

E-bulletin no. 18
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Love as labor¹

Despite various policies and measures for the advancement of gender equality promoted and implemented in the European Union Member States, women still remain the main carers of children and the elderly. As indicated in the EIGE's report (2013) concerning the thematic area "Women and the Economy", women between the ages of 25 to 44, in Europe, spend three times longer than men in childcare per day. As a result, the need to balance work, personal and family life of women remains a European challenge.

European programs aiming at the "reconciliation" of work and family started to be promoted in Europe in the 1980's. In the 1990's the efforts were targeted on the one hand in the increase of women's participation in the labor market and on the other hand in the formation of affordable childcare services in all regions, acknowledging at the same time the need to break down gender stereotypes regarding the child-caring and domestic responsibilities.

At the Barcelona Summit in 2002, the European Council set as targets to be accomplished by 2010: a) the increase of female participation in the labor market at the level of 60% and b) the increase of the provision of childcare services to at least 33% of children under 3 years old and to at least 90% for children between 3 years old and the obligatory school age. While, the European Commission in 2015 with the "*Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality 2016-2019*" alternated the first target, setting it at 75% for both men and women by 2020 and kept the second target at the same levels, expanding it at the same time in order to cover the care services to other dependent members of the family.

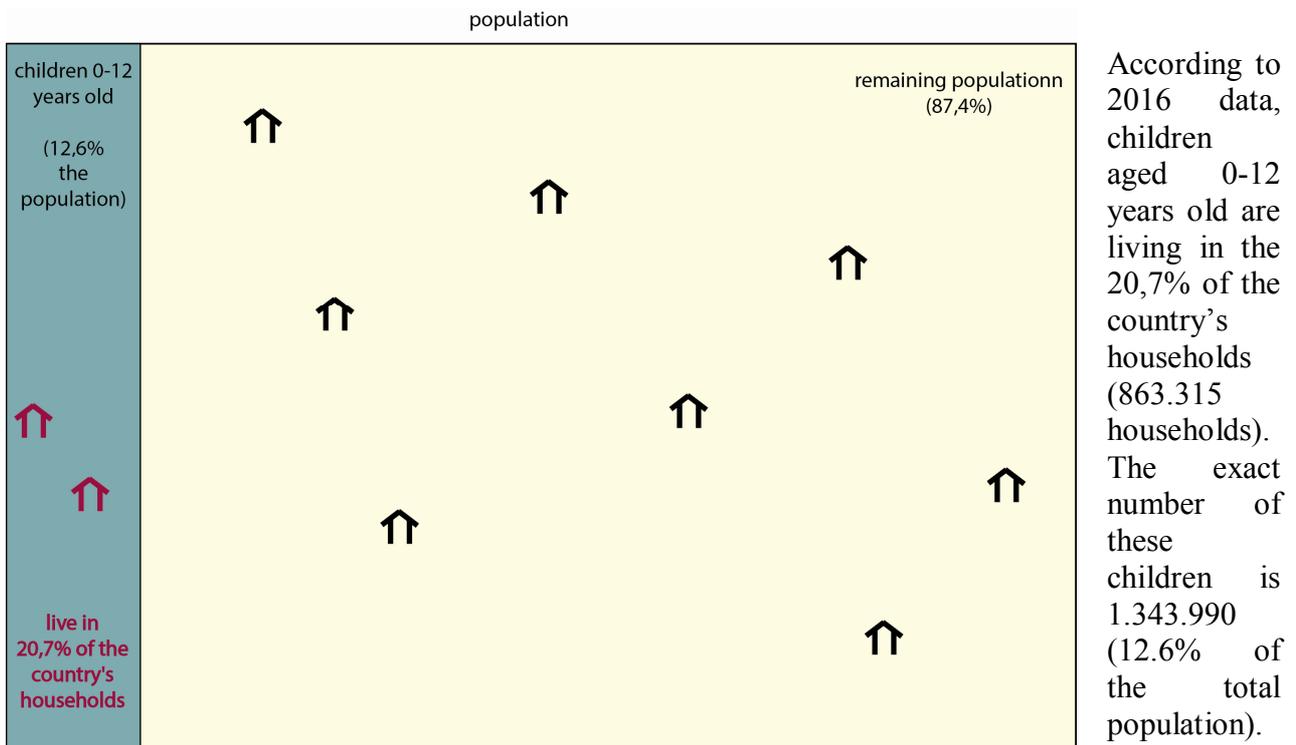
¹ The title of the present E-bulletin has been extracted from the title of the article of Duden, B. & G. Bock (1980), "Labor as Love – Love as Labor: On the Genesis of Housework in Capitalism", in E. H. Altbach (ed.), *From Feminism to Liberation*, Cambridge, Mass: Schenkman, pp 153-192.

