgi, Femicide / How to end the scourge, 2021).

> *Why are there no community mental health services to alleviate suffering and sometimes prevent "evil" so that incidents of domestic violence and femicide do not proliferate?* (Efsyn, Underestimating the woman to death, 2021).

The Council of Europe places significant importance on the presence of a proactive state mechanism, such as a government ally, to effectively implement strategies aimed at attaining a goal through consistent and interconnected policies. However, in Greece, there exists a counter-discourse asserting that the response of an institutional mechanism has

been insufficient, indicating a lack of efficacy in implementing measures to safeguard women during the specified reporting period. Numerous entities, encompassing governmental entities, law enforcement agencies, and social service organizations, bear a significant obligation in the prevention and elimination of occurrences of gender-based violence. The nation's ranking in the Global Gender Equality Index suggests the existence of systemic elements that have played a role in the perpetuation of gender inequality and discrimination. In order to address this situation, it is imperative to implement or strengthen measures that establish secure environments for victims to report instances of abuse, while also ensuring that individuals responsible for such acts are held accountable in a timely and appropriate manner.

Indeed, in the study "Tackling violence against women and domestic violence in Europe: The added value of the Istanbul Convention and remaining challenges" authorized by the FEMM committee, survey participants highlighted that, despite certain advancements, the facilitation of effective collaboration with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) has been insufficient, and there remains a notable absence of a comprehensive multiagency strategy and intervention for addressing domestic violence, particularly concerning the police, judiciary, and healthcare system (European Union, 2020:87). In the WAVE European Network country report of 2021, it is mentioned that Greece is facing a decrease in the number of beds available in shelters. Specifically, there is a shortage of 58 beds that fail to meet the standards outlined in the Istanbul Convention for the provision of women's shelters (p.108).

Moreover, the transition from the General Secretariat for Gender Equality to the General Secretariat for Family Policy and Equality, implemented by the present administration, has garnered significant public attention due to the perceived decline in the institution's status. In her critique published in Avgi, Ms Kamtsidou (2021) argues that the government's decision can be seen as a regression toward patriarchal norms. This decision promotes a model that associates gender equality with demographic and familial considerations, ultimately relegating women to the domestic sphere as mothers and caregivers. While acknowledging the sanctity of the decision to become a mother and the importance of institutional and social support for this choice, feminist movements have

questioned the traditional association of parenthood and reproduction exclusively with women (Letherby, 1994). Conversely, the attribution of parenthood and reproduction to men has often been linked to notions of sexual dominance, social standing, and economic achievement. Herein, it is worth noting to mention the fertility conference which has been organized to be held 2-4 July 2021 in Ioannina and provoked a stormy reaction that eventually resulted in its cancellation.

Respectively, in the article "Eliminating violence against women - The demands of 19 Women's Organizations" published in In.gr, one of the petitions concerned the creation of a Ministry of Gender Equality and the re-establishment of the General Secretariat for Gender Equality, established by Article 27 of Law 1558/1985 (Government Gazette 137/A), as an independent Public Service under the Ministry of the Presidency of the Government. A body that will be in charge for designing, monitoring, and evaluating the country's equality policies.

One of the concerns stemming from the chosen sample is the significant systemic deficiency in safeguarding women against highly violent conduct. This deficiency reflects an institutional insufficiency of considerable magnitude and gives rise to a humanitarian crisis, as the essential requirements for the well-being and survival of an entire population are not assured, and the state in question lacks the resources to effectively address this issue. Ms. Kaitaji-Witlock's (2021) observation regarding femicides and their correlation with the prevailing state of global governance poses a threat to national security on a global scale.

> *Although men attack women, the problem of so many femicides becomes anthropologically* existential. It constitutes a humanitarian crisis. Here, it is surely judged how much the coordinated societies have failed (Avgi, Femicide / How to end the scourge).

Ms. Kaitaji-Witlock extends the inquiry into accountability by broadening its scope. The systemic issue at hand extends beyond the mere failure of national efforts to safeguard women and girls, as it also poses a direct challenge to the established political framework. The prevalence of femicide as a humanitarian crisis necessitates an

examination of the issue within the framework of an existing thread marked by insufficient safeguards. Femicide, regarded as an internal conflict inherent in human society, calls for a more profound comprehension in order to critically examine prevailing structural norms and facilitate their transformation into values that promote the well-being of all individuals. Specifically, Ms. Kaitaji-Witlock highlights the importance of adopting an ecumenical perspective to comprehend the implications of this phenomenon. This perspective reveals a recurring pattern of deeply rooted behaviors that pose a threat to the well-being of women and girls, thereby jeopardizing the entire global population.

As very insightfully analyzed in the book Political Order (Hudson, V. M., Bowen, D. L., & Nielsen, P. L., 2020) the subordination of women is a global issue that affects the security and stability of nations worldwide. This is evidenced by the fact that exhibits a clear association with food insecurity, poverty, fragility, violence, and the proliferation of autocratic regimes. The correlation between women's insecurity and the aforementioned issues can be traced back to a primary political construct referred to as "The Syndrome." This construct characterizes a societal condition where male dominance is perceived as a legitimate entitlement, frequently reinforced by legal and cultural norms that curtail women's rights and impede their autonomy. The patrilineal system of kinships, clans, and tribes serves as a mechanism for self-preservation, which is upheld through a range of culturally violent practices with the intention of subjugating women and girls. By utilizing open-source data encompassing 350 variables that provide comprehensive insights into the status of women across different countries, the authors of this study have arrived at the deduction that the establishment and perpetuation of this particular societal structure give rise to a self-perpetuating cycle, aptly referred to as the ouroboros in the book. This cycle not only facilitates the proliferation of violence, extremism, and various other societal challenges but also offers us a valuable comprehension of the interconnectedness between gender, security, and peace.

2.1.3 Police Reflexes

The study's first section, 1.1, focused on analyzing the institutional response to the urgent issue of gender-based violence and femicide. This analysis highlights the deficiencies and incongruities in police methodologies as a crucial component of the comprehensive investigation of the phenomenon, based on the scrutiny of nine articles.

> *The female soul is steeped in violence. Should you leave? Speak? "Nobody cares," we were told. The police don't care. The prosecutor and experts are conducting a plethora of tests. They want witnesses. "Should I say, 'Hang on a* minute and let me bring a witness to the house to see that you're beating me'? (Press Project, You are not alone. There are many of us. We have a voice, 2021).

The statement is attributed to female citizens as part of a journalistic effort to provide a forum for women to express their views on the topic of femicide in tribute to the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women on November 25. The underreporting of female victims of violence is equally alarming as their mistreatment narratives. Unfortunately, women have a high level of mistrust for the ineffective police response. Victims of gender-based violence are hesitant to formally report abuse because the justice system doubts the survivor when looking for witnesses. Survivors often encounter disbelief, blame, and revictimization when seeking assistance and justice. This has resulted in a culture of silence and fear among victims, who may fear that reporting abuse will only result in additional harm.

> *The recent case of Makrinitsa[8] -one of only four confirmed femicides in 2021- is indicative of the consequences of the*

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[8] Konstantina Tsapa, age 28, was murdered in Makrinitsa, Pelion, by her estranged husband, age 32. She had requested security measures and prosecutorial intervention to ensure her safety, as the perpetrator had allegedly engaged in repeated acts of violence. However, following the necessary recommendations, the perpetrator was released, and he committed femicide a few hours later. The 31-year-old man broke into the family home of the 28-year-old woman, who called the police and asked help. The police car arrived late due to traffic on the road. After a heated argument, he stabbed the ex-wife, who was taken to the hospital shortly after that, and fatally stabbed her brother, who was who was summoned from a nearby village when neighbors heard shouting and came to help. The

authorities' failure to demonstrate due diligence in these cases",
Anastasia Goni-Karabotsou explains and adds: "This is not the only
such case. Unfortunately, it is not at all rare for police authorities
to misinform and discourage women who approach the country's
police stations to report a gender/domestic offense against them.
(Documento, Women's killers usually live with them).

Anastasia Goni-Karabotsou (2021), an attorney who specializes in gender-based violence and a member of the Greek Section of the European Observatory on Femicide (EOF), elucidates the police's role in protecting victims and encouraging them to pursue legal action. The femicide in Makrinitsa is not the first instance in which police negligence has led to the death of a victim. The incident in question is a tragic example of a history of repeated abuse and a flawed evaluation that fails to properly assess the incident and the signs of escalating violence. As noted in the footnote on the Makrinitsa femicide, the perpetrator, in this case, was released by police shortly before committing the crime several hours later.

In a comparable vein, the attorney introduces another distressing case of femicide, namely that of Eleni Topaloudi. This case underscores a multifaceted array of personal, institutional, and external influences that contribute to policy decision-making characterized by a lack of ideology, knowledge, and failure to fulfill responsibilities.

