GREEK FERTILITY SURVEYS: 1983, 1997, 1999

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Abstract

The three Greek fertility surveys presented in this article, two at a national level (1983, 1999) and one follow-up survey for the Greater Athens area (1997), show that the two-child norm is still quite strong in Greece. Nevertheless, fertility continues to decline (since 1981) especially in successive younger generations. Although fertility intentions usually overestimate family size, most women in Greece are consistent to their fertility plans. Higher expectations are associated to higher fertility. Among the socio-economic factors affecting fertility women's employment has a negative effect (causal influence), but fertility does not appear to have any significant effect on employment. The number of owned rooms and the household's economic situation have a positive effect upon fertility and upon the consistency between fertility intentions and fertility behaviour.

1. Introduction

In the post-War period fertility in Greece does not seem to have been affected by the baby-boom. Nor was there the fall in fertility, observed in Europe immediately after 1965. The mean number of children per woman of reproductive age remained stable at 2.3 over the period 1960-1980. However, after 1981 fertility dropped to a level below 2.1, i.e. below replacement level. The total fertility rate 1.32 in 1997 [Eurostat (1998/9)] is now among the lowest in Europe (and worldwide).

In order to study the fertility behaviour several relative studies have been carried out in Greece. The first, at a national level, survey was implemented by the Centre of Biomedical Studies of Athens University in 1962-63 and 1965-67 with a sample of 3,838 married women in the first phase and of 6,500 in the second. In this study the analysis has been restricted to abortions as the main determinant of fertility (Valaoras, 1969).

In the second national study, carried out in 1983 by the national Centre for Social Research of Greece, with a sample of 6,534 married women, aged 15-44 years, living with their husbands, whose first marriage was still intact, more in depth research into individual demographic data with social characteristics, was implemented focusing on the fertility-employment relationship. Retrospective data has been collected by personal interviews -and similarly to the subsequent 1997 and 1999 surveys- on life-cycle events, such as birth histories and employment histories of women interviewed (Magdalinos and Symeonidou, 1989; Symeonidou et Magdalinos, 1993; Symeonidou et al, 1997;).

A follow-up, to the 1983 fertility survey, took place in 1997 in the Greater Athens area with a sample of 507 women (Symeonidou, forthcoming). Its principal objectives were: (a) to investigate whether and to what extent women re-interviewed in the 1997 have been consistent to their fertility intentions of 1983 and the socio-economic factors affecting the validity of their intentions, (b) to analyse women's work history in relation to life-cycle events (marriage and births).

In the 1999 Greek Fertility and Family Survey (FFS), the methodology of relative studies proposed by the United Nation Population Activity Unit (PAU) was strictly followed. The aim of this survey was to obtain comprehensive information on family development with emphasis on family issues, comparable to the information existing in other European countries. The sample of the survey (random and representative)

consisted of 3,049 women and 1,026 men, aged 18-50 years. The questionnaire used was based on the model developed by PAU. All the core sections were used. Moreover, some additional questions were added at the end of the questionnaire regarding sex-role attitudes and the family division of labour.

In this article we will present the findings of the last two national fertility surveys and the follow-up survey of 1997, since as already mentioned, in the first fertility survey no analysis was carried out in respect to the socio-economic factors affecting fertility.

2. The 1983 National Fertility Survey

The theoretical framework of the study -as well as of the 1997 and 1999 surveys presented in this article- is based on the *New Family Economics Theory*, which assumes that family size is determined by a set of preferences weighted against available resources (Becker, 1960; 1965).

Summing-up the results of the survey, from the descriptive analysis of the data it is shown that the two-child norm is quite strong (Table 1). Couples actually have fewer children (1.98) than they would desire (2.29), and still fewer than the number they regard as 'ideal' for the average Greek family (2.70). Fertility varies according to the place of residence. In Athens, the average number of births is lower than in rural areas, while in the other urban areas of the country the values lie in an intermediate zone. This pattern is repeated with regard to the desired and 'ideal' number of children (Symeonidou et al, 1997).

