Gender and Leadership in Greek Primary Education

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Abstract

Women constitute more than half of the teaching force inprimary schools in Greece but men are more likely than women to achieve headship. In other countries (e.g. in the USA, in the UK and in other European countries) women are represented in educational leadership in disproportionately low numbers, too.The aim of this thesis is to cast light on the neglected phenomenon of women's relatively low participation in Greek primary school leadership and to explore the constructions of men and women head teachers and teachers regarding headship and gender. More specifically, the research offers insights into women's and men's experiences of progressing to and experiencing primary school leadership in Greece; examines whether and to what extent these experiences are gendered; and maps the participants' constructions of primary headship. In addition, I explore the future for women in educational leadership in Greece.

The study is underpinned by a feminist social constructionist paradigm, involving a qualitative analysis of 40 semi-structured in-depth interviews with women and men head teachers and teachers.

The findings suggest that women teachers in primary education in this sample, were generally less leadership-oriented than men and followed relatively unplanned occupational trajectories compared with men. Both men and women appeared to need encouragement from colleagues, superiors and family to enhance their confidence and set them on the pathway to headship. Gendered processes in relation to the recruitment and selection of head teachers, as well as traditional 'masculine' stereotypes of leadership, are challenged by the research. It is argued that both men and women participants construct accounts of approaching leadership in a fluid way, reflecting time, place and situation, rather than primarily gender. Finally, implications for theory, policy and practice are discussed and recommendations for future research are proposed.

Conference and seminar papers arising from thesis

Papanastasiou, E. (June 2015) *Discursive practices of gender, sexuality and educational leadership in Greek primary schools: A case study.* Paper presented at the 10th International Gender and Education Conference: "Feminisms, power and pedagogy". University of Roehampton 24-26 June 2015

Papanastasiou, E. (April 2014) *Constructing change: Women in educational leadership in Greece.* Paper presented at the British Sociological Association Annual Conference, "Changing society". University of Leeds, 23-25 April 2014

Papanastasiou, E. (November 2013) *'Feminine' and 'masculine' educational leadership approaches: Fact or fiction?* Paper presented at a Research Students Seminar at London Metropolitan University. London Metropolitan University, 18 November 2013

Papanastasiou, E. (April 2011) *Women Head Teachers in Greece: Constraints in their Career Progression.* Paper presented at the 8th International Gender and Education Conference: "Gender and Education: Past, Present and Future". Exeter University, 27-30 April 2011

Papanastasiou, E. (June 2010) *Gender and School Management in Greece: The Under-representation of Women.* Paper presented at the 6th Biennial International Interdisciplinary Conference on Gender, Work and Organization. Keele University, Staffordshire, UK, 21-23 June 2010

Papanastasiou, E. (October 2009) *Gender and Head Teachers: What is happening in Greece?* Paper presented at a Research Students Seminar at London Metropolitan University. London Metropolitan University, 20 October 2009

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This thesis is dedicated to them all.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

> There is! There is! [under-representation of women in educational leadership]. There
> is the pattern that has been inherited by us, the pattern that younger people adopt
> because this is what they have learned. (Maria, woman head teacher, age 40-49)

As the above comment from a woman head teacher who participated in my study
indicates, women are seriously under-represented in head teachers' positions in Greek
primary education (schools for children 6 to 12 years old). Using a feminist social
constructionist framework, this research seeks to identify the reasons for this under-
representation, to explore the career progression of women and discuss the challenges
that women educational leaders face in performing their duties. It also seeks to inform the
debates about how women's participation in leadership could be increased.

This chapter is presented in six sections: Section 1 gives a brief rationale for the research,
followed by a discussion of the context of the study in relation to both Greek and
international context (section 2). Then section 3 identifies the research aims and the
research questions guiding the study; section 4 gives a brief account of the theoretical
context of the study and the next section (5) highlights the significance of the study. The
chapter concludes with section 6, which includes an outline of the rest of the chapters in
this thesis.

1.1. Why study women in educational leadership in Greece?

Internationally, the term 'leadership' is often seen as synonymous with 'management' and
'administration'. The usage of these terms varies at different times and in different
countries. In the UK, as Coleman (2005a) notes, '"leadership" tends to be seen as the most
important of these concepts, "management" tends to relate to more operational matters
and "administration" to relate to tasks which are a routine' (p. 6). In North America,
Canada and Australia the term 'administration' has more or less the same meaning as
'leadership' in the UK (Bush 2011). However, there are significant differences as leadership
is seen as an aspect of management. Bush (1998) links leadership to value or purpose,

while he relates management to implementation or technical issues. In the Greek school context, the head teacher can be classified as an 'administrator' as the Greek educational system is characterised by centralisation and bureaucracy and the head teacher can be seen as a person who implements laws and ministerial policies. So, as the main body of the literature comes from the UK and the US where the head's role is different, I take care not to draw upon the literature unproblematically. I will use the terminology used in the countries the literature refers to, however in my data I will use the term 'leadership' and I will be referring to the process of providing directions to individuals and exercising influence on others in order to achieve the core work of schools and school systems.

In a context of leadership like the one described above, the under-representation of women in educational leadership in Greece has received little attention in the mainstream media or amongst politicians or even the public. It is only in the past few years that this issue has begun to gain some attention in the Greek academic arena, with some studies being published (i.e. Taki 2006, Brinia 2012) and conferences held (i.e. Kedek 2010, Kedek 2013). Research on the subject has therefore been limited in Greece and most of that which has been conducted focuses mainly on the differences between the way women and men lead, as is discussed in more detail in Chapter 2 (literature review).

My own interest in women educational leaders began at an early stage of my life. My mother (who recently retired after 32 years) was a teacher in secondary education. When I was young, she took me with her when there were school meetings and there I saw only men head teachers. Also, my mother never wanted to be a head teacher, nor did her women friends and colleagues. Moreover, when I was a student in primary and secondary education, there were only men head teachers.

Later on, when I graduated and started work as a teacher myself, I was surrounded by women teachers. Of course, this could easily be explained as I was working in pre-primary education (4-5 years old), a field where men were not allowed to study or work until 1987. Hence, the great majority of teachers are women, especially in urban areas (where I worked) as they tend to be older and appointed well before 1987. When I was transferred to my current post (assessor of children with special educational needs) in 2004 I needed to be in regular contact with children's schools, I saw that the great majority of head teachers in the area of my responsibility were men and the teachers were mainly women.

But, it was not until the mid 2000's that I became more interested in the experiences of women educational leaders. At this time I was studying an MBA in Educational Management at a UK university and during one of the modules I came across the issue of women's under-representation in educational management. All my experiences came back to me and I realised that this was an international issue and not simply a Greek one. I conducted a literature search and discovered that it had not been adequately researched in Greece and especially in the area of primary education. This opened up a whole new area for me that was stimulating, exciting and challenging. I wanted to work towards taking the issue of the under-representation of women in leadership positions in education further.

Moreover, my interest is not only in understanding the phenomenon of women's numerical under-representation in primary education in Greece, but also it reflects a desire to understand my own and my women colleagues' 'lived experience' of working and leading in an area where men dominate leadership positions. My involvement in education means that my own awareness of the difficulties that women may face has been heightened. The impetus for this research came, therefore, from a very personal desire to understand why women are under-represented in educational leadership in Greece.

1.2. The background to the research

1.2.1. An historical perspective on gender issues in Greece

In order to understand gender identities and relations in Greece today, it is important to reflect on the history of women's position in the country.

While there is a significant corpus of international scholarly literature specifically focusing on women's subordinate status in society and their under-representation in educational leadership in particular (e.g. Shakeshaft 1989, Hall 1996, Coleman 2001, Moreau et al. 2007), the attempt to review the relevant local literature revealed in the most acute way the scarcity of pertinent literature and research in Greece. Deligianni and Ziogou (1993), in one of the few comprehensive texts, examine the position of Greek girls/women in society and education since the 19th century and explore the issues of women in education and gender differences. They provide evidence that the status of girls/women in Greece has been influenced by socio-cultural and religious norms.

Greek society of the 19th and the first half of the 20th centuries was predominantly patriarchal with women viewed as physically and mentally subordinate to men and therefore economically and socially dependent on them (Deligianni and Ziogou 1993, Varikas 2004, Cassia and Bada 2006). Women tended to be stereotypically typecast as mothers, wives and housekeepers and, to this end, they tended to be socialised accordingly. The fact that patriarchy dominated was displayed in various ways (Moussourou 1985a). For instance, girls/women were commonly physically and mentally oppressed by fathers, brothers and/or husbands. It was imperative for a woman to retain virginity until marriage to avoid 'traumatising' the family's honour (Deligianni and Ziogou 1993). Young women were advised by their parents and relatives that it was 'better to damage their eye than their name' (dignity) which is a traditional saying, and this is illustrative. Up until 1929, naming girls-only schools as 'virgins' schools' (parthenagogia) that aimed at rendering girls obedient, humble, respectful, good Orthodox Christians and silent 'ladies', is also characteristic of the importance placed on virginity. The concept of 'virginity' is closely related to the traditional dominance of 'masculinity' as for fear of being 'dishonoured' by their women kin, males kept women under strict control, limiting any kind of relationships with men outside the family (Hadjikyriacou 2009). The importance placed by Greeks on virginity for women reflects traditional constructions of 'femininity', according to which women ought to be passive, subordinate to men and to stay and work in the house. These constructions of 'femininity' confine women to the private sphere and domesticity. Along with this, the different curriculum that was followed in these schools (emphasis was given to French language, piano, home economics, needlework and sewing, whereas boys studied maths, geometry, physics and physical education) is indicative of their educational aim (i.e. to prepare good housewives). In 1929 'virgins' schools' were transformed to girls-only schools where a different curriculum was also followed compared with boys' schools (i.e. no algebra, less maths etc). This lasted until 1985 when all state schools became co-educational and girls and boys followed the same curriculum.

Women's inferior position was underpinned by Christian Orthodox values defining women as moral, totally dedicated, nurturing and submissive to their husbands and ready to make sacrifices for their families, resembling the holy figure of Mary, the Mother of God. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, religion was closely related to education and many schools were established and financially supported by the Church. It thus comes as no surprise that gender disparity and stereotypes had a negative effect on girls' enrolment in education, especially in the secondary sector. Moreover, economic constraints led parents

to 'invest' in boys' education instead of that of girls who it was assumed would eventually get married and leave their jobs. After all, girls, especially the older ones, were 'needed' in the big families of the time for raising their siblings and helping their mothers with everyday household chores. For all these reasons, up until the 1930s the percentage of illiterate women was far higher than that of men, reaching 70% of all women (Gouli and Kafkoula 2004). At the same period, illiteracy among women in Belgium was 6.5% and in Finland 16.6% (UNESCO 1953). The only occupation considered 'acceptable' in Greece for those women who completed their studies in secondary education successfully was that of teacher.

Conventional views about women's inferior position in Greek society started to shift in the middle of the 20th century due to urbanization, the development of transport, communication and technology and the expansion of artisanship and industry that created new positions for women to work outside the home. The First and Second World Wars, the Greek civil war that followed (1945-1949), the migration wave towards northern Europe after the civil war and the military regime (1967-1974), necessitated women undertaking different roles in society. As in the UK (Goldin 1991), during WWII Greek women entered the labour market at higher rates, as the male workforce was reduced. Moreover, women kept on working after World War II had ended, because the Greek civil war followed (1945-1949) and men were either on the mountains fighting or in exile because of their political beliefs. After the Greek civil war because of the re-construction of the economies of the northern European countries that suffered from labour shortages (Dustman and Frattini 2013) and the poverty that followed a decade of war in Greece, many Greek men migrated to northern European countries. During this period, the women who stayed in Greece had to work in order to help their families and to support the Greek economy (Drakopoulos and Theodossiou 2006). Finally, less than two decades after the civil war, a military regime was established, and women had to go out to work again, as many men were in exile.

Until the mid-1970's, women in the field of education – and possibly in other fields as well, especially in the private sector – were unequally treated (e.g. there was a pay-gap between women's salaries and men's, women lost their jobs after they announced pregnancies etc). What is most striking is that many women in all professional areas were forced by social pressure to leave their jobs after marriage because society could not accept a working married woman (Habidis and Taratori 2008). Then in 1975, after the reinstatement of

democracy, Greece adopted a new Constitution and gender equality was established in law (Nazou 2002).

Now, the Constitution states in Article 4(2) 'Greek men and women have equal rights and equal obligations'. However, despite positive initiatives and the huge strides towards equalisation underpinned by legislation, there is still a long way to go until gender inequalities are completely eliminated. Greek society remains largely patriarchal in its structure and customs and as a result, stereotypical perceptions and attitudes towards men's and women's roles persist and decision making still rests mainly in the hands of men, as the majority of those who hold the leadership positions are men (Athanassoula-Reppa and Koutouzis 2002, Kyriakousis and Saiti 2006, Kaparou and Bush 2007). In other words, similarly to the UK (Coleman 2009), there appears to be a gap between the legal framework that is supposed to ensure equality and the current situation.

In addition, the Church still has a strong influence on Greek society and especially on educational matters. Religious education still forms part of the school curriculum as a required course. Also, Greece is the only European country that has a Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, showing the Church's de facto position and its extensive role in education. In November 2013 the Holy Synod of the Greek Orthodox Church decided that greater involvement is needed in the writing of school books and decided to formally request the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs to appoint a Church representative to the editorial committee of the Pedagogical Institute, which is the scientific body responsible for the scientific and technical support for the design and implementation of educational policy issues, in order to influence the content of textbooks. At the point of writing there has not yet been a formal response on behalf of the Ministry, but this is indicative of the close involvement that the Church still has with educational affairs. The Greek Orthodox Church is a very powerful institution both politically and economically. It has an active involvement in the key contemporary political controversies and national issues, including the practice of civil weddings and the legislation related to gay partnerships (Kallinikaki 2010). The Church also promotes negative perceptions about abortion and pre-marital sex and positive perceptions about traditional families (i.e. many children, working father and stay-at-home mother).

In a climate like this, it seems that Singleton's (1993, p. 165) assertion that 'jobs whilst not legally labelled "for men" or "for women" are still viewed by many people as just that'

remains valid in Greece. The professions of pre-primary, primary and secondary school teacher, nurse or secretary, among others, are still largely traditionally perceived by both genders as 'feminine' whereas manual/technical, 'high profile' and 'demanding' jobs are mostly seen as 'masculine' domains. To this end, the majority of Greek female students in higher education in Greece and abroad tend to cluster in the departments of Education, Humanities, Law and Fine Arts while men students dominate the departments of Economics, Business Studies, IT, Engineering and Technology (Hellenic Statistical Authority 2005, Kethi 2008) similar to their equivalents in England (UCAS 2014). Clearly, the theoretically 'free choice' of study and profession in Greece is in reality largely gender-determined and socially constructed.

Social expectations in relation to gender also appear to define women's and men's hierarchical position in the country. In particular women's representation in the upper echelons of public and political life is poor, with the percentage being among the lowest amongst EU members, as I show in Chapter 6.

As of September 2015, there are 7 women and 37 men in the Government, including the Prime Minister (15 men and no women are ministers, 12 men and 4 women are deputy ministers and 9 men and 3 women are undersecretaries. It should be noted that the women hold the positions of deputy minister of tourism, of social solidarity and of unemployment. So women who participate in the current Greek government are in more 'caring' posts and not in what are considered as 'real' leadership posts (e.g. minister of finance or foreign affaires), Furthermore, there are six women and sixteen men representing Greece in the European Parliament and no woman had become president since 1821 when Greece was liberated from the Ottomans and became an independent state. Only 63 women have managed to enter the Parliament compared with 237 men over the years since liberation.

Echoing the situation in the UK (Coleman 2011), in the labour market and particularly in the private sector, men still earn more than women (Livanos and Pouliakas 2012, Christofides et al 2010). This occurs despite legislation and even though statistics show that Greek women outnumber men in higher education and frequently outperform them academically (KETHI 2008, Hellenic Statistical Authority 2010b). Unfortunately, complaints and accusations by women in the private sector that they have been dismissed from their jobs due to pregnancy continue to be reported in the press (Eleftherotipia July 2013, edupame

2010), even though there is a law stating that a woman cannot be fired when she announces her pregnancy and that her job is secure for 18 months after giving birth. Additionally, numerous cases of violence against women in the family and sexual harassment in the workplace are still recorded by the General Secretariat of Equality (2013).

As suggested in this subsection, it appears that in Greek society gender has impacted on the distribution of power and authority in the private, professional, economic and political arenas over time. Put plainly, gender has historically signalled different roles for men and women in every facet of life. It is against this contextual background in combination with my gendered personal/professional experiences as a teacher that this thesis is developed, seeking to provide explanations for the under-representation of Greek women in primary school leadership.

1.2.2. Women and educational leadership in Greece

As in many other countries (Chard 2013, Lumby 2011, Coleman 2002, Shakeshaft 2006), there appears to be a disparity between the number of women teachers and those assuming headship in Greece. According to data from the Hellenic Statistical Authority in 2012, although women constitute the majority of teaching personnel in pre-primary (4-5 years old), primary (6-11 years old), lower secondary (12-14 years old) and upper secondary (15-17 years old) sectors, only a small percentage of leadership positions are held by women. The only exception is pre-primary education where women are not only the great majority of the teachers (99.8% of the teachers), but make up the great majority of the head teachers as well (99.7% of the head teachers). This can be easily explained as early childhood education is constructed as caring and as a 'mothering' profession (Lumby and Azaola 2014). It is perceived as more appropriate for women and so it is highly feminised. Also, until 1983 men were not allowed to study pre-primary education (and work as pre-primary teachers), with the first men graduating in 1987. So, the vast majority of teachers in primary education, which is the focus of this thesis, were and still are women. The figures for the public schools sector that are presented in Table 1, obtained from the Hellenic Statistical Authority (2000-2011), reinforce this statement.

The number of women teachers in all areas of education in Greece is consistently higher than the number of men teachers (Papanastasiou 2009, 2010). Especially in primary education (which is the focus of this research), since the school year 2005-2006, the number of women teachers has been almost double the number of men teachers. The statistical data in Table 1 show the interesting trend that since 2010 the number of teachers, both men and women, has dropped. In an era of recession and austerity, this can be explained by many teachers retiring and by the financial measures across all sectors and in education, which have led to reductions in pensions for those retired after 2010. In addition, because of these austerity policies very few new state employees in general and teachers in particular were appointed, as according to law, five old employees that retire, only one new person is appointed. Instead, in order to cover the lack of teachers, the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs decided to merge or even close down schools and increase the maximum number of students in a classroom from 20 to 30 for all age groups. It is also interesting that in pre-primary education there are still not many men teachers despite the fact that the gender ban was lifted in 1983 leading to the first men graduates in 1987. The fact that in all areas of teacher training the studies take the same time (four years), are free of fees and all teachers are paid the same wage irrespective of the age group they teach, may lead to the assumption that the fact that men do not study pre-primary education does not have to do with financial reasons. More likely it has to do with the assumption that the nature of the work is 'feminine' and has lower status.

What is also worth observing in Table 1 is that although there is a fall in the number of men teachers from 2007 and up to 2011, the number of women teachers increases in 2007, 2008 and 2009 before it starts to drop. It is unclear why this happened.

The trend of women teachers outnumbering men is evident in all areas of education, even in the upper secondary stage (for 15-17 year olds). So, it can be assumed that education as a whole is considered a 'feminine' domain. It appears that the stereotypical presumptions regarding the suitability of the teaching profession for women (discussed earlier in this section and in greater detail in Chapter 4) still persist and are partly responsible for women's preference for this traditional 'female occupation'. As a result, there are more women than men studying in the Departments of Education at Greek universities and more women than men graduate and finally work as teachers. To my knowledge, there have not been any attempts in Greece to attract men into teaching by emphasising that what are considered as 'masculine' attributes are part of a good pedagogy in addition to those of

'femininity'. Also, the contradiction that although men are under-represented in a 'feminine' profession they tend to be promoted faster than their women colleagues (i.e. the 'glass escalator' phenomenon identified in the UK by Williams in 1992 and Skelton in 2002) does not seem to be incentive enough to attract more men into teaching, and even if there is no available evidence in Greece for this assumption, it may be the case here too.

Table 1: Gender representation in primary schools in Greece
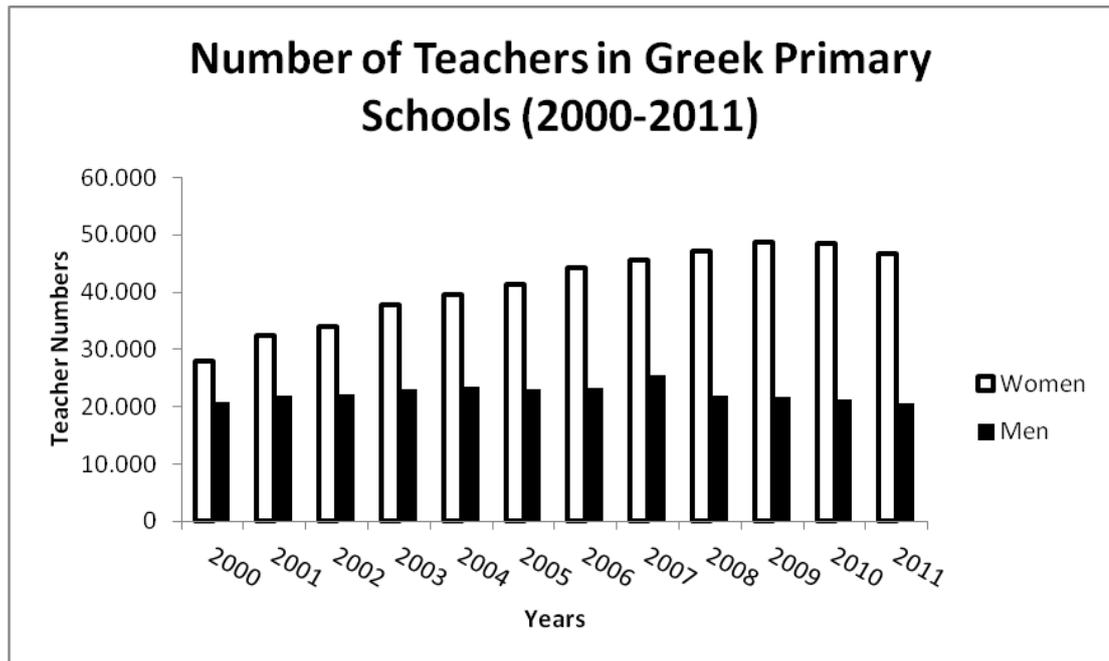
Table derived from statistical data from the Hellenic Statistical Authority (2000-2011)

With regard to headship, if men and women were proportionally represented, it would be expected that the percentage of women head teachers would be higher than that of men, with the exception of lower secondary education where it would be almost equal. This would have been a logical inference based on quantitative data from the Hellenic Statistical Authority (2011). Nonetheless, this is far from being the case. Over the years, the distribution of women in school headship has not reflected their numerical representation in the larger teaching population. It appears that Lynch's (1994) asertion that 'women teach and men manage' reflects the predominant pattern in Greek education. This is true even in primary education where women teachers outnumber men teachers by almost two to one.

Data in Table 2 below illustrates the situation for the headship in primary education, which is the focus of my thesis. As can be seen in Table 2, although women's representation in

leadership has increased in the last 12 years, and especially from 2006 onwards, women are still not present in proportion to their numbers in teaching.

The decision to embark on research dealing with women's experiences of educational leadership was stimulated by this statistical picture. This is the starting point for discussing gender and educational leadership (Kaparou and Bush, 2007). As the numbers indicate, women's disproportionate representation is an indicator that 'things don't work properly' (Al-Khalifa 1989, p. 95) in the distribution of leadership between genders.

Table 2: Percentage of women teachers and head teachers in primary education

Years	% of women teachers	% of women head teachers
2000	57.2	22.1
2001	59.6	22.9
2002	60.1	22.1
2003	62.1	22.6
2004	63	24.2
2005	64.2	25.6
2006	65.6	27
2007	66.8	29
2008	68.3	30.2
2009	68.3	31.2
2010	69.5	33.4
2011	69.4	35.3

Table derived from data from the Hellenic Statistical Authority (2000-2011)

1.2.3. Being a head teacher in Greece

In order to understand what it means to be a head teacher in Greece it is necessary to understand the Greek educational system. As already indicated, this is characterised by a predominantly centralised structure, unified planning and central control by the Ministry of Education (Lainas 1993), like those of France and Germany (Lainas 2000). Educational

matters are regulated, in their insignificant details, by a mesh of rules (laws, presidential decrees and ministerial decisions), which are supplemented by explanatory circulars. So, educational leaders have to keep up to date to identify the most recent legislation, and interpret and apply the regulations. This practice does not offer any room for initiatives regarding the function of the school (Lainas 2000, Papanastasiou 2010).

There is an explicitly hierarchical model, at the top of which is the Minister of Education and Religious Affairs and the central service of the Ministry of Education. Hierarchically graded under them, are the Regional Directors of Education, the Local Directors of Education, the head teachers and deputy head teachers and, finally, the teachers. Each position has different levels of power, status and advantages.

The leadership posts at the school level are the head, the deputy head and the School Teachers' Assembly. According to the legislation, the head of the school unit is in charge of its smooth operation. This means in practice that the head teacher is responsible for applying educational laws and ensuring the efficient operation of school. S/he has responsibility for the implementation of the timetable and the curriculum, health and safety and protection of the school population, the cleanliness of the school and the organisation of school life. S/he also has the main responsibility for the co-ordination of school life, the observation of laws and circulars and the application of decisions of the Teachers' Assembly. In addition, s/he participates in the evaluation of performance of the educational personnel of the school[1] and collaborates with the school advisers and the Regional and Local Directors of Education for the more effective transaction of his/her duties.

The Teachers' Assembly (which is a governing body, comprised of all teachers in a school and has the head teacher as president) in a school is responsible for taking up some of the administrative duties. These include updating the students' records, selecting deputy heads (from the teachers who want the post) and leaders of computer laboratories, ordering and distributing the textbooks, planning the teachers' schedules, handling correspondence and organizing fieldtrips. Some of these duties are of an administrative nature, but since in most schools there is no administrative staff, these are distributed among the teachers at the beginning of each school year, either after discussion, a draw or some other way. Practice has also shown that the Teachers' Assembly, along with the head teacher,

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[1] this has not been implemented at the time of writing this thesis, even though this is referred to the Presidential Decree 152/2013

sometimes decides upon the school's disciplinary policy even though it is not within their legally prescribed duties. The Assembly is monitored by the head teacher who is responsible for evaluating its professionalism, collegiality and punctuality.

It is worth noting that even though the majority of the teaching staff in all areas of education in Greece is female, the majority of the deputy heads, who are elected by the Teachers' Assembly, are men as statistical data show (Hellenic Statistical Authority 2012a and b). So, it is likely that men put themselves forward and are elected by their colleagues, supporting the traditional construction of leadership as 'masculine'.

Compared with the role of the head teachers in the UK, the Greek head teacher's role is different. In Greece, there are no governing bodies in schools. Instead, the head teacher is the only one responsible for the internal organisation, management and control of the school. S/he is accountable only to the Director of the Local Educational Authorities (LEA) as far as the application of laws is concerned. Moreover, s/he is not responsible for appointing teachers, as this is done centrally by the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, after National (Panhellenic) formal exams (ASEP). As far as the disciplinary policy in the school is concerned, the head teacher can be considered as a coordinator, as the law does not permit any freedom on ways to discipline teachers and staff. Additionally, in Greek schools there is no inspectorate even though, as indicated earlier, this is referred to a Presidential Decree but is not implemented yet, and school budgets are allocated by the Ministry of Education and religious Affairs via the local Mayor depending on the number of the students in each school. In Greece, salaries for those working in the public sector depend on their education and years of experience, with the exception of hospital doctors, military personnel, firemen, archbishops and judges who are paid under special schemes. So, a teacher's salary in Greece is €7,800-14,000 (around £ 6,226-11,175) (depending on years of experience) and a head teacher gets paid a standard teacher's salary plus €115 (around £95) each month, so the annual head teacher's salary in Greece is €8,580-€16,980 depending on years of experience (around £6,600-£13,061) (Eurydice 2014). At the same time in the UK a teacher's salary is £25,000-42,000 (Eurydice 2014) and a head teacher's salary can reach (or even exceed) £100,000.

To sum up, the head teacher's role in Greece is different from the head's role in the UK. It is characterised by hierarchical control with a top-down structure. S/he has the full responsibility for the school, but at the same time, in this bureaucratic structure, s/he has

to abide by democratically made decisions of the Teachers' Assembly. But, as Kousoulos et al (2004) note, not all head teachers abide by these decisions and some choose to approach leadership in a more autocratic way. In practice there is no way to assess and evaluate their leadership approaches as there is no formal inspection system in Greece. The teachers' union has made some formal complaints regarding head teachers' behaviours (e.g. DOE 2012) but, to my knowledge, no action was taken. So, it can be assumed that there may be tension between the teachers and the head teacher in schools where leadership approaches are considered by the teachers as autocratic.

It is important, therefore, to recognise the specific context of the Greek educational system in locating this study. The majority of research of gender and educational leadership in schools has been conducted in other countries, in particular in the UK and the US and whilst I draw on this research it is important to recognise the different locations in which it has been conducted.

1.3. Aims and research questions

The overall aim of this study is to explore the ways in which educational leadership may be gendered in the context of Greek primary schools. Specifically the study sets out to:

1. Explore how men and women teachers and head teachers perceive and experience educational leadership.

2. Identify the extent to which these perceptions and constructions of educational leadership are gendered.

3. Contribute to the development of feminist theoretical understandings of the under representation of women in leadership roles in Greece.

4. Consider the implications of the findings for the development of policy and practice with a view to improving the representation of women in educational leadership roles in Greece.

5. Contribute to theoretical debates about gender and educational leadership, and to the small but growing body of research in Greece.

On the basis of the main aims of the study, the questions which the study addresses are as follows:

i. How do women and men head teachers construct their personal and professional identities?

ii. How do women and men teachers construct their personal and professional identities?

iii. How do men and women teachers decide and prepare to progress with their careers (or not)?

iv. How do men and women head teachers combine career and family?

v. What challenges do women and men head teachers face in the workplace?

vi. How do men and women head teachers and teachers see the future for women in educational leadership and what changes do they believe are needed in order to improve the representation of women?

vii. To what extent and in what ways are the experiences and identities of teachers and head teachers gendered?

The analysis presented within this study draws upon constructions which are critically examined in relation to the lived experiences of a group of head teachers and teachers, women and men. I conducted a qualitative study, using a feminist social constructionist approach based on the relative and shifting nature of truth and I aim at discussing my participants' constructions at a particular moment. My analysis draws on 40 semi-structured interviews (15 with women head teachers, 10 with men head teachers, 10 with women teachers and 5 with men teachers) from four different geographical areas.

These interviews shed light on the ways in which the participants in this study, head teachers and teachers, are positioned and position themselves as women and men and as head teachers and teachers.

1.4. Theoretical approach

This study utilises a theoretical approach that can be defined as feminist social constructionism. This is to say it is primarily concerned with examining how certain constructions draw upon dominant positions and how these relate to wider relations of

power. Feminist social constructionism is deeply concerned with social constructions that appear in the form of concepts, practices, entities, and attributes that constitute oppression against women (Friedman 2006). So, this study presents the men and women teachers' and head teachers' views on a specific and largely ignored situation in Greece. Women's under-representation in educational management is not only a numerical reality but a social construct, as well. Hence, as it is a product of social relationships that are presumably under human control and are not stable and fixed; whatever is oppressive to women can be made better by humans acting differently.

This project has been influenced by a number of scholars working internationally within sociology and the sociology of education, who have focused on the continued influence of gender on the shaping of identity and choices in relation to leadership, work and home (for example Coleman 1996, 2002, 2005b in the UK, Blackmore 1999 in Australia, Hall 1996 in the UK, Reay and Ball 2000 in the UK). This scholarship has critically investigated the extent and impact of gender and leadership in the construction of identities. My study intends to continue this work by examining how gender informs women's and men's ability to access and perform leadership duties in primary schools in Greece, a country where research on this subject is scarce and what there is, is mainly based on secondary data.