The present E-bulletin of The Observatory of the General Secretariat for Gender Equality (GSGE) belongs to the thematic area of the Beijing Platform for Action “Women and the Economy”. The statistical data which are presented are part of the indicator of the Observatory of the General Secretariat for Gender Equality:

- **Percentage of children cared by childcare services by age group and duration**

The indicator is calculated as the quotient of the children cared by childcare services over the total population of each age group.

Figure 1: Percentage of children aged 0-12 years old and percentage over the country’s households (2016)²



The 60.6% of the households (523.453 households) with at least one child aged 0-12 years old does not use childcare services and the 16,5% would like either to use the services or to increase the amount of hours of the provided services.

More specifically, the percentage of the children cared by childcare services by age group and duration in Greece for the years 2010-2016 is depicted below in Table 1.

² It is necessary to clarify that the absence of the dimension of same-gender parenting per household type from the E-bulletins published from G.S.G.E. is a result of the lack of official relative statistical data. Therefore, the presented data reinforce the reproduction of a heteronormative stereotype of family, overshadowing different types of parenting that are being experienced by a number of families in the mentioned countries.

Table 1: Percentages of children in childcare services by age group and duration (2010-2016)

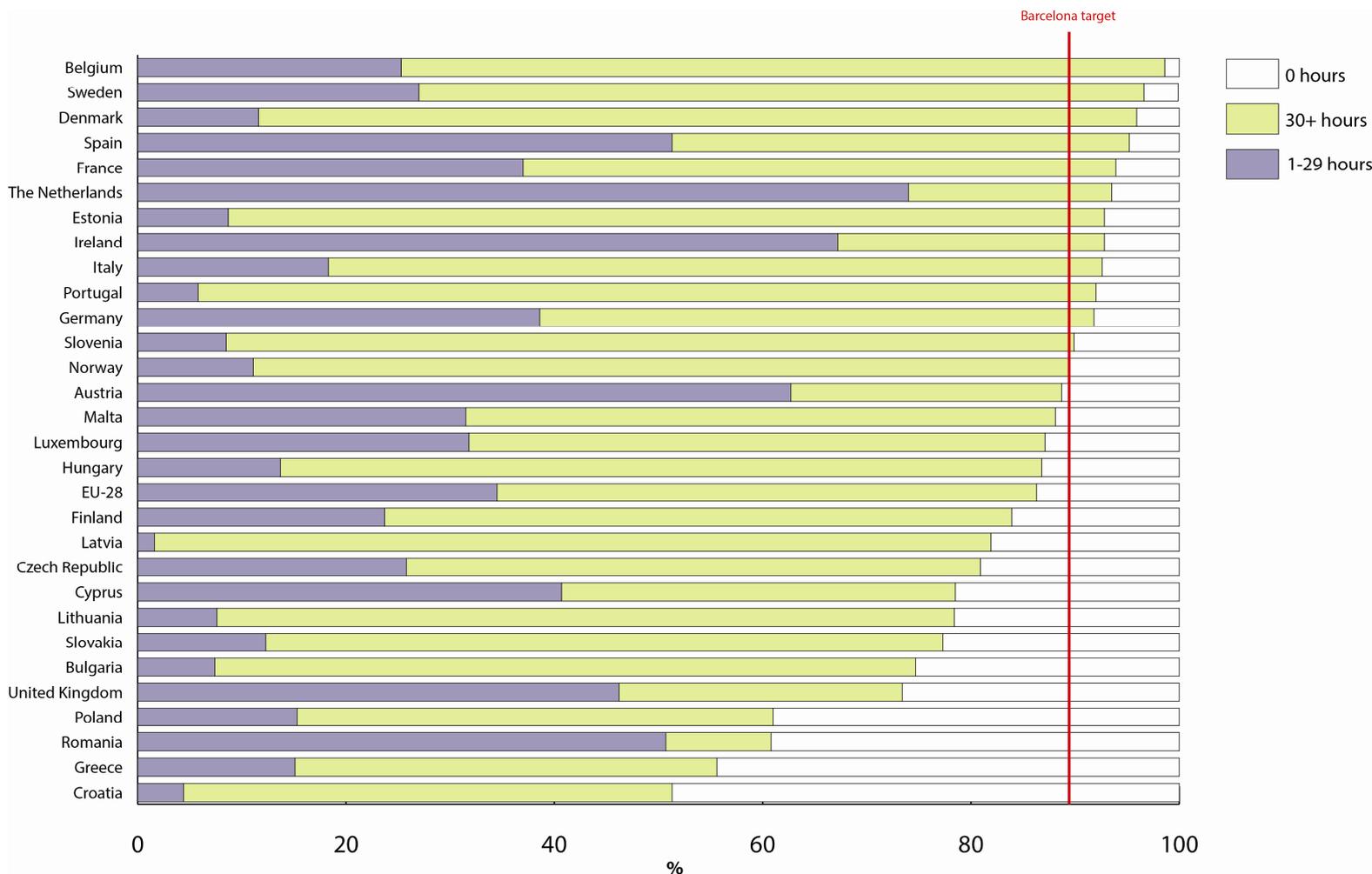
		2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
under 3 years old	0 hours	92%	81%	80%	86%	87,2%	88,6%	91,1%
	1-29 hours	3%	4%	5%	8%	5,5%	4,9%	2,9%
	30 hours or more	5%	15%	15%	6%	7,3%	6,5%	6%
3-6 years old	0 hours	31%	24%	25%	31%	43,5%	32,9%	44,5%
	1-29 hours	46%	43%	37%	39%	26,1%	41,1%	15,1%
	30 hours or more	23%	33%	38%	30%	30,4%	26%	40,5%