Table 1. - Mean actual, desired and ideal family size by area of residence

Number of children	Greater Athens area	Other urban areas	Rural areas	Greece
Actual	1.75	1.97	2.21	1.98
Desired	2.16	2.27	2.40	2.29
Ideal	2.55	2.70	2.84	2.70
Sample Size	1,881	2,164	2,259	6,315

Note: The desired number of children is derived from the question «how many additional children you desire to have» plus the actual fertility. The ideal number of children comes from the question: «how many children you consider as ideal for the average Greek family».

Examining the differences in fertility by socio-economic group, it was found either a negative correlation or a U-type relationship between the various socio-economic factors (income, education, women's employment, area of origin, attitudes towards the roles of the two sexes, division of housework, etc.) and fertility, which is stronger when the duration of marriage is less than 10 years.

From the causal analysis which followed (Magdalinos and Symeonidou, 1989; Symeonidou et Magdalinos, 1993), by a model of simultaneous equations, fertility and women's employment were assumed to be simultaneously determined, while women's attitudes to the roles of the two sexes functioned as an intermediate variable. It was also assumed that each woman maximised her utility which was a function of three factors: number of children, leisure time and a composite consumption good.

The main finding of this analysis is that a significant causation exists from employment to fertility, which is both direct and indirect through women's sex-role attitudes. On the other hand, causation from fertility to employment is not apparent. The fact that in Greece the cost of leaving and restarting work is very high (few comprehensive work schemes, no provisions for extended paid maternity or parental

leave, restricted part-time employment, difficulties in finding a new job, and in transference of rights from one job to another due to complicated pension and social benefit schemes), explain the tendency among Greek women to either continue working after marriage or after the birth of their first child, or to rarely re-enter the labour market if they leave their job (Table 2).

Table 2. - Currently married women who have ever worked, by stage of leaving and resuming work in relation to marriage and first birth

	Athens	Other urban areas	Rural areas	Total
Sample size	1,881	2,182	2,275	6,338
Always worked	17.4%	12.7%	19.0%	16.8%
Left work at marriage	22.3%	22.0%	25.4%	23.4%
Of whom resuming work at least once	35.2%	34.5%	51.7%	40.0%
Left work at first birth	14.3%	9.2%	6.2%	10.7%
Of whom resuming work at least once	35.2%	37.1%	67.3%	43.2%

Note: In the table we present the whole sample of *fecund* women and not the sub-sample used in the estimation of the equation system.

Apart from female employment other factors having a statistically significant negative effect upon fertility were women's opportunity cost, their level of education, and their age at marriage. A significant positive effect have the variables: total family income, the number of owned rooms, the desired number of children at marriage, marriage duration, the number of children of the respondent's mother, as well as of her husband's mother.

In regards to policy implications, it seems that a complex of measures, aiming at the reconciliation of women's family and working life and a housing policy specially designed for young couples, are the most important ways to affect fertility positively.

3. The follow-up study of 1997

The central question of this work, similarly to previously surveys (Westoff et al, 1977; Freedman et al, 1980; Monnier, 1987) is whether there exists inconsistency between fertility expectations and fertility behaviour, the measurement of the discrepancies (if any) and the detection of the relevant demographic and socio-economic determinants.

The sample of 507 women were found and re-interviewed, from the initial sample of the 1983 fertility study, i.e. from the 1,924 women, aged 15-44 years in 1983, living permanently in the Greater Athens area, and having a stable first marriage.

The total expected family size in 1983 was equal to 2.20 children per woman in reproductive age, while the total actual completed family size in 1997 was equal to 2.02. This difference of 0.18 children had to be examined.