Whilst the issue of women's low/disproportionate participation in educational leadership and the barriers to their advancement have long been studied in the UK (e.g. Ouston 1993, Ozga 1993, Evetts 1994, Hall 1996, Coleman 2001), US (e.g. Shakeshaft 1989), Canada (e.g. Reynolds 2008), Australia (e.g. Blackmore 1993) and New Zealand (e.g. Fitzgerald 2006), this is not the case in Greece.

1.5. Significance of the study

The findings of the study will be of value to those who are either directly or indirectly concerned with the progress of women educational leaders in Greece and to those addressing issues of gender equality and educational leadership.

The significance of this research primarily lies in the fact that it attempts to deal with a long lasting situation in Greece. That is, there is a lack of literature in the Greek setting that specifically looks into and documents women's experiences of progressing to and

experiencing primary school leadership or attempts to clarify why women have been disadvantaged in ascending the educational hierarchy. In this respect, drawing from the participants' first hand experiences, this thesis is important in developing a more theorised explanation of women's uneven take up of Greek educational leadership posts.

Also, this thesis will:

1. Add to knowledge and understanding of women in educational leadership by showing what the phenomenon looks like in Greece.
2. Add to knowledge about how women may overcome 'obstacles' when aspiring for leadership and potentially encourage them to go further in their career paths.
3. Inform and advise Education Officers in the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs in the planning and implementing of training programmes and courses on leadership for educational leaders and potential leaders.
4. Inform Education Officers in the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs in the appointment of head teachers so they are able to make the best possible use of available human resources.

I also hope that this study will generate further research in similar areas of concern in Greece and in other countries where there is also limited research.

1.6. Overview of chapters

The following outline of chapters is intended to help the reader navigate their way through the thesis. In the next chapter of this thesis I engage with the theoretical and empirical work that contributes to an understanding of gender and educational leadership within a global and Greek context. Expanding upon the theoretical discussion I trace a movement from theories of essentialism, which still tend to underpin common understandings of gender, towards social constructionism. I introduce the concepts of 'femininities' and 'masculinities' along with the concepts of 'power' and 'patriarchy' and their relationship to the construction of identities.

Methodological and epistemological issues are the focus of Chapter Three. The chapter provides an in-depth discussion of my epistemological location and the ways in which this

has informed the methodological design. This section also includes information on the research sites, participants, methods of analysis, as well as a discussion of ethics and power within the study.

The next three chapters constitute the main analysis of my data. They provide a comprehensive overview of my main research questions. Chapter Four begins with an analysis of the data about the participants' constructions of the patterns of careers men and women may follow and the process through which they decide to apply (or not) to become a head teacher. In the following chapter, Chapter Five, I discuss the participants' approaches to leadership and the extent to which these can be seen to fit (or not) with a construction of leadership as 'feminine' or 'masculine'. In addition, their conceptualisations of what constitutes an ideal head teacher and their experiences of the potential difficulties of combining career with family are discussed. Chapter Six provides a critical examination of the participants' constructions of the future for women in educational leadership. Exploring their concerns and rationales, this analysis seeks to provide a stimulus for thinking about ways to change the current under-representation of women in leadership positions in primary education.

I conclude this thesis in Chapter Seven with an overview of the key findings and contributions to knowledge made by this research, assessing throughout how successfully I have met the project's objectives. I reflect upon the limitations of the study, outline the study's implications for public policy and propose directions for future research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

This study seeks to provide a critical feminist analysis of the formation of gender and leadership in primary schools in Greece. In particular it investigates the way women and men construct gender and the constructions of leadership these give rise to. The literature critically examined in this chapter includes both theoretical approaches and specific empirical interventions that offer tools to contextualise, explain or critique changing configurations of identities.

In the first part of this chapter I introduce the theoretical framework of social constructionism that I claim provides a productive analysis for understanding gender and leadership, not as an inevitable and natural outcome of biology, but as a configuration of identity that is produced through complex interactions.

Then I draw on literature which explores theorisations of gender, 'femininities' and 'masculinities' in order to conceptualise my theoretical understandings. Following this I introduce key theoretical approaches that have been adopted to analyse constructions of educational leadership in relation to gender identities, patriarchy and power, and assess their utility to this particular project. I begin by illustrating how theories of gender in the last 20 years have sought to explain the potential differences between men and women[2]. I argue that assuming that differences are attributable only to gender is too simplistic an account. I critically engage in the debate that categories such as age, and sexuality may have a significance that necessitates a more critical approach to the issue of leadership and gender.

I move on to critically review international, mainly Western (UK and US), literature, in order to contextualise this study within the current knowledge in the field and I present the existing Greek literature on the subject. Discussions with Greek scholars and personal research have shown that little research has been conducted relating to the role, constructions and approaches of women in educational leadership in Greece, so after

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[2] Literature from the last 20 years is being discussed, with some exceptions that include older studies that were considered as groundbreaking and had a major impact on the literature/research that followed (e.g. Shakeshaft 1989)

acknowledging the different contexts, I will mainly draw on international literature around gender and educational leadership.

Following this, I provide a critical review of the relevant literature around the barriers that women may face when they reach (or aspire to) educational leadership. The analysis is intended to illuminate these barriers from a social constructionist perspective.

2.2. Theoretical framework

This study takes a social constructionist perspective, looking at how gender and educational leadership is constructed by the head teachers and teachers who participated in the research. Therefore, in the following sections, I will briefly introduce how this social constructionist paradigm has taken shape, what it means, and what implications it has for social research

Gubrium and Holstein (2008, p. 3) explain that '[t]he leading idea [of social constructionism] always has been that the world we live in and our place in it are not simply and evidently "there" for participants. Rather, participants actively construct the world of everyday life and its constituent elements.' Burr (2003) also articulates the key premise of social constructionism, arguing that:

> …a lot of things we take for granted as given, fixed and immutable, whether in ourselves or in the phenomena we experience, can upon inspection be found to be socially derived and socially maintained. They are created and perpetuated by human beings who share meanings through being members of the same society or culture (p. 45).

Both statements imply that there is no given, natural or authentic understanding possible of the world or of people. Instead, they hold that people's understanding of reality draws on a society or culture. Social constructionism therefore takes a critical stance toward taken-for-granted knowledge, viewing the ways in which we understand the world as historically and culturally specific, and thus suggesting that neither the social world, nor we ourselves as people, have any 'true' or discoverable nature. For social constructionists, our way of understanding the world is a social process.

Berger and Luckmann (1966) propose the idea that all knowledge, including the most basic, taken-for-granted common sense knowledge of everyday reality, is derived from and maintained by social interactions. So, they emphasise that subjective meanings, common sense knowledge and objective facts are all socially constructed through the interaction between members of a community and they therefore draw our attention to the process in which 'the subjective meanings become objective facticities' (Berger and Luckmann 1966, p. 18).

Building on Gergen's (1985) work, Burr (2003) lists some key premises shared by social constructionist research, which have been considered as defining features. Some aspects relevant to this study are selected here for further explanation.

Firstly, social constructionism is based on a critical stance towards taken-for-granted knowledge. Social constructionism theory proposes that 'what we take to be the knowledge of the world is not a product of induction, or the building and testing hypothesis' (Gergen 1985, p. 266). The traditional view that scientific theory serves to reflect or map reality in any direct or decontextualised manner has been severely challenged by the following two questions proposed by Gergen (1985): 'How can theoretical categories map or reflect the world if each definition used to link category and observation itself requires a definition? How can words map reality when the major constraints over word usage are furnished by linguistic context?' (p. 266-267). Further, Burr (2003) argues that

> [social constructionism] invites us to be critical of the idea that our observations of the world unproblematically yield its nature to us, to change the view that conventional knowledge is based upon objective, unbiased observation of the world (Burr 2003, p.3).

For example, gender is examined in this thesis not as a biological category, but as a social construct. To put it another way, the categories according to which human beings are divided into men and women do not necessarily refer to real divisions. They are constructed through the gendered understandings that we find in specific cultures (Cuddy et al 2010).

Secondly, the historical and cultural specificity of knowledge is another important idea for social constructionism theory. The ways we understand the world, the categories and

concepts we use, are historically and culturally specific. Our knowledge about the world is the 'product of historically situated interchanges among people' (Gergen 1985, p. 267), or as Burr (2003) puts it 'all ways of understanding are bound to specific historical and cultural contexts' and 'dependent upon the particular social and economic arrangements prevailing in that culture at that time' (p. 4). Any given object can have radically different meanings in different cultures that can change markedly over time.

Thirdly, 'knowledge is sustained by social processes' (Burr 2003, p. 4). Our understandings of ourselves and of the world are constructed together through our everyday social interaction, in which our use of language plays a central role. Fourthly, 'knowledge and social action go together' because possible constructions of the world are multiple and they also invite or make possible different forms of social action, that is, 'they have implications for what is permissible for different people to do, and for how they may treat others' (Burr 2003, p.5).

Finally, in social constructionism language plays the primary formative role in the construction of knowledge. Raskin (2002) points out that the role of language is critical in social constructionism as 'how people talk about themselves and their world determines the nature of their experiences' (p. 17). Burr (2003) claims that 'language and our use of it, far from simply describing the world, both constructs the world as we perceive it and has real consequences' (p. 46). All this can show that in making sense of any form of knowledge, of the way it has been constructed, or of its effect in society, language should always be at the centre of the analysis. As Burr states, 'It is the insistence upon the nature of language as constantly changing and varied in its meanings that is the key stone of social constructionism' (2003, p. 46).

The basic assumptions of social constructionism outlined above raise a number of questions for our understandings of ourselves and the world. As we, ourselves, and the social world are seen as the product of social processes, it follows that any notion of gender being 'a determined nature to the world or people' must be rejected (Burr 2003, p. 5). Instead, gender is viewed as situated, partial and contingent, stemming from the particular perspectives and lenses through which we gaze at the world.

So, social constructionism puts emphasis on the continuous and interactive nature of gender construction and its confirmation by individual men and women in daily life. As such, it leaves room for the possibility of change in the analysis of gender behaviours and

gender relations. Such change may follow change in age, gender, professional post, and, possibly, location. In this study of school leaders, this conceptualisation provides a theoretical tool for understanding change in gender relations and understandings.

Hence, social constructionist gender theory provides a helpful framework to analyse change in gender understandings among women and men head teachers and teachers and demonstrates the interactive, continuously changing nature of gender relations and understandings as a result of both inter-personal and larger societal/cultural influences. It helps to examine how gender relations are reproduced and reaffirmed on the one hand, while challenged and negotiated on the other.

In the following section I discuss theories around gender identity with an emphasis on social constructionism.

2.3. Gender identity

In international literature the debate between gender essentialism and gender social constructionism has been pivotal. Although the theoretical focus of this thesis is on gender social constructionism, I also engage in a discussion of the essentialist approaches to gender theory, as these still often underpin people's assumptions and the ongoing negotiations of gender (Sandilands 2004).

Public discourse and some literature tend to present differences in gender identities as representing a difference in nature, an innate difference reflecting an essentialist view followed by generalisations about women and men. So, an essentialist view argues that there are pervasive differences between men and women because of different biological and psychological dispositions. According to this view, sex is conceptualised in terms of binaries: male/female, man/women, masculine/feminine and gender is understood as being biological, depending on the body and its form or shape. So, unitary stereotypes tend to depict men as directive, bureaucratic and instrumental and women as collaborative, relational and organic (Ferguson 1984, Adler et al 1993).

Neuroscience is now being used to resurrect these older arguments that women and men are born different. Gurian et al (2001) suggest that we should talk to children in the appropriate way for their gender because the brains of girls and boys learn differently.

Baron-Cohen (2007) argues that there are different types of brain which he labels as 'male' and 'female', although he argues that a male brain can be found in a female and a female brain in a male. Nevertheless, his use of descriptors of 'male' and 'female' brains reinforce the gender binary that is supported by gender essentialists. Baron-Cohen (2007) also asserts that the male brain is hardwired for understanding and building, while the female one is for empathy and people should choose their professional careers based on that. So, his assumption appears to be that men are more suited to being scientists, engineers, bankers and lawyers, while women are better at understanding others' feelings and responding to them sympathetically. According to Baron-Cohen, women are considered to have the kinds of qualities that are thought more suited for work as counsellors, primary school teachers, nurses, therapists and group workers. So, it can be assumed that women do not possess the qualities or abilities needed for leadership because of their brains.

One of the major critiques of the essentialist view of gender (and hence of leadership theory based on it) is that it ignores plausible social and local explanations because of the tendency to try to find evidence for the biological determination of differences between the sexes (Rose 2001). So, the proponents try to establish these differences as the root of differences in personality and of the leadership approaches of men and women. Fine (2010) reviews studies that demonstrate how gender bias pervades society and argues that it is a delusion that science has shown that hardwired sex differences mean that it is pointless to hope or strive for greater sex equality. Fine does not claim that male and female brains are the same; she agrees that there are small differences in babies' brains. Nevertheless, she points out that babies are born as being very sensitive to the environment and very receptive to the information they receive. Therefore she claims that the way boys' and girls' brains are when they are born does not describe sexual differences, as only part of the variation in children's development can be explained by their gender. Also, she argues that the overlap between boys and girls is much greater than the differences between them. Skills are not built into the genetic architecture of boys' and girls' brains but are responsive to the environment in which boys and girls live. Fine (2010) concludes that neurosexism promotes damaging, limiting and potentially self-fulfilling stereotypes and she shows that there are almost no areas of performance that are not touched by gender stereotypes. Similarly, Jones (2002) argues that humanity is not only where men (and women I may add) are born, but also where they get unmade and unravelled by genetics, chemistry, history, culture and ideology. More recently, he argued that human brains may be influenced by genes, but the environment and culture also play

an important role in shaping gendered brains and abilities (Jones 2013). So, according to Jones, gender is socially rather than biologically constructed. Gender, therefore, should not be seen as two static categories, but rather 'a set of socially constructed relationships which are produced and reproduced through people's actions' (Gerson and Peiss 1985 p. 327). It is constructed by dynamic relationships and it is something that 'one does recurrently in interaction with the others' (West and Zimmerman 1987, p. 140). So, gender is viewed as a dynamic social process.

These constructions begin early in life, as most children develop a clear sense of gender identity, of being either 'a boy' or 'a girl' at a young age through gender socialisation (Ryle 2014). These ideas are further confirmed when children begin their early childhood education. Francis (1996) for her PhD research, studied the talk of 145 7-11 years old children in role play and interviews. She wanted to see whether children constructed the genders as different or the same, oppositional or not oppositional and whether or not they constructed gender as a source of power. She found that many children constructed genders as oppositional and these constructions are suggested to have an impact upon many children's power positions in role play interactions and in the classroom. Hence, Francis argues that it appears that children construct gender as a source of discrimination in adult work.

These findings raise important questions about the gendered experiences children and young people have as they seem to draw on the different cultural ideas and messages they receive. Boys and girls are often encouraged and praised for quite different behaviour. Girls often emphasise and are praised for stereotypically 'feminine' characteristics, such as being conscientious, responsible, obedient and helpful, while boys are more often allowed to break the rules of conversations, to talk loudly and dominate and to cut in and speak without raising their hands or obtaining permission first (Francis 2008). Court (1994) has also pointed out how cultural ideas developed within Western societies about appropriate ways to 'be' 'feminine' or 'masculine' are associated with beliefs about the kind of work men and women are most suited to. In her view these beliefs have been particularly significant in the context of education where specific experiences are found to have shaped the way children see themselves as adults, such as when they take on a leadership position, like headship. These various experiences are likely to impact, not only on the construction of gender identities but on their leadership identities as well.

In this study gender identities are conceptualised as multiple, fluid and everchanging. In essence, these perceptions advocate the acceptance of multiplicity rather than consistency in each person's identity. This approach emphasises the ways in which people may need to adopt multiple roles and construct multiple gender identities in order to negotiate meanings, status, security, and position in their everyday life (Burr 2003). People may have many identities at the same time, as parents, friends, husbands and wives and as leaders. Each head teacher in this research is thus developing his/her own distinct leadership identity in a context where gender assumptions about leadership continue to prevail.

An example of such gender-specific assumptions is to be found in research findings from Spain. Rodriguez et al (2006) examined nursery school teachers' perspectives to check if the discourse which shows boys and girls as opposites, relational and different from each other is still maintained by the teachers. They found that children's behaviour was not necessarily restricted by teachers who sometimes allowed the children to behave in a way that was seen as beyond the limits established for each gender. 'However' they state 'boys and girls are almost never encouraged to behave against social stereotypes' (p. 192). Such stereotyped behaviours can only be formed through the cultural messages children receive. So, girls appeared to internalise 'femininity' by being more caring, emotional and by pretending to be mothers. At the same time boys seemed to choose options which match with 'masculinity'. From these messages they may later in their lives draw on information about the 'masculine' criteria in which the image of leadership seems to be enshrined. So, gender identities do not pre-exist individuals, but at the same time there are constraints on the identities we construct (Bucholtz 1999). Bucholtz (1999) also incorporates agency into her definition of identities, emphasising that the individuals are not just simply passive recipients of social stereotypes. Similarly from the perspective of discursive psychology, Weatherall (2002, p. 138) argues that 'identities are progressively and dynamically achieved through discursive practices that individuals engage in.' So, individuals construct various identities in social interaction, as Francis (1996) also argued.

So, in contrast to essentialist, fixed conceptualisations of gender, therefore, social constructionism accounts for multiple configurations of gender, 'masculinities' (Connell 1995) and 'femininities' (Genz 2009). In contrast to widespread understandings in the West of 'feminine' as naturally nurturing and caring, 'femininity' is dynamic, various and changing, and it is perhaps helpful to think in terms of multiple 'femininities'. As Laurie et al (1999), argue this recognition of a multiplicity of 'femininities' suggests that dominant

forms of 'femininity' often draw on 'natural' and 'essential' associations between sex and gender. Also, in her research, Genz (2009) argues that there are multiple 'femininities' that have power dynamics associated with them. So, while recognising various forms of 'femininity', it is important not to view them as stable and fixed but rather as related to context, position and environment.

'Femininities' are best understood as being in process, constantly being made in different times and places. Many interrelated elements contribute to the construction of one's gender identity. Among the elements that may shape gender identity are age, social class, ethnicity, sexuality and physical appearance. As Pyke (1996, p. 531) argues 'hierarchies of social class, race and sexuality provide additional layers of compilation'. They form the structural and cultural context in which gender is reproduced, reaffirmed and challenged, in everyday life, thereby fragmenting gender into multiple 'masculinities' and 'femininities'. Studies also show how other parameters, such as race or social structures affect the construction of 'femininities' (Ware 1991). Mirza (1992), for example, reports that the construction of 'femininities' among black girls differs from the forms of 'femininities' found among their white peers. The young black women in her study made few distinctions between male and female abilities and qualities and perceived relationships between the sexes as more equitable than their white peers. Men and women therefore are not homogeneous groups. Rather, differences between women and between men exist according to, for example age, socioeconomic class, race, sexuality and individual variation (hooks 2000, Reynolds 2002, Richardson 2008).

Despite this recognition, gender constructionism has been criticised for ignoring the interaction among gender, race, ethnicity, class and other social categories (Hoff-Sommers 2000, Gurian et al 2001). It is argued that the women who authorise and control most gender discourse are privileged white women, whose experience of gender is not similar to women who are marked differently within complex stories of gender, race or class (hooks 1981, Sandoval 1990). In my research, all of the participants are white Greeks (this was not intentional, but reflects the demographics of the Greek primary school teaching force) and they represent various age groups, sexualities and roles within the school. In this thesis, I acknowledge the differences that may exist between the participants in my research by drawing on a social construction framework throughout my study, rather than making assumptions about the way they construct gender.

There are also a number of studies from all around the world in which researchers have traced the construction of 'masculinities' in particular time and place (Connell 2000). Connell (1995, 2002) has reached the conclusion that there is not one form of 'masculinity', but 'masculinities' (in plural). As Whitehead (2002) notes, 'masculinities' are multiple and plural, differing over time, space and context. They are also affected by variables such as race, ethnicity, class and age and sometimes men learn to avoid behaviours that are considered as less 'masculine' in order to avoid being stigmatised (Harris 1995). There seems to be a reconfiguration of power relations between different forms of 'masculinity' where dominance is more fragmented and unpredictable and there is also an interplay between 'masculinities' (Connell 1995, Ferguson 2001). As Christensen and Larsen (2008) note, 'what in some contexts appears as marginalised masculinity may in other contexts be hegemonic' (p. 56).

Studying 'masculinities' and 'femininities' is not about more or less 'masculine' or 'feminine' characteristics, it is about patterns of social practice that construct and sustain a hierarchical relationship between men and women, 'masculinities' and 'femininities'. This is of particular interest in my research, as I explore the relationships between men and women head teachers and teachers in the typically 'masculine' arena of educational leadership in Greek primary schools.

Francis (2010) has identified a way to conceptualise the complexity and fluidity of gender as this is performed by women/girls or men/boys, as they are biologically sexed. She draws on Bakhtin's (1984) notions of monoglossia and heteroglossia in order to explore what it means to be a woman or a man. For Francis (2010), monoglossia describes the dominant definitions of gender – stereotypical notions of 'masculinity' or 'femininity'. Heteroglossia, on the other hand, describes the transgression by women/girls in doing 'masculine' behaviours or men/boys doing 'feminine' behaviours. She argues that binary notions of 'masculinity' and 'femininity' and their interdependency with sexed bodies limit how we capture the fluidity of the everyday experiences of gender. For example, Francis (2010) cites a number of incidents where boys and girls take on 'masculine'/'feminine' behaviours. In effect their behaviour tends to be different from normative gender behaviours. It is of great interest that young children do not appear to take up counter identities in terms of 'male femininities', rather there seems to be a complex arrangement of monoglossic and heteroglossic events, where the boys and girls she studied 'did not conform to monological accounts of gender' (p. 486) rather they drew on accounts of gender depending on the

situation. This conceptual division between gender monoglossia and gender heteroglossia enables her to locate behaviours that do not easily fit into traditional notions of 'masculinity' and 'femininity'. In this study these theoretical discussions of gender identity are relevant, as if I am to pursue gender and educational leadership, the complex and often contradictory nature of gender needs to be grappled with. In a gender-sensitive stance I need to recognise and challenge the dominant constructions about gender identities, where assumptions and practices may serve to reify existing traditional constructions, while at at the same time acknowledge that gender identities may be constructed in ways that are fluid and contradictory. As Francis (2010) argues:

> The conceptual tools of gender monoglossia and heteroglossia facilitate the marrying of these two positions: we may see patterns of gendered behaviours and inequalities as expressive of monoglossic gender practice, but within this be attuned to the complexity and contradiction at play (heteroglossia), both in the diversity of gender production and in our categorisation of it. It is this attunedness to heteroglossia that offers potential for disruption and the avoidance of the reification of gender norms, and the exposure of gender as discursively produced rather than inherent. (p 488)

So, I believe that gender is conceptualised neither as something individuals are born with nor acquired solely through socialisation, but as an active accomplishment that is done differently within specific social and cultural contexts (Francis 2010, Connell 2002, Messerschmidt 2011, West and Zimmerman 1987). Despite the dynamic and constantly changing gender construction, individuals are not entirely free to construct their gender identity, but they are restricted by social institutions which prescribe particular references of gender in specific contexts. So, I adopt a feminist social constructionist perspective of gender and leadership as the theoretical framework of my thesis.

2.4. Understanding gender in relation to patriarchy and power

Modern Greece is to a large degree a patriarchal society (Kantzara 2006). As Kaparou and Bush (2007) note: 'in Greece, patriarchy ensures that society is based on a male model, where men are at the top and women at the lower level' (p. 229). But cultural constructions of Greek women are more complicated. Writing in a newspaper Karaiskaki (2006) comments that 'the image of Greek women [is that they are] educated,

economically independent and unafraid of taking their lives in their own hands. However this image does not account for the multiple roles of women, the dramatic changes they experience through their lives and the stereotypes which affect them'.

Patriarchy is defined by Humm (1995) as 'a system of male authority which oppresses women through its social, political and economic institutions' (Humm 1995, p. 200). Similarly, Walby (1990) defines patriarchy as a system of social structures and practices through which men dominate, oppress and exploit women. Patriarchy involves gender relations that can be 'understood as predicated on inequalities of power' (Jary and Jary 2000, p. 45).

Walby identifies six structures of patriarchy that, she claims, capture the depth and interconnectedness of women's subordination and allows for change over historical time. These six structures are: paid work, household production, culture, sexuality, violence and the state, and a historical account of the shift from 'private' to 'public' forms of patriarchy. The last structure is maybe the most important, as 'private patriarchy' is found in systems of household production and operates through the exclusion of women from the public realms of male power. In contrast, 'public patriarchy' operates through the segregation and subordination of women within the public sphere of politics and culture. So, this structure is in relation to the position of women within the workforce and, in relation to the present study, within educational management.

Patriarchy is preserved firstly through a preparation process that starts with children's socialisation in the family (the first agent of socialisation) and is encouraged further by education, literature and religion to such an extent that its values are adopted by men and women (Bryson 2003). However, this assumes that it is all embracing, leaving no space for women (or men) who think differently.

A major critique of patriarchy is that it encourages a rather limited conceptualisation of gender relations as occurring only between men and women, and does not acknowledge the full extent of gender relations and the fluid nature of gender (Ramazanoglou 1989).

As far as this critique is concerned, Walby's early work (1990) allows for change over historical time. Also, in her later work, Walby (1997) argues that in Britain although patriarchy still exists, it has altered in several respects. Especially, she argues, young women have made important gains compared with older women. So, older women may

still be subject to private patriarchy whereas younger women are more likely to be subject to public patriarchy, by their subordination and segregation within the structures of paid employment as well as within the different cultures (i.e. there are differences between the ways women are being treated, are being raised etc). As a result, women may not be excluded from the public sphere but they still are treated unequally to men (Walby 2007, 2009).

As Witz (1992) explains, patriarchy is 'the way in which "male" power is institutionalised within different sites of social relations in society' (p. 11). So, key to an understanding of gender is an understanding of gender and power relations. Bradley (1999) focused on power as a resource and related it to gender. This enabled her to demonstrate that there are variations in power since women and men can have control and access to different forms of power as a resource. In addition to this, she noted that there are differences in the amount of power as a resource that women and men can hold at different times. This means that power is not only complex but can also be flexible between and among women and men. This perspective enables the study to go beyond an analysis that conceptualises gender power relations simply in terms of patriarchy that views men as power-holders and women as oppressed victims (Elson and Pearson 1984, Bradley 1999). It provides a point of view that power is a resource that can be acquired and used by both men and women and it can operate differently in the various sites of an organisation. Men may be able to have more control over resources of an organisation which has more institutionalised rules, but women may be able to find ways of controlling those in the household or vice versa. This perspective of power enables us to realise that there are 'asymmetries of power' and with these, we realise who the 'power-holders' are, what their 'interests' are (Bradley 1999, p. 33), and what makes some women and men subjects and others objects of this power and sometimes even objects and subjects of power at the same time. Of course, this is fluid and can change over time (Bradley 1996). Although in my analysis I examine how workplace structures, cultures, identities and practice can reflect and reproduce one another by revealing the dynamic and shifting nature of organizational and people's relations, I also want to retain Bradley's (1999) idea of power holders. Although it is, to some extent, in contradiction to my approach, it is also important, as I believe the under-representation of women in educational leadership has to do with structural factors that are produced and reproduced by individuals who exercise varying degrees of power attached to them because of their gender.

In my research I have therefore followed Bradley in seeing power as a resource that women and men may draw upon in order to lead schools and form relationships in them. The gender and gender relations are shaped within these power relations. I use the concept of 'gendered power relations' to refer to the way head teachers lead schools and the relations within which this takes place. As Bradley (1996) argues, 'a theory of gendered power […] can handle the complexities […] of social relationships and avoid the crude view of women as victims' (p. 105). So, in identifying gendered power as a dynamic which requires theorising, Bradley's ideas resonate with my own aims to discuss the construction of leadership identities as multidimensional and gendered.

This approach seems to be useful, as it gives space for exploring how women may be empowered to resist dominations of gender, age and sexuality and can identify power holders and their interests. This allows a serious engagement with the private and public sphere of the home and work which is central to understanding the under-representation of women in a patriarchal society like the Greek one.

However, patriarchy is still a useful concept to describe the situation in Greece, as it still extends through the society but I acknowledge that women can take power in different situations or particular contexts.

2.5. Gender and educational leadership

In this section, I review studies on constructions of educational leadership. I call attention to studies of women and men leaders in education in Greece and elsewhere. I bring to the foreground studies that acknowledge that the multiple and overlapping identities of leaders contribute to their understandings and practice of leadership.

2.5.1. Participation in leadership

Shakeshaft (1989), as noted earlier, was one of the first who brought to the forefront issues of gender and educational leadership. Her study can be considered as groundbreaking because it was one of the first scholarly texts based on a woman-centred approach and it reframed the study of women throwing light on gendered approaches to educational

leadership. So, based on her own and others' research on women leaders' behaviour in schools, she concluded that to women leaders, relationships with others were central to their actions, teaching and learning were the major foci of their work, their style was more democratic and participatory, they were informal, more caring than men and the line they drew between the private and the professional was blurred. Shakeshaft's research was followed by a number of studies that also reported findings indicating that women tended to adopt a different approach to leadership than men.

In the UK, research on this subject with similar results has been undertaken by Adler et al (1993) and Ozga (1993). In Australia we find research by Blackmore (1999) and Collard (2003), and in New Zealand by Strachan (1993, 1999). Ozga (1993) and her contributors refer to research which indicates that women leaders tend to lead in a more democratic way than men, are more flexible, more intuitive than men, better at conflict solving and often more effective than men, and they call this 'the traditional dichotomy of gender characteristics' (p. 111). They also offer a series of accounts of women managers at all levels, arguing that educational leadership is 'defined by men' (p. 2) and that different career-shaping opportunities are offered to men and women.

Adler et al (1993) drew on interviews, a survey and life narratives to study the experience of women as feminists, managers and teachers and exploring the contradictions and compromises faced by women working in education in the UK. They considered the women's experiences of educational leadership and they found that men were thought to be leaders who were authoritarian, bureaucratic, isolated and utilitarian with women leaders being depicted as collaborative, organic and relational. Moreover, the researchers in their findings note women's ambivalent attitude to power as an issue for feminists both in classrooms and in senior positions. They also found that women leaders were seen to have a closer and more informal relationship with their superiors than men, they tend to emphasise co-operation rather than competition and focus more than men on teaching and learning.

Hall (1996) conducted a study of six women head teachers' experiences in the UK. She reported that, in contrast to Adler et al's findings above, these head teachers all appeared to draw on leadership approaches that are not exclusive either to men or women. However, she acknowledges gender as a significant and pervasive feature of organisations which affects women's experiences, actions and impacts. She looked at the way women did

the job without trying to draw comparisons with men and observed that the gender issue influenced both attaining headship and the way that women head teachers do the job, i.e. headship as a gendered identity. While acknowledging that '[t]he problems in making comparisons are in knowing whether the differences are attributable to gender, the context or personalities' (p. 201), she came to the following conclusion:

> The women heads [...] represented one recurring interpretation in spite of differences in personality and context. In other words the similarities between them were greater than their differences. I have suggested that what they held in common were the value systems underpinning their management and leadership behaviours, combined with the skills and competences they have developed throughout their careers. (p. 201, my emphasis)

Some years later, Collard (2003) asked a stratified sample of Australian men and women head teachers about their perceptions and beliefs about student abilities, curriculum goals and pedagogy, working with teachers and the roles of parent and community members. He found that women appeared to be more relational, committed to collegiality and teamwork and more willing to allow staff to participate in decision-making. Also Collard reported that they said they were more receptive to advice and more tolerant than men. Collard's findings thus suggest that there seemed to be significant differences in the perceptions and beliefs of men and women head teachers.