From the data above we can observe that the rates of children under the age of 3 who are not cared by a childcare service range from 80 to 92%, a percentage far from the target of Barcelona’s Summit. The rates of children under the age of 3 who receive childcare service for more than 30 hours per week are consistently higher than those who receive these services from 1 to 29 hours. This shows that even though the majority of the parents with children under 3 years old do not use a childcare service, the ones who do use a service prefer to use it more than 6 hours daily.

In the rates of children 3-6 years old we can observe fluctuations over the years, however the factors leading to these data require further investigation. The rates of the children for the same age group that have not received any childcare service the past few years is between 24 and 44,5%

For children over the age of 3, the hours of provided childcare services in the European countries is presented in the Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Children over 3 years old in childcare service by duration of the service (2016)



From the figure above we can easily observe that the majority of the European countries has not yet managed to reach the target that has been set in 2002 in Barcelona's Summit. The countries that have managed to overreach the Summit's threshold are 12, plus Norway which is not part of the European Union and seems to have reached the target. Belgium (98,6%), Sweden (96,7%) and Denmark (95,9%) have managed to provide care services to almost all children over 3 years of age.

Greece's ranking in the penultimate position, with a 0-hours-in-childcare-services rate of 44,4%, shows the need for additional measures for the participation of children in pre-school education, which will contribute both to their psychosocial development and to the reconciliation of family, personal and professional life of their parents, especially women.

Another important factor which stands in the way of the “reconciliation” of work and family is the cost of care services, to which we will refer further moreover, as well as the child benefits which differ greatly among the European countries. The comparison of child benefits in the Scandinavian countries and in Greece is of great interest.

Table 2: Annual allowances to double parent households and single parent households (2012)³

	Greece	Denmark	Norway	Sweden
double parent household:	€	€	€	€
1 children	840	1.267	987	1.103
2 children	1.680	2.534	1.975	2.363
3 children	3.360	3.800	2.962	3.943
single parent household:	€	€	€	€
1 children	840	2.192	1.975	1.103
2 children	1.680	3.917	2.962	2.363
3 children	3.360	5.643	3.946	3.943

According to 2011 data the allowances for a couple with one child reach the amount of 1.267 euros annually, as for the single parent the allowance is 2.192 euros. At the same time in Greece the corresponding allowance for the families with low incomes, regardless of

