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Maria Tsouroufli

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‘Playing it Right?’: Gendered Performances of Professional Respectability and ‘Authenticity’ in Greek Academia

By Maria Tsouroufli¹

Abstract

This paper draws on the career narrative interviews with 15 female academics to unravel the performative politics of gender in Greek Medical Schools. I explore the gender positioning and embodied performances of Greek women as they relate to the contingencies of participation, recognition, and esteem in academic medicine and framed within the wider gendered discourses and structures of the increasingly neo-liberal Greek academia and society. Drawing on Butler's notion of performativity, I illustrate the possibilities of making the successful Greek female academic subject through subjection to normative, gendered discourses of respectability, encompassing integrity, respectable aesthetics, and affective work and scripted along intersecting privileges of class and heteronormativity. I argue that although Greek women's gendered professional authenticity and respectability projects demonstrate intentionality and agency, they leave little, if any, room for displacement of gender norms. Gender transformation and promotion of gender equality in Greek academia requires institutional support and political action.

Keywords: Gender, Respectability, Respectable Aesthetics, Affective work, Greek academia

Introduction

This paper is concerned with Greek women's gendered projects of professional recognition, success and 'authenticity' in Greek Medical Schools. In this paper I draw on the career narratives of a diverse sample of Greek academics to investigate how gendered professional femininities are negotiated and performed within an academic and socio-cultural context of intersecting privileges of class and heteronormativity.

¹ Dr. Maria Tsouroufli is a Reader in Women and Gender at the University of Wolverhampton, UK. She is an established applied social scientist specialising in interdisciplinary and international research in education and employment aiming to contribute to theorising of gender, promoting gender equality and advancing social justice. Her work in the Sociology of Gender has been concerned with the relationship between policy, practice and inequalities, exploring how gender inequalities are connected to subjectivities, every day practices, pedagogy, culture and institutional processes. This research has spanned issues of gender, ethnicity, migration, sexuality and social class and has been underpinned by engagements with post-structural thinking about power, the subject, and the political and also by commitment to an emic approach to intersectionality. Her research has had academic impact by raising understandings of gender performances and intersecting inequalities in international work contexts. It has also had professional impact on educational institutions and educational and health/medical practice through engagement with practitioners and developing tools to promote diversity and gender sensitive school cultures. Course Leader EdD Professional Doctorate in Education. Convener of Educational Policy Research Cluster and Athena Swan Intersectionality Working group, Institute of Education, WA102, Faculty of Education, Health and Wellbeing. Editorial boards: 1. Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Equality and Diversity <http://journals.hw.ac.uk/index.php/IPED/> 2. Athens Journal of Health, <http://www.atiner.gr/journals/health/board.htm>. Executive Board of Feminist and Women's Studies Association, UK and Ireland, Email: M.Tsouroufli@wlv.ac.uk

In what follows I provide a brief account of gender equality in Greece, gender in contemporary Greece and the changing landscape of Higher Education in Greece. I then discuss theory and empirical work on the performativity of gender (Butler, 1990), respectability (Skeggs, 1997) and the material and psycho-social challenges of performing the successful female subject in the neo-liberal University and the post-feminist era (Walkerline et al. 2001).

Gender Equality and Women in Greece

Although the Greek Revolutionary constitution of 1822 contained a gender equality clause, gender equality was explicitly recognised by the 1975 Constitution for the first time in the Greek constitutional history (Kapotas, 2012, p. 12). In 1952 the Convention on the Political Rights of women was adopted and ratified by Greece and in the same year women were given full electoral rights (Kapotas, 2012, p.12). Since Greece became full member state of the European communities and with a socialist government in power in 1981, a number of significant legal changes took place, including in 1982 the abolition of all regulatory provisions allowing for unequal treatment of women. Positive action was introduced by Greek Parliament since 1998, with a view to tackle the under-representation of women in the public and politic spheres and to achieve substantive gender equality (Kapotas, 2012). However, the Global Gender Gap Report, (World Economic Forum, 2006) provided conclusive evidence that Greece falls far behind in gender equality in terms of economic participation, economic opportunity, political empowerment, educational attainment and health and well-being. Unfortunately, the situation in Greece has not improved in the last 10 years (World Economic Forum, 2015) for a number of reasons, including the economic crisis, the rigidity of gender norms and the persistent lack of gender awareness.

