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## Partners



## SUMMARY

There are different understandings of both gender and gender-based violence in different national and organisational contexts. While recognising the potential conflicts and tensions emanating from different strands of epistemology, ontology and contexts, UniSAFE is primarily informed by a feminist understanding of both gender and violence.

The aim of the UniSAFE theoretical and conceptual framework is to frame the overall study – including data collection and analysis on micro, meso and macro levels and their interrelations – and to highlight key debates and contestations in the research field of gender-based violence in RPOs (Research Performing Organisations, including universities). The framework is developed in order to contribute to the data collection and analysis of gender-based violence in academic environments and research workplaces in Europe.

The underlying approach is multi-level and holistic, and informed by gender theory, intersectionality, and feminist violence studies: these are applied to both the collection and analysis of evidence, and to its operationalisation into tools and dissemination. Such an approach, in turn, requires approaching gender equality and gender-based violence in institutions from an organisational violence perspective, rather than approaching gender-based violence only from a gender equality perspective, or indeed an individualist perspective.

To these ends, the UniSAFE theoretical and conceptual framework outlines the key concepts used in the project and proposes forms of gender-based violence to cover and the definitions for these forms, with the whole project anchored in feminist violence studies. It introduces the 7P model at the heart of the project, defining each of its elements in turn. How these concepts relate to each other are then provided, as well as an operationalisation in terms of different strands of data collection. This informs the work in the following work packages and assists in the systematisation of data collection and analysis.

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## INTRODUCTION

UniSAFE is a Horizon 2020 project (contract number 101006261) funded under the call topic *SwafS-25-2020: Gender-based violence including sexual harassment in research organisations and universities*. It has a *double* objective. First, to produce robust knowledge on gender-based violence in RPOs (universities and research performing organisations). Second, to translate the knowledge into operational tools and recommendations for universities, research organisations and policymakers to reduce gender-based violence.

UniSAFE examines the mechanisms of gender-based violence in RPOs, its determinants, antecedents, and consequences, by using a multi-level research design to collect, analyse, and synthesise qualitative and quantitative data:

1. Legal and policy frameworks specific to gender-based violence in RPOs are analysed via an extensive mapping carried out by national experts in 31 EU Member States, Associated Countries and Third Countries.
2. Prevalence and impacts of gender-based violence are analysed via a survey implemented in 45 RPOs in 15 EU Member States and Associated Countries, and via a Europe-wide survey of researchers at higher risk of gender-based violence, for example due to their temporary employment contracts, lack of social networks, early-stage career status, and migration status.
3. Organisational responses and instruments are analysed via 12-18 in-depth case studies, interviews with vulnerable/precarious groups (n = 60), and an inventory of institutional measures in the 45 RPOs.

An ambitious and holistic analytical **7P model** (covering prevalence, prevention, protection, prosecution, provision of services, partnerships and policies) is used to collect and analyse data at each level (Mergaert et al. 2016). The model is better suited to structure the collection of data, analyse their relations, and translate findings into operational tools than the conventional UN and EU 3P model (prevention, protection, prosecution) or the Istanbul Convention 4P model (prevention, protection, prosecution, policies). The same 7P model is used to co-design a comprehensive set of measures and tools to be applied inside RPOs and by other stakeholders, including policymakers and research funding organisations.

In order to contribute to a reduction in gender-based violence in academic environments and research workplaces in Europe, a multi-level holistic approach informed by gender and intersectional theory – referring to the interconnected and complex ways in which multiple inequalities (such as age, gender, and nationality) interact and position people (Collins 2002; McCall 2005; Verloo 2006; Walby et al. 2012; Strid & Verloo 2019) – as well as feminist violence studies (Brownmiller 1975; Dobash & Dobash 1979; Hester et al. 1996; Walby 1990; Westerstrand 2010) is applied to both the collection and analysis of evidence, and to its operationalisation into tools and dissemination. It requires approaching gender equality and gender-based violence in institutions from an organisational violence perspective, rather than approaching gender-based violence only from a gender equality perspective, or indeed, reducing it to an individualist perspective, where women are seen as responsible for their safety and blamed as victims. Instead, the understanding of violence is as a structural system that operates first and foremost to produce and reproduce inequalities between groups, including on the basis of gender.



UniSAFE relies on a strong multi-disciplinary consortium of nine European partners. Its strength is in the partners' in-depth knowledge and extensive track record in researching gender-based violence, translating academic insights into operational tools (including the GEAR-tool), disseminating knowledge (including a direct link to the Horizon 2020 project Gender Equality Academy), developing policy recommendations at the EU level, and empowering stakeholders to exploit project results, with a carefully designed impact plan.

The UniSAFE theoretical and conceptual framework outlines the key concepts used in the project and proposes definitions for the different forms of gender-based violence that will be covered, with the whole project anchored in feminist violence studies. It uses the 7P model and defines each of its elements. How these concepts relate to each other are then provided, as well as an operationalisation in terms of different strands of data collection. This informs the creation of templates in WP3, WP4 and WP5, used by national researchers and project consortium members to systematise data collection and feed into the synthetic analysis (WP6).

## THEORISING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

There are different understandings of both gender and gender-based violence in different national and organisational contexts. Depending on whether gender-based violence is understood primarily as a feminist, organisational, psychological, criminological, legal, political, or ideological concept, several different meanings and sub-concepts will be emphasised and juxtaposed, included or excluded. While recognising the potential conflicts and tensions emanating from different strands of epistemology, ontology and contexts, UniSAFE is primarily informed by a feminist understanding of both gender and violence.