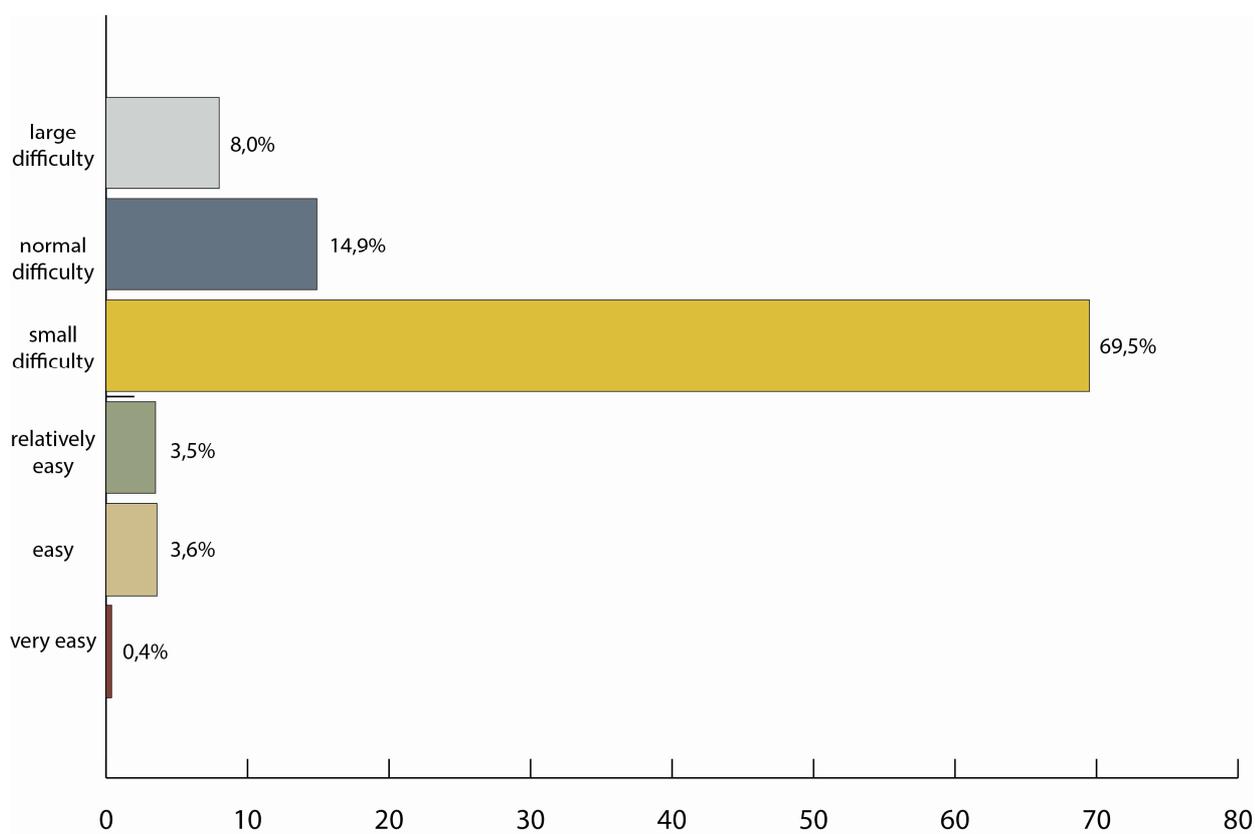
whether they consist of 1 or 2 parents, amounts to 840 €.

Weaknesses of the welfare state in meeting the needs of childcare in Greece and their consequences

Focusing on the conditions prevailing in Greece regarding the provision of childcare services, a matter of great importance can emerge when realizing that of all the households with at least one child aged 0-12 years old that uses a childcare service, the 92,5% declares some difficulty in covering the costs involved. 69.5% of households find little difficulty, 14.9% some difficulty and 8% very difficult to cover these costs.

³ The links for the data are the following: <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/id/11106.pdf> and <https://opeka.gr/oikogeneies/epidoma-paidiou/pinakes-paradeigmata/>.

Figure 3: Degree of difficulty for households with at least one child up to 12 years old in order to cover the costs of childcare services (2016)



In Table 3 below, we can observe that the main reason why no childcare service is used or not used to the extent needed is the economic difficulty (61.1%). While the other reasons are the non availability of the service (18.7%), availability but not at a convenient for the parents time (8.1%), the availability of the service but with some difficulty in accessing it (6.5%) and the unsatisfactory quality of the provided services (5%).

