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By

Dionysios S. Gouvias, Maria Gasouka and Xanthippi Foulidi

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FOREWORD

As is well documented from the international literature, migration–whether forced or not—is a complex phenomenon, mainly in terms of the cultural, spiritual and value elements that immigrants and refugees carry with them; elements which "seek free space" within the dominant culture and manifest themselves alongside their carriers' basic needs (feeding, housing, shelter, etc.). The truth is that identities, cultural differences, motivations, norms, values, and moral beliefs of the "others", when they meet the social sensitivity and acceptance of the citizens of the host countries, may have a beneficial effect on the new life of the people on the move, and can support their efforts to integrate into new social settings, so far unfamiliar for them.

In the case of *Intercultural Education*, which is dealt with in this book written by Dionysios Gouvias, Maria Gasouka and Xanthippi Foulidi, the recognition and acceptance of "alterity" (or "otherness") and what it entails can strengthen the adaptation of the "other" students to the school reality of the hosting country and improve their learning performance, thus reducing the chances of dropping out of school. One way or another, for immigrant and/or refugee students, despite the possible traumatic experiences of the journey that they have endured and which, in one way or another, affects their school performance, it is much easier than adults to integrate into the hosting society and to adopt much faster its language or other cultural features, mainly through their exposure to educational interventions. Consequently, it is understandable that a large number of studies internationally examine the factors affecting the school performance of immigrant and/or refugee students, pointing out that *cultural identity* is, among other things, a predictor of their school performance, as well as of their cultural adaptability. But what has not yet been extensively studied is the dimension of *gender* in this whole process; a dimension that is strong, since we all know–after decades of feminist theory, research and activism—that *gender cultural identity*, along with *feminine* or *masculine self-image* may have different effects on children's school performance.

Of course, *social class, age*, *nationality* and *residence status* are also predictors of school performance, especially in refugee and immigrant groups. These predictors, which may act as mediators between cultural identity and school performance, have generated intense research interest. The same, however, has not happened with *gender*, the effects of which

remain unclear, or rather obscured, and warrant a systematic investigation. We need to focus research on this particular issue, as cultural identity and gender intersect in a variety of ways, and Intercultural Education must take this fact into account. Equally important is to consider the fact that in *patriarchal societies*, as feminist research established many years ago, it is very easy to erect barriers for women and girls and prevent them from accessing resources and opportunities, even more so if these women and girls belong to vulnerable groups, such as migrants and/or refugees. These barriers undermine their self-confidence and affect both the girls' school performance, and their interaction with teachers and other classmates.

The above factors, as well as the important issue of developing a modern, open, *anti-racist* and *anti-sexist education*, which responds to the demands of our times, is at the centre of interest of the authors of this book. The book stands out in the insightful and clearly analyzed way in which it deals with the problem, based mainly on the Greek experience. Its authors focus particularly on the importance of Intercultural Education programs, which require the recognition and acceptance of "alterity", wherever it comes from. According to the authors, it is necessary to make visible both *feminist pedagogy* and *non-sexist education*, a choice that characterizes open and democratic education; one that can meet the needs and expectations of students, teachers and parents.

The *feminist*, *non-sexist* model of education comes to meet the *intercultural* one, with the aim of creating schools of acceptance and recognition of alterity, of overcoming stereotypes and deep-rooted perceptions, and of abolishing all kinds of discrimination. This is a crucial quest that must take place in schools–in the Greek ones too—with beneficial consequences both for immigrant and refugee populations, and for the societies of the host countries.

In this kind of educational environment, teachers, women, and men are required to be aware of their responsibility, be properly prepared to welcome "other" children and their families in a person-centred way, and to possess a strong sense of their role *and* "mission". Moreover, they are required to respond to the great challenge of transmitting knowledge, skills and values to children of different ethnic groups or gender identities, as well as to the successful adaptation of gender and cultural diversity in the educational system. The authors of the book send a strong message about the need for teachers to defend the right to education for *all children*, wherever they come from, and to refuse to legitimize obstacles and barriers for the participation of girls (mainly) and boys of the aforementioned cultural groups, aiming through their teaching practice to keep them in

school, and to contribute to the continuous improvement of their school performance.

I warmly congratulate my three colleagues at the University of the Aegean, Professor Dionysios Gouvias, Professor Emerita Maria Gasouka and Post-doc Researcher Xanthippi Foulidi for their excellent work, and I look forward to further explorations (both theoretical and empirical) of such an important issue concerning the convergence of *Intercultural Education* with *Gender Studies*.

