



**WOMEN FACULTY MEMBERS' PRESENTATION AND
ACTIVATION IN THE INTERNATIONAL ACADEMIC FIELD:
A REVIEW OF SOCIOLOGICAL SCIENTIFIC LITERATURE**

**Anna Asimaki¹,
Gerasimos Koustourakis¹ⁱ,
Maria Varsami²,
Archontoula Lagiou¹**

¹School of Humanities and Social Sciences,
University of Patras,
Greece

²European University of Cyprus,
Cyprus

Abstract:

The aim of this paper is to investigate and present the position of women faculty members in the international academic field, as well as the challenges they face in their professional careers, within the framework of a review of contemporary sociological scientific literature. In addition, the representation of women academics in administrative positions and positions of power in the academic field is investigated along with the potential existence of sex discrimination. The findings from related scientific studies are in agreement on the following: (a) women faculty members in the international field continue to be found lower down the academic hierarchy compared to their male counterparts. This is due to the fact that they face various challenges, the most significant of which is the lack of balance between their professional and social roles. These challenges hinder their progression and permanence in the academic field. (b) Women academics globally are under-represented and are in a minority in administrative positions within the university field. The factors that deter women faculty members from taking up or going after administrative positions are mainly linked to gender stereotypes and attitudes that predominate in the academic field regarding leadership style. And (c) gender inequality and sex discrimination continue to exist in the international university field. However, their extent is linked to the national-cultural factors of the various nations.

Keywords: women faculty members, academic field, scientific capital, gender habitus, career

ⁱ Correspondence: Prof. Gerasimos Koustourakis, email koustourakis@upatras.gr

1. Introduction

The presence of women in the academic field has increased significantly since the second half of the 20th century. Even so, women academics appear to be under-represented in the academic field, gathered at the lower levels, absent from higher administrative positions, and in many cases abandoning the academic space prematurely. This is a global multifactorial phenomenon that is linked to the phenomenon of the 'glass ceiling' which refers to a supposed glass barrier that obstructs the advancement of women to higher administrative and salary levels in the work field without however this meaning that they don't possess the necessary qualifications or that they are less capable of occupying a higher position. In addition, it is linked to the phenomenon of the 'leaky pipeline' which refers to women's tendency to abandon the academic field, or their field of work prematurely due to socio-psychological factors linked to their gender role which greatly influence their decisions to remain in positions of great responsibility. Finally, it is also linked to the phenomenon of 'horizontal and vertical discrimination' of women faculty members, which refers to the concentration of women and men in particular scientific fields (horizontal discrimination), as well as to the hierarchical positions that they occupy in the university field, according to their sex (vertical discrimination) (Alexander, Thomson, & Edles, 2016; Gasser & Shaffer, 2014; Kemelgor & Etzkowitz, 2001; Kim & Cryss Brunner, 2009; Pai & Vaidya, 2009; Sanders, Willemsen, & Millar, 2008; Soleymanpour Omran, Alizadeh, & Esmaeeli, 2015; Spiliopoulou, Koustourakis, & Asimaki, 2018).

The investigation of the scarcity of women faculty members in the academic field and the factors that affect this has occupied a large number of scientific papers on a European and international level (see: Almukhambetova, Torrano, & Nam, 2021; Asimaki, Katsigianni, & Koustourakis, 2008; Asimaki, Zenzefilis, & Koustourakis, 2016; Fotaki, 2013; Kele & Pietersen, 2015; Levine, Lin, Kern, Wright, & Carrese, 2011; Mair & Frew, 2018; McNae & Vali, 2015; Molla & Cuthbert, 2014; Nikunen, 2012).

The aim of this paper is to investigate the contemporary scientific sociological literature highlighting the status of women faculty members in the academic field, the challenges that they face in the course of their academic career, and the attempt to lay claim to and acquire high-status administrative positions, as well as the sex discrimination that exists in the university space.

The content of this study, after the section on the theoretical notes, is shaped through the categorization of the findings of the relevant scientific papers into thematic units, based on their thematic content. The paper closes with a section containing concluding remarks.

2. Theoretical notes

For our approach to the matter under investigation, we made use of the concepts of the 'scientific field', 'scientific capital, and 'gendered habitus' from the theory of Pierre Bourdieu.

According to Bourdieu (2005), the formation of the social world is a sum of 'social microcosms' or 'fields', like for example the political, the artistic, or the university field which constitutes a scientific field. The scientific field is a social field, with defined specific interests, stakes, benefits, and strategies. It is a field of structured positions, powers, as well as contests that aim to either preserve or transform it. As in every field, so in the scientific field, there is a battle between: (a) the new arrivals, who fight to cross the threshold and occupy a position within it, according to the volume and type of capital they possess, and (b) the dominant scientists who endeavour to maintain their position within the field (Bourdieu, 1993). For a field like the scientific field to function, it is essential that there are suitable stakes and actors possessing habitus 'compatible' with the field in order for them to be able to participate in the 'game' that is acted out within it (Bourdieu, 2005, 2015; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992).