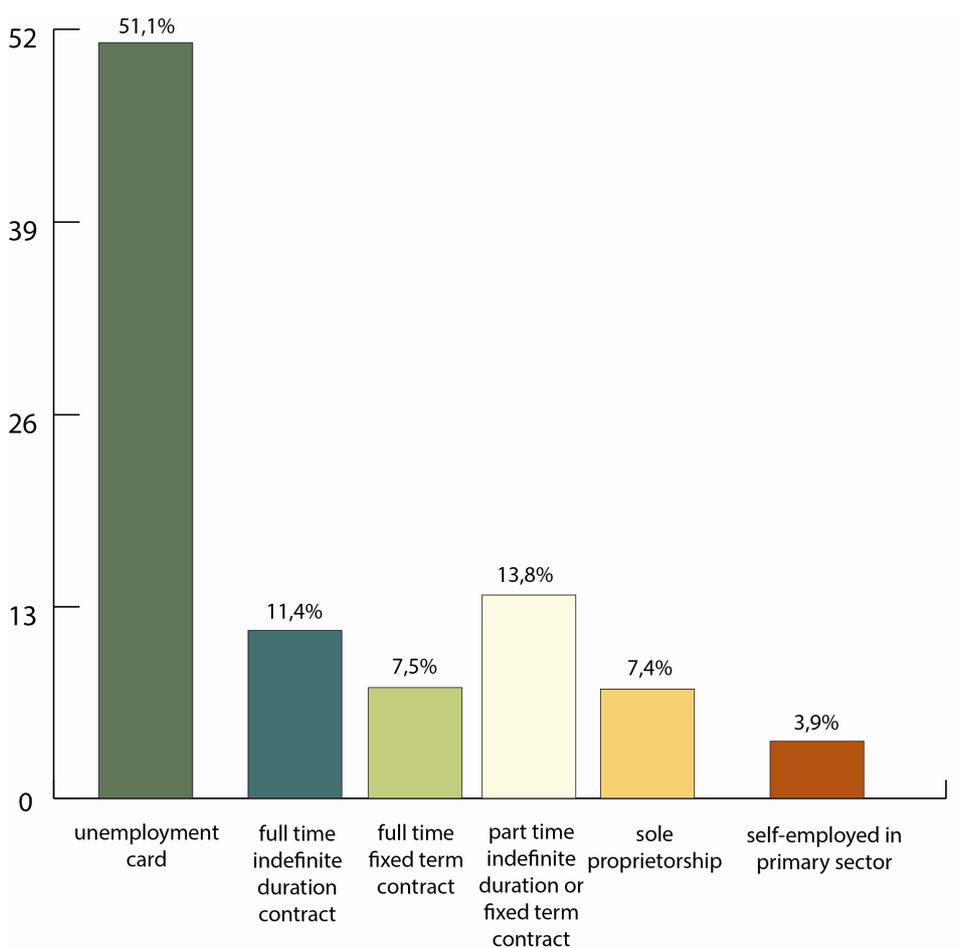
Table 3: Main reason why households with at least one child up to 12 years of age do not use childcare services or do not use them as much as needed (2016)

main reason	%
financial difficulty	61,1%
the service is not available	18,7%
the service is available, but operating hours are not convenient	8,1%
the service is available but is far away	6,5%
the service is available, but the quality of the service is not satisfactory	5,0%
other reasons	0,6%

The situation described above reveals the weakness to cover the needs of the population in childcare services. For that reason the Hellenic Agency for Local Development and Local Government (EETAA) through their action “Harmonization of Family and Work Life” covers the nurture costs in nurseries and kindergartens, as well as the renovation-reformation of the existing facilities, the supply of the equipment needed and the creation of new infrastructures.

