

## CHAPTER 10

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# FAMILY CHANGE AND FAMILY VALUES IN GREECE

**Laura Alipranti-Maratou**  
***National Centre for Social Research, EKKE***

***(in cooperation with) Vasiliki Gountsidou***  
***Aristotle University of Thessaloniki***

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### INTRODUCTION

The ancient civilizations in Greece and Rome have left art and writings, that provide a good portrait of their experience and perception of aging. Older citizens were highly respected for their wisdom, and councils of elders helped rule Greek and Roman society. Even a goddess existed to show the importance of family and home, Estia. However, respect for the elderly in Greece declined during the fifth century B.C., as old age came to be depicted as a period of declining mental and physical ability and youth extolled, as the ideal time of life. In modern societies family is perceived as an arena of negotiations, where there are not only close emotional relationships, but also conflictual and ambivalent ones.

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Up to 1821 most of present-day Greece was a neglected province of the Ottoman Empire. As a result, it has never experienced the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, which was spread across Western Europe at that time. Its path into the modern era started with the 1821 revolution against the Ottoman Empire, which had ruled the country for 400 years, and became an independent country in 1830.

Today Greece can be characterized as a modern developed and democratic country (officially the Hellenic Republic), in southeastern Europe, with a population of approximately 11 million (2011 census). Greece is a founding member of the United Nations, it was the 10th member to join the European Communities in 1981 and it has been part of the Eurozone since 2001.

However, during the 20th century, the country's social and economic development has not followed a linear path. For complex historical reasons, it has evolved in functional, economic, and cultural processes, which conflict with and confound mainstream development/modernization theory. According to Mouzelis (1978), the country displays all the characteristics of a society in which "progress" often means regression and return to previous developmental stages. Greece has followed a distinctly European trajectory, with meanings, behaviors, and structures that are clearly different from those usually associated with processes of rationalization, which is also related to the rapid transition of the country, from agrarian to the postindustrial era followed by a late and epidemic industrialization.

The political regimes of modern Greece have alternated between parliamentarianism and dictatorship—military or civilian—in varying combinations, with a monarchical or republican form of government. Some analysts have characterized the modern Greek political system, as one dominated by political clientelism, whose roots are deep in traditional Greek society. Moreover, the particular relationship between Orthodox Church and state reproduces an ethnocentric cultural identity (Charalambis et al., 2004; Diamandouros, 1983).

Greece has been for a long time a labor-exporting country and during the 20th century about 1,000,000 Greeks emigrated towards Germany, the United States, and Australia. Of greater importance perhaps has been the rapid urbanization in the post-World War II (WWII) and civil war period. In the 1960s, Greek society experienced the most intense mobility of its modern history. Rural areas suffered continuous population losses, and the urban population exceeded the rural one for the first time in history. Greece entered a phase of rapid urbanization with serious social and demographic consequences. The rural population decreased from 48% in 1961 to 23.4% in 2011 (Koniordos et al., 2006).

However, both emigration and urbanization processes have not had a negative effect on the social values related to the family and have not

acted as disintegrating factors. On the contrary, they have contributed to preserve its unity and cohesion. The strength and vitality of kinship ties along with community networks, are also incorporated in more general family strategies for social improvement of family members.

Although the traditional framework of marriage and the two-parent families remain the most common model in our country, the frequency of divorces is constantly increasing, new family forms as single households, single parent families, and registered cohabitation for heterosexual and homosexual partners are met more and more often.

The fact that Greek society has been transformed from an agrarian into a postindustrial society, without consolidating the principles of industrialization and the following social integration had as results the underdevelopment of the social security, health and welfare system until present-day (Maratou-Alipranti, 2002; Venieris & Papatheodorou, 2003, p. 42).

The issues which are explored within the framework of this report will highlight interesting dimensions and aspects of the current reality on the key issue of family change and intergenerational relations.

### DEMOGRAPHIC DEVELOPMENTS

The population of Greece (as well as the population of almost all the developed countries of our planet) in the post-WWII period has grown significantly (7.6 million in 1951, to 11.0 million in 2014) and is progressively aging (average age 29 in 1951, 43 years in 2014, i.e., +14 years).