It has occurred that they refuse to accept a complaint for a
domestic violence offense unless a fee is paid, despite the fact that
the fee has been eliminated for years, that they insist that a felony
act is barred by statute four years after it was committed and that
they refuse to apply the autopsy procedure against the accused. In
some instances, this has tragically proved fatal for women. Eleni
Topaloudi received the same treatment when she went to the

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prosecutor charged him with intentional homicide in a calm state of mind, attempted homicide against the mother of the victims, illegal possession and use of a weapon.

authorities to report the rape she had endured. (Documento, Women's killers usually live with them)

Similarly, the mother of Eleni Topaloudi (2020) claims that

> *My child went to the Rhodes Police Station, and they kicked her out as if she was the sergeant and the policeman's pet. But are there no institutions and bodies? Who is responsible? Did you see anything happening? There is a hypocrisy and a mockery of the state* and the institutions. (Documento, Mother of Eleni Topaloudi: "They killed her because she was a woman")

Without a robust documentation process and untrained officers, there is a chance that incidents and crimes will go unreported or will be improperly recorded, which can have severe repercussions. For instance, victims may not receive the necessary support, and perpetrators may continue their abusive behavior. Additionally, without a clear record of incidents, it can be difficult for authorities to assess the risk posed by an offender and develop effective risk management strategies. This may lead to lost opportunities for early intervention and ongoing risk management. Inconsistent investigation and documentation of incidents can result in gaps regarding the abuse's history and context, making it difficult to identify patterns and intervene promptly.

In relation to the treatment of women by the police authorities, A. Kefallinou (2021), communication officer of the Diotima Centre, stresses that

> *Too often in police stations, complainants hear lines such as "try to work it out, where will you leave your children, if you sue him, he will sue you," which act as a deterrent, or they are not given the correct information, or, more simply, there is no recording of incidents that can be used as evidence in* court (Avgi, Gender-based violence / Femicide is not a bolt from the blue)

Ms. Kefallinou argues that the response of police officers to gender-based violence may be influenced by personal patriarchal attitudes regarding the sanctity of the family.

According to Robinson (2000, p. 606), this non-interventionist approach was associated with the perceived sanctity of the family: it was based on the belief that the family unit should be protected, and that law enforcement should not interfere in what was perceived as a private matter. This contradicts the principles outlined in the Istanbul Convention, which emphasizes the importance of prioritizing victim safety and ensuring accountability for perpetrators through comprehensive training in domestic violence management. This perspective represents a fundamental aspect of professional culture, which leads to the skepticism or lack of seriousness with which the victim's narrative of violence is regarded, ultimately resulting in discriminatory practices that undermine the significance of their ordeal.

Finally, Mr. Balascas (2021), a former trade unionist of the Hellenic Police, received significant criticism for his statements, which were deemed vulgar and provided guidance to potential perpetrators of femicides on methods to secure reduced prison sentences.

> *It shows that he's an idiot. If he claimed at the time he killed his wife, if it was an unfortunate event, in his anger, that he lost it and "went crazy", if he called the police he wouldn't even go to jail for 4 years, he would go "in a boil" to a family fight, "not wanting it at the time", "it wasn't me", with a prior honest life, 4,000 other things. Was he going to go to jail for five; or six years?", Balaskas had stated.* (In.gr, The killers had the keys to their houses - Three femicides in 12 days)

2.2. The private becoming public

2.2.1 Metoo movement

The confluence of the pandemic crisis and the escalation of gender-based violence has created a fertile ground for the wake of the #MeToo movement. By focusing more on sexual harassment and rape, the #MeToo movement grew and brought to the public's attention systemic issues such as gender-based violence, femicides, and other issues related to gender inequality, reiterating the urgent need to create a safer and more equitable world for all.

In four (4) articles, the role of the #MeToo movement as a catalyst for initiating a public discourse on the issue of femicide and its subsequent confrontation is pointed out. Each speaker utilizes categorical statements as a means of initiating or introducing their arguments, with the purpose of highlighting the importance of acknowledging the various dimensions of the phenomenon and questioning the prevailing narratives The text in question contains clear and straightforward statements that possess connotations worthy of analysis, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the contextual framework within which these issues are situated.

Mary Leontsini (2021), Associate Professor of TEAPI, President of HIF – EKPA noted that:

> *The Greek #metoo allowed us to speak loudly about what was happening, about what was considered private matters. It made us understand that 1 in 3 women worldwide faces physical or sexual violence at some point in their lives.* (The Press Project, Violence, abuse of women, and femicide are symptoms of a system that devalues women)

The aforementioned claim suggests that the rise of online narratives initiates a discussion about the broader extent and root causes of different forms of oppression. The #MeToo movement has garnered significant attention by highlighting the notion that instances of

sexual harassment and assault extend beyond isolated events, serving as manifestations of wider cultural and societal issues such as gender inequality, patriarchal structures, and power imbalances. Thus, the #Metoo movement serves a vital function in increasing the prominence of these narratives and drawing attention to this phenomenon by revealing the fundamental structures at play.

The Professor continues by emphasizing the significance of femicide as a leading cause of mortality among women and cites statistical evidence to underscore the importance of promoting awareness about gender-based violence.

> *According to data from the Greek team for the European Observatory on Femicide, gender-based violence is the biggest threat as a leading cause of death and disability for women, after cancer and road traffic accidents, according to the Council of Europe," the professor stressed and cited data: "According to the European Parliament in November 2019, 2600 women in the EU lose their lives to gender-based violence and 1 in 2 women worldwide are killed by partners.*

The standpoint of Ms. Petroulaki (2021), a psychologist with a Ph.D. and President of the Board of the European Network against Violence, is in accordance with the views expressed in the aforementioned statement.

> *Certainly #metoo in Greece and Caroline's murder, which shattered all the myths that are usually used as the cause of femicide, thus removing the responsibility from the perpetrators, brought the issue of femicide to the forefront of the debate, and that helps a lot, but we still have to take many steps to talk about a sufficiently sensitized public opinion.* (Avgi, Femicide / How to end the scourge)

The assertion suggests that recent events in Greece, including the emergence of the #MeToo movement and the tragic killing of Caroline, have brought the issue of femicide to the forefront of public discussion. The aforementioned incidents have successfully

debunked widely held misconceptions that exonerate perpetrators of responsibility for violent acts and have played a role in increasing public awareness about the prevalence and repercussions of femicide. The past witnessed a tendency to overlook or downplay the experiences of numerous survivors of gender-based violence, encompassing femicides. However, a notable shift has occurred in the recognition and understanding of these experiences. The heightened documentation and recognition of femicides as a manifestation of gender-based violence have had a significant influence on the societal discourse surrounding this issue, evoking a collective sense of emotional distress among individuals who have experienced similar situations. The transition from an individualistic viewpoint to a communal standpoint is instrumental in the process of reconstructing and reevaluating historical occurrences, recognizing a collective past that has been significantly influenced by shared experiences of trauma. The convergence of diverse historical narratives and the increased recording of femicide result in a shared sense of identity that promotes fair treatment and recognition within the framework of justice, encompassing both the occurrences that should not have occurred and the individuals who, unfortunately, did not survive (Theodosiou, 2022).

Ms. Kefallinou (2021) highlighted the impact of the #Metoo movement in motivating women to seek assistance.

> *What we saw quite strongly during the Greek MeToo period, which obviously was empowering for many women, women asking for help…. This upsurge is indeed the result of an intensification of domestic, and intimate partner violence, but also of greater vigilance and mobilization of women experiencing violence themselves and those around them.* (Avgi, Gender-based violence / Femicide is not a bolt from the blue)

has emerged as a significant catalyst in promoting consciousness regarding instances of sexual harassment and assault within the context of Greece and has brought together feminists from different waves as well as LGBTI activists to advocate for change (Kampouri, 2022). They have brought attention to the intersectional nature of gender-based violence and he necessity of approaching it from a comprehensive standpoint.

Through active engagement in marches, demonstrations, and public debates, these activists have helped to create a public discourse around the issue, which has contributed to making it more visible in Greek society. The advocacy efforts of the movement have contributed to the normalization of the usage of the term "femicide" within Greek society, a subject that was previously deemed socially forbidden. This incorporation of term also played a pivotal role in providing a linguistic framework for experiences that were previously marginalized or disregarded.

In relation to the inquiry regarding the escalation of femicide or the heightened awareness surrounding it, Ms. Georgili (2021), founder of the Greek section of the international organization Lean In, said:

> *The truth is somewhere in the middle. In a period of pandemic, there is indeed an upsurge in violence against women but after the MeToo movement women are speaking out more.* (In.gr, Individuals who perpetrate femicides are often individuals of "next door")

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in circumstances that render women more vulnerable to violence, as well as increased stress and anxiety, financial strain, and social isolation Furthermore, the enforcement of lockdown measures and restrictions on movement have posed difficulties for women in terms of their capacity to acquire support and avail themselves of accessible resources. The #MeToo movement has experienced an upsurge in momentum following the pandemic, as it has concurrently underscored the imperative for heightened consciousness and intervention in relation to gender-based violence. Given the increasing number of individuals engaging in online activities and utilizing social media platforms, digital spaces have emerged as a viable avenue for survivors of sexual harassment and assault to effectively communicate their narratives, seek solace, and establish connections with fellow individuals who have encountered comparable ordeals. These spaces also serve as platforms for artistic expression and opposition, where individuals can express their perspectives, challenge dominant narratives, and imagine innovative possibilities for the future.

2.2.2 Breaking the silence

The extent of femicides in Greece necessitates the public's active engagement in constructing and embracing alternative narratives that strongly denounce such lethal violence. Civil society organizations including Safer Internet 4 Kids of FORTH, Women on Top, the Women's Support Counseling Center of the Municipality of Veria, the Women's Counseling Center of the Municipality of Thessaloniki, and the Cybercrime Prosecution Directorate, engage in collaborative efforts to tackle multifaceted challenges and raise awareness about critical social issues (Karagianni, 2021).