All women in the sample were intending to have at least one child. The two-child norm was quite strong, since most women (56%) were expecting and finally had (64%) two children, while 10% of women were expecting and 13% finally had one child only. For three or more children the percentage for expectations (26%) in 1983 was quite close to real fertility behaviour (22%) (Table 3).

Table 3. **Percentage Distribution of Women by Number of Births, Expected Family Size and Ideal Number of Children in Different Periods**

Number of children	1983			1983-1997	1997	
	Women's expectations for more children	Women's expectations in total	Ideal Number of Children	Number of births	Total number of births	Ideal Number of Children
0	60.2	0.2	0.4	68.8	0.0	0.6
1	22.3	10.5	1.6	21.9	13.2	2.4
2	7.3	56.2	49.3	7.7	63.7	34.8
3+	2.8	25.7	50.7	0.5	22.1	61.2
No response	7.5	7.5	--	1.1	1.1	--
Total	100.0	100.0	100	100.0	100.0	100
	(N 507)	(N 507)	(N 507)	(N 507)	(N 507)	(N 507)

At the same time, women in 1997 consider in higher percentages as 'ideal' to have larger families than in 1983 which may reflect either a change in the general attitudes towards a higher number of children, or simply a change in the attitudes of the respondents, already older by 15 years, since they had been firstly interviewed.

The basic finding of the survey (Symeonidou, forthcoming) was that most women (70.1%), were consistent to their fertility plans, 19.3% of women had a smaller than expected family size and a 10.5% ended-up with a larger than expected number of children. At an aggregate level, for the period 1983-1997, it was calculated that 11.1% of women, although were expecting more children, they finally had no more, while at an individual level inconsistency was more often met among women who intended more children (33.3%) than among women intending no more (11.8%). An important factor affecting the consistency of fertility intentions positively is the improvement in the households' economic situation and in the housing conditions during 1983-1997, whereas the 'ideal' family size and the first birth interval have a negative effect.

Moreover, it is worth mentioning that fertility expectations in 1983 are positively related to the probability of having an additional child in 1983-1997.

A more detailed analysis by parity, through event history analysis, shows that the role of the expected family size seems to be crucial for all parities: the higher the expected family size the higher the 'transition rate' for the first, second and third birth and the shorter the relative birth intervals (Symeonidou, forthcoming). Conversely, analysing the effect of life-cycle events upon work patterns it seems that marriage affects women's withdrawal from the labour force and the number of jobs women change. The first and the second birth affect towards more stability in work, while the third birth does not have a statistically significant effect. Therefore, in this survey -as in the previous one- one basic finding is that although work influences fertility (delaying the first childbirth), employment is not seriously affected from childbirth.

The main conclusion of this survey is that fertility intentions could be useful for short-term population predictions for completed fertility: their consistency at the level of aggregate and individual level is considerable, compared to other fertility indices. Follow-up fertility surveys could be extremely important for evaluating the factors affecting the discrepancies between expectations and actual fertility and the implication of policies allowing the realization of the couples' intentions in regards to fertility behaviour.

4. The Family and Fertility Survey (FFS)

The fieldwork for the Greek 1999 FFS has been carried out from 25th of January to 20th of July 1999. Then the Standard Recode File (SRF) has been prepared and the PAU tabulation programme has been applied. In this section a short description of the first findings will be presented.

Firstly, in regards to the household composition (Table 4), in the total sample, 68% of women and 48% of men interviewed were living with a partner. Marriage seems to be the predominant form of partnership in Greece since 97% of those women and 93% of those men were married. Cohabitation is very low even among the younger generations (e.g. for the age group 20-24 years it is equal to 5% for women and 3% for men), and childbirth out of wedlock is very rare (only 0.5% of women with children and no partner have never been married).

Examining the data on family formation these low percentages can be explained by the fact that although cohabitation has increased in recent years, it usually lasts for a short period of time (less than two years) and it is followed by marriage.