Rhodes, December 2023

Chryssi Vitsilaki
Professor Emerita
Former Rector
University of the Aegean

PREFACE

This book is an attempt to interlink the concepts of "gender", "alterity" and "education", with special focus on "refugee education", and to highlight issues that have not been examined before in the international literature.

What is unique in this book is the simultaneous examination of both "gender" and "alterity" in the context of theoretical debate, as well as empirical research on Intercultural Education. So far, there has not been any in-depth study of the combination of gender and cultural (i.e., racial, linguistic, religious, etc.) dimensions of social life, with the current international literature focusing exclusively on either the first one (i.e., feminist theory and methodology, gender studies, etc.), or on the second one (i.e., cultural studies, anti-racist education, intercultural theory and pedagogy, etc.).

A professional group that will be interested in this book are *active teachers*, at primary or secondary level, as well as academics working in the fields of multicultural and intercultural education, migration, ethnic studies, racism, gender studies, etc.

Additionally, *students of Social Sciences and Education Departments* at both under- and post-graduate level who wish to work in the Education sector would benefit from up-to-date, valid and reliable information about the current situation of refugee education, in Greece and in the wider EU, and–most of all—from acquiring necessary knowledge and skills in order to deal with cultural diversity within classrooms.

Moreover, people engaged in *refugee-hosting sites* (e.g., various NGOs and/or international organizations who work with refugees) would gain a lot from getting acquainted with useful theoretical and practical insights on issues of "alterity", "diversity", "gender" and "education".

Furthermore, *state officials* (e.g., migration officers, police officers or coast-guard officers) would gain valuable knowledge and skills on how to handle vulnerable populations such as refugees–especially minor ones–effectively and according to international humanitarian standards. Lastly, people working in the *Mass Media* (traditional or not) would be equipped with a very useful "toolbox" of concepts, an action framework and guiding principles in reporting issues of refugee education, without having to resort to stereotypical, xenophobic and racist images of the "other".

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1. Scope of the book

In contemporary societies, where cultural "heterogeneity" increases alongside "globalization" and "homogenization" (Castells, 1996, 2004), the institutional, political and pedagogical dimensions of their management gain importance in the formulation of educational policies at a global and, above all, at a national level.

The mass movement (voluntary or involuntary) of populations, caused by natural causes (i.e., floods, earthquakes, tsunamis, hurricanes, etc.), or by armed conflicts and administrative practices (i.e., population exchanges, deportations, etc.) has created, in the last decades of the 20th century and the first two decades of the 21st century, a complex and multifaceted picture of the demographic and cultural composition of contemporary societies. According to data from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the highest levels of human movement have been recorded worldwide in recent years. In 2018, 74.8 million people were forcibly displaced globally due to conflicts–interstate and civil–and consequent human rights violations, of which 24 million were refugees or asylum seekers (UNHCR, 2019).

In the region of the Eastern Mediterranean Sea and the Middle East, the conflicts that followed the so-called "Arab Spring" (2011), which were related to civil conflicts within independent nation-states in the region (e.g., Syria, Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, etc.), as well as to interstate conflicts based on geopolitical and economic interests (e.g., exploitation of oil fields) and religious and ethnic differences (e.g., Iran-Israel, Turkey-Syria or Iraq, Israel-Palestine, Saudi Arabia–Yemen, etc.), created huge flows of refugees from those areas to Europe.

It is the first time since the Second World War that we have had such intense immigration/refugee flows on European soil, even though significant numbers of immigrants were recorded in the post-war decades with the well-known "migration of demand" (such as that of the Mediterranean

countries to Germany, France and Belgium, or from the Commonwealth countries to Great Britain), which had its main cause in the labor market needs of the host countries during the long period of their post-war economic development (Papadopoulou, 2009). Characteristic examples were the tens of thousands of displaced Greek Cypriots after the invasion of Cyprus (1974), but also in the 1990s, when war refugees from the former Yugoslavia–especially those coming from Bosnia-Herzegovina (1992-1995) and later from Kosovo (1998-1999)–migrated *en masse* to countries of the Balkan Peninsula, but also to rich countries in Central and Northern Europe.

Since 2015, Greece has received an increasing influx of refugees from various troubled areas of the Middle East and Africa; people who, en route to Europe, have found themselves "trapped" in Greece, due to the tightening of EU border controls. Due to this situation, a considerable number of refugees are increasingly coming to terms with the possibility of staying in Greece permanently, thus reflecting on how to integrate into Greek society; that is, how to adapt themselves to their new socioeconomic, political and cultural environment. One of the most challenging tasks faced by refugees is meeting their educational needs, as well as those of their offspring.