UniSAFE conceptualises gender as a social construct, a hierarchy, a relation and as a process (rather than as biology or merely a variable only). Thus, this conceptualisation of gender attempts to go beyond a binary understanding, including the experiences of women, men, and further genders. UniSAFE is also based on a feminist and intersectional understanding of gender and of violence, and defines violence as:

- *A cause and consequence of gender inequalities, and as an inequality in its own right* (Hearn, 2013, Hearn et al. 2020). Violence/gender-based violence is autotelic – that is violence begets violence (Schinkel 2010, 2013) and previous violence is a predictor of subsequent violence – rather than being *only* an expression of other inequalities. An extreme expression of inequality on the grounds of gender, gender-based violence is a human rights violation.
- *An expression of power and structural dominance*, rather than as an expression of the loss of power and individual marginalisation, where the direction of violence is analysed primarily as going from the relatively privileged and powerful, and directed towards the relatively marginalised and powerless. Gender-based violence is predominantly – but not exclusively – directed from men towards women, including transwomen. Such conceptualisation requires keeping the relatively powerful – and their positions in the organisation – in sight in both data collection and analysis.
- *Reflecting power relations in society as a whole*, meaning women, marginalised groups and minorities are generally subordinated, marginalised and the expected

majority of victims of gender-based violence. While recognising that there is certainly no gender symmetry in the experiences of gender-based violence (Straus 2011; FRA 2014; Walby & Towers 2017) and that gender relations stem from gendered inequalities in power (O'Connor 2000), UniSAFE acknowledges and examines the experiences of men and further genders, in addition to women. This includes violence in relation to diverse and non-normative gender identities and sexualities, as summarised in the umbrella term, LGBTIQ+. In this context, it is important to acknowledge transwomen as women, and as such how they can experience gender-based violence related to their status as women, and with the increased exposure to violence arising from the additional, mutually shaping, inequality based on their trans status (Johnson 2006). The above point raises the question of whether any violence, including men-men violence and women-women violence, or indeed women-men, can be excluded from gender-based violence. Much initial work and conceptualisation on gender-based violence derived to a great extent from earlier work on men's violence against women. Subsequently, approaches to gender-based violence have differed to some extent in their emphasis and focus, with some considering the experiences of women only, while others also including men (Hagemann-White 2001).

- *Any and all violence include gender.* There are always multiple notions and experiences of violence set in continuous motion, even within single subject's narratives/bodies. Specifically, the issue of whether there "is" a gender or a sexual element in all forms of violence is partly an empirically open-ended question, embedded in the constant reshaping of narratives/bodies connected to/experiences of violence. It also partly depends on the theoretical/analytical framework in use in terms of the relationship between gender dominance at the macro, even global, level and more particular acts of violence (for further discussion, see Graaff 2021). The question of what is to be included in gender-based violence in terms of it being *gender-based*, as opposed to *gendered*, *gender-related* or *gender-coded*. Such issues are not easily reduced to simple or legalistic definitions or indeed closed survey questions. The balance between being (gender-) *based*, *related* or *coded* can be highlighted more fully in the qualitative research in the project, and taken up in the integrative phases of the whole project. Any and all violence involves people who are *gender-coded*, including agender and non-binary people, even if the violence appears to be mainly linked to other "non-gendered" social relations. The question of *gender basis*, *relatedness* or *coding* is both an empirical question and one for conceptualisation and theorising.
- *An epistemological stance* conceptualising violence, violations, abuse, and their consequences from the *experience of the survivor/victim*. This means the focus is on seeing gender-based violence. It extends the concept of gender-based violence to include acts or events that may not be regarded as violence from a legal perspective or in juridical definitions, but nonetheless are experienced as violence, so called emerging forms of violence. Thus, a survivor/victim understanding of experiences of gender-based violence is crucial.
- *Involving victims/survivors, perpetrators, and bystanders:* It is relevant to stress a critical understanding of bystanders and perpetrators and organisations in terms of responsibility. Bystanders are knowledgeable subjects who may be accountable for in terms of being arguably complicit and/or being co-dependent in gender-based

violence, hence simultaneously part of the problem and the solution. Further, the need to expand the very concept of bystanders is crucial, including moving away from monolithic understandings and towards a dynamic understanding. The latter mirrors the experiences as bystanders often being of a simultaneous “nature” (including witnessing GBV, being co-dependent to/supporting perpetrators, intervening in ongoing GBV, as well as experiencing own trauma).

- *A complex, persistent feature and force, often unspoken, of many organisations, including RPOs (Hearn & Parkin 2001; Latcheva 2017).* Categories of violence/gender-based violence that have been employed in organisations and workplaces, such as sexual harassment, bullying, and physical violence, may also be misleading, if seen as totally separate, rather than overlapping, and sometimes even coterminous. This issue is important in both research (e.g., quantitative and qualitative surveys, interviews, observations) and policy development.

Furthermore, more specific conceptual points to note regarding theorising gender-based violence are:

- The question of intersectionality, the interconnected, complex ways in which multiple inequalities (e.g., age, sex, gender, disabilities, nationality, location, religion, sexuality) that interact and position people, as highlighted in research on gender-based violence in higher education (Fedina et al. 2018; Bondestam & Lundqvist 2019). This is a challenge that takes several forms. First, some forms of gender-based violence may also be experienced, categorizable and theorisable as other forms of violence, for example, targeting a woman of colour may be simultaneously gender-based and racist violence. Second, it could be argued that gender-based violence always involves aspects or characteristics of a person beyond sex, gender, age, appearance, size and so on.
- Violence/gender-based violence can be usefully understood as a system – including perpetration, victimhood/survivorhood, responses, policies and practices – rather than isolated, individual and aberrant incidents (cf. Žižek 2008; Strid & Meier-Arendt 2020).
- The regulation of violence is not simply a reflection of pre-existing inequalities; therefore, the deployment of violence cannot simply be reduced to individual psychological traits, marginalised outsiders, or dysfunctional families (Strid et al. 2013).
- Violence/gender-based violence can mean that further violence is unnecessary to maintain control and/or dominance, thorough, for example, the operation of threat and fear; this raises a major problem for empirical measurement.
- Different forms of violence/gender-based violence – for example, group bullying/mobbing, rape and sexual assault, and criminal damage of property – have specific features and characteristics, and display different mechanisms of action, and may therefore require different logics of interventions.
- Increasingly, it is vital to acknowledge both offline and online violence – in particular in times of covid-19 when many activities have shifted from offline to online – and how the very online/offline boundary may sometimes be blurred, for example, as to what extent victims’ perceptions of gender-based violence may differ as it also might shift between online and offline modes.