The age at first partnership seems also to increase across successive younger cohorts. For example, by the age of 19 only 13.5% of women, aged 20-24 years at the time of the survey, had entered a first union, while the relative percentage of those aged 35-49 years is 33%. This finding agrees with the fact that children leave the parental home rather late (18% of women and 25% of men leave the parental home after the age of 30). Increase in the years of schooling and high unemployment rates may explain to an extent this finding. Moreover, elderly family members live quite often, as compared to other European countries, in the same household with their children and grandchildren (around 10% of respondents live together with at least 2 generations).

Table 4 - Position in the household[1], female sample

	Age group (at interview)							TOTAL
	18-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	
	Birth cohort							
	1980-81	1975-79	1970-74	1965-69	1960-64	1955-59	1950-54	
Percentage distribution of respondents by presence of children and/or partners								
a. With children[2] and partner (subtotal)	1.5	13.6	45.4	77.7	87.0	80.5	72.6	57.8
single	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
married	1.5	13.6	45.2	77.3	86.4	80.5	71.7	57.5
previously married	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.6	0.0	0.9	0.3
b. Without children, with partner (subtotal)	0.5	9.0	19.8	8.8	3.2	8.7	13.6	9.8
single	0.5	4.9	5.6	0.8	0.2	0.0	0.0	1.9
married	0.0	4.1	14.2	8.1	3.0	8.5	13.3	7.9
previously married	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.2	0.1
c. With children, without partner (subtotal)	0.0	0.8	0.6	3.0	3.9	5.9	8.9	3.4
single	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.2
married	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.7	0.2	0.2
previously married	0.0	0.4	0.6	2.6	3.5	4.9	8.7	3.1
d. Without children or partner (subtotal)	98.0	76.6	34.4	10.5	5.8	4.9	4.9	29.0
single	98.0	76.4	33.7	9.0	4.3	4.2	3.0	28.0
married	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.1
previously married	0.0	0.0	0.6	1.1	1.5	0.7	1.6	0.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Base	202	513	485	533	462	426	427	3048
Percentage of respondents according to living arrangements								
e. With parent(s)[3]	81.2	54.4	24.3	8.4	7.8	6.3	7.0	22.9
f. With other relatives[4]	71.8	51.9	26.2	11.1	7.6	8.5	10.8	23.4
g. With others, no relatives	5.9	4.7	1.0	0.6	0.0	0.9	0.2	1.6
h. Alone	7.4	13.5	7.8	3.9	1.7	1.9	3.7	5.7
i. With at least two other generations	8.9	8.2	9.3	9.9	8.9	10.6	13.8	9.9
j. Average household size	3.8	3.2	3.3	3.7	4.0	3.8	3.5	3.6

[1] Marital status in a and b is that of the respondent, not the partner
[2] Including adopted/foster children and step children
[3] Parents or step parents
[4] Grandparents, partner's parents, siblings, son/daughter's partner's, grand children and other relatives

