



From Gender Roles to Gender Identities: 30 years of research on gender and life choices in Greece

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Youth transitions

- Youth transition to adulthood: a complex process in which young people
 - start taking definitive steps to achieve measures of financial, residential, and emotional independence,
 - take on more adult roles as citizens, spouses, parents, and workers.



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Youth transitions

- Youth transitions,
 - are changing from time period to time period
 - have a historical dimension,
 - differ from culture to culture
 - are influenced by the existing social and economic conditions
 - are developing in strong connection with the existing youth culture(s).



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Education and youth transitions

- The relationship between education and the labour market
- The role of education in the transitions from adolescence to adulthood
- Gender, education and youth transitions



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Youth transitions and gender

- Gendered transitions: investigated in depth under a feminist perspective
- Recent studies: transitions and the development of gender identities- a two way process
- Older investigations dealt almost exclusively with girls and young women.
- Recently, research includes the study of both male and female identities and transitions



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The current presentation

- Focuses on the research trajectories of Greek research on gender and transitions
- Includes three major surveys conducted from the 80s to 2010 in Greek schools with samples of teenagers aged 15-17 (including sometimes teachers and parents as well).



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Aims of the presentation

- To contribute in our understanding of the transitional mechanisms that shape young people's occupational and life choices and of their experience of femininity and masculinity.
- To show the interconnection of transitions with gender identities
- To underline the transformations of gender through time, by recording the constant as well as the changing elements of gendered constructions.



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Gender and Transitions During the 80s

Dominant Theoretical Contexts

- Liberal Feminism: Gender roles and Stereotypes
- Marxist/ Socialist Approach: Gendered division of labour/ Reproduction of traditional gender relations in Education



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Gender and Transitions During the 80s

Social Context and International Research on Gender and Education

- Boys: the authentic pupils
- Girls: the intruders in the educational systems
- Low achievement and lack of interest among girls / however, there are girls who resist
- Stereotyped gender roles are transmitted through education
- Education is considered as reproducing the existing social structure
- Feminist research on gender and education is flourishing



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Gender and Transitions During the 80s

The Greek context

- A changing society: typical/ legal gender equality is promoted, women's participation in higher education and in the labour market is increasing gradually
- Research on gender and education is poor
- Period of changes in the educational system: gender mixed Secondary Schools, attempts to change the content of school texts in order to abolish gender stereotypes and to stop discrimination.



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Gender and Transitions During the 80s

Research Project:

“Occupational Choices and Constructions of the Labour Market and the Adult Life”

- 520 adolescent boys and girls 15-17 years old from different secondary schools of Northern Greece
- Quantitative and Qualitative Data



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Gender and Transitions During the 80s

Research Project: *“Occupational Choices and Constructions of the Labour Market and the Adult Life”*

Results

- Construction of traditional images of the labour market
- Occupational choices of boys: Traditional male jobs
- Occupational choices of girls: Characterized by contradictions and conflicts/ unclear and hazy constructions of professional futures
- Different motivations in the occupational choices between genders



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Gender and Transitions During the 80s

Research Project: “Occupational Choices and Constructions of the Labour Marked and the Adult Life”

Constructing the adult life: combination of family and work

“I want to become a famous doctor. In the morning I will be working at the hospital. The rest of the day I will be with my family. I will clean the house, cook and do everything a good housewife does. In the afternoon I will help my children in their homework...” (Girl, 15 years old)

“I ‘ll get married and have four kids. As a profession, I want to become an very successful doctor. I will be a man with morals and determination... I will be director in a big hospital. I imagine myself as a speaker on a doctor’s board. I will give my opinion and my colleagues will respect it...” (Boy, 15 years old)



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Gender and Transitions During the 90s

Theoretical Context

- Post-structural/ post-modern feminist approach
- Focus on gender identities
- The notion of multiple identities emerges



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Gender and Transitions During the 90s

Social context and international research

- The social reality of schools is changing:
 - Boys' underachievement
 - Girls' academic success in all aspects of education
- School is suggested to reproduce and transmit dominant gender identities/ to protect and preserve hegemonic masculinities
- Masculinity in crisis / The image of the New Man is emerging
- Dynamic presence of women in education/ their participation in the public life and in decision making is limited/ the gendered division of labour still remains



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Gender and Transitions During the 90s