- The development of policies and practices to counter violence needs to work towards violence-free organisations and workplaces (in the context of the UniSAFE project, universities and other research performing organisations and research funding organisations); this means fostering and furthering violence-free institutions, processes and actions within them, most obviously violence-free cultures, ways of working/studying, at all levels, and forms of management and control. Violence free cultures, institutions etc is not only about the absence of physical and other forms of direct and indirect violence, but also about the existence of what has been called positive peace, with sense, feelings and actions of positive inclusion, safety and safe space (Hearn & Parkin 2001). Specific practice examples include many schools based on a principle of no violence, so-called peace education approaches to work (Galtung 1969), and work on safe spaces.

## INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS ON GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

International conventions and definitions of gender-based violence are important, and their theoretical status is shown not only by the numerous scientific articles citing them, but also illustrated by the recent debates around Turkey's announcement to withdraw from the Istanbul Convention (CoE 2011). These definitions have been developed, notably by institutions such as the United Nations, the Council of Europe, the European Commission and the International Labour Organization.

The European Commission (2020) has listed ending gender-based violence as one of the key objectives in the EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025. According to the European Commission (2021), gender-based violence is defined as:

Violence directed against a person because of that person's gender or violence that affects persons of a particular gender disproportionately. Violence against women is understood as a violation of human rights and a form of discrimination against women and shall mean all acts of gender-based violence that result in, or are likely to result in physical harm, sexual harm, psychological, or economic harm or suffering to women. It can include violence against women, domestic violence against women, men or children living in the same domestic unit. Although women and girls are the main victims of gender-based violence, it also causes severe harm to families and communities.

The Council of Europe (2018), in its Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023 tends to focus more narrowly on violence against women, emphasising that it:

Remains one of the most pronounced expressions of the unequal power relations between women and men. It is both a violation of the human rights of women and a major obstacle to gender equality.

One of the most prominent and recognised instruments to tackle violence against women is that of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (commonly referred to as the Istanbul Convention). As of

13 April 2021, 34 countries have ratified the Istanbul Convention and a further 12 have signed it but not ratified it, including the EU itself as an international organisation (CoE 2021). However, on 20 March 2021, Turkey – the first Council of Europe Member State to ratify the Istanbul Convention, in 2012, followed by 33 others – announced the decision to withdraw by a Presidential decree, without debates in Parliament and society at large (BBC 2021). This denunciation is due to enter into force on 1 July 2021. Article 3 of the Convention defines violence against women as a “violation of human rights and a form of discrimination against women and shall mean all acts of gender-based violation that result in, or are likely to result in physical, sexual, psychological, or economic harm or suffering to women including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life”. In the same article, gender-based violence against women is defined as “violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately.”

The International Labour Organization (ILO 2019) has also played an important role in setting standards in relation to gender-based violence. In 2019, it adopted the Violence and Harassment Convention – known as Convention No. 190 or C190 – which recognises the right to a world of work free from violence and harassment, including gender-based violence and harassment. It notes that such violence at work represents a human rights violence, and poses a threat to access to decent work, and the labour market more generally. It calls for an inclusive, integrated and gender-responsive approach in combating gender-based violence, that considers how intersecting forms of discrimination and unequal power relations contribute to the problem.

These strategies and conventions aim at a global outreach, and to provide a framework to promote policy-led change and effective measures – at national or organisational level – in different parts of the world. However, it is evident that the national context matters and that there may be very different understandings of what constitutes gender-based violence, including what is seen as acceptable. For example, Eurobarometer (EC 2017) data for 2016 showed a wide spectrum of attitudes: while in countries such as Spain or Sweden, there is no or very little agreement that domestic violence against women is acceptable in certain circumstances, at the other end of the spectrum other countries such as Romania, Slovakia or Poland have a small, yet not negligible, proportion of the population (5%, 6% and 7% respectively) that believes it to be acceptable in certain circumstances.

## GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN RPOS

Gender-based violence at work – in the framework of UniSAFE including RPOs (work and study places such as universities and other research performing organisations) – often falls outside of the mainstream violence research interests. Instead, gender-based violence has predominantly been explored in the home as different forms of domestic violence or intimate partner violence. Indeed, Eurobarometer data for 2016 show that this reflects the perceptions of the population across Europe. Violence against women is perceived as more likely to occur at home than in any other setting: 86% report that violence against women is likely to occur at home, and comparatively fewer report it is likely to occur in other places/arenas (19% report it is likely to occur in public spaces, 19% online, 17% at the



workplace, and 8% in public transport). Fewer still identify violence against women as taking place in school or university (5%). This is despite the now well-established research and policy literature and high-profile public debate in some parts of Europe on gender-based violence in both higher education and schools.<sup>3</sup> The #MeToo movement, in its various national, local and indeed workplace and occupational forms, has certainly impacted on awareness of gender-based violence in schools and RPOs in some countries (Chandra & Erlingsdóttir 2021).

The extent to which perceptions of the prevalence of gender-based violence as a problem within the context of RPOs match the actual situation has until recently been relatively under-explored. Anecdotal evidence, and high-profile cases reported in the media in some countries with an “on campus culture”, where students live, study and socialise on campus, suggest that the problem might be larger than expected. For instance, concerns were raised concerning the cases of sexual harassment and rape threats in UK universities and their responses (de Caires 2019). It must be recognised that the problem touches all institutions, with universities described as a ‘home for a rape epidemic’ (Reynolds 2018) and rape culture (Lewis et al. 2018; Phipps et al. 2018). A UK Home Office (2013) prevalence survey of sexual offences, for example, shows that in 2012, this stands at 6.8% for women who are full-time students compared with about 3% for all women aged 16 to 59. One of the aims of the UniSAFE project is therefore to provide reliable and comparable data on different forms of gender-based violence in RPOs to understand the extent of the problem among staff and students and assess institutional responses to that problem.