Educational systems, as one of the most crucial support mechanisms for people attempting to advance their social and cultural integration processes, are called upon to play an important role "in creating conditions for the acceptance and recognition of *pluralism* and *alterity* as basic characteristics of social processes" (Govaris 2001, p. 11).

Teachers are called on to be informed and trained so that they can respond to diversity in school classes, without reproducing inequalities and discriminations that are based on sterile prejudices and stereotypical perceptions, and lead to negative reactions on the part of children (Gillborn, 2003; Katsikas & Politou, 1999; Nikolaou, 2000; Zografou, 2003).

Students are required to tolerate and recognize the "other", or the "different", with whom they will need to come into contact and cooperate at some point in their lives. "Cultural diversity" is indeed considered–in the official texts at least—as a necessary element "so that everyone can live harmoniously in an environment of cultural, ethnic and linguistic diversity" (MNERA, 2003, p. 3). At the same time, measures are promoted which "aim at removing inequalities and ensuring equal opportunities in education for all students" (MERRA, 2016, p. 1).

To the above ends, *gender* plays an important role in the way each individual will experience integration into the host society, and intersects and interacts with other economic, religious, cultural and personal characteristics (or "factors") of immigrant and refugee families. *Sexism*,

which is an ideology, and simultaneously a theory of legitimization of male "superiority" and female "inferiority", is a strong social factor that defines boundaries and delimits roles in refugee communities, where according to long-standing patriarchal traditions, women are degraded and their status is on the margins of the social hierarchy, while men have significantly greater economic and political power (Lips, 1988; Oakley, 1972). This ideology unavoidably affects refugees' differential access to a number of social goods that are taken for granted for the citizens of the host country: from food and shelter to health and education.

The purpose of this book is to help readers understand the concepts of "gender" and "alterity", as well as how they are related (in increasingly "globalized" social environments) in the design, development, operation and evaluation of new forms of formal, non-formal and informal learning, especially those addressed to people on the move (e.g., refugees). It also intends to bring readers, especially teachers, in touch with modern theoretical formulations on Intercultural Education (IE), feminist pedagogy and other related topics that could be creatively applied, both in their teaching interventions and in the planning and implementation of various practical exercises and training actions.

Additionally, the book raises—especially in the last chapter—issues about the opportunities arising from Distance Education (DE) and electronic learning (e-learning), especially regarding their emancipating potential in the development of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in Adult Education (AE) and IE, and their importance in combatting gender and cultural inequalities and discriminations.

2. Structure of the book

In the *second chapter* ("The Construction of Gender") there is an extensive examination of the concept of "gender", a social construct that includes a set of structural, functional and behavioral differences that characterize "masculinity" and "femininity", as it is distinguished from "sex", which refers to biological characteristics of an individual, such as hormones, chromosomes and genitals. Moreover, there is an emphasis on traditional representations of gender, and an extensive description of how contemporary feminist thought has elaborated and represented gender relations, and how it has related them to wider structures, power relations, social roles and cultural norms.

The *third chapter* ("Gender, Alterity and Education: theoretical approaches and social evidence") focuses on educational institutions and practices from a gender perspective and examines school (and indeed any kind of educational setting) as an institution that contributes to the social

construction of gender and cultural identity for male and female students. It then tries to link key concepts in the study of *multicultural societies,* such as *gender, identity, diversity, alterity, racism, stereotypes* and *prejudices.* After a clarification of basic terms, the authors give a brief outline for an *open and democratic school* as the main tool for repelling racism, sexism, xenophobia and homophobia.

The *fourth chapter* ("Migration and refugee flows in Europe – the case of Greece") explores the migration phenomenon on a global scale, with special reference to the case of the European continent in the last decade. After providing some conceptual definitions regarding the international legal provisions for migrants and/or refugees, the recent refugee flows into Greece are analyzed and the response of the Greek State to these flows is evaluated. Furthermore, there are some reflections on the integrational prospects of refugees within contemporary Greek society. Finally, the most challenging tasks faced by refugees in meeting their educational needs, as well as the needs of their offspring, are stressed.

