CYPRIOT WOMEN AT WORK

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Abstract

This article focuses on the services of women, as well as their gains in Cypriot social and economic fife. The article refers to the study of women's employment and its importance to feminist theory: it is concerned not only to identify the processes and structures which generate gender inequalities and gender segregation, but also to suggest appropriate strategies for equalising the position of women and men in paid work. According to social theory, the Jabour market is a site of complex and interrelated inequalities. In addition, gender inequalities in the labour market are linked to and reinforced by those in other areas, such as, for example, women's unequal access to education and training which, in turn, has important implications for women's participation in paid employment, affecting their choice of jobs and their opportunities for advancement.

Introduction

All societies have a division of labour based on sex-work that is seen as women's work and work that is seen as men's (Stockman, Bonney and Xuewen, 1995). However, the nature of the work that is carried out by men or women varies from society to society and has changed historically. According to feminist theory, the sexual division of labour is socially constructed and not based on natural sex differences (Oakley, 1982). Jobs become identified as men's jobs or as women's jobs (Abbot and Wallace, 1990).

Although working-class women played a central role in the first industrial workforce, the development of industrial capitalism in the nineteenth century progressively restricted women's participation in all forms of paid work, whilst the ideology of domesticity increasingly defined a woman's place as a full-time wife and mother in the private sphere of the family, dependent upon a husband's wage. During these years, this became the ideal for many working-class women. The twentieth century, however, has witnessed many changes in the social role of women. In particular, there has been considerable change in women's participation in paid employment, so much so that 'women's domesticity' was replaced by the "feminisation of

the labour force" (Hagen and Jenson, 1988), which describes the fact that women have made up a steadily increasing proportion of the total labour force over the last years.

Moreover according to social theory, although women are engaged in wage labour, they still perform the bulk of household duties, particularly child-care tasks, and assume the main burden of responsibility for the care of elderly, disabled and dependent relatives (Witz, 1993). In addition, the demands on women's time and energy as unpaid carers are increasing (Ungerson, 1987).

A major characteristic of economic development in contemporary Cyprus has been the massive involvement of women in the labour market. This change was very impressive as Cypriot women for centuries had been uneducated and confined to their unpaid family activities. For the first time they were seen in massive num- bers entering high-schools and the labour market. For many, this change was a convincing indication of women's emancipation. For example, five Cypriot social scientists, in their book "The Cypriot Woman", claim that Cypriot women have begun to escape from the traditional perceptions which govern their relations with the opposite sex (Mylona et al., 1986). They point out that education and employ- ment outside their homes have been decisive factors for their liberation. As they put it:

> Education and employment are the decisive factors in the change of attitude and the creation of conditions for the mental, social and economic liberation of the Cypriot woman. (Mylona et al., 1986:133)

As in the case of working women in other capitalist nations, women in Cyprus are concentrated in female dominated and low-paid occupations (DSR-LR, 1995). Their participation in male dominated areas of employment is still very low. Evidence has also indicated that women and men tend to be employed in different occupations and industries, that women are concentrated in a much smaller number of jobs and industries than are men *(ibid),* and that gender segregation within industry takes the form of women's under-representation in all economic sectors (Varnavidou and Roussou, 1995).

The involvement of women in economic production has been considered as emancipation even by the women themselves (Stavrou et al., 1996). However, cap- italism and patriarchal ideology appear to lead them into new "double bind" roles which are enriched with more duties and responsibilities than before: apart from their traditional roles as wives, mothers and house-carers, they are now required to be labour workers, attractive and sexy for men's satisfaction, and financial support- ers of their families.

Economic changes in Cyprus have been so immense and rapid so that they have led to various, sometimes false, perceptions regarding the status of women. It is a real fact that women's education and their employment in the labour market have played a substantial role in this change. According to social theory, educational and employment achievements make women less economically dependent on men (Pascall, 1997); however, education and employment are not able alone to bring equality between the two sexes (Wallace, 1987). In addition, education and employment in capitalist societies may lead to discrimination and unequal treatment of women resulting in subordination (Wolpe, 1988). It has been argued, for example, that in capitalism most unpaid work is done by women (Witz, 1993).