In an interview conducted by Ethnos.gr, Ms. Artinopoulou (2021), a Professor of Criminology at Panteion University, discusses the increasing prevalence of gender-based violence, which ultimately culminates in femicides. She emphasizes the significance of empowering victims to articulate their experiences through the utilization of diverse methods.

> *In my opinion, what needs to be strengthened in Greek society is respect for the rights of victims, in other words, respect for the voice of the victim and the corresponding protection of the victim's rights within and outside the criminal justice system. Victims should be encouraged to report their victimization in a timely manner, to escape from abusive relationships and, of course, to receive respect and proper treatment from the competent bodies.* ("There is no bad moment" - The cycle of violence before the femicides in Greece)

Ms Artinopoulu underscores the criticality of speaking out against gender-based violence as remaining silent entails significant consequences. The act of speaking out or sharing one's experiences, when it comes to sensitive or suppressed topics, shedding light on issues that have been silenced or ignored, and it often involves unveiling stories of pain, suffering, or resistance. The concept of "Engaging in a dialogue with the muted," as introduced by Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian (2003), acknowledges that certain individuals or communities encounter systemic obstacles, including social, cultural, economic, or political factors, that impede their capacity to articulate their thoughts and ideas.

Providing a platform for historically marginalized, suppressed, or neglected individuals can freely articulate their thoughts and emotions while experiencing a sense of safety is an essential element. In order to validate these perspectives, it is necessary to simultaneously question the prevailing systems of authority, inherent biases, and discriminatory attitudes that contribute to the silencing of gender-based violence and femicides, disregarding its far-reaching consequences.

This engagement in speaking out ought to initiate within the immediate environments of individuals, such as their families and communities, encompassing both personal dwellings and public spaces. Significantly, this obligation is incumbent upon all individuals, irrespective of their gender. The journalist, Ms Eptakoili (2021) writes

> *It is the responsibility of the state to create a strong safety net for women who find the courage to report and seek help and protection. It is the responsibility of all of us to speak out, to mobilize, to get out of the way before it is too late.* (Kathimerini, To Speak)

From an analytical standpoint, this statement reflects an understanding of the collective effort of multiple supporters, such as family, friends, neighbors, community organizations, and support services in addressing the specific needs and circumstances of individuals facing potential threats or violence. According to Herman (2015:187, "the task of developing an adequate safety plan always includes a component of social support"). This indicates that the presence of strong community connections is essential in fostering resilience and cultivating a collective sense of responsibility. By embracing this standpoint, women have a safe place to share a common experience of living under the constant threat of patriarchal violence, which shapes their understanding of the issue and informs their perspectives on it. Prioritizing women's experiences and amplifying their voices is crucial in recognizing the widespread nature of violence against women, thereby challenging the perception that it is an isolated or individual issue within society.

Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge that silence can have a detrimental impact on the perpetuation of a deeply rooted collective trauma, preventing the cathartic expression of emotional anguish associated with experiences of suffering and violence.

In Monastiraki we recorded voices. We recorded experiences. But many still remain in silence. "I lived it, yes, but I'm not ready to talk yet", "we all lived it, but someone else better tell you about it"´....Don't wash your dirty linen in public; we learned from little girls. Somehow we ended up keeping abuse hidden, tightly closed behind locked doors. (The Press Project, You are not alone. There are many of us. We have a voice, 2011)

The presence of silence and reluctance to participate in discussions surrounding abuse and trauma can be seen as a reflection of the internalized cultural values and broader societal influences that promote the concealment of abusive behavior and discourage open communication. The lack of public outrage fosters a climate wherein individuals of the male gender are able to commit acts of violence rooted in gender with minimal consequences, ultimately leading to fatal outcomes. The aforementioned environment additionally cultivates a climate of silence among women, who may experience a sense of obligation to acquiesce to their circumstances without expressing dissent. This phenomenon gives rise to extensive misconceptions that result in the suppression of narratives. As a result, the lack of a secure environment in which individuals can share their personal narratives and encounters leads to the isolation of both survivors and communities, fostering a collective sense of shame, anguish, and sorrow. This hinders the progress of recovery and the attainment of emotional well-being.

Though speaking out and breaking the silence is crucial as it sheds light on the multifaceted aspects involved in this process, including the importance of healing, seeking justice, promoting social change, preserving history, and fostering personal empowerment. The control over the narratives, as well as the exclusive control of women over their bodies, serves as a tool for social activism to expose systemic issues.

On the femicide of Helen Topaloudi, members of the feminist collective KAMIA ANOCHI (2020) state:

The voices raised were so loud that they prevailed over the onslaught of misogyny and rape-culture canards that swamped our screens and newspapers. We demanded justice for Helen and every

other murdered woman. We shouted in the marches, at every march, "Never forget what they did to Helen, no other murdered woman." (Avgi, The historic case of Topaloudi: a symbolic redemption for a large part of society)

The demand for justice for Helen and every other murdered woman points out the significance of not forgetting the violence committed against them, honoring the memories of victims, and leveraging their narratives to inspire communal efforts toward social and political reform. Raising our voices loudly, as expressed by the members of KAMIA ANOCHI, is a consistent opposition to discourses that normalize gender-based violence.

The traumatic history of gender-based violence and femicide is not confined to survivors/victims but rather encompasses wider societal concerns. The phrase "The personal is political" originated from the feminist movement during the 1960s and 1970s (Siegel, 2001) and has experienced a resurgence in popularity amidst the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic crisis, effectively illustrating the inherent link between individual experiences and their capacity to function as influential political messages. The socio-economic crisis during the pandemic period magnified the enduring relevance of the slogan that highlights how women's personal issues are rooted in the negligence and insufficiency of governmental systems (Pesmatzoglou, 2021). The notion of the slogan is that personal experiences, including relationships, family dynamics, life decisions, and sexuality, are not detached from political and social frameworks, but rather carry substantial political significance and possess the potential to both mirror and reshape societal conventions.

3.3. Need for a holistic approach

3.3.1. Adopting a legal terminology

The subject matter of the aforementioned articles contributes to an ongoing discourse surrounding the legal recognition of femicide.

In the year 2021, a total of nineteen women's organizations have collectively advocated for the incorporation of the term "femicide" within legal frameworks, aiming to enhance the visibility of femicide within society and establish its acknowledgment as a distinct criminal offense.

> *We ask that the term "femicide", i.e. gender-based murder, be introduced into the law so that this criminal act becomes visible in society specifically and is punished as an aggravating circumstance in relation to homicide, as it is currently treated.* (In.gr, Eliminating violence against women - The demands of 19 women's organizations)

Ms Kaouni's (2021) also acknowledges the need to give legal status to the term "femicide".

> *This incorporation (referred to as the term femicide) could be done, for example, by adding a SIMPLE AND DIRECT basis of discrimination to Article 82A of the Criminal Code, by introducing an aggravating circumstance directly in Article 299 of the Penal Code and not by removing the disjunctive case of temporary imprisonment in general and indiscriminately, as is attempted today.*

The introduction of the term femicide in our criminal system would also be a way to strengthen the collection and processing of such data, which unfortunately are lacking in our country so that such incidents are officially recorded as femicides, but also be dealt with competently by the judicial authorities. Classifications and categorizations have a very important objective: the development of policies up to and including the allocation of funds.

In the EU, the term is separated from homicide in 16 countries, while in 11 (including Greece) it is not. The Republic of Cyprus has recently gone to the next level in terms of targeting the issue by introducing the term femicide as a new offense in the Penal Code. In England and Wales, a start has been made in recognizing misogynist-motivated crimes as hate crimes and, in the victimization of victims of domestic violence or rape in courtrooms (Avgi, Femicide / How to end the scourge).

The proposed amendments intend to recognize femicide as a distinct offense, thereby recognizing the discriminatory nature of these types of crimes. This approach ensures that the recognition of femicide is embedded within the specific provision pertaining to homicide, as opposed to the current effort to eliminate temporary imprisonment without distinction. By emphasizing its severity as an aggravating factor in cases of homicide, the legal system can establish a more robust foundation that would provide enhanced protection for victims. In addition, Ms. Kaouni provides global examples that exhibit a resolute dedication to advancing human rights. The current discourse revolves around the recognition of femicide as a unique criminal offense within the domestic legal system, given the latest advancements. Sixteen (16) countries have made a distinction between femicide and homicide, thereby encouraging the ongoing discussion. The ongoing discussion has expanded to encompass additional member states of the European Union (EU), as evidenced by Cyprus' recent efforts in September 2021 to enact legislative measures that would establish an independent reference to femicide. Furthermore, current

endeavors in England and Wales involve the categorization of crimes motivated by misogyny as hate crimes and the implementation of suitable measures for victimization.

Ms Kriebardi, (2021), a journalist for The Press Project raises concerns about the effectiveness of the legal system in holding perpetrators accountable for acts of violence against women specifically stemming from the discrepancy between the legal definition of intentional homicide and the recognition of femicide as a distinct crime.

> *The term "femicide" and its characteristics are slowly becoming more and more known in society, although it is not recognized by law - in our country. Homicide with intent, according to Article 299 of the Criminal Code, is punishable by life imprisonment. However, in practice, in many cases, this sentence is reduced due to mitigating circumstances recognized by the court. Therefore, the offender is often given a shorter sentence.* (The Press Project, Stories of Shame with women in the background*)*

Notwithstanding the gravity of the penalty established in the legal framework, the reference to extenuating circumstances suggests the existence of variables that may result in the mitigation of sanctions for individuals found guilty of the crime of homicide.