In particular, looking at the population change over 10-year periods, we find that the population experienced the greatest increase in the decades 1951–1961 and 1971–1981 (+ 9.6%, +733.0 thousand and 9.9%, +874.0, while the weakest in the periods 1961–1971, 1981–1991, 1991–2001 and 2001–2011 (+ 5.4% respectively, +449.2 thousand, 6.1%, +586.7 thousand, 5.5%, +563.3 thousand and 2.7%, just +287.4 thousand, respectively). In the latest data period (2011–2015), for the first time in the post-war history the country's population has fallen by –265.4 thousand, according to ELSTAT's latest estimates 10.9 million (2.4% decrease) (ELSTAT, 2014).

In that same period, we observe an important increase of the average life expectancy at birth, by approximately 10 years—from 69 to 78 years for men and from 73 to 83 years for women. However, the concomitant decrease of fertility has caused a progressive population ageing. At the same time, Greek population has been urbanized and in 2011, 80% of the population lived in urban areas, but it has been concentrated in an extremely limited proportion (6%) of the country's total surface, by the

formation of two major metropolitan areas (Athens and Thessaloniki). The massive population outflows to urban centers have been directed mostly to Athens, the country's capital and the second largest city, Thessaloniki which both gather half of the country population.

From relatively "homogeneous" after WWII (the non-Greek citizenship in 1951 was a few thousands), Greece now includes about 1,000,000 migrants, the vast majority of whom, come from former socialist countries and the developed areas (a significant part of the latter has illegally entered our country and does not have a residence permission). The proportion of migrants constitutes the 10% in the total population (ELSTAT, 2017a).

As far as migratory flows are concerned, a part of the immigrant-economic migrants established in the two previous decades returned to their countries, as a result of the economic crisis. It is evident that under these conditions Greece is not an "attractive" destination for economic migrants.

On the other side, the influx of economic migrants and refugees from the less developed regions in Greece, which constitutes one of the main gateways to the European Union (EU), is continuing and the "refugees crisis" is expected to be intensified.

Unlike these developments a new wave of emigration of Greeks abroad emerges with a strong participation of young graduates (brain drain), estimated at around 500,000 young people in productive age (25–39 years). The new migration wave (New Diaspora) is related to the economic crisis as a result of the high unemployment rate, the lack of job opportunities and the economic recession (Karakatsidi, 2016).

The majority of young people who emigrate are highly educated and they search for an employment. Thus, the economic crisis, the lack of employment opportunities, inequality, and corruption, drive off the best brains of the country and there is no prospect of a soon return, as the state is unable to cope with the causes of the "brain drain" (Hondros, 2016). Unfortunately, young people who preferred to stay in Greece, have been recently characterized as "working poor."

### **Age Structure of the Population**

A comparison of changes in the size of population age groups shows a gradual reduction in the proportion of children (0–14 years). From 26.2% in 1961 it has been reduced to 14.7% in 2014 and a significant increase in the proportion of those 65 years and over. More particularly, in 1961 the 65+ population constituted 8.9% of the total population and in 2014 accounts 23%. It is important to note that although the total population of the country increased by about 45% between 1951 and 2015, the increase was

much higher for the elderly. Thus, the over 65 years old almost increased threefold, while people aged 85 and over have increased tenfold (Table 10.1). These figures depict the drastic changes in the two dependent population groups. The demographic aging of our population is indisputable, due mainly to the increase in the average expected life expectancy at birth, the simultaneous reduction of births and the negative migratory balance. The aging of the population of Greece, as well as of Europe in general, causes many medical, social, family, financial, insurance, and other problems, which will take explosive dimensions in the coming decades (Dianecosis, 2016).

**Table 10.1**

***Resident Population by Age Groups (%) 1981–2014***

Years	0–14 years	15–64 years	65+	85+
1961	26.2	65.5	8.3	0.6
1971	24.5	64.1	11.4	0.8
1981	22.4	64.4	13.2	0.9
1991	19.0	67.1	14.0	1.2
2001	15.3	67.4	17.2	1.5
2011	14.6	65.9	19.5	2.1
2014	14.7	64.8	20.5	2.6

*Source:* ELSTAT (2017a).

### **Fertility**

For the greater part of the postwar period, fertility remained at high levels despite the absence of a baby boom in Greece. It remained high in the period 1960–1981 around 2.3 births per woman of reproductive age, that is, slightly above the level of 2.1 births considered necessary for the replacement of generations. A downward trend was observed after 1980 and has led to a very low level of fertility at present. Currently, the overall fertility rate has fallen even further, due to the economic crisis, reaching 1.3 children per woman of reproductive age in 2014 (from 1.5 in 2010).