Greek higher education remains highly gendered in spite of equal opportunity policy (Tsouroufli, 2016). Research has shown that gender discrimination and sexist views are still quite strong in academic life (Palios, 2008). Women have entered higher education en masse but the majority are found in feminized disciplines (Pedagogy, Psychology, Sociology, Literature, Languages, Humanities) and/or in the lower echelons of the highly prestigious disciplines (Academic Medicine, Law, Economics, Science and Engineering) (Tsouroufli, 2016). Although there is no official and up-to-date statistical information of the representation of women academics in Greek higher education, anecdotal evidence reflects a reality which is line with European trends. Women are under-represented in the professoriate particularly in science-based subjects in Greek Universities. Only 10% of the Professoriate were women in the 3 Greek Medical Schools that participated in my study (Tsouroufli, 2016). Women are under-represented across European Universities particularly in the Professoriate and senior leadership of Universities (Zimmer, 2003). For example, in Germany only 8.6% attained the highest grade of professorship (Pritchard, 2007) and 15.3% in the UK. The under-representation of women in science subjects is profound in British Universities (Times Higher Education, 2013).

Greek higher education remains state funded. However, Europeanization and marketization of Greek Universities, resulting from neo-liberal reforms in the last 30 years, as well as the recent financial crisis, had profound implications for the role of Universities in Greek economy and society and the sustainable European labour market. These changes have had implications for the nature of academic work and the configuration of academic identities (Tsouroufli, 2016). Greek scholars are now expected to engage with entrepreneurialism, and performativity (Ball, 2003; Marshall, 1999), to be concerned with outcomes and efficiency irrespective of the means to achieve it, embrace opportunities and overcome gender, racialized,

class, heteronormative, as well as epistemic relations of power, both locally and globally (Pereira, 2014; Pereira, 2015).

Compelling evidence from Europe and the USA shows that the commodification and marketization of universities has exacerbated gender inequalities and the marginalisation of women through gender employment practices, sex discrimination, and the research production process (Fletcher et al. 2007; Knights and Richards, 2003; Krefting, 2003; Thomas, 1996; Van de Brick and Benschop, 2012). Feminist research has demonstrated that gendered expectations and constructions of academic conduct, performance and success within patriarchal organisations and neo-liberal contexts can “break up” and “make up” the professional self and seriously affect women’s academic careers and progression (Tsouroufli, 2012, p. 1). Alignment with dominant discourses of gender, academic and medical work has been found to enable and sustain women’s performances of the ‘good’ doctor and ‘good’ academic (Tsouroufli and Payne, 2008; Tsouroufli et al. 2011b; Tsouroufli, 2012) and the reification of their gendered professional identities within macho work cultures-work ideologies built and sustained on entrenched gender behaviour norms and gender discriminatory patterns-whereas resistance or subversions of gender norms has been found to jeopardise gendered professional authenticity (Jeanes, 2007).

The dearth of substantial empirical and theoretically informed research on the gendered professional experiences and inclusion/exclusion of women in academic medicine and other highly regarded masculinised professions, throughout important economic and socio-political changes, modernisation and Europeanization of Greece in the last 30 years, restricts understanding of gender identities, gender politics and equality in organisations and professions in Greece (Dellios, 2008). This paper attempts to raise understanding about configurations of gender in Greek Medical Schools and also to turn attention to the implication of intersecting strands of difference (class, heteronormativity) in the gender politics of belonging, ‘othering’ (Ozbilgin and Woodward, 2004; Ozbilgin et al. 2011) and ‘authentication’ (Archer, 2008) in academic medicine.

In this paper I focus on professional respectability and esteem achieved through gendered, classed and heteronormative performances of integrity, ‘respectable aesthetics’, and affective work by a diverse sample of Greek academics, in order to draw attention to Greek women’s projects of gendered inclusion in prestigious professional arenas, and the devaluing of women’s roles within highly masculinised professional work (Davies, 1996). I illustrate the forging of embodied gender identities in Greek academia, paying particular attention to the gender regulatory practices and power relations within which female subjects negotiate their subjectivities (Tamboukou, 2004) within the local and the wider socio-cultural Greek context of lack of entitlement for women.