The focus of the *fifth chapter* ("Educational policies for the management of cultural diversity in Greece during a period of increased refugee flows") is the evolution of European policies for students with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, as well as related models of managing alterity, with special reference to Greece. What is stressed in this chapter is the importance and necessity of new educational structures for the integration of refugee students, the content of the curriculum offered, and also the contribution of teachers who work with students with an immigrant background, more specifically with a refugee background. Special reference is made to institutional, ideological and practical obstacles that inhibit the development of IE in Greek schools. Finally, there are proposals for some important institutional steps towards the cultivation of IE in Greece, at a national, regional, local and educational level.

Chapter six examines the role of teachers in the inclusion of students with different cultural characteristics in multicultural classes. The authors propose specific teaching methods and pedagogical practices that can be effectively applied, as well as the characteristics of the educational materials that should be used for students with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Special attention is paid to the role of teachers as "social reformers" in the classroom, as well as to the intercultural dimensions of curricula and school textbooks.

Chapter seven examines if the utilization of ICTs–mainly e-learning in contemporary educational environments–contribute to the fight against gendered, racial, linguistic, religious and other inequalities and discriminations. First, some basic definitions are given for better understanding of ICTs in

the learning process, with particular emphasis on new forms of digital access to knowledge. A brief historical overview of the different methodologies and technologies that have been used in the field of distance learning, and later in e-learning, is then offered. Finally, there is an investigation of the prospects for improving already-existing institutions and designing principles of e-learning, through suggestions and realistic policy proposals derived from the feminist movement and corresponding epistemological perspectives.

Chapter eight ("Conclusion and Discussion") provides a summary of the main theoretical and empirical points raised throughout the book and makes some concluding comments about the school environment as the meeting point of *Feminist* and *Intercultural Education,* where ICTs emerge as a very important *tool* in facilitating social cohesion and leading to a fairer and more inclusive society. This conclusion is not based on a naïve technological determinism, since it its clearly stressed that the new ICTs and the gendered and cultural dimensions of their use in educational and work environments are very strongly related to *structural inequalities* and *stereotypes* that have been created and reproduced for centuries. Therefore, what is proposed is that, apart from wider socio-economic and political processes, in order to promote girls and boys equally in co-educational and inclusive settings, teachers should both confront their own gender and cultural stereotypes, while encouraging student to understand the importance of diversity and equity in the classroom and everyday school life.

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CHAPTER 2

THE CONSTRUCTION OF GENDER

1. Introduction

In recent years, the analytical category of "gender" has led social theorists, as well as politicians and policymakers, to accept that the identification of a person as "male" or "female" is based on specific cultural criteria, and that a set of structural, functional and behavioural differences characterize "masculinity" and "femininity". In this context, the gendered symbolic order emerges as male-centric, a fact that resonates in language and culture in such a way that, on the one hand, men (and in more general terms, "masculine" humans) are considered more important than women (and in more general terms, "feminine" humans), and their view of the world and society is more reliable and prestigious, whereas women are limited to the role of "others" (Gasouka, 2013).

Gender is a dynamic term that has different meanings depending on *culture, country, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, age group* and *religion*. The concept of "gender" was first used by the sociologist Ann Oakley in 1972, but quickly established itself as an analytical category, which became the focus of feminist theory and research practice within various academic disciplines. Gender is not about biological differences, but the interpretation of men and women's behaviours, as these are linked to civilization and culture (Dill & Zambrana, 2009; Lips, 1988; Oakley, 1972).

In this chapter we will refer to the key concept of "gender" for modern social thought (i.e., feminist and others), as well as to the basic distinction between (biological) "sex" and (social) "gender". We will then emphasize traditional representations of gender and see how contemporary feminist thought has elaborated and represented gender relations, and how it has related them to wider structures, power relations, social roles and cultural norms.

2. The process and consequences of "constructing" gender

The stratification of Western-style society into classes is accompanied by a *gendered social asymmetry*. The "male/female" hierarchical relation is omnipresent: hierarchy by law or by tradition. This hierarchical system–like any other–furnishes itself with myths and ideologies in order to ensure its legitimacy, attributing this gendered asymmetry to natural or metaphysical factors (Bryson, 1992).

At the same time, it develops a whole universe of attitudes, perceptions and representations, such as a social consciousness and a gendered scale of values, which entail different gendered attitudes and expectations, and compose what in recent decades feminist thought has labelled as the "social role of gender" (Acker, 1987; Arnot, 2002; Oakley, 1972). Traditional gender representations are deeply embedded in the psyche of the individuals who make up society. This fact does not concern only men, but also the majority of women who have "internalized" these gender representations from the very early stages of their life, irrespective of class affiliation (Acker, 1987; Connell, 1991; Davis, 1983; Gasouka, 2013; Gasouka & Kokkinou, 2010; Oakley, 1972, 1974, 1982).