As noted in a recent study, the constant trend of decrease of the first order births (the first, i.e., births) to younger generations also reflects the emergence of a new phenomenon, that of the increase of final childless-

ness, which will probably lead one in four women (25%), who were born after the late 70s, not to become a mother (Kotzamanis, 2018).

Contrary to established trends in Western countries, births out of wedlock are only marginal phenomena in Greece. In 2003, they represented 4.9 % of all births, and despite a small increase, they hardly make up 7.8% of all births in 2014.

Concerning the average age of mothers in total births, it began to grow after 1985 at a slow pace and then faster, resulting in an increase of approximately 5 years in 30 years (from 26.1 years in 1985 to 31 years in 2014).

New family patterns and reproduction behaviors contribute to the postponement of family creation and the childbirth decision, resulting to the decline in fertility rates. Further, economic insecurity stemming from unemployment and/or low earnings leads to long-term dependency on parents.

### **Family Structure**

Since 1970, there have been significant changes in family structure and on family behaviors and practices, in men and women social roles and in interfamily relationships. These changes took place with some delay in our country (preceded in Western European countries) and are part of the general change in the representations and practices regarding private life and interpersonal relations.

Demographic changes and new social conditions led to an increase in the number of households, from 2,142,968 in 1961 to 4,234,540 in 2011. Average household size decreased gradually, from 3.78 people in 1961 to 2.62 in 2011). The proportion of one-person households increased from 10.1% in 1961 and corresponds to 25.7% in 2011. These changes can be attributed to the effects of urbanization and the emergence of new family forms and values, pertaining to independent residence of families and the population ageing as well, which tend to produce more widows and widowers.

Regarding marriages fewer marriages are made, with a delay (older spouses). As it is argued longer education, youth unemployment, job insecurity and the prospect of unemployment delay the creation of a permanent relationship, and family. Moreover, living together without marriage—which has been institutionalized in most European countries as an alternative family model—was only recently applied in our country with the cohabitation agreement. Although the traditional framework of marriage and childbirth remains in our country, after 2014 civil marriages and the cohabitation agreement overcame religious marriages although it still only concerned heterosexual couples (Table 10.2).

**Table 10.2****Number of Marriages by Type, 2003–2016**

Year	Total Marriages	Religious	Civil	Cohabitation Agreement
2003	61,081	47,871	13,210	–
2004	51,377	37,496	13,881	–
2005	61,043	43,601	17,442	–
2006	57,802	39,579	18,223	–
2007	61,377	40,734	20,643	–
2008	53,500	32,380	21,120	–
2009	59,212	34,375	24,837	161
2010	56,338	30,327	26,011	180
2011	55,099	28,472	26,627	185
2012	49,710	23,980	25,730	314
2013	51,256	25,624	25,632	581
2014	53,105	26,190	26,915	1,573
2015	53,672	26,419	27,253	2,611
2016	49,632	23,778	25,584	3,799

Source: ELSTAT (2017b). \* Cases that follow the political and religious marriage are not recorded.

Concerning the frequency of divorces the rate is constantly increasing in Greece, but at a lower rate than in other European countries (Maratou-Alipranti & Kaklamani, 2011). According to statistical data in the beginning of 2000, there were only 20 divorces per 100 marriages (composite divorce rate). Twenty years later in 2015, this rate has increased to 31 divorces per 100 marriages. The number of divorces after 2010 presents a significant increase, probably as a result of the problems faced by the middle-class family during a period of prolonged economic recession. Moreover, most of the divorces are now issued consensually (80%).

### Family Models

According to empirical findings from studies conducted in the 80s and 90s, 85% of families in urban areas were nuclear in form. It is important to note, that even in the case of coresidence (extended families), in most cases, only one grandparent comes to live with the family after the death of his or her spouse. The generalization of independent living is shown in

data from the 2011 population census: 82% of all households in Greece are married couples (with or without children), while registered partnership is a marginal practice (2.9%). In addition, single-parent families constitute a small group (15.2%), consisting mainly by lone mothers living with their children (Table 10.3).

**Table 10.3*****Family Models, Greece 2011***

<b>Family models</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
Married couples without children	913,28	30.22
Married couples with children	1,570,422	52.00
Cohabited couples without children	61.63	2.00
Cohabited couples with children	01/12/32	0.38
Father with children	74.44	2.5
Mother with children	389.34	12.9
Total families	3,021,425	100

*Source:* ELSTAT (2017a).