The conceptual framework used in this paper is Judith Butler’s notion of performativity (Butler, 1990), an increasing popular framework in the analysis of gender identities in Greece and from the perspectives of various disciplines: literature, history, political science, social/cultural anthropology and sociolinguistics (Kotsovili and Papadogiannis, 2008). I examine Greek women’s repetitive acts of gender conventions in Greek academic life and their agency and desire in being constituted, conferred and recognised as legitimate gender and professional subjects in academic medicine (Butler, 2004).

Doing Gender Respectably and ‘Authentically’

Feminist scholarship has exposed how men use respectability to ‘other’ women and exclude them from the public realm (Skeggs, 1997). Research on gender and professions has demonstrated context specific elements of female respectability and workplace acceptability

(Fischer, 2013). Respectability features include particular characteristics such as moral behaviour in line with gender norms, demonstrated as sexual restraint, modest dressing, and usually confinement in the private sphere. Although some of these features may have been redefined or changed across socio-cultural and professional contexts they still exist and influence women's opportunities to create social and symbolic capital that could enhance their careers (Fernando and Cohen, 2013; Whitehead, 2005). For example, female doctors/academics in Greece are no longer expected to be confined in the home but travel abroad for conferences and work alongside men in wards, theatres and laboratories. However, as I will discuss later they are expected to maintain their respectability through gender appropriate behaviour.

Historically it has been largely women who have been responsible for upholding and maintaining class based respectability (Hupatz, 2010) and dominant social groups who have defined conceptions of respectability (Ball, 1970). Respectability has arisen alongside the rise of the middle classes and served as a dividing mechanism between the middle and working classes in Victorian England (Huggins, 2000) and also as a useful resource in the stratification and social elevation of certain professions such as nursing and social work (Mendes, 2005). Respectability has also been used by elite or privileged women in South USA to affirm their assumed socio-ethnic superiority, to expand their own freedom in public spaces and political arenas and overcome barriers in patriarchal societies (Bachand, 2015).

There is however, limited literature on the respectability and legitimacy projects of professional women in the androcentric world of the Mediterranean and particularly in contemporary Greece. In this paper I focus on the career experiences of privileged Greek women, defined as such by the author, due to their elite status, socio-economic positioning and symbolic power as doctors and academics in Greek society. I explore how respectability is used as a marker to connect with dominant gender norms and hegemonic norms of academic conduct, competency and esteem. I demonstrate that through behaving properly, 'playing it right', and disidentifying from women, groups, or practices that are perceived as less respectable or as subversive, Greek academic women achieve status, authenticity and success in the academic world (Skeggs, 1997; Whitehead, 2005).

Respectability is conceptualized and operationalized broadly in this paper as a safe vehicle for navigating in social relations and academic careers and as a gendered and socio-cultural discourse intersecting with privileges of class, heteronormativity and clinical speciality gender culture in Greek academic life. It encompasses a number of technologies of the self (Foucault, 1977) employed for sustaining notions of the 'good' woman and gaining morality, popularity and acceptance, while competing covertly for high-status positions.

Conceptions of female and male morality and popularity in education and in the public realm have been found to be strongly classed and race specific and closely associated with the performance of heterosexuality (Renold, 2000; 2001; Guano, 2007). For white middle-class girls and women dominant discourses of sexuality and sexual behaviour such as passivity and being 'nice' (Currie et al. 2007) have been used by women to validate 'authentic' selves to others and also to 'other' women (Vasiliadou, 2004), although these qualities have been challenged by working-class and ethnic minority girls in the UK (Jackson, 2000; Reay, 2001) and women across different national contexts (Haram, 2004).

Construction, reconstruction and validation of multiple self-identities, including gender, race and class, are produced through and constrained by dominant discourses about socially and culturally appropriate femininities and masculinities. Femininities and masculinities are

'changeable and there are social histories for each term, their meanings change radically depending upon geopolitical boundaries and cultural constraints about who is imagining whom and for what purpose' (Butler, 2004, p. 10).

