

# Gender in Science without Numbers

From academia to work-life balance

## Main Results of Case Studies

The present volume titled «Gender in Science without Numbers. From academia to work-life balance» includes short reviews of the main results of qualitative case studies focusing on the work-life balance of eleven categories of women professionals and scientists.

The qualitative research showed that the relationship between work and family life has been significantly influenced by the new conditions imposed by the recent economic crisis. Seven years after the advent of the crisis, the Greek society has undergone a variety of changes which are reflected in income, employment, state care services, benefits and allowances affecting those working in both, the public and the private sector.

Within these conditions, the relationship between work and family life, as shown by the project's case studies, has suffered by the successive shocks of social and economic transformations taking place during the crisis. This is especially true for women professionals. In addition, key dimensions of gender inequality existing even before the recent economic crisis have been prevalent as well.



The project has been implemented in the context of the «Academic Research Programme in the priority sector /GR07» managed by the General Secretariat for Research and Technology and co-financed by Greece and the EEA Financial Mechanism 2009-2014.



GENDER IN SCIENCE WITHOUT NUMBERS. FROM ACADEMIA TO WORK-LIFE BALANCE

## EDITORS

Maria Thanopoulou

Joanna Tsiganou



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ΕΘΝΙΚΟ ΚΕΝΤΡΟ ΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΚΩΝ ΕΡΕΥΝΩΝ  
NATIONAL CENTRE FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH





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*The editors*

*Maria Thanopoulou and Joanna Tsiganou*



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## INTRODUCTORY NOTE

The recent global crisis appeared in Greece from 2009 onwards. By 2016 its important repercussions in both the Greek economy and society became obvious. The Greek population in the midst of the current crisis is faced by a highest risk of poverty compared to the EU average, coupled with an also high risk of material deprivation.<sup>1</sup> This situation has forced women in Greece to an even more vulnerable position as the interplay between gender and other social characteristics, such as age, employment, income, nationality and citizenship, produce multiple and new vulnerabilities. In this context work-life balance for the Greek employed women has also been affected. Current conditions at the Greek labour market such as wage freezes or wage cuts in the public and private sector, personnel cuts in all sectors of the economy, cuts and restrictions in care related benefits, allowances and facilities, reduction of housing benefits or family benefits, do not favor the accomplishment of work-life balance.<sup>2</sup> As evidenced by the 2010 European Social Survey certain cases of infringement of the rights of pregnant women and mothers of young children to maternity leave and benefits have been documented.<sup>3</sup> Moreover according to EIGE's gender equality index<sup>4</sup> Greek women compared to men are disproportionately involved in caring activities, with extremely wide gender gaps between the time

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1. EGGSI, 2011, *The impact of the economic crisis on the situation of women and men and on Gender Equality Policies*, Synthesis report, prepared by Francesca Bettio, et al. [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/genderequality/files/documents/130410\\_crisis\\_report\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/genderequality/files/documents/130410_crisis_report_en.pdf). Also, EU SILC 2008, 2011.

2. EGGSI, 2011.

3. ESS, 2010, Greece.

4. EIGE, *Gender Equality Index, Measuring gender equality in the European Union 2005-2012*: Report, ISBN 978-92-9218-814-6, DOI 10.2839/763764.

spent on caring and educating children and grandchildren per day, and disproportionately responsible for cooking and housework.<sup>5</sup>

In Greece the issue of work-life balance has not been adequately addressed by means of empirical research investigations. The few research attempts devoted to this issue focus mainly to the distribution of parental duties, care and housekeeping as well the use of time between spouses within the nuclear family. Further, most of these attempts have been conducted before the advent of the current economic crisis.<sup>6</sup> There is a limited number of relative research undertakings carried out in the midst the present crisis. These are also oriented to the study of the distribution of family roles, competences and use of time between spouses.<sup>7</sup> To this respect the research project on «Work-life balance in the context of changing families and labour market in Greece»,<sup>8</sup> carried out in the year 2016, attempts to cover the existing gap in the relative Greek literature and research. It tries to assess the needs and aspirations of women, and to determine how work and family life was reconciled in Greece, in times of crisis. It had three specific goals. A descriptive goal has been to highlight the changes that have occurred in the lives of women from the recent economic crisis, to describe the changes in family structure and the factors having affected employment and

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5. On an average of men's involvement in cooking and housework every day for an hour or more in the EU in 2010, of 45.5 out of 100, Greece scored only 20.0 while Denmark scored 80.4.

6. We are referring to literature reviews on the issue of the work-life balance such as in Thanopoulou M. et al. (1999). «The relationship between professional and family life. The investigation of the Greek literature», *Synchrona Themata*, 71-72, pp. 171-189 (in Greek) and the review conducted during the implementation of the present project.

7. The relevant information comes from the literature review conducted during the implementation of the present project.

8. The project has been part of the European Area's Financial Mechanism WOR-LBAL, with code EEA GR07/3939 and has been co-financed by the Programme Research within priority sectors "Diversity, inequalities and social inclusion" of the EEA Financial Mechanism 2009-2014. The project has been administrated by the General Secretariat for Research and Technology (GSRT) and implemented by Family and Childcare Centre (KMOP), as the project's co-ordinator and partners the National Centre for Social Research (EKKE), the Greek League for Women's Rights, and the Institute of Social Sciences of the University of Iceland.

family life, as well as to provide evidence for the effectiveness of European policy, in the domain of work and family life harmonisation. A substantial goal has been to provide empirical evidence about the needs and expectations of specific professional groups of women, namely, women entrepreneurs, women scientists, self-employed, salaried women and unemployed women scientists, but also to provide greater insight into the personal experiences of women, in other words, to portray the needs and strategies of personal and professional survival, amidst the current financial crisis. A practical and policy oriented goal has been to map the nature of the economic development policy in Greece, in relation to the promotion of child care services, the provision of parental leave and the introduction of liberal or reduced working hours, for each European country.

The implementation of the project included a quantitative and a qualitative research. A qualitative research, a refined approach without numbers, was necessary in order to respond to the need to investigate in depth some more and new dimensions of the work-life balance not yet considered. We had as a starting point the idea that the current crisis, as a product of objective terms and conditions, is reflected on and perceived differently by various categories of women according to their position into the labour market and the social hierarchy. We have also assumed that personal feelings and experiences of women reflect objective conditions and factors that directly affect their life trajectories. Aiming to trace the interconnections between objective conditions and subjective perceptions of the present crisis we have chosen specific professional categories of women. We aimed at verifying the hypothesis whether high education credentials and employment protect women from poverisation and status degradation. Having these in mind we have chosen to study professional categories of women considered - before the advent of the current crisis - the non or the least vulnerable from a gender perspective among Greek women. These are mainly women possessing high educational credentials leading to scientific professions highly classified in the professional hierarchy, but also women active in the entrepreneurial field. Further, in relation to

previous research attempts our undertaking examines not only the accomplishment of family obligations, but also the working conditions of professional women in the midst of the current crisis. In other terms in our qualitative research the work – life balance is simultaneously considered in both the domains of work and that of the family.

The purpose of the qualitative investigations undertaken and carried out was a thorough study of the professional, family and personal life's balance in certain professional categories of women in the present conditions of the current economic crisis in Greece. The qualitative research of the targeted population aimed at an in-depth qualitative analysis of interconnections between work and family life, of working and unemployed professional women in Greece today, their prospects and their expectations. It aimed at investigating the living experiences of the targeted population of professional women. So, three broad categories of case studies were originally planned. These included the following: a) Women entrepreneurs, b) women scientists either self-employed or employed and c) unemployed women scientists. These broad categories of women professionals were further specialized in order to include specific professional categories of women so that the investigation of the balance of professional and personal life to be facilitated. This need was dictated by a pre-screening process of the field and a pilot study which showed that the above three general categories required further specialization, so as to draw specific conclusions, per occupational category of professional women. For this reason, it was considered necessary to enrich the range of occupational categories of women documented so as to help a better understanding of the state of affairs in Greece under crisis.

The selection of the professional categories was based on the criteria of high liability professions, high educational capital, self-employment, as well as, professions that are state-protected. Thus some broad professional categories were identified to be included in to the investigation process such as: a) Women employees and liberal professionals. b) Women working in the public and private

sector. c) Women in professions of high responsibility. d) Women scientists that are underemployed, unemployed, or active in other domains than the ones already specified within. e) Women whose occupations or employment have been affected by the economic crisis, and new vulnerable professional categories of women coming from the middle social strata. So the qualitative research included eleven case studies of women active in a variety of professions as well as unemployed professional women. These case studies were conducted at the population of professional women as follows: Women historians within academia, women civil servants, women judges, women lawyers, women notaries, women doctors, women pharmacists, women entrepreneurs-beauticians, women architects, self-employed women, as well as unemployed or underemployed women architects, civil engineers and women sociologists.

Given that the purpose of the project was to analyse and portray the work and family relationship, as shaped and experienced by employed and unemployed professional women in modern Greece, the research steered to the investigation of this relationship from the standpoint of maternity and work balance. Therefore, the women selected were aged 25-50 years and were mothers of minors, that is children in need of care as dependents. To collect the necessary qualitative data, an interview guide was designed, based on the concept of the 'life cycle', corresponding to the articulation of different 'worlds', such as the world of the family and the world of work. The research focused on the current situation faced and experienced by women who were selected. However, it was considered necessary to collect information related also to their past, namely the relationship of their studies –area of expertise– and their subsequent profession to the family of origin and their own nuclear family. This was expected to highlight the complex and multiple facets interwoven within the world of work and the world of family. Also, one of the dimensions of the study was to detect future family balancing capabilities and work. In this context, it was considered appropriate to investigate the views of women respondents on relevant prospects. Thus, the interview guide was structured in four

sections: a) The social - demographic characteristics of respondents, b) biographical notes, c) their current status and d) their prospects. These modules included sections for inquiry that helped to a more appropriate and thorough approach of the basic goals of the research. The guide was designed in a semi-structured form in order to ensure simultaneously both, the collection of the necessary information about some key issues and some kind of flexibility on the part of the respondent facilitating at the same time the narration. The interview guide was also designed in a way to permit adaptations to each professional category of women. It is to be noted that there were various difficulties in approaching the respondents of the qualitative research. The snowball technique adopted for the approach of the specific professional categories of the research population did not automatically secure the required number of respondents per case. There were denials, excuses and postponements in time schedules due to work overload. Also certain difficulties emerged in identifying new respondents within the criteria of the study. The total number of respondents of the qualitative research, amounted finally to hundred and ten professional women, allocated equally within the eleven case studies. The material collected was extensive and its range was beyond thousand pages of transcripts.

The present volume titled «Gender in Science without Numbers. From academia to work-life balance» refers to the qualitative research undertaken by the National Centre for Social Research and includes short reviews of the main results of each case study focusing on the work-life balance. Our qualitative research showed that the relationship between work and family life has been significantly influenced by the new conditions imposed by the recent economic crisis. Seven years after the advent of the crisis, the Greek society has undergone a variety of changes which are reflected in income, employment, state care services, benefits and allowances affecting those working in both, the public and the private sector. Within these conditions, the relationship between work and family life, as shown by the project's case studies, has suffered by the successive shocks of social transformations taking place during the crisis. This is especially

true for women professionals. In addition, key dimensions of gender inequality existing even before the recent economic crisis have been prevalent as well.

The present volume contains twelve texts concisely referring to the qualitative research results on work-life balance. The text titled «The bonds of a liberal profession. Architects in motherhood», a collective contribution to the memory of Fray Kamoutsi, illustrates the work-life balance for self-employed women architects. The narrations of female self-employed architects, mothers of infants, highlight points of friction arisen during the exercise of the profession under crisis and their attempt to balance the work and the family. The study depicted the practices that these women adopt in order to respond to the multiple requirements of their professional and family life. Subsequently, what has been prevalent is that within the current crisis, self-employed architect mothers are basically experiencing the “restraints” of an in name only “freelance” profession.

In her text on women historians titled «The daughters of Clio between home and history. Women historians in academia», *Ioanna Papathanasiou* argues that the “equality” of gender relations within academia, although provided in the present system by a strong institutional framework, has been hampered in practice, even in occupational groups classified as a social or intellectual “elite”. As far as the work-life balance in the lives of women historians is concerned the research has shown that it is not stable. This was evidenced by the different and readjusted family strategies allowing them to manage their roles flexibly, the roles they maintain as women, mothers, daughters and wives and as professionals within a male-dominated working environment.

The study concerning women judges portrays the diverging and asymptotic relationship between work and family life. As shown by *Emmy Fronimou* in her text titled «Professional work and family life of women judges. An incompatible relationship», women judges’ duties conflict with their feelings and requirements of their role as mothers. The investigation has shown that women judges operate under pressure due to a multitude of psychological and social factors

related not only to the specific nature of their demanding profession, but also to the exceptional difficulty of reconciling the conflicting demands of the world of work and the world of the family.

The investigation of the work-life balance of self-employed women lawyers by *Amalia Frangiskou* revealed the divergent aspects of the relationship between work and family life. In her text titled «Female lawyers. The equilibrium of two worlds – on the bench», she underlines that the work-life balance is experienced by women lawyers as a compilation of a “world of remorse” and a “self-nourishing conflict”. She stresses that, despite the mitigative action that these women are or were prepared to take, their losses are exhibited and vary accordingly. They include the moments lost from the mother-child relationship, their marriage breakdown, inefficiencies in the workplace, and the deterioration of their personal health. The crisis facing the country has started to affect more and more aspects of their daily life, and has considerably worsened the situation and prospects of their profession in general.

In the case study referring to the work-family relationship of women notaries, *Maria Thanopoulou and Joanna Tsiganou* show that this relationship has been determined by the new conditions set by the economic crisis. In their text titled «Family and work of notary women. From safety to insecurity», they argue that in the new unstable professional environment women notaries try to balance work and family under very unfavourable terms. They strive continuously for a balance between exercising a freelance profession constantly charged with more responsibilities of the state and responding to the traditional role of a mother and a housewife. The upheavals caused by the current crisis are experienced by women notaries with daily stress and anguish. They do not foresee a promising future for the survival of their profession, but also for the prospects of ensuring a fair standard of living for themselves and their children.

In her text titled «Female doctors with under-age children in time of crisis. An endless role conflict», *Aliki Mouriki* emphasizes the constant conflict between professional and familial roles of women doctors having children that are minors. She argues that the

successful and balanced reconciliation of professional and family life seems excessively difficult for most women doctors with young children. The prolonged economic crisis compounds the objective and subjective difficulties that face the successful practice of their profession. These affect the family, but also the personal balance of these women. As these conditions worsen the exercise of the medical profession is threatened. Women doctors face with stoicism and personal sacrifices the significant difficulties of combining their complex roles; these include small reductions in the time they devote to their children and much more, in their career and personal development.

In her study titled «Work-life balance for women pharmacists and critical changes in a profession 'suitable' for women», *Hara Stratoudaki* highlights the critical upheavals that are taking place in the profession of the pharmacist, for women, during the crisis. Until recently, many women chose the profession of pharmacist, considering that among the health professions, is the most suiting towards their gender, as it may provide the appropriate time and working conditions allowing for a smooth balance of work and family. Therefore, in recent decades, most pharmacists in Greece –and elsewhere– are female. With the onset of the economic crisis and the diversification of the way pharmacies operate, the work-life balance has been threatened. Women pharmacists feel they are failing in many of their roles within the profession and the family and feel pessimistic about the future, as the entrepreneurial facet of their profession becomes more and more demanding.

The fragile balance between the aspirations and desires of women beauticians-entrepreneurs who are mothers of children minors, particularly within the context of a crisis, is documented in the text titled «Profession beautician. Fragile balance between their ambitions and wishes». As *Dimitra Kondyli* argues the exercise of the profession of the beautician requires a woman to possess distinct professional and business skills as well as physical strength, especially since the growth or even retention of the clientele in times of crisis, becomes elusive. The crisis has contributed to the increase in working

hours, to the reduction of the cost of services provided, and helped to create a fragile coupling between work and family; the dilemmas regarding the prioritization and needs between the professional and family sphere, are at the forefront.