Changes in contemporary Greek family highlight that gradually from a “social institution” turns to a group of “voluntary cohabitation.” Although legal marriage is the most prevalent family model in Greece, the family group becomes more and more fragile, as separation and divorce are common phenomena. Moreover young people delay the creation of family and childbirth.

**Economic Situation**

During the postwar period and up to the early 1970s, Greece witnessed very impressive economic growth rates with some fluctuations, but since 2009 a prolonged recession has started. Overall, the main features of the downturn of the economy have been the decrease in the growth of GDP, the continuous significant increase in the public debt and the high levels of the unemployment, mostly of women and young.

In the postwar period, economic growth rose and fell. The evolution of GDP in the postwar period is characterized by two distinct trends. Up to the mid-1970s, growth was very rapid (especially in the 1960s, when Greece had the fastest-growing economy in the OECD. In the following decades,



however, growth slowed dramatically (annual averages: 1960–73: 7.7%, 1974–81: 2.9%, 1982–1994: 1.6%). A rise in the growth rate was observed in 1994 according to official estimates, this trend was maintained in 1995 and 1996.

Unlike this, there was a continuous increase in public expenditures and the public debt for a long period of time. Efforts to attract foreign investments have been unsuccessful, and gradually the rate of economic growth has remained at zero for several years.

Coming to the recent period, since 2000 Greece saw high levels of GDP growth above the Euro zone average, peaking at 5.9% in 2003 and 5.5% in 2006. However, the subsequent great recession and Greek government debt crisis, a central focus of the wider European debt crisis, plunged the Greek economy into a sharp downturn, with real GDP growth rates of –0.3% in 2008, –4.3% in 2009, –5.5% in 2010, –9.1% in 2011, –7.3% in 2012 and –3.2% in 2013. After 6 years of economic decline, Greece achieved a real GDP growth rate of 0.7% in 2014. Regarding the country's public debt, in 2006 it was about €225 billion and in 2011 reached €355 billion (170% of nominal GDP). Overall, the general public gross debt as percent GDP during the years 2009–2014 has increased and reached 178.6% and the economic downturn has dramatically worsened employment levels. Unemployment has reached high levels, while multiple problems have arisen in the social protection system. This has made it clear that the policies promoted since 2000 within the framework of the European Employment and Social Protection Strategy, were very fragile, as they were based on high levels of employment and on a stable economic development. Besides, in 6 years period, male and female employment declined dramatically: male employment shrunk by 26.4 points and female women by 19.5 points (Emke-Poulopoulou, 2015; Karamessini & Rubery, 2015).

More specifically the unemployment rate that ranged around 10% in the first half of the previous decade in 2015 reaches 25% (average in EU-28 9.4%). In addition, the economic crisis has disproportionately affected young people regardless of their sex. In particular, among young people aged 15–29, the unemployment rate has risen dramatically and in 2015 reached 41.3%. The social and economic cost of the Greek economic crisis are very significant. National income fell by almost a quarter and the percentage of the population below the poverty line reached 21.4% in 2015 while middle-class poverty has been witnessed by the large decline in pensions and property income (Table 10.4).

### **Social and Family Policies**

The welfare state was developed in Europe during the economic boom of the three postwar decades and has provided European societies with a

**Table 10.4*****People at Risk of Poverty or Social Exclusion by Most Frequent Activity Status, Greece 2009–2014***

Year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Employed persons	18.5	18.0	17.6	22.5	20.2	21.2
Not employed persons	35.5	36.8	42.0	43.5	43.8	44.4

*Source:* EU-SILC, Eurostat. <http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nuisubmitViewTableAction.do>

credible social security system. However, contrary to other European societies in postwar Greece, the rapid transition to the postindustrial era was followed by a late and epidemic industrialization which, combined with demographic ageing has resulted in an unequal and fragmented social and welfare system funded mainly by the state. Moreover, the absence of structural changes in critical areas, such as employment and social protection, favored the development of a deficit welfare system that was strongly based on family solidarity and social security, while social spending remained low and largely ineffective, reflecting a timeless inability to safeguard basic social needs. This means that social policy and welfare system have always lagged and are still lagging far behind the standards in advanced industrialized countries, while the delayed increase in funding is seriously constrained by financial and political limitations in the form of budget problems and the readdressing of the question of the welfare state and social security system (Venieris, 2003, pp. 42–43).