Housework, caring for children and relatives, consuming (shopping and purchasing), and offering a social life for family members are in many societies women's duties. The following quotation from a United Nations Report illustrates the imbalance between women and men:

Women are one half of the adult population and one third of the official labour force, performing two thirds of the world's working hours, earning one tenth of the income and owning one per cent of the world's property. (U.N. 1980, in French, 1992:24)

Women's Work before the 1974 War

The role of women in Cypriot society was confined to the house. Their work at home was degraded and so never gained respect and value. Women were considered servants to their husbands, children and parents. There is evidence, however, that women's contribution to the family, especially in rural areas, was not confined only to housework and child rearing (Roussou, 1985; Markides et al. 1978). The majority of women in rural areas worked on their family farms and fields, as unpaid family workers, or carried out other duties which were not considered important or valuable.

Table 1 Occupational distribution of women, 1921

OCCUPATION	FEMALE EARNERS (numbers)
Weavers	9.727
Farmers and Cultivators	1.490
Agricultural Labourers	5.341
Sewers and Dressmakers	3.408
Embroiderers	2.449
Domestic Servants	2.030

Source: Census of Cyprus, 1921.

The occupational distribution of women in 1921, shown in Table 1 provides a clear example of women's segregation in female dominated jobs.

Prior to recent economic development, the largest percentage of working women were employed in: agriculture; weaving; dressmaking and as domestic assistants. We can thus see that women were employed in jobs which did not require a sophisticated training or education, and for this reason these jobs were of low social prestige and wages (Papadopoulos, 1975). Another feature of full-time women workers during this time, was that most of them had been widows or elderly ladies (Pyrgos, 1993), and this indicates that women went out to work when there was a dire economic necessity or when they were at an age when they ceased to be considered as sexual objects, or when their going to work was not a threat to family honour (Markides at al., 1978).

Economic development, which Cyprus experienced after 1960, and the concentration in towns of many economic sectors such as construction, the manufacturing industry, commerce, and services, resulted in a greater shift of the population towards the towns, while a substantial percentage of country dwellers commuted daily to the towns for work. As a consequence, rural women came into frequent contact with the way of life and the ideas of the town. At the same time women coming to the towns to work in surroundings unknown to them behaved more independently, as they were not subjected to the strict social control exerted in the village by the family and the neighbours (Attalides, 1981).

Capitalist economic systems and industrialisation during the years after Cypriot

independence had a wide range of effects on people's lifestyles as well as on the structure of communities. Emerging urban settlements became centres not only of industry but also of banking, finance, and industrial management *(ibid).* The factory system which developed during this period led to a much more refined division of labour than was evident in early preindustrial cities *(ibid).* Many new occupations were created, and one by-product was a more complex set of relationships among workers. During this process Cypriot women gradually managed to gain an economic role outside their homes. Single women had now the opportunity to work outside their homes in order to help their parents to build their house and save money for their dowry (Pyrgos, 1993); but when they got married they were obliged to leave their jobs.

Economic expansion after the independence of Cyprus provided many opportunities for women's employment, so gradually women were given more opportunities for education and a career. For seven consecutive years, for example, prior to the Turkish invasion in 1974, conditions of overall full employment prevailed - the average rate of registered unemployed ranged from 1.2%-1.5% of the economically active population (DSR-LR, 1980). Over these years, women's employment in the non-agriculture sector grew by 80%, one-third in trade, one-quarter in manufacturing and one-fifth in services. Transport and finance were together responsible for only 15% of the increase in women's employment *(ibid).*

Women's Work after the 1974 War

After the 1974 war the employment of women increased rapidly. Four thousand men had lost their lives and many others left Cyprus to find a job abroad. In addition, the destruction caused to the economy by the war led to a high demand for labour.

One year after the 1974 war, industrialisation was reestablished in Cyprus with stronger impetus, leading gradually to the "economic miracle" of the 80s (Theophanous, 1996). One would suggest that Cypriot women substantially contributed to the creation of the "economic miracle" which took place in Cyprus after the 1974 war. Their duties both in the household and in paid work could not easily be estimated or interpreted in terms of money as they were immense.

During these years of capitalist economic development in Cyprus, more women have gradually joined the labour market (DSR-LR, 1980). This movement in feminist theory, has been characterised as a shift from private to public patriarchy, which means that gradually working women manage to escape from their families' control and dependence and are found to be dependent on their wages and welfare systems. In Cypriot society, however, ethnic and political circumstances seem to play a central role in the continuation of the patriarchal traditional family.