Ms. Kefallinou's statement, as reported in Ethnos, acknowledges a deficiency in the existing legal framework and underscores the necessity of implementing significant reforms to effectively address this matter.

> *The legal framework is not seriously flawed with the exception of the issue of legal recognition of femicide. We insist and will continue to insist that femicide should be legally recognized and should be an aggravating circumstance for the perpetrator.*

The argument proposes that femicide should be considered an aggravating circumstance, thereby situating the matter within a wider context of justice and responsibility, underscoring the seriousness of these offenses.

This view is also shared by Suzana Paulou, Director of the Mediterranean Institute for Gender Research in Cyprus, a researcher on gender equality and violence against women, and a member of international organizations and initiatives. She stresses the positive development in Greece, wherein the term "femicide" has been adopted in the public debate and the need for a distinct legal framework to address it.

> *It is positive that in Greece the term has at least been adopted in the public debate. For us too, legal recognition of femicide is a long-standing demand and the Speaker of the Parliament, Anita Demetriou, is trying to promote the issue at the same time as the need for data collection. So far when we ask for data from the police, they send us the whole list of homicides.*

On the other hand, while Ms Kamtsidou (2021) recognizes its value in highlighting the underlying causes and perpetuation of patriarchal ideology and structures that foster the occurrence of such offenses, dissents from the notion of establishing a uniform definition of the term within a legal framework. She argues that it is crucial to recognize and grant women equal status as human beings, with commensurate entitlements and liberties, while also contesting any manifestation of gender-based differentiation or preferential treatment.

> *So I fear that any differentiation between the murder of the woman and the murder of the man is legally and politically incorrect. Women, in the most formal, most solemn way, will be recognized as a special category of human beings, who deserve different*

treatment, while claiming without any preconditions their human status, their 'humanity', so that on that basis they can enjoy all their rights and freedoms equally.

I consider valuable the use of the term femicide in public discourse to highlight the causes, survival, and reproduction of patriarchal ideology and the structures that produce the crime, while I consider its legal standardization to be misplaced (Avgi, Femicide in the media as a sign of female vulnerability)

Ms Vougiouka (2020) highlights the alignment between critical feminist theory and the feminist movement's stance in advocating for the legal recognition of femicide.

For critical feminist theory and the feminist movement, it is clear that this new signifier, which encapsulates the extreme criminal behavior of violent life-taking and at the same time extreme, lethal gender violence as the final stage of a continuum, requires legal recognition of femicide. (Avgi,, Patriarchy / The modern Minotaur requires sacrifices)

The feminist discourse emphasizes the importance of recognizing and analyzing the gendered dynamics of violence, and this statement reflects that perspective. The essence of the definition of femicide inherently includes gender discrimination and violence as necessary components. Hence, the acknowledgment of the gendered nature of the lethal act highlights the fundamental societal concerns and power imbalances that facilitate the perpetration of such offenses.

Mr Alexandris (2020), emphasizes the importance of prioritizing meaningful action and interventions to combat femicide over semantic debates. Instead of engaging in

theoretical discussions, he suggests focusing on understanding and combating the underlying causes and effects of gender-based violence against women.

> *Femicide is not just a crime with female victims. It is a crime where women are victims precisely because they are women. And as in many other categories of crime whose outcome is more or less the same, there is a special circumstance, that of gender as a necessary condition, which differentiates the crime qualitatively and quantitatively from other cases of homicide.....And how ridiculous it is to discuss the definition of femicide instead of worrying about the literal meaning of it.* (Kathimerin, Dimensions)

The significance of adopting the definition of femicide has also become a topic of discussion in international media, as indicated by the journalist (2021) of In.gr.

> *The Guardian even published a report on the incidents of femicide in Greece, entitled "A woman is murdered every month…."Lawyers and activists point to the terms of the Greek penal code that they say reinforce a culture of tolerance for violence against women. These conditions lead to a reduction in the sentence of those accused of manslaughter if the victim 'provoked them' or the crime was committed in the heat of passion - often referred to as a 'crime of passion' - or if the accused had a prior honorable life and, after the murder, repented. They say that adding the term 'femicide' to the criminal code will act as a counterweight, removing the opportunity for perpetrators to present themselves as innocent men who suddenly felt overcome by emotion and justify the murder.* (Individuals who perpetrate femicides are often individuals "next door").

It exposes the criticism of certain provisions of the Greek penal code that are viewed as fostering tolerance for violence against women. The proposed addition of the term "femicide" to the criminal code is presented as an attempt to challenge and alter this cultural tolerance, and to ensure that perpetrators are held accountable for their actions. The report also mentions attorneys and activists who contend that the provisions of the Greek penal code contribute to a culture of tolerance for violence against women. Specifically, they point out conditions that could lead to reduced sentences for perpetrators, which are invoked on the pretext of victim provocation, crimes committed in the heat of passion, or (the perpetrator) having led an honorable life prior to the murder and demonstrating repentance.

Another issue that has arisen relates to the practical application of the subject under discussion, as well as the supplementary factors that need to be taken into account when addressing such occurrences. Kaitaji-Witlock's (2021) observation presents a significant perspective regarding the role of lawyers in representing individuals accused of perpetrating harm against women.

> *Disciplinary action should be taken against lawyers who defend women killers in Sharia terms, citing 'injured honor', and seeking impunity for criminals.* (Avgi, Femicide / How to end the scourge)

Ms Kaitaji-Witlock suggests that attorneys who overlook the psychological well-being of individuals who have suffered from domestic violence over a prolonged period of time and interrogate them, contribute to the development of a deep-seated belief in immunity. Attorneys who employ cultural or religious justifications, such as the notion of "injured honor," are complicit in a legal framework that prioritizes the safeguarding of perpetrators while simultaneously depriving victims of their rightful access to justice. Henceforth, it is imperative to hold accountable and challenge any defense strategy that

contravenes the fundamental tenets of equitable treatment and the applicability of legal principles to all individuals.

Ms. Goni-Karabotsou (2021), a lawyer and researcher for the European Observatory on Femicide, points out that while naming these crimes is essential, broader institutional recognition is also required.

Although we have come to name these crimes for what they are, targeted gender-based murders, which is a victory primarily for the feminist movement of recent years, especially since 2017, "as far as institutional recognition is concerned, we do not see any such intention from the authorities at this stage, although there are institutions that have adopted the term femicide and are struggling for its wider social acceptance.

We are far from a wider institutional recognition of the phenomenon. This would not, of course, mean magically eliminating features of a patriarchal society that lead to femicide, such as treating female bodies as less important, but it would help to recognize the responsibility of the state for how the authorities act or fail to act in cases of gender and domestic violence.

Nevertheless, she points out, "in public discourse, there is a clear tendency to predominate and, as the experience of Latin American countries shows us, this is a precursor to changes at the legislative level as well. It is very likely that in the next few years, the anti-objections will be overcome and there will be legislative changes in this respect. (Documento, Women's killers usually live with them)

In Latin American nations, legislative changes have frequently followed a notable prevalence of the issue in public discourse. According to Ms. Goni-Karabotsou, it is possible that a comparable trend will arise in the future, wherein the hindrances and opposition toward the recognition of femicide as a legal concept will be surmounted in the forthcoming years. This reference to the experiences of Latin American nations

implies that public discourse can exert a substantial influence on the enactment of legislative reforms as occurred in these countries. These modifications transpired in conjunction with more extensive revises subsequent to the collapse of oppressive regimes. Certain nations have made efforts to establish a connection between criminal activities and the State's inability to address femicides. This highlights the State's accountability for promoting a culture of tolerance and inaction toward gender-based violence over a prolonged period.

Nevertheless, in relation to the official acceptance of the term femicide, a group of researchers in Latin America argue that the institutional integration of the term femicide/feminicide does not offer a thorough resolution. The authors argue that the relatively low effectiveness of legislation addressing femicide/feminicide can be attributed to a variety of complex factors. These factors, including shortcomings in the actions taken by government agencies, insufficient funding, and prevailing societal attitudes, should carefully be considered and incorporated in order to effectively prevent the phenomenon (Carrigan & Dawson, 2020; Bay, 2020; Padilla, 2022; Pasinato, & de Ávila, 2023)

3.3.2. Creating a state body that handles and records gender violence

Ms Kaouni states (2021) that the current shortcomings in data collection regarding femicides often result in underreporting or misclassification of these crimes, leading to an incomplete understanding of the extent and nature of gender-based violence.

> *The introduction of the term femicide in our criminal system would also be a way to strengthen the collection and processing of such data, which unfortunately are lacking in our country so that such incidents are officially recorded as femicides, but also be dealt with competently by the judicial authorities. Classifications and categorizations have a very important objective: the development of policies up to and including the allocation of funds. This creates the necessary for psychological and legal support, information,*

prevention, and care structures. (Avgi, Femicide / How to end the scourge)

Comprehensive and reliable data on the scope and characteristics of violence against women is crucial for understanding the phenomenon and assessing the effectiveness of policy interventions (Krug, Mercy, Dahlberg, Zwi, 2002). Keeping track of this sort of data is of utmost importance as it allows for the development of an all-encompassing collection of information, which in turn facilitates the acquisition of valuable knowledge for policymakers and researchers regarding the fundamental reasons, trends, and characteristics of these occurrences. Furthermore, according to Ms. Kaouni, the inclusion of femicide in the criminal justice system can aid in the formulation of preventive measures. Through a methodical process of documenting and scrutinizing data on femicide, policymakers can identify high-risk areas, risk factors, and implement targeted interventions to address the root causes of gender-based violence. An approach that goes beyond the mere resolution of isolated cases and prioritizes the prevention of future occurrences, with the goal of fostering a safer environment for women within society.