Public-sector welfare institutions operate at four levels: central government, regional, prefectural, and local government. The Ministry of Health and Social Welfare is the main body for the operation and organization of the social policy and social security sectors.

Regarding family policy until the 70s it was not developed as such, but rather was implicit in other social provisions. However, from the 80s and onwards there are important legislative reforms of family Law (Law 1483/1984) of tax systems, of pension rights, partnership agreement, and so forth. So, family policy schemes have started to take into consideration the new trends in family life as well (Maratou-Alipranti, 2002; Moussourou & Stratigaki, 2004; Petmesidou & Mosialos, 2006).

Furthermore, Greece has incorporated a number of European Community Directives (maternity leave, parental leave, leave for dependency, etc.). Legislative provisions concern also the protection of the reproductive role of the working mother in order to make it easier for women to combine family and professional obligations (such as maternity leave, paternity

leave, childcare leave, and other arrangements for the work life balance (Alipranti-Maratou et al., 2016; Alipranti-Maratou et al., 2017; Alipranti-Maratou & Nikolaou 2011).

The general guidelines could be classified in three categories: first, the support of waged employees, who constitute the majority of those insured. In this category benefits operate on the principle of covering child-rearing costs of all workers in the private and public sectors and benefits are given to one parent regardless of sex.

The second category concerns the support of de facto disadvantaged families (orphans, unprotected children, one-parent families, and families with many children). However, in Greece lone parenthood has not been considered as a social problem requiring greater state intervention or justifying more support. So, as we saw the proportion of births out of wedlock remains still very low.

A third area of public family intervention is to help large families, those with three or more children. These provisions have recently been linked to measures addressing the “demographic problem.” Some policy measures have attempted to counter the trend towards decreasing fertility by promoting incentives to child-rearing and adopting a pronatalist philosophy. In the early 1990s, a reform of the system of family benefits in Greece, created new benefits for families with three or more children.

Furthermore, changing social roles and behaviors within the family and in particular women’s economic independence through individual professional life, created new needs for social care services provided by the state. The availability of such services, as childcare services and that for old people and depended family members, have gradually increased in an effort by the state to facilitate the reconciliation of work and family life but remain insufficient to cover the real needs (Karamessini & Rubery, 2015).

Yet, the financial pressure on the welfare state in addition to the economic crisis since 2010 has generated a consensus that the state should target to families at risk in a *selective* way. Nevertheless, in recent years, as result of the economic crisis, state interventions have been reduced and as it is pointed out the overall family policy in our country is not responding to the emerging new social conditions and needs (Alipranti-Maratou et al., 2016; Matsaganis, 2011).

### **Third Age Social Policy**

The generalization of pensions and the autonomous residence of older people in Greece created new needs for this population group. Lack of social services and policies for the elderly in Greece, as well as the low pensions, often result in the main burden of care for the elderly falling on the

family, especially to women (Teperoglou, 2004). In the context of Open Care, the following services are provided by local authorities:

**“Help at Home”:** The *“Help at Home”* program was implemented under the responsibility of local authorities providing free basic home care services to elderly people and people with disabilities, such as psychosocial support, nursing services, company, nourishment, payment of bills, and so forth. Today in many municipalities it is no longer applied.

**Open Care Centers for Elderly, Friendship Clubs /KAPI:** Various services are offered to men and women over 65 years who live in the area, regardless of their economic and social situation. What is particularly important in the concept of open protection for the elderly is their stay in the community, in the familiar environment of the family, the neighborhood, the friendly environment.

More particularly the services include counseling, medical care, psycho-emotional support, physiotherapy, sports activities, gymnastic, occupational therapy, training, lectures, organized entertainment, excursions, visits to museums and archaeological sites, theatrical performances, and so forth.

**Day Care Centers for Older People (KIFI):** are modern structures for the elderly who are not fully independent. Currently only 50 such structures are functioning in the country. Services offered are nursing care, care to meet practical living needs, personal hygiene, creative programs, programs for developing functional, and social skills.

Moreover, various activities and good practices are implemented within the framework of “Friendship Clubs/KAPI” which aim to enhance inter-generational relations, as for example the learning of ICTs and various activities to promote active ageing.