There are also more recent studies that conclude that women and men approach leadership in different ways. So, Arar (2012) in reviewing Grogan's and Shakeshaft's (2011) book, agrees with their argument that there is a 'feminine' approach to leadership in contrast to the traditional 'masculine' approach. He goes on arguing that this knowledge can inform leadership preparation programs that should be shaped according to these differences and include more 'feminine' approaches.

The argument that women lead differently from men is also taken up by Shapira et al (2010). They conducted interviews with four women head teachers in Arab schools in Israel. Although the researchers emphasise their research on cultural diversity and the issues these women have to deal with because of their nationality, they also note that their leadership approaches are considered 'feminine' with great attempt to show professionalism and an aspiration for excellence. Furthermore, they suggest that the women they studied appeared to be very interested in constructing a community in their

schools. So, according to Shapira et al's (2010) argument, cultural constructions may result in specific 'feminine' approaches to leadership.

Finally, Grogan (2010) argues that women around the world shape educational leadership in a unique way following certain patterns, different from the traditional 'masculine' ones. She draws on literature from the corporate world to argue that where the leaders are women, the corporations flourish and she says that this could be an example for educational leadership as well. So, she notes that 'women emphasize leadership for learning, leadership for social justice, relational leadership, spiritual leadership and balanced leadership (between home and work lives)' (p. 785). However she notes that women of all backgrounds and ethnicities do not have equal opportunities to become educational leaders, as leadership is constructed on traditional gender constructions that may differ across cultures, ethnicities and religions.

But the above mentioned studies seem to be based on a theoretical framework that considers gender primarily in terms of a dichotomy of male/female, even though Hall (1996) in the previous quote does acknowledge some differences between the women she studied. The women in the studies mentioned above tend to be considered as a distinct, homogeneous group, opposite to that of men, sharing the same or similar experiences, values and approaches to leadership. Considering all women as similar to each other can involve 'sweeping generalizations [...][that risk] over-claiming and over-simplifying' (Rhode 2003, p. 18). I have argued in an earlier section of this chapter, that childhood experiences, expectations, socialisation etc, may shape gender identities. I argue that the way gender is constructed may also affect leadership approaches. So, women may sometimes be found in research to have different approaches from men not only because they are considered as a homogeneous group, but also because women have been seen to have more in common with other women. For example, Shah (2010) draws on interviews with men and women head teachers in Aza Jamnu and Kashmir, Pakistan, to argue that women seem to approach leadership in a way different from that of men. She then notes, however, that the way leadership is understood, defined and practised by these women head teachers, is informed by the relevant cultural and belief systems related to cultural appropriateness and religious legitimisation.

In Greece the relevant research is limited and therefore, as I explained in Chapter 1, even though the context and the understandings of educational leadership between the

countries differ, in this study I will draw on mainly international literature, though I recognise that research conducted in other countries cannot unproblematically be applied to the Greek context. So, Taki (2006) in her PhD thesis, was the first who conducted a qualitative study of women in various leadership posts in education in the area of Thessaloniki, Greece. In her thesis she explores the reasons for the exclusion of women teachers from high-ranking administrative posts in primary education and also examines their under-representation in low-ranking posts and, finally, presents what she calls 'the female perspective of educational management' (p. ii). This is the first qualitative study in Greece, based on a grounded theory approach, of 20 women and men (although in the analysis no men are mentioned) who were serving or had served in administrative posts in public primary education (i.e. heads and directors of Local Education Authorities (LEA), school advisors and head teachers). Her results are grouped into three thematic categories: the reasons why women chose to become teachers, their career development, and the obstacles faced by women in their development. She found that most of her participants chose teaching because it was considered as 'a suitable career option for women' (p. 158). Although, there appears to be a differentiation between younger and older women. The younger ones appear to have planned their careers and to have worked towards achieving a leadership position, while the older ones just 'drifted' into it. Finally, she found that the main problems her participants faced in their career had to do with being accepted as leaders and combining their career with having a family. As a conclusion, she proposes a new, alternative leadership model, based on the way women manage education. That is a model which is transformational, democratic, people-oriented and based on humanist values. These characteristics of leadership approaches can be seen as informed by traditional gendered constructions of 'feminine' leadership (Coleman 2005b, 2003, Van der Boon 2003), and hence are not dissimilar from the approaches and conclusions of much of the international literature discussed above.

Brinia (2012) studied the potential existence of different approaches to educational leadership between men and women in different Greek districts. She conducted a qualitative study of in-depth interviews with 20 men and 20 women head teachers using a questionnaire to examine their leadership approaches. She used Giorgi's et al (1975) phenomenological method to analyse her data. She found several factors that may influence women to remain in teaching rather than seeking promotion (e.g. they like working with children, they have family commitments, they have limited experience, they tend to have more career breaks). She also reported that there are perceived differences

between men and women in leadership approaches, with women seen by her as being more emotional, sensitive and indecisive than men. But this conclusion seems to be problematic as Brinia draws on dominant constructions of gender which assume separate and distinct 'feminine' and 'masculine' characteristics. But recent research, as discussed earlier, has shown that gender constructions are more complicated than this binary model assumes. Gender identities depend on the situation, on cultural reasons and on the individuals and their experience.

In addition, both Taki (2006) and Brinia (2012) in their analysis consider gender as something static rather than fluid. They appear to consider men and women as homogeneous groups with similar characteristics because they belong to the same sex. So they adopt the idea that there are 'masculine' and 'feminine' ways of acting and, as a result, of leading, and they base the conclusions of their studies on this assumption. So Taki (2006) argues that:

> men tend to adopt transactional leadership which is expressed with a system of penalties and punishments [....] On the contrary, women adopt the transformational leadership model, a leadership that is not static, allows collegial solutions, encourages participation, information and power distribution. (p. 345)

Brinia (2012) also argues that 'personality characteristics [that are based on sex] diversify the way men and women [...] react as headmasters [sic] (p. 179). Both of them argue that women approach leadership in a different way from men. So, they consider them as a homogeneous group different from the group of men without critically discussing their findings. But in this way they do not take into consideration the socially constructed nature of leadership and that each person, either man or woman, may draw on different identities (both 'feminine' and 'masculine') in their leadership approach (Reay and Ball 2000) in a way that depends on the social, cultural and educational context and on their own histories and experiences.

Other researchers doing their research around the world have found less conclusive support for gender differences. Mertz and McNeely (1998) who studied African-American women head teachers, suggested that an 'either/or' and 'male/female' dichotomy is too simplistic and called for a multidimensional approach that examines context, ethnicity and other factors when conducting research on the issue of leadership approach. Similarly, Jirasinghe and Lyons' (1996) study of 225 head teachers in England, comprising of 113 men

and 142 women, found no differences between men and women teachers' propensity for directive leadership.

Grace (1995) showed that, in the English context, commitment to teamwork and a culture of consultation could be found in the accounts of both men and women heads, but women were likely to accept teamwork as a normal and organic process, whereas men referred to 'their' creation of teamwork as an important innovation in the school culture. Oplatka (2001) studied 25 women primary head teachers in Israel and investigated what happened to their managerial approach after a number of years as heads. He reported that a small majority of the women head teachers he interviewed (13 out of the 25) experienced, what he termed, 'cross-gender' (p. 291) transitions in managerial approaches. He argued that those who began headship with a democratic leadership approach experienced a transition to a more directive approach. Consequently it is suggested by Oplatka that women head teachers mid-career may experience a change from 'feminine' to 'masculine' approaches. This reinforces the questioning of essentialist dualisms and suggests that gender may not be the only determining factor. In this case career stage may influence the particular approach adopted.

But Reay and Ball (2000) offer a different view on the way women shape their leadership in practice. They suggest that leadership approaches adopted by women depend on the type of situation and culture of the school. Reay and Ball (2000) conclude that 'the inherent tension between being female and being a leader invariably results in adaptations and adjustments and the assumption of a femininity that is more congruent with leadership than traditional variants of femininity' (p. 147) and so they call for recognition of the diverse possibilities of multiple 'femininities' by implying that there is a 'femininity' more compatible with leadership. They argue that the roles that women undertake, as well as the context they work in, shape women's leadership in practice, not the other way around, or that at least it works both ways. They suggest that this is more a matter of degree, such as women being slightly less directive than their men counterparts, but conclude that 'there are clearly enormous difficulties in translating what are traditionally perceived to be women's ways of working into senior management contexts' (Reay and Ball 2000, p. 151).

Also in the UK , Coleman (1996) interviewed five women head teachers in England and Wales and found that all of them 'identified themselves as being caring, creative, intuitive and aware of individual differences' (p. 166). In a more extended survey of all head

teachers in England and Wales, Coleman (2002) found that the majority (85%) of the women and men head teachers described their management approach as being collaborative and people-oriented, that is, they see themselves as drawing on a 'feminine' stereotypical range of approaches with a significant minority of older women head teachers drawing on a more 'masculine' range of approaches. While it has to do with historical expectations which have lingered and social expectations about the roles of men and women, it seems from Coleman's study that the way the head teacher was constructed is a gendered position, where the prevailing values are mostly 'feminine'. Three years later, Coleman (2005b) repeated her study using a similar research tool and found that there were changes in the way men and women head teachers constructed leadership, as although gendered stereotypes about men and women as leaders still seemed to prevail, both men and women appeared to see themselves as adopting a slightly more 'masculine' leadership approach than the previous study. Coleman (2005b) argues, that

> There seems to have been a move to incorporate a slightly harder, tougher edge to the leadership style reported, and for this tendency to be shared by both men and women. Although the collaborative, caring and people centred concepts dominate, the more directive/efficient mode of operation is a strong second and […] slightly more apparent amongst women than men (p. 37).

As Coleman (2005b, 2009) also notes, changes may have happened due to the influence of national programmes and of culture change in the form of the current agenda in schools (i.e. inspectorate and proving one's worth). However, she argues, gender is an important factor that continues to differentially determine and affect the ways in which individuals operate, work and perceive each other.

This implies that any examination of gender identity as it relates to leadership approaches must be examined as a social construction in a particular time and place and in conjunction with traditional dominant 'masculine' constructions. Leadership approaches within a social constructionist framework are continuously being negotiated, so they become something complex and changeable. Gender identity can also be considered as in constant negotiation and change.

As individuals move between contexts, their experiences may lead to different and changing identity formations. This, in conjunction with the argument that the dominant constructions of leadership are 'masculine', over time, may lead to the assumption that the

leadership identity of head teachers is therefore likely to change as they have experiences which may impact upon them in various ways. So, there may be differences between the way men and women approach leadership, as much research has shown, but I argue these differences are not because of biological differentiation. Rather, I argue, these differences are because of the different experiences of women and men, the different gender socialisation and their different cultural expectations.

This study builds on the above body of research to explore the constructions of gender and leadership that Greek women and men head teachers and teachers hold. It also examines women's and men's career paths and the leadership approaches of Greek head teachers.

2.5.2. Barriers for women in educational leadership

Trying to understand why women are under-represented in educational leadership, in this section I discuss research related to women in educational leadership and the documented obstacles and barriers they seem to encounter in their pursuit of headship. A range of structural and cultural barriers have been recorded in the Anglo-Saxon countries. These include the traditional masculine culture that exists in some schools and the lack of supporting networks, the socially constructed beliefs about women and the multiple identity conflicts they often face.

In the literature prior to 20 years ago, women's presumed 'internal barriers' (i.e. lack of confidence, fear of failure and lack of competitiveness) were seen as the main reason for their low participation in educational leadership (i.e. Mosconi 1983) and this notion persists in both academic literature (i.e. Grogan and Shakeshaft 2011, Killingsworth et al 2010) and popular discourse today. Shakeshaft (1989), however, denounces the presumed low aspirations and low self-esteem of women as a 'blaming the victim' attitude and argues that 'using internal barriers as an explanation for women's perceived lack of achievement is inadequate […] It is not the women's psyche that is at fault and thus needs changing, but rather the social structure of society' (p. 556-557).

Looking at women's under-representation in educational leadership, one of the greatest barriers to women's careers might be considered the organisational culture in which they work. Appointing practices and sex discrimination for women who seek headship are part

of this culture. There is a history of interview panels choosing men over women (e.g. in the Carribean, Morris (1999) and in the US, Gupton and Slick (1996) have pointed this out). Other researchers have documented how people tend to hire those like themselves (Shakeshaft et al 2010, Shakeshaft 2011, Young 2003). Therefore, it is possible that white men tend to hire predominantly white men. Thus, women in the teaching profession face obstacles similar to those in other sectors, in terms of recruitment and promotion.

Another barrier that can be perceived as related to the organisational culture of schools in the US was reported by Home (1998). The researcher reported the lack of support from colleagues, mentors, or head teachers as one of the major external obstacles for women in the US who seek leadership positions. The lack of support reported by women in Home's study is significant, particularly in light of a study of successful women superintendents in Texas by Schroth et al (1999) in which support and encouragement was found to be key to women's success. Early in their careers, women usually had a superintendent or principal who encouraged them to move from the classroom into headship. Research in the UK shows similar results. Coleman (2002) studied head teachers in England and Wales and drew the conclusion that 40% of the women and about 35% of the men appeared to have taken some action regarding encouraging other women. Also, she found that women head teachers were more likely to have received encouragement from outside the school (family, husband etc) regarding their career planning.

Gupton and Slick (1996) argue that women seem to need more encouragement because of the additional stress they report as they enter leadership jobs in a male dominated world. While both sexes are involved in presenting themselves to maintain an image of an authoritative manager, in Gupton and Slick's study women said that they have to work harder to be seen as competent. Therefore, women have to do more work than men in order to legitimatise their presence in leadership. As a result, Gupton and Slick conclude that women leaders appear to be subject to a greater number of work-related pressures compared with their men counterparts.

However, there are indications that the traditional, male-oriented leadership identity seems to be changing. More recent research by Coleman (2005b) in England indicates that school head teachers' identities are being reshaped and reconceived. She supports the notion that women head teachers may bring many characteristics necessary for school reform. If characteristics of an effective school head teacher are redefined, this could

lessen gender stereotypes and focus on desirable characteristics that applicants (men or women) tend to bring to the position. The impact of this on women's ability to obtain and keep leadership positions has yet to be analysed, and my study will provide information about the experiences of women and men seeking to enter this environment in Greece.

But in order for women to enter leadership, networking is important, as through networks inside information about leadership positions can be gained, advice can be sought and support can be found. Women often seem to be excluded from networking for career progression (Coleman 2002) in particular from 'old boys' networks composed of men who hold power in the organisation (Coleman 2002, 2005b). The exclusion of women from men's networks helps to perpetuates the more 'masculine' customs and negative attitudes towards women leaders. The detrimental effects of exclusion from men's networks can block promotion, bring in discrimination and lower salaries.

Knouse and Webb (2001) discussed the importance of networking and made recommendations for strengthening women's and minorities' networks in the US. They suggest women's networks can provide a support group of people who have had similar experiences. However, Linehan (2001) argues that women in the corporate world in several EU countries (i.e. England, Belgium, France, Germany and Ireland) are capable of forming networks, but their networks are less efficient because they are not integrated in organisations. Linehan (2001) also suggests that, although it is beneficial for women to be involved in these networks, there are still more benefits to be gained from networking in the established male-dominated groups, because power is still predominantly held by men in organisations.

Apart from the way women may be constructed in the school culture, constructions of gender in the wider society may also be a barrier for women's career advancement. Shakeshaft (1989) refers to the 'social structure of society [as] the root cause of inequities'. These constructions emphasise cultural and social norms that construct and encourage discriminatory practices. The different ways that boys and girls construct their identity as 'feminine' or 'masculine' along with the dominant gender constructions help to explain why there is a disproportionately small number of women in leadership positions. Therefore, women may perceive themselves as having fewer opportunities, and hence they may not aspire for leadership posts.

Furthermore, because of stereotypical constructions about gender, there is a tendency to attribute occupational segregation (through which women tend to be subordinate to men and in caring/helping occupations) to personality differences. Thus it can be assumed that the way some women are constructed as inferior to men and in occupations that are considered as more caring and nurturing, may be due to traditional gender constructions. As Brunner (2002) indicated for the North American women she studied, the most successful and effective educational administrator is seen as male, middle-aged, Republican, Anglo-Saxon, intelligent, and a good student. These gender stereotypes constitute normative beliefs to which people tend to conform or are induced to conform.

One of the reasons for women's under-representation suggested by some research (i.e. Gupton and Slick 1996, Wilkinson 1991) is 'low aspirations' which may be directly affected by the way some women perceive the constructions and expectations that others hold for them. So, if women are constructed as inferior to men, then they may act as such (Gupton and Slick 1996, Wilkinson 1991). Riehl and Byrd (1997) presented profiles of women and men teachers' aspirations for headship in the US. They evaluated the data from the National Centre for Education Statistics' 1987-1988 Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS). The study utilised national data to examine trends over the previous 10 years. The survey followed the careers of teachers over a two-year period. Thus, the data set includes a random sub-sample of teachers who moved from teaching into school administration within this time frame. Of the 4,812 public school teachers who responded to both the base and follow-up surveys, 99 had become school administrators including 60 men and 39 women. The researchers found that men and women teachers may possess the same level of aspirations for school leadership. On the other hand, women were not as likely to leave teaching although some of them had advanced training in educational leadership at rates consistent with men's, indicating that they were interested in administrative work. According to Riehl and Byrd (1997), these findings indicate that although some women may aspire to leadership, women were less likely to be head teachers than men. The authors suggest that this may be happening because of the perception that teaching in a classroom is less demanding than a leadership position.

Finally, women's under-representation in educational leadership may be due to the presumed difficulties of combining the multiple identities (head teacher, woman, wife, daughter, mother etc) that women draw on. In today's modern Greek nuclear family, many women do not have practical support from other members of the extended family and they

are assumed to have almost the entire responsibility for the household. This places pressure on women teachers to a greater extent than on men teachers. So, both private and professional identities may create pressure for women who seek headship.

Modern women have to juggle different life components such as school, family and social and personal areas simultaneously. This multiplicity may present difficulties because of the assumed different demands of each identity (Papanastasiou 2011). In Greece, society's primary expectation of women teachers is their professional identity as educator (Argyropoulou 2006). On the other hand, the woman teacher is also expected to fulfil her gender role in family relations. A Greek woman is considered as the centre of the family and has to spend a great deal of time on household labour. As a mother, she is expected to be concerned with the daily life and development of her children (Ketsetzopoulou and Symeonidi 2002). Wajcman (1998), albeit in a different field, reported similar findings in her study of 324 managers in high-technology multinational companies concerning their domestic arrangements in the US. The average weekly hours of housework (defined as cooking, cleaning, laundry, shopping and child care) for the women in the survey was 19 hours, whereas the average weekly total for men was 10 hours. In Greece the situation is similar, as women appear to do more than 75% of household work (Mercarini and Sironi 2012). Therefore, women do more housework than the men, while they perform the same number of hours of paid work as the men if they work full-time[3] (Arber and Ginn 1995, Wajcman 1998).

Faced with both social and household responsibilities, as well as career and family, the great majority of women try to make the best of both worlds. Most women are trying to balance a successful career and home and at the same time are attempting to establish identities that conform with social expectations (i.e. being a good mother, wife, daughter etc). In the field of education, Coleman (2002) found that 67% of the women head teachers in the UK were married and 53% had a child compared with 96% of men head teachers who were married and 94% with a child. When she repeated her study in 2005, she found that 78% of the women head teachers were married, 63% had a child and 96% of the men were married and 90% had a child. So, she concluded that although there were difficulties in both men's and women's lives, the lives of women appeared to be more deeply affected in both studies. Presumably, this could suggest that women without husbands and children

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[3] Part-time work is not very common in Greece, so statistics indicate that only 14% of working women and 6% of men work on a part-time basis in 2012 (www.3.weforum.org/docs/GGR1213/Greece.pdf)

were more likely to go for head teachers' posts. An important feature of leadership work is the long hours that both men and women have to spend at work in order to gain recognition and eventual promotion. Women who desire both a family and a career often juggle heavy responsibilities in both domains (Reay and Ball 2000). It can be practically impossible to reconcile the long hours of leadership work with the amount of time needed to care for a home and children. In this context, time is very much a gender issue.

Wajcman (1998) believes that the rising consumption and changing responsibilities that two-income families with dependants may face, may result in a collision with gender constructions, such as cultural constructions of motherhood and fatherhood, that cannot be easily modified. She indicated that taking care of children and our efforts to live well are the casualties of the collision between the changing and unchanging spheres. In Greece head teachers in primary schools have teaching responsibilities along with the headship duties. They have to teach 8-25 hours per week depending on the size of their school[4]. Headship requires many extra hours of work and as a result it may not be considered 'suitable' for women who may be mothers as well. So, having caring responsibilities can be a 'barrier' to women's advancement in educational leadership.

2.6. Conclusion

In this chapter, gender has been used as a lens to examine literature on educational leadership. The discussion opened with a discussion of the theoretical framework of social constructionism that underpins this thesis. An examination of the research around the construction of gender identities and gender in relation to power followed. Next there was a review of research in educational leadership in Greece and internationally. Interwoven was a discussion of the obstacles in women's pathway to headship. These obstacles can be perceived as arising from the 'masculine' culture that seems to dominate educational leadership, the social understandings about women and the conflict between the multiple identities that women draw on.

In the present study the innumerable acts of negotiation of gender will be examined in the field of educational leadership. The power relations in the workplace will be examined and

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[4] A head teacher in a school with 1-3 classes has to teach for 25 hours, with 4 and 5 classes for 20 hours, with 6-9 classes for 12 hours, with 10 and 11 classes for 10 hours and with 12 or more classes for 8 hours per week. At the same time a teacher teaches for 25 hours per week.

the subjects and objects of power (Bradley 1999) along with their negotiations and interplay will be identified. This means that I will study the complex interplay of those who act and also those who are acted upon (who may be the same person), and I will try to understand the ways in which their reactions, resistances and their practices of power in turn work to construct wider relationships and networks.

The study also discusses how women and men construct their careers in and their experiences of leadership and gender. This thesis offers insights into women's and men's experience of primary school headship in Greece, examines whether and to what extent these experiences are gendered and maps the constructions of the participants about the future of women in educational leadership in Greece.

In the next chapter I discuss the methodology and research methods in the study.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

I begin this chapter by exploring the methodological issues related to the theoretical perspectives that underpin the approach adopted for the present study. A justification for locating the study within the worldview of feminist ontology and the adoption of interviews as my research tool is given.

The research process is presented and practical issues of the study are discussed. The overall research design, preparation and data collection, data collection instruments, participants, study sites and practical ethical considerations are covered. This is followed by a discussion of the methods of analysis adopted in the study and the measures taken to ensure the trustworthiness and authenticity of the study. Finally, the chapter deals with the general ethical issues of the research.

3.2. Rationale of the study

As indicated in the previous chapter, women are under-represented in educational management both internationally and in Greece. But, there has been no systematic attempt to study in-depth the under-representation of women in educational management in Greece. With this knowledge gap in mind, the general aims of the present study were to explore teachers' and head teachers' perceptions and constructions of educational leadership, and to examine whether and in what ways these perceptions are gendered. Also, I aim to contribute to the development of feminist theoretical understandings of the under-representation of women in leadership roles. Moreover, with this study, I aim to consider how my findings could influence the development of policy and practice to improve women's representation.

3.3. Research strategy and methodological approach

3.3.1. The case for a qualitative approach

I decided to use a qualitative approach to the research, because I considered that the nature of the study would require expression of opinion and perception. Also, using a qualitative approach would allow the participants to talk about their perceptions and constructions. This decision is supported by Silverman (2009) who wrote that:

> If you are concerned with exploring people's life histories or everyday behaviour, then qualitative methods may be favoured. An insistence that any research worth its salt should follow a purely quantitative logic would simply rule out the study of many interesting phenomena relating to what people actually do in their day-to-day lives. (p. 10)

Therefore, the quantitative approach which is often associated with statistical data would be inappropriate for the present investigation.

Deeper understandings can be arrived at through qualitative methods, particularly with regard to social and educational research. Denzin and Lincoln (2005), explain a social constructionist approach, similar to mine:

> Qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is being studied and the situational constraints that shape inquiry [...] They seek answers to questions that stress how social experience is created and given meaning. (p. 10)

Furthermore, Denzin and Lincoln (2005) argue that:

> Both qualitative and quantitative researchers are concerned with the individual's point of view. However, qualitative investigators think they can get closer to the actor's perspective through detailed interviewing and observation [...] They argue that quantitative researchers are seldom able to capture their subjects' perspectives because they have to rely on more remote, inferential empirical methods and materials. (p. 12)

Walden and Walkerdine (1985) emphasised understandings of subjective reality in their research. In their attempt to see why although girls in primary education outperformed boys in certain aspects of the Maths curriculum, they were much less frequently entered for the higher status examination, and when they did enter their results were not as good as the boys'. When the teachers were asked to fill in questionnaires about their students' backgrounds and their views about teaching Maths to boys and girls, followed by interviews, it was noted that girls were perceived as being less confident and hard workers when they succeeded, while boys were seen as seeking opportunities for exploring. So Walden and Walkerdine (1985) argue that within classroom dynamics boys and girls are constructed in discourses of domination and subordination and power and resistance. A simple quantitative study that might just have measured the performance of boys and girls in Maths would not have given the valuable information about why these results occurred. In my research I want to explore the perceptions and experiences of men and women head teachers and teachers about educational leadership. I do not want to simply count their responses, but I want to listen to their own words when describing their experiences. Hence a qualitative approach is more suitable.

3.3.2. Social Constructionism: Applying theory to research

My research follows a social constructionist approach. So, knowledge is seen as a human construction and as such it cannot be an objective process (Burr 2003). Knowledge is co-created between the researcher and the researched and therefore knowledge is seen as local and specific to the people who participate in the research. My research is not intended to have objective 'scientific' status. The truths sought by positivistic methods are not considered appropriate for constructionist studies like mine (Lincoln and Guba 2000). Social constructionist research is characterised by context (like historical and cultural influence), rich or thick explanations of events, participant inclusion, researcher reflexivity and meaning generation (Gubrium and Holstein 2003). These characteristics differ from traditional positivistic research which focuses on objective knowledge captured via standardised procedures, which supposedly give access to the truths of the world (Hughes 1990).

Social constructionist research rejects the assumptions of universal knowledge and certainty claims (Fontana 2003). Traditional quantitative research is believed to control and

pre-plan the research participants' experiences, while social constructionism views the research participant as part of the process contributing to the development and outcome of any construct under study (Hoshmand 1994).

Social constructionism is viewed as focusing on 'attention to context, embedded meanings, acknowledgement of the contributions of the observer and the observed, utilization of tacit knowledge and preference for interactive modes of knowledge construction' (Hoshmand 1994, p. 27). These factors distinguish social constructionism from traditional positivistic science. Traditional scientific research fails to account for how people make sense of events and how they attribute meaning to situations. These are replaced with observer objectivity and independence from the research process itself. The interpretations of the research are put aside as being subjective and viewed as potentially threatening to the validity of knowledge generated (Gubrium and Holstein 2003). In my research I involve critical engagement with the social and historical constructions of my own knowledge production, instead of claiming objectivity. In this way I seek to avoid 'alienated knowledge' (Stanley 1990, p. 3) and an analysis that assumes what Haraway (2013) calls 'the God trick' (p. 189), a gaze from nowhere which masks its own partialness by appearing to be completely neutral. By using social constructionism I address the meanings people attribute to situations by relying on human communication, shared meanings and the contexts in which meanings take place.

From a social constructionist perspective, both the researcher and participants are included as a part of the research outcomes. The process of conducting research is through dialogue, collaboration and the co-constructed sharing of meanings and realities (Gubrium and Holstein 2003). All realities are given credence and value and are explored equally. Any interpretations of data that are made are believed to be constructed from the researcher's way of understanding and should (where possible) be verified by co-researchers. The outcomes of any social construction research are also a reflection of those who participated in the research as well as the topic that was researched. Therefore, shaping of the research results is not only because of the techniques used to generate information and knowledge, but also because of the opinions expressed by the participants (Atkinson and Coffey 2003).

Language is very important to social constructionist research. Meanings are thought to be created in the domain of language and therefore any attempt to understand the meaning

making process would necessarily analyse the language used amongst people under study. Different social norms and values are carried through language usage in different societies, constructing specific realities. The emphases of language and reality construction are based on context bound interpretations and rich descriptions of the conclusions made so that the reader can fully appreciate the social embeddedness of patterns of meanings. Words, signs, symbols and unspoken taken-for-granted belief systems construct the language system. In positivistic research, the researcher imposes his/her language system on the research participants and as a result the research yields more information about the researcher than about the participants (Durrheim 1999).

The social constructionist researcher aims towards understanding how people's meaning systems are informed and reciprocally inform the surrounding discourses (Burr 2003). The discourses are thought to shape the way that people come to have meanings, belief systems, thoughts, feelings and experiences (Burr 2003). Therefore, each person within society has developed systems of beliefs and values on the basis of what is considered as appropriate or not. These judgements are created amongst people within a social and cultural epoch and the research challenge is to understand the meaning making process on an individual level as it is reflected by larger discourses (Denzin and Lincoln 2005).

So, in the present study which is based on a social constructionist framework, knowledge is co-constructed through the interview process from the participants and from me. I do not aim to generalise my conclusions, rather I want to explore the meanings and understandings of the participants in the research in this particular context and time.

3.3.3. Choosing a feminist approach

The present work has been greatly influenced by a feminist tradition which, while having many varying stances, is built upon an ontology which recognises the shifting and relative nature of truth and seeks emancipation for those who are oppressed within society – particularly women. Gunter (2000) supports the view that feminist research is about ensuring that personal dimensions are taken into consideration. So, the beliefs and endeavours of the researcher and the researched, his/her personal biography, are part of the choices he/she makes about the research methods used, the analysis and presentation

of findings (Letherby 2003). This gives both the researched and the researcher's own experience value and worth.

The present study is grounded in a feminist research framework. This means in part, looking at the world from a woman's perspective, honouring the common experiences and histories of women in society, and at the same time respecting their different experiences. It also means recognising gender power relationships, as well. It does not mean excluding or devaluing men. Any research that uses a feminist lens is research that is informed by the current and former status of women in society. Pritchard (1994) suggests that:

> Feminist critique starts with 'women' or 'women's' issues but goes beyond to the impact of gender relations and gendered conditions of human development in all spheres of thought and action. (p. 42)

This means that feminist research is concerned not only with gender inequality but also with issues related to race, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation and physical ability. In my research I study the perceptions of men and women in relation to gender and school leadership in Greece. My research is feminist, as its aim is not just to conduct research about women and gender in educational management, but to produce research for women. It is research that 'does not merely generate new knowledge about women for the sake of knowledge, but conducts research with the purpose of empowering women' (Langellier and Hall 1989, p. 195). It is my intention that this inquiry will produce knowledge that will assist other women and policy-makers in applying policies that raise awareness about and increase the participation of women in educational management in Greece

3.4. The place of researcher in the research

It was important to locate myself as interviewer within the research and to acknowledge my subjective position in this study as this is a key component in order to gain understanding of my relationship with my subject, as Bogdan and Biklen (2007) advise. Oakley (1981) wanted to acknowledge the role of the personal in constructing research knowledge and she felt that she shared a similar social location to her interviewees:

> We both share the same gender socialisation and critical life experiences, social distance can be minimal. Where both interviewer and interviewee share

membership of the same minority group, the basis for equality may impress itself even more urgently on the interviewer's consciousness. (Oakley 1981, p. 55)

But claims made by Oakley and other feminists (e.g. Finch 1984, Reinhartz 1992) about the status of knowledge via interviewing are considered problematic. Wise (1987) made an important contribution by arguing that Oakley (1981) and Finch (1984) actually avoid confronting the power dynamics that exist between researchers and their subjects. Wise does not accept that power imbalances are solved via women's shared structural position.