In her text titled «Women architects and civil engineers facing underemployment, unemployment and the pursuit of work-life balance», *Natalia Spyropoulou* shows that the family and professional lives of women architects and civil engineers, dependent employees, are shifting and tormented by the economic crisis. As the working conditions of these professions have been deteriorated there are effects which spill over to the ways in which these women used to effectively combine their professional and family life. The research highlighted the problems these women face today because of the crisis, but also the different strategies they follow to fulfil the multiple roles undertaken in the context of their work and family life.

*Andromachi Hadjiyanni* has conducted a case study on women sociologists, a vulnerable professional category even before the advent of the present crisis. In her text titled «Women Sociologists. Family, employment, underemployment and unemployment in times of crisis» she shows that for unemployed or underemployed women sociologists, the reconciliation of work and family life is dictated by conditions other than those concerning their colleagues who might enjoy permanent employment. The research population consists of women sociologists who are employed part-time or hold minimum hours, a situation which has deteriorated during the years of crisis in Greece. It seems to be difficult for those women sociologists to combine the roles of working woman and mother, as they often depend on the ability of childcare and the help of their family.

Though the qualitative research placed emphasis on the work-life balance of certain categories of women professionals some case studies include also relevant policy issues. In her text on women civil servants, titled «Female public sector employees and a difficult reconciliation of family and work life», *Christina Varouxí* highlights the difficult reconciliation of family and professional life for women civil servants arguing that during the last six years they are experiencing

adverse conditions with respect to employment. The text emphasises the policy measures proposed by the women interviewed as necessary to support both their career aspirations and their ability to harmonize the latter with the responsibilities of the family.

Moreover we included, as *postscript* of this volume, a qualitative research conducted with key-informants on the existing relative policies in Greece under crisis. *Manina Kakepaki* in her text titled «Evaluation and assessment of public policies and practices on work-life balance in Greece», refers to the policy-making process and to the policies on work-life balance in Greece. To fulfill the purpose of the study semi-structured interviews were conducted with experts and government officials on the issue of policies regarding reconciliation of family and professional life. As evidenced, there is a severe lack of resources for social policy due to extensive cuts in state welfare structures. On the other hand working relationships are becoming more flexible, and other –atypical– labor relations are imposed, which are unprotected and not subject to the existing legislative framework. At the level of values, claims related to gender issues have declined since they are considered a “luxury” in harsh times.

By evaluating the results of the qualitative research in their totality, it seems that the common denominator of all studies, is that, today, in Greece under crisis, the relationship between work and family life deviates more and more from any perspective of reconciliation. Regardless of the profession in which these women are active - historian working in academia, judge, doctor, lawyer, notary, pharmacist, architect, civil-engineer, entrepreneur beautician, civil servant, sociologist – work-life balance appears as a painful “duty”, due to the long list of professional and familial responsibilities they have to cope with. In the absence of supportive structures from the state, and amidst income shrinkage, the provision of external auxiliary services, both at work and in the family, becomes extremely difficult. Instead, the memorandum policies adopted by the state, worsen the conditions of exercising their professions, and variously affect the women included within this qualitative research project. Existing policies are practically against the prospect of the reconciliation of

work and family. In some cases, these lead women in seeking outlets of early exit strategies from the profession. In Greece under crisis, the balance between professional and family life of the women studied has begun to tilt towards the return to the traditional role of the woman as mother and housewife, that goes against the emancipation won by women in the post-war era, particularly in recent decades.

All qualitative investigations undertaken in the context of the overall project are complementary to the simultaneously conducted quantitative research and the reviewing of existing policies on work-life balance. They constitute small-scale investigations that lead to circumstantial evidence which must not be generalized in its entirety. The case studies try to provide an analytical approach with respect to the balance of work and personal life of professional women in Greece, at the time of an in-depth crisis and exhibit new areas for further research. These might be further investigation of the new conditions affecting not only gender relationships in both the work and the family but also social mobility and social reproduction. We expect that our preliminary qualitative approach might be of help in future explorations of these fields as it implies that the current overpowering economic crisis 'shelters' multifaced other crises.

*Maria Thanopoulou and Joanna Tsiganou*  
*Athens, December 2016*

## THE BONDS OF A LIBERAL PROFESSION. ARCHITECTS IN MOTHERHOOD\*

*Collective contribution to the memory of Fray Kamoutsi*

The interrelation between the work and family spheres, as is developed within high qualified professions, has not until now been sufficiently dealt with into the Greek research bibliography. The main subject of the present case study has been the examination of the types and modes of the configuration and tuning of the professional and private life of a category of women exercising a profession of high qualifications, namely the female self-employed architects. In view of investigating the various facets of the work-family relationship, emphasis has been placed on issues such as the working conditions, the way of life and the work-life balance. For research purposes, ten female architects with underage children, who are self-employed, were chosen through the “snowball” technique.

In this particular study the interview guide has been specialized in order to adapt to the particularities of the aforementioned profession thus pertaining to twelve distinct research units: a) Demographic and social characteristics of the respondent, as well as the household, b) retrospection: choice of studying at the Department of Architecture, c) parental environment, d) educational route and empirical

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\*The present case study was designed by Fray Kamoutsi, a colleague and architect mother who has undertaken the research tasks with personal involvement and much enthusiasm. Unfortunately serious health problems impeded her from finishing her research work. In the accomplishment of the remaining field work tasks contributed Dimitra Kondyli and Ioanna Papathanasiou. The editors of the present volume tried to put together the research results in a way exhibiting the significance of this specific case study on architect mothers within the whole qualitative research undertaking.

experience during studies, e) configuration of personal professional targets and choices, f) professional profile and office organizational structure, g) requirements that emerged through professional life and their influence on social life, h) interrelation between professional and personal life, i) employment during the crisis, j) interrelation of professional and family life cycle, k) exercising multiple roles and giving prominence to tensions, balances, manifold and conflicting emotions, l) opinions and judgments regarding the provided social infrastructure. So all the research units aimed at reconstructing the life trajectories of the women architects to be interviewed.

### *Main research findings*

Female self-employed architects have chosen their profession consciously. For some women, this choice was the natural continuation of and complementary to their family history when coming from families of self-employed architects, who are socially reproducing themselves through the continuation of this profession from generation to generation. Indeed, in some cases the intergenerational continuation of the profession is extended across three generations. In other cases, the choice of this profession is based on its subject matter and the notion that it is underpinned on the one hand by science and on the other by the arts.

All ten respondents' choice of profession is affected by what they call "*love for architecture*". This expression could allude to a type of elitism, but also to a need for forming or, at other occasions, for confirming a special identity, that of a female architect. An interesting element that our research also revealed was that most of the participants were married to men who were coming from similar working environments. Their husbands were either architects or civil engineers, a fact that underlines the dual nature of the interrelation between work and family for female architects.

Studies abroad, as well as the social circle that most of the respondents have, constitute an important educational and social

capital that supports the exercise of the freelance profession. This support is particularly important in the case of women architects, who are facing the existing special gender relations within the construction sector (contractors, male-dominated crew, suspicion by clients etc.). As far as the profession is profitable, balancing life and work is feasible provided that paid help is available at work and at home. In parallel, the exercise of a freelance profession is supported as well by the family network, parents who help at the office and the house in different ways.

With the advent of the current economic crisis, the crumbling of the construction sector, the decrease of income, the over-taxation of self-employed professionals, architects included, and the over-taxation of properties, the profession has been seriously affected by adverse pressures. The continuing operation of female self-employed architects' offices has become a challenge and it is with great difficulty that can be maintained. Female architects, in the face of additional financial obligations and constraints, are forced to undertake ad hoc activities related to simple transactional works, such as processes of legitimization of planning, building code violations, dealing with excess bureaucracy. Subsequently, they are experiencing the consequences of the transfer of some part of state responsibilities to the engineers and of the aggravation of bureaucracy. In addition, the relations of female self-employed architects with their clients are strained, since clients are suspicious and demanding, while, at the same time, they delay outstanding payments.

This newly formed situation leads to a feeling of annulment of female architects' expectations. From the exercise of a profession that was considered as an "elite" profession, they are made to adapt to a new reality of simplistic activities of a procedural and bureaucratic type that are at a distance with the scientific and artistic nature of their profession and their initial high expectations.

In many occasions, the crisis at the profession has brought a shift in the means of acquiring income. In parallel with the office that is underperforming and does not bring income to the female self-employed architects, they are looking for ad hoc projects or to other

means of contributing to the family income. They are often led to traditional means of home crafts and are crafting homemade items for everyday use (bags, knitted garments e.t.c.) that are being sold in open markets or through their social circle.

The great difficulty in living by their own means faced by female self-employed architects has a direct effect to the interrelation of work and family. Usually, the working hours at the office and home are extended at the detriment of time for family and sleep. The lack of state support as well as the incapacity of paying to get support for the children lead these women to take on almost entirely the weight of house 'burdens'. Even in cases where husbands contribute equally at the allocation of family responsibilities, female self-employed architects are those who take over the responsibility for coordinating and scheduling all the household activities.

With virtuosity, sacrifices, ingenuity and patience, like traditional Greek housewives, those women administer the everyday requirements, while undergoing, through this constant struggle for survival, multiple frustrations: frustrations that are related to the scientific subject of their work itself, as well as the loss of the high prestige of the profession and the affluence that accompanied it.

## *Conclusions*

The exercise of the liberal profession of architects is seriously affected by the current financial crisis. As it is pointed out through this case study, what characterizes the female self-employed architects' employment status is underemployment or part-time employment. At the same time, within the context of the crisis, office needs awaiting to be covered and constantly rising tax burdens imposed to liberal professionals are being accumulated. On the other hand, underemployment releases more free time for women architects in order to be devoted to upbringing their children. This increase of hours at home however entails the time dealing with office work as well as the time required for undertaking house chores since "help at home" is no more available.

Whichever balance is being achieved between professional and personal life by female self-employed architects is at the expense of the scientific and artistic dimension of their profession, as well as of their professional expectations and personal needs. These women face the future with uncertainty. Every day they try to keep a difficult balance between family and work in order to avoid feeling the full annulment of their youth dreams regarding the profession and the family.

So the narrations of female self-employed architects, mothers of underage children, have brought into the forefront frictions related to the exercise of their profession within the context of the current crisis and to their efforts to achieve work-life balance. The study depicted the multiple novel ways that come up and the practices that those women adopt during the exercise of their complex role in view of responding to the multiple requirements of their professional and family life. Subsequently, through this study what has been prevalent was that within the current crisis, women architects and mothers are basically experiencing the “restraints” of an in name only “freelance” profession.

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THE DAUGHTERS OF CLIO  
BETWEEN HOME AND HISTORY.  
WOMEN HISTORIANS IN ACADEMIA

*Ioanna Papathanasiou*

Gender equality, as is portrayed within this text, although provisioned in the present context by a rigid institutional framework, in practical terms, is hampered. This occurs even in occupational groups that may be effortlessly classified within the social and intellectual 'elite' of the country. The problems are not due exclusively to the traditional distinction between the private and public sphere, that persists to classify women in the first, nor within the 'hierarchical sexual division in the labour market'. Senior public structures inherently favouring males, a widely debated phenomenon during the past years, is the symptom of a broader gender-based *status quo* still underlying in modern societies.

The rise in the educational level of women and the continuous improvement of their position in employment, have allowed them, in the post-war era, but especially in recent years, to enter domains previously established as stereotypically 'masculine'. Elevated educational status and celebrated careers, however, do not seem to prevent the prolonged (albeit gradually diminishing) underrepresentation of females in key positions of the scientific, as well as the administrative hierarchy. In addition, there are extremely low rates of women participating in high level planning and decision making. The phenomenon, certainly, is not only Greek. As was pointed out several years ago, by Laura Maratou, "in all countries-members of the EU there have been highlighted clear differences between men

and women, both in training and in their professional paths; women are the minority within universities and research centres, as reports on data portray”.<sup>1</sup>

These estimates have been corroborated by a recent qualitative survey we conducted in the summer of 2016, focusing on one of the most populous, in numbers, of women disciplines; historians working as Teaching Scientific Staff at various Greek universities. Ten Greek historians were asked to answer questions about the problems faced in the venture to harmonize the different roles undertaken as mothers, wives, daughters and academics, in higher education and as women scientists, within the male-dominated and competitive academic environment.

### *1. The ‘daughters of Clio’ as the population of our survey*

The search for balance between family life and work, for this female population, has its starting point in some data, which lead to corresponding questions. Is the prolonged (albeit gradually diminishing) under-representation of females in the academic and research community and the scientific hierarchy exclusively due to the resistance and hurdles posed by the patriarchal gender staffing of senior public structures and the hierarchical sexual division within the work pool?<sup>2</sup> Is, after following social perceptions and stereotypes, the advancement of women even in professional categories that are classified as ‘elite’, hampered by rivalries of gender and other factors not only limited to the professional environment? Does the female presence in the social and life sciences relate to the revival of another level of traditional roles that correspond to ‘natural’ female abilities, and in how women can manage their own issues arising from other traditional roles that they maintain as women, mothers,

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1. Maratou, 2004, pp. 7-10. On women academics see also Iliou, 1988, pp. 3-24. Vosniadou and Vaiou, 2006, pp. 45-49. Kaltsoglia-Tournaviti, 2011, pp. 421-438.

2. A theoretical and historical review of this issue can be found in Avdela, 1990, p. 292.

daughters and wives and both as professionals in a predominantly male-dominated working environment?

The population of the qualitative research consisted of Greek women historians, specializing in modern and contemporary history, that are aged between 45 and 55 years, holders of doctorates from universities in Greece or abroad, and a stable working relationship at different universities and in different ranks. The age limit of the research, set at 55 years of age, that included women respondents and especially the ones with children that are minors, has held ramifications for the project, since our options were limited to the search of the survey population to universities within the country.

## *2. Between home and history*

Historians, that have shared their views with us, highlighted aspects of their family and professional life, especially related to the specificity of their gender. The most important issues that were extracted are allocated within the four sections that follow.

### *2.1. Motherhood and academic career*

Although it is not systematically studied, it is apparent that a significant number of women in academia remain, or prefer to remain, childless. The neutral phrase that is expressed, “*this is how life brought things*” comprises essentially two realities wherein a physical dysfunction, as is expected, is not included. The first relates to an informed decision, of “*putting the career first*”, that is associated predominantly with the difficulties and the competition of the profession, as well as the consequent refusal to undertake the obligations that are required to start a family. The second is closely linked to the first, without implying a premeditated decision, that is coupled with deflecting as to the point in time to bear a child, due to the dominant path of career building.

All ten historians with whom we discussed, were linking motherhood with a unique experience that they would not trade for

anything; the instance of having children is described as “*a unique gift of nature and life.*” At the same time, however, they emphasize the radical changes in the commitments and obligations arising from the creation of the family. For this reason, they explain that the role of the mother (that is not easy at all), was not imposed in their lives by chance, but because of a joint decision taken by themselves and their partner or their spouse.

The joint decision and choice, the division of responsibilities between the couple and any external assistance, which was recruited and came either from the family environment, or in the context of paid services, has balanced the conflicts, as much as possible. However, given the nature of the mother-child relationship, they cannot overturn the established and prevalent perception that the foremost and primary responsibility for the child belongs to the mother.

In any case, the academic career and motherhood are two distinct poles, that each requires a great amount of availability, investment and time. Although working hours at a university may not correspond to an eight-hour work day, the nature of the work, the preparation of courses, the research and writing requirements, that demand extreme concentration and isolation, come in contradiction with the needs of children. Added to the list of problems to be solved, is what happens due to the transportation requirements of a parent, or both parents, to and from work.