To obtain a baseline of existing prevalence of gender-based violence in the countries included in the UniSAFE project, the project carried out a mapping of quantitative studies and results, as part of Work Package 3, through country reviews conducted by the network of national experts. The mapping shows that national prevalence studies of gender-based violence in RPOs are few. It is noteworthy that none of these cover the prevalence of the forms of gender-based violence to be examined in the UniSAFE. A majority of the countries (e.g. Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Denmark and Germany) have not conducted any national prevalence studies on gender-based violence in higher education or in research performing organisations. A few countries, for example, Sweden, Serbia and Slovenia, are implementing comprehensive prevalence studies in RPOs in 2021-2022. Some others, for example, Canada, Czech Republic, Estonia and Ireland, have already implemented comprehensive national surveys. The national prevalence study conducted in the Czech Republic and that carried out in Estonia with the study focus on sexual harassment: gender harassment, unwelcome sexual attention and sexual coercion, while in Spain sexual harassment, including “sexual blackmailing” (also called sextortion) and also “environmental harassment” (also called organisational violence) have been addressed. Ireland has implemented a few prevalence studies, predominantly covering different forms of sexual violence (ranging from a focus on consent and unwanted sexual experiences, to rape), but one prevalence study also includes online violence. Few of the prevalence studies include both staff and students. Furthermore, most existing studies are regional or local, address victims, and are limited in scope, covering sexual harassment and sexual violence (student/student), for example, campus rape. There are only few prevalence studies including online violence (e.g. in Estonia and Canada), and none on economic

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<sup>3</sup> See for example, <https://schoolofsexed.org/guidance-for-schools> and <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-56588166>.

violence or organisational violence. They are predominantly victims-focused, rather than targeting bystanders or perpetrators.

Two forms of gender-based violence appear to have been studied more than others in RPOs, and predominantly involving students: sexual harassment and sexual violence. These, and other forms of violence, are increasingly taking place online, and are facilitated and/or augmented by digitalisation. Other forms of violence, for example physical, psychological, economic and financial, often studied in the context of intimate partner violence or honour-based violence, are less studied in the context of RPOs. Sexual harassment and sexual violence occur within all disciplines of higher education, and affect students, doctoral students, and employees, and include student/student, staff/staff, staff/student. Students are by far the most studied group, and there are no signs that the prevalence of sexual harassment among undergraduate students is decreasing (Bondestam & Lundqvist 2020a; Fnais et al. 2014; Johnson et al. 2018; Rosenthal et al. 2016). Online sexual violence and harassment are forms of violence where research is increasing, and prevalence is alarmingly high (Megan et al. 2016). Both women and men are at risk, but women to a much greater extent. Perpetrators are predominantly men. Groups that are already marginalised and at *points of intersection of multiple mutually shaping inequalities* (Walby et al. 2012) are at risk of increased levels of violence; younger women, women with less secure employment conditions and on temporary contracts, and minorities are more likely to have experienced gender-based violence. Here, there are specific cases with more vulnerable groups of staff, where moral, sexual or other forms of harassment overlap, sometimes with elements of coercion and/or some forms of economic violence if contracts are not renewed or resources denied/withdrawn. While there are in-depth studies that examine the mechanisms of gender-based violence in academia in specific organisations and local/national contexts (see e.g. major overviews of both workplace bullying, mobbing and harassment in academia, Bondestam & Lundqvist 2020a; Keashly 2021) and the gender dimensions of workplace bullying and harassment (Salin 2021)<sup>4</sup>, quantitative research and knowledge about the extent of the problem remains limited. Prevalence studies providing robust, reliable and comparable data on the multiple and different forms of gender-based violence in RPOs are lacking.

Finally, it is important to recognise the potential and complex cause-effect relationship between and across boundaries/spheres and outside/inside the RPO: higher prevalence of actual gender-based violence outside is likely to positively related to the acceptance of gender-based violence within the research performing organisation. However, where acceptance of gender-based violence is higher, disclosure may well be lower. This has been illustrated through the so-called 'Nordic paradox' (Gracia & Merlo 2016), where the disclosed prevalence of gender-based violence appears – at least on the surface – as positively related to gender equality, less prejudiced attitudes to gender-based violence and greater awareness of the issue throughout society (Humbert et al. 2021). Gender-based violence enacted outside RPOs may have major implications within RPOs, and may be responded to by colleagues, supervisors and managers in ways that may assist or worsen the situation. The extent of what has been called “work and violence embeddedness” (Krigel

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<sup>4</sup> There is also an extensive and established research, policy and activist literature on gender-based violence in universities outside Europe and the global North, for example, in North America and Southern Africa.

& Benjamin 2021) should not be underestimated. These overlaps are accentuated through digital gender-based violence (Hearn et al. 2020).

## OPERATIONALISING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

UniSAFE builds on, and extends, the EU Work Programme and the SwafS-25 call text definition of gender-based violence including sexual harassment. Gender-based violence is defined as violence directed against a person (or persons) because of that person's gender, often – but not always – corresponding to a person's sex, or violence that affects persons of a particular gender disproportionately. Sexual harassment is defined as any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct that manifests itself in what can be constructed as of a sexual nature with the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person, in particular when creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment (Council of Europe 2011, art 40).

In UniSAFE, the term '**gender-based violence**' is used to capture all forms of gender-based violence, violations and abuse, including but not limited to, physical violence, psychological violence, economic and financial violence, sexual violence, sexual harassment, gender harassment, stalking, organisational violence and harassment – in both online and offline contexts, including emerging forms of violence, experienced as **violence, violations and abuse not yet necessarily named or recognised as violence**. UniSAFE has an **important gap to fill here**. Gender-based violence and sexual harassment take on different forms and are to be found in several different contexts: physical, psychological, emotional, interactive, as part of workgroups and organisational culture, effects of informal and/or formal/preferred leadership, online/digital/in social media and in web forum (including teaching platforms), sexist (and racist) hostility/threats etc. This is in line with scholarly research and an international understanding where the concept of gender-based violence describes and includes a continuum of violence and violations, violent behaviours and attitudes based on sex and gender (Hearn 1998), and always intersects with and mutually shapes other dimensions of inequalities, such as for example age, class, ethnicity, disability and sexuality (Walby et al. 2012). These forms of violence, that occur both more generally throughout society and more specifically in research performing organisations, are defined as including, but not necessarily being limited to:

**Physical violence** and abuse, including kicking, beating, pushing, slapping, shoving, hitting, blocking (Hester et al. 1996; Heise 1998). Physical violence is the form of violence most easily measured, often in incidents, and commonly addressed. It is direct, often involves a relatively easily identifiable perpetrator, and the time and space between act and immediate impact is very limited. Physical violence has been *measured* before in RPOs, UniSAFE's contribution is to fill the knowledge gap concerning bystanders' experiences and roles, and the institutional responses.