However, the gradual restriction in benefits for the elderly and the reduction of pensions exert greater pressure on family members, who are often reluctant to take on the burden of care of dependent old parents. The challenge facing by the government today is by what means will ensure the provision of good quality care for children and the elderly.

### HISTORICAL PART ON THE VALUE OF FAMILY IN SOCIETY

The institution of the family seems to have play an important role in Greece’s recent development, and the institution of marriage continues to be highly valued. As we have already mentioned, neither emigration nor urbanization have had a negative effect on the social values relating to the family, nor have they acted as destructive factors (Charalambis et al. 2004).

The dominant family type is the nuclear family: the married couple and their children, living in their own residence and often in the same area or neighborhood with parents and/or relatives. Though the nuclear family

predominates, it is embedded in a wider network of relatives, which supports its members in daily life (Maratou-Alipranti, 2012; Nova-Kaltsouni, 2018).

As many studies point out, solidarity and mutual support between close kin continue to have a very important place in family organization and are expressed in the exchange of goods and services, in daily contacts and communication, financial assistance, help with finding a job, help during an illness, and so on (Maratou-Alipranti, 1999a; Moussourou, 1985; Tsoukalas, 1987).

The traditional family model endures, as the majority of men and women are married (in 2011, 50.3% of the population was legally married/or registered partnership). Besides modern family schemes, such as alternative forms of cohabitation, one-parent families, and births out of wedlock, continue to remain limited practices. Although marital life is becoming more fragile, it appears that social structures and norms have resisted pluralism in life choices (Maratou-Alipranti, 2013; Maratou-Alipranti, 2019).

Since 1980, there has been a wide array of changes in the patterns of family formation. These changes include not only a decrease in the number of marriages and an increase in the number of divorces. They also include other changes such as a decrease in the average family size and an increase in the number of consensual families, of one-person households, of lone parenthood, of reconstituted families, as well as the postponement of marriage and childbirth. However, our data on most recent developments (see Chapter 1 on Demographic Developments) do not reveal a radical restructuring of family.

During the 1980s legislative reforms on equal parental rights and responsibilities with regard to children, the recognition of children out of wedlock and adoption were introduced in Greece (New Constitution in Greece in 1975, Protection of the family/marriage) and the New Family Law (1329/83) introducing equality between men and women in marriage, contributed to the modernization of the procedures involved. These reforms reflected the fact also that the husband was no longer the undisputed head of the family and the "sole or main breadwinner." In 2008 cohabitation agreement for different sex partners was legally recognized (Decree 3719/2008) and more recently it was extended for same sex partners (Decree 4536/2015) introducing complete exoneration for cohabiting partners, like those married in social security benefits.

Studies from the 90s show that for Greeks the family consistently appears to be the most important value: 99.4% reported themselves in favor of it in 1994, the highest percentage in the EU (Eurobarometer, 1993; Maratou-Alipranti, 1999; Moussourou, 1988; Nova-Kaltsouni, 2018).

Additionally, findings from older and more recent studies support the view that the family is the most valuable notion, that relationships among

family members are basically emotional, and that love and affection are intrinsic to family cohesion (Georgas et al., 2004; Guilbot et al., 1998; Maratou-Alipranti & Hadjiyannis, 2001; Teperoglou, 2004).

A survey on 1,600 young people aged 15–29 years, undertaken by the General Secretariat of Youth, in late 90s showed that the family steadily holds the scepters regarding social values of young: 81.7% consider the family as very important, followed by love (77.4%), friendship (74.2%), employment (73.5%), personal freedom (73%), and education (60%), among others (Maratou-Alipranti, 1999b; PRC-V, 1997).

Female employment has gradually increased and women by acquiring greater education improved their position in the society and in the family. Regardless these improvements, gender roles in the family remain traditional and most of the spouses continue to follow the traditional division of household tasks (Alipranti-Maratou, 1999b; Carlos & Maratou-Alipranti, 2000; Alipranti et al., 2016).

Regarding intergenerational relations, close relatives continue to play an especially important role in different aspects of everyday life. Relatives comprise an important part of kinship networks and play a significant role in personal definitions, expectations, and choices, although there are no available longitudinal data about the density and the dimensions of kinship.

### **Research on Intergenerational Family Relations**

Close family members continue to provide solidarity and mutual support (exchange of services, financial assistance, gifts, marriage dowries, assistance in finding a job, help during illnesses, and so on) in everyday life (Maratou-Alipranti & Hadjiyannis, 2001; Nova Kaltsouni, 2018).