Similarly, Ms. Kogidou (2021) highlights that the absence of a formal mechanism to document femicide poses a challenge in presenting an exact portrayal of the phenomenon in Greece.

She underscores the necessity of an official recording system that adheres to comprehensive standards, thereby enabling a more precise depiction of the problem.

The absence of an official mechanism to record femicide obscures the true picture of the phenomenon in Greece. According to the criteria used by the Greek section of the European Observatory on Femicide (EOF), there are more gender-motivated murders of women than the 18 reported in the media. However, the creation of the Greek section of the European Observatory on Femicide, which took place in April 2020 (see website femicide.gr), is an important

*contribution to the effort to highlight the issue of femicide in
Greece, its causes, and its characteristics. In addition, systematic
data collection enables the design of more effective prevention
policies and may demonstrate the need for the recognition of the
crime of femicide as a distinct offense.* (Kathimerini, As long as
society denies seeing it)

Ms Kogidou says also that the establishment of the Greek section of the EOF represents a
noteworthy endeavor that aims to bring the matter to the forefront of public discourse and
policy agendas. In the absence of an official mechanism, this platform records and
collects systematic data for measuring the extent of femicide and increasing public
awareness.[9]

Mr Kapsabeli (2021), the researcher of the Greek section highlights the establishment of
the European Observatory on Femicide as a response to the gap in the recording and
visibility of femicides in Greece. The phrase "no data, no problem, no policy"
encapsulates the challenge faced not only in Greece but also in many other countries. In
the absence of data, the surveillance of femicides' causes, and classifications is
insufficient, thereby impeding the development of a more efficacious approach to tackle
the issue.

*The Greek section is the first attempt to systematically record and
analyze, both quantitatively and qualitatively, the number of
femicides in Greece. Finding sources on the basis of collecting and
recording cases was a challenge from the outset. This is because
since in our country femicide is not a crime, no data are kept at the
state level, so we use alternative sources, mainly the media…*
*This invisibility of the motives of each perpetrator does not allow
for any indicator of prevention at the legal, social, and institutional*

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https://femicide.gr/

level. "It is crucial to have in our hands the measurable data that will lead the broader social and institutional perception to accept the intensity and quality of the problem and start acting against it… Thus, we can talk about the possibility of overcoming the problem that we encounter with gender violence and crime not only in Greece but also in many other countries, which can be summed up in the words of the person in charge of the Greek group, "no data‣ no problem‣ no policy" (Documento, The killers of women usually live with them)

The lack of a standardized framework for recording the gender characteristics of victims and perpetrators in relation to all crimes, including homicide is also recommended by Ms Petroulaki (2021).

It is worth mentioning that we do not have any data on femicides that do not fall under Law 3500/2006 on domestic violence. They are included in the data on homicides which, for the moment, are not published separately by sex of victim and perpetrator….The same process (Death Reviews) should be repeated on an annual basis and Annual Reports should be produced, including quantitative and qualitative data and an update on risk factors when they arise. This project will require the establishment of a permanent, multidisciplinary, and cross-sectoral, working group involving qualified professionals with experience in the field and will be given access to official police and court files and, where appropriate, to the witness(es) in each case. (Avgi, Femicide / How to end the scourge)

The proposed initiative entails the implementation of a periodic Death Review procedure, to be carried out annually, as well as Annual Reports that encompass both quantitative and qualitative information, along with the latest updates on potential risk factors, thereby facilitating a more thorough and in-depth analysis. In order to properly carry out this project, Ms Petroulaki recommends a more integrated set of coordinated services from the police, criminal justice systems, health services, and social services.

3.3.3. Taking socioeconomic measures

The implementation of a financial resilience package highlights the imperative for government intervention and allocation of resources towards this objective, particularly for individuals who do not qualify for standard benefits.

> We demand the provision of a sufficient financial allowance from the state, to be included in this year's budget and especially from the support and resilience package given due to the cuts, to address issues of domestic violence and the establishment of a special allowance to support women and children escaping from domestic violence, especially those who, even temporarily, are not eligible for the usual benefits (e.g. Minimum Guaranteed Income, rent allowance, A21 allowance).

> We demand the automation of the process considered necessary to provide legal aid to low-income citizens and the broadening of the income criteria, at least for survivors of domestic violence who have children. (In.gr, Eliminating violence against women - The demands of 19 women's organizations, 2021)

The demand made by nineteen (19) feminist organizations for a specific allowance highlights the insufficiencies and constraints of the present support mechanisms,

indicating the requirement for supplementary measures to aid individuals who are marginalized or insufficiently provided for by the prevailing benefits. Specific cohorts of women, including those who are not engaged in economic activities, migrants, and individuals residing in households with low income or heavily reliant on labor-intensive work, face unique challenges and susceptibilities that require tailored support. The impact of poverty on individuals seeking legal aid is primarily influenced by the factors of efficiency and accessibility. Therefore, it is imperative to prioritize the optimization of the process in order to enhance the accessibility of legal assistance for individuals with limited financial resources. The decision to broaden the income criteria aligns with the principle of inclusivity, aiming to address the unique challenges faced by domestic violence survivors who are parents and may have limited financial resources.

In addition, the enhancement of the availability and accessibility of psychosocial support, shelter, and legal representation for women who are survivors of violence was highlighted by nineteen (19) organizations as a crucial requirement that should be prioritized in policymaking aimed at addressing gender-based violence. Developing the necessary infrastructure to provide emergency housing for women and children who cannot access shelters or require extended assistance and specialized care is the primary objective. This is intended to protect vulnerable women, such as refugees, immigrants, and Roma, among others. This hospitality is intended to be extended until the core issues that survivors of violence and their children must confront are resolved.

> *We demand the strengthening, the multiplication of women's support structures, the extension of their operating hours, and the framing and staffing with permanent personnel so that they can provide effective psychosocial support, hospitality, and legal representation. To create the infrastructure required for emergency, IMMEDIATE, hospitality without any bureaucracy, for alternative accommodation for women & children excluded from shelters and those who need long-term hospitality, which lasts until the basic problems of survivors of violence and their children are resolved.*

(In.gr, Eliminating violence against women - The demands of 19 women's organizations, 2021)

The language of the above statement conveys a sense of urgency and the need for immediate action to address the needs of survivors, especially in terms of providing accessible support services and establishing infrastructure to accommodate both emergency and long-term hospitality.

Ms. Petroulaki's call to action centers on the advantages of a comprehensive approach that includes heightened respect for victims, and improved safety and protective measures. The proposed plan for coordinated and integrated services seeks to address the inherent deficiencies of the current system. The text emphasizes the advantages of the model and endeavors to optimize the efficacy and efficiency of the support system through the consolidation of procedures and the encouragement of interprofessional cooperation. Consequently, the implementation of a collaborative methodology guarantees the incorporation of all facets of a victim's circumstances, culminating in the formulation of an individualized and all-encompassing strategy.

Expedite the formal interconnection and cooperation of all services and agencies involved in dealing with incidents of domestic violence in order to provide immediate protection and support so that the woman seeking protection is not forced to take on the coordinating role herself, as is currently the case. That is, the model of Family Justice Centres or Domestic Abuse One Stop Shops, provides almost all services in the same building and directly.

This would free the abused woman and her children from multiple and often unnecessary visits to services, each of which wants to take its own history in order to design its own plan of action for the small portion of the case it can manage. This approach is advantageous and effective not only for the victim who, through the

holistic support she receives, feels that she is treated with respect, but also for the country's system of support and protection for victims of domestic violence through the linking of specialized, already experienced, professionals who: a) approach, as a multidisciplinary team, each case of domestic violence, b) have access to all required information and c) jointly design a multifaceted, individualized, action plan for the protection and empowerment of the abused woman and children, but also for and against the perpetrator. (Avgi, 2021, Femicide / How to end the scourge)

Ms. Kefalinou's statement acknowledges the scale of the problem and suggests a concerted effort to enhance the Secretariat's capacity to offer aid and support to women who have experienced abuse. The statement underscores the importance of establishing a network of resilient and adaptable structures that can effectively respond to the requirements of all women who seek assistance.

*Strengthen the Secretariat's network of structures to be able to deal with and support every woman who escapes abuse (*Avgi, 2021, Gender-based violence / Femicide is not a bolt from the blue)

Positive steps have been made in enhancing awareness through publicity as evidenced at the time of conducting this study. The General Secretariat for Demographic and Family Policy and Gender Equality of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs has recently introduced a digital application[10], that aims to offer guidance to individuals without specialized expertise, as well as the general public, on effectively addressing instances of domestic violence. This initiative aligns with established international norms and guidelines.

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[10] https://isotita.gr/gbv-guidelines/

3.3.4. Gender issues as a part of the educational curricula

The speakers hereunder emphasize the importance of developing a comprehensive and coordinated educational program that addresses various aspects of gender equality and women's rights in order to identify effective interventions to prevent SGBV.