**Psychological violence** and abuse include psychologically abusive behaviours, such as controlling, coercion, verbal abuse, shouting, threatening, and blackmail, or any other intentional conduct that seriously impairs another person's psychological integrity, and takes place in both online and offline contexts (EIGE 2017; CoE 2011). Psychological violence in an academic setting can include public insults, ridiculing of someone's work at

a seminar or conference, humiliating a colleague in public etc., and can deprive a person from future professional development (Veinhardt 2019).

**Economic and financial violence** and abuse involves making or attempting to make a person financially dependent by maintaining control over financial resources, withholding access to money, and/or forbidding attendance in education or employment (Postmus et al. 2018). It includes acts or behaviours which causes economic or financial harm to an individual (Krigel & Benjamin 2020). Sextortion, which occurs when a person with entrusted authority abuses this authority to obtain a sexual favor in exchange for a service or benefit or economic gain, which is within their power to grant or withhold, can also be a form of economic violence (see Krook 2017 for sextortion as a form of violence against women in politics). Economic violence in research organisations can be examined in the forms of, for example, sextortion, *quid pro quo*, restricting access to financial resources by denying travel grants, conference attendance or other support, controlling someone's access to employment healthcare services, delaying or withholding employment contracts, or not complying with economic responsibilities.

**Sexual violence** and abuse include sexual acts, attempts to obtain a sexual act, sexual assaults or acts otherwise directed against a person's sexuality without the person's consent, and takes place in both online and offline contexts. They include any sexual act committed against a non-consenting person, even if that person does not show signs of resistance. Acts of sexual violence attack the right to sexual freedom, autonomy, control, integrity and security, and can be intimately related to reproductive rights (Kelly 1988; Phipps 2018).

**Sexual harassment** includes unwanted verbal, nonverbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, such as touching, comments on looks or body, stalking, sending of images with sexual content or sexist jokes. Sexual harassment is not the same as sexual assault, although these can and often overlap.<sup>5</sup> It can include harassment, assault, grooming, coercion, bullying, sexual invitations and demands, comments, non-verbal communication, creation of atmospheres of discomfort, and promised resources in exchange for sexual access. The term 'misconduct' is sometimes used instead of harassment to capture some of the possible abuses of power that may occur within a higher education institution. Sexual misconduct impacts students of all gender identities and sexualities. It raises issues of unequal relationships, consent, and the prevention of equal access to education for all.

**Gender harassment** is harassment on the grounds of sex and/or gender, but without sexual connotations, such as diminishing or hateful comments, exclusion, silencing or stereotypical prejudices. It takes place in both online and offline contexts (see e.g., Leskinen & Cortina 2014; Cortina et al. 2011).

**Online violence**, abuse and violation can take many forms, for example, cyberstalking, cyberbullying, internet-based sexual abuse, non-consensual distribution of sexual images and text, with certain features arising from the nature of ICTs, for example, instantaneousness, asynchronicity, personalisation, global connectivity, reproducibility of

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<sup>5</sup> Sexual harassment has existed much longer than the term, coined in the 1970s and often credited to Lyn Farley in *Sexual Shakedown*. There is now a vast literature on sexual harassment. In 1987, the Finnish Ministry of Social Affairs and Health published a survey and bibliography detailing 341 publications and no less than ten *bibliographies* on sexual harassment (Högbacka et al. 1987). One early university studies was conducted by the Oxford University Students Union Women's Committee (1984). See also the ILO 2019; Istanbul Convention 2011; 6 & 7 of June Council Conclusions, 2014.

images, and blurring 'real' and 'representational' (e.g., Hall & Hearn 2017; Turan et al. 2010). These questions become even more important to examine with the movement to greater online research and education, not least through the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the conduct of everyday work in research performing organisations.

**Stalking** includes the unwanted, repeated surveillance or monitoring by an individual or group towards an individual or group. Stalking is often linked to harassment. Stalking can involve students, administration and faculty, and is increasingly taking place online, where new opportunities for cyberstalking are created (Finn 2004).

**Organisational (gender-based) violence** includes, in addition to more individually focused forms of gender-based violence, important manifestations at the *more collective, group and organisational levels of RPOs in relation to gender-based violence* (Hearn & Parkin 2001). This can apply in a less direct sense, such as weak or laissez-faire and/or autocratic or authoritarian management and leadership that facilitate, or even condones, individual gender-based violence (Ågotnes et al. 2018; Salin & Hoel 2020), or *the existence of group/organisational cultures that promote, or even enact, gender-based violence directly or indirectly*, for example, hostile environments (MacKinnon 1979)<sup>6</sup> and psychological violence. It can also be subsumed within studies of, for example, homosociality, group and organisational culture, organisational climate, and management and leadership (Anitha & Lewis 2018; Lewis et al. 2018; Lewis & Anitha 2019; Lewis & Marine 2019; Phipps 2018; Phipps et al. 2018; Brabazon 2020). Enabling factors of such negative collective, group and organisational environments can include large power differentials, perception of low costs to the organisation for enacting violence, high stress and dissatisfaction amongst those concerned, and the state of organisational leadership in relation to gender-based violence in the institution. For example, a recent mixed methods study of sexual harassment, assault and women's leadership found *institutional leadership* as the unifying theme in their data bringing together other sub-themes (Evans et al. 2019).

**Emerging forms of violence** includes forms of violence and abuse not necessarily recognised as violence, but which from a feminist perspective with a focus on *seeing violence* and victims/survivors and their experiences, may very well constitute violence. This may include coercive control of health, the body, and relations with colleagues, students, friends and family, including ignoring, shunning, snubbing and ostracism.