For many feminist researchers, (social) "gender" is contrasted to (biological) "sex", and is defined as an eminently social, economic and cultural structure, a view with which postmodern feminists disagree (Butler, 1990). One way or another, however, it is now recognized as the basis of social organization, or the "principle of relating*"* (Papataxiarchis, 1992), which constructs "gender identities". These are defined, according to Gisela Bock (1993, p. 65), as "the set of socially determined gender roles, as well as the system of thought and ideological representations, which culturally define what is 'male' and 'female'".

This differs from culture to culture, from society to society and from historical era to historical era, and proves the *cultural, social, historical* and *political construction* of gender, which is also linked to concepts such as *nation, social class, religion, sexual orientation, age*, etc.

Gender, therefore, is much less a product of human bodies than it is a product of social norms and ways of thinking, while the famous and directly gendered "private/public divide" has functioned as a field of social positioning in human history. One way or another, as mentioned above, the concepts of "gender", "gender roles" and "gender identities" are influenced by socioeconomic, political, geographical and cultural contexts, and any changes in them go hand in hand with changing economic, cultural and political conditions (Acker, 1987; Connell, 1991; Davis, 1983; Oakley, 1972, 1974, 1982, 1986; Reeser, 2010).

Feminist theories, since the 1970s, have contributed to the identification and highlighting of *gender inequality*, the way *identities* are constructed, as well as how the distribution of *power* and authority in society is shaped politically and culturally (Acker, 1987; Connell, 1991; Davis, 1983; Millet, 1971; Mitchell, 1973). They have allowed for the investigation of important problems, especially in the context of so-called "Cultural Studies" (such as the discovery of women's "worlds" and "voices"), which are usually on the fringes of mainstream theories. In this specific context, it became apparent that the ideologies, value and belief systems, symbols and social structures associated with genders, although differing significantly from culture to culture, must be taken seriously in any historical, sociological, anthropological and literary analysis (Leavy, 2007). It also became evident that the categories "women" and "men" are cultural and historical, and that the social construction of gender presupposes a specific social context in time and space. On this basis, an interesting variety of female activities, contributions, forms of power and influence, which are often at odds with the dominant ideology, have become visible through relevant research (Acker, 1987; Dillabough, 2001; Dillabough & Arnot, 2002; Jackson, 1993; Scott, 2003). Thus, gender as an analytical tool has contributed to overcoming the myth that women are condemned by their biological characteristics to be closer to "nature" than to "culture".

3. Gender relations and identities

By investigating the essence of gender identities and social roles, we look at how people experience their lives in specific social and cultural contexts and how they shape relationships with each other. There is, of course, a huge range of ways in which people conduct their lives, and we cannot approach the past through generalizations. As is known, all societies have formed a series of basic categories for the creation of gender identities, which are separated by the gender boundary or boundaries (Gerson & Peiss, 1985). In this specific context, the "self-image" (self-concept/identity) is formed; that is, how a person perceives him/herself, but also the way she or he is perceived by others.

Gender identity is not only about the inclusion of a person in the categories of "man" or "woman", but also includes its interaction with society as a whole (Connell, 1995; Oakley, 1974). More specifically, when we refer to relations between "men" and "women" and other "masculinities" and "femininities", we mean the interactions between them that are often distinguished by their hierarchical and dominating character. These relations are socially defined by culture, religion or socially-accepted ways

of thinking that constitute the collective social consciousness (Connell, 1995). They are usually characterized by the marginalization of women in decision making, but also in other forms of distribution of power, in both the private and public spheres of life. These are relations of power that, in a dialectical connection with sociability, permeate every social practice, and are articulated in the culture of everyday life in the formation and organization of identities and in the production and consumption of lifestyles.[1]

Gendered meanings ultimately shape perception of the world and produce ideology, which in turn implies a classification of meanings that ensures the gender order as a *symbolic order* (Connell, 1991, 1995; Gasouka, 2013). At the same time, the perception of gender as a cultural construct has allowed scientists to understand that gender roles and/or gender identities are themselves traditional forms of expressive communication (Butler, 1990). In other words, it constitutes a social, aesthetic, and ethical construct, something that places it at the centre of research interest (Reeser, 2010). In this context, there are other terms that are interchangeably used.