In the research relationship, being women takes us so far, being a feminist a bit further, personal style and skill play an important part, but there comes a point at which structural inequalities do interfere with communication and understanding [...] we can, and do, exert power over each other. (Wise 1987, p. 74)

So, there are important objections to the suggestion that women share the same standpoint within a researcher/researched relationship. Whilst they may share experiences of structural oppression as women this may be influenced by different identities and oppressions, like age, 'race', sexuality, religion etc. In addition, they do not share the same positions of power within the research, and the power dynamics must be acknowledged rather than ignored. For example in my research I could have been thought of as 'knowledgeable' as I was pursuing a higher degree and so I was 'better' than my respondents. On the other hand, I could have been thought of as inferior to them because of my younger age.

Having experiences in common with participants gives access to information in relation to the very complex issues involved. So, as I am working in the same broad professional environment as the participants in my research (education), I am aware of some of the difficulties that women head teachers may be facing (i.e. issues with parents, LEAs etc). Also, as my mother was a teacher for 32 years but never a head teacher out of personal choice, I am aware of some of the possible reasons for the under-representation of women. The relationship between the researcher and what is being researched becomes symbiotic. On the other hand, Walker (1980) argues that past experiences of the researcher are a problem because they may mask issues and distort them in that s/he comes with the issues already within a conceptual pattern of importance. There were implications for my study in that I had a framework informed by both my own experience and by the research literature. I addressed this by ensuring that the participants had the opportunity to cover

issues that were important to them, within, or in addition to, my questions. So, I let them speak and did not interrupt them and at the end of each interview I asked them to add anything that they felt was not covered by my questions.

I argue that the interview is a dialogic relationship in which notions of power are shifting and changing according to how the subjects are positioned within particular discourses. Especially when I was interviewing some of the men, I felt that they wanted to show they were powerful. For example they wanted to appear as more knowledgeable by commenting on my questions, or they sat behind their desks in a formal but also relaxed manner, or they wanted to appear as very busy and that they were doing me a favour to participate in my research. Similarly Madrid (2013) notes that some men tend to draw on power discourses in order to stress their 'masculinity'. Additionally, the interview is a re-counting of events, a narrative account (Mishler 1986), and it generates data rather than simply collecting data. This is an important distinction since data are not '"out there" as an already existing stock of knowledge, ready to be collected and independent of our interpretations as researchers' (Mason 2002, p. 51).

The nature of my study demands reflexivity from the interviewer in order to get to the core of the experience in a relationship between peers where some of the participants were known to me. Platt (1981) argues that 'this implies reciprocity and symmetry in the relationship' (p. 80), in contrast to the general assumption that the interviewer and the interviewee are 'anonymous to each other [...] that the relationship has no past or future and the research roles are (or should be) segregated from all the other roles' (p. 75). I attempted to deal with the issues above by ensuring that the participants were, as much as possible, in control of the interview, provided that we covered the outlined issues. There were no overt boundaries to the ideas and opinions they could express within the framework of the study. This way my past experiences or preferences would influence their responses and my analysis as little as possible. As a researcher with an understanding of the detailed context which might affect the findings, I employed reflexivity during and after the interviews. I did this by keeping a research diary where I was aware and conscious of my participants' values, attitudes, perceptions, feelings etc, and how they were feeding into my research and of my own influences, feelings and constructions during the interviews.

3.5. Research design and methods

3.5.1. Choosing data collection methods

In my research I wanted to investigate the relationships within schools in order to understand how women and men construct gender in educational leadership. Although observations might have given an additional perspective, it would have been very time-consuming, as in order to observe all the aspects of the head teachers' role (meetings with colleagues that do not happen on a regular basis, meetings with parents that would probably cause problems as they are considered as confidential, dealing with bureaucracy) would mean that I would have to spend a long period of time in each school. Also, interviews did allow me to ask about relationships at home, which I could not have investigated with observations, as I was not able to visit the participants' homes. Finally, given the fact that some participants were reluctant even to be interviewed (as I explain below), I assumed that they would have been even more reluctant to be observed for a longer period of time.

So, I decided to use interviews as my data collection tool. Mason (2002) characterises the qualitative interview as one which uses a relatively informal style, based upon a thematic, topic-centred, biographical or narrative approach and in which the epistemological assumption is made that data are generated via the interaction between the two parties, the interviewer and the interviewee.

My own view of the interview was that each and every one would generate contextually-dependent forms of knowledge, rather than 'truth'. The interview generates accounts of events which are negotiated between the interviewer and the interviewee (Mishler 1986) depending upon how each 'reads' the other person and which are also bound to leave out information which the interviewee feels s/he does not want to discuss.

So, using structured interviews would not have been helpful, as I wanted to be able to follow up respondents' own areas of concerns and their own perceptions. This meant that my interviews were going to be either unstructured or semi-structured. Unstructured interviews have the advantage of gathering more in-depth data, as the participant speaks freely and there are no 'fixed' questions, but the disadvantages are that it is time consuming and that it leads to difficulties in organising the data (Klenke 2008). Semi-structured interviews are in-between unstructured and structured. There is a list of

questions or themes to be covered, but, in contrast to structured interviews, the order of questions can be modified, added or deleted as appropriate. There is also opportunity to explore meanings since there are no fixed questions or forced answers and there are opportunities for clarification for both the interviewer and the interviewee (Klenke 2008).

Semi-structured interviews were used as this method provided the opportunity to ensure depth in the investigation of the participants' experience. It was about getting 'people to explain their answers at length' (Drever 1997, p. 6) and drawing on these statements to identify common features and differing views across the interviews. In undertaking 'semi-structured' interviews all participants answered broadly the same questions, which allowed for comparisons across interviews and facilitated data organisation and analysis (Cohen et al 2013).

Whilst the participants answered the same broad questions, the interview process also allowed for a responsive approach, where there was space in the interview to react to issues raised by the participant. I was aware that in choosing this method there would be difficulties. Bechhofer and Paterson (2000, p. 63) argue that researchers often choose this method because they think it is the 'easiest, almost natural thing to do', but the reality is quite different. In fact, interviewing people is a difficult, time consuming process.

One of the main benefits of this type of interview is that it is an interactive process, where the researcher sits with the participant and they can engage and create a relationship, which helps in the process of eliciting information. I was also able to see if the participant was comfortable through their body language and/or facial expressions. As Walford (2001) advises, what the researcher observes is as important as what they say. There was also less likelihood of a question being misunderstood by either me or the respondent, because questions and answers were being clarified during the interview process. In undertaking semi-structured interviews I was aiming to create a space where the respondents could engage in a dialogic process and feel more at ease and less mechanical in their relationship with me as the researcher (Denzin and Lincoln 2005, Oakley 1981, Rubin and Rubin 1995, Bechhofer and Paterson 2000).

3.5.2. Designing the interviews

I designed an interview schedule which would focus upon the way in which headship and head teachers' roles are experienced and which would enable the participants to tell their stories.

The questions were designed to treat the subjects as knowledgeable experts, who knew the reality in their schools, and had their personal opinions and their own perceptions about gender roles. Their practice as head teachers and their experiences was seen to inform the way they saw the relationships between their professional and personal identities. [The interview schedule is to be found in the appendices section, as APPENDIX 1]

I took care to have a flow in the interview schedule, by following Robson's (2002) guidelines. So, at first I planned to introduce myself and explain the purpose of my research, assure them of issues of confidentiality and anonymity and ask for their permission to record the interview.

The 'main' interview consisted of 5 sets of questions, that at first were aiming at creating an easy-going, comfortable environment, leading to the 'core' of the research (leadership approaches and experiences) and finishing off with 'cool off' questions (Robson 2002, p. 277) in order to smooth out any tensions.

The first questions gave both teachers and head teachers the opportunity to explore the way in which they had arrived at a career in teaching and then their present roles as teachers and head teachers respectively. The second set of questions sought to explore the selection and recruitment procedures, whether they had planned beforehand to become head teachers, whether it was something they wanted to do, or something that just happened, and their opinions about the selection procedures.

The third set of questions for the head teachers explored their experiences in the role and their gender perceptions, in order to locate their perceptions of headship against issues raised within the literature. The questions to the teachers were around their experiences of their head teachers and their understandings of gender in relation to headship.

The last two sets of questions explored how both head teachers and teachers saw their future and their career development, in order to further explore the career choices of men and women.

As part of my research design I also used a brief questionnaire (an English translation of which is included in the appendices section as APPENDIX 2) which my participants filled in, in order to collect information on their demographic profiles. The inclusion of the questionnaire and its structured format was particularly helpful to gather the information and made categorisation and analysis easier.

3.5.3. Selecting participants and negotiating access

Having decided to use interviews as a method, and more specifically semi-structured interviews, I then had to make decisions about where to conduct the research. I wanted to speak to head teachers and teachers in primary schools in Greece in different geographical locations.

In thinking about which participants to approach and include in my research, I had to bear in mind a number of factors. Firstly, I wanted to approach women head teachers, because they are my main interest. Their experiences of the job, from the selection process, their problems etc, were of interest to me. Then, I wanted to approach women teachers who have all the necessary qualifications and requirements but who chose not to become head teachers or whose applications were unsuccessful. I also wanted to see how teachers viewed their head teacher, whether women or men. In addition I wanted to include men head teachers and teachers as well, because I wanted to compare their views and perceptions to those of the women.

Furthermore, I wanted to ensure that there were participants of diverse ages and school types (urban/rural, large/small) in order to gather a variety of experiences and views. My intention was to include a variety of geographical areas, but due to restricted resources I chose four areas, three in the North of the country and one in the South (these areas will be described in detail later in this chapter), as I believed they would represent potentially different views.

I decided on the four areas that I would research based on practicalities and always keeping in mind the restricted means, in terms of financial resources and limited mobility, that I had. So, the areas were selected mainly because they were close to the place I live in Greece (the first three) and so I could go there in the morning and then return home. The

fourth was much further away, but I had a friend with whom I could stay for the duration of the research. Also, although I wanted to do my research in urban and rural schools, I had to exclude the rural schools that were inaccessible (they were mainly in mountain areas).

The first 3 areas (A, B, C[5]) are in North Greece. They are considered neither as 'poor' nor as 'rich' areas. A large part of their population moved to bigger cities like Thessaloniki or Athens or emigrated (especially to Germany) during the 1950's and 1960's. The population is diverse, as there are many migrants from the former Soviet Union, from Albania and from Bulgaria. All areas also have Muslim minority populations (Turkish-speaking, Roma and Pomaks[6]) and schools for the Muslim minority[7]. In area B an increase of population was noted during the last population census in 2001 (Hellenic Statistical Authority, 2001a), as many repatriates from the former Soviet Union had settled in the area. The other areas have faced minor decreases in their populations. A big part of the population are farmers and the rest are working either in family businesses or in the public sector. Although areas B and C have 5.18% of all the factories of the country and 6.4% of all the investment during 1999-2000, more jobs have not been created and unemployment rates are quite high, reaching 48% in area B and 35.5% in area C (80% and 60% respectively among young people aged 16-24). In area A comparable rates of unemployment were 40% overall, and 60% among young people. At the same time, the unemployment rate in Greece as a whole was 26.4% overall, and 50.7% among young people (Eurostat 2014).

As far as the educational level is concerned, 55.4% of the population in all three areas have completed only primary school education, and 20% have completed secondary education (while the same numbers for the rest of the country are 38.1% and 30% respectively). 15.2% of women in area B and 13% in area C are illiterate (cannot read or write), while the same percentages in the whole of the country is 6.5%. Because there are many mountains that make transportation difficult for young children, there are many schools in villages that are small with one to five classes (but catering all years). Schools with more than 5 classes are mainly in urban or semi-urban areas. In the research both small schools and larger ones were included. Twenty-two participants from urban schools were interviewed

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[5] Areas are coded to ensure confidentiality.
[6] They live in the mountains and they are of Slavic origin. They speak Pomak, and their language belongs to the linguistic family of the Southern Slavic languages. They attend, in accordance with the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923, bilingual schools where the teaching is done both in Turkish and in Greek.
[7] These schools were not included in the research, as they have a different legal framework and, as a result, different selection procedures for head teachers.

(five from Area A, six from B and six from C) and 18 participants from rural schools (five from area A, five from B and four from C).

So, the first three areas have highly mobile populations and are multicultural as there are minority populations and repatriates and migrants from Eastern Europe. Especially in area B, the repatriates have led to an increase in the population, and an increase in the number of languages being spoken in schools, with more difficulties in communication due to this multiligualism (making the head teachers' job more difficult, as indicated during my research with head teachers). Also, it is noted that although a large amount of money has been invested in the areas, the unemployment rates are high (among the highest in the country). The low literacy amongst women (especially in areas B and C) reflects the traditional women's roles and women's place in society (Athanasiasdou 2002). Finally, the variety of schools and school locations may lead to different views of head teachers and teachers about headship.

The fourth area, is in South Greece. It is considered a 'poor' area and since the 1950's has lost almost half its population through emigration, mostly to the Americas. The great majority of the population are farmers and many others work in a large factory in the area[8] and at a coal mine. Unemployment rates are lower than the other areas, reaching 20% (23% among young people). About 10% of the population are non-Greeks, mostly from Albania. The schools are both urban and rural and include a variety of students from different socio-economic and cultural environments. In my research I included both urban and rural schools (five from urban areas and four from rural) in order to ensure that all kinds of school are represented. For a summary of the characteristics of the four areas, see Table 3 below.

I was also mindful of the practicalities of access (Burgess 1984), as I needed official research permission from the Greek Pedagogical Institute, which I will discuss later in this section. I also, of course, needed the participants' consent for participation and I was unsure whether I would be able to persuade them to participate (I discuss how I negotiated access later on in this chapter, in section 5.3.3.).

Because there was no online database with the names of the head teachers and their schools, I decided to call each LEA and ask for the contact information of the schools that

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[8] More details are withheld for confidentiality.

had a woman head teacher and I considered all the rest as having a man head teacher. Then I made a list for each area that I had decided to study with the women head teachers and a list of the men head teachers. The teachers were chosen from these schools as well. I took care to have an equal number of participants from each area.

Table 3: Characteristics of research areas

	Geographical location	Illiteracy among women	Unemployment (young unemployment)
Area A	North	8.1%	40% (60%)
Area B	North	15.2%	48% (80%)
Area C	North	13%	35.5% (60%)
Area D	South	7.1%	20% (23%)
Greece as a whole		6.5%	26.4% (50.7%)

After compiling this list with the schools I provided the Greek Pedagogical Institute with a detailed plan of my research (rationale for the study, research method, research tool, details of how I would ensure confidentiality for my interviewees, etc) along with the list of the schools that I wanted to include in my research in order to obtain an official permission to conduct my research in the schools. This was a very lengthy and bureaucratic procedure, that lasted for about 7 months. I had to send the application to the Ministry of Education, then they had to send it to the Pedagogical Institute, they had to discuss my application and after they made a decision, they had to notify the Ministry of Education again. Then the Ministry sent me the approval. [A translated version of the research permission is to be found in the appendix section, as APPENDIX 3.]

After getting permission, I was ready to start my research. Contact with the schools was initially made by phone. I talked with the head teachers, informed them about myself and the research and also told them that I had permission to conduct the study from the Ministry of Education. Then I went to the schools and asked for their willingness to participate. I also gave the head teachers and the teachers a letter outlining the area of

focus and the method to be used. The letter also promised confidentiality and anonymity to protect their identity. Generally, those who agreed to be interviewed felt that the area of focus was of particular interest (on the other hand, some men laughed and commented that women's place was in the kitchen!). [The letter can be found in the appendix section, as APPENDIX 4.]

After that first contact in person, I called each school and I asked for their decision. Where the decision was positive, I proceeded with the interview. Where the decision was negative, I contacted another head teacher or teacher from the same area, until I reached the number of participants I wanted. I should say here, that most of the head teachers I contacted agreed to participate. Out of the initial 40 people that I approached, five teachers did not want to be interviewed (all women) and four head teachers (one woman and three men). The reasons they gave for their decision were that either they never participated in research, or that they were very busy and could not fit me into their schedules. Those who were more willing to participate were the older head teachers, the younger teachers and those who had at some point been a member of the teachers' union. The probable reasons for this are that they were experienced in expressing views (members of the Union) or they had nothing to be afraid of (older head teachers) or they had experiences of doing research because they had graduated recently or they were doing research themselves as part of a post-graduate dissertation (the younger teachers).

3.6. Data collection

3.6.1. Pilot study

Before conducting the main body of research, a pilot study was carried out. The interview guides were piloted with a selected group of informants, which included one woman head teacher, one man head teacher, one woman teacher and one man teacher, all from area B of my research, as this area is closer to where I live. Also, the four participants were teachers I knew from my professional background, and they agreed to be interviewed without me having formal research permission from the Pedagogical Institute. This pilot study helped me gain an in-depth understanding of the context under investigation, as a preparation for the main study. It also helped me with my skills as an interviewer as I understood better how to construct the questions and how to ask follow-up ones, making

sure there was a flow in the way the questions were asked. It also helped me gain confidence in my abilities as an interviewer, as when I did the first pilot interview I felt really anxious and I found it very hard to ask questions and keep a flow in the interview. I overcame this during the following interviews

I did not face any major problems and so my interview schedule was not altered after the pilot study. These four interviews were then included in my final sample.

3.6.2. Main research

3.6.2.1. Sample

40 participants were identified (15 women head teachers, 10 men head teachers, and 10 women teachers and 5 men teachers, who have all the required qualifications to become head teachers, that is at least 10 years of experience). This is a purposive sample, defined by Robson (2002) '[a sample chosen] through the researcher's judgement as to typicality or interest' (p. 141-142). They were selected because they fit the required criteria (i.e. they were head teachers or teachers eligible for headship and they were both women and men in order to compare views and experiences). [A table of the participants is included in the appendices, as APPENDIX 5]. Within the sample I included a variety of ages, years of experience, schools (urban and rural), regions (A, B, C, D) and gender in order to see patterns and trends. 83% of the participants were women. As far as the participants' age is concerned, 27% were 30-39 years old, 40% 40-49 years old and 33% 50-59 years old. They were almost equally distributed among the 4 research areas, as 10 people were interviewed from area A, 11 from area B, 10 from area C and 9 from area D. All participants are white Greeks. As far as I am aware, there are no other nationalities among teachers in Greece.

The demographic data for my participants is presented in the following tables.

Table 4: Participants by gender, role and area

	Head Teachers		Teachers		
AREA	Women	Men	Women	Men	Total
A	4	3	2	1	10
B	5	3	2	1	11
C	4	2	3	1	10
D	2	2	3	2	9
Total	15	10	10	5	40

Table 5: Participants by gender, role and age

	Head Teachers		Teachers		
AGE	Women	Men	Women	Men	Total
30-39	2	-	7	2	11
40-49	10	2	3	1	16
50-59	3	8	-	2	13
Total	15	10	10	5	40

Table 6: Participants by gender, role and years of teaching experience

Head Teachers			Teachers		
Years of Teaching Experience	Women	Men	Women	Men	Total
10-15	3	-	8	3	14
16-20	2	1	-	-	3
21-25	7	2	2	-	11
26+	3	7	7	2	12
Total	15	10	10	5	40

Table 7: Head teachers by gender and years of experience

Years as Head Teacher	Women	Men	Total
1-5	10	4	14
6-10	4	4	8
11-15	-	2	2
15+	1	-	1

As it can be summarised from the above tables, the women head teachers and teachers who participated in my research were younger than their men colleagues (22 women and 5 men were up to 49 years old). Moreover, it appears that the vast majority of the women head teachers had fewer years of headship experience (10 women and 5 men with 1-5 years of experience). This may have been coincidental owing to the small sample, or it may show a pattern, that women head teachers are mainly in their forties, relatively young in comparison with the men, half of whom are in their fifties. Also, it may show that women get headships earlier in their career than men. Contrary to this, Earley et al (2012) have shown that women in the UK move into senior positions when they are older than their male counterparts. According to the researchers this may, in part, reflect that women tend to take a slower career path due to childbearing. Also, as McNamara et al (2010) argue that in the UK men apply for significantly more leadership posts than women before being appointed and are more prepared to move regionally for a new post than their female counterparts and as a result they have more opportunities to get a leadership post. I have not been able to locate any other research in Greece that shows whether or not similar patterns occur.

3.6.2.2. Conduct of interviews

The interviews were carried out at the participants' schools, in the office of the head teacher, where we could be alone and where it was quiet. The teachers were also interviewed in the head's office, without the presence of the head, because in the teachers' office there were a lot of people (other teachers, students, parents) and along with the issue of noise, there could also be an issue of confidentiality and of the teachers expressing themselves openly. Although the teachers were not in their own office, they did not seem

to feel uncomfortable, as they seemed willing to talk and express their views. All the interviews lasted for about thirty or forty minutes and were recorded using a digital recorder. I allowed the participants to choose the time of the day they wanted to be interviewed. The majority of the teachers chose a free period between their classes and the head teachers chose either a class hour when the school was quieter or after the school day was over.

All interviews were conducted in Greek. If the respondents are able to speak in their own language, they can express themselves in a more precise way, the answers are richer and the respondents feel more relaxed (Bryman and Bell 2007).

The interviews were audio recorded, as recordings have the advantage of capturing data more faithfully and accurately than hurriedly written notes. Furthermore, as I was going to translate the interviews into English, I had to have my raw data recorded in order for the translation to be as close as possible to the original. Recording also made it easier for me, as a researcher, to focus on the interview and on the participants' words.

Conducting the interviews was problematic on two counts. Firstly, many of the participants were reluctant for me to use a recording device, because they were afraid of who might listen to the recording and whether they would say the correct things. One woman head teacher said:

> Why do you want these? Why do you want to record me? Will you send the recordings to the Ministry? Can't you just take notes? What if I don't say what you want me to?

Eventually, this particular head teacher decided not to participate because she was afraid. For the rest, this was overcome by assuring them of anonymity and by letting them know that only I was going to listen to the recordings. In that way I managed to overcome their fear of authority and their insecurity. The second issue was overcome by assuring them that I was not after a correct answer, but rather their personal opinions.

Secondly, head teachers and teachers have their own priorities and an appointment would easily be jeopardised by the many issues needing attention during each day. I felt that it was unfair to ask participants to give up time outside school hours, but meeting in school was subject to interruptions. Time just before or just after school, or free gaps in their daily

programmes seemed a reasonable request. None of the interviews were abandoned in spite of the many crises that were on-going while I was present (e.g. one head teacher was informed that a student had a high fever, in a period when there was great panic about H1N1 virus, and she had to call the child's parents to come and pick her up). There were only a couple of interruptions during the head teachers' interviews, when I stopped recording, which suggested that my participants had seen the interviews as important and had made arrangements not to be disturbed, as far as possible.

3.7. Data analysis

3.7.1. Issues in transcription and translation

I transcribed all of my interviews from beginning to end verbatim in Greek and as a second step, translated into English. Translating the interviews was not only time consuming, but also intellectually challenging. Collecting data in my mother tongue (Greek) and presenting it in another (English) is not an easy task (Birbili 2000) and there were moments I had a sense of loss. Birbili (2000, n. p.) argues that while translating interviews 'even an apparently familiar term or expression for which there is direct lexical equivalent might carry "emotional connotations" in one language that will not necessary occur in another'. In line with Birbili's descriptions, I came across several instances where the connotations that a term had in Greek were not the same in English. An example is the word 'fylo' which in Greek has several meanings, such as gender in a grammatical sense (female, male and neutral nouns and adjectives); race or tribe (as in the ancient Greek tribes/races)[9], and sex as well as gender. Another problem that I had to deal with was finding the exact meaning of some of the Greek colloquial expressions, e.g. 'Omoios omoio aei pelazei' (literally, people go near their similar), which I translated as 'birds of a feather flock together'. Finding the exact meaning of some of the Greek colloquial expressions in English was one of the hardest tasks in translating the interviews. In some instances, when I was completely lost, I consulted via email some of my Greek friends that live in the UK for help in converting a particular word or phrase from Greek to English. At the end a decent translation as close as possible to the original transcription was accomplished.

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[9]The ancient Greek "races" or "tribes" were the Pelasgians, the Acheans, the Aeolians, the Ionians, the Dorians, the Macedonians and the Tracians. There were more Greek races or tribes in ancient Greece, but these are the major ones that affected Greek history

In the transcript extracts the interviewees are represented by their role initial (i.e. T=teacher, HT=head teacher) and I am represented throughout as 'E' (i.e. E=Emmy). Whenever I refer to a participant and their transcript a coded identification follows their name, representing their gender, role and age group. Hence 'Jenny, WHT, 50-59', describes Jenny, who is a woman head teacher and in the 50-59 age group. Area has not been included in the coded identification of the participants, as it did not emerge as significant in the analysis.

3.7.2. Analytical approach

As already discussed my theoretical approach is feminist and my analytical approach is guided by social constructionism.

Social constructionism and feminism require questioning and reflecting on the ways of knowing and understanding the world. They also require understanding of interactions with others that construct meaning. They challenge the idea that everyone 'knows' the same things and that we all have the same fixed and shared meanings. Rather, they both suggest that in our interactions with others we negotiate and interpret what we know and do so in relation to a particular context and historical point in time. The researcher and the researched are recognised as in relation to each other and they both take into account of their own experiences from their own perspectives (Haraway 1988)

The analysis of the data was initially guided by a general inductive approach (Dey 1993, Miles and Huberman 1994), which builds categories gradually from the extensive raw text data (Thomas 2006). A general inductive approach is about foregrounding the data rather than preconceptions. But feminist analysis elicits issues of gender and social constructionism posits that the researcher cannot position him/herself outside of the research. So, I acknowledge that my own perceptions and understandings are brought into the categories for analysis. Additionally, the literature on gender and educational management informed decisions about categories for analysis.

In the following sections I explain the techniques for employing a general inductive approach as a strategy for data analysis.

3.7.3. Analysis process

3.7.3.1. Manual analysis

Data arising from audio-recorded interviews were transcribed and then transferred to the software package NVivo, as a way of managing and organising the data. The aim of the analysis was to look for common codes and categories throughout the interview texts which could be grouped to form major themes, using a general inductive approach (Patton 2002, Thomas 2006).

In order to gain thorough familiarity and understanding of my data, I read each transcript several times. These continuous readings of the transcripts helped me to make sense of what was said and served as a great help in the identification of initial concepts and ideas for possible themes. This first identification, following Miles and Huberman's (1994) methods for finding patterns and developing conceptual themes, was undertaken manually. So, key words or words expressing a concept were written in the margins of the transcripts in order to obtain a sense of the overall data. For example, when a participant said that she will apply for headship when her 'child will be old [...] in two years time he will be 10, he will be independent', I wrote in the margins of my transcription 'old children=not so many needs'.

As a second step, by scanning each data type, looking at differences and similarities, gleaning out underlying and recurrent constructs, I was able to provisionally identify several closely related initial themes, like the reactions of their families when (or if) they decided to apply for a headship position.

Thirdly, keeping the list of initial themes in the forefront, I carefully read the transcripts again, to identify passages of texts which exemplified the themes. These passages were underlined. Themes were allowed to emerge from the data directly and literature was used to identify themes in the data. This list of themes constituted the thematic framework that served as the coding tree for the purpose of coding in the NVivo programme [The coding tree is included in the appendix section as APPENDIX 6].

3.7.3.2. Use of NVivo in data analysis

NVivo software was chosen because I could easily alternate between the data and the coding scheme and let categories emerge and change as the research proceeded.

As the interviews were long and generated a large amount of data they needed to be organised in an effective way. So, in this instance, using NVivo was a useful organisational tool and an efficient way to extract and search the data according to themes and labels that had been attributed to it. The speed and organisational qualities of NVivo were especially useful due to the importance of what Weitzman (2000, p. 813) calls 'poking around in your data' for a more inductive approach. It was also useful to store memos and keep organised nodes and ideas as the analysis process was unfolding.

Like other qualitative data analysis packages NVivo is only a tool and cannot compensate for poorly constructed research or lack of interpretive capacity. Although it allows for multiple coding of a particular segment of texts, there may be a danger of chopping that data into different segments and losing the overall accounts (Bazeley 2007). In my research care was taken to select and code significant segments of the transcript that discuss particular constructions or issues and thus retain the overall meaning. Silverman (2010) argues that computer softwares do not display visually the sequential events of how some things are necessary for others to happen, so this had to be done manually in order not to lose any connections between the data.

To begin with the analysis process, once the interviews were inserted into the programme, attributes were created for each of the interviewees (pseudonym, role, school type, region, age group, family, years of teaching experience, years as head teacher). These attributes were used to search the text and analyse responses according to specific interview characteristics, as relationships started to develop between particular categories and attributes.

The coding was done using the distinct analytical categories that had been devised in the handwritten analysis and by adding new ones when necessary. Care was taken to ensure that the coding developed uniformly throughout the analysis of interviews, and that I did not mix the codes. To ensure this it was necessary to make detailed notes providing a rationale for each of the codes within the overall main aim of the research.

The most difficult stage in the analysis was refining and editing the coding categories that had been created as the data was rich and there were multiple codes attached to it. To move to the next stage of analysis, these codes (or free nodes as they are called in NVivo) were coded into broader codes and then transferred into tree nodes, organising them into overall themes. For example, the free node I called 'children' and included accounts on how

the heads' children were reacting to their mothers/fathers wish to apply for headship, was transferred into the tree node that I called 'family', which was included in the node 'barriers'. This brought greater clarity and structure to the analysis. It also facilitated the on going process of writing.

3.7.4. Reliability and validity of the study

Validity and reliability, in their traditional sense, are associated with quantitative epistemology. Validity is concerned with accuracy and the extent to which a method can provide a correct answer (Gorman and Clayton 1997), ensuring the integrity of the conclusions (Bryman, 2012). Validity is linked to truth and builds upon the foundation of reliability. There are several elements to validity: face validity – does it fit into the expected pattern; criterion validity – establishing the accuracy of the findings by using another method; internal validity – are we sure that any causal relationships found are related to the identified variables (Bryman 2012); external validity – can the results be applied outside of the specific research context; and construct (measurement) validity – at analysis stage, does it have meaning in the conceptual framework (Gorman and Clayton 1997), or, does it measure what it aims to measure i.e. does the IQ test measure intelligence (Bryman 2012).

Nevertheless, scholars have argued that such criteria to judge research 'quality' are problematic for research based on a different worldview (Winter 2000, p. 1). Cresswell and Miller (2000), for instance, argue that validity is affected by the researcher's perception of validity in the study and the researcher's choice of paradigm. For Janesick (2004) validity 'has to do with description and explanation and whether or not a given explanation fits a given description. In other words, is the explanation credible?' (p. 216). Similarly, reliability is viewed as 'a fit between what they [qualitative researchers] record as data and what actually occurs in the setting under study, rather than literal consistency across observation' (Bogdan and Biklen 2007, p. 36). So, qualitative inquiry is inclined to focus on the construction of meanings between the researcher and the informants (Leitz et al, 2006).

Reliability is concerned with consistency. There are three aspects to this: if it was done again, would the same results be found (i.e. stability over time); equivalence (can it be done elsewhere?); and internal consistency (i.e. are answers in one section confirmed by

another?) (Bryman, 2012). However, such measures are awkward to apply to the human or social sciences, partly because there is less stability in their circumstances. For example, in pure sciences, the acceptable percentage of variation in an experiment may be 1%, but in sociology experiments cannot be done and responses may be full of variations (Glazier 1992).

Many feminist researchers would also argue that it is open to debate whether it is possible to create valid or objective truth, and thus the notions of validity and reliability are, to some extent, redundant. However, they have argued that feminists still need criteria of validity if they are to be able to judge knowledge claims and thus present truer or 'better' knowledge (Ramazanoglu and Holland, 2002). Further, Ramazanoglu and Holland state that

> Criteria of validity differ according to ontological and epistemological assumptions that shape particular knowledge claims and particular notions of science, research and curiosity. (Ramazanoglu and Holland, 2002, p. 135)

It is important to note that high reliability, which comes with structured interviews where the questions are predetermined (Bush 2002), may suggest a systematic bias at work in data. This is why many researchers in qualitative research emphasise validity rather than reliability. When interviews are semi-structured or unstructured, part of an interpretative study, 'allowing each person to respond in his [sic] unique way' (Nisbet and Watt 1984, p. 82), documenting what occurs in an accurate manner may reveal inconsistencies. Reality is dynamic and it changes constantly. It is important to realise that low reliability could be consistent with high validity if the social situation is constantly in flux, or people might see different aspects of the whole, which is far more complex than any single perspective. Putting two different accounts together might result in a better understanding of the whole than either one separately. So, low reliability could produce even higher validity (Bell 2005). My study may have low reliability as I am using semi-structured interviews and I am treating each participant as a unique respondent, but this can be seen as enhancing validity.