## THE 7P MODEL

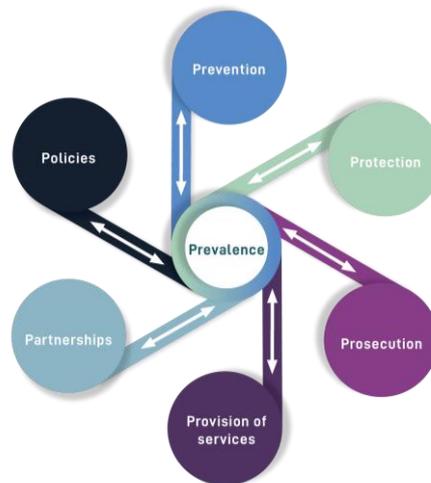
The UniSAFE project relies on a **7P model** to address and combat violence, to assess the efficiency of modes of intervention and regulation and the institutional responses put into place to eradicate gender-based violence, including sexual harassment, in RPOs. At the core is the measure of the **prevalence** of gender-based violence, with the aim to understand the roles of university and research organisations in **prevention, protection, prosecution, provision of services**, supported by **partnerships** and **policies**. This 7P model takes a

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<sup>6</sup> Salin (2003) reports: "These terms include 'employee abuse' (e.g., Keashly 1998), 'workplace aggression' (e.g. O'Leary, Griffin & Glew 1996; Neuman & Baron 1998), 'victimization' (e.g. Aquino et al. 1999), 'interpersonal deviance' (e.g. Bennett & Robinson 2003), 'social undermining' (e.g. Duffy, Ganster & Pagon 2002) and 'workplace incivility' (e.g. Andersson & Pearson 1999; Cortina, Magley, Williams & Langhout 2001)."

holistic approach to gender-based violence and is better equipped to collect comprehensive data, analyse relationships, and translate findings into operational tools by extending the conventional UN's and EU's 3P approach (prevention, protection, prosecution) (UN 2017; EU 2019, 2020) or the Council of Europe (2011) Istanbul Convention's 4P approach (prevention, protection, prosecution, policies) (Anitha & Lewis 2019).

Figure 1: The 7P model



**Prevalence** refers to data (and data collection) estimating the extent of the gender-based violence and providing information on different forms of gender-based violence. In terms of research performing organisations, this includes prevalence of **type of gender-based violence** for **victim/survivors** by different social positions and groupings. Such groupings include those categorised by social divisions, notably age, class, (dis)ability, ethnicity/racialisation, sex, gender, sexuality, and also those categorised by functional position in the research performing organisations in question: students, academics, and professional, administrative, technical or other support staff. These include further sub-positions, e.g., undergraduate student, master's student, doctoral researcher, visiting student, visiting (post)doctoral researcher, postdoctoral researcher, lecturer, senior lecturer, assistant professor, associate professor, professor, professor emeritus/a, leader/head of studies/discipline/unit/division/department, dean/rectorate, administrative employer, administrative supervisor/manager, support worker (e.g., laboratory technicians, IT, cleaning, catering). Prevalence is also categorisable in terms of the social position of **perpetrators** (either **individual or collective**) and **bystanders**, and the relationality (in the broadest sense between perpetrators and victims, and by **severity** and **frequency** over time.

In the UniSAFE project, the focus is on prevalence within the context of research performing organisations. This does not mean that incidents of violence that involve external people *and* take place outside of this organisational context – also called structural violence) – are not important (Galtung 1969; Engle Merry 2011; Hearn et al. 2020). While it is important to recognise the potential cause-effect relationship between and across boundaries/spheres and outside/inside, where higher prevalence of gender-based violence outside is likely to

increase the acceptance of gender-based violence within the research performing organisation, this will be captured in the qualitative in-depth case studies rather than the quantitative prevalence study.

The analytical focus concerns the main victim-perpetrator functional relationships outlined in Table 1 below.

*Table 1: Victim-perpetrator functional relationship*

PERPETRATOR V	VICTIM >	Staff (Academic, Professional, Administrative, Technical, Support)	Student	Organisation	External person
Staff (Academic, Professional, Administrative, Technical, Support)		✓	✓	x	x
Student		✓	✓	x	x
Organisation		✓	✓	x	x
External person (within the context of RPOs)		✓	✓	x	x

**Prevention** refers to implemented measures to promote changes in the social and cultural patterns of behaviour and attitudes, and may include, among others, awareness-raising initiatives, the development of educational materials, targeted policy documents and the training of professionals (Bondestam & Lundqvist 2020b). In terms of research performing organisations, this includes: induction materials for both staff and students; ongoing internal and external publicity and training; clear public written statements and visuals; integration of anti-gender-based violence in teaching and research (both content and process); promotion of research on gender-based violence; creation of peaceful, non-authoritarian, non-hierarchical, democratic, collegial management, supervision, and leadership; peaceful, non-authoritarian, democratic staff and student cultures; strong leadership, support and resources for Gender Equality and Diversity committees; funded expertise on gender-based violence; and focused attention to specific situations e.g., long-term dependency relations in doctoral supervision, conferences, field trips.

**Protection** aims at ensuring the safety and meeting the needs of (potential) victims. Protection comprises (cooperative) actions to protect (potential) victims of any form of gender-based violence. Protection also includes reporting the occurrence of, or potential for, abuse or harassment. In terms of research performing organisations, this includes: clear processes, procedures and infrastructure for reporting and supporting (potential) victims; both internal and external resources, training and expertise of those responsible for designing and implementing these processes, procedures and infrastructure, and for those acting as contact support points.

**Prosecution** and disciplinary measures cover legal proceedings against suspected perpetrators, and related investigative measures and judicial proceedings, including court

cases. This includes criminal and civil offences, as well as internal disciplinary grievance procedures. In terms of research performing organisations, this includes: clear processes, procedures and infrastructure for dealings with perpetrators, including possible disciplining, warnings, suspensions, rehabilitation, and termination of employment and study, as legally appropriate; both internal and external resources, training and expertise of those responsible for designing and implementing these processes, procedures and infrastructure and liaison with legal, police and criminal justice organisations and professionals.

**Provision of services** refers to the services offered to victims, families, and perpetrators of gender-based violence. It also covers the professionals who provide these services (e.g., those involved in specialised training) and the existing tools (e.g., guidelines, learning materials) to assist these in better addressing the needs of both target groups. In terms of research performing organisations, provision of services overlaps with both protection and prosecution. It can include for example counselling services, restraining measures, and the reorganisation of hierarchies. Importantly, the provision of services needs to be well known to all staff and students, and not only known to (potential) victims and perpetrators, and managers and supervisors.

**Partnership** relates to the involvement of relevant actors at international, national, regional, local and institutional levels, including governmental agencies, civil society organisations, trade unions, staff and student associations, working in collaboration on concerted actions to combat gender-based violence. University and departmental procedures are developed and implemented in cooperation with students, staff and faculty and their representatives. As well as liaison with legal, police and criminal justice organisations and professionals (as above), partnership includes close liaison with and learning from NGOs and other organisations with expertise in gender-based violence.