Table 4 (cont.) - Position in the household[1] male sample

	Age group (at interview)							TOTAL
	18-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	
	Birth cohort							
	1980-81	1975-79	1970-74	1965-69	1960-64	1955-59	1950-54	
Percentage distribution of respondents by presence of children and/or partners								
a. With children[2] and partner (subtotal)	0.0	1.7	12.3	44.1	63.7	77.3	79.3	38.8
single	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6	0.8	0.8	0.3
married	0.0	1.7	12.3	44.1	63.1	76.6	78.5	38.5
previously married	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
b. Without children, with partner (subtotal)	0.0	5.2	13.4	15.3	11.5	6.3	10.7	9.6
single	0.0	2.9	3.4	5.6	3.8	0.8	0.0	2.7
married	0.0	2.3	10.1	9.6	6.4	4.7	9.9	6.5
previously married	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.3	0.8	0.8	0.4
c. With children, without partner (subtotal)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6	0.8	1.7	0.4
single	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
married	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
previously married	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6	0.8	1.7	0.4
d. Without children or partner (subtotal)	100.0	93.0	74.3	40.7	24.2	15.6	8.3	51.2
single	100.0	93.0	74.3	36.7	19.7	9.4	5.8	48.7
married	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
previously married	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.4	4.5	6.3	2.5	2.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Base	92	172	179	177	157	128	121	1026
Percentage of respondents according to living arrangements								
e. With parent(s)[3]	79.3	64.5	58.1	27.7	17.2	15.6	8.3	38.4
f. With other relatives[4]	80.4	56.4	43.6	15.8	10.2	5.5	4.1	29.7
g. With others, no relatives	2.2	5.8	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.0	0.0	1.5
h. Alone	10.9	14.5	13.4	13.6	10.2	7.0	4.1	11.0
i. With at least two other generations	10.9	7.0	6.1	5.1	9.6	10.9	5.8	7.6
j. Average household size	3.8	3.3	3.0	3.0	3.5	3.8	3.6	3.4

[1] Marital status in a and b is that of the respondent, not the partner
[2] Including adopted/foster children and step children
[3] Parents or step parents
[4] Grandparents, partner's parents, siblings, son/daughter's partner's, grand children and other relatives

All the above findings show that family ties are still strong in Greece. According to the data from FFS (section on *Values and Beliefs*), 96% of women and 93% of men believe that "it would be a good thing if in the future more emphasis was placed on the family". Family solidarity has a long tradition in Greek society. Moreover, the fact that family replaces to an extent the inefficiencies of the welfare state, in respect to its youngest and oldest members, may partly explain the above-described situation.

Data on childbirth (Table 5) shows that the average number of children for all interviewed women is 1.3, exactly the same as the figure computed from vital statistics. There are, however, differences between cohorts of women, not only among the youngest -which is expected as they are still in the initial stages of family formation- but also among the older ones, following the already mentioned downward fertility trend. Women aged at the time of the interview 45-49years have on average 2.2 children, whereas those aged 35-39 years, who can be considered as having also completed their reproductive life, have 1.9.

Table 5 - Number of live births, female sample

	Age group (at interview)							TOTAL
	18-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	
	Birth cohort							
	1980-81	1975-79	1970-74	1965-69	1960-64	1955-59	1950-54	
a. Percentage distribution of respondents by number of live births								
0	98.5	85.6	54.0	18.9	8.4	8.2	6.6	36.2
1	1.0	9.9	18.6	23.5	18.4	15.0	10.3	15.1
2	0.5	4.3	24.1	42.6	51.9	52.1	54.1	34.8
3	0.0	0.2	3.1	12.6	15.4	19.0	20.6	10.6
4	0.0	0.0	0.2	1.9	4.3	4.0	6.8	2.5
5+	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6	1.5	1.6	1.6	0.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Base	202	513	485	533	462	426	427	3048
b. Average number of live births	0.0	0.2	0.8	1.6	1.9	2.0	2.2	1.3

Table 5 (cont.) - Number of live births, male sample

	Age group (at interview)							TOTAL
	18-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	
	Birth cohort							
	1980-81	1975-79	1970-74	1965-69	1960-64	1955-59	1950-54	
a. Percentage distribution of respondents by number of live births								
0	100.0	98.3	87.7	53.7	33.1	14.1	9.9	58.0
1	0.0	1.2	8.9	20.9	18.5	20.3	10.7	12.0
2	0.0	0.6	2.2	21.5	35.0	50.0	58.7	22.7
3	0.0	0.0	1.1	2.8	10.8	11.7	16.5	5.8
4	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.1	2.5	3.9	3.3	1.5
5+	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.8	0.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Base	92	172	179	177	157	128	121	1026
b. Average number of live births	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.8	1.3	1.7	2.0	0.8

The average number of children for men is lower as compared to women (0.8 children), and this difference is observed for all age groups. A possible explanation may be the age difference between spouses. There exists, in this case also a reduction in fertility across cohorts, already observed among women.