Some researchers go further and argue that these controls or measures are not necessary at all outside quantitative circles. Ramazanoglu and Holland argue that validity can be applied by the researcher within the context of reflexivity and they present a list of 10 criteria for consideration such as: considering the background of the feminist researcher making the knowledge claim; whether the knowledge claim is confined to local truth or is

more general; and how the evidence/grounding is constituted and assessed (Ramazanoglu and Holland, 2002).

Thus, the understanding of the traditional meaning of reliability and validity from the qualitative researcher's point of view is changed. Reliability and validity are better conceptualised as trustworthiness in the qualitative paradigm. For this research the concept of trustworthiness applies in the sense of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Lincoln and Guba 1985).

The concepts of dependability and transferability apply in the sense that another researcher may conduct a similar research using my research tool in other times and spaces, as an audit trail has been kept which allows an external reader to view and scrutinise the process of the research (Morse and Richards 2002, Moisander and Valtonen 2006). In this study, I maintained an audit trail as clearly as possible. Firstly, all interview records are kept both in electronic format and hard copy. The recordings are kept in password protected folders in my computer and the transcripts in locked cabinets at my home. Secondly, all my research process is made transparent through describing the research strategy and data analysis in a scientifically detailed manner. I have attempted to set out my approach, methods and methodology clearly and stated the procedures followed.

However, I do not believe that in the social sciences it is possible to conduct the study again and to produce exactly the same findings. For example, this research relies heavily on people's words and quotes to illuminate a point. If the study was conducted again, it would be at a different point in time, when different issues are of concern to the participant being interviewed. It might not even be possible to interview the same individuals (indeed, this study cannot be repeated as many of the respondents have either retired, or transferred to other schools). Also, in a social constructionist research there is co-construction of knowledge between the researcher and the participants. I have drawn on my own constructions, beliefs and views in order to analyse that data. Another researcher may draw on a different background and have different constructions and views, so even if the data was exactly the same, s/he may produce different analyses and results.

In terms of confirmability, the approach by Ramazanoglu and Holland (2002) has been adopted as being most suited to this qualitative, feminist research. Thus the forms of reasoning that these knowledge claims depend upon have been clearly stated, and along

with their other criteria, my reflexivity, as Miles and Huberman (1994) propose, has enabled the confirmability of the research to be continuously checked. So, care was taken to ensure as far as possible that the findings are the results of the experiences and ideas of the informants, rather than my characteristics and preferences, although it was always possible that personal beliefs and meanings could have influenced the analysis (Holland and Ramazanoglu 1994)

According to Lietz et al (2006) member checking refers to asking participants and other researchers to check the accuracy of findings and confirm which aspects of data analysis best fit their perspectives. It was not possible to check my analysis and findings with my participants because I did not analyse that data in Greek. But, I used peer debriefing to check accuracy of interpretation. As Lietz et al (2006) argue 'peer debriefing involves the process of engaging in dialogue with colleagues outside of a research project who have experience with the topic, population or methods being utilized' (p. 451). In order to address this, I presented my work through department seminar presentations and conference presentations. Thus the study was peer-reviewed and discussed by colleagues and professionals inside and outside of London Metropolitan University and this helped to establish its credibility.

Credibility can be further established by using triangulation among data (Lincoln and Guba 1985). Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested that triangulation of data can come from different sources: theories, methods, sources and investigations. I employed a variety of theories and sources to triangulate my data. I collected secondary data through reviewing the literature. Although in a general inductive approach, knowledge of prior theories and concepts is not deemed necessary, the existing literature, along with my being critically informed, cannot be ignored. It can help to know the history of the research area, pre-existing studies and latest research findings. Furthermore, it helps to build categories and make comparisons. During the analysis of the findings of my study, I compared the emergent theory, with several existing theories and analysed the linkages between them, adding to the credibility of my research.

3.8. Ethical considerations

This section discusses the ethical considerations that were heeded as part of this research.

London Metropolitan University's ethics policy and Code of Good Practice was followed, along with the Data Protection Act 1988. Also, the research complies with the statement of Ethical Practice for the British Sociological Association and with the Greek Pedagogical Institute. As far as the latter is concerned, official research permission was obtained, which was necessary for conducting research in Greek schools. [The permission is included in the appendices section, as APPENDIX 3]

Also, I followed a feminist ethical stance. So, I recognise that power is not simple and that identities are not unitary and as such there is great variation between the participants in my research. In trying to recognise power differentials between me and the research participants and in trying to address them where possible, I comply with feminist research ethics. I tried to mitigate any unequal power relations and even to identify power dynamics. Feminist ethics have the potential for illustrating aspects of social injustice that may inform a situation and can contribute to overcoming it (Luff 1999). I also adopted a reflexive stance in acknowledging my own stance throughout the project.

In practice, care was taken to ensure confidentiality of the data collected and the anonymity of those involved. I designed a letter of consent which was given to the potential participants during our first meeting and can be found, as indicated earlier, in the appendices section. In it I stated my research purpose, their right to withdraw at any time without consequences, confidentiality, anonymity protection and the fact that the interviews would be recorded. A pseudonym was given to each participant and their schools' names have also been changed to preserve confidentiality. All the recordings are electronically kept in password protected computer files and all printed data is kept in a locked cabinet in my house.

In transcribing the interviews there was a danger that the participants could be identifiable because of some of the biographical information and events in the school life that were provided. But this has been overcome, as the interviews were translated into English, the research was about Greece and all names mentioned were changed. Also, I did not use the areas' names, instead I have named them 'Area A', 'Area B', 'Area C' and 'Area D'.

3.9. Conclusion

The chapter has set out the design for my field work which uses semi-structured interviews to gather data about the experiences of forty women and men who participated. The chapter has analysed the research methodology and methods for this study, and I have discussed the problematic issues for the research and how I have dealt with them. Both a manual method and NVivo software were used in data analysis. Measures were taken to ensure quality, including steps to ensure the trustworthiness of the findings through establishing credibility (that the 'true' picture of the researched phenomenon is being presented) and confirmability (the taken steps to demonstrate that the findings emerge from the data and not from my own dispositions).

In the next chapters, the findings from the research are presented and analysed.

CHAPTER 4: BECOMING A HEAD TEACHER

4.1. Introduction

Although women constitute over half of the workforce worldwide (Dencker 2008) leadership in general has been identified with men (Schein 1994, 2001, Grace 1995). The same is noted in educational leadership, as well (Blackmore 1989, 1995). Traditionally in the West there has been a stereotype of what a leader should be and as a result, women and others who do not correspond to this stereotype, identified by Kanter (1977) as 'male, heterosexual, white, glamorous and well-built' (p. 42), may be considered as outsiders in leadership roles (as was discussed in Chapter 2).

A range of structural and cultural barriers that block career progress for women in Anglo-Saxon countries have been identified (also discussed in Chapter 2), including the dominant 'masculine' culture in schools (Cubillo and Brown 2003), the lack of support and mentoring schemes for women (Coleman 2002, Blackmore 1999, Cubillo and Brown 2003) and the lack of adequate child support systems resulting in stress and practical difficulties associated with combining a career with having a family (d' Arbon et al 2002).

This chapter is concerned with the patterns of career of the head teachers and the teachers who participated in the study, focusing specifically on ways in which women and men become head teachers (or not). Also, I discuss the stages through which my participants progress (or not) to headship, their experiences and views of the selection procedures and the influence that family responsibilities are seen to have in decisions about their career.

4.2. Choosing a career

The interviews gave the head teacher participants the opportunity to speak about how they became heads. In addition, the teachers who participated in the study were given the opportunity to talk about their future career plans and aspirations. It can be seen that some of my participants had plans for a career in educational leadership and worked towards this goal. Other participants seemed to have become head teachers without aiming to do so, and, finally, some of the teachers who were interviewed indicated that

they were not willing to become head teachers at all. In this section I discuss the participants' choice of a career, beginning with those who planned to become head teachers, followed by those who did not plan for it but nevertheless became heads and moving on to those teachers who indicated that they did not want to become heads.

4.2.1. Becoming a head teacher: Career planning

There were two distinct groups amongst the head teachers in my research, those who became head teachers because they wanted to and aimed for it, and others for whom the route to headship was serendipitous. It is the former that it is discussed in this section.

Although literature from the UK suggests that most heads follow a career path that leads through deputy headship to headship (Evetts 1994, Coleman 2002), in my research it was only a small minority of the heads that were deputies in the past. This may suggest that the career progression to headship in Greece is not a linear series of steps, from teacher to deputy and then to head, identified in previous literature from other countries. This may be the case for the whole of the country, but as the research sample is small, I do not know if the pattern is replicated nationally.

In this study, out of the 25 participants (15 women and 10 men) who were head teachers at the time of the research, only five women and no men had been deputy head teachers before becoming a head teacher. Three of the women who had been deputy heads did not talk about how they got their deputy post. The other two (Gina and Danai) discussed being a deputy head. Gina, a woman head teacher, said that she got to the post of the deputy head and then to that of the head 'Out of personal ambition.' (Gina, WHT, 40-49). And then, she adds, she became a head teacher because 'it was the next step', as was suggested in the literature mentioned above.

Danai, another woman head teacher, noted that:

> I was a deputy head at a very large school,[…] After being a deputy head for 3 years and because I managed it, I said why not give it a try? I decided to try it. It was the next step. I knew the job, as well. (Danai, WHT, 40-49)

She became a head teacher because she felt, as she said, contrary to the general belief, that being a deputy head teacher was much more difficult than being a head teacher. She explained that she had more responsibilities and a more difficult task, because she had to be the link between the teachers and the head teacher. She seems to think that as a deputy head she was a forgotten leader in the school, similarly to how Beycioglu et al (2012) and Cranston et al (2004) describe deputy heads in Turkey and Australia. This was because she had similar responsibilities to the head teacher (she said 'I knew the job'), but did not have the authority and the status that a head teacher may enjoy, as Hausman et al (2002) notes about deputies in Maine, US.

But the role of the deputy head teacher in Greek schools is not the same everywhere. Their role, as it is described by law 1566/85, is particularly related to, and heavily influenced by, the head teacher as the head teacher is the one who defines the deputy head's duties. The same is noted in the UK by Garrett and Mcgeachie (1999), and Greenfield (1985) also notes that the deputy's duties could be defined as the head's will. As Dean (2002) argues, many deputy heads in New York find that they need to negotiate their role even where there is a clear job description, because it depends upon the management approach of the head teacher. There appears to be a similar pattern in Greece, too. Therefore, the tasks and responsibilities of deputy heads vary from one school to another and may be vague and unclear, as Harris et al (2003) noted in the UK. In Greece although there is a legal framework for the head teacher's duties and responsibilities, this is not the case for the deputies.

Irrespective of whether they approached headship via the route of deputy, some of the potential applicants seem to have a clear idea of what 'steps' they should take in order to enhance their potential candidacy for headship and this includes gaining more academic credentials. Three of the respondents (2 women and a man) talked about further developing their qualifications as a key to enhancing their advancement. For example, a woman teacher indicated:

> In the future…[I may apply for the post] if I were more experienced or had studied further…. A kind of specialisation [would have been useful]. So I could be useful in a senior post. Maybe an MBA, or a masters in administration. (Loukia, WT, 30-39)

A woman who had made it to the top and became a head teacher also explained:

At first, university was not enough for [my husband], so he got another degree. Then it was a Masters. I followed him, as well, or maybe he followed me. We graduated together with a degree in political sciences. Then we did a Masters in teaching, I in language teaching, he in mathematics. (Lea, WHT, 50-59)

Aspiring women in this study tend to have more qualifications than men (even if they have someone to keep them company on their journey to obtain them, as in the case of Lea). According to the Hellenic Statistical Authority in the academic year 2008/2009, women represented 55.8% of students in Master level courses (Hellenic Statistical Authority 2012). Also, according to Hellenic Statistical Authority in 2008 women comprised 57.8% of all the primary education teachers with post graduate degrees (Hellenic Statistical Authority 2008), rising to 66.1% in 2013 (Hellenic Statistical Authority 2013). Statistics demonstrate that there are more women with postgraduate degrees. This problematises the assumptions that women do not progress because they are less qualified (Coffey and Delamont 2000) and does not offer satisfactory explanations for the under-representation of women in educational leadership.

Coleman (2002) also noted that in the UK, during the period of advancement and planning women and men who aspire to headship are likely to obtain further qualifications. In Greece in 2010 67.4% of primary education teachers with second Bachelor degrees were women (Hellenic Statistical Authority 2010b). In my research only two men held a second bachelor degree (in Management and in Economics), while eight women held second bachelor degrees (in Mechanical Engineering, Nursery Nursing, Beauty Studies, Political Science and Religious Education) and three held Masters (in Education). Taki (2006), in her PhD study, interviewed Greek women in the urban area of Thessaloniki who held a variety of leadership posts in education (head teachers, Directors and Heads of Local Educational Authorities and educational advisors). By comparing the qualifications of the women applicants for these posts to those of the men applicants, she also reached the conclusion that women appear to obtain more qualifications than men. This may be a local and a fairly recent phenomenon as earlier research from other international studies produced different results. For example, Coleman (2002) found that in the UK over 50% of the men head teacher participants in her study held a Masters degree, 10% more than the women. Also, in the USA Shakeshaft (1989) reported that 71% of men secondary school principals held graduate degrees compared with under half of the women. My search for more up-to-date data on the gender distribution of teachers with further qualification in the UK did not yield

any result. However in 2009-10 there were more women postgraduate students (56.6%) than men (43.4%) in the UK as Higher Education Statistics Agency (2011) reported. So, it seems likely that nowadays in the UK women teachers are also more likely to hold postgraduate degrees than men teachers, as in Greece.

Logan (1999) and Peterson and Runyan (1999) argue that the desire for more qualifications that some of the women have may be due to stereotyping women as having lower self-esteem and lacking confidence (as could be argued for Lea in my research). Similarly, Brunner and Grogan (2007) suggest that women's low self-esteem may lead them to seek to further develop themselves in order to prove to themselves and to others that they are qualified enough to become leaders. This could suggest that low self-esteem may be directly affected by the way some women perceive the constructions and expectations that others hold for them. So, if women are constructed as inferior to men, then they may act as if they are (Gupton and Slick 1996, Wilkinson 1991). Liu (2000) argued that the higher demands on the professional role of women teachers in China make the conflict between self-respect and feelings of inferiority even more acute. He explains that because of traditional cultural images, some women teachers might feel inferior and lack confidence. Therefore, when women are challenged in work, they may doubt their ability, and often stop advancing (Liu 2000). In addition, research has found that some women appear to be less aspiring toward school leadership than men (Riehl and Byrd 1997, Gupton and Slick 1996). Of course there may be other reasons for the fact that women stop advancing, like family responsibilities, workload etc, but low confidence may be viewed as a possible reason, too. Riehl and Byrd (1997) in the US reported that women were not as likely as men to want to leave teaching. Women teachers had degree credentials in educational leadership at rates consistent with men's, indicating that they probably were interested in this kind of work, but they were less likely to leave the classroom, and less likely to apply for leadership positions. Similarly, Cleveland et al (2000) drawing on international literature, argue that men are more likely to be hired for managerial positions than similarly qualified women. Similarly in the present study, although more women that men held second Bachelor Degrees and Masters, as indicated earlier, only one of them chose to pursue a leadership career. Therefore, based upon these measures, women teachers either appear to be less actively seeking school headship than men, perhaps assuming that they would not get the job or they are less likely to be appointed. Furthermore, gaining more qualifications may be an attempt to counter the assumed preference for men candidates in the selection processes (an issue that is discussed in the section below).

4.2.2. Becoming a head teacher: Drifting into headship

Many of my interviewees (seven out of the fifteen women and three out of the ten men) saw their appointment as head teachers not as a result of a systematic career plan or strong career aspirations, but rather as an unplanned, even abrupt, event in their career. It seems to be a case of what Gold (1996) described as 'drifting' into educational leadership.

In most cases, respondents explained that their application came about as a result of others (including their colleagues or the Director of the LEA) suggesting they apply. For example, a woman head teacher said:

> [I became a head teacher] [c]oincidentally. I never dreamt of it, I never aspired to it, it never crossed my mind. Because being a head teacher is only being a clerk, not a teacher. You have to be an accountant, you have to know about computers and there is no, or limited, opportunity for direct contact with the classroom. You don't have your own class. You don't have your own children to devote yourself to. You don't feel that special relationship between the children and their teacher. Because of all that it never crossed my mind to apply. But then in 2005 the head teacher of my school retired and the post was advertised. My colleagues urged me to apply. They believed I could handle it. I have been in this school since 1993, when it first opened, so I know all the problems, all the needs. So I decided to apply. I was thinking of taking the post just for a year. Then I said, ok one more year. Then I applied again for another 4 years this time. But to tell you the truth it was not an easy decision, because I wouldn't have my class. (Kiki, WHT, 50-59)

Kiki constructs headship as very technical not compatible with her own priorities and experiences. She sees headship as administrative in nature ('being a head teacher is only being a clerk [...] You have to be an accountant, you have to know about computers'). She identifies herself as wanting to work with children and devote herself to them, reflecting priorities traditionally constructed as 'feminine' and connected to women (i.e. proximity to children, emotional expressions). Her traditional image of headship implies a 'masculine' construction of the head teacher's role as someone who has to deal with money and work with technology, professions that in Greece are associated mostly with men (Alipranti-Maratou and Tsakmakis 2008). In conjunction with 'masculine' constructions of management as technicist and requiring knowledge of new technologies (Al-Khalifa and Migniuolo 1990), the head's job conflicts with traditional notions of 'femininity' (Reay and

Ball 2000). So, from what Kiki is saying it may be suggested that the assumed 'masculine' nature of headship may perpetuate women's low aspirations of attaining a management position (Blackmore 1999, Evetts 1994). Put differently, the belief that women tend to value caring and having relationships with others could be perceived as being at odds with 'masculine' values of management and as a negative incentive for women's desire to pursue career progression (Limerick and Anderson 1999).

Furthermore, Kiki appears to lack confidence when she had to decide whether to apply for headship or not. She had to be 'urged' to apply as her colleagues believed she 'could handle it'. So, she can be assumed to be drawing on constructions socially ascribed as traditionally 'feminine', even though as I will show below, some men in my research also appeared to lack confidence in their abilities to handle leadership (e.g. Yannis). So, it can be argued that lacking confidence, although it is traditionally constructed as a 'feminine' characteristic, may also associated with men, too. Though men who display a lack of confidence tend to be seen as 'not manly' enough, as they do not correspond to the traditional notion of 'hegemonic masculinity', that constructs men as unemotional, confident and independent (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005).

Yannis, like Kiki, did not plan to be a head teacher. He explained:

> I would say that I became a head teacher without aiming for it. [...]When I was talking to other teachers and heads they were all telling me to apply. But this didn't affect me. I didn't believe I was suitable for the post, that I was the right one or that I could manage the whole school. The Director of LEA, though, who was a close friend of mine and kind of a role model, told me that I could do it and that I should apply. (Yannis, MHT, 50-59)

He is an example of a man head teacher who did not plan to become a head teacher and needed a 'push'. Similarly to Kiki, he seems to have low confidence, although this is traditionally assumed to be a 'feminine' characteristic (Oplatka 2006). He was encouraged by a man Director of the LEA and by the Director's belief that he was capable of being a head teacher. Yannis therefore may be viewed as someone who benefited from homosocial networks (which is discussed below) to enhance his career. His talk is also indicative of the assumption held by some of the respondents (17 out of the 40) that becoming a head teacher has to do with networking and the people you know. Networking maybe of a political nature as 18 of the respondents believe, or it may be of other nature

(e.g. religious, knowing people who are in senior positions etc). Yannis falls into the second category because his appointment as a head teacher was supported by the Director of LEA, who was also a man (as it is evident in the Greek word 'proistamenos' that he uses). In this case networking appears to be based on homophily in a way that has powerful implications for the information people receive, the attitudes they form, and the interactions they experience (McPherson et al 2001). Yannis was supported not only by a man, but also by someone holding power (i.e. the Director of LEA). According to the literature, men tend to move onto the leadership ladder because those who make the decisions and have power usually want to maintain the status quo (i.e. to have men and/or those who draw on traditionally 'masculine' identities in leadership posts) (Jakobsh 2004).

Other head teachers in this study entered their current role due to the former head teacher's retirement or career transition as they have moved to different posts (e.g. Director of LEA). The important aspect in their story is, nonetheless, that events brought about a need to recruit a person as a head teacher and they were chosen to fill this position. Notably, the women head teachers (and some men too) underscored the fact that they had not initiated the application for the vacant position. On the contrary, they indicated that they had been persuaded to apply by someone else, using phrases like 'I was the most experienced teacher in this school, when the former head retired, I was offered the post and my colleagues insisted that I accept' (Christina, WHT, 30-39)[10]. Perhaps they talk like this because they are not so sure they are capable of doing the job, or it may be the opposite, they wanted to stress to me that they were thought of as able and appropriate for the post by their colleagues and/or superiors.

Other head teachers talked also about becoming heads even though they had not planned for it.

> I was appointed this year, because a head teacher retired and they didn't have anybody else to appoint. I don't think I was the best person for the job. I don't even think I was prepared for it, I didn't think that then and I don't think it now. I still don't have any qualifications in management. In other schools there were better people,

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[10] In Greece when the head teacher in a school retires or resigns from the post then the next one in the list of the potential candidates takes his/her post. But if the list is finished (i.e. all the candidates have become heads) then the most experienced teacher in the school can take up the post, but only until the end of the 2-year incumbency of the former head teacher.

but the new head teacher had to be from this school and I was the only teacher with a permanent post. (Kostas, MHT, 50-59)

Here Kostas also appears to lack confidence as he says that he was appointed as a head teacher as a last resort, because there was no other person to take up the job. He does not appear to believe that he became a head teacher because he was the right person for the job. Later on he repeats almost the same words 'it was just an empty post, they didn't have anybody else and so they gave it to me'. His appearance is quite 'masculine'. So, according to Greek understandings and constructions of masculinity' his physical appearance and his moustache, which in modern Greece is considered a symbol of a virile man (Christianopoulos 2004) even though in other countries (i.e. Iran and UK) it can be associated with homosexuality (Khosravi 2009), one would expect that his behaviour would have also been 'masculine'. But he appears to draw on a more 'feminine' construction (like Yannis above) as he appears to lack self-confidence and to devalue himself. This highlights how gender is socially constructed based on stereotypes and behaviours that do not necessarily correspond with men's and women's own identities.

4.2.3. Unwilling to become a head teacher, or not willing yet.

I asked the teachers who participated in my research if they planned to apply or if they were thinking of applying for headship in the future. Out of the five men and ten women teachers that I interviewed, only three were planning to apply for headship sometime in the future (two women and one man). Out of the five men teachers that I interviewed, two had applied in the past but had not been successful and had now accepted that they would not be heads. The other eight women and two men were not willing to apply.

Five of those women who were not willing to apply indicated that the tasks of headship are not of interest to them at this point in time, because they entered education to teach. Some typical quotes from their responses are:

No. For the time being I am not thinking about it. I am very young and I want to work with my class. I really enjoy the contact with the children and the way they behave. (Roula, WT, 30-39)

I like teaching. This is what I want. [...] I don't think I will ever apply for headship, because it will mean that I would have to abandon teaching. (Loukia, WT, 30-39)

Perhaps the most important point in these quotes is that both of them are from women teachers, and that only women made this point. No man in the study discussed the enjoyment of being a teacher and being close to children. Kiki should also be mentioned here, too, because, even though she became a head teacher, she would still prioritise being in the classroom with children over leading a school. These are claims despite the legal framework that indicates that head teachers do have teaching responsibilities, as I showed earlier. It is assumed that teaching is traditionally constructed as a feminised practice associated with care (Noddings 2005), reflecting a dominant discourse of 'femininity', where women are seen as caring and nurturant, and are thus considered to be 'naturally' focused on the role of a teacher. Also, as I have discussed in Chapter 2, 'femininity' is traditionally associated with an ethic of care, contrary to 'masculinity' which is associated with professional prowess (Charlebois 2012), resulting in the assumption that 'men manage and women teach' (Ozga 1993, Coleman and Fitzgerald 2008).

One other reason that the participants put forward for their decision not to apply for headships is that of family responsibilities and work-life balance. One of perhaps the biggest challenges women and men face today is combining a career that is satisfying with the rewards of family life. Women's participation in the workforce is increasing, with working women reaching almost 52% of all women in Greece (European Commission 2010)[11]. Given the sort of demands that the head teacher's post holds and the fact that women are more likely to take the responsibility for children and home, it is not surprising that many women, both in my study and in other studies worldwide (Lewis 1994, Coleman 2002, Oplatka and Herzt-Lazarowitz 2006), find it difficult to combine career with family.

Caring responsibilities around the world tend to be still strongly identified with women and seen as women's work (Warrin and Gannerud 2014). This assumption produces imbalanced patterns of working practices and responsibilities across a whole range of contexts including within the teaching profession.

Additionally, while almost all of the women participants appeared to talk lovingly about raising their children, most of those who planned to apply for headship wait until their

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[11] Although in the current recession the rates of unemployed women is 30.1%, much higher than the 23.9% of the men (Eurostat 2012, Hellenic Statistical Authority 2013).

children are grown or more independent. They indicate that they do not think that they could do the work required to be a mother and a head teacher at the same time. A woman teacher aspiring to headship indicated:

> My child will be older [when I plan to apply], he is 8 now, in two years time he will be 10, he will be independent…ok, I have only one child, I don't have a lot of other engagements…(Eleni, WT, 40-49)

A similar account was given by another woman teacher:

> I haven't thought about it. Also, because I have connected headship with major responsibilities, it hasn't crossed my mind. Also, I have 2 children who need my attention. They are young. They can't cope without their mother! I also have my husband and my house to take care of[…] And I have to be a mum, a housekeeper and a wife on top of that! These are jobs with great demands, as well. (Mina, WT, 30-39)

She offers the view that being a head teacher is a very demanding job with great responsibilities. This, combined with the fact that she has two young children (10 and 7 years old) and domestic responsibilities, feels too much to handle and so she does not think of applying for headship. McLay (2008) in her study on head teacher career paths in UK schools also found that most of her respondents did not take their first headship before their children were aged 15 or over. Domestic responsibility is also a very important point raised in Mina's talk. Responsibility for care and domestic work is not shared equally between women and men, regardless of women's employment status in the UK (Delamont 2001, Kodz et al 2003, European Social Survey 2013). European data on social trends in domestic work show that women perform almost two thirds of all domestic work in European countries (European Commission 2004, European Social Survey 2013). Also, in the same report it is noted that domestic activities are gender segregated with women tending to do the housework (i.e. cleaning, cooking, ironing, doing the washing up etc) and caring and men doing maintenance and repairing work. In Greece, data by Mencarini and Sironi (2009) who conducted a comparative analysis of the data collected in the European Social Survey (Round 2, 2004) found that women do more than 75% of the work around the house. The most recent data from European Social Survey (2013) indicate that women in Greece do even more domestic work, reaching 80% of the total. The explanation for this increase may rest with the recession in Greece, as women face unemployment in greater

numbers. As a result, they stay at home and undertake more of the domestic work. Of course, the situation is not that different from the past, when women did not face such high numbers of unemployment. Another explanation may also be that more men than women tend to have second jobs in order to make ends meet and support their families after the pay cuts that have taken place over the past three years due to the recession in Greece (Livanos and Zangelidis 2012, To vima 24/7/2011). So, as men are away from the house, women have to shoulder even more responsibilities and housework. One the other hand, as I have shown earlier, unemployment has reached over 30% (Hellenic Statistical Authority 2013) and even if the rates of unemployed women are higher than those for men, a lot of men are out of work. So, one might have expected that men would have shared domestic duties, as many of them do not work any more. But, as Kambouri (2013) also notes, this is not the case.

In today's modern nuclear family, women usually do not have practical support from other members of the extended family and this tends to place extensive pressure on women teachers as Home (1998) indicates in the US. Household and family responsibilities can also be seen as barriers for women in leadership positions (Home 1998). Faced with both social and household responsibilities, as well as career and family, the great majority of women try to make the best of both worlds. Most working women are trying to balance a successful career and home and at the same time are attempting to establish acceptable social identities as mothers and wives (Litosseliti 2006). A study of managers aged 35 to 64 in the United Kingdom found that 88 percent of men managers were married, compared with 69 percent of their women colleagues (Charlesworth 1997). In the field of education, as noted in Chapter 2, Coleman (2005b) found that 78% of the women head teachers were married and 63% had a child compared with 96% of the men who were married and 90% who had a child. So, she concluded that although there were difficulties in both men's and women's lives, the lives of women appeared to be more deeply affected in both studies. An important feature of leadership work is the long hours that both men and women have to spend at work in order to gain recognition and eventually promotion (DfES 2007). Even though there is no official data about the amount of time men and women in leadership positions spend at work in Greece, I can assume from personal knowledge and experience that it is longer than non leadership work. So, women who desire both a family and a career often juggle heavy responsibilities in both domains (Reay and Ball 2000). It can be practically impossible to reconcile the long hours of leadership work with the amount of

time needed to care for a home and children. In this context, time is very much a gender issue.

For women, combining a senior post with motherhood is difficult and this may lead women to prioritise their goals. It can be assumed that society's expectations are that women play the lead role at home and in child care and this may cause conflicts between family and career. My respondents' choice to delay their entry into the headship, may suggest that it might be difficult for these women to perform as both heads and mothers, given the dominant constructions of these roles, if their children were still home. While these women may need to overcome many barriers to obtain their head teacher position if they decide to apply, it is possible that their delayed entry serves to perpetuate the under-representation of women in educational leadership. Dana and Bourisaw (2006) in their study about women as superintendents in the USA explain:

> One of the most traditional sex-role stereotypes is the woman as family and home caregiver. Because women are the childbearers, they are also expected to be the primary family caregivers, which traditionally has meant the women stay home to rear the children, fix the meals, maintain the house and all family operations, and, since they are at home, take care of the secretarial, organizational, and social duties for the family. Men are expected to be the financial providers for their families. (p. 22)

Similarly, in the Greek family the mother is constructed as taking care of everything in the house and the father as the main breadwinner (Stratigaki n.d.).

These expectations seem to be grounded in dominant constructions of 'femininity' and perhaps make it difficult for women to access a head teacher's position. The head teacher's position tends to be defined around more 'masculine' constructions, as being always present in the school without any other responsibilities and spending long working hours there. So, it does not seem to be a post that a woman with traditional family responsibilities can easily cope with as it may collide with the dominant constructions of 'femininity'.

Furthermore, a woman teacher in my research who did not want to apply for headship (Dina) seems to have images of headship that can be seen to draw on traditional

constructions about 'masculinity' and 'femininity' and to corroborate 'masculine conceptualisations of management' (Gray 1989). For example, Dina notes that:

> [A man head teacher] reacts differently in certain situations, he can enforce discipline, he can set up rules, he is fair. A woman is afraid, she is insecure, she becomes unfair, she bases her decisions on gossiping and not facts. A man can handle staff, while a woman can't. (Dina, WT, 40-49)

The assumption that an effective head teacher ought to be assertive, aggressive, determined, persuasive, strong and charismatic, makes it easier to understand why this woman teacher felt that headship does not fit with dominant constructions of 'femininity'. So, in some instances women like Dina may be put off applying for senior positions because leadership is often associated with 'masculine' characteristics which can be unappealing to them. Dina seems to downgrade women head teachers by associating them with behaviours that have a negative connotation, like gossiping or by considering them as afraid and insecure, contrary to men. A view like that coming from a woman is very interesting and in contrast to other studies from the business world that have found that women peers tend not to downgrade other women (Ibarra and Obodaru 2009). On the other hand, in the field of educational leadership Gupton and Slick (1996) report 'an unexpected wrinkle' (p. 5) in a woman high school principal's experiences in her new job when she revealed that 'many teachers were [...] not inclined to accept leadership from a woman. And the women teachers were less inclined [than men]' (p. 66). Bell (1995) tried to explain this phenomenon by stating that women in educational leadership are in the unusual position of having one foot in each camp, being members of a majority (women in education) as well as members of the few (women school leaders). She concludes that the experiences of women leaders 'encompass both authority and influence as leaders, and isolation as women in a male dominated occupation' (p. 289).