Gender role(s), which refers to the expected behaviours, interests and obligations defined by society as "appropriate" for men and women. This also entails the development of a nexus of attitudes, perceptions and representations, as well as forms of social consciousness and gendered values, which imply different attitudes and expectations according to gender, and compose what in recent years have become labelled as "gender roles"; or in other words, patterns of social behavior within specific cultural and social conditions that are considered to be appropriate for each gender (Connell, 1995; Lips, 1988). The gender roles are reflected in the behaviours of people in their daily lives, which are influenced by the expectations of the collective, social consciousness; hence, why they are often called "gender stereotypes". They are learned from birth, as children are exposed to the gendered attitudes of their parents and other members of society. Thus, growing up in this way, they internalize the socially "appropriate" behaviours for men and women. At the collective level, gender roles, fluid and changing, often determine the traditional responsibilities and tasks assigned by a particular society to women, men, girls and boys (Kouroutsidou & Gasouka, 2021).

[1] The concept of "power" is of decisive importance in understanding the relationship of the individual with society and her/his role in social development. However, *power* relations are often confused with *authority* relations, a fact that leads to serious misunderstandings. Authority relations entail inequality and presuppose it. They also involve power, which is institutionalized for she/he who possesses it and is concealed by consent from she/he who lacks it (Connell, 1991).

Gender identity, which refers to a person's perception of his/her gender, and the construction of "masculinity" or "femininity". More specifically, people construct their identities creatively and unpredictably during their interactions. This assumes that "identity" is not considered a fixed and unitary category that simply pre-exists in people's minds. In short, we do not expect a man exclusively to construct a "masculine identity", nor a woman exclusively a "feminine" one. Thus, we have a clear separation of biological factors from social categories in the process of identity construction. It is worth noting here that in the utilization of the multidimensional and multilevel term "identity", which was first used by Eric Erikson (1950), a notable ambiguity is noted. On the one hand, it means the absolute identification of individuals and perceptions, and on the other hand, the existence of a set of elements that are separate and unique for each individual and differentiate her/him from another individual. Identity is related to "diversity", since it includes the individual's relationship with others, and with the world. The "other" is a constitutive element of identity (Vryzas, 2005, p. 170). The collective identity is in constant and direct interaction with the individual identity and is constituted in a framework of relationships. National identity, for example, appears as the pre-eminent "natural identity", based on kinship ties; on ties that flourish among people who belong to the same "nation", with a common perception of origin (due to physical similarity), customs, shared memories, colonization or immigration, "common fate", etc. (Weber, 1968). The nation and the ethnic group, in other words, constitute group bonds, which are based on "objective" common features (i.e., language, history, culture, etc.). The theory of Social Identity aptly points out that the individual joins various groups in order to place her/himself in the "social space" and acquire the feeling of "belonging" (Tajfel, 1974; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). It is defined "by those aspects of an individual's self-image that derive from the social categories to which the individual considers her/himself to belong to" (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, p. 40).

Diversity, which means variety, difference, heterogeneity or otherness, in relation to elements such as sex, colour, nationality, descent, religious or other beliefs, physical endowments, age, sexual orientation, language, accent, habits/interests, occupation, socioeconomic status, appearance, culture, class, etc. It even includes the complex socioeconomic, legal and political components of each individual's identity (Gouvias & Nioti, 2008). But mainly, it presupposes the recognition that each person is unique, the acceptance of her/his individual characteristics and respect for her/his whole personality.

Sexism is the practice through which people are degraded on the basis of their gender, sexual identity and/or orientation. The undervalued gender is women, and generally female individuals, in the sense that, in a patriarchal society, female discourse and experiences are marginalized, and males have significantly more economic and political power. In scientific literature, special reference is made to *linguistic sexism*; that is, linguistic interaction in a male-dominated society, in which language reflects power relations between the genders and functions in such a way as to perpetuate and legitimize the power of males at the expense of females (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2003; Fairclough, 1992, 2010). In this context, the debate about the relationship between language and gender reality began early on, as the efforts of gender-conscious women to articulate an emancipating discourse became visible (Gasouka & Georgalidou, 2018)[2].

Gender-related violence, which is an expression of the structural violence that characterizes patriarchal societies. Structural violence is understood as social exploitation and unequal power (and, by extension, unequal opportunities in life), elements which are embedded in the gendered social order (Connell, 1991; Millet, 1971). When it comes to violence against females, structural inequality and power imbalances create the conditions for their social subjugation. In that sense, it constitutes a violation of human rights and is an extreme form of discrimination against females. It includes all acts of gender-based violence that cause or are likely to cause women physical, sexual, psychological, or economic harm or suffering, as well as threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether these violent acts are practiced in the context of the public or private sphere of life (WHO, 2015). Its important feature is an abusive pattern of behavior, practiced over time, within or outside the family. It not only affects the mental health of people (more often women and girls) and their social networks, but also deprives them of opportunities for future personal, social and economic development (Council of Europe, 2011).