## *2.2. Routine and organization of time*

As references of ‘discipline’ and “*running to catch up to it all*” are the keywords that describe the functions of the new system of family. The ways which are selected for the everyday mitigation of issues vary by each case, and by the different child development stages. Some of the historians who shared with us their experiences, explained that as their children were infants or very small, they would rather be isolated and working at home. Others chose to work every day outside the home, most often in the workplace, as their office better allowed for the concentration required; for others, the transportation

to their workplace within regional universities imposed, after the end of their maternity leave, their absence from home, at least for some days of the week.

The allocation of tasks within the family proved to be, in most cases, a life-saving solution. The father, at hours where he was available from his own professional obligations, assumed an active role in the children's daily life, along with the grandparents. The paternal presence worked positively, mainly in cases where the mother had moved away from the house, due to the requirements of her position, and at the night 'shifts' when she needed rest. In the same way, the ancestral family, especially of the mother, contributed effectively when her parents were still alive and able. Their absence or unavailability was compensated by 'external aid'.

Different types of responsibilities are obviously connected with family strategies aimed at the proper functioning of the system. It is probably no coincidence that in most cases where the mother had to be relocated because of her work assignment, the father would stay at home, and that their ancestral families would surround them with their care.

As effective though different family strategies may be, they only proved to solve practical issues. The phrase "*I am full of remorse and guilt*" is constantly recurring within this research, when referring to the hours devoted by our interviewees to their children, regardless of their situation and the solutions they have adopted. The designation of scarce engagement with the daily routine of the child, as 'creative' and quality time, especially at tender ages, does not exclude the 'guilt' unfolded behind closed doors, the two-day and three-day absences every week in the university, or the travel imposed by the participation in an international conference. On the other hand, when their research is not a priority, because of obligations to the family, then, anger may prevail. This pervasive sense of failure is found within historians who do not have to move, to be in proximity to their workplace.

The harmonization of roles occurs gradually. As a non-taken for granted process, it may express itself due to the new balance

achieved as “*the child proceeds to the next stage of life*”, grows and becomes autonomous slowly. In the new phase, the school, especially the “*good school*”,<sup>3</sup> assumes responsibility, when the family finance permits it, a sharing of the upbringing of the child, along with the family, amidst its education. However, our research has shown that in the organization of everyday life, what really counts is the gradual change of the character of the obligations towards the child, the acceptance of the already established system of gendered roles within the family and most importantly, the reduction of family stress.

Through acceptance, the feeling of the mother’s failure may subside, but guilt for her absence is prevalent, as children look after it, and sustain it themselves. The mother’s work and the void this precludes, formulate an “*unwanted part of life*” which they know they cannot change.

### 2.3. *Gender relations at work and in the family*

The ‘glass ceiling’ phenomenon, namely, the limited access of women to management positions and positions at the university and in the first stage is correlated, by most of our interviewees, with the lack of encouragement from their male colleagues. In other words, this situation includes ‘mild’ symptoms of gender inequalities and rivalries in the academic workplace. But this is not only restricted in this phenomenon, that is observed in other countries as well.<sup>4</sup> Within the Greek academic community, where gender antagonisms are of excess, these seem to be “*kept very well*”. Decency and culture may operate as self-control mechanisms, keeping the public utterance of sexist comments limited, but the merit code of the masculine Greek university still contains traces of scattered sexism, that can be inherent throughout the Greek society.

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3. “*Fortunately, there are good schools that care for them,*” as one of our interviewees referred. The couple could not meet all extracurricular activities’ requirements, due to lack of time, so they preferred to send the child to a private school that provides in addition to excellent training, the necessary foreign language courses and sports activities.

4. See the collective work Blanpain, 2006, p. 320.

In direct relation to the previous statements, gender relations and inequalities document another important issue: whether the attitude of the women themselves can be affected by the criticism and the negative comments of their professional environment. An aggressive attitude, as well as indifference, are the most likely emergency response scenarios. In the long term, however, women appear to have a different attitude with respect to their proximate context. They accept that within the domain of work, it seems that it is much easier for social stereotypes to be prevalent, and they are willing to grant to other sex what rightfully, they may themselves, claim.

#### *2.4. The 'privileged' university and the economic crisis*

Working in academia is considered as a 'privileged' profession, with a 'secured special payroll'; academics and researchers do not seem to be affected by the economic crisis of the recent years to the extent that has affected other professional groups.

Common estimates, however, with respect to the deteriorating economic situation of the country that call for reductions of 40% on their own salaries, do not imply uniformity in the situation. The effects of the crisis reflected do not affect in the same manner the academic community; in addition, a collective experience does not translate to the same working or living conditions, for everyone affected. The variations have, as may be considered logical, a starting point, within the financial situation of each family unit, and are accentuated per several factors. Our interviewees have listed, as important additional factors, the professional and financial position of the husband, additional resources from programs or a second job, and especially the place of work for historians and / or their 'partners', with respect to weekly transportation.

The limitation of family expenditure, however, is no easy task. It is hardly applicable for everyone, when at an age, they have organized their lives in certain ways; this situation may affect the professionals, and their spouses, that move or relocate for their work, as well. In any case, when family planning is concerned, the most widespread

and effective cut, other than books, is the reduction or abolition of paid domestic services for the home and the child.

Humour sometimes conceals, but it does not cover, the gaps created by cuts in everyday life. Most children of our interviewees are already in adolescence, but those that are still young, have been waiting patiently for their busy mother, “*with paint and their colouring books*” in a conference room or classroom. On the other hand, the intensification of the requirements for running a home have spilled over not only to children but also to mothers, especially when the husband is constantly absent due to his own obligations.

## *Conclusions*

As custodians of history and historical memory, the women historians with whom we talked, have managed to make their presence felt in the quality of their work in science; they consider parenthood, despite the difficulties and the exhausting pace of everyday life, as “*the most precious gift*”. The problems encountered in trying to harmonize their professional and family obligations, do not seem to diverge with those of women in other disciplines of the academic community; those who have the pleasure to have children, simultaneously test the peculiarities of a profession that is considered reputable, privileged and without distinct external difficulties.

Having made their privileged area that of social sciences and humanities, and secondarily the health sciences sector, where women’s work meets with a deep tradition, women academics and researchers unreel in professional categories to be classified within the intellectual ‘elite’ of the country, though facing, even today, attitudes and social stereotypes through which gender antagonism may be expressed, deriving mainly from their professional environment.

“*Obstacles are there, so that we may overcome them*”, our historians argue, signifying that the balance in which they operate is not stable. Quite the contrary, in some cases they seem very doubtful, as was evidenced by the different and readjusted family strategies that allow

them to manage flexibly, despite the emotional costs, the roles that they maintain as women, mothers, daughters and wives and as both professionals, within a male-dominated working environment.

Living through these roles, the difficulties and contradictions that characterize their composition, do not portray a personal ‘success story’, nor necessarily do they adorn their personal and professional journeys. They say that they honour their choices and try to respond at all levels; they explain that none of the roles undertaken “*shows a compulsory course, neither is a must.*”

For this reason, moreover, employing new practical solutions at all levels, allows them to resist wage cuts imposed by the economic crisis of recent years. As genuine daughters of Clio, they are aware of the past, of societies of other times, and the realities of the social topics, as well as the conditions and circumstances restricted to their gender. Amidst the difficulties, they draw strength “*from the gleam of hope in their children’s eyes*”, and continue with the awareness that “*in a few years, the children go their way and we keep ours.*” Thus, contradicting the view that motherhood is a *cul-de-sac* for their academic future, they believe that a balanced participation in the family and academia may be ensured in the long term, through continuous investment and communication.

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# PROFESSIONAL AND FAMILY LIFE OF WOMEN JUDGES. AN INCOMPATIBLE RELATIONSHIP

*Emmy Fronimou*

It is not well-known that the Greek judiciary is primarily composed of women judges. Things, however, were not always so. Until the 1980s, most judges were men, and various reservations were raised on whether women should be occupying judges' chairs at all. For historical reasons, it is worth referring to the point expressed, in the opinion of the session of the Legal Council of State (no. 275/1955), which seeks to challenge the ability of women to settle in court, per the explanation poised as, "women, per their physiological and biological composition, as compared to men, are subject to a greater extent of emotional fluctuations, and therefore undergo the influence of emotional factors in a greater range, have less analytical capacity, a less sophisticated competitive instinct, and have less physical strength while they succumb more easily to pleads". The social changes that followed, however, at first hesitantly, but later very swiftly and in a barrage, formed new conditions on the position and the social and professional role of women. Thus, the first woman judge<sup>1</sup> was appointed as an Associate judge in Athens in 1959. The prosecutorial branch, however, accepted a female public prosecutor only in 1975, and recently, in 2011, appointed a female President of the Supreme Court,<sup>2</sup> whereas the first woman Attorney General of the Supreme Court was appointed as recently as 2013.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Anna Athanasiadou.
  2. Rena Asimakopoulou.
  3. Euterpe Koutzamani.

In recent years, however, the number of women judges has increased dramatically. Today, women make up 60% of all judges, whereas in the lower levels of the judicial hierarchy, this percentage may reach the figure of 65%. Especially referring to the Administrative Courts, wherein relocation transfers are not so common, women constitute about 70% of all judges. Regarding their qualifications, the judges generally are civil servants who have tenure, and must be Law School graduates with at least three years of experience in exercising the legal profession. Since 1995, when the National School of Judges was founded in Thessaloniki, they must have graduated from this school, as well. The number of candidates is excessively large<sup>4</sup> and the examinations' difficulty within the School of Judges is extremely demanding. So few candidates are successful on their first try. Most must re-sit for exams two to three times. The education of the incumbents lasts sixteen months, ensuing a mandatory eighteen months of internship in court. To qualify, the candidates must have reached 27 years of age, but not be older than 40. Those who have completed the above study cycle are appointed as associate judges in a Court of the First Instance, within the country. For each promotion to a higher grade, there are subsequent relocation transfers around the country.

In the rank of the Associate judge, the judges remain effective for at least one year. The rank of judge in the Court of the First Instance that follows, lasts for about twelve years, while serving as presiding judges of the Courts of the First Instance, takes at least four years. In the following ranks, those of the Appeal judge, and President of the Court of Appeal, they must also remain for about ten to twelve years. In the careers of judges, steady hierarchical progression is expected, and only in case of misconduct, or a disciplinary problem, is this progression reassessed. The rank of President of the Court of Appeal is usually the maximum rank achieved. Those who wish to progress into the Supreme Court are required to submit a special request. Members of the Supreme Court retire at the age of 67, in

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4. For example a thousand candidates applying for only sixty positions.

contrast to all other judges, that share compulsory retirement at 65 years of age.

This case study, highlights the incompatible relationship between professional and family life of Greek women judges. The object of this study has been to investigate the factors that affect the balance between personal or family life and work, among women judges. Specifically, we examined the difficulties, needs, career aspirations and expectations, as well as strategies, which the judges, as social actors, chose in order to overcome the work-life dichotomy, from the gender perspective. For this purpose, through snowball technique, ten semi-structured interviews with nine women judges and a public prosecutor, aged 38-51 years, with at least one minor child, were conducted. In addition, an eleventh interview was performed, with a key informant and member of the Trade Union of Judges and Public Prosecutors, during which the important problems of their sector, and those concerning women judges and public prosecutors, were exposed. It is worth mentioning, that the reported interviews were preceded by an extensive pilot interview with a judge from my social circle. The purpose was to get a preliminary overview of the topic and identify some critical points that would help configure the sections to be discussed and documented, within the interview's guide. In this text I choose to refer only to certain points of research that seem important.

Within this text, I choose to make special reference to two indicative features that characterize the profession of judges, which, in my opinion, impose decisive influence on the work-life balance within this specific professional group of women. One peculiarity is the relocation transfers, and the other, is the possibility of working from home.

Relocation transfers are generally mandatory for judges. The issue arises immediately after their graduation from the School of Judges, and every time they are promoted to a higher rank. Their first placement can occur in any region of Greece, and outside their place of residence, wherever a court may have personnel requirements and vacancies. The existence of a judge's family does not affect the

Agency's decisions on the transfer of women judges, since the issue is inherent in the profession and it is left upon the judges themselves to manage it. My interviewees had a total of transfer times from two to five years. Most transfers take place between the ages of 30 and 40 years, when as Associate judges or judges of the Courts of the First Instance, they have the largest caseloads to handle, but are also at the age at which they normally have children.

One of the judges whom I spoke with, was already married when she took her first placement in a bordering region of the country. While she was pregnant, she remained in her placement, practicing until the eighth month of her pregnancy. During her pregnancy and childbirth leave, she returned to Athens, where she lived previously, and where her husband was situated, and continued his work. After a few months, she returned to her post, whilst she was still breastfeeding, and she found a local woman to care for her child, while she was working, from 8.00 in the morning, until 6-7 in the afternoon. She confided, that in the three years of this placement, she could go to Athens to see her husband only at Easter and summer. In the meantime, he would come to visit if he could, about twice a month. When she asked for a leave of absence for an exceptional reason, her motion was denied, and later she learned that this was commented by a superior as "*and who asked this lady to have children?*".

Another interviewee considered the matter within a more holistic context. In her own words:

*"When you start your career at about thirty years of age, and you're in a city that you will abandon in one to two years, to go to another city for another one to two years, with relocation transfers, only to return to your initial residence at the age of 36 years, it is difficult to immediately meet the right person to marry and start a family. That is why, today, many women judges, remain unmarried. So, the issue of family is a thorny one, in our sector".*

And further, she continues:

*“The continuous relocation does not allow for a stable social environment. Whom can you meet in the provincial regions? The lawyers you socialize with, in court, every day? Nor can you live a rewarding social life... you must accept a very restricted lifestyle, that predominantly consists of working, and only socializing with colleagues. This reduces the chances to make an acquaintance for marriage, especially within the timeframe that you can start a family”.*

The second peculiarity of the judicial profession that I wish to make special reference to, is related to the possibility of working from home. Judges can study their casefiles and prepare their respective decisions, whilst working from home. They can go to court solely on the days when they must occupy the bench. While this may, at first, be considered only as an advantage, however, it has its problematic dimensions. As was referenced by my interviewees, the defendants and the First Instance Court Presidents, do not have their own offices within the courthouse. There is only one big room to drink a coffee before entering the courtroom. The First Instance Court Presidents must share an office with four to five other colleagues; obviously, one cannot have the necessary peace to work in a shared office of many people. Only Presidents of Appeals’ Courts have their own office. As one woman judge stated, *“for the first time I had a permanent office when I worked in the Juvenile Court.”* At home, however, things are not always so easy, because not all judges can maintain an office at home or, even, a dedicated workspace within the residence of the whole family.

Judges do not have fixed work hours and may be found working ten to twelve hours a day when they have court days. Often, this can occur until late at night, when their children are sleeping. One interviewee explained to me how she prepared her future husband for the requirements of the job.

*“When we were to be married I told him: You know, I work all week, even on Saturdays and Sundays. We’ll be able to go on an*

*excursion only occasionally. You cannot tell me: it's Easter, you can't be working, or, it's Christmas, you can't be working. This is going to be my work schedule, I hope you'll be able to endure it".*

And she continues with humour.

*"Instead of myself, he was the one going to children's parties. No one from our social surroundings had ever seen me, they thought we were separated. They always saw only a dad, and asked: where's mom? She's at home, working... whoever could believe it, believed it!"*

The undisturbed atmosphere a judge needs, to do a job that requires great concentration and lucidity, is not always accessible within the family home, especially when there are small children living there. The judges with more robust finances have their office on another floor of the house or may be found looking for other ways to solve this problem.

*"Lately, with a colleague, we rented an office, nearby my home. To be respected by everyone in the family, that mom will be going out of the house, to go to a workplace. Because if I was in the house everybody thought: come on, you're at home, you can do this and that. And although I was cooking and I did everything, they still had to say to me: why didn't you pay this bill? If I worked elsewhere and had to punch a clock, they would not be saying something like this! "*

But guilt that can be expressed with emotional reactions, can be seen scattered throughout the interviews of mothers, when they are reflecting upon the childhood of their, now, grown-up children. They believe that their childhoods passed them by, whilst they were drowning in stacks of casefiles, even if they had a home office. Because balancing family and work, although involving the whole family, is still primarily considered a woman's concern.