Ms. Koronaiou (2021) expresses frustration with the exclusion of social sciences from secondary education, especially given the prevalence of serious crimes involving violence, infringement on sexual freedom, femicide, domestic violence, and racist attitudes in society. This omission is seen as a potential barrier to fostering critical thinking and may inadvertently align with fascist, bigoted, and sexist tendencies. She also suggests that the prevailing media discourse requires modifications, as it tends to exhibit a biased portrayal of events, particularly with respect to matters pertaining to women. A modernization of the media's portrayal of women so that it more accurately reflects gender equality's progress is required. This would ensure that the coverage is fair and balanced and does not perpetuate or reinforce harmful stereotypes.

> *We must respond, women and men together, with a coordinated program that includes many, many strands. I am not only talking about Criminal Law as the program could also address education. It is tragic that social sciences are being removed from secondary education. Instead of being inspired by such a policy or similar policies, we are currently immersed in something that shows a state or institutions that border on fascism", the professor emphatically stressed and commented that in the area of women's human rights, we should be very strict. "Not only should the media stop this particular way of presenting events, but in similar cases, even prosecutorial intervention should be activated to deal with this situation, she concluded.* (Press Project, The Media take a class approach to gender violence and patriarchy,)

Ms.Paulou (2021)additionally points out the existence of gender bias in the justice system and implies that this must also be addressed through gender equality-based inclusive programs. This patriarchal discourse of the justice system that attributes blame to the victims and re-victimizes them leads to unjust outcomes for victims of gender-based violence.

> *"Often the judges themselves express the patriarchal discourse that puts the blame on the victim and re-victimizes it. This particular judge said of the perpetrator that he 'clouded his mind because she cheated on him.* (Ethnos, There is no bad moment" - The cycle of violence before the femicides in Greece)

Ms. Kaitaji-Witlock also emphasizes the significance of providing training to professionals who are frequently the first points of contact in cases of violence against women. The group of individuals known as "Primary Determinants" includes various professionals, such as police officers, forensic doctors, journalists, and lawyers. Aligning their training with the objectives of the Istanbul Convention, these professionals will be better able to serve the rights of female victims with professionalism and accountability.

> *Educational institutions have to propose new pedagogical methods and practices. The aim is to fully respect women's rights. By honoring the value of equality, de facto, Universities can take the lead in launching curricula focusing on egalitarianism in society. The professional categories of 'Primary Determinants' of first contact with incidents of violence (police officers, forensic doctors, journalists, lawyers) need to be trained according to the objectives of the Istanbul Convention. Only in this way can they serve the rights of women victims, as they conceptually define relations of*

inequality, structurally influencing the chain: news, opinions, and recruitment. (Avgi, 2021, Femicide / How to end the scourge)

Goni-Karabotsou recognizes the crucial and urgent need for customized training programs and the involvement of various stakeholders within the legal system. The objective of this training is to address occurrences of victim-blaming, lack of respect, and violation of the dignity of victims that are observed in court proceedings, with the primary goal of guaranteeing the proper provision of justice.

Unfortunately, it is not uncommon for the personality of the victims to be violated in the courtroom, even though it is undoubtedly much more limited in femicide cases than in cases of rape or other gender crimes that did not result in the death of the victim….

This makes clear the absolute and urgent need for specific training for all (co-)workers in the justice system, judges, prosecutors, lawyers, police authorities, and forensic doctors. The state has a duty to ensure that the lack of trust in justice that is - rightly - felt by victims/survivors of gender crimes is restored. (Documento, 2021, The killers of women usually live with them)

Respectively, Ms. Kouvela (2021) proposes the implementation of training sessions and programs focused on gender equality, aimed at promoting the adoption of inclusive and non-discriminatory practices among professionals in their respective fields. By means of legal interventions and educational programs, media professionals can acquire the essential skills and expertise to advance gender parity, contest preconceived notions, and cultivate a more comprehensive media environment.

The law that provides for the adoption of measures to promote gender equality in the mass media, in advertising, and in the responsibilities of the National Broadcasting Council must be implemented immediately, and relevant seminars must be held for the people who work in these areas. (Documento,The killers of women usually live with them)

Ms Kefallinou (2021) suggests that media outlets should refrain from sensationalizing or glorifying abusers, as such coverage can perpetuate harmful narratives and contribute to the re-victimization of survivors. The analysis further indicates that the media's focus should shift towards giving voice to victims, promoting their stories, and raising awareness about the issues surrounding abuse and gender-based violence.

…. changing the media's perspective to stop headlines and articles that make money out of abusers. (Avgi, Gender-based violence / Femicide is not a bolt from the blue)

Educational programs that would aim at gender equality addressing deep-rooted patriarchal relations and stereotypes should be part of the educational process. Ms Kefallinou and Ms Kaitatzi-Witloc recognize the need for a sustained effort to educate preschool and school-age children about sexuality, consent, gender identities, and healthy relationships.

Let's start by strictly applying the clauses of the Istanbul Convention (2011) of the Council of Europe (CoE). The state must legislate against unfair behavior. Launch education programs focusing on respect for the personality of women (Avgi, 2021, Femicide / How to end the scourge)

*Launch education programs focusing on respect for women's personalities. Establish necessary institutions to eliminate patriarchal relations and stereotypes. (*Avgi, 2021, Femicide / How to end the scourge)

.... among other measures, Ms Kefallinou states the introduction of courses on sex education (Avgi, 2021, Gender-based violence / Femicide is not a bolt from the blue).

It is important to acknowledge that endeavors have been initiated within the realm of higher education. In accordance with Law 4589/2019, specifically Article 33, Gender Equality Committees (GECs) have been instituted since the year 2020. These committees function as consultative entities within the majority of universities in the nation, providing guidance to the Senates and Administrations of the Faculties and Departments. Their primary objective is to advance equality across all aspects of university operations and within the various processes of academic life. The preparation of medium-term Gender Equality Action Plans for each Higher Education Institution stands as a crucial responsibility of the Gender Equality Committees.

3.3.5. Linguistic gender-sensitive adaptations

Herein, Ms. Kaitaji-Witlock (2021) discusses the existence of linguistic sexism in legal systems that reinforce and perpetuate gender inequalities, leading to harmful narratives that provide justifications to offenders through the re-victimization of survivors. The professor advocates for the eradication of linguistic sexism in legal frameworks, highlighting the necessity of reevaluating language as a tool to contest patriarchal power dynamics and foster parity, inclusivity, and empowerment for all individuals.

> *Legislators must eliminate the linguistic sexism of laws, which insidiously establishes patriarchal power relations. Note: in the Progressive State, gender equality is not only a matter of 'defensive'. On the contrary, prospectively, equality constitutes a dynamic developmental tool that liberates social forces as a whole.*
> (Avgi, Femicide / How to end the scourge)

The capacity to function in a virtual setting while maintaining anonymity, has created a milieu wherein individuals have the freedom to participate in misogynistic behavior and disseminate detrimental ideologies. Within this particular context, Kaitaji-Witlock (2021) articulates her perspective by emphasizing the significance of regulating content and preventing the growth of harmful material on social media platforms. The implementation of legally enforceable regulations and oversight mechanisms is necessary to ensure that the content disseminated on these platforms does not promote or condone misogynistic beliefs and behaviors.

> *Social networking media should be immediately subjected to legally binding regulations, in line with the provisions of the Istanbul Convention, criminalizing messages of misogyny that produce mass*

fascism and addiction. In the 'Internet of anonymity', in addition to
regulating the central companies (Instagram, Facebook), the
control of local content and advertising providers is a priority.
(Avgi, 2021, Femicide / How to end the scourge)

As indicated in other sections of the paper, feminist viewpoints highlight the significant and distinct impact of media on the formation of societal values and beliefs in addition to its potential to impact policy decisions. In 2021, a total of nineteen (19) organizations have emphasized the critical need for timely intervention and modification in media usage that does not effectively address existing gender inequalities. Given these circumstances, the Organizations are urging journalist unions to enforce ethical standards among their members and implement measures to prohibit and prevent gender-based misconduct in the media sector. Thus, the Organizations assert that such an issue cannot be ignored, so promoting adherence to ethical guidelines that reject sexist storylines, prejudices, and biased behavior among journalists can bring the media industry in line with depictions that promote gender equality, respect, and impartiality.

We call on journalists' unions to stem the tide of sexism in the
media and demand that their members apply the relevant codes of
conduct, avoiding the repeated promotion of bad standards.
(Eliminating violence against women - The demands of 19 women's organizations)

Ms. Athanasopoulou (2021) takes a critical stance toward the current language norms and structures that perpetuate gender inequality. Ms Athanasopoulou aims to highlight the importance of recognizing the performative aspect of gender identity in the transitional space of language, by drawing on the concepts put forth by Judith Butler. Butler posits that the act of enacting one's gender identity is a repetitive and ongoing process that entails the utilization of cultural scripts and cues by individuals. The rigid and unyielding

concept of identity is based on the way in which gender is linguistically constructed within a patriarchal system of power. As a result, Ms. Athanasopoulou advocates for challenging and reshaping language, since the disruption of the certainties surrounding identities, companionship, and parenthood can open up fresh possibilities for comprehending and expressing identities and relationships.

We learn through the theories of the American structuralist philosopher and great gender studies theorist, Judith Butler, the ways in which gendered subjects are shaped by public nationalist discourse. And we have seen how this discourse can become dangerous through the externalization of internalized guilt. It is, after all, through language that discrimination is consolidated and violence is normalized.....