According to Bourdieu (2000, 2015), scientific capital is a special form of symbolic capital that is linked to knowledge and the recognition accorded a 'player' in the scientific-university space by the other scientists – opponents involved in the 'game' in the particular field. The positioning as well as the power of the dominant, in other words, the recognized 'players' in the scientific – university field, depends on the quantity and type of their accumulated capital (Bourdieu, 2015).

Bourdieu (2005) distinguished two forms of scientific capital which are governed by different means of accumulation. There is the 'net' scientific capital and the 'institutional' scientific capital. Net scientific capital is linked to and is acquired mainly through factors of a symbolic nature that bestow scientific status on the possessor, like for example publications in high-status scientific journals for each branch of science. The particular kind of capital is linked to the subject himself and his personal qualities and is not simply the object of an 'appointment order'. In addition, it is exposed to critique and provides the subject who holds it the power of high personal prestige (Bourdieu, 2005). 'Institutional' capital is acquired through particular and time-consuming personal strategies based on what is valid in the institutional framework of each country regarding the academic space. In other words, it is the result of personal battles to claim and hold institutional, administrative, and managerial power positions within the university field, which provide their holder with 'institutional' power (Bourdieu, 2005).

Bourdieu (2015), in the framework of a hyper-historical analysis, claims that the male-dominated social field carves the habitus into the gendered subjects as an internalization of the externalization, as well as a '*gendered reality of gender-generated principles of theory and division*'. Hence, 'gendered habitus' that is inscribed in the women initially through socialization in the family as well as through the imposition of a male-dominated view of the social order of things, contributes to strengthening the division

and discrimination between the sexes. It results in the harmonious meeting of the habitus of the women and the positions they fight for and hold in each work field. So, in many cases, women choose and work in inferior and dependent jobs, that correspond to the shaping of their gendered identity, which is often linked to their tendency for caring, devotion, and self-denial (Bourdieu, 2015). From this perspective, women faculty members enter the male-dominated scientific field of the University with shaped 'female attitudes – habitus', which don't correspond to the demands of the 'game' that exists in this particular academic field. These are demands that are closely linked as much to the required volume of scientific capital as they are to a set of particular characteristics that correspond to the characteristics that men faculty members usually display. So, despite the progress that women have made in the sector of science in recent decades, they seem to remain victims of 'symbolic violence', in the sense of the arbitrary imposition of attitudes, principles, evaluations, prejudices, and stereotypical views. This is because women faculty members don't seem to be facilitated or even favoured as much in terms of successful entrance, permanence, and progression within the university field, as in terms of their claim for positions high in the hierarchy or institutional administrative positions within the university where they work (Bourdieu, 2015).

3. The position of female faculty members in the university field and the challenges they face

From a study of the international scientific literature, it emerges that women faculty members are in an inferior position when compared with their male colleagues as they face a variety of challenges daily within the academic field. The prejudices surrounding the capabilities of the female sex, intense competition, discouragement from the work and home environment, and the attempt to balance their professional and family obligations, appear to constitute factors that play a significant role in discouraging women faculty members from entering and progressing within the university field. At the same time, in a number of cases, ideological and practical issues force women faculty members to choose between career and family as in many cases women faculty members are almost exclusively shouldered with the responsibility of caring for their children and home, which prevents them from accumulating a large volume of 'net' scientific capital and contributes to the slow progression of their professional career in comparison with their male colleagues. In particular, pregnancy and childbirth prove to be especially difficult for women faculty members as they are called on to balance the demands of their academic career and their increased parental obligations (Anastasaki, 2019; Asimaki et al., 2008; Asimaki, Koustourakis, & Papaspyropoulou, 2012; Kemkes-Grottenthaler, 2003; Maxwell, Connolly, & Ni Laoire, 2019; Nikunen, 2012; Toffoletti & Starr, 2016). In fact, the dual role of female academics, the lack of encouragement from the family environment, the often unfriendly work environment as well as the gender prejudices and stereotypes that still exist even today, in the social as well as the university field, lead many female academics to abandon their academic career prematurely (Cervia &

Biancheri, 2017; Gardner, 2012; Levine et al., 2011) Moreover, according to the results of several studies, it emerges that women faculty members often provide more service to the university they work at in comparison with their male colleagues, although this is not recognized and doesn't contribute to them occupying either high positions in the academic hierarchy or administrative positions with high status (Bagihole, 2007; Canetto, Trott, Winerrowd, Haruyama, & Johnson, 2017; Carvalho & Santiago, 2010; Elsaadani, 2012; Mitchell & Hesli, 2013; Sanders et al., 2009).