Patriarchy refers to a socioeconomic formation that intersects horizontally with all other known socioeconomic formations (i.e., slavery, feudal, capitalist, etc.) and is based on the principle of male *dominance* over women. It has a strong ideology, as well as mechanisms and practices in

[2] Discourse is nothing more than an institutionalized way of thinking, reflecting and considering things, and it is established and reflected in social practices (Gasouka & Georgalidou, 2018). This definition implies that the term is not static, but includes abstract concepts, such as ideological positions and attitudes. Gendered discourses are understood as the result of a specific set of ideas related to gender in certain sections of society.

order to justify this dominance and attribute it to the inherent physical differences between men and women, as it often invokes metaphysics as a legitimizing mechanism (Millet, 1971). Historically, patriarchy has manifested itself in the social, legal, political, religious and economic organization of a number of different cultures (Connell, 1991; Gasouka, 2013; Millet, 1971).

Gender equality is a concept that encapsulates the principle that all people are free to develop their personal capacities and make choices without the restrictions imposed by strictly defined gender roles, and that different attitudes, aspirations and needs of women and men are considered, valued and favoured equally.

Equality of opportunity is a basic principle of European Social Policy, the two essential aspects of which are the *prohibition of discrimination* based on nationality and the *promotion of equality* between men and women. This principle must be applied in all areas, including economic, social, cultural and familial life. However, despite reasonable objections to the possibility of "equality of opportunity" within the inherently unequal capitalist relations of production, emphasis is officially placed on the fields of employment and education, as inalienable social rights (Gasouka & Kokkinou, 2010).

Gender boundary is the imaginary cultural boundary that divides ethics, values, language, the entire socialization process, as well as the multiple processes of shaping the self-image of "female" and "male" identities according to gender-based criteria (Gerson & Peiss, 1985).

Feminism(s) is the nexus of sociopolitical movements and ideologies that aim to define and promote the political, economic, personal and social equality of the genders. They are based on the assumption that societies, *patriarchal* as a rule, recognize male *dominance* and female *inferiority* and *submission*, and legitimize them by referring to "nature" or metaphysics. In their struggle for gender equality today, feminists focus, among other things, on combatting oppressive gender stereotypes, and on improving educational, professional and interpersonal opportunities for women (Kouroutsidou & Gasouka, 2021).[3]

The emancipation of women is a historical process and a political strategy through which women strive to free themselves from the power and control of men and traditional power structures, to secure equal rights, to

[3] Feminist movements, originating in late 18th century Europe and America, have fought and continue to fight for women's rights, including the right to vote, access to public office, work, equal pay, property, education, contracting, equal rights within marriage, protection of motherhood, access to contraception, the legalization of abortion and addressing all forms of gender-based violence.

eliminate gender discrimination, and to set legal standards that will promote their full equality with men (Kouroutsidou & Gasouka, 2021).

4. Feminism(s). What exactly are we talking about?

The starting point of feminism is linked to the Enlightenment and the French Revolution[4]. However, it is the Industrial Revolution and the entry of women into the labour market that led them to the development of gender consciousness, to organized struggle and militant movements, such as those of the Suffragettes. These movements claimed the improvement of their position in the family and more broadly in society, a struggle that continues to this day as, despite any progress made, gender discrimination and inequalities still exist. In other words, feminism is *both* those political/social theories and the related movements that, despite their differences, are not only committed to the common goal of women's liberation and the achievement of gender equality, but also to their common belief that the subjugation of women is due to their gender (Gasouka, 2013).

Owen (1994) aptly characterizes feminism as a universal emancipatory movement since, regardless of perspectives, it represents currents of thought and action that seek, in the name of human equality between the genders, the abolition of divisions, hierarchies and asymmetries based on sex (i.e., biological differences). There are several feminist currents and orientations, (e.g., Marxist feminism, liberal feminism, radical feminism, cyberfeminism, lesbian feminism, black feminism, ecofeminism, symbolic feminism, postmodern feminism, etc.), so we need to talk about "feminisms".