I quote an indicative incident, confided by an interviewee, regarding the time she had turned the living room of her home, into a working office.

*“He came (my son) from the outside, when he was three years old, knocking on the door, to get inside the living room. I wouldn’t let him, I locked the door. I was usually locked inside the living room, working. The poor boy would come out of the balcony door, hitting the windows, because he wanted to sit on the floor beside me and draw a picture. Since I did not want to be seen by him, I closed the balcony door shutters and pulled the curtains. Now I consider this behaviour tragic, and regret it. Maybe my relationship with my child is not good at present, because I did all this in the past? Now I would not do any of this again! “*

These were my judges. With the responsibility that must distinguish the exercise of their demanding profession, nine out of ten of my interviewees, were evidently putting the priority on the job, and not on the family. Only one out of ten put her family first.

In conclusion, I would like to focus upon two prevailing themes in the narratives of the interviewees. For once, the long-term professional preparation, the demands of the profession, the continuous mandatory relocation transfers cause considerable delay, for women judges who wish to embark on starting a family. Concerns were also expressed, by my interviewees, regarding the plans to start a family within their own reproductive age limit. They often mentioned that the number of their younger colleagues who did not manage to surpass the time constraints necessary for the balance of work and family life, were forever on the increase. Secondly, despite the fact that the number of petty offences heard in court has declined in recent years of the economic crisis, because “*people do not have money to spare on lawyers*”, the growing number of financial offences relating to household debt, unpaid ‘red’ debt, bankruptcy, tax evasion, corruption etc., has increased the workload for the courts. This alongside the reduction in income, due to the economic turndown, the lack of technological

infrastructure, the pressure to resolve judicial cases speedily, have intensified work stress for women judges.

On reflection, I would say that my original belief that women judges and public prosecutors would be difficult to approach, that they would be distinguished by cold rationality and a punitive spirit, was completely refuted. Through this research, I met women who are active and hard working, but are also sensitive, with deep empathy for the people they are called to judge, and who are open to discussion; acknowledging their conflicting feelings with honesty, and who speak freely or have the need to speak about everything, even about the most sensitive, and often painful, personal and professional issues.

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## FEMALE LAWYERS. THE EQUILIBRIUM OF TWO WORLDS – ON THE BENCH

*Amalia Frangiskou*

For over a century women have been part of the lawyer profession, an exceedingly demanding profession which has been attributed with the adjective “fighting”, especially in the cases of active freelance lawyers. Since the early appearances of women lawyers in court, continual changing of the times with regard to economic, political and social norms have contributed to the fragmentation and segmentation of the practice of law, on both the national and european levels.

The profession of the lawyer, as a primarily liberal profession,<sup>1</sup> has certain characteristics of particular sociological interest. The research approach of liberal professions depends upon key sociological considerations within the context of the historical specificity of each country. Among other common features, the liberal professions are enjoying privileges, and therefore their public image is a standard to be imitated, they hold a key place in the structure of social classes –particularly in the middle and upper class– and are being appropriate as channels of social mobility and reproduction. The long-term specialization and practice that they presuppose imply social and economic rewards, power and participation in the formation of elites.

Within the ever growing field of the practice of law since the 1950s, women have been increasingly involved. They have deman-

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1. For more on the lawyer profession in Greece and the practice of law in Athens in particular, see Lambiri-Dimaki, 2004.

ded the removal of all inequalities regarding the exercise of their duties. Over time the number of women law practitioners outnumbered that of the men. However it must be emphasised that despite the numerical superiority of the women in the field,<sup>2</sup> it is hard to distinguish between mere registered and real practitioners and therefore any depiction of the share of women in the profession would lack plenitude in the case of Greece.

It seems, however, that the call for removing inequalities and the numerical superiority of women does not imply the feminization of legal profession.<sup>3</sup> ‘Feminization’ of the legal profession as referred to, actually relates to the working life<sup>4</sup> of both sexes and consequently to family life. It seems that some issues branded as “female issues”, are not actually related to women exclusively. “Men face similar problems for other reasons. Work environments that are reluctant to accommodate working mothers pose similar resistance for fathers.... discouraging male lawyers from equal participation in domestic obligations and therefore reinforcing gender gaps”.<sup>5</sup>

## *1. Research framework*

Among the various statuses<sup>6</sup> that co-exist today, regarding the practice of law, the study focuses on mothers with kids, practicing

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2. Only in the Athens Bar Association, which is the first and largest bar association in the country, in a total of 21,766 registered lawyers, 9,263 are men and 12,503 women (2015); almost two out of three lawyers are women (Athens Bar Association). The total number of registered lawyers in the sixty three Bar Associations in the country in 2014 is 41.992 (<http://www.eklogesds.gr/>). For a more general picture at european level, see the relevant table of the Council of European Bar Associations (CCBE) <http://www.ccbe.eu/>.

3. For the relative theoretical reflection on the simplicity of the arithmetic correlation to essential feminization see more in Menkel-Meadow, 1986.

4. Worldwide, on the basis of the International Labor Office (ILO) statistics, the persistence of inequalities between the sexes in the field of work is being proven out (International Labor Office, 2016). Regarding employment in nowadays Greek reality, see the GSEE Labor Institute, 2016.

5. Rhode, 2002, p. 2217.

6. So, the profession of lawyers presents many categorizations that completely

the profession as freelancers. The goal was to investigate their work-life relationship, any problems with respect to its balance, as well as the ways to solve them. The original material derives from ten semi-structured interviews conducted, with cases covering the entire range of ages (from 30 to 53 years), being mothers with young children (one, two and three children), which also ranged from an infant of three and a half months, up to 17 years of age. Through the portrayal of their life's trajectory (biographical story), their options (procedure of the selection of profession, family planning, etc.) and the strategies that have been developed, not only in the current context, but in all stages (over time) of both their professional and family life, were documented.

The research included the influence of the economic crisis and the changes which have resulted in both the professional and the familial aspects of their lives. Another important element for interpreting the empirical data is that all the interviewees live and work in Athens. Also, the interviews were carried out while a lengthy lawyer strike was in motion in the country, opposing the new legislation concerning the changes in the health and retirement funds of attorneys that have been mandated by the state.

## 2. Findings

Despite the idea that a presupposed social background consisted of lawyers would be prevalent, the cases that were examined revealed a wide range of origins and social stratification from the emergence out of a rural family, up to continuing a family tradition in practicing law to its third generation.

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differentiate its veneer from its practice, i.e. the form of the profession. For example, a lawyer (in urban centers) can work in free practice law, and combine it with working on retainer, or working exclusively on retainer. Considerable variations of the profession are also the object of many disputes upon consultancies and clients' support. We can observe lawyers, as quasi-business executives, shareholders and board members of law firms; in general, there exists a concentration of the legal services market.

Not any specific pressure as to the selection of the profession has been detected, except when the interviewees themselves acknowledged a conscious or unconscious attachment and attraction towards the particular social image of the lawyers' profession due to the pre-existing optimistic conditions and beneficial circumstances of practicing law. So, becoming a lawyer was an informed choice, although when the research moves towards younger ages it is often reported that there have been unsuccessful attempts by them in the past to be employed in other not freelance posts. Motherhood was also a conscious decision. There were detected some common positive characteristics and traits attributed to the profession, such as social advancement or the desire of the preservation of social and family status, the breadth and capabilities of legal studies, as well as the perception of the profession as a public function, its social contribution and the participation in the political process. A common feature of all ten completely different cases that have been examined, has been their profound personality, and their multilateral analytical perspective and potential, with respect to their thoughts, emotions and experiences.

Liberal professions in general, and practicing law, especially, are considered incompatible with motherhood, because they cannot function with time constraints and due to the dedication, they require. Furthermore, there is no statutory provision for women lawyers despite repeated claims to the Association. There is no provision for postponing any professional matter due to anything that may be related to the child, illness or school. In addition, no provision is made for the periods when the children's school is closed, since all public education operates within standard business hours<sup>7</sup>. So all kinds of help and supporting networks are being employed.<sup>8</sup>

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7. The incompatibility of operating hours as to service social functions, is generally particularly pronounced in Greece (Mouriki, 2008, p. 24). Also, despite the establishment of a strengthened institutional framework for gender equality in Greece, after the political changeover and the institutional reforms, there are defaults and significant shortcomings.

8. We also note that in our country the existence of informal support networks is linked to the impressive lack of demand for family-friendly policies and is one of the

Thus, assistance is welcome, from any support network, wherein it may be found. Significant support is provided by the parental family, the children's grandfathers and grandmothers, and the endorsement of the parental role or even the understanding of its challenges from the husband, as well as by the financial wherewithal that will ensure the provision of different services both for the home with respect to the child and the office. These kinds of support, ideally, should be offered simultaneously, and often they are.<sup>9</sup> The whole situation is more balanced when, the support involves the parents or the father, within the upbringing of the child, which often happens. A remarkable finding, is that for the younger ages, of the cases studied, some husbands and fathers prefer to take care of the child or the house, than to struggle in the world of work.

Despite the help and the unlimited assistance offered by parents and by additional paid services, there remains a deep feeling of *"overdrive, continuous overdrive"*, as was mentioned, *"if you want to be adequate –and not just to be called a lawyer– if you want to be present in the life of your children"*.

*"It requires strength and courage to be a lawyer and a mother, at all ages of the children, since this must happen in a hostile city for children, and for the practice of law. Until recently there were evening shows, scattered courtrooms, bureaucracy"*.

They are two worlds, *"totally incompatible for the present circumstances."*

*"It is about 'super-heroes'... conception, flexibility and stress. It's a crazy combination... searching the self to find your limits and*

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inhibiting factors for the obvious absence of a coherent harmonizing policy (Mouriki, 2008, p. 47).

9. For example, one interviewee, and a mother of three children, expressed that she had experienced the relationship of family and work as a relatively balanced one, but she had the support of four parents, an assistant at home and in childcare, and her husband was a lawyer as well, who supported with the children, as well as her work.

*tremendous balance, diplomacy... and mainly an ensuing battle with yourself”.*

It has been quite clear that within the context of the current form of society “*the needs of the family are assigned to both parents.*” while role assignment is often dependent on which job earns more money. In general, both the personal experience of the narrators along with the broader experience of their professional circles provide a wide variety of family models and choices that reinforce the view of the dominant role of personal perceptions in the reconciliation of professional and family life<sup>10</sup>.

### 2.1. ‘Fighting’ lawyers and ‘fighting’ mothers

Motherhood automatically places you within a “*world of remorse*” as was said.

*“You feel inadequate with your kids, with your job, with your partner and with yourself. You feel you are doing poorly in every aspect of life, and that you are sloppy. And the truth is, you are exactly that sometimes...your children talk to you and your attention must be elsewhere, because you must be alert to check your email for a time sensitive answer you are expecting. All the things are done in half, nothing is complete... it’s a tragedy”.*

*“You must combine the incompatible, you have to be a super hero to manage all this”.*

This so clearly expressed conflict also seems to be ‘nourishing’ and fulfilling, as a challenge for a woman’s diverse potential. It is hectic but also charming. Most women can derive satisfaction from the fact that they are capable to manage all the daily fluctuations, and the sexist discrimination or the hostility towards motherhood, especially,

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10. See Kalliath and Brough, 2008.

as was reported, from other women. This achievement can be attributed to ‘feminine’ qualities, such as multitasking in intelligence, adaptability, endurance in toil, pain, and in tolerance of conflict and adversity. Moreover, the conflicting nature of family and professional life, can also have its positive aspects for an active worker mother, such as setting an equal standard, and self-realization, which contributes to the independence and accountability of children. However, the result, is bitter. Discounts everywhere and decline in every aspect of life, have enormous psychological costs. Despite the manoeuvres and the stresses that are or were prepared to be made by the women interviewed, their losses are compounded and vary in domains: in the moments that were lost from the mother-child relationship, in the marriage breakdown, the workplace, in personal health as there were reported many autoimmune diseases<sup>11</sup>. Conversely, there are also benefits, for motherhood and self-realization through a career and in some cases the possibility of being absent from home during the adolescence of the children.

The prolonged recession that is facing the country has effects in all aspects of daily life. Revenues are decreasing, and thus, cuts must be made at home and at work, especially with respect to paid assistance. There is often the need to spend even more time, with the family, or within the office. In some cases, of mothers of younger children, the professional hardship might lead to the acquisition of valuable experience such as having lunch together. Teen mothers have an additional role, of battling with themselves, and changing roles when turning home, to appear optimistic, so that their children are not let down from what is happening around them, so as not to amputate them.

*“Working from home requires diversity, but, mainly, to underplay the maternal role. But, generally, the office, whether there is work to do, is a living organism.”*

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11. Many surveys globally have identified women’s health problems, recording disproportionately high levels of anxiety, substance abuse, reproductive malfunctions, and mental health difficulties, see Rhode, 2002, pp. 2208-2209.

*“If you leave it, it will leave you”.*

The situation facing law firms is bleak. Customers are going berserk and must be appeased, many are intolerant and hostile, while others have just mentally collapsed, and need to be supported psychologically. The months of absence from the job have created anxiety and insecurity. The education and health care sectors are collapsing. A completely disorganized judicial system, is exacerbated by lawyers being accused of lack of sensitivity and fairness. In areas affected directly (e.g. redundancies and general labour law cases) it can take a decade for a court to reach a final decision. There exists a denial of justice, which hurts the profession and the confidence of the citizens in the institution.

## *2.2. Prospects*

The prospects of the profession are generally bleak, with women being the most affected. Many threats have been already identified: the work degenerating to clerical status, the inhuman working conditions, the meagre wages,<sup>12</sup> the obligatory cooperative dynamics one must engage in, either factual or superficial, and the early retirement. Many women lawyers are already seeking ways of escaping this situation, especially younger women lawyers that are also mothers. Despite the pessimistic predictions, some outlined proposals requiring financial support that may be able to introduce measures to raise societal awareness and consolidate maternity protection and parenting in general.

Considering the terms of practicing law nowadays, our research has shown a shift to dependent work, inhumane working conditions, poor pay, compulsory consolidation in co-operational schemes, either actual or virtual, early retirement, search for other professional solutions. This latter trend is exactly contrary<sup>13</sup> to the stated desire

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12. By today's standards, new lawyers entering the profession speak of twelve-hour workdays for a monthly remuneration of 400€.

13. As shown in research conducted prior to the advent of the current crisis, a

for the liberal practice of the profession and, above all, to the reasons inducing for its choice. However, in some cases, the clerical post perception appearing on the horizon of lawyers' profession is treated as an uncomely working condition that may perhaps facilitate maternity because of fix working hours. Further, in some cases the lack of measures by the state, forces to the abandonment of the profession, with the false hope for a future come-back.

### *Conclusions*

The issues of work-life balance, life beyond work and gender-based division of labor can be traced back to the 19th century. Noting the culture of “*many working hours*” in the legal professions, Leila Robinson, who was the first to be admitted as a member of the Massachusetts Bar Association in 1882, questioned whether “it is feasible for a woman to perform successfully the duties of the spouse, the mother and the attorney, at the same time?”<sup>14</sup>

The liberal professions in general, and the practice of law specifically, are considered incompatible with motherhood, because they cannot be exercised within temporal constraints. From the investigation of the work-life balance of self-employed women lawyers in the context of the present case study, there were revealed many aspects of the relationship between work and family life. These sketch a ‘world of remorse’, a ‘self-nourishing conflict’, that can offer satisfaction and a continuous excess. Significant support must be provided by the parental family, and the predisposition of the parental role or, at least, understanding from the husband, and the financial wherewithal to ensure the provision of various services; all

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high percentage of respondents' satisfaction has been recorded about the form of lawyer profession they are practicing. The rest would prefer to work as freelancers and, even more so to maintain stable clientele, getting paid by fixed remuneration. It is less desirable to join any group of law-practitioners, in the form of lawyers' firms. Absolutely undesirable is the dependence on “employers” lawyers. (Rethymiotaki, 2005, pp. 258-316).