Research by Eslen-Ziya and Yildirim (2022) that was carried out with a sample of 200 women faculty members who were working in European universities and universities in the USA, Mexico, Brazil, and Australia is indicative, in its investigation of their attitudes towards their professional development, their ambitions and the challenges they face in the university field. The results of this study revealed that the women faculty members that took part in the research appeared to encounter various challenges within the academic field due to their sex, which caused insecurity and anxiety. In particular, female academics, due to their gender differentiation encountered gender prejudices and were in a worse position in comparison with their male colleagues, something which lessens their chances of advancement to higher levels within the university field. This is despite the existence of institutional interventions and regulations in the universities to combat gender inequality and promote gender equality. In addition, the existing hierarchical structure in the academic space, with the prevalence of male domination in the university field, appears to be an obstacle and discourages many women faculty members from continuing their academic careers and fulfilling their ambitions to reach higher administrative positions in the universities where they work (Eslen-Ziya & Yildirim, 2022).

Research by Anastasaki (2019) which investigated the position of women faculty members in Greek universities and the work conditions under which they carry out research and publish articles in scientific journals, shaping their 'net scientific' capital, is worth noting. The results of this research revealed that women faculty members usually occupy the lowest academic levels, in contrast to their male colleagues, who are found at the highest levels. This is due to the fact that in parallel with their work at the university, they shoulder the large burden of family obligations, something which makes their career progression difficult. In this case, the specific women faculty members often experience a conflict of roles in their attempt to balance their professional life with family life. In addition, it emerged from this study that to a certain degree the Greek university appears to be a male-dominated space where gender stereotypes that in some cases make the academic work of women faculty members difficult, are preserved (Anastasaki, 2019).

The findings from a study by Cervia and Biancheri (2017) which was carried out on a sample of 245 women faculty members at the University of Pisa in Italy and aimed to investigate female leakage and abandonment of the university field, are interesting. The findings from this study revealed that the departure of women faculty members from the university field is directly linked to the failure to balance the demands of personal/family and professional life. In particular, many female academics, in their

attempt to devote themselves to their career and combine it with their family obligations are under a lot of pressure due to the intensely competitive and male-dominated nature of, and the conditions that make up and shape, the academic environment. In fact, it appeared that the attempt to balance parental responsibilities and the large weight of academic work influenced women academics to a far greater degree than they did their male counterparts. What's more, the conclusions from this study revealed that Italian women faculty members seem to be virtually exclusively responsible for raising children, which results in the rates of leakage and abandoning the university field on their part being significantly higher than those for their male colleagues.

The findings from research by Maxwell, Connolly, and Ni Laoire (2019) on a sample of 71 women faculty members from universities in Ireland, which aimed to investigate their lived experiences in relation to the granting of maternity leave and the consequences this had on their professional career, are significant. The results from this research revealed the prevalence of male domination within the university field in Ireland and the consequences this has for the granting of maternity leave to women faculty members. In particular, it emerged that exercising their right to maternity leave upsets the climate within the university field, often putting female academics in a difficult position since the flexible working which these women are forced to offer before and after childbirth, as well as the maternity leave they take, are linked to unofficial practices that upset their professional career. More specifically, the majority of women faculty members engaged in unofficial arrangements during their maternity leave in order to be able to meet the demands of their academic workload as well as those of their parental role at this time. In fact, it emerged that women academics needed to work more and harder than their male colleagues in order to adequately make up for their absence due to childbirth. In addition, the whole situation they face in their attempt to meet the demands of both their professional and parental obligations made the women faculty members feel emotionally vulnerable and very anxious regarding the prospect of taking maternity leave.

The aim of a study by Giuffrida, Steffey, Balsa, Morello and Kapatkin (2020) was to investigate the extent to which academic position, length of academic career, and the new scientific capital of faculty members (productivity – contribution to science – publications in scientific journals) were related to sex in the veterinary schools in American universities. The results of this study revealed that women faculty members in veterinary schools in America rarely occupy the highest administrative positions and are mainly to be found in the lower academic grades. In addition, women's academic career is usually shorter than that of their male counterparts because they face obstacles in the course of their career in the academic field and usually remain stationary in the positions they are already in. The outcome of this is the increase in the phenomenon of the 'leaky pipeline', as a result of their discouragement and the lack of support from their social environment. What's more, family and parental obligations combined with a heavy workload are obstacles to their advancement in the academic hierarchy. In fact, the male domination that prevails in the university field and the stereotypes and prejudices

regarding female faculty members burden their work and their psychology, since, in the scientific field of veterinary science, discrimination exists due to their sex. So, they endeavour to work harder than their male colleagues to prove they are worthy of being in the field, or being promoted within the academic space. The findings from research by Giufrida et al. (2020), that the field of surgery is a purely male space and that men faculty members in veterinary schools are promoted more easily even though they may have the same qualifications as their female counterparts, are characteristic. In addition, it was clear that women academics are significantly under-represented in terms of the number of publications of scientific articles, especially in respected scientific journals.