Table 2 Gainfully employed population by sex 1976-1994 (Thousand)

Year	Males	Females	Total
1976	81.5	35.2	116.7
1980	122.8	69.7	192.5
1987	144.1	86.8	230.9
1989	153.4	97.2	250.6
1991	158.5	100.5	259.0
1994	163.8	106.2	270.0

Source: Department of Statistics and Research. Ministry of Finance.

It has been estimated that the number of economically active women in Cyprus has grown to 106.2 thousands in 1994 which constituted more than one-third of the total economically active population: 38.4 percent of the total economically active population in 1994 (DSR-LR, 1995). In Table 2 we can see this progress.

Economic development during recent years in Cyprus has led to the creation of new and many employment opportunities for both women and men. For example, in 1993, due to the favourable developments in the labour market and the considerable gains in employment experienced in 1992, there was an absolute decrease in employment for the first time since 1975 (DSR-LR, 1995). During these years of economic expansion Cypriot women took up a greater share of jobs in the non-agricultural sector and a disproportionate number entered manufacturing, trade and services.

Table 3 Female labour force participation rates in some European countries

COUNTRY	PARTICIPATION RATE		
	1992	1993	1994
Denmark	46,2	46,5	45,5
Britain	45,2	45,7	
Germany	40,7	40,8	41,3
Cyprus	39,7	39,3	39,2
Netherlands	39,4	41,4	40,5
Italy	35,1		35,1
Greece	34,8	35,0	

Source: C.E.C. Employment in Europe, 1995.

The overall labour force participation rate of women in Cyprus compares quite favourably with other countries in Europe. In Table 3 we can see the rates of female labour force participation in some European countries.

As *in* other European societies (CEC, 1995), Cypriot women appear to engage in part-time jobs, particularly those who are married and have children. In Cyprus, however, these variables have not yet been taken into consideration by the government, so that official statistical reports do not exist. This fact indicates the absence of any official concern regarding women's issues. This is important, as part-time workers enjoy fewer rights and privileges, and less protection by the trade unions. In Britain, for example, only 9 per cent of women part-time workers belonged to an occupational pension scheme (Martin and Roberts, 1984), although some changes have been won recently, partly through the Equal Opportunities Commission using European legislation (Morris, 1995).

Table 4 Unemployment of women 1984-1995 (Thousands)

	1984	1986	1988	1990	1992	1993	1995
Total	8.0	9:2	7.4	5.1	5.2	7.6	7.8
Women	3.5	4.4	3.7	2.6	2.8	4.4	4.3

Source: Department of Statistics and Research. Ministry of Finance.

Unemployment in Cyprus during 1993 rose to 2.6 per cent of the economically active population from 1.8 per cent in 1992, with a significant increase in Manufacturing and Hotels and Restaurants (DSR-LR, 1995). The total number of registered unemployed in the Labour Office was 7,638; of these 4,41O or 57.8% were women. Considering that the share of women in total employment, excluding agriculture, was only 39 percent, it is evident that the incidence of unemployment is higher among women workers. In Table 4 we can see the numbers of women's unemployment during the years 1984-1993.

According to official reports, unemployment of women was more intense in tertiary education where 55 percent of the registered unemployed were women, although fewer women than men are employed in tertiary education. According to the same reports, during 1993, from 93 illiterate unemployed individuals 67 or 72% were women, compared to 945 women out of 1730 unemployed in 1974; from 2,234 unemployed with elementary education 1,504, or 68% were women, compared to 4,714 out of a total of 17,550 unemployed in 1974; from a total of 3,204 with secondary education, 1,919 or 59% were women, compared to 2,708 out of 6,369 in 1974; and from 1670 with higher education 828 or 49.5% were women, compared to 398 women out of a total of 1,156 unemployed in 1974 (DSR-LR, 1995).

Information also indicates that unemployment among women is higher than among men in all age-groups but particularly during the first years after graduation from high-schools *(ibid).*

Power at Work

At work, the fight for higher wages within and through trade union activity has ultimately brought legislation for equal opportunities, equal pay, and against sex discrimination, giving Cypriot women some rights of access to areas once denied.