14. Bacik and Drew, 2006, p. 138.

these parameters, ideally, should be met simultaneously. Despite the manoeuvres and the stresses that are or were prepared to be made by these women professionals and mothers, grave losses are sustained that vary in origin: moments that were lost from the mother-child relationship, marriage breakdown, workplace inefficiencies, and personal health deterioration. The crisis facing Greece in all aspects of daily life has considerably worsened the situation and the prospects of the profession in general. Women lawyers have been affected the most.

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## FAMILY AND WORK OF NOTARY WOMEN. FROM SAFETY TO INSECURITY

*Maria Thanopoulou and Joanna Tsiganou*

Traditionally, the profession of the notary in Greece was synonymous with elevated status, social prestige and increased financial rewards. In a country, wherein citizens were attempting to address the conditions of economic and social instability by investing in property, the notary always exercised a distinct role, that of the symbolic guardian of the property of Greek citizens. The notary would act as a latent and discreet consultant of families, in several legal issues, which gave the profession an important social role. In fact, within the post-war era, the rapid growth of the construction sector had given the profession a lot of financial glamour, and it was deemed privileged in every respect. The profession of the notary has always had a dualism of aspects: that of the public official and that of a liberal professional, though the emphasis has always been placed on the characteristic of the public function.

The above parameters of the profession of the notary had created a safe environment. They were linked to the reasons for high-school graduates choosing the legal studies. Concerning the work-life balance the female graduates of legal studies chose the notary profession because of the conditions of its practice considered as facilitating the creation of a family: the possibility of regulating flexible working hours and sufficient income ensuring paid help in both the office and at home, as well as prospects of a high living standard. There were strong counter-balance incentives involved in assisting the reconciliation of family and work.

In the advent of the present economic crisis, the working conditions of notaries gradually began to change. These changes are related to the transformation of the state, the strengthening of overregulation, and the swelling of bureaucracy. At the same time the notary profession has been seriously affected by the collapse of the construction industry and the over-taxation of property and income that, incidentally, is constantly decreasing. It has been also affected by the imposition of new laws and regulations modifying the conditions of its practice. As a public official the notary has been gradually entrusted with more and more state competences, expected to be offered for free. Simultaneously, the notary as a liberal professional is continuously affected by the imposition of new and increasing taxes. Our case study designed to investigate the relationship of work and family during the crisis has shown that the conditions of practicing the notary profession have changed dramatically.

### *1. The research*

Our investigation focused on the relationship between professional and family life, as experienced by women notaries under conditions of the present economic crisis, as well as on the practices adopted by them in order to achieve work-life balance. The research material was produced on the basis of semi-structured interviews conducted with ten women notaries, up to 50 years of age, that were also mothers of minors, and were practicing the notary profession within the region of Athens. Meeting the women notaries was not an easy process. Lack of time on their part and reserve towards our project hampered the research process. We have met with several rejections as well as postponements of meetings already arranged. However, there were also cases of interviewees with a positive stance towards our undertaking. Though the initial response of women notaries to our request was merely kind and formal, they gradually developed a more confidential stance which led to narratives of a confessional nature. In these cases, women notaries who professionally acquire the

role of a careful and discreet attender were gradually 'transformed' into confessing narrators. Thus, they temporarily relinquished to the researcher the role they usually hold for themselves, that of the confidential and careful attendant.

From the wealth of material collected, we have compiled themes repeated in most interviews. It should be noted that the issues mentioned in the present text are indicative and in no way should lead to generalizations.

## *2. Themes related to work-life balance*

The key recurring issue present to all women notaries' narratives is *the continuous and never-ending quest for time*. Time operates like a 'tug of war' between the profession and the family. Time is not sufficient to combine the daily requirements of the profession and the family, without paid help, but only with the support of the family network, when possible. Time is always pursuing the women notaries, sometimes until suffocation, trapping them in a daily venture in order to fulfil an endless list of obligations at both, the office and home. Women notaries confront the lack of sufficient time for the fulfilment of the long list of tasks ahead by precise and continuous organization of their activities into strict daily schedules. But this way of planning often implies for women notaries constant stress and psychological torment.

Another important theme that runs throughout the narratives of women notaries is the so called «*home-office*» and «*office-home*» relationship. Many women notaries have transformed their home into an office, and in some cases, their office has been turned into a home. At this period, due to the technological advancements that can facilitate communication, and thus the availability of professionals even outside their working hours, the family asylum and the private sphere have been breached with professional obligations. These obligations are transferred into the personal domain and, occasionally, they can be extremely invasive. The private domain of the house,

nowadays, may host all the necessary office equipment as well as all folders of contracts, that regularly accompany the daily routes of women notaries from the office to home and vice-versa. In the face of the absence of assistance in the office and at home, women usually try to compensate not only by reducing their presence in the office, but also by fulfilling, within the household, their professional and family obligations simultaneously. Exceptionally the lack of assistance sometimes drives the transformation of the office into a home that can host for a few hours during the workday new-born babies (*“the working baby”*) or young pre-schoolers.

The balance between work and family is not the only balance to be achieved by women notaries. The third important issue that highlights the narratives of our research is *the need for a continuous and multiple balance within family and work*. The family not only requires the coordination of women notaries professional schedules with the schedules of their spouses and children, but also the combination of working at home with household chores. Moreover, women notaries often have to balance the relationships between family members (the spouse, the children, the children between them, etc.). On the other hand, this situation must go with the fact that the profession is continuously under the imposition of new regulations requiring to balance the different conflicting interests between parties, but also between clients and tax authorities, customers and accountants, civil engineers and customers. The woman notary must demonstrate exceptional coordination skills of orchestration and mastery to harmonize the needs and requirements of different worlds. Complex and laborious effort is required to achieve coordination of all these multiple levels that compose the worlds of work and family; women notaries usually offset this arduous task by the satisfaction deriving from acting the coordinator’s role in both, the family and at work.

Within the narratives of the women notaries there is *no reference to state provisions facilitating the work-life balance*. On the contrary any reference to the state is portrayed with a negative connotation. Women notaries believe that the state is absent from the support of the family life of those practicing a liberal profession in Greece

under crisis. In fact women notaries feel that the state acts as an unjust and heartless predator since their professional life has been gravely affected by the transfer of state powers and responsibilities to them, the over-taxation of their profession, as well as by the recent memorandum policies dramatically diminishing their income. The lack of state care for the family life of self-employed women notaries is counter-balanced either by resorting to recruiting family members for their assistance, or by shrinking working hours and personal time. Nevertheless it is worthy to underline that women notaries are confronted with fear and insecurity regarding the future of their profession which, in some cases, is considered to be endangered.

Another important theme that emerges within the narratives is *the degeneration of the professional and personal identity of women notaries*. In the current context of the crisis, the excessive increase of professional responsibilities, that comes in line with a significant reduction in the volume of work and its subsequent remuneration, the deduction of scientific knowledge, the uncertainty manifested due to the fluent nature of the applicable law and the distrust of clients are leading to a feeling of futility; futility due not only to the inability to ensure a fair standard of living through working for themselves and for the future of their children, but also to the loss of meaning, within their everyday professional activities. The crisis of the professional identity of women notaries is sometimes compensated by addressing the possibility of early termination of their career, and the return to the traditional role of mother and housewife at home. In other cases, this is limited to strongly expressing the grief, amidst the deadlock experienced, after the degradation of the social and economic status of their profession. But the deconstruction of the personal identity is also related to the lack of personal free time. It is no coincidence that all the leisure activities of women notaries coincide with the needs and activities of their children. In this case, they outweigh the lack in personal time by resorting to the traditional model of the mother who is content to experience *“bliss through the joy of the children.”*

## *Conclusions*

In the context of the current economic crisis the profession of the notary is transformed from safe to unsafe. From initially being a profession that is straightforwardly robust it is slowly transformed into a fluid occupation that, to survive, must adapt to the flexibility and uncertainty that accompany its ever-growing complexity and bureaucracy. In this novel environment shaped and governed by the effects of the crisis the work and family balance of women notaries is predominantly affected by the new conditions regulating the exercise of a profession becoming nowadays more and more precautionous. The achievement of a demanding work-life balance for notary women is depended on the flexibility that women notaries can demonstrate to achieve it; on the one side they have to deal with the exercise of a liberal profession constantly charged with state duties and responsibilities that do not correspond to respective financial rewards; on the other side they have to play the traditional role of the mother and housewife, that is not supported neither by the state nor by seeking external paid help. The relationship of family and work of women notaries is also influenced by the merger of personal, family and professional space and time. This entails the inter-absorption of work and family, and the subsequent and complete absorption of personal time, from the family and the practice of the profession.

In conclusion, in the case of women notaries, work-life balance, as it is shaped today amidst the current crisis, diverges from reconciling work and family life. Instead of being set free and opening their wings by experiencing the career market, notary women are witnessing another facet of the traditional model of the woman. They remain traditional mothers and housewives and, at the same time, constantly bear an elevated multitude of professional responsibilities. Indeed, they are desperately trying to create certainty and stability in the workplace and in the family amidst the growing current conditions of uncertainty and instability within the profession of the notary.

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# FEMALE DOCTORS WITH UNDER-AGE CHILDREN IN TIME OF CRISIS. AN ENDLESS ROLE CONFLICT

*Aliki Mouriki*

Women in Greece constitute over 50% of medical students, but only 38.4% of the medical personnel.<sup>1</sup> This is perhaps due to older cohorts of medical schools' graduates that were mostly men. A large part of female doctors is concentrated in only nine out of the thirty nine recognised specialties, whilst more than half opt for just three specialties, those of bio-pathologist, paediatrician and anaesthesiologist. A mere 1% of women medical graduates becomes a surgeon.<sup>2</sup> The above figures illustrate vividly the intense influence of social gender on the choice of a specialty and of the future career and academic path associated with this choice. Whether consciously or not, the principle criterion that impacts on the choices of female doctors is how they will be able to juggle more effectively the demands of the medical profession with having a family and bringing up children.

The question, to what degree it is realistic to simultaneously pursue a successful professional career with the raising of well-balanced children, is one that haunts women from the moment they decide to enter paid employment on equal terms with men, without jeopardising their family and personal life, or vice-versa. Most women, especially of younger ages, unaware of the stakes at play,

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1. According to the ELSTAT 2011 census.

2. The data are based on an earlier study by D. Andrioti, researcher at the Athens School of Hygiene. Mentioned in Kroustalli, 1998.

believe that they, 'will make it', despite the plethora of examples of frustrated initial expectations and disillusionment. In time of crisis as the current one facing Greece over the past seven years, work-life balance becomes increasingly difficult. The reason is that the crisis has undermined several certainties that allowed working parents to juggle, albeit with difficulty, their complex roles. The main reversals include the following:

(a) The male bread-winner and the dual-career models have been undermined by the soaring levels of unemployment (which peaked 27% in 2013)<sup>3</sup> triggering off drastic changes of roles within the family, with the male partner often without work and the female partner in paid employment, even if part-time or undeclared. The reduction in the family income has made it increasingly difficult to recruit paid care services from the market.

(b) Unemployment and shrinking incomes have weakened the informal support networks, such as the family, which is increasingly unable to fulfil its vital function as a substitute or complement of the residual welfare state.<sup>4</sup>

(c) The social infrastructure (nurseries, crèches, school hours) – unable to meet the needs even before the crisis– has been further downgraded and worn out.

(d) Employees' bargaining power has been curtailed and businesses are becoming more and more reluctant to facilitate working parents with family obligations. Liberal professions have seen their ability to organise their time in a way that suited both their family obligations and a demanding job, diminish considerably.

In the case of women who chose to pursue one of the most demanding professions of our time, the medical profession, it is beyond doubt that they are under considerable pressure to successfully fulfil their multiple roles. The daily compromises and juggling of responsibilities has an impact on both their career and their intra-family relations. To explore the difficulties, demands, compromises,

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3. ELSTAT, 2014.

4. Mouriki, 2015.

but also the joys and satisfaction experienced by female doctors while enacting their complex and multiple roles, we have sought to track down, using the snow-ball technique, ten doctors of different specialties, with under-age children, at various stages of life and interview them about their experience.

### *1. Socio-demographic characteristics and professional choices*

Efforts were made to have a research population of ten doctors that reflects the diversity of academic and professional pathways, of professional status and of family situations experienced. Most of the doctors in the research population are over 40 years of age, married, with one or two children. Six out of ten work as free lancers in their own private practice, three are employed in public hospitals and one works in three private clinics simultaneously. All but one have between 11 and 27 years of professional experience.

In choosing their specialty, six out of ten doctors were driven to a choice 'by exclusion', as their family responsibilities, current or future, seem to have played a crucial role in their decision to avoid a specialty that would require long waiting times, intense competition with their male colleagues and very demanding and irregular working time schedules. There has even been one case where the respondent stated that she regrets having chosen the medical profession and the time devoted to it, as she had under-estimated the inherent difficulties of the profession and the slow professional advancement.

The medical profession does not seem to influence the choice of the partner (only three cases said they met their future husband at the medical school), but it certainly influences to a large degree the timing of having children and their number. For most of the doctors interviewed, the presence of children of a young age weighs heavily on the performance of the medical profession leading to a loss of career opportunities, even international ones, the turning down of job offers and the curtailment of their ambitions. Most doctors stressed the practical difficulties in reconciling both roles, such as the

overnight duty system in public hospitals, the difficulty in keeping up with scientific developments and participating in conferences and seminars, the lack of time to study in view of getting a postgraduate degree or a doctorate degree, the precedence of children over their profession, etc. To avoid an intense role conflict, some had to lower their expectations from the beginning and abandon their ambitions for an academic career or a large client list in their private practice. In only two cases no role conflict was reported.

Despite the prevailing system of overnight duty (eight shifts around the clock per month), the doctors working in public hospitals are better placed than their colleagues in the private sector or the liberal profession, who would gladly swap their present status for a public hospital job, as that would entail more free time and less work-related stress.

## *2. The impact of the crisis on the medical profession*

The crisis has had a negative impact on the professional and family lives of the doctors interviewed in many ways. Those working as salaried employees in public or private hospitals, have experienced drastic pay cuts, considerable delays in their pay cheques in the private sector and regarding the overnight duties in the public sector, whilst some must work in two or three different jobs to make ends meet. Very often, in the public hospitals, they also must perform their duties in a context of severe shortages in medicines, medical equipment and supplies, and in personnel.

As for the free lancers, they have suffered a severe, double blow. On one hand, the number of patients visiting their private practice has gone down, owing to economic hardship, whilst even those that do visit them have difficulties in paying. On the other hand their increased social insurance contributions have further eroded their already reduced income. Thus, they must work longer hours, to address their growing needs, thus scarifying time that they would otherwise devote to their family and personal life.

The crisis has also had an impact on family life, as the reduction in the disposable income leads to cuts in children's out-of-school activities, in purchasing care services from the market and in the necessary recreational activities.

### *3. Main difficulties in balancing the medical profession with family life*

The doctors interviewed are all faced with considerable barriers in performing their profession whilst at the same time raising their children, as they are the ones mostly bearing the burden of family responsibilities. The main difficulties encountered include:

- the absence of adequate and affordable childcare facilities, especially for the afternoon and early evening hours, when the free lancers need to work in their private practice;
- the unsuitable state school opening hours except for schools operating on the all-day school system;
- the lack of support in caring for sick or disabled children;
- the long and unsocial working hours, the continuous stress and professional fatigue, the responsibility that the doctor carries towards her patients that prevent her from switching away from her problems when at home;
- the rigid working time schedules and the lack of flexible working arrangements;
- the absence of maternity and parental leaves for the doctors without tenure in public hospitals or working as free lancers;
- the lack of a stable environment that allows long-term planning;
- the lack of personal time.