**Policies** refers to declared intentions and differ from other measures in that they are more abstract and – while linked to implementation, they are not per se about implementation. They constitute a clear vision and comprehensive strategy that respond to the problems of gender-based violence in a comprehensive and structural way. Policies also refers to the dominant or primary discourse framing the measures, rather than the implementation of these same measures in relation to prevention, protection, prosecution, provision of services or partnerships, and with the stated aim to combat gender-based violence. In a higher education context, this includes measures accommodated to specific institutional circumstances, not one size fits all and comprehensive in how they address specific issues of the respective constituency.

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: DETERMINANTS AND CONSEQUENCES OF PREVALENCE AND INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSES

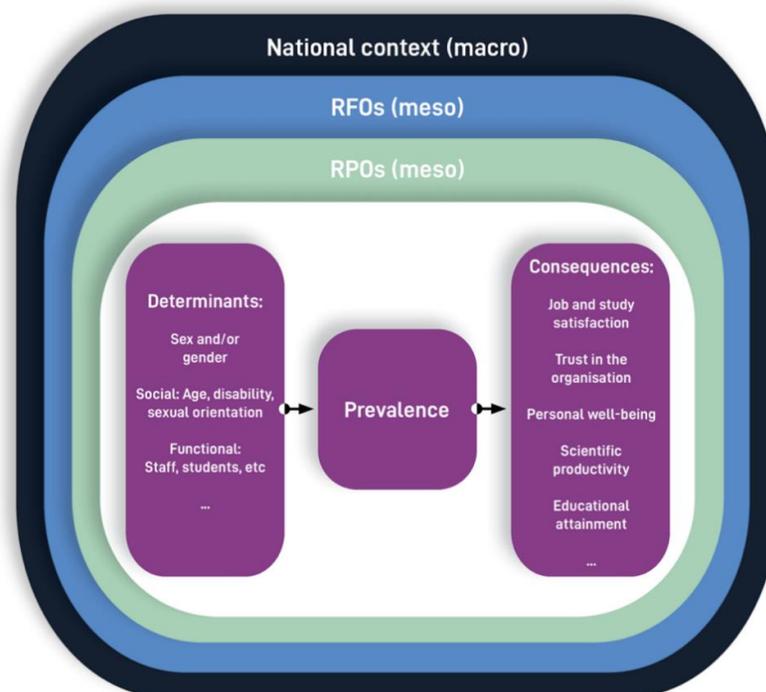
The measure of prevalence, in relation to the other Ps of the 7P model also needs to be examined in relation to both the determinants and possible consequences of gender-based violence. The **determinants** of the prevalence of gender-based violence in universities and other research performing organisations include demographic characteristics (such as sex



and gender but also age, disability, or sexual orientation, allowing where possible for intersectional perspectives to be drawn out) or markers of functional diversity (such as type of contract or seniority level for staff; or being a visiting researcher). Including only socio-demographic and functional diversity represent a narrow conceptualisation of determinants – other aspects, for example, attitudes to gender-based violence or sexist orientations are also central, and included in UniSAFE’s measurement of the broader context/environment. We thereby consider which, at the individual level, socio-demographic and functional characteristics/circumstances might influence prevalence (e.g., being from a sexual minority, being in a temporary contract might put individuals at greater risk). We also recognise that other aspects of the broader social environment, i.e., at meso and macro level, might influence prevalence either in their own right, but also as moderators of the relationship between individual determinants and prevalence – aspects such as institutional context, leadership, gender equality context in the country, gender equality in the institution (e.g., unadjusted gender pay gap), diversity within the institution, and other forms of structural violence. The project will also examine the potential **consequences** of gender-based violence within universities and other research performing organisations. These can range from organisational concerns such as well-being and retention, to scientific outcomes such as productivity or educational attainment, or more personal ones such as job or study satisfaction.

Figure 2: UniSAFE conceptual framework

Prevention Protection Prosecution Provision Partnership Policies



Prevention, protection, prosecution, provision, partnership and policies relate to the different contexts and environment at macro and meso levels in complex ways. Prevalence, determinants and consequences at the micro level exist in the contexts and environments of the meso and macro levels (prevention, protection, prosecution, provision, partnership

and policies). The conceptual model at the core of the UniSAFE project is thus multi-level in the sense that it integrates perspectives – and associated measurements – located at the micro level (e.g., determinants, prevalence and consequences), meso level (e.g., organisational infrastructure, policies, responses and measures), and macro level (e.g., national/regional policy and legal frameworks). There is a broad correspondence between these different levels and the programme of work in each Work Package, as outlined in the next section.

**Determinants** capture the functional and socio-demographic background of individuals (as victims, perpetrators, or bystanders). In addition to sex and gender, these include, but are not limited to, age, class, (dis)ability, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. They also cover the functional position of individuals, among students (e.g., undergraduate student, postgraduate student, doctoral researcher) or staff (different grades of academic, professional, administrative or other categories of staff). Other aspects of functional diversity are related to visiting status (for students or staff), but also to seniority, number of years in the institution or type of contracts (among staff). Therefore, although determinants represent individual characteristics, collectively build into a social structuring of research performing organisations and can accordingly influence the extent to which they provide gender+ inclusive cultures.

The **consequences** of the prevalence of gender-based violence, at the individual level, include the potential harm created in terms of satisfaction and performance with study/work, to educational attainment or professional development, or to health and well-being. At the organisational level, these compound into more collective harm such as erosion of trust in the organisation, absenteeism or problems with retention and turnover for both students and staff.

Determinants, prevalence, and consequences form an ‘input-output’ model, which is itself embedded in a wider context at meso level and macro level, including national and European contexts. The contexts in which research performing organisations operate is therefore important to take into consideration, as it can potentially moderate the relationships between them. For example, some (intersecting) categories of students/staff might be more at risk of gender-based violence, with in turn related consequences, but these effects might be compounded by an organisational and/or national context that is not supportive of victims or tolerates violence. It is therefore important to consider the wider staff culture/climate (e.g., collegiality, gender norms, attitudes to gender-based violence) or managerial culture/climate (e.g., hierarchical or authoritarian leadership styles) of research performing organisations, as well as their organisational characteristics (e.g., size, type).