The Greek Context

- Girls' academic success. The model of the 'good girl': a combination of traditional and modern characteristics (being brave, obedient, achieving well at school, aspiring at further studies and a career, becoming financially independent, reconciling family and work)
- Contradictory perceptions about the two genders by all agents of social life
- Uneasiness, but not conscious concerns, from the part of parents and teachers regarding masculinity: the boy under threat
- Greek society is changing rapidly
- Zero interventions of the state regarding gender equality/ the issue is considered to be resolved



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Gender and Transitions During the 90s

Research Project: “*Gender Identities and Life Choices*”

- *Sample:* 1110 adolescents aged 15-17, pupils of Secondary Education all over the country (according to proportionate sampling).
- *Method:* Action Research
- *Data Collection:* Variety of research tools (quantitative and qualitative)



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Gender and Transitions During the 90s:

Project: Gender Identities and Life Choices

Male Identity is constructed

- ✓ In the basis of characteristics like physical strength, personal value and personal freedom
- ✓ In connection to the public sphere and studying Science
- ✓ Self-identifying with traditional values and perceptions regarding gendered work divisions and gender relations in the family and the job market
- ✓ Retaining the role of the bread-winner
- ✓ Aiming at financial and professional security regarding the concept of the notion of success

Female identity is constructed

- ✓ In the basis of characteristics like caring, studiousness, good achievement, obedience and kindness
- ✓ In connection to the private sphere and studying Social Sciences and Humanities
- ✓ Self-identified with innovative ideas regarding gender relations in the family and the division of labour, keeping, in parallel, a traditional perception of man as the bread-winner.
- ✓ Retaining the role of the mother-housewife in the family
- ✓ Aiming at personal fulfillment, regarding the concept of the notion of success



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Gender and Transitions During the 90s:

Project: Gender Identities and Life Choices

Life Choices: The boys

- ✓ Don't deny technical education and training that will bring them closer to the job-market
- ✓ Use the criterion of financial and professional security, when choosing a job
- ✓ Develop a realistic perception of the notion of work
- ✓ Make attempts to penetrate in traditional female jobs in the labour market
- ✓ Give emphasis on sexuality as well as on continence, regarding their future partner
- ✓ Plan their future family in the frame of the traditional division of roles and duties, retaining for themselves the role of the bread-winner.
- ✓ Try to broaden the construction of masculinity, by choosing a more active paternal role for themselves

Life Choices: The girls

- ✓ Give emphasis on the academic role of schooling, choosing studies of a higher level
- ✓ Use mostly the criterion of personal fulfilment , when choosing a job
- ✓ Develop a romantic perception on the notion of work, which they consider as less important for their life in comparison to the boys.
- ✓ Develop a perception of the job market according to which women's access to all kind of jobs is self-evident
- ✓ Choose their future partner using as a criterion the ability to provide care, support and companionship
- ✓ Plan their future family challenging the traditional division of domestic work



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Gender and Transitions During the 90s: Project: Gender Identities and Life Choices

Constructing the future family life: the gender gap

Quotes from essays with the topic 'One day in my future family'

"...for sure, my family would be patriarchal, which means that the father would dominate. At the same time, however, the woman would play an important role in the family, that is, she would express her opinion..."
(Boy, 16)

"Between me and my husband there will be mutual understanding and equality. We will decide together about everything, resolve our problems and decide about what will be the best for our children" *(Girl, 16)*



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Gender and Transitions During the 90s: Project: Gender Identities and Life Choices

Constructing the future family life: the gender gap

Quotes from essays with the topic 'One day in my future family'

“During my free time at work, I call my wife at home, to see how she is doing, because I don't allow her to work. When I come back from work, everything is in order: dinner is ready, our children in bed and by wife expects me with impatience” (boy, 15)

“My husband and me will work ... we will have our own system of work and power division at home... we will both take care of our children... we will discuss all our problems together”. (girl, 15)



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Gender and Transitions at the beginning of the 21st Century

Theoretical Concept: Critical Modernization Theory as a response to Post-structuralism

Social Context and International Research

- The penetration of women in all areas of public life is established
- In the public sphere: women's participation is still reduced
- In the private sphere: domestic abuse, unequal interpersonal relations.
- Globalisation and economic crisis disrupt the traditional transition paths
- Young people face problems regarding their personal autonomy and independence.