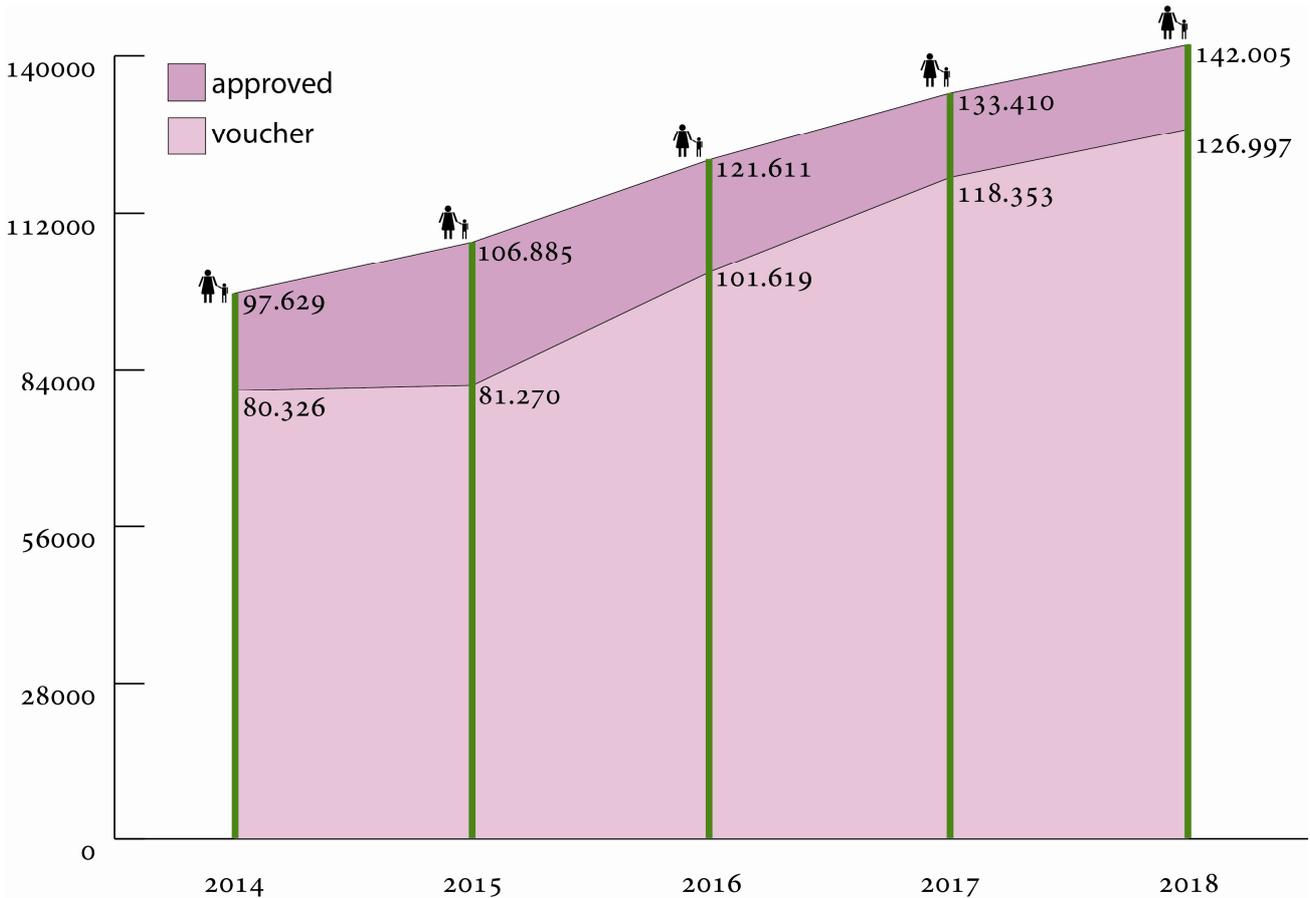
The aforementioned program recognizes the need to support working mothers, who are challenged to deal with the demanding and conflicting roles of work and family, but also unemployed mothers and families of disabled children, prioritizing the applications of those families in order to achieve the provision of qualitative services. Therefore, the beneficiaries of this program are mostly unemployed mothers and working mothers (employed or self-employed) in the private sector, since women working in the public sector are excluded. According to EETAA, the distribution of beneficiaries per employment status for 2017 is as follows: unemployed 51,1%, part-time employees with fixed or indefinite duration contract 13,8%, full-time employees with indefinite duration contract 11,4%, full-time employees with fixed term contract 7,5%, women and men in sole proprietorship 7,4% and last self-employed in the primary sector 3,9%.

Figure 4: Beneficiaries by employment status (2017)



The remaining beneficiaries are consisted of single parents that have the custody of children either through a judicial decision following a divorce or are widowers. The selection criteria are the family income, the employment status, family status (families with 3 children, women with many children, children with disabilities). All the applications of people with disabilities are being accepted. It is important to mention that the vouchers provided by that program do not address only to nurseries, daycare centers and kindergartens, as it is for the statistical data provided by ELSTAT and Eurostat, but include also creative childcare centres and centres for children with light types of kinetic or sensory disabilities and children with disabilities.