Although the Butlerian conception of gender is useful in examining how Greek academic women reiterate gender conventions (Butler, 1990), I am mindful of critiques of Butler's work, including the inflection of performance with performativity in her earlier work, the collapse of sex/gender distinction, and also more importantly for the analysis presented in this paper, critiques about notions of resistance and change, and the implications for political action and feminist activism (Salih ; Nussbaum, 2000). Institutional constraints and possibilities, structures of power and social relations (Epstein and Johnson, 1998) as well as material advantage or disadvantage (Skeggs, 2005) are implicated in the process of gender identification and legitimization. However, the supposedly meritocratic logic of neo-liberal universities in Europe has obscured structural and institutional inequalities and has diverted attention from social justice to the seductive discourses of individuality, freedom, and endless possibilities for reflexivity, self-monitoring and capacity of academic subjects for success (Baker, 2009; Davies and Petersen, 2005).

Foucauldian theorists have argued that freedom is a regulatory myth that operates in ways that allow the neo-liberal subject to be regulated through their own freedoms and desires (Rose, 1990). Feminists have critiqued the popular positioning of girls and women as victors in late modernity and argued for the urgency to examine the implications of individualism and freedom for gender categories and gender inequalities in education and work (Baker, 2009). Although there have been gains for women in the educational arena and indeed in medical education in the UK and Greece (Ozbilgin et al. 2011; Tsouroufli, 2016) higher education remains socially stratified (Sianou-Kyrgiou and Tsiplakides, 2011; Reay et al. 2001) and misogynistic (David, 2016; Palios, 2008) within a wider post and anti-feminist context in which feminism is treated as redundant (McRobbie, 2004; Ringrose, 2007). Clearly there is still work to be done in this field and this paper aims to address this gap by bringing to the fore the gendered professional experiences of Greek academic women and the gendered strategies they employ in navigation respectfully and successfully the macho and misogynistic culture of academic medicine.

In this paper I draw on qualitative data from a study about the professional experiences and career progression of women in academic medicine in Greece at the aftermath of the recession and within a wider national and European context of aggressive neo-liberalism. I set out to understand the tensions, contradictions, possibilities, and 'choices' in the professional identity projects (Kerfoot and Kinghts, 1998) of these privileged women and contribute to the problematization and critique of post-feminist discourses of girl and woman power, success and gender equality (Ringrose, 2007).

Also in this paper I explore the emergence of heteronormativity and class as resources (Savage, 2015) and socio-cultural discourses that Greek academic women pull in and drawn on in their gender and professional identity projects. These strands of diversity emerged as important in the research process and analysis rather than pre-defined categories at the outset of the project (Tatli and Ozbilgin, 2012).

Methods

This paper draws on semi-structured interviews about the career narratives of 15 women in Greek Medical Schools. The study employed a narrative approach with a diverse sample of

academic women to explore how professional identity and academic professionalism are negotiated in academic medicine. In this paper I use discourse and content analysis to explore the gendered positioning of Greek academic women that relate to the contingencies of participation and recognition in specific domains and settings (Noble, 2009). This paper reports on a small, semi-structured narrative interview study conducted with Greek academics from 2013 to 2015. Although ethical approval was not required by the Greek Ministry of Education through a formal process, ethical considerations were attended. Prior to signing a consent form, participants were given information about the study including data management, dissemination, confidentiality and anonymity. Female academics from 6 medical schools in Greece were invited by email to participate. These 6 medical schools varied in terms of size, geographical location and curriculum (traditional/ problem-based curriculum). However, only academics from 3 medical schools took part, due to the researcher's established professional relations. Each interview lasted approximately one hour and was conducted by Skype, telephone, or face-to-face (Tsouroufli, 2016).

Women were asked to discuss their background and reasons for choosing medicine and later an academic career, their experiences of studying and working in their particular speciality and academic medicine, their relationships with students and colleagues, their experiences and views on teaching, research, assessment and gender inclusion/exclusion. Women were also asked to talk about barriers in their career advancement and to specifically discuss notions of academic professionalism and identities (Tsouroufli, 2016).

The researcher informed the participants of her background and multiple identities (Greek born British academic), her commitment to gender and feminist research and her track record of research in medicine and medical education. There were opportunities in the interview when the researcher shared her own professional experiences as a sociologist in Medical Schools and also a Greek middle-class woman/academic in an attempt to connect with the participants and make sense of her storied self and the storied selves of the participants (Tsouroufli, 2012).