From the above, it emerges that the progress and position of women faculty members in the university field, as well as the challenges they face, are directly dependent on the non-compatibility of their habitus with the male-dominated characteristics of the university field, which shape the conditions for them frequently being found in the lower positions in the academic hierarchy. In this way, and under the influence of their family and other obligations, the conditions that prevail in the academic space function to restrict and deter women academics regarding the prospect of acquiring powerful and effective weapons linked to the accumulation of the essential scientific capital for their participation in the 'game' of the specific field. In addition, in the cases where women academics managed to reach high 'institutional' type positions in the university hierarchy, they were often in danger of losing 'their feminine attributes'. What's more, they often end up paying a kind of price, which equates to less happiness in the family field. So, in contrast to their male colleagues, women faculty members are frequently obliged to choose between professional career and family which usually results in their resorting to either a partial or complete rejection of the professional field (Bourdieu, 2015).

4. The under-representation of women faculty members in administrative positions in the university field

A study of the sociological scientific literature reveals the difficulty women faculty members have when it comes to being recruited to high administrative positions in the university field. It appears that the male domination that prevails in the university field is linked to the under-representation of women faculty members in the administrative field of the university and to their non recruitment to high administrative positions. This reality is often accompanied by phenomena of devaluation, marginalising, biased comments, and professional sexism at the expense of women faculty members (Barrett & Barrett, 2011; Danell & Hjerm, 2013; Fotaki, 2013; Giuffrida, Steffey, Balsa, Morello, & Kapatkin, 2020; Harris, Ravenswood, & Myers, 2013; Hashim, Noman, & Kaur, 2016; Kanyumba & Lourens, 2022; Kele & Pietersen, 2015; McNae & Vali, 2015).

Interesting too are the findings from research by Mushibwe and Simuka (2021) which was carried out on a sample of 70 women faculty members that held high administrative positions at universities in Zambia and Zimbabwe. It emerged from this

study that women academics at universities in Zambia and Zimbabwe were under-represented in terms of their recruitment to high positions in the administrative hierarchy. This is not due to their lack of administrative abilities but it appeared that the leadership style of the women academics who held high administrative positions is compared with and competes against that of their male counterparts, and is attributed to gender–biological factors. In addition, the existence in some cases of a positive attitude in certain men towards their women counterparts taking up leadership administrative positions, doesn't appear to help them, strengthen them or motivate them to go after such positions.

The literature review study by Kanyumba and Lourens (2022) was concerned with investigating the course of the professional career of women faculty members and their efforts to advance to high administrative positions in the university hierarchy in South Africa and Australia. This study revealed the great and arduous effort women academics must make in these two countries in order to claim administrative positions in the university field. The reasons deterring them from this are lack of time due to family and parental obligations and responsibilities. In addition, it appeared that the existence of gender stereotypes, biases, and prejudices have an influence on deterring the women faculty members and obstructing them from taking on high administrative positions. In fact, in many cases, the non-existence of a supportive and encouraging climate for women academics that hold high administrative positions within the male-dominated university field, results in doubts over whether to remain in these positions and in them giving up these academic positions often before the end of their tenure.

Consequently, from the relevant studies, it emerges that the differentiated practices that the gender habitus of women faculty members produces, don't push them to lay claim to administrative positions, in other words, positions of power, responsibility, and prestige. In addition, the gendered structural relationships of dominance in the university field appear to legitimize and transmit the prevalence of its male-dominated culture. In this way, the occupation and maintenance of leadership administrative positions by the dominant – men within the university field, men who through a process of socialization aspire to and achieve that set of characteristics and qualities that the occupation and maintenance of such an administrative position requires, is predetermined (Bourdieu, 2005, 2015).

5. Gender inequality in the university field: State interventions and cultural factors

Gender inequality in the academic space appears to continue to exist globally despite institutional measures having been taken to promote the equality of the two sexes and the entrance of more women into the university field. Nevertheless, the findings from many studies revealed that the experiences of women faculty members are not consistent with the state interventions for dealing with sex inequality in the male-dominated university field. This is because, in the cases of a number of universities, it appears that it is still difficult to change the gender stereotypes and prejudices surrounding women's

academics (Dehdarirad, Villarroya, & Barrios, 2014; Ion, Duran Belloch, & Bernabeu Tamayo, 2013; Liu, Dunlop, Allavena, & Palmieri, 2021; Molla & Cuthbert, 2014; Winchester & Browning, 2015). In fact, in many cases, the entrance, progress, and permanence of women in the university field are closely linked to specific – differentiated cultural and religious factors that exist in various countries of the world. This is linked to the continuation of gender inequality despite the fact that nowadays the number of women in the university field has increased (Ensour, Maaitah, & Kharabsheh, 2017; Kim & Kim, 2012; Shah, 2018).