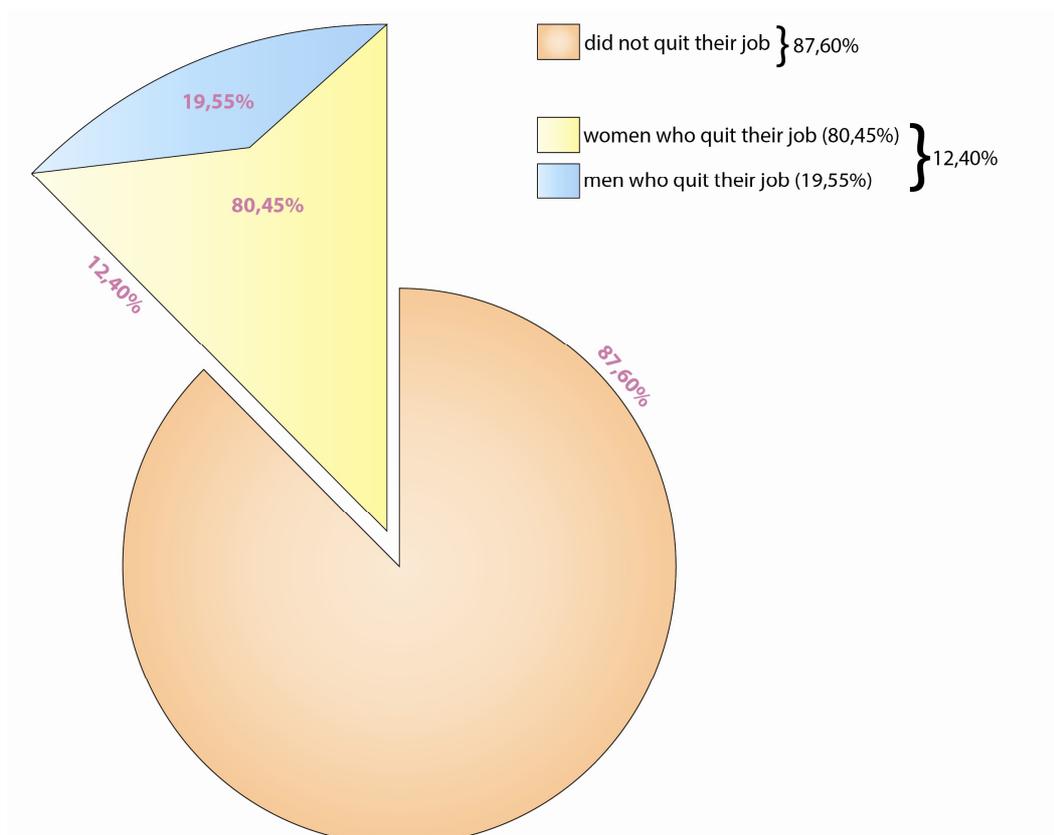
Figure 5: Number of valid applications and total number of vouchers provided (2014-2018)



As we can see in Figure 5 above, the number of valid applications and the number of beneficiaries of the program have increased in the last 4 years. In 2017, 88.7% of the available positions were covered, while 89.4% were covered according to the data of 2018.

The availability and the cost of childcare services for children aged 0-12 years seem to have a significant impact on the employment status of the parents. In 2010, 12.4% of the employees (211.019) claimed they had quit their jobs in order to take care of young children. Of these, 80.4% (169.764) were women.

Figure 6: Parents who quit their job in order to look after young children by gender (2010)



The majority of parents who discontinued their work for the above reason were aged 35-44 (52.4%) and 25-34 (30%).

Table 4: Parents who quit their job in order to look after young children (2010)

age groups	did not quit their jobs		did quit their jobs	
	thousands	%	thousands	%
15-24 years old	12.237	79,9	3.072	20,1
25-34 years old	333.720	84,1	63.095	15,9
35-44 years old	786.432	87,7	110.601	12,3
45-54 years old	325.567	91,3	31.152	8,7
55-64 years old	34.902	91,8	3.098	8,2
total	1.492.858	87,6	211.019	12,4

According to the above, it is clear that the gender dimension of childcare is still permanent and intense. The majority of women in the ages that most births take place is forced to unemployment due to childcare. At the same time, 21.1% of women who have discontinued their work claimed that they would seek part-time or full-time employment if the appropriate childcare services were available. The corresponding figure for men is 6.3%.

Gender division of (invisible) household labor

According to a KMOP's⁴ survey to a representative sample of 1000 women, women are the ones who devote more time in childcare, while are the ones who participate more in the everyday function of the household. It was observed that husband's support in household labor does not minimize the equivalent time spent by women, but on the contrary it maximizes it. To maximize women's free time, the contribution of husband/intimate partner in indoors household labor must exceed the 3 hours daily.