The participants were from different clinical disciplines (Pathology, Surgery, General Practice, Internal Medicine, Renal Medicine, Endocrinology, and Paediatrics) and of different academic grade (Emeritus Professor, Professor, Associate Professor, Assistant Professor, Research Fellow). They all worked full-time as academics and clinicians. Women's ages varied with the youngest one being 36 years old and the oldest one being 74 (Emeritus). All except three out of the 15 participants were married and had children. Only one of the married women had no children. Participants were not asked about their sexual orientation. However, discussions of their relationships indicated that they were all heterosexual. All research participants were white. There were no ethnic minority and migrant female (and male) academics in the Medical Schools that were invited to participate in my study. Greek academia is profoundly white. Representation of marginalised groups is also low in British Higher Education although BME groups are better represented in Medicine, Dentistry, Computing, subjects allied to Medicine, Engineering and Law (ECU, 2009).

Research participants were not asked to label themselves as middle-class or high class but they were invited to discuss their socio-economic background and parental education as well as the class capital that have had access to and built on in their personal and professional lives. Only 2 women came from medical families and some had at least one parent in the teaching profession or a professional job (e.g. engineer). It is well documented that high status academic departments in Greece, such as medicine and law are dominated by students from middle-class backgrounds (Sianou-Kyrgiou and Tsiplakides 2011). However, the fact that some of my participants came from

poor, agricultural families might reflect the belief and indeed reality at least for the first post-war decades that participation in higher education could lead to intergenerational mobility (Frangoudaki, 1985; Kyridis, 2003). The fact that higher education has been free and state funded, might have also made participation more attractive and indeed possible for working-class students. Massification of Greek higher education since the 70s, increasing unemployment of graduates since the 80s, and recently the recession have impacted on participation in higher education, although the exact consequences of these factors have not been systematically researched and evaluated yet.

I employed a purposive as well as a snowballing approach in order to get diversity of perspectives and experiences. Only 2 of the research participants had responded to my initial email and the majority were actually recruited through personal connections in 3 out of the 6 medical schools that I approached.

Field-notes and a reflective diary was also kept throughout data collection, analysis and writing up. Interview data was recorded and transcribed verbatim. Excerpts from interviews have been translated to English by the author, including information about participants' clinical speciality and academic grade are used in this paper to illustrate the different views and experiences of academic women.

Academic grade was considered relevant for this paper as the analysis is intended to explore potential differences in notions and performances of respectability, and different forms of labour (gender, aesthetic and affective). In an attempt to protect the anonymity of Greek academics I carefully chose excerpts and demographics, from which the participants may not be identifiable.

The aim of the study was to explore how women do gender and academic professionalism in a highly competitive and masculinized academic discipline. The data was initially coded under the broad descriptive themes of the interview schedule. Through the process of reading and comparison of data (Weber, 1990), further descriptive themes emerged. For example, 'working harder than men' and 'being of good character' emerged as fundamental female strategies in achieving professional recognition and securing academic progression. Descriptive analysis was followed by reading of relevant literature on gender and women in the academic world and conceptual categorization. 'Respectability', 'respectable aesthetics' and 'affective work' were identified as key conceptual themes in women's career narratives. My next step was to highlight the gendering of these powerful discourses (Mahtabb et al. 2016) and their regulatory operation and disciplinary power in Greek women's journeys of academic progression and success (Foucault, 1980; 1982). The analysis presented in this paper illustrates how women repetitively draw on these gendered discourses to perform gender and 'authentic' professional subjectivities (Archer, 2008). Throughout the analysis attention is paid to the implication of other identities including class and sexual orientation, in the performance and legitimization of gendered identities.

Findings

'Playing Good'

The constitution of respectable and legitimate femininities of Greek academic women was a complex project which required repetitive performances of gender in line with the Greek socio-cultural norms. Playing by the rules and being careful not to overtly upset the gender order meant intentionally performing a sensible, humble, and respectful female subject. For example, in the following extract an Emeritus Professor described how careful she was in meetings with senior

(both in terms of status and age) male colleagues, not to take the floor and run the risk of being perceived as too assertive and disrespectful.