Similar to Bell's (1995) argument is Funk's (2010) assertion that members of oppressed groups tend to lash out at their peers in response to oppression instead of attacking their oppressors. Dina appears to be doing this, as she denigrates and attacks other women who have made it and reached leadership posts.

It is not only women who find the idea of headship and the amount of work involved deterring. Vassilis, a man teacher noted:

[I don't want to be a head teacher] [b]ecause a head teacher has so many responsibilities that I don't even want to think about the fact that I could have been in his shoes.[...] A head has so many other jobs, so many documents, has to run around, asking, or begging, for several things, like for extra teachers, or for money for the heating. A lot of work! (Vassilis, MT, 30-39)

The amount of work that headship involves appears to deter him, too. He feels that the head teacher is overloaded. The head teacher is perceived by Vassilis (as was perceived by Kiki earlier) as having so many administrative duties (e.g. dealing with bureaucracy) that do not seem to be directly linked to leadership and management. He also perceives the head teacher as the one who 'begs' for things, like money or teaching personnel. It is true that in Greece the money allocated to the schools by the local authorities is usually not enough to cover schools' basic needs (i.e. utility bills and heating), let alone stationery and maintenance. Also, it is rare that all the teaching posts are covered at the beginning of each school year or during the year should a teacher leave because of health reasons. The head teacher usually has to turn to his/her superiors in order to have the empty posts filled. So, Vassilis believes that these responsibilities are overwhelming and, so, a headship post does not appeal to him.

Finally, one more reason for not wanting to be a head teacher seems to be the pervasive culture of heterosexism (Papanastasiou 2015). A man participant identified himself as gay and said:

....this will happen [the application], if it ever happens, in the future. First I have to work on being accepted as a teacher and as a person. I try not to provoke anyone. I behave as normal as I can, as 'manly' as I can. I don't know...I feel it in the air that they would rather not have me around here, but I don't give up! I am here to stay! Whether you like it or not, I am a teacher, I am a good teacher I think, and my sexual orientation is nobody's business. But it causes problems and it will cause more problems if I dare apply! (Petros, MT, 30-39)

Appleby (1996) and Hunt and Jensen (2007)discussing the connection between homosexual identity and experience of the heterosexist UK educational system and Ferfolja (2007) in a study in Australia note that those who do not follow the 'acceptable' standards of (hetero)normativity in a school, may be 'punished' through overt or covert harassment, stigmatisation, ostracism and exclusion. So, as a consequence many gay teachers choose

silence, because their sexuality may be considered an 'illegitimate' discourse and practice as the prevailing dominant discourse normalises heterosexuality. Petros positions his silence about his sexuality by foregrounding other discourses, particularly that of teacher as a professional ('I am a teacher, I am a good teacher'). Maybe he believes that by identifying himself as a teacher rather than as a gay teacher, he will limit potential harassment.

Greece is considered a conservative country where most people regard homosexuality as a taboo issue (Eurobarometer 2007) and non-heterosexual people as an invisible group (Giannelos 2000). The Greek Orthodox Church, a major and influential institution in the country, considers homosexuality to be a sin and those with homosexual orientations as sinful. Similarly, several high-profile politicians have openly expressed disdain towards homosexual people and the media often promotes an image of exaggerated and ridiculous homosexual characters or even censor homosexual scenes in prime-time series (e.g. a kiss between men shown in the British TV series 'Downton Abbey'). Unlike other European Union countries, same-sex registered partnerships do not exist in Greece, because the legal status (cohabitation pact) of same-sex unions is not recognised. Moreover, Greek law does not recognise same-sex spouses even if they hold a valid certificate from another European member state (De Shutter 2008). Qualitative research findings suggest that the population in general holds a rather negative picture of homosexuals and believes that homosexuality poses a danger to society (Tzamalouka 2000). Even many social work students in a study of their perceptions appear to have negative views of homosexuality and admit that they would not treat a person who is gay/lesbian as they would treat heterosexuals (Papadaki and Papadaki 2011, Papadaki et al 2013). Homosexual populations in Greece are stigmatised, marginalised and often subject to homophobic behaviour (Tzamalouka 2002). Recently, an MP from the far right political party of the Golden Dawn denounced homosexuality as 'sickness' (the Guardian 16/7/2014). In a cultural climate like that one can understand why Petros chooses to remain silent about his sexual orientation and why he thinks he has almost no chance of getting a head teacher's position.

Petros describes his behaviour as trying to be 'manly', reflecting the 'normal', hegemonic form of (hetero)sexuality and the dominant form of gendered social relations that are constructed in an institution like a school. He believes that his gay identity may disrupt his career progress as Boatwright et al (1996) explain in their study. So this highlights not only the fact that the head teacher is constructed as 'masculine', but also as heterosexual, as Kanter (1977) when discussing the US situation suggested. Blount (2003) in his study in the

US context suggests that there is understandable reluctance on the part of gay (or lesbian) administrators to identify themselves given societal bias. Petros is brave enough to identify himself in the interview but, as it appears from his account, not at school. He seems to believe that, contrary to Lowell (2000), by breaking the code of silence through disclosure he will not experience less heterosexist bias but would have to deal with a lot more. So, he is trying not to draw attention to his identity but it consumes much of his time to hide his identity and he does not work towards getting a higher position. But Petros does not reject headship at all. He considers it for the future, after he has been accepted as gay. He says 'this will happen [the application], if it ever happens, in the future. First I have to work on being accepted as a teacher and as a person.' Otherwise he believes that he will face many problems. Shakeshaft et al (2010) draw on research from the US and the UK that analysed the history and experiences of gay and lesbian educational leaders and conclude that their reluctance to identify themselves as homosexuals is understandable. They add that gay/lesbian leaders in the US 'still risk immediate termination based on the belief that gay, lesbian, and transgender administrators post a threat to the stability of the school community' (p. 115). In Greece, although the Greek Constitution, which was established in 1975, does not allow discrimination based on gender, race and religion, sexual orientation is not included as a non-discriminatory category. So, maybe Petros is right and if he chooses to become a head teacher now, he will have to deal with a lot.

To sum up, from my research it seems that the ones who feel able to apply for headship are mostly men who may want it or have been urged by their colleagues or superiors to apply, even though there are some women who have applied or think about it in the future. Regarding women, it seems that those who want to be head teachers usually plan it beforehand and work towards it by obtaining more qualifications. It should be mentioned that the younger women appear to have more qualifications than the older ones (from the seven women participants with a second Bachelor and/or a Masters degree, only Loula and Lea were over 40 years old, while the rest were in the age band 30-39). Also the women who have fewer domestic and/or childhood responsibilities are more likely to seek headship. The reasons why women and some men do not want to be head teachers seem to be because of the demands of the post and because of how they construct the role of the head teacher. This latter issue will be analysed in the next Chapter.

4.3. Selection procedures

In order for teachers to become head teachers they have to go through a selection procedure. In Greece, this is done in every geographical area, every two years, and the assessments and selection are done by a council which is composed of two members of the teachers' union, the Director of Local Education Authorities and an Educational Advisor. The assessment and selection procedure involves a points system with two sub-categories. The first one is where the applicant's qualifications (bachelor, postgraduate degrees, seminars and conferences attended, papers presented at seminars or conferences, publications, knowledge of foreign languages, etc) are judged and the second one is an interview where the applicant's personality and management knowledge and ability are assessed.

For the participants in the present research two factors were highlighted that may assist or hinder career progress for both men and women: Networks and constructions of gender.

4.3.1. Networks and the selection process

Although in Greece the selection procedure for head teachers is intended to be objective and transparent, the head teachers and teachers who participated in my research believe that the procedures are anything but objective. All but one of the respondents felt that political beliefs played an important role.

A man teacher, who failed to be selected as head, discussed the role that political beliefs could play in the selection procedure:

> [I wasn't selected] [b]ecause, the final decision was based on criteria that were not
> objective, they were subjective.[…] You had to be a friend of the government or you
> had to be in agreement, politically, with the selection panel in order to get a high
> mark and to be selected. (Thodoris, MT, 50-59)

And another one commented on the selection procedure and the influence of politics:

> [I wasn't preferred because] the other [applicant] was a political ally of them. He was
> a member of the governing party and he had been involved with the union for many

years. He was known to them. I was just a simple head teacher that wanted to keep my post. I had never expressed myself politically, I wasn't an active member of the union. So, the other guy was preferred.(Lakis, MT, 50-59)

This is similar to the findings of other studies in Greece about women in educational management (Taki 2006) and about gender and the selection procedures in educational management (Andrikogiannopoulou 2010). Both of these studies concluded that the selection of educational leaders is an unfair procedure, open to manipulation based on political networks and influence. A woman head teacher, who used to be a member of the selection panel in her area when she was involved with the teachers' union, admits that 'I myself was influenced by factors outside the procedure, like the "correct" political party' (Gina, WHT, 40-49) (she indicated the inverted commas with a gesture). The respondents agree that favouritism based on political beliefs can be applied equally to men and women and by men and women.

However, an interesting point in my data is that it is men who reported that they failed to be selected as heads because of political networks. The women in my study, although they acknowledge the existence of these networks, did not report any personal experiences related to this. This may relate to the different ways in which men and women present their political affiliations. Men tend to be more overt about their membership, something that women do not appear to do, as Kiki below indicates. She believes that her political affiliation did not play any role in her appointment as a head teacher, as her political beliefs are not known to the public. So, she assumes that the selection panel probably appointed her on other criteria and not politics:

> Because we are Greeks, I believe politics could be an influence. Personally, all these years I try to keep my political beliefs outside of the school. Politics is not my passion. So, I have never given the right to anyone to judge me for my political beliefs and I don't think that it has affected my appointment. (Kiki, WHT, 50-59)

But even so, a selection based on political beliefs may also be a gendered selection, as this woman head teacher indicates:

> The one who is closer to the panel's political beliefs [is selected]. And because men have more time to get involved in politics, they would choose the man (Rena, WHT, 30-39).

She offers the view that women are less involved with politics because of gender roles and especially the role of women in Greek society. As discussed above, women are constructed as being the ones responsible for the house and the children. The public sphere is the male preserve and the private, or domestic sphere is the designated sphere for women. So, in a traditional society, like the Greek society, the tendency is for the men to be involved in politics and for the women to identify with traditional` constructions of 'femininity' and this is suggested by Rena. A family with two breadwinners usually means a dual burden for women and unequal distribution of domestic work (OECD 2001, Kodz et al 2003). As was noted earlier, responsibility and care in Greece is not often shared equally between women and men either. So, while women teachers have to work at school and then take care of their homes, families and children, men teachers have time after work to deal with other things, like politics and networking.

So, some men and women participants feel that promotion in the Greek education system can be subjective and obscured by political motives. This view was also shared by the teachers who participated in research by the Greek Teachers Union (DOE) in 2002. It can be suggested that this widespread view stems from the way that educational managers are selected. In addition, the existing legislative framework (Presidential Decree 25/2002) does not establish consistent selection criteria (Saitis 2002) or requirements that interview questions should be the same for all applicants. But even if there were, this does not imply that favouritism would cease, as research in the UK, where the same questions for all candidates is standard policy, has shown that the applicants' gender affects selection (Coleman 2002). Even though Coleman's and DOE's studies were conducted over a decade ago, Rena clearly feels that gender is still influential.

Another hindering factor, besides political networks, that is suggested by some of the participants in my research is what has been identified in the literature as the 'old boys' network' (Coleman 2002, p. 81). White men have known for a long time that networks are important for career success (Cocciara et al 2010). Variously termed the 'Old Boys Network' (Blackmore 1993) or 'Good Old Boys' network (Shakeshaft 1989), these networks have developed through school ties or social organisations, such as country clubs. Such networks serve an instrumental function in providing career related information (Coleman 2002). In essence, the literature suggests networks provide resources, such as information, feedback, and social support, to the individual. Moore and Webb (1998) argue that for many women,

who lack access to information and social support in the workplace, effective networking might be crucial for career success.

Women who seek leadership positions often find that informal networks of leaders control the recruitment and selection process, as Linehan (2001) found in her research in the area of corporate management in Ireland, Belgium, Germany and France. Women usually do not have access to the kinds of informal contacts that usually ensure advancement in a career. Most women feel left out because the 'old boys' network', a male communications network among leaders, exchanges professional and personal information that often deals with job advancement and placement opportunities as Fagenson (1994) notes for the corporate world. It can be argued that the situation is similar in education, as well. In Greece this informal networking usually takes place in coffee shops in the afternoon. Coffee shops are traditional places where men gather and where women are not welcome. As Papataxiarchis (1992) and Loizos (2003) note, the coffee shops (kafeneia) in Greece are places where 'masculinity' is usually demonstrated by swearing, playing cards and backgammon, drinking, smoking and engaging in discussions and are in contrast with households, which are considered as 'feminine' fields. So, women are traditionally excluded from such networks and as a result they do not have information about open leadership posts. Although in my research the participants did not refer to the places where informal networking tends to take place, personal experiences show that this is in coffee shops, football grounds and private clubs.

About 15 years ago, Linehan (2001) indicated that, throughout Europe, the 'old boys' network' was strong in most organisations. More research conducted in Ireland by Drew and Murtagh (2005) indicated that there are many established networks in the corporate world in which women are not allowed to participate. Finally, lately Piterman (2013) argues that in Australia 'the Old Boy network is alive and well, despite all talk of diversity and corporate change' (p. 101)

Women are excluded from 'old boys' networks which have been composed of men who have power and information (Linehan 2000). The exclusion of women from male networks perpetuated the more 'masculine' customs and negative attitudes towards women leaders. The detrimental effects of exclusion from male networks could be blocked promotion, discrimination, and lower salaries even if they hold similar qualifications to men.

In the international literature in relation to education, the 'old boys' networks' may be viewed in relation to mentoring and sponsoring as Taylor (1995) noted in Canada and Coleman (2002) in the UK. Although mentoring and/or sponsoring by experienced heads was cited as an important aspect of training and contact with others (Sherman et al 2008, Coleman 2002, Taylor 1995), inside information and acquaintance with gatekeepers, i.e. selection panels, women tend not to have full access to mentoring schemes. A reason for this may be that the majority of mentors are men, so they form patriarchal and homosocial support systems (Bagilhole and Goode 2001) from which women are usually excluded. But given that Bagilhole's and Goode's research was about women in higher education in the UK, and not in primary education, where women are the majority of head teachers in the UK, it would be interesting to see if the situation is similar in primary education in Greece where women are the minority of head teachers, as I have shown in an earlier chapter.

So, although one may have expected that women in Greece would have formatted their own networks to balance men's, the only women's networks in the country are for women who suffer from domestic or other kinds of violence, the Women of SYRIZA network that is mostly concerned with political issues (e.g. the anti-globalisation movement) and the White Women Front, a network that the far right political party Golden Dawn has formed in order to inform women (see Introduction). I suggest that more women's networks are necessary in order to help women to see themselves in a different way, to raise consciousness, to see new possibilities and to them gain the benefits and information deriving from networking.

In Greece, there are no formal mentoring schemes, but many of my participants talked about support that they received from a former head teacher or from the head of the LEA.

> During my first year I just took the place of the former head who retired and really believed in me and helped me a lot with everything during the first year. He was the one who, kind of, pushed me to apply....he believed I could do it. (Alexandra, WHT, 40-49)

> I won't call it a proposal…information is the right word [from the LEA]. […] they proposed to me. And then, ok, it was a whole procedure. But I knew there was a will to open this school and to appoint someone experienced, like me. (Maria, WHT, 40-49)

What is interesting is that Maria and Alexandra were both head teachers who discussed their approach to leadership in ways that could be seen as associated with traditional 'masculine' constructions (i.e. making decisions on their own and not consulting the other teachers, relying a lot on the law and not being flexible, not caring about the others' emotions etc) (as is discussed in the next chapter) and their 'sponsors' were men. It is also interesting that the research participants (men or women) who tend to draw on what are considered as traditionally 'masculine' leadership approaches were mainly supported or helped in their career progression by men. So, maybe homophilous and/or known colleagues (in the cases of Alexandra and Maria they were the former head teacher and the Director of LEA) act as attractors and they provide a familiar underlying structure for the head teacher to return to, as men tend to help other men (Coleman 2010) or those who are similar to them (Chewning and Doerfel 2013, McPherson et al 2001). Maria, like Yannis earlier, had inside information about the post from the Director of LEA. But, contrary to Yannis who did not initially plan to be a head teacher, Maria wanted to and had already been a head teacher at another school before this post became available. So, maybe it was not a case of homophily as the case with Yannis, but a matter of acquaintance. The Director of the LEA knew Maria from her previous post and knew that she was experienced and the appropriate person to lead a new school.

But, it is not only the lack of support from those who hold an 'important' position that may hinder the selection process. The fact that selection panels consist mainly of men (something that most of the respondents stressed) can also hinder women's career progression. This was something that all of my respondents (men, women, head teachers and teachers) agreed upon.

> T: [The selection] depends on who is conducting the interview and what there is in his mind.
>
> E: If the panel is all men, do you think it is more likely they would select a woman or a man?
>
> T: A man.[..] Because he will be one of them (Anna, WT, 30-39)

> [The selection] depends on who is on the panel that is conducting the interview. Most Heads of LEAs are men and birds of a feather flock together! Of course they will select a man! (Kostas, MHT, 50-59)

It is worth noting that Anna uses the single form of the Greek masculine grammatical form (tou) when she is talking about the people conducting interviews. Although the panel consists of 4 people, Anna seems to consider it as something coherent that is also male. While she is doing this she can be viewed as drawing on traditional gender assumptions, i.e. that the norm is that men occupy the upper echelons of leadership and the selection panels. Kostas draws on the same constructions as he argues that the panel consists of men and he does not refer to any women on it as though women on selection panels do not exist (even though they do exist, and Gina, a woman head teacher who participated in this research, had been a member on the selection panel of her geographical area before she became a head teacher herself). They both appear to draw on the assumption that homosociality can be reproduced in the selection process, as Surgue and Furlong (2002) also note.

Wood (1997) and Coleman (2002) in the UK, note the absence of women role models who manage to balance family and career. It does seem often that the demands placed on the head teacher have demoralised others (both men and women) who might aspire to such posts as Hall (1996) and Strachan (1999) report. Women head teachers have to prove that they are capable of dealing with the workload and even prove that they are equal to if not better than their men colleagues and at the same time can handle family responsibilities.

> If they select the woman, she would have to do much more than the man to prove that she was the correct choice. A woman has to prove her value after the interview as well, while the man's work ends there. (Roula, WT, 30-39)

It can be assumed from her account that women are more likely than men to feel that they have to prove themselves and believe that they have to work harder than men to earn their place. The need to work harder is fuelled by the traditional stereotypes about women that associate them with domesticity and caring, not with leadership. There has been a lot of research which show that women need to work much harder to prove their value (i.e. Reay and Ball 2000, Brezinski 2011, Gupton 2009) and to 'break away from their stereotypes' (Coleman 2002, p. 82).

So, the contact between people who appear to share similar identification, i.e. are men or those who are more 'masculine', seems to create a tie between them (McPherson et al 2001) and seems to disadvantage those who are different (i.e. the men and women with more 'feminine' behaviour) or the ones who do not correspond with the dominant construction of head teacher (i.e. 'masculine' and heterosexual) like Petros who was discussed earlier and is not planning to apply for headship in the near future because of concerns about the likely reactions to his sexuality.

4.3.2. Constructions of gender and the selection process

As discussed above, Coleman (2010), in her research about networking in education in the UK, argues that the selection panels are influenced by gender stereotypes which associate women with the home and the family. She also argues that this link is difficult to break. Nevertheless, in earlier research of men and women head teachers in England and Wales she found evidence that traditional gender constructions had not proved a factor hindering promotion. In fact, she found that caring roles associated with 'femininity' were 'almost equally common in the life history of the male and female heads in the survey' (p. 19). She argued that this may indicate a reduction in the stereotyping of women in such 'softer' roles. Equally it may also mean a reduction in the stereotyping of men as suitable for headship, suggesting that the link mentioned earlier is starting to break. But, according to Grummell et al (2009) in Ireland assessors of educational leaders tended to outline a range of personal criteria and qualities that they associated with leadership positions. These, as Grummell et al (2009, p. 336) argue, 'evoke the concept of hegemonic masculinity (Connell 1995)' and excluded many people, mostly women, who were judged subjectively based on their perceived suitability for the post. So, women tend to be considered as suitable for 'softer' roles and low status tasks, not for headship (McLay 2008).

The head teachers who participated in my study were asked whether they had encountered any discrimination because of their gender when they applied. Also, all the participants (teachers and head teachers) were asked whether they believed that gender could be a hindrance in the selection of head teachers. The responses of my participants illustrate that women seem to be systematically overlooked because of traditional constructions that do not associate women with leadership.

When a woman head teacher was asked whether she believed that there was an inequality issue she noted:

> There is! There is! There is the pattern that has been inherited by us, the pattern that younger people adopt because this is what they have learned. (Maria, WHT, 40-49)

My data suggest that there are two reasons why women may not be considered suitable for the role of head teacher. The first is that women may not be seen as capable of being heads. So women are not seen as suitable choices, even if they are more qualified than men, because headship is seen as being too hard for women. The second reason is that being a head teacher requires a heavy time commitment and women do not have time. One respondent indicates this by arguing that perhaps a woman is not preferred for headship because she usually has care responsibilities while a man does not.

> But if there is an issue of selecting between a man and a woman, I think they will prefer the man, because he wouldn't have the responsibilities that a woman has, not because he would be more capable (Yannis, MHT, 50-59)

In relation to this, one woman head teacher had to deal with a question during her interview about her ability to combine headship with her family.

> [They asked me] [h]ow will you do it and what will happen with your family? (Alexandra, WHT, 40-49)

The question that Alexandra was asked can be linked to the perceptions discussed earlier about the difficulty for women in juggling career and family responsibilities. The selection panel seems to draw on traditional constructions about women that appear from earlier discussion to be widespread and common including among some of the research participants.

Both of these quotes illustrate that women may be constructed as the 'other', the one who is different from the dominant construction of the head teacher (i.e. being always available with no other responsibilities). The panel members may feel the need to 'protect' women from this heavy duty by not adding another responsibility on them and they may assume that a woman will have trouble managing work and family. Martin (2006) calls this: 'paternalistic masculinity'. 'Paternalistic masculinity' keeps women in their traditional unquestioned social identities, thus devaluing their identities as professionals and leaders.

Women are constructed as weak people who need to be taken care of. The 'father' figure is central and guides and protects his family members. It perpetuates gender stereotypes and constructions: women have responsibility for taking care of the children, while men are responsible for other things. Men tend not to have to justify the arrangements they will have to make even if they themselves have families and children.

In addition, my data indicates that women applicants are seen as different from men when judged against the ideal stereotype of the strong, authoritarian, masculine leader. As one woman said: 'A man who is believed to be a good leader is treated differently [during the selection procedure] from a woman, who can be seen as more emotional and caring' (Jenny, WHT, 50-59). So, as leadership is often associated with 'masculine' characteristics, women applicants may have to appear as more 'masculine' in order to be appointed. Reay and Ball (2000) observe that 'female managers are operating in a context of male hegemony' (p. 145) and as a result they will have either to conform with it and become more 'masculine' or fail to be selected.

As another participant indicated:

> I have heard 'why does a woman want it?' and I have also heard 'A man can use a Black and Decker, what will a woman do?'. (Danai, WHT, 40-49)

I suggest, therefore, that the role of head teacher is constructed through the distinctions that are made in society between men and women and that these distinctions may hinder women who are seeking to occupy roles as leaders. The gender dualism that underpins the selection panel's thinking about women and men influences their perceptions of the worth of both. Paechter (2001) refers to:

> dualisms deeply implicated in gendered/power relations, aligning themselves with and underpinning the distinction between masculinity and femininity. They include participation in civil society versus rootedness in hearth and home, hardness versus softness, activity versus passivity, reason versus emotions. (p. 48)

Within these dichotomies more value is placed on civil society than on the domestic arena, on hardness, activity and reason rather than on softness, passivity and emotion. Moreover, 'femininity' is constructed as a homogeneous concept, i.e. all women are assumed to be caring and emotional. But, in contrast to such constructions, 'femininity' is dynamic, various

and changing, hence allowing for multiple 'femininities' (Paechter 2006). The above dichotomies are the foundation for how the roles that men and women play in society are viewed and how gender is constructed. The construction of women as caring, domestic and, implicitly, of lesser importance and status than men impacts on the experience of women in positions of leadership which are identified with stereotypical 'masculinity'. This stereotypical, or 'hegemonic masculinity' as Collinson and Hearn (2000) term it, also has implications for men who choose not to operate in traditional ways. On the other hand, claiming that being 'feminine' is of lesser value and importance than being 'masculine' is not so simple. Hence, Lumby and Azaola (2014) argue that women by being 'feminine' attempt to change 'the rules of the game' (p. 11) and import the values and norms of their personal lives into their professional lives and use them in order to gain power and deploy their agency (Barlow and Chapin 2010, Bradley 1999). So, it can be assumed that it is too simplistic to view all women as drawing on specific constructions that are considered as negative for leadership, like being caring and emotional. Similarly, it is also simplistic to view all men as drawing on a different set of distinct constructions that help them in becoming and being leaders.

Judgements may be made about the leadership capacities of men and women on the basis of personal characteristics that are being assessed during the interview part of the selection process. Men tend to be seen as the 'reference point' and women as the other that may differ from this reference (Oppenheim Mason 1986). In some instances even men who are different from the dominant 'masculinity' may be treated as 'other' by the selection panel, as Petros, the gay teacher discussed earlier, indicated:

> I have heard people saying that women head teachers don't cope with things as easily as men do. That men can be more assertive and are heard, while women aren't so much, there is more order in schools that are managed by typical men. I don't know how they will react if I, or somebody else who is gay, apply. I guess I will have a problem, as I am not the typical man who goes around giving orders. I am more approachable and cool with everybody. (Petros, MT, 30-39)

Here Petros challenges dominant constructions of 'masculinity' as someone 'who goes around giving orders'. He presents himself as more approachable and democratic and constructs a different/alternative 'masculinity'. He chooses not to conform, but rather challenges the prevailing constructions of 'masculinity' and femininity' (i.e. being assertive

like a 'typical' man). Reay and Ball (2000, p. 149) draw on Ganderton (1991) and Gunter (1997) to suggest that those who 'challenge organizational views, including orthodoxies around the 'best way to manage' are unlikely to be promoted to the position of head teacher and this seems to apply to Petros. Although he chooses in the interview not to remain silent about his sexuality, he is silent in the school context as indicated earlier. His reaction seems to confirm what Reay and Ball (2000) note, that 'the powerful in society, regardless of their sex, share more in common with each other than they share with relatively powerless members of either sex' (p. 150).

4.4. Conclusion

The route to headship is difficult for both men and women in this study. Both sexes have experiences of rejection, albeit very few (two men and one woman), and may lack confidence about taking on this difficult job. For a surprisingly large proportion (seven out of the 15 women and three out of the ten men head teachers) there is a lack of planning and even an element of surprise in finding themselves in a head teacher's job. What seems to be significant is the perception of both men and women that the female gender can be an 'obstacle' to becoming head teachers. Women are also likely to encounter stereotyping that is unhelpful in making career progress. Although women appear to be dealing with the difficulties stereotyping might cause them, the data confirms that culturally women tend to be assumed to be less capable than men of holding head teacher positions.

As far as the selection procedure is concerned, almost all of my respondents suggest that networking, either political or other, can influence the final appointment. Almost all also offer the view that the selectors, who tend to be men, have difficulty in overcoming the stereotype of women as linked to the family and home. So, my research shows that at the beginning of the twenty first century the majority of women and a proportion of men judge that gender stereotypes and dominant constructions of 'femininity' and 'masculinity', still play an important part in the selection of the head teachers.

Finally, family life can be considered as a factor delaying or even hindering career progress for women, as balancing life and career is bound to be a difficult issue, when the responsibility of childcare and domestic work is largely placed on women. The women in

my research seem to believe that they are the ones in the family that often have to sacrifice their own career aspirations for the benefit of their family.

In the next chapter the focus is on the participants' experiences of being a head teacher and on the teachers' views regarding the head teacher's role.

CHAPTER 5: CONSTRUCTIONS OF HEADSHIP

5.1. Introduction

Much of the research worldwide on gender and educational leadership is about assumed differences in leadership approaches between women and men head teachers (Adler et al 1993, Fuller 2009, Brinia 2012, Oplatka 2006). This may reinforce the binary between men and women as it draws on the assumption of inherent characteristics for each gender. On the other hand, Francis (2010) argued that gender characteristics are not tied to biological sex. Rather, she notes, men can draw on 'feminine' and women on 'masculine' approaches, depending on the situation and their socialisation. In the same vein, Reay and Ball (2000) offer the view that 'gendered identities are in context more fluid and shifting […] as a result female leadership […][is] both multi-faceted and more contradictory' (p. 145).

A critique of the notion that head teachers' behaviour and interaction with students and teachers may be predicted on the basis of their gender is reinforced through my research about gender and leadership approaches. Kessler and McKenna (1978) and later Speer (2005) pointed out that once a gender attribution has been made (a person identified as male or female), their behaviours tend to be understood with reference to that attribution. So, a similar behaviour may be read as 'aggressive' in a man or as 'bitchy' or 'manipulative' in a woman (Francis 2000, 2002).

Head teachers' performances of gender and their leadership approaches are explored in this chapter. In the first section of this chapter I draw on data from the participants (men and women head teachers and teachers) to analyse the extent to which they draw on authoritative approaches to lead their schools. The findings highlight the diversity in women and men head teachers' practices and in their constructions of gendered subjectivities and leadership, hence providing evidence to question assumptions that head teachers lead in particular ways due to their identification as belonging to the male or female gender. The analysis emphasises the fluidity and complexity of gender in head teachers' performances, and is supportive of the argument that gendered behaviour is not necessarily tied to biological sex.

In the second section the emphasis is on the way men and women head teachers have extended their potential caring roles as fathers, mothers, wives, parents and carers into the workspace, into their leadership approaches and the impact of this on their lives. Contrary to this assumption that leadership approaches stem from gender identity, the analysis of data from my research suggests that there are many different approaches to leadership, not necessarily tied to gender or biological sex.

In the third section I discuss how men and women head teachers combine their career with their family and the responsibilities they assume in both their roles. As women have the major responsibility for the house and the family, it is primarily women who are 'juggling' these different roles. On the other hand, men tend to have a more hands-off approach to domestic responsibilities.

So, in the next sections I discuss the way the men and women head teachers talk about their approaches to leadership. I will also discuss the teachers' constructions of the ideal head teacher. Finally, I discuss the experiences of head teachers in combining a career with a family.

5.2. Constructions of authority

In this section I aim to illustrate and analyse diverse performances of gender and authority on the part of the head teachers, both women and men. In doing so, I seek to unpick some of the discourses on gender and headship underpinning their performance of gendered subjectivity in the school and to apply this analysis to draw conclusions regarding the relations of power.