Contemporary feminisms mainly focus on re-evaluating and re-defining women, their positions and roles, or deconstructing covert forms of gender discrimination and exclusion. However, we must note that not all women's movements have been feminist, without this making them less combative in their own way. Most of them were closely connected to, or were part of other movements (e.g., anti-colonial, communist, etc.). They linked women's liberation to wider national, social and economic changes such as the abolition of colonialism or capitalism (Ong, 2001).[5] From those movements, great fighters for equality and peace emerged, and their exclusion from Women's History and, in fact, from many feminist historians, is reminiscent

[4] In texts of this period, there is a clear reference to the social-political equality of the two sexes (Scott, 2003).

[5] The relative opinion of the great German political activist Clara Chetkin, (to whom we owe the celebration of the 8th of March) is that the liberation of women will be brought about by "the Revolution, the Proletarian Mother way", in the context of modern materialist feminism.

of relevant male practices of exclusion that feminist thinkers and academics denounce, a fact that should be taken into account in contemporary feminist theoretical debates (Kouroutsidou & Gasouka, 2021).

The history of feminist movements includes narratives of the movements and the corresponding ideologies that have had as their goal the defense of women's rights. While feminists around the world have varied in their interpretations, goals and intentions across time, culture and country, many Western feminist historians argue that all movements working to promote women's rights should be studied as feminist movements, even when they do not define themselves as such. Modern Western feminist history is conventionally divided into three time periods or "waves", each with slightly different goals, based on previous progress (Hantzaroula, 2006; Scott, 2003):

- *First-wave feminism* of the 19th and early 20th centuries, which focused on overturning legal inequalities, particularly addressing issues of women's suffrage.
- *Second-wave feminism* (1960s–1980s), which broadened the debate to include cultural inequalities, gender norms and the role of women in society.
- *Third-wave feminism* (1990s-2000s), which historians approach both as a continuation of the second wave, as well as a response to some of its failures.

Although the analytical tool of "waves" is commonly used to describe the history of feminism, as a concept it has also been heavily criticized for ignoring or even erasing the history between the various "waves", choosing to focus exclusively on white, middle-class women, and also due to the belief that it is a Western-centric, racist and colonial construction (Mohanty, 1991).

It should be noted that in Greece the first modern references to the history of women are directly linked to the development of the feminist movement after 1974. The relevant articles in the magazine *Skoupa* in 1978-1981 and the corresponding books of the "Women's Editorial Group", and later of the magazine *Dini*, dealt almost exclusively with the past of women's controversy in Greece and internationally, the history of feminist movements, and also their relations with other social movements (e.g., communist, socialist, anarchist, anti-racist, etc.). However, Women's History did not flourish in Greece compared to other countries, something that is due to the limited development of debates on the position of women, the absence of a significant number of feminist historians from universities

and the few and fragmentary production of historical studies in general. It is also the result of resistance from state, political, ecclesiastical and other circles, who viewed such attempts with disbelief–something that is evident in the ongoing debate about History textbooks in public schools (Salimba, 2019).

5. Theories of Gender(s)

Feminist theories are the extension of feminism in theoretical or philosophical fields. They span a variety of disciplines, including: anthropology, sociology, folklore, economics, history, literary criticism, art, psychoanalysis and philosophy. Their epistemological starting point is the hypothesis that gender is a fundamental structural factor of social structures, while the concepts of "femininity" and "masculinity" are formed as social, cultural constructions, and constitute fundamental concepts of a structural character. These are created in the context of a continuous process of social construction, within which individuals, agencies and society are in a continuous interaction. They seek to understand the causes of gender divisions and focus on gender politics, power relations, sexuality, etc. They also focus on promoting women's rights and interests[6].

At the same time, feminist theories reject, with strong arguments, the view that the genders and the relationships between them are natural or self-evident, and in their theoretical context, interpretations of "naturalness" are replaced by interpretations of power, power relations, and power processes[7]. They insist on the changeability and fluidity of gender, qualities that are also found in other social categories (e.g., social class, ethnicity, sexuality, etc.) and point out that science and research are not "neutral", but gender-specific (Kouroutsidou & Gasouka, 2021).

Various feminist theories emerged from the famous three waves of feminism, from which new fields were also created in various scientific disciplines, which were thus enriched, expanded and democratized: feminist geography, feminist history, feminist anthropology, feminist folklore, feminist psychoanalysis, feminist pedagogy, feminist literary criticism,

[6] Topics explored include *discrimination, stereotyping, objectification* (especially sexual objectification), *oppression, gender-based violence* in all its forms, the *material conditions of women* and other *femininities*, the meaning and content of "patriarchy", etc.

[7] For many scientists, it is this dimension of power that ultimately shapes the relationships between individuals in society.