Indicative of this is research by Llorent-Bedmar, Llorent-Vaquero and Navarro-Granados (2017), which was carried out on a sample of 143 academics who worked in universities in Morocco, of whom 58 were women and 85 were men. The results of this research revealed the existence of gender inequality in Moroccan universities. In particular, women faculty members recognised the existence of gender inequality in their universities. Moreover, it appeared that women academics in higher leadership positions had more responsibilities and obligations compared with their male counterparts, due to the unequal division of services within the university field. The majority of women faculty members in Moroccan universities appeared not to aspire to take on some administrative position because they believe that administration doesn't fall within the duties of women. This attitude can also be seen in the fact that Moroccan women face great pressure from the family and social environment to get married and devote themselves to their spousal and family duties and not advance professionally. In fact, it appeared that women as much as men academics believed that Moroccan women faculty members are privileged since they are in these positions. In addition, the women academics stated that the formation of a support system for married Moroccan women academics would be especially helpful in performing of their academic obligations and in the improvement of their social recognition. Finally, it emerged from this study that the political leader of Morocco has a great influence on shaping the views and attitudes of the people on gender issues and the position and role of women in Moroccan society (Llorent-Bedmar et al., 2017).

A study by Molla and Cuthbert (2014) investigated the lived experiences of women faculty members in universities in Ethiopia. The results of this research revealed that women faculty members in Ethiopia are subject to discrimination due to their sex because in the university field of this particular country, measures for equality and equal treatment of the two sexes are not adhered to and there is sex discrimination regarding access to tertiary education. In fact, it was claimed that women academics in Ethiopia are often the victims of sexual violence and in many cases are forced to endure sexist stereotypical comments. In addition, the intense male domination in the academic field in Ethiopia limits and weakens the self-confidence of women in academics and discourages them, and obstructs their careers in the academic space.

Consequently, from the relevant studies, it emerges that male dominance in both the social and the work – university field of many countries is not hidden or disguised, but rather it is obvious and is enforced without justification. This is because it is deeply

rooted in the conscience of the citizens of many countries around the world and is accepted in cases mainly concerning the developing world. It is the result of the exercise of 'symbolic violence' that has intense gender characteristics and leads to the passive submission of those that endure it, who in this case are the women academics. In fact, Bourdieu (2015) points out that habitus always produces differentiated practices depending on sex, social background, and nationality.

6. Concluding remarks

According to everything we examined we reached the following conclusions:

- From the analysis of the research findings of contemporary sociological scientific papers we conclude that despite the increase in the number of women in intellectual professions, like that of a university teacher, and despite the progress that women have made in the university field, they continue to be found in the lowest position in the university field compared with their male colleagues. In fact, the global representation of women in higher hierarchical university positions is not representative of the percentage of women who enter the academic field (Chakraborty, 2021). Moreover, women faculty members face a variety of challenges in their attempt to progress to higher academic grades and to remain in the male-dominated, even today, field of the university. This is due to gender prejudices, lack of encouragement, the unfriendly climate, and the gender stereotype comments that women academics often come in for which seem to comprise obstacles to their advancement and remaining in the university field. A particularly significant obstacle in the progress of the career and perseverance of women faculty members to remain in the academic field seems to be the huge body of services they have to perform in order to fulfil both their professional role and at the same time meet the demands of their family and parental obligations. So, women are forced to make an intense and painful effort to prove their worth and be recognised socially in the male-dominated field of the university. In fact, the results of the research revealed that the university field is built on oppositions and dualities, such as: man/woman, powerful/weak, dominant/dominated, and activates the gender habitus of the social subjects, who, depending on the volume and type of capital they hold, either claim, or not, a position within it. However, the conditions that are shaped, or dominate in many countries around the world seem to often create restrictions and/or exclusions for women from participating in the 'game' of prospects and careers that are played in the academic space (Bourdieu, 2015).
- Globally, women faculty members comprise a minority in the field of administration and leadership in institutions of Tertiary education. The factors which appear to discourage women academics from taking up, or even going after administrative positions, which are positions of power, are to be found in gender stereotypes, bias, and biological prejudice that predominate in various societies,

as well as the prevailing attitudes regarding leadership style that usually possess stereotypically male characteristics. This leads the majority of women faculty members to not fight to acquire leadership-type administrative positions. In this case, it appears that the university field functions like a 'market for symbolic goods' which is dominated by a male view and order of things. In addition, the formation of frequently critical comments on the way women who rise to administrative positions of power within the university, administrate, seems to be linked to a conscious or unconscious attempt to shape an environment of denial in a way, of women academics' right to develop and practice what in a way is a 'male' characteristic, like the exercise of power. In this way, women are essentially pushed to exclusion by the 'game' of power within the academic field (Bourdieu, 2015).