There are no recent data available on the density and dimensions of kinship networks, but they remain crucial. The number of relatives appears constant in rural areas and seems to decrease in urban areas, as a result of the recent internal migration (1960–75). In urban areas, married children usually live close to their parents. Data from various studies showed that about 60% of married men living in the Athens area had close relatives (parents and siblings) in the same area, while about 40% had relatives far from Athens. A more recent study found that 80% of families living in Piraeus had at least one parent living somewhere close or in the Athens area (Georgas et al., 2004; Maratou-Alipranti, 2012; Nova-Kaltsouni, 2018).

Parents and their married children are very often residing close, have frequent contact and maintain close relationships and exchanges as older and recent empirical findings reveal (Benoit-Guilbot et al., 1998; Georgas et al., 2004; Maratou-Alipranti, 2012).

In addition, strong relationships are also maintained between relatives, who remain in the home village. The increased communication facilities have favored contacts on major holidays and special occasions such as weddings, baptisms, and funerals. Several studies, most of them anthropologically-orientated, have stressed all the abovementioned points and have indicated the persistence of kinship networks in spite of the considerable geographic separation showing that in fact an urban-rural continuum exists (Charalambis et al., 2004).

Parents support and help their children in all phases and transitions. Their main goal is that their children attain as much education as possible, especially at the university level, which has long been considered the safest way toward upward social mobility (Tsoukalas, 1987; Maratou-Alipranti, 1999).

At marriage, the families of origin (both sides) assist the new family either by passing on property to their children, or through generous wedding gifts. They help them in the marital transition by supporting them with cash and material gifts (such as houses, money, and durable goods).

Research indicates that 95% of parents expect to help or have already helped their children with various goods and assets when they get/got married (Benoit-Guilbot, Maratou-Alipranti, et al., 1998). It must also be noted that the child-centred character of the Greek family, apart from fulfilling all these needs, gives rise to tension and parental anxiety. Parents are constantly trying to provide the best they can for their children within a consumer-orientated environment, which is a central feature of Greek society, especially during the last two decades (Alipranti-Maratou, 2014).

The role of the family is so overwhelming that one is tempted to entertain the claim that it has hindered the development of a welfare state. Relatives and kinship networks play a significant role in personal definitions, expectations, and choices in Greece. The kinship network continues to provide solidarity and mutual support (exchange of services, financial assistance, gifts, marriage dowries, assistance in finding a job, help during illnesses, and so on; Georgas et al., 2004; Maratou-Alipranti, 2012).

The family continues to make up the "core" of society and to play a significant part in determining Greeks' value systems. Many traditional elements and lifestyles have been preserved because most of the population lived in rural areas in the first decades after World War II, and the majority of the inhabitants of Athens and the big urban centers were not born in that city but moved there from rural areas. Attitudes have undoubtedly altered in many respects, under the pressure of new social, economic, and political structures and legal regulations, but changes in the value system have not been fundamental.

The important position of the family in various matters of everyday life have also a considerable economic impact on families' everyday life, and

more specifically in recent years of the economic crisis. As it appeared in a recent survey conducted by Metron Analysis on behalf of the Institute for Democracy- K. Karamanlis the close family network, besides emotional support (70%) offered to its members, plays an important role in everyday life (78%) and to the financial support of its members (85%) (Alipranti-Maratou, 2012; Maratou-Alipranti, 2012).

Thus, intergenerational solidarity often replaces the deficient welfare state. The economic crisis of 2009 has strengthened the role of the family both for the financial support, but also for psychological support and mainly for the creation of a climate of "security" limiting social risks. Recent research findings show that 72% of young unemployed has received family assistance to survive (Chtouris, 2015).

Furthermore, most elderly grandparents through their pensions often complement the income of their children and grandchildren (Alipranti-Maratou, 2012 and 2014). Grandparents play an important role also in childcare. Public childcare for preschool children is limited (only 10% of the needs are covered), and grandparents help by taking care of their grandchildren (Alipranti-Maratou, 2014; Davaki, 2006; Karamessini & Rubery, 2015).

Although the intergenerational relations are changing and differentiated in the modern period, they do not lose their important position and its symbolic value. As it appears, the kinship network still plays in Greece an active part in the everyday life of families and remains the main source of help for dependent minors and adults and older members.