The most common ways to address the above difficulties is the recourse to informal support networks (namely parents) and, less often, the purchase of private services (housekeeper, nanny, childminder). Though not explicitly spelled out, husbands or ex-husbands do not seem to show enough understanding regarding the demanding medical profession and assist very little or not at

all in the house chores and in raising the children, usually limiting their contribution to driving children to classes, helping them with homework or going to the super-market on Saturdays. In only one case, that of the paediatrician with the three young children, it was reported that the husband contributes significantly to the family and household responsibilities. In the case of divorced doctors, the assistance from the ex-husband is even more rare and irregular.

#### *4. Work-life relations*

Despite their considerable efforts to combine the demands of the medical profession with their caring responsibilities, the doctors interviewed are not, overall, satisfied with the outcome. The major barriers they encounter in attempting to reconcile their roles include physical and intellectual fatigue due to their job, stress, lack of time, especially regarding their children, lack of effective support from their partners, and the absence of state-funded care facilities. Thus, they feel inadequate in both roles, they are haunted by guilt, they do not have the energy to spend creative time with their children, they put aside their social relations and personal hobbies, or they sacrifice their career prospects in favour of the family. Even in the case of doctors (four out of ten) who consider having put more emphasis on their job than on their family, this comes at a price, as their sense of satisfaction is mingled with guilt.

The doctors, on the other hand, who reported that the outcome of their reconciliation efforts is in favour of their family rather than their job (three out of ten cases), still feel they do not devote enough quality time to their children. Whilst in three other cases, doctors reported that they have managed to strike a balance between their career and their family, without feeling that they have neglected either their children, or their career. However, failed expectations regarding a successful combination of a career with family life is an indisputable reality for most.

In terms of career advancement, most doctors have reason to believe that as women they are treated unfairly compared to their male

colleagues. Some pointed out the loss of professional opportunities, because of having children, which is not the case with male doctors.

### *5. Policy suggestions for the reconciliation of work and family life*

The doctors interviewed, apart from airing their grievances, also put forward concrete proposals as to how to overcome the overwhelming barriers facing them, in managing their multiple roles. Their suggestions cover a wide range of areas, from institutional initiatives (social infrastructure operation hours, employment and social rights of doctors working in the private sector, flexible working arrangements in hospitals, etc.) to the greater involvement of fathers and / or husbands in the family and household responsibilities.

### *Concluding remarks*

For most of the women doctors interviewed, the prospects of work-life balance are bleak, in view of the prolonged economic crisis that exacerbates the subjective difficulties facing female doctors, eager to perform their profession successfully, whilst at the same time raising a family and pursuing their personal balance. As the conditions of performing their medical duties continue to deteriorate, so will the prospects of successfully balancing the complex roles that female doctors have endorsed. Doctors working freelance are particularly concerned about their future and experience intense insecurity, having to work prolonged hours to survive. But even the salaried doctors are affected by the pervasive insecurity surrounding them that prevents them from making long-term plans, in either their public or private sphere.

Regarding intra-family relationships, the prolonged absence of mothers from home and the few hours they can devote to their children, due to exhausting work schedules, have a negative impact on children's well-being, causing them a sentimental void that can

be expressed in various ways: aggressiveness, introverted behaviour, complaints. Grand-parents or professional helpers, and to a varying degree, fathers too, are called upon to make up for the mother's absence. This solution, however, is often associated with conflicts and tensions.

The general impression from the ten interviews with female doctors is that they face with stoicism and personal sacrifices the considerable barriers in reconciling their complex roles, making small compromises on the time devoted to their children, and significant ones on their career and personal development. The support they receive from their husbands and the state falls short from their actual needs and cannot mitigate the tensions and the difficulties they encounter daily. Thanks to their great, often heroic, efforts, they eventually manage to carry the heavy burden of the medical profession, without seriously neglecting their children and their smooth development. However, the often-unresolved tensions that emerge in their private and public spheres come at a price.

Perhaps the best way to help women reconcile effectively their family and work responsibilities is to allow them greater autonomy over their time, which means providing them with the means to avoid working long and rigid hours that deprive them of precious time from their personal life and drain their energy. This is something seemingly unfeasible in the context of the medical profession - amongst many others - and the current crisis. Because it requires a totally different approach to working time organisation, a re-structuring of social hours and of intra-family arrangements, but also a drastically different business mentality, not to mention a value system that embraces with the same respect the women who chose to prioritise their family over their work, with the women that wish to pursue their career advancement in the present and not in some distant and uncertain future.

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# WORK-LIFE BALANCE FOR WOMEN PHARMACISTS AND CRITICAL CHANGES IN A PROFESSION 'SUITABLE' FOR WOMEN

*Hara Stratoudaki*

The first female pharmacist in Greece obtained her license sixty years after the founding of the School of Pharmacy. A century later, more than 60% of pharmacists are women<sup>1</sup> as in many other countries<sup>2</sup>. Per existing literature, such percentages are considered as a proof that the profession of pharmacist is family-friendly<sup>3</sup> and therefore suitable for women. In the general context of the overarching research, the case study on women pharmacists raised two specific subjects of inquiry: How they experience the changes in the profession in recent years and the conditions of the profession amid the economic crisis. At the same time, we sought to detect the dynamic dimension of the relationship between the pharmacist profession and family life, as a relationship shaped by women to “create a personal meaning”.<sup>4</sup>

The research population consisted of ten women pharmacists aged 40-55, owners of a pharmacy, and mothers of one or more children. Most of the pharmacists interviewed were between 40 and 55 years old. Eight were married and two divorced. Most women pharmacists had two children, three had one child and one had three children.

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1. Birlirakis, 2011, p. 13.

2. PGEU, 2014, Gidman et al., 2007, Goldin and Katz, 2016, Seston and Hassell, 2009, Henderson, 2000.

3. Goldin and Katz, 2016.

4. Clark, 2000, p. 750.

Only two of them mentioned dependent elders in the family. None of them has followed postgraduate studies.

Most of the research population did not choose to study Pharmacy. They decided upon a career as a pharmacist, instead. Some of them had a general interest for health professions, and rejected medicine because they thought that it would be impossible to respond to the high demands of being a doctor. Behind such a choice, one may understand that they were just accepting the limitations associated with their gender role. Thus, “girls undermine their hopes for the future, as they develop a disadvantageous idea for themselves, further reducing the range of their future professional goals”.<sup>5</sup> Others wished to study in related disciplines without a secure job and turned to pharmacy due to a realistic understanding of the job market.

The profession had been facing a sort of identity crisis, even the years before the current serious debt crisis, as pharmacists were losing their role as scientists thus becoming mere “merchants” of drugs. To this identity crisis, the economic crisis imposed certain changes, demanding the violent adjustment and redefining the balance between their roles, obligations and pursuits. Those changes were:

- The extended opening hours since legislation made it possible for pharmacies to remain open for more hours and days. This was met with reactions, as overloaded mothers complained that this caused a new conflict between profession and family life and the roles they had to fulfil.
- The decrease in turnover as available data show a drop by 41.1%, in the total spending for drugs between 2009 and 2015 (EOF 2016).
- Changes in the health system causing major delays in the repayment of state debt to pharmacies.
- The planned opening of the retail medicine market in other channels, creating a major concern for pharmacists as they are anxious about their future.

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5. Athanasiadou, 2002, p. 133.

The impact of these changes in family and working life of pharmacists, but also their expectations for the future, is grave. On the one hand, there are changes in family related to time-management. Women pharmacists, who are wives, mothers and sometimes caring for their elders with health problems, while striving to satisfy their social and personal needs, are in constant role-conflict. Some interviewees mentioned the practical support received from their husbands and other family members (e.g. mothers). However, in most cases, this assistance does not reduce the stress of rushing from home to work and back. Time-management has several aspects. The age of their children is quite important, since younger ones require to be taken care of, and therefore consuming more of their mother's time. The stance toward the extended opening hours of their businesses is also important. Most of the interviewees have partially adopted the new system. A third aspect is the recourse to assistants, both in pharmacy and at home. The economic crisis has been accompanied by major changes in family income and its first victims were pharmacy assistants and "helping hands." The interviewees made clear that the balance between professional and family life has become a balance of terror. When they are asked to evaluate this balance, they admit that regardless of their priorities –which for the majority is family– they did not meet the requirements of any of the two sectors. On the other hand, economic recession in its various forms is mentioned as the major professional problem. They describe their situation as extremely uncomfortable and weak. The scientific dimension of their profession is gone, and their job is becoming purely transactional and bureaucratic. The trust relation to their customers offering them recognition, satisfaction, prestige and part of their professional identity is gone. Therefore they feel "*betrayed*," a mere cogwheel in a commercial transaction, a "*business*" without scientific merit, and no personal contribution.

In their discourse, the negative effects of the crisis both in the pharmacy, and at home, form a vicious circle of recurring frustration. The sentiments of being "*betrayed*" and of occupational impairment are enlarged with the frustration from their family and personal life.

The roles they must meet do not only require time but also sustained offering to others. Though this is completed within the framework of affective and emotionally positive relationships, the fact of “*spending*” themselves remains. Indeed, several times they mentioned the word “*balance*”. “*Failure*” is another recurring word. In both cases, these words are related to guilt.

Between pharmacy and home the fulfilment of their expectations, personal needs and pursuits are crushed. The extra time that they must be at work is stolen from their personal time. The reduction in their earnings makes impossible to pay for assistants – either at the pharmacy or at home – which means that they have more to do, to the detriment of their personal growth and satisfaction.

In this context prospects are uncertain and “*negotiated*”. They predict that soon many autonomous pharmacies will cease to exist and their place will be taken by pharmacy chains with many employees, while a lot of their exclusive merchandize will be also on sale in super markets. For the older ones the uncertainty is related to the new trend in their profession and possibly to new opportunities, e.g. internet sales, which, however, they are not willing to follow. For others giving up is not considered a solution. They realize that changes occur in a relatively slow pace and thus a state of flux without a clear direction prevails. They believe that the situation will be even harder for women pharmacists, since the autonomous pharmacies will be left to operate without assistants. Therefore, they believe their other roles and expectations will remain unfulfilled. Otherwise they may be forced to leave the profession, something they already see happening in their circle.

Another possibility they foresee is the replacement of the pharmacy-individual enterprises by large impersonal units where pharmacists will become employees. Such a perspective is experienced as demotion and treated with strong negative feelings. On the contrary, for the younger interviewees such a change might be even appreciated, under certain conditions, of course. Generally, younger pharmacists are more optimistic. Even though they recognize that they cannot foresee the outcome, they suggest that the pharmacy as

a private business will survive. They argue that this form of business is appropriate to the organization of social life in Greece, and to existing cultural norms.

In conclusion, we found that the profession of the pharmacist, which was for decades regarded as family-friendly, and therefore as a 'female profession', in a period of crisis tends to lose that character. While satisfaction by profession and a relatively balanced family and personal life is creating a positive environment that offered women pharmacists life-satisfaction, the advent and deepening of the current crisis made all the above to collapse. Their profession no longer offers to the women pharmacists neither prestige, nor economic prosperity, nor the joy of offering. Home-related roles become overwhelming, demanding more time than available. The future is uncertain and, for the majority, bleak. A vicious circle is created, generating sentiments of inadequacy, guilt, and anxiety because of the lack of time.

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# PROFESSION BEAUTICIAN. FRAGILE BALANCE BETWEEN THEIR AMBITIONS AND WISHES

*Dimitra Kondyli*

Most beauticians are generally female. For Bourdieu<sup>1</sup> it is no coincidence that some professions that involve the provision of services and care, as well as the socio-medical service sector are *a fortiori* female occupations. Such occupations include in their practice two traditional lines of female action: caretaking and housekeeping. In Greece, the first private schools of one year studies have been established in 1962 whilst in 1969 the Act 361/69 defines prerequisites for the beauticians' degree as well as professional licence. Nowadays graduated beauticians from the Technological Educational Institutes belong to the tertiary education and are classified as health professions or they graduate from private colleges and vocational training institutes. In the case of certified beauticians professional status is also combined with entrepreneurial activity, in a smaller or greater range, given the service provision and the sale of products.

This case study concerns certified beauticians with their own "*laboratory*", as the beauticians themselves call their workplace.<sup>2</sup> In the context of this work, we will focus on some issues related with beauticians' daily lives and reflect the efforts of balancing family and professional spheres, in the current socio-economic conditions of crisis, with everything that this entails. The interviews were conducted in different parts of Attica during the months of May,

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1. Bourdieu, 2002, p. 153.

2. I would like to thank the participating beauticians, as well as the members of the Graduate Beauticians Associations Federation that assisted in detecting the landscape.

June and July 2016 either at any interval between their scheduled business appointments, in the morning before work, or late at night. During almost all the interviews, time pressure on the part of the interviewed was evident, while in some cases, meetings had to be postponed. Our study concentrates on ten women beauticians of young age that also have young children. Their age is between 32-38 years, except for two beauticians 46 years old and 50 years old. All participants are in marital cohabitation. Most of their children are of a preschool age.

### *1. Life and career plan*

The beauticians who participated in our study do not have similar social background while their social capital varies. Their partners and parents have different educational levels and different professions. In four cases, the choice of studies appears to be strongly influenced by the family environment of the participants, specifically the occupation of their parents or first degree relatives. In some cases, first selection of their field of study was medicine, however they appear satisfied with their academic and professional development. They are versatile and operate in more than one area and type of beauty services, presenting a wide range of interests and expertise. Among the reported activities, professional makeup television shows, teaching at vocational aesthetics training courses (Technological Educational Institutes-TEI, or Institutes of Vocational Training-IEK) and social aesthetics are included.

The fact that most participants were undergoing the third decade of their life, a period that according to the international literature<sup>3</sup> is crucial in terms of professional development and fulfilment of their personal life and the launching of life plan and career. The following findings emerge regarding questions on maternity, childbearing and cohabitation:

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3. Clark, 2000, Pickard, 2016.

### *a) The desired number of children*

Many participants have one or more young children and the prospect of having children is still an open desire. Basic regulatory factor regarding the suspension of their desire to have more children seems to be their increased professional obligations, the reduced income and the simultaneously increased working hours, as well as the general fluid environment of the current economic crisis.

It seems that there is a dividing line between those who currently invest forces and resources to the expansion and sustained growth of their business, or else their laboratory, *“because I love my work very much, I feel that when I leave, I escape”* and those who say they have to *“withdraw”* for a while, to meet their family desires. Their responses reveal the *“suspension”* of their professional aspirations. As a beautician says, *“as children grow up, I hope that the work will go better, now I do not think I have time to do more”*. Also the fact that younger age participants started their business within the crisis worked from the outset as a restriction to the possibility of having paid services of infant childcare. So, when ascending relatives are not present, the desire is limited. Moreover no one of the respondents interrupted their work during pregnancy or the period after pregnancy for more than twenty days. The feeling that along with maternity and children responsibility, childcare also correlates to their personal responsibility and duty was expressed by nearly all respondents.

### *b) The role of the husband*

These are families where the couple equally contributes to the family income, but without an equal division regarding the practical arrangements and managing of everyday life. However, male partners were presented as supportive to the professional occupation of their spouses. It is also worth noting that the beauticians' narratives reflected similar effort and fatigue at the end of each workday, mainly due to the intensity of their employment. Instead, in many cases, the distribution of obligations and responsibilities is more equally balanced during the weekend.

### *c) In search of balance between family and professional sphere*

The profession of a beautician, for the participants to our research, requires knowledge, physical strength, honesty, courtesy, tact, communicative flair, sincerity, to meet with success in their professional role. They are switching constantly between the role of the professional and the role of the mother, “*juggling between appointments, and baby-bottles*”. Further, the composite dipole child-family as well as from one customer to another, leaves them by the end of the day “*drained of all energy*”. The final assessment balances sometimes in favour of family responsibilities and other times, in favour of professional responsibilities, thus accomplishing the impossible “*to keep everybody happy*”.

In cases where the contribution from informal family networks or paid services is present, physical fatigue goes away, giving however its position to “*remorse and guilt*” towards family members, and “*satisfaction*” towards professional activity. However, both strategies do not include the concept of leisure.