- Finally, as emerges from the results of sociological research, despite measures being taken globally to promote equality of the sexes in institutions of Tertiary education, it appears that gender inequalities and gender discrimination continue to exist. In fact, these inequalities are graded and are entirely dependent on differentiated national-cultural factors of the states in which the university institutions where women faculty members work, are to be found. The gender discriminations are linked to the exclusion of women from administrative positions due to the dominant view in many societies that administration doesn't suit the female biological sex and the duties that emanate from that and the fulfilment of roles of mother and wife at the expense of professional development and achievement in the academic space. In fact, it is clear that the prevalent strength of historical and differentiated structures in the university field, depending on the national-cultural framework of the various countries, which are founded on male dominance, reverses the problematic of the assertion of the changes that are visible today in the social condition and the position of women (Bourdieu, 2015).

Concluding this study, we believe that an international comparative consideration of the changes and shifts that exist in the 21st century in the international politico-social and academic field regarding the position of contemporary women academics and how they are seen, the challenges they face, the gender discrimination which continues to exist, as well as the investigation of the ways these issues can be effectively dealt with, would be of great interest.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

About the Authors

Anna Asimaki is Associate Professor in Sociology of Education at the Department of Educational Science and Social Work of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Patras, Greece. She is also a tutor in the Postgraduate Studies Programme

in the same Department, teaching Professional Development for Teachers. E-mail: asimaki@upatras.gr

Gerasimos Koustourakis is Professor in the Sociology of Education and School Knowledge at the Department of Educational Sciences and Early Childhood Education of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Patras, Greece. He is also a tutor in the Postgraduate Studies Programme, Master in Education, at the Faculty of Humanities of Hellenic Open University teaching Open and Distance Learning. E-mail: koustourakis@upatras.gr

Maria Varsami is a primary school teacher. She is also a postgraduate student in "Education Science: Special Education" at the European University of Cyprus, Cyprus.

Archontoula Lagiou is a primary school teacher. She also holds a Master's degree in "Education Sciences" and is a PhD candidate at the Department of Education and Social Work, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Patras, Greece.

References

- Alexander, J., Thomson, K., & Edles, L. (2016). *A Contemporary Introduction to Sociology: Culture and Society in Transition*. Athens: Gutenberg.
- Almukhambetova, A., Torrano, D., & Nam, A. (2021). Fixing the Leaky Pipeline for Talented Women in STEM. *International Journal of Science and Mathematics Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10763-021-10239-1>
- Anastasaki, A. (2019). *The position of women in the Greek academic community: the gendered dimension of research and publishing productivity of university teaching and research staff* (Ph.D. Dissertation). Rhodos, University of Aegean, Greece.
- Asimaki, A., Katsigianni, M., & Koustourakis, G. (2008). The defining factors of the evolution of women in the academic (University) hierarchy. Case study: the University of Patras 1964 – 2007. In *5th International Scientific Conference. History of Education: 'Education and Social Justice'*. Conference and Cultural Centre. University of Patras. Patras, October 3-5, 2008. Available online from http://www.eriande.elemedu.upatras.gr/?section=985&language=el_GR&page706=1&itemid706=1073
- Asimaki, A., Koustourakis, G., & Papaspyropoulou, K. (2012). Female Faculty Members in the field of Electrical and Computer Engineering: The case of Greek Universities. *Problems of Education in the 21st Century*, 39, 15-28. <https://doi.org/10.33225/pec/12.39.15>
- Asimaki, A., Zenzefilis, V., & Koustourakis, G. (2016). The Access and Development of Female Academics in the University Field in Greece: University of Patras Case Study. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 4(3), 150-162. <https://doi.org/10.4236/jss.2016.43021>