“I remember when we would meet with the Minister of Education and was asked to give my opinion on medical educational matters I would never speak first. I used to say ‘there are people here who are more experienced and older than me and they should speak first’”. (Emeritus Professor of Pathology)

By appearing to be stepping back, Greek academic women gained popularity and respect from their colleagues and were rewarded status of the ‘good’ professional. Through demonstrating stereotypically perceived feminine qualities, including good character, diplomacy, flexibility, resilience, and hard work, Greek women disassociated themselves from other women, unworthy of respect and professional esteem and managed to overcome barriers in their careers as the following extracts illustrate:

‘If a female academic wants to be successful she needs to gain respect through her hard work and avoid confrontation’. (Lecturer, Endocrinologist)

‘I think what has helped me in my career was my good character. I am very approachable, open, friendly and honest.’ (GP, Research Fellow)

‘I always responded to male colleagues’ aggressive behaviour with a smile. I never thought of giving in or giving up my career. Men want to be first and best in everything so it is still very difficult for women in the academic world. So women need to be very political. However, if women are not honest and do not have good character they will always have problems with men’ (Assistant Professor of Renal Medicine).

There was however one occasion discussed later in which the formula of ‘goodness’ was challenged. Respectability emerged as a resource for professional success, a form of embodied cultural capital that these privileged Greek academic women were capable and responsible for generating (Bourdieu, 1988). The academic game was described as political and difficult and women’s gendered professional identity projects demonstrated intentionality and agency. For example, performing ‘goodness’ and respectability were not simply passive reproductions of gender norms but intelligent projects of aspiring women within an academic and a wider Greek context of lack of entitlement as I explore in more detail later in this article.

Performances of female ‘goodness’ involved appearing modest and performing ‘selflessness’ and emotional work with medical students. Greek women academics were very careful in their work context and the interview not to be perceived as over-ambitious and antagonistic and hence put their respectability projects at risk. In the following extract an assistant professor of surgery highlights the affective aspects and rewards of her academic career and feminine surgical pedagogy and distances herself from egotistic male colleagues.

‘I am not interested in titles. For me it is important to be able to do the things I am doing now. If I never become a Professor I would not care. My recognition comes from students and from my patients who whenever they see me they kiss

me. There are a lot of male academics who talk about their ego. The most important thing is inner peace. If you can sleep well then that means you have not done anything wrong... Women have more intelligence in surgery than men and certainly more humanity' (Assistant Professor of Surgery)

All Greek female academics emphasized gendered respectability and professional recognition and authenticity achieved through emotional work with students and affective feminine pedagogy. They heavily critiqued male colleagues for promoting instrumentalized, technocratic education and disembodied academic professionalism (Tsouroufli, 2016).

Affective pedagogy was an important technology of the self for Greek women academics as well as a resource for pleasure and professional satisfaction. The active and gendered work required to construct respectable femininities in the context of academic medicine in Greece was not narrated as a burden, dissatisfactory or impossible. Contrary to feminist literature about the impossibility of maintaining constructions of feminine 'goodness' and 'selflessness' (Walkerline, 1990; Read et al. 2011), there was no indication in the narratives of Greek women to suggest that the valorization of these dominant constructions of femininity was experienced as problematic or inherently contradictory (Griffin, 2004). Embracement of these dominant constructions of professional femininity was not discussed in the interviews as problematic and/or causing tantalising emotions, ruptures, interruptions and disruptions of the female subject (Tsouroufli, 2012).

Respectability and Authenticity within Gendered Greek Academia

Although most participants did not describe Greek higher education as sexist or gendered, they offered numerous examples of difficulties they faced in their academic and medical careers because of their gender. They were very open and reflective of the gender identities they performed and the gendered strategies they employed in an attempt to gain professional recognition, esteem and belonging of the high echelons of the academic and the medical profession, particularly senior academics, either in terms of age and/or academic grade.