## *2. Assessment of the current situation and prospects*

The differentiations among the beauticians of our research population are associated with the start-up period of their professional and entrepreneurial activity. Given that in most cases, beauticians became active during the crisis, their words reflect a spirit of compromise considering the circumstances. The newest beauticians appear more optimistic as “*work will always exist*”. The major changes relate to the reduction of the frequency of visits and treatments, especially during seasonal months, the entry of new actors –medical specialties involved in the fields of beauty–, the unfair competition from unregistered beauticians offering their services to customers at home without the burden of a declared business,<sup>4</sup> and the continued increases in fixed

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4. In an interview with members of our Graduate Beauticians Associations Federation was also noted that some of their colleagues closed their business and

costs and taxes on services. Crisis affects the total amount of service, and their quality in the sense of frequency of expensive services. Some beauticians having to cope with the general unfavourable economic and business environment are trying to change the difficult situation into an opportunity, renewing their laboratory with new machines and recruiting staff trained in new techniques and fields such as the recent emergence of social beauty treatment.

### *Conclusion*

We would say that the practice of the beauty treatment profession combined with the entrepreneurial activity requires increased knowledge and skills. During the crisis, maintaining and expanding customer base becomes a difficult endeavour. For the women beauticians the current crisis influenced their professional life as it has contributed to the increase of working hours and the reduction of the cost of their services, producing also serious dilemmas concerning the already fragile balance of work and family life. These dilemmas regarding the prioritization and needs between the professional and family sphere lead some of them to a forced decrease of business activity for the benefit of family life for a limited period. At the same time the growing potentiality of their professional endeavours pushes them to change their life and family plan.

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continued the activity at their home. It seems that currently this practice has been intensified after the recent fiscal measures and the continuation of the financial crisis

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# WOMEN ARCHITECTS AND CIVIL ENGINEERS FACING UNDEREMPLOYMENT, UNEMPLOYMENT AND THE PURSUIT OF WORK-LIFE BALANCE

*Natalia Spyropoulou*

Architects and civil engineers belong to the occupational category of “qualified engineers” along with seventeen other sub-categories. To practice these professions a membership in the Technical Chamber (TEE) is required, as well as the acquisition of a professional license. The professions of architects and civil engineers were amongst the most prominent and profitable in Greece. However, the 2008 economic crisis has hit hard the construction sector and consequently those professions. According to the Institute of Economic and Industrial Research (IOBE), business activity in the construction sector fell by 80% since the beginning of the economic crisis,<sup>1</sup> while total employment in the construction industry decreased from 363.5 thousand in 2006 to 154.7 thousand in 2016.<sup>2</sup> The 2009 TEE survey showed that, the profession of the architect consists of 50% women and 50% men, while civil engineers comprise of 73% men and 27% women. In a more recent survey focused on the new graduates of the period 2002-2010, women comprise 71% of the new architects and men 29%. As to the civil engineers, 61% are men and 39% are women. Both architects and civil engineers are mainly working in the construction sector, while the clear majority of them are self-employed (86% and 83% respectively).

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1. IOBE, 2015.

2. Data refer to the second Quarter of the Year. Eurostat database, LFS.

The present text is devoted to female self-employed architects and civil engineers, with an emphasis on those who are currently facing under-employment or unemployment. The main goal of the research was to highlight the complex interaction between work and family life by exploring the experiences and recording the practices that working mothers - architects and civil engineers - use in their everyday life in order to cope with their family and work responsibilities. More specifically we attempted to explore the practices followed by female architects and engineers in their working and their personal lives and to capture the changes that have occurred in balancing family and professional life due to the economic crisis. A qualitative research was conducted drawing material on in-depth, face-to-face, semi-structured interviews with ten self-employed architects and civil engineers mothers of minors up to 17 years. A snowball technique was used to reach the research participants.

The women of our research population aged between 30 and 56 years. Half of them hold a master's degree, while the other half are university graduates. Out of the ten interviewees, six were architects and the remaining four were civil engineers. The interviews covered four broad thematic areas: 1) Work characteristics, 2) family life, 3) childcare facilities and support, and 4) work-life balance. The consequences of the crisis in all these aspects of their everyday life are also discussed and analysed.

## *Research findings*

### *a) Working conditions*

Except for the two youngest interviewees aged 33, the rest have a long working experience from thirteen to thirty three years. Most began working while still in university. After graduation, the majority opted to work for companies to gain experience and expertise, the exception being those who already had a business waiting for them from their parents. Nevertheless, after a period of time, most architects and civil engineers stopped working for these companies

and started up their own business. The main reasons mentioned for this change were professional evolution, autonomy and flexibility, control over own work, family responsibilities and bigger earnings.

It is worth noting that the clear majority of architects and civil engineers are considered as self-employed regardless of whether they are working in companies or in their own offices. The reason is that most companies do not hire them as employees, but as collaborators. Thus, their status implies that of 'dependent self-employment'.<sup>3</sup> In other words, despite working exclusively or mainly for a specific company, they are hired with a private contract rather than a labour contract, thus excluded from the rules of labour law.

Most respondents do not seem to identify any difficulty in exercising their profession, other than the long working hours and the management of the interpersonal relationships with the clients. In addition, civil engineers highlight the difficulties of being a woman in the construction sites, which brings up to the front gender equality issues at the workplace. Most civil engineers seem to overcome this problem by adjusting themselves to the dominant masculine culture and behaviour. Some women also claimed that they had felt discrimination in the labour market not owing to their gender, but to their motherhood. This was experienced by most of the women working in companies and it mainly concerned their hiring procedure.

Despite the above shortfalls, the vast majority of the respondents were very satisfied and proud of their professional lives until the emergence of the crisis in 2008. Job satisfaction is attributed to several reasons such as good cooperation, creative working projects, friendly working environment, travelling opportunities, big scale construction activities, high financial rewards etc. Indicative are the answers of an architect and a civil engineer:

*"[Architecture] provides you with everything you want! Everything! Human contact, art, contact with politics etc. It's very nice, very*

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3. Dependent self-employment describes work relationships where the worker is formally self-employed yet the conditions of work are like those of employees.

*nice! I love this profession very much. I believe that it has unlimited possibilities”.*

*“There were some good years! When I first started working I didn’t have enough time to eat! Within one day I had to supervise three construction sites. All this, I enjoyed it very much! Very much!”*

Today, after eight years of recession in the construction sector, all the professionals interviewed feel hopeless and disappointed with the labour market situation. Some women face economic difficulties, others have no more clients for some years now, while all the professionals who were working as dependent self-employed in companies were left without a job. Not everybody experienced this downturn at the same time or with the same intensity. Nevertheless, all the respondents believe that the construction sector in general and their professions will not recover soon.

*“Engineering is dead. For the construction to recover it needs at least a decade”*

*“I believe that architecture was the first to fall and will be the last to rise”.*

What are the practices those women follow to deal with this situation? Based on their responses, they can be grouped into three categories: those that keep their own offices, mostly of women in their fifties, facing under-employment and recession rather passively, waiting for the time to pass; those who were made redundant’ by the companies they were working for and are currently in a transition phase, thinking about changing their professional orientation, and those self-employed, mainly in the middle of their careers, who struggle to make ends meet by taking up all kind of relevant jobs.

### *b) Family life*

The clear majority of architects and civil engineers became mothers after the age of 35. Only two women had children before the age of 28. Half of them stated that they postponed having a family for professional reasons.

Regarding parenting responsibilities these are borne predominantly by women, most of whom use, in turn, a combination of informal networks, salaried staff and care facilities to meet family obligations. Most of the husbands and fathers have only a minor role in parenting during the weekdays, while they seem to be more actively involved on the weekends. As to the gender division of household responsibilities, most of the women in our research admit that they are exclusively in charge of all household responsibilities regardless of the working status of the men. We can thus safely conclude that the gender division of responsibilities, both in terms of child care and housework remains unequal, with women maintaining their traditional role as housewives, and assuming almost entirely responsibility for these tasks.

*“I am responsible! That is, I do the shopping, I clean, I do all the housework. If we also include the childcare, then the sharing of responsibilities used to be 95% -5% and now it is 80% -20%”. That is, 80% is on me”.*

The crisis has led most of the families to cut down expenses, especially those related to children’s out-of-school activities and to housework. This situation has caused additional psychological and physical stress to mothers, who bear most of the burden of these consequences.

*“I get more tired than I used to. Because now, I must go to work and I also must help with my child’s homework, and to do all the household tasks and all these by myself. Not to mention that I feel psychologically tired with all these things going on. The whole situation depresses me”.*

### *c) Childcare facilities and support*

To cope with their dual role as mothers and as professionals, women follow different strategies. These strategies have been affected to some extent by the crisis. Before the crisis, most women after giving birth chose to return to their jobs much quicker, while they used paid help and family support more extensively compared to the women who gave birth during the crisis.

*“My daughter had a nanny from the fifth day of her life and I continued working. The only difference was that I returned home earlier i.e. at 20:00 and didn’t stay at work until 22:00 or later, as I used to do before having the child”.*

Today, most mothers choose to take care of their children alone, with support mainly coming from the parental family in the form of meals provision.

*“I could hire a nanny for my baby if I were to go to work. But today there is absolutely no reason, for I have nothing to do at all”*

Childcare facilities - both private and public - are widely used by all the respondents for their children after the age of 2 or 3. The main reason is to give their children the chance to socialise. The crisis may have led to cuts in other outdoor and afternoon activities of the children, but it has not affected - in most families- the choices of the parents about the kindergartens and the schools that their children attend.

### *d) Work-life balance*

Most women claim that having a child affected, one-way or another, their professional lives and their career. They also believe that it is very difficult to achieve work-life balance. As they pointed out, there is always an imbalance between work and family, because

priority is usually given either to work or to family, depending on the circumstances.

*“They are both very demanding. If you are a perfectionist, it is impossible to do both perfectly. So, inevitably, either none will be done perfectly or if the one is done, then the other will stay behind”.*

So, at times when most of their attention was paid in their professional life, mothers identified deficiencies and problems in their family life. Similarly, in times when childbearing absorbed most of their personal time, this had a negative impact on their job.

*“There is no such thing as work-life balance! That is, when I used to be overloaded with work, working overtime, I used to feel that I missed my children, and now I miss my job!”*

*“To strike a balance... It is not an easy task to strike a balance between work and family life, and to be able to respond to the multiple roles you perform as a mother, a professional, a friend, a wife, as everything”.*

The current crisis on the one hand has brought about a significant deterioration in the professional career of women. On the other hand, it has, in a way, contributed to their spending more time in family life and parenting. In fact, today, the balance between work and family life is geared towards the family.

*“If we were in a different period, a period with too much work, then I would have spent less time with my child and my husband, being at home. The crisis has negatively affected my profession, but for the family I think it was a good thing, because now I spend more time at home.”*

*“The crisis resulted to my withdrawal from professional life. Spending more time with my child has –to some extent- counterbalanced my sadness for losing my job”*

## *Conclusions*

Liberal professions such as architects and civil engineers are traditionally characterised by long working hours and competitive working conditions. Professionals who are mothers find it very difficult to achieve the right balance between work and family life. To respond to the demands of their roles they use a combination of supportive mechanisms, such as paid help, family networks and childcare facilities, which are all used for facilitating them with their family responsibilities. The division of responsibilities for childcare and household work is still unequally shared between the two genders in Greece, with women preserving their traditional role as housewives, expected to assume the largest share of the workload in both tasks.

During the last years, however, architects and civil engineers have been hit hard by the crisis resulting in under-employment, unemployment or even inactiveness, while there are no visible perspectives for their professional recovery in the immediate future. Most of the respondents have experienced a significant loss of income from work and rely now on their savings and on the husband's financial earnings.

The crisis has, nevertheless, resulted in mothers obtaining a more active role in parenting, due to the increased availability of time. Women spend now more personal time in childbearing than mothers who raised young children before the crisis, when the workload and the professional responsibilities were at a peak. These new conditions, however, do not contribute to the establishment of a work-life balance, but rather tend to result in the loss of the women's professional identity. Work-life balance remains a challenge for most of the women architects and civil engineers in our research.

As to the measures and policies proposed by the mothers to facilitate the balance between work and family life, these mainly concern the establishment of better quality and accessible to all day care facilities for children and creative programmes and sports infrastructures in the municipalities. Most mothers highlighted that there are no specific provisions by the state to facilitate work-life

balance for those in liberal professions. Indeed, public policies for the self-employed were until very recently completely missing in the social policy field. In general, the Greek state is still lacking an adequate and integrated set of policies that would aim at balancing work and family life for the self-employed.

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WOMEN SOCIOLOGISTS.  
FAMILY, EMPLOYMENT, UNDEREMPLOYMENT  
AND UNEMPLOYMENT IN TIMES OF CRISIS

*Andromachi Hadjiyanni*

The profession of the sociologist in our country is a relatively new profession. Studies in sociology and their corresponding degree in the Greek labour market poses small “value” in the Greek labour market. Studies in Sociology not only lead to a “weak degree” but also to jobs which often do not require specific expertise, such as non-specialised positions in the State’s administrative machine. So, it seems that most sociology graduates in our country have never been able to find a job relating to sociology and are employed in the public and private sector, in administrative or office jobs, or in something completely unrelated to the specific studies.

In the present study focusing on the work-life balance of women sociologists we interviewed ten unemployed or underemployed women sociologists mothers of minors. The working hypothesis which directed the interviews is that women sociologists who try to combine professional, personal and family life start from a “disadvantaged” position in relation to the graduates of other fields of study and their underemployment is associated with these studies. Furthermore, the economic crisis of recent years seems to have worsened conditions for this professional category because it hit the most “vulnerable” professional groups.

The balance, reconciliation or harmony between work and family life, or rather the “work-life balance”, as it is known, does not concern only women. It is not a women’s issue or problem, but an issue and problem affecting both sexes concerning what we call

“gender relations”. At the same time, it is not an issue limited to the organisation of women’s time since they are required to organise it in a way that allows them to fulfil their role as employees but also take care of their family. Since women are primarily required to find ways to combine their multiple roles and meet work and family responsibilities, even when partners or spouses share the various “burdens” of the house and family, empirical studies on the balance between work and family life usually have women as their subjects.

The study of “reconciliation” between working and family life for unemployed or underemployed sociologists contains a contradiction: at the time of the interview, these women did not have a professional life –if they were unemployed– or had few professional obligations due to reduced working hours. Thus, the interview had to cover different aspects of their employment status in relation to their role in the family and its obligations: their previous work experience (for those who had worked in the past), the difficulty of being integrated or reintegrated into the labour market (in the case of sporadic or occasional jobs) and the loss of a job or the inability to find employment - possibly because of the inability to combine their professional with their family life.

### *1. Work and family for sociologists*

Describing their professional career from their graduation until today, the underemployed women sociologists who spoke to us often said they gave private lessons in languages or other courses, or worked for short periods of time on short-term employment contracts, which were interrupted by long periods of unemployment or deliberate abstention from work relating in most cases with a pregnancy. Sometimes, during the period they are not employed they become pregnant - perhaps by plan - so they stop seeking work for a while and devote themselves to their family and childcare.

We found therefore that many of the objective difficulties in finding a full-time job, or part-time job, or the lack of employment

during the period when their children were very young, was to a certain degree a “choice” for the women sociologists to whom we spoke. For older sociologists, it seems studies were not automatically linked to the need to integrate immediately into the labour market. They decided what to study mostly based on their interest in those studies rather than on its “employability”. Of course, the possibility of finding employment two decades ago was much higher than it is during the current crisis in Greece. At the same time, it becomes apparent from their trajectories that neither their husbands nor themselves made it a priority to enter the labour market. Instead it seems that the priority was to start a family and raise children, while working was simply complementary, and to the extent that it did not become an obstacle in fulfilling family obligations. For this reason, these women maintained a part-time employment, mostly giving private lessons. Furthermore, their perceptions on the role of women, on gender relations, as well as on the family model they adopt are much more traditional than those of younger women, meaning that family needs remain a priority. Therefore their active participation in the labour market takes a back seat. For younger women sociologists the difficulties in finding a job were known from the beginning. In fact, the decision on what they would like to study was based on the employment opportunities which were available at that time (teachers, social workers, psychologists, etc.).