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Gender and Transitions at the beginning of the 21st Century

The Greek Context

- Girls' superiority in all levels of education
- School map is changing:
 - Strong presence of children from migrant or refugee families
 - Gender discrimination intersects with other forms of discrimination
New forms of inequalities in school (ethnic origin, religion etc)
 - New forms of aggression and marginalization: bullying, cyber-bullying, school violence, drugs)
- Youth transitions: Threatened by extended youth unemployment, delayed financial independence, prolonged dependence on parents



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Gender and Transitions at the beginning of the 21st Century.

Research Project “From Adolescence to Adulthood”

Sample

- Representative national sample
- 8511 male and female pupils of Secondary Education (all levels, all type of schools) aged 14-16
- 51% boys - 49% girls

Research methods

Combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods (Questionnaires and Focus-Groups discussions)



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Gender and Transitions at the beginning of the 21st Century.

Research Project “From Adolescence to Adulthood”

Findings: Educational choices

	Girls	Boys
General educational choice	University or Private Higher Institution	Technical School or Technical Higher Education (TEI)
Pupils of General Secondary Education	Social Sciences and Humanities	Science and Technology New Technologies
Pupils of Vocational Secondary Education	Nursing, Hair-dressing, Business Administration Accounting, Applied Art	Electronics, Car Mechanics, Electrical Engineering, Informatics



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Research Project “From Adolescence to Adulthood”

Findings: Views on schooling

	Girls	Boys
Attitude towards school	Positive	Negative or neutral
Views on school knowledge	Knowledge and the process of learning are means of self empowerment	School knowledge is absolute and a product of the dominant ideology



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Gender and Transitions at the beginning of the 21st Century.

Research Project “From Adolescence to Adulthood”

Findings: Occupational Choices

Girls	Boys
<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Teachers of all levels (18,7%)✓ Public or private sector employees✓ Freelancers with University degree✓ Deny the role of the housewife✓ Selection criterion: the job should be interesting, creative, allow the combination of family and work, offer financial independence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Teachers of all levels (6.5% only)✓ Small entrepreneurs and specialized technicians (25.8%)✓ Athletes and artists, farmers, entrepreneurs and civil servants of higher level✓ Selection criterion: the job should offer financial security, fame and money



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Research Project “From Adolescence to Adulthood”

Girls	Boys
<p>Agree with</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ progressive views on women’s work and gender roles in the family	<p>Agree with</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ conservative views regarding the gendered division of work in the society and gender roles in the family➤ traditional views on the role of women in the family



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Gender and Transitions at the beginning of the 21st Century.

Research Project “From Adolescence to Adulthood”

Findings: Reconciliation of Family and Working Life

Girls	Boys
<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Creating a family is their first priority for their adult life➤ Chose a job that would allow the combination of family and work	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Creating a family is <u>not</u> a priority➤ Prefer their wife not to work (they want her to stay at home, do the household and take care of husband and children)



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Gender and Transitions at the beginning of the 21st Century.

Research Project “From Adolescence to Adulthood”

Findings

- Segregation of studies and scientific fields by gender.
- Representation and conception of the labour market based on gendered divisions of jobs and employment sectors.
- Maintaining the perception of gender-based roles and responsibilities in family and work.



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Gender and Transitions at the beginning of the 21st Century.

Research Project “From Adolescence to Adulthood

Findings have shown:

- A general view of gender divisions in the disciplines, occupations and roles
- A broadened conception of female identity showing that social change is connected with and promoted by women
- A differentiated association of the two genders with education, which now plays a much more important role in girls' than in boys' transitions



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Conclusions

The findings of 25 years of research on gender and transition in the Greek context have highlighted the changing face of the Greek society.

- During the 80's: Traditional views and choices
- During the 90's: Era of challenging the existing gender relations/ broadening of female identities
- At the beginning of the new century:
 - Changes of gender relations are established/
 - social change is connected with and promoted by female gender/
 - the gender gap is maintained and expanded



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Conclusions

During the last decades

- young women
 - have been involved in a process of change, transforming their personal lives, changing femininity and changing the Greek society at the same time,
- young men
 - in their majority, remain trapped in very traditional choices, decisions and behaviours



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Conclusions

At present time however, given the context of economic crisis

- how many of these social changes and transformations regarding women's position will continue to take place?

Research on youth transitions and gender faces now new challenges



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New research questions

How the society will be developed during the next decades?

- Regression to more traditional social structures?
- Greater flexibility of women in periods of crisis?
- Will there be winners and losers in the frame of gender relations?



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