When I asked the participants how they deal with everyday issues at the school and what they do if they have a problem, six out of the ten men head teachers in my research said that they usually give orders to the teachers, or carry everything out by themselves:

> Normally, I should let the teacher solve the problem [that may occur with a child], but I always intervene, because I don't think that teachers and especially the women, can enforce discipline. (Takis, MHT, 50-59)

The head's word is one and only. The head should be clear about what is in his mind. No tensions are allowed in the school and nobody is allowed to do whatever comes into his mind. They should ask me first. Discipline among the teachers is a must. I know best what to do and I can advise them. (Stefanos, MHT, 50-59)

Knowledge and ability to enforce discipline is constructed as being held exclusively by the (man) head teacher, and the other teachers (and especially women) are positioned as devoid of authority. So they are positioned as 'lacking' something. Both of the head teachers construct themselves as the possessors of knowledge. Harding (1991) has noted that this construction as 'authentic leader' and 'keeper of knowledge' is a profoundly 'masculinised' one. So, these head teachers draw on a model of the head teacher as an authority, as possessing knowledge and power, with teachers lacking both. This deliberate concentration and 'ownership' of power and the distancing approach they seem to be taking to their colleagues may be considered as typically 'masculinised' constructions.

It is interesting that another head, Dimitris, refers to the teachers in his school as 'kids'. He says: 'I feel very lucky that the kids who are working here in my school are a team.' (Dimitris, MHT, 50-59). He positions himself as the adult, the father, who is in control of the school and the 'possessor of knowledge', and the teachers are being constructed as 'kids', who teach other kids. Thus the teachers are positioned in non-egalitarian relationships with their superiors (i.e. the head teacher). So, in a way he seems to infantilise the teachers and imply that they do not understand and cannot be trusted.

Another man head teacher, Nikos, adopts physical violence to discipline children in his school:

…what I am doing is grabbing their arm and shaking them. They have to understand that someone else is in charge. That is what I do. I always walk between the children, because if you want to be effective, you have to know and see everything. Now, once I had to hit a student. He climbed up to a window, which had metal bars, managed to pass through the bars and was sitting outside the window. The other students told me what he did, I called him into my office and I had to slap him in the face because he could have been hurt or even killed, had he fallen over. It was a mistake, I know it, but that was my decision at that moment. (Nikos, MHT, 50-59)

Corporal punishment is explicitly prohibited in schools in article 13 (8c) of Presidential Decree No. 201/1998 on The Organisation and Functioning of Primary Schools and those who enforce discipline in that way face legal disciplinary procedures and even dismissal. Despite this and despite the extensive campaign that has been running in Greece for several years against corporal punishment, Nikos acts that way and shows his power over the young boy. His last words indicate that he understands his fault, but does not appear to regret his actions. His decision at that moment was perhaps indicative of his assumption about authority and traditional 'masculinity'. Also he can be assumed to be drawing on positional power (Bradley 1999) that stems from his higher position in the school compared with the students.

There is also another head who, although he uses dialogue in order to deal with disciplinary problems, believes that it is not the appropriate method. He said:

> This is a general problem, especially today when there is a general drop in the values in our society, there are many immigrants that don't know about the value of the family, so things are difficult. On the other hand, there are the laws that forbid us some things just like that, there has never been an organised study. There has never been research that proves that punishing the children corporally is bad. But the law forbids it. But I see that in America and England things are turning to more traditional disciplinary actions. Here we still have to deal with the problems through dialogue. Dialogue with the child, dialogue with the family... How much dialogue? Anyway, I follow the law, even if I don't like it, even if it is very difficult to communicate with the parents who are immigrants or whose first language is Turkish, because they don't want to learn Greek. (Giorgos, MHT, 50-59)

He appears to hold racialised assumptions about the non-Greek students and their families. This is an issue that has been present and studied in other countries as well. Studies in England indicate the prevalence of racism in schools, mainly in terms of teachers' (un)intended attitudes, behaviours and practices (Gillborn and Mirza 2000, Gillborn 2008). In particular, it has been found that some teachers may treat Black, Muslim and Asian students in stereotypic or hostile ways and may assume that these students have behaviour problems (e.g. Archer 2003, Connolly 1998); some teachers' constructions are found to be grounded on racialised, gendered and classed assumptions (e.g. Archer and Francis 2005). Similarly, research in other European countries (e.g. Belgium and the

Netherlands) shows how some Belgian teachers discriminated against Turkish children (e.g. Stevens 2008), or some Dutch teachers disregarded Moroccan children (e.g. de Haan and Elbers 2004). In addition, research in the United States shows that some teachers' negative stereotypes and low expectations of children from minority groups partly explains the overrepresentation of culturally and linguistically diverse students in special education programmes, which, in turn, affects the eventual educational outcomes of these children (e.g. Harry and Klinger 2006). These representations of children from minority groups may be grounded in homogeneous perceptions of identity and colour- blind perspectives and place the burden for adaptation to the norms of the majority on minority children (Phoenix 2002, Stevens 2007). Most of these studies argue that teachers draw on racist constructions in their classrooms either without realising it, or meaning to, or while they deny it to researchers (i.e. speech and practice are different). Giorgos does not deny his assumption about non-Greeks, and his belief in the need to use corporal punishment. Rather he appears to be quite proud of it and tries to support his view by referring to studies from other countries.

Giorgos makes clear, however, that he believes that he is fair and democratic. He says 'I discuss everything with everyone. I hear all sides, sometimes there are more than two, and I make the fairer decision'. He articulated his impatience when he explained how he deals with students from various social groups (as mentioned earlier). He projects a deficit onto 'foreigners' who may be seen as demonised and as the ones responsible for their assumed behaviour issues ('they don't know about the value of family', 'it is difficult to communicate with the parents […]because they don't want to learn Greek'). So, he presents himself as politically informed and at the same time as a democratic, firm, demanding head teacher, with high expectations, in contrast to those students he finds 'challenging' because of their 'Otherness' (i.e. their nationality or language). Generally, his approach might be read as a highly 'masculine' construction of self, i.e. assertive, self assured, intellectually invested (as he wants me to know that he is informed about studies on pedagogical matters), rule-bound and maybe even aggressive, similarly to what Francis (2008) argues in her study.

Both of these head teachers set strict rules. The first one, Nikos, even hits a child to discipline him and the second one, Giorgos, believes that dialogue is not an appropriate problem-solving technique contrary to 'more traditional disciplinary actions', hence we see a 'masculinised' performance of authority. But, as Nikos notes later on in his interview and is discussed below, he seems to adopt more mediating approaches, which could be read as

a more 'feminine' approach, as he claims that he encourages children and teachers and listens to them ('But I am trying to discuss it with all the involved parties').

It is interesting that when asked to describe their leadership approaches with the teachers, all the men head teachers interviewed described their approach as a democratic one based on dialogue. For example they said:

> I am trying to discuss it with all the involved parties […]I try to discuss, to understand the problem […]You have to find a way to treat your colleagues and to lead them, but going against them is not the best way to handle things. (Nikos, MHT, 50-59)

> I believe that everything can be resolved with conversation. […] I believe that by discussing with the teachers who have the problem, it can be solved. If it is a misunderstanding, this misunderstanding ends (Dimitris, MHT, 50-59)

> I believe that dialogue is a very strong tool (Pavlos, MHT, 40-49)

> I will try to keep balance and solve the problem in a diplomatic way (Takis, MHT, 50-59)

But when they were asked to give actual examples of how they lead their schools (i.e. my question was 'what would you do in a difficult or problematic situation?') almost all referred to issues or problems with the children's behaviour and they appeared to construct their approaches in a more autocratic and 'masculine' way, showing a contradiction between their account of how they treat teachers and the accounts they give about their actions with children. Maybe this contradiction appears because they have learnt the 'correct way' to answer theoretical questions, but when they have to talk about actual practice, a rather different account emerges. For example Dimitris said that he uses deprivation in order to discipline children.

> [T]here were very few occasions…very few, that we had, not to punish, but to deprive the kid of something. And that was it. (Dimitris, MHT, 50-59)

Nikos, who also claims that he follows a democratic leadership approach,   as mentioned above, does not hesitate to grab the children or even hit them. And Takis, although wanting to lead his school in a diplomatic way, appears to be autocratic, as he says he always intervenes and even threatens the parents 'with expelling their child or with going to social

service [...] [This way] a problem is always solved' (Takis, MHT, 50-59). Here it can be argued that they appear to change their approaches when they have to deal with someone with less power than them (i.e. the children). In the Greek educational system, the head teacher does not have any disciplinary power over the teachers, so s/he has to count on their good will to accomplish tasks, hence perhaps the emphasis on dialogue. On the other hand, the head teacher has disciplinary power over the children, e.g. by calling their parents, by keeping them in his/her office, by depriving them of excursions etc. Therefore, it can be assumed that the contradiction between how they should say they deal with issues and how they say they actually deal with them, in part affects the power dynamics. Their actions are assumed to be based on their power over the children and they gain their power from what Bradley (1999) calls 'positional power' which is their authority and position within the hierarchical system of the school.

These cases illuminate the way in which particular gendered leadership approaches and practices can be considered as constructing a powerful 'masculine' position for the head teacher compared with the powerless other (teachers and students). In the present cases and in the case of the head teacher that I will present next, power seems to be located in the head teacher's hands. They exercise power in specific instances by calling on the disciplinary practice of the school and by concentrating everything in their hands and not giving any responsibilities to the teachers. So, power is constructed as something that is initiated by the individual (i.e. the head teacher) based on his/her place in the hierarchy.

In my research there were a number of participants (17 out of 40, 8 women and 9 men) who argued that women have to modify some of what might be considered as their 'feminine qualities', in order to conform to the expectations of the head teacher that are centred around masculine discourses. Vasso below indicates this:

> I don't want to be liked, I don't care. Of course these behaviours are in the school. When I leave here, I become a different person. Inside the school, I like to have everybody else as, please forgive my wording, slaves, I want everything in my own terms [...]If she is tough by nature, then she can be herself. Otherwise, she should become tough and autocratic. There is no room for good people here. (Vasso, WHT, 40-49)

From her account it becomes apparent that she draws on a leadership approach in which she is less inclined to build personal relationships with her colleagues and adopts an

identity more strongly associated with 'masculinity' than with 'femininity' in order to be successful. Acquiring power in school may lead a woman to play out her gender in many ways that are 'different to those realised in normative, socially subordinate femininities' (Reay and Ball 2000, p. 146). As Reay and Ball (2000) comment, 'it is arguable whether many of the women or men who succeed in becoming head teachers are able to challenge and stand out against expectations that they manage according to contemporary orthodoxies' (p. 150).

Similarly, Vassilis, a man teacher, argued that a woman head teacher 'When she is at school she should leave her real, kind and emotional self at home and take up another role. A meaner role' (Vassilis, MT, 30-39).

Vasso and Vassilis do not seem to draw on the gender constructions that are ascribed to 'femininity' (being caring, kind, passive, emotional, co-operative). Their constructions about women head teachers appear to be quite different from this dominant construction and they believe that every woman who aspires to leadership should also follow a similar approach (i.e. refrain from being emotional, be strict etc). This may be viewed as demonstrating that women like Vasso are active agents in the production of women's various subjectivities as they consciously draw on different identities and, as a result, leadership approaches.

A man teacher said about his former woman head teacher:

> She was making some decisions that we, the rest of the teachers, were listening to, but when the time came and the school was being inspected by the head of the LEA about these decisions that were her personal decisions, then suddenly she tried to put all the teachers forward in order to defend her. [...] She wasn't listening, she was the ultimate ruler of the world! She wanted to enforce her opinions (Andreas, MT, 40-49).

The conventional or 'expected' approach for a woman head would have been to listen to the other teachers, consider their views and make a collegial decision. On the contrary, according to Andreas, the head decided to be more autocratic and so can be seen to draw on 'masculine' approaches. So, being in a powerful position of authority, she can be assumed, from Andreas' talk, to be drawing on aspects of a more autocratic identity. Yet, when she was inspected by the director of Local Educational Authorities, who was a man,

she appeared to draw on aspects of a more 'feminine' identity, which perhaps reflects the hierarchical relationship between the director of the Local Educational Authorities and her. Hence, this woman head teacher seems to be constructing her identity through constant negotiations of power and hierarchy, showing that power can be seen as a resource that can operate differently in different sites and under different conditions (Bradley 1999). Her identity also can be seen as fluid and dependent on context.

5.3. Constructions of caring and nurturing

School leadership is regularly expressed through metaphors (Earl and Katz 2006). One of the most common metaphors is that of the school as a family, meaning that there is the expectation that the school is lively and has a warm atmosphere like a family (Akbaba-Altun 2007).It also recognises the adult-child relationship of power and authority (Stobo-Gaskell 1995). Baker (1991) and Mahlioson and Maxson (1998) stated that the school is usually perceived as a family when the protective and training characteristics of the family for their child are noted. When the family metaphor is projected onto the school, then the women in it are usually seen to be drawing on aspects of the role of the mother and the men that of the father (Saban et al 2007).

So, in this section, the emphasis is on the way men and women head teachers' potential caring roles seemingly spread from their personal to their professional lives incorporating characteristics of care into their leadership approach. In addition, the way their leadership approach impacts on their personal lives is discussed.

Contrary to the 'masculine' and authoritative approach that I discussed in the previous section, Thanos, a man head teacher, can be seen to articulate a different approach. Power differences between the head teacher and the teachers are less overt. He evokes an 'equal' relationship between the teachers and himself, although this could be hiding unequal power differentials that come from the different hierarchical positions between the head teacher and the teachers.

> [If there is a problem] I would try to find the golden medium. We come to the school in order to be calm and do our job properly. Quibbling and fighting is not good. I will never enforce my opinion. We discuss here, we don't enforce. (Thanos, MHT, 50-59)

This head teacher seems to construct himself as respectful and as wanting to solve problems and issues through dialogue. However this may also be considered as a 'masculine' discourse (Harding 1991, Walkerdine 1990), because it is associated with reason and mind, while discourses associated with emotion are considered as 'feminine'. Similarly, his emphasis on being calm is associated with 'masculinity' as he can be assumed to reject any emotionality. But, it may also be argued that practices based on respect for the others' point of view and are more collaborative, represent more 'feminine', 'soft' leadership approaches (Alvesson and Billing 2009). So, gender constructions are more nuanced than just simple constructions of 'feminine' or 'masculine'.

An approach that does not comply with traditional notions of 'masculinity', but rather seems to be more complex, is also suggested by Yiannis:

> I am always trying to come close to [the children and the teachers], to hear them, to discuss with them. I don't know if I achieve it. At least I want to believe that I do. (Yiannis, MHT, 50-59)

Yiannis says he performs in a more nurturant, 'feminine' way in his relationship with the children and his teachers/colleagues. But there are suggestions that his authority might have been questioned, as he said:

> This year we had a small problem with 2-3 parents. You know, rumours and stuff against me [...] Most parents mean well, but there are also others who are wrong, who may be vicious… (Yiannis, MHT, 50-59)

He told me when the interview was finished, that there was a rumour at the school that he was incompetent in his leading of the school. His account suggests that the parents (at least some of them) are seen by Yannis as positioning him as slightly incompetent. Perhaps there are issues of power differentials, where Yannis is seen as less powerful than some of the parents, despite him being a head teacher, a post usually associated with power and status. So, this is indicative of the shifting status of power as a resource that can operate differently in different sites and under different conditions (Bradley 1999).

This interpretation is supported by Yiannis' somewhat self-depreciating construction. For example he said 'I am not perfect' and 'I don't know if I achieve it. At least I want to believe that I do.' This slightly anxious and unconfident subjectivity produces characteristics

socially ascribed as 'feminine' rather than 'masculine', although his unexpected 'feminine' approach does not appear consonant with his 'masculine' appearance (very tall, dark, with moustache[12] and deep voice). This realisation may be showing how constructions of gender are usually based on gender stereotypes and gender expected behaviour that may not correspond with what happens in practice (Papanastasiou 2013).

Another man head teacher also indicates the complexities of gender constructions when he offers an approach that differs from the traditional construction of 'hegemonic masculinity'.

> The head teacher should inspire everybody, be an example, and be the first to do what he is asking. If the head teacher is avoiding things, he can't expect the teacher to do the work. The head teacher should give responsibilities to everyone and everyone should know what has to be done. (Stefanos, MHT, 50-59)

He did not talk about the inadequacies of the others and he stressed that in a school responsibilities should be shared. He also noted that an important aspect of the head teacher's role is encouraging the others and setting an example of good practice. Here this man head teacher constructs his professional role not as a disciplinarian and authoritative person, but rather as a colleague to the teachers and a father (his wording) to the children, contrary to Kiki discussed earlier, who constructs the head teacher as an administrator. Drawing on Francis (2010) it can be argued that he draws on constructions of 'masculine femininity', indicating that leadership approaches are not based on the binary dichotomy between 'feminine' / 'masculine', but are more complex.

As discussed in Chapter 2, men tend to be seen as more capable of leadership positions (Cox 1996, Wajcman 1998), as they are believed to be better at enforcing discipline. The notion that men are more suited to leadership is embedded in the public discourse of gender and leadership (Cammack and Philips 2002) and is based on the stereotype of a ''natural' male violence' (Burn 2005, p. 5) which is constructed in opposition to female 'caring'. Kaufman (1994) argues that men are required to 'suppress' nurturing and caring in order to prove their 'manhood' and hence they may appear as more 'violent'. Also, with regard to care, dominant forms of 'masculinity' are characterised by the need to avoid closeness in relationships and to fear emotions (Kimmel 1994, Connell 1995). But, in my

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[12] As I indicated earlier (see Chapter 4) having a moustache in Greece is considered as an indication of masculinity.

research, some men head teachers may be viewed as 'caring' figures. In particular one of them said:

> [The children see me] [l]ike the father of all! I mean, that all of the children, whether the youngest or the oldest ones, whatever they need, they will go to their teacher [uses the female form for the word 'teacher' in Greek] and then they will come to me. They would ask for my advice, or my help, or for something to be done immediately. (Pavlos, MHT, 40-49)

Here, he can be seen as taking up the role of the caring father, the one who is wise enough to advise the youngsters, who can take action immediately, who is available and willing to help. At the same time, by using the female gender when he talks about the teacher, he may be viewed as constructing an image of teaching as a women's profession (and as a consequence leadership as a men's one) and an image of men as being more capable than women (the woman teacher cannot deal with issues, so the children turn to the man head teacher).

The 'masculine' and 'feminine' differentiation of the jobs and the construction of the 'appropriate' professions for each gender can be also assumed by the way respondents talk about the head teacher's role. They tend to use the masculine personal pronoun and masculine suffixes to nouns and adjectives. For example Stefanos who was quoted earlier, uses the Greek word 'diefthindis' which means the 'man head teacher', when he talks about the 'head teacher', contrary to 'diefthindria' which means the 'woman head teacher'. Then, he uses 'his colleagues', 'he is asking', 'he can't expect'. The words and the pronouns that he uses are very important, as they can be considered as a social resource for constructing different accounts of being a head teacher, as either a man or a woman. Contrary to Stefanos, the rest of the participants used both the masculine and feminine words and pronouns (i.e. diefthindis/diefthindria, o/i etc). As Burr (2003) notes 'To the extent that our constructions of the world are founded upon language […] then language underpins the forms of action that it is possible for us to take' (p. 61). So, this head's culturally shared expectations that head teachers are (inevitably) men can be considered as the source of his using the male grammatical gender in his speech.

Dominant constructions of motherhood in society reflect notions of love, responsibility, selflessness and sacrifice, as is reported in Sikes's (1997) study. Also it is expected that what are often assumed to be 'maternal instincts' are available for teachers to use with all

children, and particularly primary stage children. Women have been seen to be particularly suited to teaching young children through a symbolical representation of the teacher as the loving mother (Peeters 2008, Burman 1994). At the same time, men are able to assume a 'privileged responsibility' towards caring duties because it is not seen to be their 'natural work' (Tronto 2002, Zembylas et al 2014). Consequently, care, when performed by men, perhaps is not recognised as such (King 1998, Hjalmarsson and Lofdahl 2014). Along these lines, 38 out of the 40 women and men participants shared the view that women are the most appropriate teachers for young children, as they are assumed to be more caring and nurturing. For example a man head teacher said:

> I think it is more appropriate for women. Especially when the children are young, and they are closer to their mothers, their family etc, and maybe it would be better for the child to have a continuance and not to move suddenly from the mother to a man teacher because there may be psychological difficulties (Giorgos, MHT, 50-59)

And another man head teacher commented:

> Women are really good in dealing with the young ones, as they replace their mothers; they are more caring, more emotional. (Kostas, MHT, 50-59)

The opinion of a woman teacher was similar to the ones above expressed by men:

> I believe that women are better when they are teaching young children, because they are more approachable. This is what I have noticed. While older children should be taught by a man, because they can, as it is believed, enforce discipline. (Rea, WT, 30-39)

Here, the three participants, with their dominant constructions of 'motherhood', also reproduce dominant constructions of 'femininity'. So, according to them the woman is constructed as caring, emotional, approachable, nurturant, and sensitive to children. These traditional constructions then lead to the assumption that women are suitable mainly for a role that includes the above mentioned constructions, that of the teacher of younger children. Therefore, as it is argued by Lumby and Azaola (2014), women may be perceived as less of a match to the traditional stereotype of the leader. Hence, women who wish to achieve headship should probably step outside of the acceptable construction of their 'female' identity in order to match the leadership stereotype. This means that women who

take up headships may face persistent stereotypes. Swann et al (1999) argue that many women struggle against the negative assessment of themselves as having limited value and struggle in order to change this stereotype.

Women are expected to take care of their families (children, husbands/partners or extended families) willingly (Charlebois 2011, Wajcman 1998) and as an extension of that, of their schools. It would not be a surprise to find a woman in a school perceived as taking up the role of the mother, as a supportive, caring figure. Sometimes their colleagues even expect them to behave like that, as described by Reay and Ball (2000) and found in my own study.

A woman head teacher said that when she first entered the staff room as the new head teacher, some of the men teachers greeted her saying:

> 'Go to your kitchen and leave us alone'! Somebody else told me to make him his coffee every day, because if I wanted to learn how to manage, making coffee was the first step! I thought they were just stupid! (Vasso, WHT, 40-49)

Her men colleagues construct her according to the typical traditional woman, i.e. staying at home, caring and serving the man, creating particular configurations of 'masculinity'. Their expression defines 'masculinity' in ways that lead to social constraints and power inequalities. So, these men appear to assume that they hold the power and that 'women's place is in the kitchen' or 'she should be making coffee'. It can be argued that the men teachers deliberately put Vasso down and treat her as a woman rather than as a head teacher. Telling her to make coffee can be seen as overt hostility against being managed by a woman. This brings to mind Walkerdine's (1990) study in a nursery school, where she found the roots of patriarchal violence against women in the sexual banter of two four-year-olds who verbally assaulted a girl classmate and a woman teacher:

> Terry: You are a stupid cunt, Annie.

> Sean: Get out of it, Miss Baxter paxter.

> Terry: Get out of it, knickers, Miss Baxter.

> Sean: Get out of it, Miss Baxter paxter.

Terry: Get out of it, Miss Baxter the knockers paxter, knickers bum.

Sean: Knickers, shit, bum.

Miss Baxter: Sean, that's enough, you are being silly. (p. 4-5)

Walkerdine argues that the boys' talk, though resistant and transgressive, is far from progressive or emancipatory. These boys succeed in resisting the authority of the teachers and the school, but only by reproducing the patriarchal power available to them by being male.

As in the case of Vasso, the power shifts between oppressors and oppressed here is clear. The men/boys resist the authority of the head teacher/teacher by exploiting a sexist discourse in which they, as the males, have power. In both cases there is a blatant sexist challenge and both women respond weakly and ineffectively (Miss Baxter says 'I think you are being very silly' and Vasso says 'I thought they were just stupid'). Their responses do not seem to help them resist the subject position they are being offered (i.e. the traditional, subordinate, powerless woman).

 Hence, Vasso is constructed by the men in the school as only suitable for more subordinate roles rather than leading a school, maybe because they do not believe that she is capable of achieving her role, or maybe because they do not want anything that changes or challenges the patriarchal norms of the Greek society (Gassouka 2004).

A woman head teacher who claimed she took up a 'mothering' role in her school explained:

I care about children and cherish them. I am their mum. Instead of having 2 children, my own children, I have also the 27 children from the school, a total of 29! So many!!!! (Marianthi, WHT, 40-49)

'Masculinity' and 'femininity' are not simply properties of bodies, but they are discourses, contextual, cultural and situational. As such, they are not stable but they may shift and adjust. So, they are intertwined into everyday practice and the management of schools. Perhaps this is why it 'feels' acceptable for women and mothers to be primary teachers, because there is the expectation that only women share these assumed 'maternal instincts', and they may gain pleasure and power from this.

Also, as some women head teachers (four out of 15) in my study place an emphasis on the 'image' of the school (what others say about the school, what festivals they organise, what extra-curricular activities they have etc), it suggests the head teacher may feel vulnerable and exposed. Perhaps if they 'fail' to present a good image, the effect may be to expose the head teacher to public scrutiny and blame (from the parents). Since women are often seen as 'outsiders', as they are perceived as less of a match to the ideal construction of a leader, they may therefore experience this effect to a greater degree than their men colleagues (Moreau et al 2007).

One illustration of the way in which identity is constructed in the context of dominant discourses of 'femininity', 'masculinity' and school leadership is provided by Katerina, when she described how she dealt with an issue at school.

> ...there is a child at the first grade who is very naughty. His teacher has warned him many times, so I called his father to come here. So, the father came and started telling him off before the morning assembly and before the prayers. Here in the hall. I told him to come into my office because the other children were watching. He continued shouting at his child there, in front of everybody. Later, when the school was over and the mother came to pick up the child, I told her that I and her son's teacher had to speak with her husband, because he behaved really badly in front of all the children. And that we wanted to tell him some things. So, the father called me and told me that I was not a good teacher, I couldn't do my job properly, I couldn't handle young kids and that he was going to talk to the TV channels about the way I behaved. In five minutes he came here and continued shouting. I told him, I want to help you. I want to help your child. What you did, shouting at your son in front of all the students, was wrong. You can't threaten your child by saying that you are going to kill him. You can't tell him that he is a constant problem. This is going to be a boomerang for you, because your son will never forget it. And I also told him, that we have studied these subjects, we know something more. He is your child, but we are responsible when he is in the school. He said that he was going to stop schooling for the child. So I told him, do what you want, but I will do what I have to do, and that is call the police to protect my child. And then he started saying that he was sorry, that he had overdone it. (Katerina, WHT, 40-49)

She can be seen to draw on a discipline-oriented identity, when she calls a student's father because he was obstructing class. Yet, despite being in a powerful, authority position, she is drawing on aspects of a more caring identity, as well, when she protects the child from the (potentially) abusive father and when she shows interest in the child continuing school. In studying her words and the way she negotiated and constructed multiple, shifting identities, we find that she draws on another aspect of her identity, at odds with the subordinate woman, when she stands up to the father (the man) and threatens him. So, her behaviour can be understood as multiple, fluid and dynamic. Her role as a 'mother' who tries to protect her 'child' in this quotation is being put forward as a source of power, as it allows her to face and even threaten the father in order to 'protect' her child. She can therefore be seen to challenge traditional constructions of female identity (powerlessness, non-assertiveness etc.) (Reay and Ball 2000, p. 153) and to draw power from one of the most powerful women's roles, that of the mother.

Katerina may be drawing power from her identity as a mother who cares about her child and at the same time (finally) enforces discipline on the father. But when she deals with the initial problem (the naughty child), she does not seem to consider the mother of the child as powerful and as able to discipline him. She called for the father to come to the school and not the mother, or a parent in general, in order to deal with the disciplinary problem. Yet she met the mother every day, as the mother was the one who regularly took the child to the school and picked him up at the end of the day. 'Fatherhood' and 'motherhood' in this quote are constructed in accordance with dominant gender assumptions about 'masculinity' and 'femininity'. So, the 'father' is constructed as the one who is able (and has responsibility) to discipline his child. He is portrayed as a dynamic, powerful, authoritative and disciplinarian figure. At the same time, she appears to construct the 'mother' as passive, powerless and 'unsuited' to discipline (Bjornberg 1991). This construction of gender and parent roles does not take into consideration the fact that identities are being constantly negotiated and are not stable.

Katerina's account indicates that the father, himself, rejects the head teacher's power in school and constructs himself as the authority and Katerina is constructed as the weak woman who, he assumes, will be afraid of him. According to Katerina, he presents himself as tough and masculine (threatens, shouts etc.). This suggests that he undervalues women who, he appears to believe, are not able to do the job, particularly the disciplinarian part of it. But, in this case, the head teacher produces change in the father's behaviour by being

strict and authoritative and by drawing on what tends to be seen as more 'masculine' gender constructions.

Katerina, the head teacher, experiences the crisis as emotionally demanding, but also rewarding to deal with, because, as it can be concluded from her words, it was important and meaningful in the context of her key responsibility (i.e. safe-guarding of the children in her care). So, she successfully negotiated what was potentially a difficult situation. Similarly to a head teacher in Reay and Ball's (2000) study, Katerina, as in the case of the woman head teacher described by Andreas in the section before, draws on a range of subjectivities that are assumed depending on the situation (Papanastasiou 2013).

Power has often been an uncomfortable issue for women as it is usually linked with control and 'masculinity', while women are believed to be understanding, caring and more emotionally motivated (Meyers 2002). For one of my women head teacher participants the context where she was working was difficult and she spoke about the conflicts that she experienced in an attempt to reconcile her managerial identity with that of the understanding woman.

> There are teachers who say, OK we have a woman head teacher, she will be more tolerant. Especially the women teachers. Do you know how many times they have asked to be excused and leave earlier from the school for various stupid reasons? [...] They think that I will sympathise with them or cover for them. But no! Lady, do you have to be at school and be inside the classroom? So, you will be at the school. You won't be out for coffee or at the super-market because duvets are on sale and they will be over when the school finishes![...] She thought that because I am a woman, I would have understood the importance of good duvets and that I would have let her leave the school and cover for her!!! (Jenny, WHT, 50-59)

The women teachers referred to in this quotation constructed the head teacher's identity on assumptions around 'femininity' and 'being one of them', as belonging to their group (Krishnan et al 2006). They seem to have assumed that there was going to be an affinity because of their common gender and so thought that they would get privileges as a result of that. So, Jenny, the head teacher, struggles with being a supportive woman head teacher who is available and understanding on the one hand, with being an authoritative, strict but fair figure who demands things, follows the laws and does not cover for other women. Hence, Jenny may be viewed as struggling with her identities, as a head teacher

and a woman. On the one hand she shares a feminine identification with the teachers, but on the other hand she appears unwilling to set aside the expectation people have of her as a head teacher. She finds it very difficult, especially, when it comes to dealing with other women and distancing herself. As Reay and Ball (2000) say, women head teachers 'are expected to lead and still remain equal, to be tough and simultaneously kind and nurturant' (p. 152). This influences the ways in which colleagues relate to them (as she is expected to be understanding and caring and nurturant).

Perhaps headship is felt to be less acceptable for a woman by society because in the combined role of being a woman and a head teacher, the ambitions and identity of the head teacher are beyond what is acceptable or outside the identity created for women (and so often, accepted by women) in society. And when women decide to become head teachers they 'are drawing on a range of subjectivities, at times as a maternal figure, at times as stereotypically woman, but at other times constructing an identity as a powerful person which cuts across and conflicts with the other historically derived aspects of feminine subjectivity' (Reay and Ball 2000, p. 153). The interplay of identities was examined in a study of head teachers who are mothers, too (Bradbury and Gunter 2006). The researchers found that rather than having one coherent identity, identity differs according to context, so at the same time their participants could identify as mothers and head teachers, drawing on different aspects of these identities. This does not imply that women head teachers have fractured identities, rather that as individuals they are multiple and complex. As Burr (2003) indicates, they actively create multiple, dynamic and sometimes contradictory identities. Each of these aspects of identity define women and yet women could not be fully understood unless each of the aspects of their identities was considered.