According to Varnavidou and Roussou (1995), Cypriot women, although having gained some more legal rights, have failed to gain real equal payment or much representation in administrative and managerial jobs. According to the same report, Cypriot women have improved their share of professional jobs, but still tend to be concentrated in some of the traditionally female-dominated occupations, such as paramedics and teachers. It has also been reported that Cypriot women's participation in non-skilled occupations is higher than men's (DSR-LR, 1995). As a result of new technology and automation more women find employment in industry as cheap labour. Many cases of exploitation as well as sexual harassment of women at the place of work have been also reported (Varnavidou and Roussou, 1995).

Cypriot women's increasing entry to paid work has obviously made them less dependent on their father's or partner's income. The increasing number of divorces in Cyprus, for example, indicates less dependence of women on their husbands. For example it has been reported that during 1995 there were 757 divorces com- pared to 110 in 1975 (DSR-DR, 1995). As already mentioned, this change indicates a shift of men's authority from private to public patriarchy, in which women become more dependent on labour markets and welfare systems for employment and income.

With regard to representation and participation in managerial and other high positions, Cypriot women have managed, through their organisations and trade unions, as well as the use of legislation, to gain some new roles in administrative and managerial positions. For example, in 1960 there were zero women managers, while in 1992 women managers in Cyprus constituted 0.8 per cent of all working women (DSR-LR, 1993).

The exercise of male power over women may vary in different classes and racial groups and may reveal itself in different ways, but it is a feature of all relationships between men and women in a society in which men as a group have power over women as a group, and have a vested interest in keeping it that way. Low pay and low participation are two measures of women's subjection in the labour market. But power is also wielded more directly through other mechanisms which produce discrimination against women at work, such as hierarchies (Martin and Roberts, 1984), control over the content and process of work and over resources (Westwood, 1984), and promotions in management (Allen and Truman, 1993). Power is also expressed through violence, with sexual harassment increasingly recognised as a mode of exclusion and demoralisation in the work-place (Adkins, 1995).

Representation and Participation

According to Margaret Marshment (1993), representation is a political issue as, without the power of women to define their interests and to participate in decisions

that affect them, they are subject to the definitions and decisions of others. Women in developed and developing societies, by virtue of their gender, experience discrimination in terms of being denied equal access to the power structure that controls their society and which controls issues of development and peace. This discrimination seems to promote an uneconomic use of women's talents and thus wastes the valuable human resources necessary for development and for the strengthening of peace.

Women's participation in decision-making bodies is a clear indicator showing the low position of Cypriot women and the extent of gender inequality in Cypriot society. According to the Cyprus National Report on Women (1995), the following indicators can verify the very low status of contemporary Cypriot women.

Indicator 1. Participation in Parliamentary Assemblies: The Cyprus Parliament had its first and only woman MP only in 1980, after 20 years of democratic and independent life. One woman MP was also elected in 1985 and two women were elected in 1991. In 1996 there were only three women MPs.

Indicator 2: Participation in Government (Highest levels): (e.g. Ministries, Deputy, Vice or Assistant Ministers, Secretaries of State or Permanent Secretaries, Deputy Secretaries or Directors of Government Departments). Table 5 presents the recent picture. We realise that in 30 years of democratic life, women had never been allowed to hold a high position in the Government. Even in 1992 there were only four women.

Table 5 Cypriot women's participation in government at highest levels, 1992

	WOMEN	MEN
Presidency		6
House of Representatives		1
Ministry of Defence		2
Ministry of Agriculture		10
Ministry of Justice		3
Ministry of Commerce & Industry	1	6
Ministry of Labour & Social Ins.		6
Ministry of Interior		21
Ministry of Foreign Affairs		2
Ministry of Finance	1	28
Ministry of Education		7
Ministry of Communication		9
Ministry of Health	2	12
Other (Independent Authorities)		15
TOTAL	4	128

Source: Government Budget for 1980, 1985 and 1992.

Indicator 3: Participation in economic decision-making in the private sector and the labour force. In Tables 6, and 7 we can see the low participation of women.

Table 6 Indicator of women as economic decision-makers in the private sector

	1980	1985	1990
	%	%	%
WOMEN	4.122 8,8	4.600 10,2	6.798 14,2
MEN	42.898 91,2	40.500 89,8	41.082 85,8

Source: Registration of Establishments 1981, 1985, 1989. DSR.