Our interviewees often reported that they were aware of the difficulties in finding a job in a relevant subject during their studies in sociology (hence of the low “value” of their degree in the labour market), but also of the difficulties in finding “regular” work in an irrelevant field. Although the family model remains essentially traditional, it seems men’s unemployment is pushing them towards a more meaningful participation in childcare, home chores and the family in general. Therefore, if a spouse is unemployed during a period that his wife is employed, he takes on the responsibility of childcare and some housework which he did not take on or assumed at a much lesser extent when working. But even in the case of spouses who are unemployed and/or lack the support of the family, the sharing

of family burdens seems to remain uneven. The husband assumes part of the care of the children or the house, but the coordination and primary responsibility for the home, the child and the family lie generally on women.

## *2. Employment and family responsibilities.*

### *The multiple roles of women and family solidarity*

We could say therefore that younger women sociologists claim more strongly the role of the working mother who succeeds, despite difficulties, in combining the two roles. They ultimately adopt a model less traditional than their older colleagues and try to combine work and family, even if their job is not so demanding. Of course, the lack of stable employment for the women interviewed forces them to take on the larger and more substantial burden of family responsibilities, while the difficulties of reconciling family obligations and work appear to be primarily a women's problem.

As the welfare state never seriously developed in our country, it has affected people's perceptions about their needs and their rights as employees and citizens in general. Therefore, taking care of young children is almost always seen as a personal matter and almost never as the State's obligation to offer this benefit to working parents. We also see that the institution of family, family solidarity and solidarity between generations remain a well-established model in Greek society, despite any variations and changes it has experienced in recent decades.

## *3. The economic crisis and its impact on the employment of women sociologists*

We were often told by the women sociologists with whom we talked to, that they were aware from the start of their professional life that it would be difficult to find a stable and "regular" job with this degree and their employment history includes various part-time or precarious

jobs. But the economic crisis seems to have affected even this precarious labour status: the demand for private lessons is diminishing dramatically, as well as the European funded programs, and even for occasional short-term contracts an employee is required to register with the social security fund for the self-employed. At the same time, tax-free incomes are reduced, limiting the income from such employment, and therefore a woman's ability to work for a few months.

The financial crisis undoubtedly affected the lifestyle, daily lives of families and the roles of men and women within the family, primarily by adversely affecting women's "employability", especially those who have family obligations, who were the most vulnerable group. But the economic crisis created stifling labour market conditions which limited opportunities for all forms of employment (permanent, part-time, seasonal employment) or of the self-employment, for both men and women. Secondly, it is also evident from the interviews that women sociologists who work less, are more inclined to turn their attention to their family and their traditional role as mothers, responsible for looking after the home and everyday life, while assistance with child care is only available through the family. Finally, although some of the women we met chose to withdraw from the labour market to take care of their children, as they struggled to harmonise work and family, even though they kept a part-time job or one with flexible hours, they have anticipated that the advent of the current crisis impeded their work-life balance, making them experiencing "failure". Their frequent reference to the satisfaction they receive from their family, even when it becomes obvious that the family's existence deterred them from having some sort of career, cannot conceal those women's frustration for their failure to satisfy their professional ambitions. To be more precise, we could say their frustration lies on the fact that they failed to combine a more permanent employment, a career that is, with childcare and family. The existence of a family and its responsibilities is experienced as a deterrent to work development and a career, as well as a personal disappointment and frustration.

### *Concluding remarks*

Through the analysis of the interviews we conducted we found that our working hypothesis was confirmed. These women found that studying sociology does not prepare them for an occupation and that the “weak” bachelor degree is one of the main causes of their inability to properly integrate into the labour market. They also stated that they would like a job which is compatible with having a family and raising children, while most of them expressed the desire to only work in a field related to their studies. The difficulties encountered led most of the sociologists to underemployment or employment in unstable jobs which were particularly affected by the economic crisis of recent years, often leaving them unemployed. Through the interviews, it also became apparent that family was a priority in their lives and their efforts to reconcile work and family responsibilities failed, because they failed to integrate properly into the labour market. In other words, their underemployment and unemployment status relates to the difficulties in reconciling family life with their professional life.

Our data suggest that the older women sociologists chose more easily not to work or to have a limited or flexible employment which could be combined with raising children, believing that they might be able to return to work later in life. The younger ones tried to integrate into the labour market immediately after graduation, but their efforts coincided with the economic crisis, so it was more difficult for them to find work than for their older colleagues and eventually they limited themselves to part-time employment. The difficulty in reconciling family life with work is often expressed by these women as a difficulty to meet their professional ambitions and is experienced, partly, as a “failure”. But it is also obvious that the family and its responsibilities which they took on as part of the traditional family model were the main obstacles in attaining career. Finally, we should mention that in all women sociologists with whom we talked to, the traditional model for gender roles within the family seems to be what determines, to a lesser or greater extent, the

distribution of family responsibilities between partners or spouses, even in cases where the male spouse or partner is unemployed.

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# A DIFFICULT RECONCILIATION OF FAMILY AND WORK-LIFE FOR FEMALE PUBLIC SECTOR EMPLOYEES. A POLICY ORIENTED APPROACH

*Christina Varouxi*

During the economic crisis in Greece measures adopted in relation to public administration in Greece included the reduction and transfer of staff (suspension, mobility etc.), the freezing of wages, horizontal cut salaries, the reduction or abolition of general and sectoral allowances, cuts in pensions and the increase of pension ages.<sup>1</sup> As far as the reduction of public sector employees' salaries is concerned, data reveal the loss of almost 1/3 of their income as well as a significant increase of the public servants with net monthly salary below 1.000 euro during the last six years (from 18, 9% in 2009 to 35, 8% in 2015).<sup>2</sup> Regarding the reduction of staff in the Greek public sector, according to Census data, in the period 2009-2015 ordinary staff in the Greek core public sector have been reduced from 692.907 employees in 2009 to 566.913 employees in 2015.<sup>3</sup> As far as the

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1. For a critical evaluation of the measures see ADEDY, 2014, Karakioulafi et. al., 2015, Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction, 2016.

2. See ADEDY, 2014 and INE/GSEE, 2016.

3. The data refers to the personnel of Ministries, Independent Authorities, Decentralized Administrations, Local Governments of first and second degree and supervised Legal Entities of Public Law. The ordinary staff of the core public sector (despite of legal entities of private law) includes permanent employees/officials, employees under private law contracts of indefinite duration, employees with a salaried mandate and employees appointed for a term in office who become permanent after the expiry of the term (teaching and research staff-DEP, doctors of the NHS, special guards). See Census applications of the Directorate of Data Processing of the Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction.

evolution of female employment in the Greek core public sector (ordinary staff) is concerned, for the period 2012-2015 it follows a downward trend since in 2012 women public sector employees amounted to 292.268 while in 2015 they amounted to 264.723 employees.<sup>4</sup> At the same time, public sector working demands have intensified, since the reduced staff, having being confronted with reduced pay and career prospects, is requested to provide to more and new users of public services, the same or best services, at the same or less time.

In the midst of the current economic crisis women public sector employees have experienced adverse reforms of their working conditions which affected their professional status and career aspirations as well as their ability to reconcile work with family responsibilities. The aim of the research has been to briefly outline the changing process features, emphasizing the effort of female public sector employees with children to balance their work obligations with the care of their family. The present review is based on personal semi- structured interviews with ten female employees who raise kids, which belong to the ordinary public sector staff and serve in five different ministries departments. Throughout their experiences and the difficulties they face concerning their daily routine track "*from home to work, from work to home*" female public servants mothers of minors propose measures to improve the balance of family and work life.

In the abruptly changing conditions of their working environment, the outmost challenge for working mothers in the public sector is to find enough time to meet their work and family obligations with less money, more responsibilities and a sense of their profession devaluation to stigmatize them. Thus, the conflict between work and family life peaked, dragging down both fields of female activity. In their effort to combine family and work, women public servants call for family support measures, the benefits of which are reflected in their job performance and measures to improve their working

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4. Source: Census database of the personnel of the Greek public administration.

conditions for the benefit of their families. In the context of the life cycle approach, per which different needs are to be met in different life stages, female public servants believe that it is very important to support working mothers when their children are very young. In relation to the provision of child care women civil servants who raise kids call for a number of provisions such as the following:

- The unrestricted access of young children –infancy and early childhood age– to quality, affordable and close to home or workplace social childcare structures.
- The strengthening with financial and human resources of childcare structures, as well as the expansion and flexibility of structures' operating hours so as to keep pace with the working hours of parents.
- The unrestricted access of primary school age children in kindergartens and primary schools, located near their place of residence, which operate a consolidated and extended schedule that can meet the needs of working parents.
- The unrestricted access of children to social education or creative/entertainment structures in hours beyond school time or in summer and school holidays. These structures can be established either outside or within schools offering activities adapted to children's age.
- The unrestricted access of children to quality public education which meets the educational needs of students within school so as to avoid extra tutorial hours in core subjects and foreign languages.

Moreover in relation to their work environment, women civil servants voice their claims for provisions facilitating their familial role such as the following:

- The individualization and extension of parental leave for purposes of monitoring school life of children.
- The provision of parental care leaves for medical reasons (e.g. medical examinations, doctor visits, home medical care or hospitalization). In this context, it is also considered important the provision of family care leave so as to provide care for other

dependants (elderly relatives, family members with disabilities or patients, etc.), which can be combined with the introduction of a “care services credit accounts” system.

- The provision of an individualized, mandatory and non-transferable parental care leave which would favour the use of family leave by fathers to undertake more responsibilities, an equal share in family and household care services.
- The individual management of working time and the discretion of choosing flexible and individualized forms of working time organization. This kind of arrangement can be provided either in certain periods of life, when there are increased or extraordinary family care needs, or on a regular basis, through the implementation of a part-time or an extended daily, weekly, monthly flexible working schedule (within a predetermined allowable flexibility). Such flexibility can be combined with the introduction of a “working time credit accounts” system.
- The combination of a mixed system of remote work (e.g. work from home) and workplace presence, or the provision of a compressed work week, within a predetermined allowable limit of work schedule flexibility.

However, what female civil servants ask, above all, is the restoration of their mandated salaries to levels that can meet their personal and family needs.

In conclusion, female public servants, in their dual capacity as providers and public services users as well as family carers and professionals, estimate that the two aspects of their everyday life can coexist in harmony, sometimes easily, more often with difficulties, conflicts, fatigue and stress. In their struggle, they call for the care of the state so as to enable them to better fulfil their multiple roles. As the female public servants pointed out, although budget constraints have adversely affected the sustainability of work-family-life reconciliation policies, on top of the challenges the country is nowadays facing (that is, an ageing population, the increased care needs, the low birth rates, the diversity of parental responsibility and family relationships, the migration of young scientists, the

deregulation of working conditions, the job insecurity and the high levels of female unemployment), state support in order to achieve a better work-life balance can be a key national strategic response.

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## POSTSCRIPT

# EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT OF PUBLIC POLICIES AND PRACTICES ON WORK-LIFE BALANCE IN GREECE

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Aim of this text was to assess and evaluate public policies on the reconciliation of work and family life in Greece. The methodology adopted was semi-structured interviews with experts and government officials on the issue of political reconciliation of family and professional life. Six interviews were conducted between July and October 2016. The interviewees were all women, with experience in the design and implementation or evaluation of public policies on gender and/or with a long-term research and academic involvement. All of them were contacted a few days before the scheduled interview and were given an outline of the subjects under investigation.

### *Key findings*

Most interviewees agreed that when we talk about work and family life balance policies we must make a distinction between working time settlement policies (work leave, part-time work etc.) and policies regarding the facilities for dependent family members (mostly preschoolers and the elderly), such as nurseries, old people's homes etc. They pointed out that the emphasis must be given on the former, i.e. the creation of adequate infrastructure, such as care

services outside the home and not on flexible working time. When care for the children or the elderly is provided outside the home, there is no “hierarchy” between the working time of the couple, since the settlement goes outside family time. All interviewees agreed that there is a problem of differential treatment of workers in the private and public sectors.

Finally, most interviewees are in favour of policies that put the state more in the core of the responsibility for balancing work and family life. They also stressed that if we perceive reconciliation as a form of support towards women we do not serve the cause of gender equality. Policies should target men as well, relate to them and try to involve them more in family matters, not support women in order to combine work and family.

#### *a) Planning, financing and implementing policies*

Interviewees were asked to identify the key actors involved in the monitoring of relevant policies. Regarding private sector regulations, these are: the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Social Solidarity, the Labour Inspectorate, which monitors the implementation of labour legislation and the Ombudsman who receives complaints for violations of working conditions. Regarding the public sector, jurisdiction lies on the Ministry of Administrative Reform and the Ministry of Interior through the General Secretariat for Gender Equality (GSGE) that has a general responsibility for recommendations and proposals for legislation and policy implementation.

#### *b) Criteria, priorities and needs'assessment*

It was agreed that no such thing as “needs' assessment” takes place for the adoption of policies. As several interviewees stated, the welfare state in Greece copied other models, rather than investigating the actual needs and taking steps in order to implement them. As a basic criterion remains the existence of funding, given the shrinking welfare state.

*c) Overlapping and cooperation between policy makers*

A major problem identified is vertical organization in the public service, where different sectors do not communicate with each other; therefore obligations and policies are not communicated efficiently. It was a common perception that horizontal policies in Greece are the future, probably providing the best solution on how to design and implement policies. Collaboration is at the discretion of the political actors, according to the synergies developed between political representatives. The administration is working and sends opinions and recommendations whenever requested; whether they are taken into account is something that seems to depend on each individual case.

*d) Coverage of needs of existing policies  
and main shortcomings*

There was a unanimous belief that needs are not adequately covered. A greater emphasis should be given on infrastructures. Regarding loopholes in legislation, there are specific categories of workers and self-employed the needs of whom current legislation does not entirely cover. All interviewees insisted that one major problem that has not been properly addressed is the change of attitudes and the elimination of stereotypes regarding gender roles inside the family.

*e) Progress that has been achieved in relation to the past*

On this particular issue there was no clear consensus in the responses. The executives of Ministries felt that there is evident progress as can be documented in the proliferation of legislation regulating work and family life in the past decade or so. Nowadays, all Ministry of Labour policies take into account the gender perspective, and staff members are more informed and sensitized.

Another dimension worth stressing was the issue of women's relationship with the concept of work. By and large the majority of the population has adopted and accepts the concept of women's

participation in the labour market. Therefore, legislation must be adopted in order to regulate the obstacles that arise; reconciliation of work and family life is seen as a problem to be solved. There is also an evolution in terms of attitudes, perceptions, etc., and this makes it easier for inequalities to become very visible.

#### *f) The impact of the economic crisis*

There is a severe lack of resources for social policy due to extensive cuts in state welfare structures. Working relationships are becoming more flexible, and other non formal labor relations are imposed, which are unprotected and not subject to the existing legislative framework. At the level of values, claims related to gender issues have declined since they are considered to be a “luxury” in such harsh times.

#### *Concluding remarks*

The existing policies of balancing work and family life have facilitated women in the organization of their family and work life; they have not however assisted in overthrowing discrimination and stereotypes but rather have facilitated women to fulfill their double roles and functions. Although there is central planning in the field of social policy that effectively integrates the gender dimension, existing policies have not been able to prevent or have created another ‘discrimination’ between workers in the public and private sectors. The General Secretariat for Gender Equality (GSGE) is a true focal point. However, many actions are scattered in various departments and agencies thus not making it possible to completely monitor and evaluate them. At the level of values, women themselves perceive their participation in the labor market as evident. However, there is a perception that the issue of gender discrimination has now been resolved. Although gender equality has become a pan-European value, there are still many difficulties in its full implementation,

that crash with an increasing competition and rapid changes in the organization and timing of work.

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