## OPERATIONALISATION IN THE WORK PACKAGES

The different levels covered by the conceptual framework (micro, meso, macro) broadly relate to different WPs within the UniSAFE project – WP4 conducts a prevalence survey at the individual (micro) level, WP5 examines institutional responses at the organisational (meso) level and WP3 maps policy at the national (macro) level – although these are all inter-related and will be brought together for a multi-level analysis. We use the conceptual framework set out above to define further these operational parts.



**Prevalence** is measured at different levels. Within WP3, the State-of-the-art on prevalence of gender-based violence at national level is obtained. This task identifies the knowledge gaps on existing national level prevalence studies of gender-based violence in RPOs. The information is specific to universities and other research performing organisations, if available. The main source of information at individual level will be obtained via the survey of at least 45 RPOs in 15 countries carried out in WP4. The gaps in prevalence includes a wide range of forms of violence. This will be expanded by WP5 at the organisational level through the case studies of measures and institutional responses, and at individual level via the in-depth interviews with researchers at higher risk of gender-based violence.

**Prevention, protection, prosecution, provision of services, partnerships and policies** will also be collected at the national and institutional levels. Within WP3, this will be through the national/regional mapping of policy and legal frameworks which will examine which of these measures are mentioned and implemented. WP4 will gather information on whether staff and students are aware of the existence of the Ps. do so through the questionnaire, and gather information on whether staff and students are aware of the existence of the Ps. will gather information as to whether these measures are included in institutional policies. WP5 will collect information on whether these measures are included in institutional policies and the extent to which they are implemented will be examined through the inventory and the case studies, including an assessment of their effectiveness.

**Determinants** will be obtained in WP4 through the survey which will include variables looking at demographic, socio-economic or functional characteristics of both victims and perpetrators (e.g., sex, age, type of contract), as well as organisational contextual factors (e.g., attitudes to gender-based violence or sexist orientations). In WP5, through the case studies, it will be possible to look in more depth at selected cases of institutional responses to chosen determinants, while through interviews with researchers at higher risk of gender-based violence, there will be insights into their experiences.

**Consequences** will be measured in WP4 through the survey (e.g., well-being, career outcomes), and also examined within WP5 through the case studies and interviews with internationally mobile researchers by analysing individual outcomes in relation to institutional responses. Consequences are not only about the direct and indirect effects of the prevalence of gender-based violence itself but can also include consequences from disclosure of different kinds, even when following formal procedure, which in turn can have variable, and even at times devastating, effects over time. This latter point is most relevant for WP5.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Gender-based violence is theorised and conceptualised differently across different national, organisational contexts and academic disciplines. What is meant by gender and violence vary. While recognising the potential conflicts and tensions emanating from different strands of epistemology, ontology and contexts, UniSAFE is primarily informed by a feminist understanding of both gender and violence and takes the importance of the intersection of multiple inequalities into account.



This framework is developed in order to contribute to the data collection and analysis of gender-based violence in academic environments and research workplaces in Europe. To these ends, the framework has outlined the key concepts used in the project and proposed definitions for the different forms of gender-based violence that will be covered by data collection and analysis. It has described the 7P analytical model and defined each of its elements. The operationalisation in terms of different strands of data collection has been outlined. These combined inform the work in the following work packages and assists in the systematisation of data collection and analysis.

To explain and understand the prevalence, it is crucial that prevalence data can be contextualised by organisational, societal and policy level factors: the collection of data on meso and macro levels need to be gathered to contextualise, explain, and ultimately change, prevalence at the micro level.

The main conclusion of this analysis is that there are no existing prevalence studies of gender-based violence in RPOs that cover in a comprehensive way the forms of gender-based violence included in the UniSAFE conceptual framework. Thus far, existing studies predominantly target victims, rather than perpetrators and bystanders. It is also clear that prevalence studies of economic violence, organisational violence and online violence are unresearched areas, in particular with a perpetrator and bystander focus. UniSAFE has an important gap to fill here. While rich qualitative research on gender-based violence in RPOs exist and predominantly focus on policy and experiences of victims, fewer studies focus on institutional responses and the role of bystanders. Therefore, the UniSAFE prevalence study would contribute to this field with important new knowledge with a focus on the *prevalence of the different forms of gender-based violence as outlined and defined in this framework*, but also incorporating the perspective of actors beyond that of the victims.

In doing so, the UniSAFE project fills a number of gaps. First, the extent to which violence, violations and abuse, and different forms of violence, violations and abuse, are named or recognised as violence is highly variable across time, contexts and locations. This is also the case with variations across RPOs. In particular, prevalence studies of economic violence, organisational violence and online violence are unresearched areas. UniSAFE has an important task in addressing those gaps and will include:

- wider range of forms of violence, violations and abuse than in most previous studies through empirical data collection (quantitative and qualitative);
- economic violence in the quantitative studies, and in more depth in the qualitative studies, as this is a relatively undeveloped area that is more difficult to circumscribe;
- organisational violence in the quantitative studies, and in more depth in the qualitative studies, as this is also a relatively undeveloped area that is more difficult to circumscribe;
- online violence in the quantitative and qualitative studies.

Second, the earlier and predominant focus on physical violence, effects on the victims of violence, and its measurement in RPOs has still meant that knowledge gaps remain concerning perpetrators, bystanders, and institutional responses. UniSAFE will include:

- more focus on researching who perpetrators are, and the nature of the organisational relation between perpetrators and victims, for example, teacher-student, student-student, supervisor-supervisee;

- more focus on the effects of violence on bystanders' experiences and the part they can play in reducing and stopping violence. Bystanders can be both individuals and groups of people, for example, multiple colleagues;
- institutional responses of RPOs, both formal and informal, in broad terms in the quantitative studies, and in more depth in the qualitative studies. Institutional responses can include non-responses, inactions, non-events, and issue avoidance, as well as more consolidated policy and policy implementation.

Third, and finally, there are no existing prevalence studies of gender-based violence in universities and research organisations that cover all forms of gender-based violence included in the UniSAFE conceptual framework. UniSAFE will:

- bring together the operationalisations above, the results of the project's different research methodologies, and the investigations of the institutional responses of RPOs.

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