All information and evidence indicate a very low grade of women's participation in administrative and managerial positions. It is notable that the ratios of women managers to men are well below even 30 per cent across the functional departments (DSR-LR, 1995). Furthermore, while women in 1993 constituted almost 15 per cent of all corporate managers, the prospective number for top management positions plummets to 2.9 per cent which is also very low. It was estimated that during 1992 women managers in Cyprus constituted 0.8 per cent of all working women while in other European Countries the ratio was 5 per cent (CEC, 1995). In Britain, for example, women make up 32 per cent of managers and administrators and 40 per cent of professionals. British women are strong in teaching 62 per cent, and librarianship 69 per cent, but account for 25 per cent of business and financial professionals and 5 per cent of engineers and technologists (Pascall, 1997). Women's access to higher managerial grades is restricted. For example, the proportion of women directors in Britain is only 3 per cent of all working women while in other European countries in 1994 it was 5.3 per cent (CEC, 1995).

Table 7 Decision-making in the labour force

	1980	1985	1990
	%	%	%
WOMEN	300 8,6	200 6,7	500 10,4
MEN	3.200 91,4	2.800 93,3	4.300 89,6

Source: Registration of Establishments 1981, 1985, 1989, DSR.

The majority of Cypriot working women are particularly likely to be subject to male authority. Very few women are at the top of hierarchies, even in jobs that are predominantly female, though some are pursuing careers. For example, though women's participation in education as teachers is 55 per cent in elementary schools and 48.3 per cent in higher education, their participation in administrative and decision making positions is very low, only 21 per cent in elementary education and 9.7 per cent in higher education (DSR-LR, 1995). The same situation seems to exist also in Britain. According to recent information (Pascall, 1997), although teaching in Britain is a woman's occupation, more men are found in higher positions. In primary schools, 90 per cent of main-stream scale teachers are women, but more than half of primary heads are men. In secondary schools three-fifths of main-stream teachers are woman, but one fifth are heads. Universities are much more male- dominated than schools, with women constituting 25 per cent of lecturing staff, and 5 per cent of professors (ibid). Women are much more likely to be employed on tem- porary research contracts than in tenured posts (Equal Opportunities Commission, **1993).**

Women's participation in administrative posts and positions of authority, though very poor, has increased slightly during recent years. In the public sector, for example, women enjoy better treatment in terms of promotions and appointments to higher positions. As a result, a number of women have been appointed to various higher administrative positions during the last years (DSR-LR, 1995). According to very recent research, contemporary Cypriot women seem to be overloaded with work, particularly those in managerial positions (Stavrou, et al., 1996). In this research some women expressed concern that they were not held to the same per- formance measures as men, and believed they had to work twice as hard. In addi- tion, they did not receive any help from their husbands with regard to household duties. One of these women in management said that:

> Women need to work harder to earn credibility, and need to prove their ability to handle the next assignment beyond a shadow of a doubt, while men have instant credibility and are presumed to be far more committed to the firm. (Stavrou et al., 1996:45)

Access to professional and managerial positions does not bring Cypriot women equal authority at work or equal incomes (Stavrou et al., 1996: Mamuka, 1996). Their access to higher management grades is restricted, with successive steps in the hierarchy having fewer places for women. It is notable that in Cypriot society, any given occupation, and in any given public office, the higher the rank, prestige or influence, the smaller the proportion of women. This conclusion is also derived, from Table 8.

Table 8 Cypriot women in management positions, 1993

Managers by Status and Functional Department	WOMEN	MEN	Percentage of Women
Directors and Chief Executives	6	**186**	3
Production & Operation Managers	270	1,718	16
- in manufacturing	16	269	6
- in construction	2	27	8
- in wholesale & retail	51	207	25
- in restaurant & hotels	18	130	**14**
- in transport & storage	8	154	5
- in business	45	359	13
Finance & Administration	37	260	14
Personal & Industrial Relationships	60	245	24
Sales & Marketing	55	381	14
Advertising & Public Relations	20	89	23
Supply & Distribution	6	35	17
Computing Services	1	24	4
Research & Development	2	11	18
Others	5	33	15
TOTAL	462	2,991	15

Source: Labour Statistics, 1994. DSR, GPO.

As already discussed, Cypriot women have fewer opportunities to find employment in prestigious jobs or to participate in decision making. For example, in 1993, 280 out of 975 registered Cypriot lawyers were women. In the same year there were only 12 women judges, and 61 men. In the Supreme Court there have been only men since the establishment of the Republic of Cyprus (1960).