In order to change this and stop women from being trapped in their own bodies or in the hands of others, changes in the symbolic field - that is, in language - must first be made in order to shake up the certainties around our identities and our choices in companionship and parenthood. (Efsyn, Underestimating the Woman to death)

The term "femicide" has generated considerable debate and censure among those who perceive it as lacking clarity and exhibiting a disparaging attitude towards women. However, for Ms. Papadopoulou (2021), an artist and activist, the term "femicide" is appropriate and accurate in conveying the severity and distinctive characteristics of homicides committed against women. She posits that the failure to recognize this terminology results in a devaluation and disregard of the systemic characteristics and fundamental dynamics of violence perpetrated against women. Ms Papadopoulou further asserts that language is a fundamental factor in shaping memory and consciousness as well as acknowledges the power of language in shaping perceptions, interpretations, and societal reactions to instances of violence based on gender. Consequently, she suggests

that the utilization of the generic term "homicide" may contribute to the erasure of these crimes from public awareness, leading to the marginalization and disregard of the systemic nature of violence against women.

> *By not accepting the signifier of femicide, we are essentially failing to recognize the truth and gravity of the relevant signifier, namely that murders are committed exclusively on the basis of the authoritarian, abusive, proprietary relationship of men to women. By denying the word, we invalidate the fact with its specific characteristics. By confining a category of gendered crimes in the shell of a generic term meaning the taking of human life, we choose to make reality disappear. How? By silencing the essence of these crimes and letting them get lost in the porridge of generality of the term homicide.....*
>
> *I wonder, in fact, how much the generality of the term homicide contributes to the dispersion of all these murders from memory and consciousness, i.e. how much language, apart from being an interpretation of reality, is also a factor that determines memory....*
>
> *Do words change the world? Not the world per se, but they do change how we perceive it, and that is an indispensable tool for changing it. Words are commands.*
>
> (Efsyn, Femicide: the "don't shout" of patriarchy)

Ms Athanasopoulou (2020), a journalist of Efsyn, argues that linguistic representation influences social attitudes and perceptions, as well as subsequent actions and behaviors. She claims that language has the potential to either normalize or challenge gender-based violence. In this sense, politicizing the term "femicide," becomes a tool for confronting and challenging the entrenched power dynamics that perpetuate violence against women.

The politicization of the term femicide and the need to reflect it in public discourse is, therefore, more than necessary, in order to highlight the political character of this particular crime, given that everything begins... in the linguistic interaction in every small or large society. Because it is through language that social discrimination is consolidated, it is through language that the male hand is legitimized or even pushed to become an axe. (Killing Helen verbally, in time and space).

4. Discussion and conclusions

To what degree has the national feminist discourse critically interrogated and contested the portrayals of femicide that extend beyond the dominant narratives presented in public discourse? What specific principles or ideas are upheld in the public discourse, and to what extent do feminists' perceptions correspond to everything they have to say? Throughout the pandemic which changes can changes be identified in the representation and attribution of femicide?

The aforementioned inquiries have formed the basis for examining how feminist narratives during the COVID-19 pandemic employed the concept of femicide to put forth alternative perspectives in response to a dominant discourse and mobilize initiatives. Given the multifaceted nature of the issue at hand, which encompasses interconnections with various forms of oppression, biopolitics, technology, and internal differentiations within the movement, this research has adopted a specific framework to study, centered on the implementation of advocacy narratives that leverage digital media exposure to increase public consciousness and advocate for policy changes.

To develop the reflection, generalizations and absolute certainties should be avoided, and more holistic research should be conducted. To improve the credibility of the data and obtain a more thorough comprehension of the impact on public discourse, it is necessary to broaden the scope of the sampling frame. This expansion should encompass various platforms such as social media, parliamentary debates, digital campaign materials produced by civil society organizations, and feminist initiatives. This approach allows

for a more thorough exploration of the existence and resonance of alternative narratives that challenge dominant public discourses. It is also important to recognize that voice exclusion can also exist in feminist spaces, where certain voices, perspectives, or identities may be marginalized or ignored. The pursuit of inclusivity is an ongoing process that requires self-reflection, learning and accountability, valuable for advancing feminist agendas. The general content of this study enables us to draw initial conclusions regarding the increasing visibility of the phenomenon of femicide in the public sphere, which can be seen as an extension of a preexisting manifestation of collective outrage and denunciation, triggered by the femicide of Helen Topaloudis in 2018 (Vougiouka, 2019). The alarming scale and growing prevalence of femicide, along with heightened discussions on topics like violence against women and domestic violence, especially during the COVID-19 health crisis, influenced the media to gradually embrace the term "femicide" and incorporate it into their coverage of such crimes. It should also be mentioned that the link between femicide and the media is in full development and there is a digital debate that should not be ignored.

In the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, the feminist narratives and actions brought attention to the urgency and relevance of gender-based violence and femicides, often neglected in mainstream narratives, and helped challenge essentialist or universalizing understandings of this phenomenon. The national women's movement, connected to an international network, has had a significant impact through its demands and the dissemination of its discourse on social and media platforms. This resurgence of the movement in various radical and non-radical forms, exemplified by movements like #MeToo, #NiUnaMenos, and #UnVioladorEnTuCamino, serves as a crucial mechanism for exerting pressure on institutions and plays a vital role in creating a supportive social framework that promotes the investigation and recognition of femicides (Kodochristou, 2021). Furthermore, the national feminist movement has aimed to disrupt existing patterns by reframing the long-standing issue of femicides and advocating for policy changes. The COVID-19 and post-COVID-19 era provide an opportune time for this reconceptualization by exploring the multidimensional forms of expression for combating femicides within a highly diverse socioeconomic, political, and ethnic space.

The attempt to acknowledge the issue in times of pandemic presents a framework for comprehending the transformations that have occurred in the realm of the public sphere. The findings of this research identified a shift away from defining or quantifying the phenomenon, as it is now commonly understood, in favor of emphasizing its raw reality and capturing ongoing consequences. This indicates that the private and personal aspects of femicide have now become a matter of public concern, demanding attention, and analysis.

The act of recounting and listening to narratives surrounding gender-based violence and shedding light on the occurrence of femicides holds substantial political implications, as it serves to strengthen advocacy collectives and foster the development of alternative public spheres. By embracing the revived slogan "personal is political" we embrace the political dimension of personal narratives, which forms as a means of restorative public discourse. This discourse empowers survivors and families of victims to reclaim their narratives while giving voice to those who are "missing" and calling for solidarity, justice, and change in society. However, this act (of speaking out) encounters resistance within a public space that upholds notions of disgrace and social stigma, combined with a media landscape that amplifies doubts regarding the reliability of survivors. In a space permeated by sexist rhetoric and politics of death,[11] it is crucial to establish various public arenas that facilitate productive exchanges among the realms of art, the public, and academia. Hence, the term "femicide" functions as a catalyst for initiating a dialogue that seeks to introduce new perspectives and adopts a collaborative approach that aims to promote a comprehensive response to the occurrence of femicide.

Remaining on the topic of visibility, the feminist narrative evolved in the COVID-19 context, exhibited proactive and reactive characteristics by responding to immediate events or challenges. Based on the available research material, feminist organizations, and collectives have actively engaged in street demonstrations to condemn the murder of women during the ongoing pandemic. In addition to calling for widespread participation

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The term is attributed to Agamben, G., Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life (1995)

in these mobilizations, they articulated specific requisitions to address gender-based violence, which tragically can result in fatalities. The renewed feminist discourse and contemporary theoretical elaborations that critique established power dynamics and question the role of the state, welfare systems, and care policies, necessitate sufficient financial resources both at the national and sub-national levels to effectively implement the recommendations outlined in the Istanbul Convention, including prevention projects and research.

The analysis demonstrates also that the Istanbul Convention has consistently been recognized as a pivotal instrument in theoretical discussions. However, it is observed that the Convention's practical application is hindered by a dearth of political determination to effectively implement and enforce its provisions. The insufficiency described above results in a situation where women who require assistance and protection do not receive sufficient support. Expectations for action at various levels of the spectrum have increased, making it necessary to ensure efficient accountability in the implementation process. In this regard, the establishment of a comprehensive delineation of duties and obligations for governmental entities and pertinent stakeholders is necessary in order to guarantee the efficient execution of strategies and policies while also enforcing accountability among the entities responsible for their implementation.

The findings also reveal a notable absence of official statistics on femicide in a country where the occurrence of such cases is alarmingly high and raises questions about their commitment to addressing the issue and understanding its scale. This system ultimately addresses violence against women primarily through the implementation of formal institutional measures that may have limited practical significance in addressing the everyday manifestations of gender-based oppression, thereby potentially disregarding its significance as a pressing issue. State authorities' collective accountability and indifference can be simply encapsulated by the phrase "absence of data leads to the absence of concern, which in turn leads to the absence of policy (Kapsampeli, 2021). This absence of concern and eventually the absence of policy underscores the need for comprehensive action, political will, and the adoption of effective measures to address this urgent issue. Institutional intervention is therefore required. For instance, there are

concerns about the lack of adequate training of police officers, who may fail to protect victims or intervene when called upon by third parties, or the tendency of the press to treat each case of femicide as an isolated incident, failing to recognize the proper handling of femicide as a deep-rooted, sexist crime in Greece. Or the tendency of the press to treat each case of femicide as an isolated incident which hinders the recognition and proper handling of femicide as a deeply rooted, sexist crime in Greece.