In regards to the family size by number of children, of all women in the sample, 64% are mothers; among those women 23% had one child only, 55% had two and 23% had three or more children. The number of childless couples increases across younger generations, but no clear trend is observed regarding one-child families by birth cohorts. It is worth mentioning the high percentage (19%) of childless women at age 30-34 possibly due, to an extent, to delayed childbearing. The two-child family is the most frequent pattern observed among women 30 years or more (35% on average). The number of three-child family declines steadily, between the cohorts 1950-1954 and 1965-1969, while for the younger cohorts it is negligible.

Men seem to delay parenthood more than women (58% of males have no children). The two-child family is also the predominant pattern among men aged 30+, but the percentages are lower as compared to women, except for the older cohort where there is an upward difference for men.

The effect of the level of education upon fertility is presented through the data on the timing of the first birth. The more educated the women, the later the transition to motherhood. For example, while 71% of women with primary education aged 25-29 years at the time of the survey had their first birth till the age of 24, this percentage falls to 44% when women have secondary education and to 5% when they have higher education. The important delaying effect of education upon parenthood is also observed among men. The higher opportunity cost of children among more educated women, seems to play an important role upon the fertility decline as already demonstrated in the previous 1983 national fertility survey. This decline however is mainly due, as already mentioned, to the lack of supporting services for the reconciliation of family and working life.

Expectations about the total number of children were reached through the question: «how many children on your own do you want in all». The results show that the two-child norm is still quite strong in the Greek society (Table 6).

The average desired family size for all respondents, regardless of the number they already have, is 2.3 and it is almost identical for women and men of all ages. Nevertheless, responses on desired ultimate family size differ when examined by the respondent's age and by the number of children already in the family.

Among childless men and women over half would like to have two children, about one fifth three, 7-11% wish to have one child only, and 5% wish to remain childless.

Table 6 - Expected ultimate family size, female sample

	Age group (at interview)							TOTAL
	18-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	
	Birth cohort							
	1980-81	1975-79	1970-74	1965-69	1960-64	1955-59	1950-54	
a. Percentage distribution of respondents, by number of children ultimately expected								
none	1.0	1.0	1.2	0.8	1.1	3.3	4.2	1.8
one	7.9	8.8	5.4	9.3	10.7	10.9	10.8	9.1
two	53.0	54.6	56.9	46.1	49.6	52.3	51.2	51.8
three	27.7	23.3	25.8	29.3	25.7	21.6	22.9	25.1
four or more	7.4	6.1	5.4	7.0	9.3	8.3	9.4	7.5
does not know	3.0	6.3	5.4	7.6	3.7	3.6	1.4	4.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
base	202	511	485	529	460	421	424	3032
b. Average number of children ultimately expected	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.4	2.3	2.2	2.2	2.3

Table 6 (cont.) - Expected ultimate family size, male sample

	Age group (at interview)							TOTAL
	18-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	
	Birth cohort							
	1980-81	1975-79	1970-74	1965-69	1960-64	1955-59	1950-54	
a. Percentage distribution of respondents, by number of children ultimately expected								
none	3.3	1.2	2.8	2.3	2.5	3.9	1.7	2.4
one	4.3	4.1	6.7	6.2	5.1	7.8	8.3	6.0
two	63.0	66.9	53.6	50.8	51.0	52.3	48.8	55.1
three	15.2	14.0	22.3	25.4	22.3	19.5	23.1	20.6
four or more	8.7	7.6	7.3	10.2	8.9	10.2	11.6	9.1
does not know	5.4	6.4	7.3	5.1	10.2	6.3	6.6	6.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
base	92	172	179	177	157	128	121	1026
b. Average number of children ultimately expected	2.2	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.3	2.3	2.4	2.3

Among women with one child it is impressive that a high percentage (34.5) do not wish to have another, while this percentage is lower for men (18%). The percentages of respondents wanting an ultimate family size of two is about 50%, while the overall percentage of those wishing three children is much lower. However, it has to be mentioned that in the age group 25-29 years 25% of women and 40% of men want to

ultimately have three children, indicating a re-evaluation of the large family in the Greek society -at least in this young age group.