Gender strategies involved meticulous self-management of the female subject, of its emotions and relations with staff and professional decisions in order to ensure sustainability of the respectable woman status in the context of academic medicine in Greece. Achieving and sustaining respectability required awareness of gender penalties and alignment of professional behaviour with gender norms and gendered expectations as the following extract illustrates:

'If two men are arguing well ok they can shout, they can do whatever they like, but if I ever raise my voice I will be called hysterical. My basic principle is to be diplomatic and I feel as a woman I can always be more flexible than men which scares some people.' (Professor of Pathology)

Gendered respectability and professional authentication required also emotional strength, courage, intelligence and a strategic approach to work, professional decisions and people management as the following extract illustrates. This extract is the only example from the data that seems to indicate a very direct challenge to the gendered regime through a performance of outside the gender norm of the 'good' woman.

I would always draw on guidelines, I would investigate what was my legal right, what I was entitled to and I claimed it. My strategy was to be productive, to be prepared and assertive. I had confidence but maybe If I had not done psychoanalysis I would have been a traditional Greek girl and I would have not been able to stand up to old misogynistic men who would either patronise me or try to flirt and make a pass at me. (Assistant Professor of Paediatrics), left early the academic career to pursue senior leadership in hospital medicine).

Emotional self-management of the female academic subject through subjection and reproduction of gendered discourses of hard work and diplomacy were intelligent and intentional respectability projects that required confidence, and gendered emotional labour which paid off, as they allowed women to negotiate and assert their position in the patriarchal realm of academic medicine.

Respectable Aesthetics: An Embodied and Gendered Practice of Respectability

Respectability was an embodied practice, enacted also through respectable aesthetics. Notions of respectable aesthetics varied across clinical specialities and particularly in female dominated disciplines, such as pathology and paediatrics, women were expected to take care of themselves and look feminine but always serious and professional. Greek female academics expected even their female students to take good care of themselves and look nice and feminine. For example, one participant (Emeritus Professor of Pathology) mentioned that once she advised a student not to wear the same top second day and to remember that she is *'first a woman and then a doctor'*. However, 'playing it right' in terms of embodied performances of professional femininity in academic medicine meant striking a balance and demonstrations of 'girly-girl' or hyper-femininity were denigrated and treated as immature, unprofessional and not fitting with the masculine subject of medicine and STEM subjects (Francis et al. 2016). Another Professor of Pathology, who described her own dressing style as very plain and serious, mentioned telling off a female undergraduate student for her pink pencils, bags and pen holders and advising her to grow up. Telling of this student denotes a demarcation of professional respectability and femininity from Barbie looks and the penalization and inauthentication of women who do not conform to the aesthetic norms of academic medicine (Brown, 2016).

Greek women's respectability projects relied also on demonstrating desexualised demeanour and heteronormativity embodied in dress and also in the performance of the identities of wife and mother. Unmarried and young women seemed to abide to an even stricter and less feminine dressing code. They felt that age was a more salient identity and a risky one in their professional lives as it could compromise their esteem, respectability and professional recognition.

'Playing it right' and demonstrating a heterosexual and middle-class beauty and appearance, as well as achieving professional success and societal recognition through heterosexual marriage and children, was an attractive and valuable package that enabled Greek academic women to configure an ideal and almost mythological form of femininity. This ideal form of femininity was narrated as possible, desirable, natural, and indeed a pleasurable experience. In contrast to popular writings about material and emotional challenges in keeping up with post-feminist aesthetic and professional aspirations (Hey, 2010; McRobbie, 2004; 2006; 2009), Greek female academics' narratives did not illuminate any hurdles in constructing the chic, aspirational academic, provided of course no gender boundaries were broken and no gender

transgression was evident. Only one participant discussed the time and material pressures for female academics in maintaining the ideal form of Greek femininity. She referred to the privileged position of men in Greek society and also mentioned that she got great satisfaction, pride and pleasure in having achieved so much in her personal and professional life, despite the fact that her professional recognition had been a laborious project.

'There is always a lot of pressure on Greek women to be beautiful, successful in their professional lives, good mothers and wives and always to have a clean house. I have a cleaner. I do not have any spare time because of my job. I have two teenage children and husband who is medical doctor and academic. However, men, including my husband and male colleagues have a lot of free time in their hands. How do they do it and what do they do with their free time? Some of them are bored and they find young girlfriends. (Professor of Pathology)

Greek academic women's socio-economic privileged position allowed them to buy resources in order to make time for their professional lives, financially support their aesthetic labour, and sustain the multi-faceted construction of the respectable and successful Greek academic. Some participants also discussed the advice, and encouragement they had received from their fathers and husbands in their careers. These women had been raised in middle and upper-class families and the confidence, connections, and material privileges they had enjoyed were discussed as pivotal in their academic progression and success.