Although Cypriot women have managed during recent years to attain university

education, they are usually found in positions with lower prestige. In medicine, for example, very few women are surgeons or specialists, while most of them are pediatricians and general practitioners. In Table 9 there is an illustration of women's participation in private medical clinics.

Table 9 Cypriot women in private medicine, 1995

	Women	Total	%
Pediatricians	72	174	125.2
General Practitioners	35	77	26.9
Pathologists	10	114	11.4
Gynecologists	8	99	7.9
Dermatologists	10	51	5.1
Anesthesiologist	8	24	1.9
Ophthalmologists	4	46	1.8
General Surgeons	2	62	1.2
ENT Specialists	3	40	1.2
Cardiologists	2	51	1.0
Neurologists	0	18	
Orthopaedics	0	40	
Urologists	0	17	
Psychiatrists	0	7	

Source: Cypriot Medical Association.

Of 3,850 police members working, in the, Cypriot Police,, 280 are, women, employed since the independence of Cyprus in 1960. None of them is appointed in the leadership or to high positions and decision making centres of the police body.

After the Government decision of 23/3/90, it was permitted for women to find a job in the Cypriot Army. As a result, 450 female soldiers in the Cyprus Army were appointed Sergeants. According to recent reports in the mass media, these women

are almost all of them confined to clerical and other similar duties (Drusiotis, 1997).

At the University of Cyprus during the academic year 1996-97, out of 175 members of the academic staff 47 were women. In the Senate there were only two women out of 23 members.

Two women pilots out of 144 were found in 1996 to be employed by Cyprus Airways and Eurocypria.

Payment

The majority of contemporary Cypriot women are found to be employed in low paid, low status jobs (DSR-LR, 1995). Some opportunities recently became available to women in prestigious professions which appear to have affected their level of earnings. In Table 10 we can see the improvement which has taken place in the overall earnings of women employees relative to men's earnings during the period 1986-1995.

Despite the gradual reduction of the differences between male and female salaries, males continue to receive 49.8% higher rates of pay in 1993 compared to 50.7% in the previous year (DSR-LR, 1994). According to the same report, women in Cyprus still receive much lower salaries than their male counterparts in almost all occupational groups; the wage difference between males and females is greater in the private sector, while in the public sector individuals are rewarded according to their position or perceived productivity regardless of sex. In this sector wage discrimination based on sex is less than in the private sector. Of course, occupational discrimination may lead women into lower paid jobs, which would be reflected in lower average wage levels.

Table 10 Average monthly rates of pay by sex 1986-1995 (C.P.)

	1986	1988	1990	1992	1995
Males	399	453	532	630	768
Females	252	293	349	418	524

Source: Department of Statistics and Research. Ministry of Finance.

It is generally accepted that sex discrimination in pay and other conditions of employment is widely practiced worldwide (Stockman, Bonney, Xuewen, 1994). In Cyprus equal pay is applied only to government, semi-government and banking organisations. A survey conducted in 1987 by the Ministry of Labour, has identified

that wage discrimination against women is widespread in private firms. The suNey found that in nineteen of the forty-two enterprises there was discrimination against women, while in the others the difference in pay was accounted for by the difference in job content (House, 1987).

In another piece of research, House and Stylianou (1987), used data collected by the SuNey of Wages and Salaries in order to find the factors of wage discrimi- nation against women. Considering that work experience and the attained educa- tional level were two important parameters determining wage scale, the age-earn- ings profiles for eight different educational groups by sex were derived: i.e. (no schooling, Primary, Secondary Drop-out, Secondary General, Secondary Technical, Post-Primary Vocational, Post-Secondary Vocational and University Graduates). According to the suNey, the age-earning profile of women for each educational level was found to lie much below than that of men. This indicated not only that women's average earnings were lower than men's but that they also increased at a slower rate with age than men's earnings. The age-earnings implied that age and education did not seem to be responsible for the earning differences of the two sexes, since women earned less than men of the same age and educational level. House claimed that the greatest part of the average sex earning differential remained unexplained, even after incorporating proxy variables for educational attainments, work experience, training, occupation and sector of employment.

Although legislation has changed, claiming equal payment for both sexes, low pay is a most consistent feature of women's work (DSR-LR, 1995). This phenome-non, however, is common in many other societies. In Britain, for example, at least four million women are low paid (Dex et al., 1994).