- Bagilhole, B. (2007). Challenging women in the male academy: think about draining the swamp. In *Challenges and negotiations for women in higher education* (pp. 21-32). Dordrecht: Springer.
- Barrett, L., & Barrett, P. (2011). Women and academic workloads: Career slow lane or cul-de-sac?. *Higher education*, 61(2), 141-155. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-010-9329-3>
- Bourdieu, P. (1993). *Sociology in question*. London: Sage.
- Bourdieu, P. (2000). *Practical reason: On the theory of action*. Athens: Plethron.
- Bourdieu, P. (2005). *For science and its social uses*. Athens: Polytropon
- Bourdieu, P. (2015). *Masculine domination*. Athens: Patakis.
- Bourdieu, P. (2018). The forms of capital. In *The sociology of economic life* (pp. 78-92). New York: Routledge.
- Bourdieu, P., & Wacquant, L. (1992). *Réponses*. Paris: Seuil.
- Canetto, S. S., Trott, C. D., Winterrowd, E. M., Haruyama, D., & Johnson, A. (2017). Challenges to the choice discourse: Women's views of their family and academic-science career options and constraints. *Journal of Feminist Family Therapy*, 29(1-2), 4-27. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08952833.2016.1273174>
- Carvalho, T., & Santiago, R. (2010). Still academics after all. *Higher Education Policy*, 23(3), 397-411. <https://doi.org/10.1057/hep.2010.17>
- Cervia, S., & Biancheri, R. (2017). Women in science: The persistence of traditional gender roles. A case study on work-life interface. *European Educational Research Journal*, 16(2-3), 215-229. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1474904116654701>
- Chakraborty, A. (2021). "Symbolic violence" and Dalit feminism: possibilities emerging from a Dalit feminist standpoint reading of Bourdieu. *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 1-19. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616742.2021.1978854>
- Danell, R., & Hjerm, M. (2013). Career prospects for female university researchers have not improved. *Scientometrics*, 94(3), 999-1006. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11192-012-0840-4>
- Dehdarirad, T., Villarroya, A., & Barrios, M. (2014). Research trends in gender differences in higher education and science: a co-word analysis. *Scientometrics*, 101(1), 273-290. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11192-014-1327-2>
- Elsaadani, M. (2012). Exploration of teaching staff and students' preferences of information and communication technologies in private and academic lives. *International Journal of Computer Science Issues*, 9(2), 396-402.
- Ensour, W., Al Maaitah, H., & Kharabsheh, R. (2017). Barriers to Arab female academics' career development: Legislation, HR policies and socio-cultural variables. *Management research review*, 40(10), 1058-1080. <https://doi.org/10.1108/MRR-08-2016-0186>
- Eslen-Ziya, H., & Yildirim, T. M. (2022). Perceptions of gendered-challenges in academia: How women academics see gender hierarchies as barriers to achievement. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 29(1), 301-308. <https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12744>

- Fotaki, M. (2013). No woman is like a man (in academia): The masculine symbolic order and the unwanted female body. *Organization studies*, 34(9), 1251-1275. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840613483658>
- Gardner, S. K. (2012). "I couldn't wait to leave the toxic environment": A mixed methods study of women faculty satisfaction and departure from one research institution. *NASPA Journal About Women in Higher Education*, 5(1), 71-95. <https://doi.org/10.1515/njawhe-2012-1079>
- Gasser, C., & Shaffer, K. (2014). Career Development of Women in Academia: Traversing the Leaky Pipeline. *The Professional Counselor*, 4(4), 332-352. <https://doi.org/10.15241/ceg.4.4.332>
- Giuffrida, M. A., Steffey, M. A., Balsa, I. M., Morello, S. L., & Kapatkin, A. S. (2020). Gender differences in academic rank among faculty surgeons at US veterinary schools in 2019. *Veterinary Surgery*, 49(5), 852-859. <https://doi.org/10.1111/vsu.13440>
- Harris, C., Ravenswood, K., & Myers, B. (2013). Glass slippers, holy grails and ivory towers: Gender and advancement in academia. *Labour & Industry: a journal of the social and economic relations of work*, 23(3), 231-244. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10301763.2013.839084>
- Hashim, R. A., Noman, M., & Kaur, A. (2016). Women leadership in higher education: Can the glass ceiling be broken. *The NIEW Journal*, 8, 4-11. https://wkuwire.org/bitstream/20.500.12540/654/1/wku_schlr_publicn_000167.pdf
- Ion, G., Duran Bellonch, M., & Bernabeu Tamayo, M. (2012). Teaching staff and their perception about gender equality at university. *Revista Complutense de Educación*, 24(1), 123-140. https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.5209/rev_RCED.2013.v24.n1.41194
- Kanyumba, B., & Lourens, M. (2022). Career development for female academics in Australian and South African universities: An integrative review. *International Journal of Research in Business and Social Science*, 11(2), 391-401. <https://doi.org/10.20525/ijrbs.v11i2.1576>
- Kele, T., & Pietersen, J. (2015). Women leaders in a South African higher education institution: Narrations of their leadership operations. *International Journal of Sustainable Development*, 8(5), 11-16. <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2618069>
- Kemelgor, C., Etzkowitz, H. (2001). Overcoming Isolation: Women's Dilemmas in American Academic Science. *Minerva*, 39, 153-174. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1010344929577>
- Kemkes-Grottenthaler, A. (2003). Postponing or rejecting parenthood? Results of a survey among female academic professionals. *Journal of biosocial science*, 35(2), 213-226. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S002193200300213X>
- Kim, Y., & Cryss Brunner, C. (2009). School administrators' career mobility to the superintendency. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 47(1), 75-107. <https://doi.org/10.1108/09578230910928098>