Among women and men having two children, a large proportion is satisfied with the size of their family (77% of women and 64% of men). However, in this case also, large percentages in the younger cohorts, express the wish to have a three-child family. Finally, the great majority of men and women with three children do not want to have another one.

In respect to the number of additional children wanted in the future, for women of secondary and higher education the numbers are much higher (1.3 and 1.2 on average) as compared to women with primary education (0.4). Actual reproductive behaviour seems to be more affected by education (through the timing of births) as compared to fertility preferences and women prove to be consistent to their expectations (see also Symeonidou, forthcoming).

Labour force participation of women in Greece together with Spain is the lowest as compared to the other EU countries. The inefficiencies in regards to relevant services (e.g. child-care arrangements) and the lack of measures (e.g. paid parental leave) for the reconciliation of family and working life, might be an explanation for this low participation.

FFS data on the percentages of working women by number of children at home shows that in all cohorts less than half of women are employed. The lowest participation rate (17%) is met in the younger age group (18-19years) possibly because of studies. This percentage doubles in the next age group, while for the ages 25-49 ranges from 50.8 to 43.1. In regards to the relationship of work to children at home no clear-cut relationship can be traced from the data. Specifically, working part-time (quite uncommon as compared to other European countries) does not seem to be related to the

number of children, neither to the age of the youngest child. In regards to women working full-time a difference is observed between women's participation when the youngest child is at primary school (33%) as compared to women with children at kindergarten or at nursery school (around 22%).

Although an analysis of the relationship between women's employment and fertility is not yet carried out from the FFS data, it is expected (as the data on women's education and fertility indicates), that in this case also, the findings will be similar to the previous two surveys, i.e. fertility will be negatively affected by women's employment, while women's work will not be affected by fertility behaviour.

Summary - Conclusions

The three fertility surveys presented in this article (two at a national level and one follow-up survey for the Greater Athens area), show clearly the fertility decline among successive generations for the last 30 years.

According to the results of these surveys the two-child norm is quite strong in Greece. Overall, fertility preferences are –as expected- higher to actual fertility behaviour. Nevertheless, the great majority of women are consistent to their fertility intentions. This finding suggests that fertility intentions could be useful for short-term population predictions for completed fertility. Family ties are still strong in Greece: high marriage rate in first partnership and highly valued marriage, as an intention, low divorce rates, low number of children born out of the wedlock, family solidarity towards the younger and the elderly. Although fertility expectations may be restricted by various socio-economic factors, the family with three or more children is considered as 'ideal' by a high percentage of women and/in general the 'ideal' family size is much higher to fertility preferences.

In regards to the factors affecting fertility, there exist a causal (negative) influence of women's employment upon fertility both directly and indirectly through women's sex-role attitudes, while the number of the owned rooms in the household and the household income have a positive effect, not only on the number of births, but also on the consistency between intentions and actual fertility.

An efficient policy for allowing couples to realize their fertility expectations would consist of a complex of various measures related to: a) income policy, i.e. fiscal policies favouring the family with children (e.g. tax-rebates scaled by number of children), provision of substantial, inflation-linked, family allowances by birth order, increased birth and child-care allowances, b) a family-work place policy, which could help for the reconciliation of family and working life (e.g. child-care arrangements, especially for children below 3 years, partly paid parental leaves, flexible working timetables), allowing women to enter into or not withdraw from the labour force after marriage, because of family responsibilities, and to assure a second wage in order to improve their household's economic situation, c) a housing policy (e.g. housing programmes, specially designed for young couples).

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