Table 5: Daily hours on labor and family duties (2016)

	daily hours	average	10 th percentile	90 th percentile
respondent (woman)	labor	7,8	5	10
	transportation	0,9	0,1	2
	family duties	2,8	1	5
	childcare	3,2	1	5
respondent's husband or intimate partner	labor	8,5	6	11
	transportation	1	0,1	2
	family duties	1,1	≈0	3
	childcare	1,8	≈0	3

As we can observe, the average time spent by a woman on childcare (3,2 hours) is significantly higher than the time spent by the husband or the intimate partner (1,8 hours). 90% of the husbands or the intimate partners spend less than 3 hours on childcare, while the same percentage of women spends 2 hours more. The number of hours devoted to family duties is similar: 2,8 hours daily for women and 1,1 hours for men.

A number of respondents stated that they use childcare services, women who raise their children without a partner make use of these services 2,2 hours more than women who are married or have a cohabitation agreement, 5,6 hours for married/with cohabitation agreement women and 7,8 for the rest.

⁴ Alipranti – Maratou, L., Katsis, A. & P. Papadimitriou (eds.) (2016), *Work-Life (Un)balance*, Athens: Family and Childcare Centre (KMOP) [In Greek].

From this survey the role of extended family in the coverage of childcare needs was pointed out, since it works as a substitute to the reduced contribution of intimate partners and the lack of welfare state. More specifically, grandmothers, according to the respondents, participate 2,8 hours daily on average in the upbringing of children of married women and 2,4 hours to the children of women of the other categories. Respectively, the participation of grandfathers is 1,5 and 0,8 hours for both categories. This reinforces the stereotype that places women in the field of social reproduction, since their contribution in childcare and the daily function of the household is crucial regardless of age.

Dimensions of social reproduction

The above highlighted the role of gender and social class concerning the ability of women to access the necessary childcare services. In Greece, even today childcare seems to be a primary duty of women and as a result a large number of women quit their job or reduces their working hours in order to nurture their children. Even though EETAA's program for the harmonization of family and work life is aiming to ensure the provision of childcare services at an ever-growing number of children, neither the demand for such services has been covered nor the Barcelona target has been achieved. While, at the same time, an important share of the families that are in need of childcare services and are not eligible to the criteria of the aforementioned program is unable to cover part or the total cost. Therefore, the families that do not receive these services either due to lack of welfare state or due to financial disability turn to their family networks, reinforcing the role of the grandmother as a nurturer, reconfirming the South European model.

Another dimension is the phenomenon of women who have migrated from former soviet or bankrupt post-colonial states in order to provide paid childcare services to the families that can afford it. Hence, it is noticed that the gendered character of care does not change even if it is provided through labor work. Moreover, we observe the commercialization of care work for those who can afford it in the private sector on the one hand, and on the other hand the privatization of those who cannot. The second category of the population is often driven in the provision of labor care work for the first category in exchange for (low) wage.⁵

The *social organization of motherhood and childcare* (who cares for the children) consist a central topic in the field of welfare state as well as in that of social rights, citizenship and gender equality.⁶ The mediterranean welfare regime recognizes women as wives and mothers without achieving to protect their integration in the labor market (part-time and uninsured labor), intensifying gender discriminations. It has been pointed out that apart from changes in social policy (benefits, allowances and mechanisms of implementing social policy), there is a great necessity to change the gender stereotypes that are being reinforced through the function of the welfare state. The political and ideological discourse of the welfare state can lead to the disdain of care work but also to a welfare regime where women's employment is encouraged and caring duties are equally divided between the parents regardless of gender. Following European policies, G.S.G.E. has embedded the aforementioned targets at the "National Action Plan for Gender Equality (NAPGE) 2016-2020".

⁵ Fraser, N. (2017), "Crisis of care: The contradictions of social reproduction in the era of financial capitalism", 10th Annual Nicos Poulantzas Memorial Lecture, 07/12/2016, Athens: nisos, Nicos Poulantzas Institute, transform! Europe.

⁶ Stratigaki, M. (2007), *The gender of social policy*, Athens: Metexmio.

The sources used are: Greek Statistical Authority (ELSTAT), Eurostat, European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), Hellenic Agency for Local Development and Local Government (EETAA), Family and Childcare Centre (KMOP).

paratiritirio.isotita.gr is a special website of the General Secretariat for Gender Equality designed to include, analyze, process and diffuse statistical data and indicators for gender equality policies.

Its goal is mapping gender differentiations in 12 basic policy areas and the monitoring of any relevant trends and advances in Greece. Moreover, it includes 82 gender indicators based either on the Beijing Platform for Action or on specific national priorities and is followed by metadata.

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