My father was ahead of this time, he was pleased that he had a girl and always supported me, my husband too. (Professor of Paediatrics)

I grew up in a family with no boys so there was no gender discrimination and my father always encouraged and supported us with our education (Professor of Pathology)

Gender, Academic Careers and Lack of Entitlement

In this section I discuss how Greek women responded to the academic and wider socio-cultural lack of entitlement context in which they operated as academic professionals, wives and mothers. Some participants planned their career decisions carefully so that their competency and professional authenticity would not be questioned. For example, in the first extract below an Emeritus Professor refers to the different expectations from women with regards to promotion. In the second extract an Associate Professor refers to her diligent timing of career promotion after on maternity leave. This decision was not described as influenced by the gendered Greek academic context but rather a personal choice, *'the right thing'* after being away for a year. Although academic women were expected and respected for combining heterosexual married life, children and professional careers within a family oriented culture, they were also expected to ensure that their personal lives did not encroach on their professional lives. This finding is line with an increasing body of literature about the careers of academics/mothers and the pressures they face in reconciling notions of the 'good' mother and academic professional (Raddon, 2002).

'If a woman wants to succeed in the academic world she needs to have double the CV of a man. I had 228 publications. There were men who were already Professors and had a lot less than me' (Emeritus Professor of Pathology)

'I did not apply for promotion after my maternity leave although I did have the qualifications. I did not think it would be fair to my colleagues because I was away for a year' (Associate Professor of Clinical Pathology)

'Playing it Right in Greek Academia': Some Concluding Thoughts

In this paper I have illustrated how the regulatory and disciplinary gender regime is reproduced and rarely overtly resisted in the current Greek academic context. The data I presented clearly demonstrate that Greek women bought into the explicit and implicit gender norms about academic conduct and performance and carefully avoided departures or oppositions (Butler, 2004) that could disrupt the gender order and negatively influence their career progression. Subjection to gendered discourses of respectability and professional authenticity appeared to have produced successful, and content academic subjects. There was though the case of AP in Surgery who defined her academic success outside the dominant criteria of efficiency and productivity and performed a gendered pedagogical identity as a form of resistance (Tsouroufli, 2016).

However, respectability did not only operate as a resource for professional authentication, but it was also mobilised by Greek academic women as a classed and heteronormative apparatus to police and 'other' 'irregular' women (Tsouroufli, 2012) and thus sustain a gendered and classed academic elite. This privileged academic group appeared concerned with self-monitoring and self-management aiming to avoid sanctions and achieve academic success within the patriarchal academic and wider Greek social context.

The increasingly neo-liberal context of Greek academy and the masculinist nature of academic medicine might also account for the limited opportunities mentioned by the research participants in overtly challenging the ubiquity of male power. However, although the women in my study mentioned few instances of resistance in the Butlerian sense, their practices led to remarkable achievements, including being the first woman in a leadership position in their field.

Possibilities for gender transformation in the Greek academy and internationally and progress towards gender equality in Universities require support from women's movements and gender equality government (e.g. The General Secretariate of Gender Equality in Greece) and non-government organisations. At the moment there are no institutional or government strategies and plans for supporting the academic careers of Greek women and systematically addressing entrenched gender inequalities in the Greek academy. Moreover the recession has brought a backlash of gender equality including the closure of many departments of the General Secretariate for Gender Equality, redundancies of many women in the public sector and substantial cuts in research funds (Davaki, 2013).

The study from which I presented data from was small and was conducted with a diverse sample of women only from academic medicine in Greece. A larger and multi-disciplinary sample would have allowed for a more systematic analysis of the role of different strands of diversity (class, academic grade, academic discipline, age, and sexual orientation) on women's respectability and professional legitimacy projects and constructions of professional femininities. Multi-method research involving higher education students and male academics might also yield interesting findings about gender norms and expectations in the Greek context, as well as research

with women who resist 'playing it right'. Further research is also required to investigate the emotional costs of women's individualised struggles for gender inclusion and success within highly competitive and macho work and socio-cultural contexts.

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