The findings of the SuNey of the Employment Status of Women in Cyprus (ML, 1983), provided useful information on the employers' attitudes towards the two sexes. The suNey revealed, for example, that employers' attitudes to the recruit-ment, promotion and training of women contributed to the sex pay differentials. According to the suNey, employers gave the following reasons for sex earning dif-ferences: lower productivity, trade union agreements and willingness of women to work for lower wages. The suNey revealed, also, that employers were found to believe that women were in general not committed to the job market, though inves-tigation showed that the overall Jabour market experience of younger women exceeds that of comparable men. Men were said to fare better than women for all the performance indicators except for taking orders from supeNisors. The employ-ers claimed that the greatest disparity between the sexes was attributed to women's greater absenteeism, voluntary turnover, and lower supeNisory skills.

The SuNey of Graduating Students Abroad (ML, 1988) revealed that females anticipated being employed with a lower salary than males; on average they expect-ed a salary 77 percent of the salary anticipated by males.

Sexual Harassment

In addition to the legitimised authority of hierarchies and control at work, there is also the intimidation of sexual harassment. According to feminist theory, harassment and other kinds of oppression may be used to drive women out of male-dominated working environments, and to reduce women's status within them (Marshall, 1995). The fact that authority structures are usually in male hands may mean that such practices are in effect officially sanctioned; they are certainly hard to resist, even with the aid of sexual harassment policies. According to Liza Adkins (1995:125-6):

This routine sexual harassment by the men operatives of the women catering assistants caused the women workers and the catering manager great distress - not least because as the catering manager said, "there was nothing we could do about it...Constantly complained to the parks manager, but he didn't do anything. He even used to laugh about it. And I complained to the general manager and he didn't do anything either...and the operatives never took any notice of me. If I tried to stop them, it would just make them worse. They'd make out it was all a laugh...they even did it to me."

In Cyprus, recent research has indicated an increase of sexual harassment against women (Peristianis and Zambela, 1997). A relevant bill for the protection of the victims of sexual harassment, which was sent in 1996 by the Cyprus Government to the House of Parliament was rejected. Moreover, some of the male MPs laughed during the presentation of the bill while some others claimed that "most victims of sexual harassment in the work-place are men."

In his capacity as a counsellor, the author of this thesis over recent years has heard of the experiences of clients as the victims of sexual harassment in the work place. The harassment involved touching or peeping and sometimes a proposition for sexual relations. Some of these women confessed their involvement in an intimate relationship with their boss, even though they were aware of the fact that their boss was married to another woman.

In Britain, sexual harassment at work is also common, and information suggests that about two-thirds of women employees have experienced some form of harassment on several occasions (Palmer, 1992).

According to US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC, 1992), sexual harassment problems are reported at 90 per cent of major corporations. Women in every industry and profession report that sexual harassment is most common during apprenticeship. This type of persistent sexual discrimination con-

tributes to the high cost of the rapid turnover of women executives, negatively impacting profits of major corporations, which, in turn negatively impacts upon the economy and society as a whole. In addition, sexual harassment, or at least sexual discrimination seems to lie behind women's decision to start their own business *(ibid).*

Work and the Family

Cypriot men until today consider housework as women's duty and avoid providing any substantial assistance (Stavrou et al., 1996). The origins of this attitude comes from the patriarchal ideology which gives emphasis to women's domesticity. As a result, housework in the Cypriot family continues to be devalued and considered not "work".

As previously discussed, feminist theory believes that housework is work. According to these theories, there are a number of ways in which domestic labour differs from waged work (Malos, 1980). No other occupation is exclusively allocated to one gender, but includes almost all adults of that gender among its practitioners (Oakley, 1984). No other job is so intimately bound up with personal ties or so grounded in an ethic of personal service (Jackson, 1993).

In the Cypriot family there is no job description for a domestic labourer, no agreed hours and conditions of work and no trade unions. What is the "unwritten" or the "moral" agreement is that this job is for women, as men are involved with "important" duties such as those of economic, ethnic and political issues which are more related to aggressive behaviour (Stavrou, 1991). These male duties are accepted, also, by Cypriot women as important, as they consider men as their protectors from the enemy *(ibid).*

In the. Cypriot family, housework is work without boundaries or limits, with no clear beginning and end points, with no guaranteed space or time for leisure. Stevi Jackson (1993) suggests that the primary issue with household is that it is unpaid work. As she pointed out:

> Housework is, of course, unpaid; it is not part of the wage economy but takes place within private households. This is related to other specific features of domestic labour. It lacks clear temporal definition because, unlike most paid work, it does not involve the sale of labour power for a set number of hours in return for a given wage. The goods and services which a housewife produces are consumed by her immediate family rather than being destined for the commodity market. (Jackson, 1993:187)

It is clear that household takes place within social relations very differently from those of capitalist production. These relations appear to be patriarchal. According

to Christine Delphy (1984) and Sylvia Walby (1986, 1990) housework takes place within a domestic or patriarchal mode of production in which men exploit women's labour. A woman is not simply a dependant whom her male partner's wage must support: she contributes to his capacity to earn that wage. She produces his labour power which he exchanges for a wage which he controls. It is in this sense that a man may be said to exploit his wife's labour within a patriarchal mode of production.

In Cyprus, domestic work seems to be any work which is done by anybody without payment. Traditionally, it has been taken for granted as an implicit element of the marriage contract, that Cypriot women take primary responsibility for domestic work. This is also evident in many other societies, even developed ones. In Britain, for example, research studies showed that women did most of the household duties from the beginning of their married life (Leonard, 1980; Delphy, 1984; Gittings, 1985), even if they were employed full-time (Witherspoon, 1988). They saw themselves as overburdened "because of their working role and not because of their husband's lack of domestic involvement" (Mansfield and Collard, 1988:135).

Domesticity in Cypriot culture is built into much of women's paid work. Some work actually takes place at home where women combine paid and domestic work as childminders, landladies, mail-order agents or outworkers. Domesticity is also built into the skills that women use in public, paid work.

Housework is also dangerous without any insurance coverage. A recent report, for example, claimed that over 2,000 people in Cyprus are treated for burns in government hospitals every year, mainly as a result of accidents in the kitchen with hot oil and water; most of them were women and children (DSR-HR, 1995).

According to Trigiorgis (1996), Cypriot women's home environment is still a place of work. They are found to be overburdened and hard-working. Nevertheless, most of them declare their satisfaction in being able to have a position in the labour market and they are not interested in having a two-year leave to rear their children (Stavrou *et al.,* 1996).

As in other capitalist societies (Balbo, 1987; Smith, 1988), Cypriot women appear to engage in a complex web of work activities which span both public and private spheres. This complex interweaving of women's work activities in the household and the work-place, in formal and informal economies, is a universal feature of women's lives (Witz, 1993).

Marriage bars that had for years excluded Cypriot women from paid work disappeared under the intensive necessity in a capitalist economy for cheap labourers. None the less, as in other societies (Walby, 1986; Pascall, 1997), marriage, motherhood and dependence on men's earnings, have continued until today to be the alternatives to paid work. In addition, domestic labour continues to be a central issue in their lives *(ibid).*

In feminist theory, women's domestic labour is central not just to the family but to the capitalist system as well. According to Lindsay German (1989:75):

The connection of domestic labour with capitalism lies not in the production of values but in the reproduction of labour-power. The housewife produces only use-values; but these in turn affect the value of labour-power.

Cypriot working class women are found in massive numbers to be involved in low paid jobs in the industry. These women are also committed to household duties. In many cases, during weekends, rural working class women are found in the fields and farms working hard for the family's income. Despite their hard effort, however, women's work is still considered less important than men's, and women themselves are dependents of men. In addition, Cypriot women perform, as in other societies (Witz, 1993), a whole variety of unpaid caring activities in the neighbourhood and the community, as well as for family members and kin.

Conclusion

Cypriot women appear to engage in massive numbers in paid work, as a result of the development of a capitalist economy, which took place during the years after the independence of Cyprus and particularly after the 1974 war. Their participation in the labour market and their unpaid services in their homes have substantially contributed to the creation of the "economic miracle" which took place in Cyprus after the 1974 war.

Women's participation in the labour market provided them with the opportunity to gain more rights and some independence from their fathers or husbands; nevertheless, they are found to be dependent on the economic system for welfare services and job opportunities. In addition, their participation in paid work has been characterised by their exploitation as they are involved in low paid and low prestige jobs as well as low representation and participation in decision making. Moreover, Cypriot women appear to engage not only in paid work but also in unpaid work in the household where they are responsible for the bulk of the household duties, child-care and other forms of physical and emotional labour. As a result, Cypriot women continue to serve more and gain less as the capitalist economy does not work in their favour.

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