### **Late Independence of the Young**

Greece presents a particularity regarding the cohabitation of adult children with their parents. Although the proportion of single-person households has risen, very few young people leave the parental home and live on their own. Young people in our country tend to delay the departure of their parents' home, and few live alone or create a lasting relationship. These facts are linked to the child-centred orientation of the Greek family (Chtouris, 2015, pp. 22-25; Tsoukalas, 1987).

They often live in the same home with their parents, even when they work, as their income is very low and is mainly used for private consumption, clothing, recreation and holidays. As a result, children depend upon their parents' financial support for a long time (Table 10.5). Besides, after 2010, young people in Greece are delaying even further and postponing their departure from the parental home, due to difficulties in finding a stable job. The economic crisis of 2009 has strengthened the role of the



family, both for financial support and for psychological support, limiting social risks.

**Table 10.5**

***Proportion (%) of 18–34 Year Old Adults Living With Their Parents (2009–2014), EU-27, EU-18, and Greece***

Country	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
EU-27	47.6	47.5	48	47.9	47.8	47.9
EU-18	47.1	46.7	47.2	47.9	48.2	48.7
Greece	59.8	59.6	60.7	61.7	62.3	63.5

Source: Eurostat, EU-SILC. <http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/print.do#>

A recent study undertaken by Dianeosis/MRB on a Panhellenic sample of 1,500 young aged between 18–35 years revealed interesting data. According to the findings 48% of young people declare “parents and other relatives” as the main source of income compared to employment which is 45%. Young unemployed are very pessimistic and only 15% of them think he/she is likely to find work in the next 6 months. Also, 41% of young people say they are willing to move to another country to find work, while 46% say they are willing to move to another region of Greece (Dianeosis, 2017).

The nuclear family often substitutes the welfare state. What appears as functionally equivalent family practices are in effect complementary and auxiliary to those of the state. Overall, family strategies combine formal and informal economic activities related to the employment opportunities and the welfare of their members. As it was shown mutual support (exchange of services, financial assistance, support in finding a job, help during illness, etc.) continue to occur within the contemporary Greek family. The recent economic crisis has also underlined the family values of solidarity that still exist within family members in Greece.

### **ICTs and Intergenerational Relationships**

The increase of elder population in the coming years, raises concerns on how this vulnerable group will have quality life. Technology gives the solution and leads to the creation of products and programs that help the elderly to cope with their problems in daily life.

According to the study of Patsi (2013), it is pointed out that a large number of older people are not familiar with the new technologies (ICTs)

and this is not only due to individual factors, but also to the complexity that characterizes the technology itself, to the lack of specific programs, of trained staff in "Third Age Clubs" and of funding the relevant public agencies. Nevertheless, specific programs have been designed and implemented on that issue with the initiative of municipalities but for limited time.

A typical case is that during the time of capital controls, due to the economic crisis in 2014 in Greece, old people seemed to be totally excluded and needed help by younger people with new technologies.

In the new social context, it is well-known that young parents are always busy and active, especially young mothers with their career and family responsibilities. It is necessary though to find enough time to talk with their children how to cope with ICTs and surf on the internet safely. Prognosis is the best treatment. That is why appropriate support and guidance is necessary in order to meet elderly needs in everyday life.

Yet, more people in silver age means more influence in silver economy. With their pensions grandparents buy gadgets for their grandchildren. Thus, younger people can educate old people to deal with new technologies and this will be a perfect example for intergenerational solidarity. As it is understood, in the era of the internet age exclusion will be a new phenomenon.

### RESEARCH GAPS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Family research has not been particularly developed as a specific field of sociological research in our country. There are no longitudinal or in-depth surveys on family structure, on patterns of life, and on issues concerning intergenerational relationships, in order to have a clear picture of contemporary trends of family life in Greece.

In addition, we know little about the family relations and exchanges practices within parents and adult married children in everyday life. Social research is a prerequisite for recording more general attitudes and social trends that will allow us to shape a general portrait of the functioning of contemporary Greek family.

There are also no evaluation studies undertaken in the context of the third age national policy applied by the state. Neither on the use of new technologies by older people.

Action plans should also be developed by the state to capture the needs and priorities of the elderly population in the context of new social reality in order to design and implement appropriate policies aiming to strengthen intergenerational relationships and exchanges.

As it is obvious, there is a lack of systematic, longitudinal, empirical investigations on family issues and intergenerational relations in Greece. Silver age has to be happy and safe both in real and digital life.

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