- Kim, Y., & Kim, S. (2021). Being an academic: how junior female academics in Korea survive in the neoliberal context of a patriarchal society. *Higher Education*, 81(6), 1311-1328. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-020-00613-3>
- Levine, R. B., Lin, F., Kern, D. E., Wright, S. M., & Carrese, J. (2011). Stories from early-career women physicians who have left academic medicine: a qualitative study at a single institution. *Academic Medicine*, 86(6), 752-758. doi: 10.1097/ACM.0b013e318217e83b
- Liu, X., Dunlop, R., Allavena, R., & Palmieri, C. (2021). Women Representation and Gender Equality in Different Academic Levels in Veterinary Science. *Veterinary Sciences*, 8(8), 159. <https://doi.org/10.3390/vetsci8080159>
- Llorent-Bedmar, V., Llorent-Vaquero, M., & Navarro-Granados, M. (2017). Towards gender equality in Moroccan universities: Female university teachers from a gender perspective. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 64, 34-40. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2017.09.002>
- Mair, J., & Frew, E. (2018). Academic conferences: A female duo-ethnography. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 21(18), 2152-2172. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2016.1248909>
- Maxwell, N., Connolly, L., & Ní Laoire, C. (2019). Informality, emotion and gendered career paths: The hidden toll of maternity leave on female academics and researchers. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 26(2), 140-157. <https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12306>
- McNae, R., & Vali, K. (2015). Diverse experiences of women leading in higher education: Locating networks and agency for leadership within a university context in Papua New Guinea. *Gender and Education*, 27(3), 288-303. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09540253.2015.1027669>
- Mitchell, S. M., & Hesli, V. L. (2013). Women don't ask? Women don't say no? Bargaining and service in the political science profession. *Political Science & Politics*, 46(2), 355-369. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096513000073>
- Molla, T., & Cuthbert, D. (2014). Qualitative inequality: Experiences of women in Ethiopian higher education. *Gender and Education*, 26(7), 759-775. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09540253.2014.970614>
- Mushibwe, C., & Simuka, J. (2021). Motivations for Women Leadership Positions in Higher Education Institutions: A case of Selected Universities in Zambia and Zimbabwe. *Africa Journal of Leadership and Governance*, 1(1), 61-85.
- Nikunen, M. (2012). Changing university work, freedom, flexibility and family. *Studies in Higher Education*, 37(6), 713-729. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2010.542453>
- Pai, K., & Vaidya, S. (2009). Glass ceiling: role of women in the corporate world. *Competitiveness Review: An International Business Journal*, 19(2), 106-113. <https://doi.org/10.1108/10595420910942270>
- Sanders, K., Willemsen, T. M., & Millar, C. C. (2008). Views from above the glass ceiling: does the academic environment influence women professors' careers and experiences?. *Sex roles*, 60(5), 301-312. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-008-9547-7>

- Shah, S. (2018). 'We are equals'; datum or delusion: perceptions of Muslim women academics in three Malaysian universities. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 39(3), 299-315. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01425692.2017.1343126>
- Soleymanpour Omran, M., Alizadeh, H., & Esmaeeli, B. (2015). The analysis of glass ceiling phenomenon in the promotion of women's abilities in organizations. *International Journal of Organizational Leadership*, 4(3), 315-323. <https://doi.org/10.33844/ijol.2015.60323>
- Spiliopoulou, G., Koustourakis, G., & Asimaki, A. (2018). The Impact of gender differences on the formation of young people's aspirations/expectations and choices for their educational and occupational future: A review of sociological scientific literature. *European Journal of Education Studies*, 4(9), 1-15. <https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.1287599>
- Toffoletti, K., & Starr, K. (2016). Women academics and work-life balance: Gendered discourses of work and care. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 23(5), 489-504. <https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12133>
- Winchester, H. P., & Browning, L. (2015). Gender equality in academia: A critical reflection. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 37(3), 269-281. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1360080X.2015.1034427>

Creative Commons licensing terms

Author(s) will retain the copyright of their published articles agreeing that a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0) terms will be applied to their work. Under the terms of this license, no permission is required from the author(s) or publisher for members of the community to copy, distribute, transmit or adapt the article content, providing a proper, prominent and unambiguous attribution to the authors in a manner that makes clear that the materials are being reused under permission of a Creative Commons License. Views, opinions and conclusions expressed in this research article are views, opinions and conclusions of the author(s). Open Access Publishing Group and European Journal of Social Sciences Studies shall not be responsible or answerable for any loss, damage or liability caused in relation to/arising out of conflicts of interest, copyright violations and inappropriate or inaccurate use of any kind content related or integrated into the research work. All the published works are meeting the Open Access Publishing requirements and can be freely accessed, shared, modified, distributed and used in educational, commercial and non-commercial purposes under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License \(CC BY 4.0\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)