Almost all the speakers, with a slight variation, call for the government to recognize femicide as a separate criminal offense against women and to include it as a specific provision in Greek criminal law. The lack of legal action suggests the failure of the state to adequately address femicide. It calls for self-reflection and reflection on the shortcomings of the state and highlights the need to examine what is not being done right in terms of preventing femicide and ensuring justice for victims. But can legislation absorb the shocks of society? In addition to the legal guarantee of the term, the role of women themselves is highlighted, particularly in terms of trying to change attitudes and perceptions.

With the patriarchal background in the Greek social context, issues related to gender-based violence may be downplayed or overlooked as they are perceived to threaten the stability and reputation of the collective unit. Patriarchal norms and expectations perpetuate the belief that men are entitled to control and dominate women, leading to the tolerance of authoritarian attitudes and behaviors towards women. When violence is considered a normal part of interpersonal relationships, it becomes more difficult to recognize and address instances of gender-based violence as distinct and unacceptable. Society should help men shed the patriarchal attitudes with which they have been nurtured for so many years. The "community response" signals society's responsibility to adopt social norms and values that prioritize the collective well-being and harmony of the community over individual rights and autonomy. To reverse existing power imbalances and patriarchal norms, interventions should actively challenge and transform harmful gender norms and power dynamics. In this layer, we can place femicide as a cultural narrative of change.Within this setting, the concept of femicides can be set as a cultural narrative that embodies transformative dynamics. Nevertheless, altering the narratives

does not necessarily result in a complete and direct transformation of the underlying shared values. The process of adaptation necessitates a significant amount of time .(Bandelli & Porcelli, 2016:22)

This study offers an examination of feminist discourses and underscores their significant role in reshaping narratives surrounding violence that ultimately led to fatal outcomes. The counter-discourse presented in this digital media context serves as a powerful means of amplifying voices that have been historically marginalized while shedding light on the distressing consequences of femicides, which are marked by inherent inequalities and discriminatory practices. Nevertheless, the speakers of these narratives extend their scope beyond mere analysis by actively calling for transformative change and advocating for social policies and interventions by holding institutions accountable.

In alignment with the approaches delineated in the thematic titled "The imperative for a holistic approach," I would like to conclude this research by pointing out the value of care as a proposition aimed at emancipating not only women but also various groups from the scourge of violence. This promising practice as envisioned by the authors of the book, "The Care Manifesto: The Politics of Interdependence" (2020) put care as the organizing principle of society that acts as an antidote to the callousness, the apathy that pervades our current system. The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic served as a stark reminder of the intricate interdependencies and intricacies within our global society, catching us off guard with its sudden and dire consequences. The repercussions of this pandemic extended beyond geographical boundaries, significantly impacting individuals, communities, economies, and various societal systems on a global scale. This profound realization emphasized the pressing imperative of placing care and cooperation at the forefront of our collective efforts across all dimensions and levels of social existence. Thus, the Manifesto, inspired by feminist thinking, posits that care as a political action has the potential to effectively confront and dismantle oppressive systems, thereby fostering a future marked by enhanced equality and inclusivity.

Besides, the resounding slogan "Είμαστε γεμάτα (στ)οργή[12]" echoing through the streets and across social media platforms, extends beyond conventional boundaries of resistance. It encapsulates a profound call for the construction and reaffirmation of essential elements crucial for the thriving and welfare of all sentient beings. By expressing our collective anger, we assert our demand for a structured democratic coexistence, diverging from the prevailing notion of accepting violence as a normative approach towards alternative non-violent political perspectives.

Finally, the analysis presented exhibited a deficiency in conducting a comprehensive examination of a crucial element: the indispensable need for an interdisciplinary methodology. This approach would emphasize the global extent of socio-economic phenomena that are intricately connected with conscious beings. Moreover, it would systematically promote the establishment of narrative frameworks and the adoption of policy-making practices that are inclusive of gender, with the ultimate goal of cultivating equality across all domains of post-pandemic activities in the 21st century. It is imperative to emphasize that the inclusion of efforts to combat gender-based violence (GBV) should be a fundamental aspect of this undertaking, necessitating a comprehensive reassessment and restructuring of evolving feminist ideologies (Sociology Lancaster, 2021).

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[12] In English "We are full of rage/affection". A pun of the words "οργή" και "στοργή" meaning respectively "rage" and "affection".

ANNEX 1.

	DATE	HEADLINE	NEWSPAPER	LINKS
1.	25/12/2021	As long as society denies seeing it	Kathimerini	https://www.kathimerini.gr/opinion/561643030/oso-i-koinonia-na-to-dei-arneitai/
2.	10/12/2021	The killers had the keys to their houses - Three femicides in 12 days	In.gr	https://www.in.gr/2021/12/10/greece/oi-dolofonoi-eixan-ta-kleidia-ton-spition-tous-treis-gynaikoktonies-se-12-imeres/
3.	28/11/2021	Gender-based violence / Femicide is not a bolt from the blue	Avgi	https://www.avgi.gr/koinonia/401954_i-gynaikoktonia-den-einai-keraynos-en-aithria
4.	26/11/2021	To speak	Kathimerini	https://www.kathimerini.gr/opinion/561602941/na-milame/
5.	25/11/2021	You are not alone. There are many of us. We have a voice.	The Press Project	https://thepressproject.gr/den-eisai-moni-eimaste-polles-echoume-foni/
6.	19/11/2021	Eliminating violence against women - The demands of 19 women's organizations	In.gr	https://www.in.gr/2021/11/19/greece/eksaleipsi-tis-vias-kata-ton-gynaikon-ta-aitimata-19-gynaikeion-organoseon/
7.	18/11/2021	Violence, abuse of women, and femicide are symptoms of a system that devalues women	The Press Project	https://thepressproject.gr/i-via-i-kakopoiisi-gynaikon-kai-oi-gynaikoktonies-einai-sybtomata-enos-systimatos-pou-ypotima-tis-gynaikes/
8.	17/11/2021	Individuals who perpetrate femicides are often individuals of "next door"	In.gr	https://www.in.gr/2021/11/17/plus/ta-atoma-pou-odigountai-sti-gynaikoktonia-einai-anthropoi-tis-diplanis-portas/
9.	17/10/2021	Femicide / How to end the scourge	Avgi	https://www.avgi.gr/koinonia/398484_pos-tha-baloyme-telos-sti-mastiga
10.	27/09/2021	"There is no bad moment" - The cycle of violence before the femicides in Greece	Ethnos	https://www.ethnos.gr/greece/article/175448/denyparxeikakiastigmhokyklosthsbiasprintisgynaikoktoniessthnellada
11.	29/08/2021	Iphigenia Kamtsidou / Femicide in the media as a problem of female vulnerability	Avgi	https://www.avgi.gr/koinonia/394653_i-gynaikoktonia-sta-mintia-os-problima-tis-gynaikeias-eyalototitas
12.	01/07/21	Femicide: the "don't shout" of patriarchy	Efsyn	https://www.efsyn.gr/stiles/apopseis/300696_gynaikoktonia-ta-oy-fonita-tis-patriarhias
13.	29/06/2021	Women's killers usually live with them	Documento	https://www.documentonews.gr/article/oi-foniades-ton-gynaikon-synithos-zoyn-mazi-toys/

14.	27/06/2021	Underestimating to death the woman	Efsyn	https://www.efsyn.gr/nisides/299909_ypotimontas-mehri-thanatoy-ti-gynaika
15.	22/06/2021	The media adopts a class-based perspective on gender violence and patriarchy.	The Press Project	https://thepressproject.gr/ta-mme-antimetopizoun-taxika-tin-emfyli-via-kai-tin-patriarchia/
16.	18/06/2021	Glyka Nera: The femicide compelled society to manifest its true self	Ethnos	https://www.ethnos.gr/opinions/article/162081/glykanerahgynaikoktoniapoystathhkeaformhnadeixoymeoloitaprosopamas
17.	18/04/2021	Stories of shame with women in the background	The Press Project	https://thepressproject.gr/istories-ntropis-me-fonto-gynaikes/
18.	30/11/2020	Patriarchy / The modern Minotaur requires sacrifices	Avgi	https://www.avgi.gr/koinonia/373134_o-syghronos-minotayros-apaitei-thysies
19.	28/11/2020	Dimensions	Kathimerini	https://www.kathimerini.gr/opinion/561177397/diataseis-11/
20.	27/11/2020	Mother of Eleni Topaloudi: "They killed her because she was a woman"	Documento	https://www.documentonews.gr/article/sygklonise-h-mhtera-ths-elenhs-topaloydh-th-skotwsan-epeidh-htan-gynaika/
21.	27/05/2020	The historic case of Topaloudi: a symbolic redemption for a large part of society	Avgi	https://www.avgi.gr/entheta/enthemata/355329_i-istoriki-ypothesi-topaloydi-mia-symboliki-lytrosi-gia-mia-megali-merida
22.	23/05/2020	Killing Helen verbally, in time and space	Efsyn	https://www.efsyn.gr/nisides/244687_skotonontas-tin-eleni-ston-logo-ston-hrono-kai-ston-horo
23.	29/03/2020	Coronavirus kills, and violence against women kills	Efsyn	https://www.efsyn.gr/nisides/237024_skotonei-o-koronoios-skotonei-kai-i-bia-kata-ton-gynaikon

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