So, in my research, a woman teacher talked about her former head teacher, whom she considered as a very successful one, explaining:

> She had a very strong personality and she managed the school by herself. She would drive to the children's homes everyday to pick them up for school. She was like the mother in the house. (Anna, WT, 30-39)

Here, she describes her head teacher as a motherly figure, showing the traditional 'feminine' behaviour of care and interest and because of this she gains respect and is accepted by both the children and the parents. This behaviour is similar to the feminine behaviour that is being put forward in Greece by television advertisements, popular

women's magazines and school books. That is the woman who, although she is working, manages to take care of everyone and everything without help. At the same time, the head teacher in this quotation is pictured as powerful and dynamic; characteristics that tend not to be constructed as 'feminine' but rather as 'masculine'. It can be argued that she constructs these shifting identities in order to be seen as an authentic leader. She made a very difficult decision (even if it was unconsciously), to construct and assume a different role from what was accepted for her female gender, because she felt that it was necessary. So, she takes on a caring but at the same time authoritative identity by being interested in the children attending school and almost coerces them to attend.

Anna later adds about this head teacher:

> But they couldn't not love her! She was a mother for all! Even for the mothers! She was there for everyone! (Anna, WT, 30-39)

She was perceived as a 'mother for all', someone who is available and present and sacrifices her own needs (i.e. free time as she drives around and picks up the children) for those of her children (i.e. the students) (Hays 1996, Peters 1997). As Sikes (1997) commented 'traditional notions of nurturance demand absolute commitment to the needs of others [...] If you are being an "ideal" mother there is no space for you to do anything else' (p. 139). Being caring and being selflessly always available for others, helped build strong relationships and acceptance by the parents. Legitimising 'motherhood' in order to explain why the women head teacher is being seen as accepted and powerful may help women have fewer difficulties in gaining a leadership position (Reay and Ball 2000). There seems to be an interplay of the constructed 'motherhood' identity and the head teacher identity, and a blurring of the identities boundaries. Although it is reported that 'femininity' in the field of educational leadership can be a negative discourse (Blackmore and Sachs 2007), the head teacher in this instance drew on the construction of a 'mothering' identity and assumed a more powerful position among the parents and the teachers.

Grummell et al (2009) see senior leadership posts as 'care-less' positions which advantage those who are 'care-free'. But far from being care-free, in Anna's talk the woman head teacher's care extends over her professional life, being reflected into her headship role and leadership approach. As Anna sees it her head teacher established rapport easily with the parents and the students, because she was always available and drew on aspects of a caring identity. She is also perceived as a dynamic woman who takes initiatives in order to

succeed in her aim. So, in order to educate the children, she drives to their homes and picks them up. She draws on aspects of a caring subjectivity and at the same time of a responsible head teacher. She is juggling with different aspects of her identity according to context, so at the same time she can be identified as 'motherly figure' and as head teacher following the laws, drawing on different aspects of these identities.

5.4. Constructions of the ideal head teacher

In the interview I asked the 15 teacher participants (10 women and 5 men) what the ideal head teacher would be like. Most of their responses were about constructions of the head teacher as the one who controls the school and enforces discipline. These views draw on more 'masculine' approaches to leadership (Coleman 2002). For example one respondent said that:

> A good head teacher also has to be firm and be able to discipline everybody, teachers, children, parents. (Vasilis, MT, 30-39)

Even if headship is considered as a post suitable for men because of its assumed 'masculine' nature (see earlier discussion in Chapter 4), in my research there were teachers who expressed negative opinions about their men head teachers, showing that there seem to be differences between the idealised notions of what a 'good' head teacher should be and how they were reported as doing it in practice.

So, a woman teacher said about her man head teacher:

> He discriminates against people. He likes some people and he dislikes others... [He discriminates] Based on beauty! [...] He behaves differently to women that he likes, and usually they are young women, and differently to people that he doesn't like, and they are men and older women teachers. [...] To us, because we are quite young, he is milder. He doesn't give us extra work, we don't have many gaps in our daily programme, and that is not fair for the others. He hasn't tried anything more, but I guess that if we were more open, he would raise his hand (Roula, WT, 30-39).

The way Roula constructs her man head teacher's leadership approach can be perceived as discriminatory and perhaps sexual harassment. The 'Gender Equality Duty' (2007), which is

a guide for authorities in England, qualifies comments about someone's appearance and actions that stem from appearance as sexual harassment. McDonald (2012) argues that sexual harassment in the workplace is identified as an issue that women experience all around the world. Although sexual harassment is a common practice in Greek workplaces and is carried out both by employers and fellow employees (Magliveras 2005), the State has not adopted any relevant civil and/or criminal legislative measures specifically to deal with it. However, there exists a general legal framework consisting of provisions in the Constitution, dealing with equality between men and women and the protection of human personality, provisions in the Civil Code and in the Criminal Code which could be applied by analogy, and in various collective employment contracts, as well as general principles of Labour Law. Arguably, this framework does not afford victims of sexual harassment a satisfactory regime for seeking redress and it depends on the court. In this case, the head teacher can be seen in Roula's account, to draw on aspects of 'hegemonic masculinity' and is assumed to be using his power to give privileges to young and beautiful teachers by means of disempowering or giving extra work to the others. At the same time, as Roula argues, he does not seem to be afraid of doing it, perhaps because of the lack of legal framework or perhaps because this behaviour is normalised. He may be viewed as drawing on forms of hierarchical relationship of dominance and subordination (Connell 1987) between himself and other men and women.

'Masculine' approaches are not only perceived to be adopted by men head teachers. Women heads, as has already been seen in Vasso's account who, as mentioned earlier, said: 'I like to have everybody else as, please forgive my wording, slaves, I want everything in my own terms [...] There is no room for good people here' can also be seen to draw on 'masculine' approaches in the way they lead their schools.

When teachers' expectations from, and perceptions about, the 'ideal' head teachers were the focus of studies in the UK and the US, it was found that they constructed 'feminine' desired relationships according to which the head teacher demonstrates that s/he trusts the teacher, listens to their opinions and feelings, increases their autonomy, develops coaching relationships and promotes professional growth (Blase and Anderson 1995, Blase and Blase 1998). Also, the ideal head teacher is usually perceived as honest, considerate, optimistic, firm, knowledgeable, moral and flexible (Blase and Anderson 1995, Hsieh and Shen 1998, Law and Glover 2000), qualities that may be considered as a mix of 'masculine' and 'feminine'.

The teachers who participated in my research organised their conceptualisations of educational leadership around qualities attributed to the idealised head teacher, his/her leadership approach and the desired relationships between the head teachers and the teachers in a school: the head teacher as a flexible and tolerant person, a moral leader, an emotional- friendly person, a coach and a strong person.

Most of the teachers who participated in the research shared the view that the head teacher needs to be attentive and open to the needs of the teachers. They expressed this view in various ways, for example:

> Many young teachers, men and women, when they start working, they don't know a lot of things, laws, their rights, their obligations, pedagogical practice….so they need the help of a more experienced teacher. I believe that the head teachers should always provide this help (Thodoris, MT, 50-59).

And another teacher said: 'I also want my head teachers to listen to me and help me out when I have problems' (Mina, WT, 30-39). Some said that a flexible head teacher is important because sometimes they do not feel competent enough on some issues, leading them to expect a tolerant person as a head teacher. Like Anna:

> I would like a head teacher who wouldn't just give an order to do something. I would like him to explain to me what I am supposed to do. I don't know everything! (Anna, WT, 30-39, my emphasis)

This ideal construction is consistent with a 'feminine' approach to leadership, which is assumed to be more accepting of differences among people, more tolerant of deviance and more considerate of others' needs (Gray 1989, Hurty 1995, Oplatka 2001, Shakeshaft 1989). It has to be stressed, that Anna uses the masculine grammatical form in Greek when she talks about the ideal head teacher. So, it can be assumed that she may be implying that the ideal head is a man or that usually the head teacher is a man, although she appears to want the head not to be typically 'masculine' and autocratic.

Likewise, the ideal head teacher – teacher relationships have also been constructed by the teachers as including positive attitudes towards the teachers' opinions, even if they are different from the head teacher's. The head teacher is expected to 'like new ideas, new

teaching ideas I mean.' (Loukia, WT, 30-39) and '[a] good head teacher should be open and flexible and should accept the novice.' (Roula, WT, 30-39).

Another teacher expressed the view that the ideal head teacher is 'a person who is open to advice and opinions, one whose decision is not necessarily the final one' (Mina, WT, 30-39). Another teacher expected 'to be supported, encouraged, and feel that someone is listening to me, to my ideas.' (Andreas, MT, 40-49). The words of Anna, Roula and Mina are similar to reports on head teachers who are depicted as listening to different viewpoints (Hurty 1995), encouraging collaboration (Regan and Brooks 1995) and advocating a consultative approach (Coleman 2002). These approaches to leadership (listening, consulting and collaborating) have traditionally been constructed as 'feminine'.

Notably, and congruent with the 'feminine' ideal (Gray 1989) and with observations on women head teachers (Fennell 1999, Oplatka 2003), as the ideal head teacher is constructed as open-minded, s/he is also constructed as an open-to-change person. So, the teachers would have the opportunity to work within a dynamic, creative and innovative environment.

Some of the teachers (5 out of the 15) hold beliefs that the head teacher should be moral. Consistent with Sergiovanni (1991) they claim that the head teacher should lead with integrity and honesty.

> The good head teacher…Fair, objective, friendly [...] Responsible, of course. Honest for sure, because a lot can happen when you handle money. And yes, I think that being able to understand and being fair are the most important things. (Loukia, WT, 30-39)

This kind of belief is also shared among teachers in other studies (Blase and Anderson 1995, Blase and Blase 1994) and can be seen to draw mainly on 'feminine' leadership approaches (Coleman 1996, 2002).

All of the teachers in my research, however, also highlighted the instructional and more 'masculine' aspect of leadership. The ideal head teacher was constructed as knowledgeable in pedagogic issues and theories (not so much in practice), a source of organisational information and a mentor. For example, the ideal head teacher was constructed as 'up-to-

date in classroom issues, so that I [if I were a head teacher] could teach the other teachers. Inform them about new techniques and staff.' (Rea, WT, 30-39)

The emphasis on pedagogical knowledge as a core element in the educational leadership approach of the head teacher was stressed by many participants (12 out of 15) despite the fact that they all had at least 10 years of teaching experience. One respondent in particular said:

> The head teacher should be a teacher first. Obviously he should know how to deal with the bureaucracy, but he should never forget that he was and still is a teacher. (Andreas, MT, 40-49, my emphasis)

Furthermore, the 'ideal' head teacher was also constructed as a source of providing systematic information about the school. It is anticipated that s/he guides, directs and makes the teachers' acquaintance with the formal and informal structure of the school organisation. This view was clearly expressed beforehand by Thodoris who noted that the head teachers should help the teachers, especially the younger and inexperienced ones, with school practice, show them their obligations and rights and inform them about the educational legal framework.

To sum up, the ideal head teacher as constructed by the teachers who participated in my research, is not consonant with stereotypes of traditional 'masculine' leaders. Rather, the construction of the ideal head teacher is more nuanced and draws on a mix of of both 'masculine' and 'feminine' characteristics.

5.5. Combining career with family

It is assumed that one of the major factors affecting the difference between women's and men's experiences as head teachers in the UK is family responsibilitites (Coleman 2002). American women high school principals in Lad's (2000) study identified the expectations of family responsibilities as a strong influence in their professional lives. Marital status also impacted their ability to carry out the responsibilities inherent to their post. Among the Australian women head teachers in Limerick and Anderson's (1999) study about their perceptions regarding how their lives changed when they reached headship, only a

childless head teacher did not report having problems in achieving a balance between the conflicting work-family demands.

As noted in the literature (i.e. Coleman 2002, 2005, Lad 2000, Hall 1996, Limerick and Anderson 1999) women tend to see more 'obstacles' in their career pathways, such as dual responsibilities at home and at work, the need to have a supportive partner who could lighten the load of domestic responsibilities and perhaps even a partner prepared to put the other's career ahead in importance of their own.

As discussed in Chapter 4, there is compelling evidence that the family responsibilities of women head teachers correlate strongly with a relative lack of career progression in both the UK and elsewhere (Coleman 2002, Oplatka 2006). In a study in Greece, Brinia (2012) interviewed 20 women and 20 men head teachers in various rural areas. She found that family commitments make it difficult for women to be head teachers. Career breaks for child rearing interrupt career development and make it likely that women will be older than their men counterparts if and when they seek promotion to headship (You and Ko 2004, Powney et al 2003). Contrary to this, in my research in Greece the men head teacher participants tended to have more years of leadership experience than the women who belonged to the same age group, even though women head teachers as a whole tended to be younger than the men. So, it appears that the women became heads at a younger age than their men peers but men probably keep their posts for a longer time. Only one woman head teacher out of the 15 I interviewed had 21 years of headship experience. The experience of the rest of the women varied from 1 year to 8 years. At the same time, the men head teachers participants had experience as head teachers that varied from 1 year (one participant only) to 15 years.

Powney et al (2003) found that almost 33% of the disproportionately low number of women head teachers in their research about English teachers actually lived alone, without partners or children, whereas only 2% of the men head teachers were without partners at home. For women in education, they conclude, as for women in other occupations, career and promotion may be more frequently sacrificed (by choice or under duress) in order to cope with family responsibilities. This seems to be far less frequent in the case of men. In the present research, all but three women head teachers were married (2 had never been married and one was a widow) and two men heads had never been married. Even so, taking into consideration that women head teachers appear to have fewer years of

experience as head teachers, it may be assumed that perhaps career and promotion for women probably is sacrificed or postponed in order to cope with family responsibilities. So, this may indicate that career progression is taking place, but, only when major child responsibilities are over, as the majority of the women head teachers had children who were over 18 years old when they became heads. This may indicate that women tend to have children earlier in their lives or that they tend to plan their careers and have their children before assuming headships.

Powney et al (2003) also found that women head teachers tended to have more 'personal circumstances' (p. 40) that they believed were hindering their attempts to combine work and family. These 'personal circumstances' are compounded by the heavy workload that head teachers had. Similarly in Greece, as one of my participants believes: 'there isn't anybody else with such a workload as a school head teacher'. She goes on by saying that at the school the head teachers should:

> ... be secretaries, cashiers, accountants, referees, psychologists, nurses especially now with the swine flu, lawyers…everything. (Katerina, WHT, 40-49)

Also, the note that women appear to have to work harder than men to achieve the same result (as indicated in the previous chapter) and that along with the large amount of work that headship entails, impact on women's family life. Given these difficulties in reconciling work and family life it is not surprising that women leaders are less likely to have children than their men colleagues (Coleman 2002). In my study in Greece the head teachers who participated were in a different situation as only 5 (3 women and 2 men head teachers) did not have any children. Out of the rest, only 2 of the women heads had a child under the age of 10 when they were appointed as heads, while 3 of the men heads had young children. If we take into consideration that in Greece the average age of all mothers was 31.57 years in 2012 (Hellenic Statistical Authority 2013b) (while in the UK it was 30 years (Office for National Statistics 2013)) and that in my research, as indicated in Chapter 3, women tend to have fewer years of head teaching experience than the men, it may be assumed that many women tend to postpone their careers.

Being a head teacher leaves little time for the additional family responsibilities that women continue to bear unequally alongside their men peers. As one of the respondents in Thornton's and Bricheno's (2006) study about men and women in education in the UK

commented, it is easier for men as they do not have restrictions from their families and they can 'drift' into things.

Unlike women head teachers, men with families are more likely to be promoted earlier than their women peers, and they are far less likely to feel they are held back by their families (Coleman 2002). And maybe even in Greece the higher percentage of men heads with young children indicates that men do not have to take care of them, as this is a woman's work, as a man teacher who used to be a head said:

> I can say that I didn't face these problems [taking care of the children and family]. But, to be honest, my wife played a huge part. She took care of all the family while I was devoted to my duties as a head teacher (Thodoris, MT, 50-59)

Perhaps the most important point in his words is that it seems that 'motherhood is mandated and fatherhood discretionary' (Clarke and Popay 1998, p. 226). Women, although they participate in paid work, appear to have to accommodate their work in their caregiver role. Responsibility and domestic work are not equally distributed between women and men regardless of women's employment status (Fagan and Burchell 2002). Also, along with their family and children, they have to deal with everything that is (or is assumed to be) included in the head's role.

The conflict between gender and headship was also constructed in this study as some of the women appear to have deeply embedded 'feminine' identities that emerged throughout our conversations. Almost all (20 out of 25) of the women participants in the research mentioned the assumption that a woman will get married and have a family, do the domestic work, take care of her children, husband and parents and always be available for them and be considerate. One example of this is Marianthi who talked at length about the importance that her husband put on the fact that she had a job with higher status than his.

> Also, I think that the fact that I was going to have a higher status job than him, he was just a bank employee, played a part in this [i.e. his bad reaction when I was appointed]. Of course, I never saw it like that, but this is how men are! (Marianthi, WHT, 40-49)

Similarly, as she has young children, she commented:

The truth is that I was a little scared [when I applied], because I had 2 young children, each morning was very difficult, I had to prepare them for school, make my husband's breakfast, prepare his clothes and get myself ready for work. As a head teacher I had to be at school very early, every day, before everyone else, I had to open the school, ventilate the classrooms, turn the heating on, make coffee for everyone else…that's usual practice in our school. Also, I had to leave later than the others. The school day was over, everyone was leaving and I was staying because I had other administrative work, I had to check if all the windows were closed, if the classrooms were in order…do you know how many times I had to carry desks and chairs because classrooms were a mess?' (Marianthi, WHT, 40-49)

Marianthi describes some of the duties of a head teacher in Greece. These duties appear quite domestic (e.g. opening and closing windows, making sure that the classrooms are tidy etc.) and in a context different to the Greek one, they might be a care-taker's responsibility. Also, they are quite feminine and not connected with those of an authoritative figure. This may raise the question as to why would a man want to be a head teacher. An explanation might be the assumption that being a head teacher is usually associated with having higher status and prestige (Paustian-Underdahl et al 2014), but neither Marianthi nor any other participant in this research connected headship with status. Nevertheless, as I said earlier, men head teachers are the majority of the head teachers in Greece.

In discussing women in educational leadership, Brunner and Grogan (2007) explain: 'Societal norms do not work in her favour, so she must address this particular aspect of her life in some way in order to move forward in her career' (p. 43)

Some of the women in this study have overcome this hindrance by seeking help from their husbands for these responsibilities. These women were convinced that they would not be able to be head teachers without this help, because they were still their responsibilities/jobs. Loula indicated:

He [my husband] helps me a lot. He does a lot of things at home, cooking, cleaning, taking care of children although they are old now. If he had refused to help…then we would have had a problem!' (Loula, WHT, 40-49)

Lukia commented on the same issue:

A woman who has a husband who doesn't do anything at home or with the children, she doesn't have time for this.[…] If her husband believes it and helps her, then yes she can do it. Otherwise, definitely no!' (Lukia, WT, 30-39)

However, another head's experience with this barrier has been quite different. Marianthi decided to become a head teacher without having any support from her husband. She still takes care of all the house duties and the children. However, she appears to have changed her mind about going into headship and she is thinking of resigning, as her home and head teacher's responsibilities seem to be in conflict with each other.

No. I don't like it [headship]! I think that it was my mistake. I am not suitable for these things. I am very tired. There is more work at school and there is the work at home, the children, my husband…I have thought of quitting (Marianthi, WHT, 40-49)

Similarly, Rena said:

No! [I don't have any help] Who will help me? My husband? He has his own work. He is a good man, but he is a man. The woman is the one taking care of the home.' (Rena, WHT, 30-39)

In both of these quotes, and in the one that follows, gender binary is reified through the reinforcement of 'masculine' and 'feminine' expectations. Additionally, these women themselves are seen to utilise this form of essentialism, by conceptualising their experiences around the binary expectations for men and women. So they seem to believe that there are specific tasks for women (i.e. taking care of the home) and for men.

Another head teacher, also does not have any help at home, because, as she indicates:

My husband is a farmer. He doesn't help at all. He is a traditional man. He wants everything in his hands. (Katerina, WHT, 40-49)

Her husband appears to conform to traditional constructions of masculinity and does not renegotiate his identity even though his wife is working, too. He can be seen to exert masculine power in a patriarchal family system, where the roles of each gender are clearly stated. So, the woman's role is to have the responsibility of the household and of the children, even if she has a quite demanding job, and the man's role is to be the main breadwinner. Gender differences are profound in the domestic realm and the woman

seems to be subordinate to man. The constructions of 'masculinity' and 'femininity' continue to be embedded in the work-family discourse, modified only to allow for greater movement between the domains, so that women are 'allowed' to work (Runte and Mills 2006).

5.6. Conclusion

Being a head teacher is a complex situation for both women and men. Different identities are constructed for them, by them and by the teachers. Many of the difficulties women encounter are related to the perceptions of teaching as 'woman's work' and management as a 'male field'. As noted, explanations of 'care' (Noddings 2005) have depicted women as better carers, because they may experience motherhood, and thereby are suited to teach young children. But this essentialising perception of nurturance and care has been seen to devalue women's skills within institutions and may be considered as contributing to their low status.

Further, it appears that men head teachers, although they are expected to be drawing on dominant constructions of 'masculinity', seem to be drawing on a range of available 'masculinities' (Haywood and Mac an Ghaill 2003) in order to construct their approaches to school leadership. They revealed constructions of 'hegemonic masculinity' along with 'masculinities' that were more sensitive, caring and nurturing.

Similarly, the women head teachers do not simply either adopted 'feminine' or more 'masculine' approaches to leadership. Rather, they appeared to draw on 'gender heteroglossia' (Francis 2010) and sometimes their behaviour tended to be different from traditional 'feminine' behaviour.

The teachers also construct the 'ideal' head teacher in terms of 'masculine' and 'feminine' leadership approaches (Lord and Maher 1993). So, in conjunction with the 'feminine' leader, the ideal head teacher is conceptualized as open-minded, attentive, responsive, emotional and supportive. The ideal relationships between the teachers and the head teacher are conceptualized as caring, considerate, equal and as a source of knowledge and growth (Blackmore 1999, Fennell 1999, Hall 1996, Oplatka 2002). But when it comes to discipline and order, the constructions seem to be more 'masculine', in that they are

assumed to include the ability to use power and authority in order to discipline people. The head teacher is expected to be a strong person who has control over staff and children and also combine qualities that have been assumed to be both 'masculine' and 'feminine'.

Finally, the question of life and career balance for people as busy as head teachers is bound to be a difficult one. The research responses show that the solutions to the problem include examples of negotiation and compromise between partners, and of probably hard decisions made by women. The implications of the responses are that the men's lives are dominated by the demands of work and that, in the majority of cases, this can happen because they have the support of their wives who provide continuity to the family as the main home making partner and the one who often sacrifices their own career aspirations. Despite some changes in the Greek context, as it can be concluded from my participants' responses, it does not appear that the 'male' model of career is being challenged, or that an alternative model that would offer a better life and work balance for women and men is becoming widely established.

CHAPTER 6: CONSTRUCTING CHANGE

6.1 Introduction

In Chapter 5 I demonstrated that according to the participants' constructions there do not seem to be significant differences between the leadership approaches of women and men head teachers in this study. Yet, despite Constitutional and legal provisions for equality and against discrimination, the percentage of women head teachers in Greek primary schools still remains lower than that of men. Statistical data presented in the introductory chapter confirms that. So, having discussed how my participants view educational leadership, the challenges they face and the way they deal with issues related to the post, I will now discuss what they suggest the future holds for women in educational leadership in Greece and how they believe women's participation in educational leadership could be increased.

I asked the participants in my research to propose ways for improving women's participation in headship. Their suggestions for change will be examined under three sections: individual change, social change and state/policy change. In a fourth section I will discuss the suggestions that no change is needed or that change is not possible.

It is worth noting, that some participants (five, 1 women head teacher, 1 woman teacher and 3 men head teachers) answered that they did not know how to improve improving women's participation in headship. Taking into consideration the context of their interviews, this may imply that they did not consider it much of a problem, or that it is not possible to change.

6.2. Individual change: Change the woman

A narrow majority of the participants (22 out of 40, 15 women and 7 men) suggested that in attempting to change the current situation in educational leadership in Greece and increase women's participation,the responsibility rests on the individual. So, they suggested ways in which the women could help themselves towards headship by changing themselves and their presumed self-belief, as according to several scholars (i.e. Shakeshaft

1989 and Coleman 2002) women are constructed as lacking confidence, aspiration and motivation.

One participant said:

> I believe it's just an issue that women themselves have to deal with. If they decide that they can meet the demands of the post, they will apply. (Marios, MHT, 40-49)

And another said:

> Women have to be willing to apply, because they have the same qualifications and abilities as men. They can do the same job. We, men, do not have more brains; we are not more intelligent than them.[...] Usually, men are more accepted because they are considered as better and because they can be at the school at any time, so they have one more advantage, but a woman can be accepted, if she fights and proves that she deserves it. (Kostas, MHT, 50-59)

Although these men head teachers do not assume that men are superior to women and recognise that women do have leadership skills and knowledge, they do attempt to 'blame the victim', in this case the women themselves. It is assumed that it is because of their personal choice that they do not apply and as a result there are few women head teachers.

Kostas recognises that men tend to be seen as the norm ('men are more accepted, so they have one more advantage'). According to him, men are generally assumed to be better than women, indicating the common perception, which was also discussed earlier, that 'management is male' (Schein 1994). In the suggestion above made by Kostas, that it rests on the women themselves to apply and fight to prove their worth, Kostas indicates that even if a woman wants to apply and even if she is successful, she will then have to fight and prove that 'she deserves it'. It is assumed that for a man being a head teacher is something 'natural' and a 'rational advancement in his career'. But for a woman, headship is not natural. It is something strange, and she will have to fight to establish her right to be in that place. As Shakeshaft et al (2010) noted, a woman has to work harder to prove her value to teachers, children, parents and others and to be considered as successful. The situation in Greece is similar to what Wahl (2010) indicates about general management in Sweden: '[managers] describe a masculine culture where women are excluded or expected to adapt. It is clear how a manager should be, and consequently women have to perform more' (p.

11). Wahl suggests that some of the Swedish managers she interviewed believed that there are differences in the way men and women managers are treated because of the organisational cultures that privilege men and 'masculinity' over women and 'femininity'.

It was not only men in my study who held these views, but also women (9 out of the 15 women head teachers and 6 out of the 10 women teachers) who suggested that it is women's personal responsibility to bring about change and increase women's participation in educational leadership. It is also important to note that the women who held these views were from all age groups.

'Women should stand on their feet' said Jenny, a woman head teacher in her fifties whilst Anna, a woman teacher in her thirties, noted that 'women tend not to want it'.

A woman head teacher in her forties, married with two children aged 12 and 16, told me:

> Women should find the courage and apply! Only that! We are not weaker or subordinate to men. We can do the same things. We shouldn't be afraid of anything. (Loula, WHT, 40-49)

She suggests that future change rests on women who should be more courageous. The implications of Loula's words are that she considers women as a whole 'different' from men as they lack the courage to apply. She implies that women seem to be lacking some of what are considered as the main characteristics for the post. But she believes that women can do it as she herself has done, by sharing the family responsibilities with her husband and by dealing with other activities, like home finance. Also, she has relied on her husband for help and she appears to believe that this is the exception ('I am a different case!', she says). 'My husband is very supportive' she indicated, which seems to have helped her in being a head teacher, as he is the one taking care of the home and the children. The relationship between motherhood and leadership is frequently treated with scepticism (Eveline 2004, Sachs and Blackmore 1998, Sinclair 2004), because motherhood is considered as a social expectation with characteristics and behaviours usually associated with or attributed to women while leadership is associated with dominant 'masculine' constructions, although as I discussed earlier, Reay and Ball (2000) argue that motherhood can be a source of power for women. Despite the assumption regarding motherhood and domesticity, Loula has managed to reverse the popular domestic situation, where the 'female' role is the caring one, and the 'male' is the bread-winner. Loula's words can also

mean that women actually need more courage to apply, because they may be faced with rude, sexist and aggressive male staff, as I described earlier in the case of Vasso who had to deal with colleagues telling her to make them coffee (Chapter 5).

Other women also suggested that women should change their attitudes towards educational leadership:

> Maybe women themselves believe that they won't be able to do it. They put up the barriers to themselves. [...] Women should believe in themselves and take the huge step! (Roula, WT, 30-39)

Roula suggests that women lack confidence and self-esteem and she also suggests that if women are more confident and believe more in themselves, then there will be an increase in their participation. Similarly, Lea said:

> But most importantly, they should want it. They should be ambitious and most women aren't, they should be more confident, stable, methodical and strict. This way they will become head teachers and they will become successful head teachers. (Lea, WHT, 50-59)

The stereotype of women as 'passive' and 'not confident' is indicated in both of their responses, similarly to other participants' talk that was analysed in earlier chapters (e.g. Stefanos in Chapter 5 and Vassilis in Chapter 4) and earlier in this chapter. They seem to hold essentialised notions of gender in which the female identity is conceptualised as stable and homogeneous, with generalised characteristics and attributes. So, women are depicted as lacking ambition, confidence and stability, and as being less methodical in their work. They are assumed to be passive recipients of the dominant constructions of 'femininity' in a patriarchal society, in which women and their experiences have often been silenced. So, these notions of 'femininity' expressed by Roula and Lea may be socially imposed constructions and products of the patriarchal society that enforces 'public patriarchy' (Walby 1990) through segregation and subordination of women within the public sphere. Roula uses an essentialised and homogeneous construction of women, drawing on what Reay and Ball (2000) call 'the universal feminine' (p. 146) and she does not consider the existence of any differences between women because of personality, experiences and time. However, Lea seems to ignore the fact that men and women may draw on many different aspects of identity that could influence their relationship with

others (Moi 1988). Women may also draw on constructions of 'femininities' that position women as powerful, as 'femininity' is dynamic, various, and changing (Pyke 1996). Hence, even if it remains a paradox for women to occupy a leadership position because it contradicts the notion of traditional 'femininity' (Reay and Ball 2000), female identities, as I have shown in previous chapters (Chapter 4 and 5), are inextricably interwoven and fluid, shifting across time and context, ranging from subordinate to powerful in different contexts, while structures of inequality maybe durably reproduced. As a result it can be argued that it is inappropriate to blame women for their low representation in educational leadership.

Sam et al (2013) also noted that many of the respondents in their research about the constructions of the female leadership stereotypes of heads in the Ashanti Region, Ghana, held the view that women lack self-confidence and courage to apply for headship. This notion of women being less courageous is reiterated in Cubillo and Brown (2003) and Gupton (2009) who also found that in the US women's so-called lack of courage was more to do with lack of familiarity with the headship territory than with a lack of courage in their abilities. So, maybe women indeed lack courage as in headship they often have to work within and around institutional, cultural and societal contexts that may be authoritarian, oppressive, gendered, and a possibly unknown territory. As indicated earlier, in Greece the traditionally male dominated field of educational leadership is a field of networking and power and, as Sinclair observes (2013, p.25), women are usually positioned as 'outsiders'. This outsider status frequently requires courage, a familiarity with 'not belonging' and a willingness to be non-conforming (Sinclair and Wilson 2002). But as Jenny and Loula argue, this presumed lack of courage should not constrain women from applying for head teachers posts.

These 'blame the woman' accounts are compatible with Schmuck's (1980) 'individual perspective', Shakeshaft's (1989) account of the 'internal barriers' that hinder women's position and Ortiz and Marshall's (1988) 'person-centred explanation'. Despite these multiple labels, all seek to explain the persistent and continuing under-representation of women in educational management from a psychological orientation and not from a social one. That is, they look to the women themselves for the 'cause', exploring such things as personal traits, characteristics, abilities or qualities. However, as Schmuck (1980) recognises, when the focus is on person-centred causation, individuals are 'held responsible for their own problems, with the solutions to those problems found in terms of

changing the defect or weakness in the individual' (p. 9). A similar perspective was expressed by other participants in my research as well. They said: 'There should be no excuse! They have all they need. All the help with the children. The state is there for them' (Takis, MHT, 50-59), 'Women do not have goals' (Stefanos, MHT, 50-59).

So, as Shakeshaft acknowledges, such emphasis on women's so-called internal barriers lends itself to what she describes as a 'blame the victim' perspective (p. 82). Although Shakeshaft insists that from a psychological perspective these 'internal barriers' do exist, she feels they take the focus away from societal barriers that deny women's advancement. Shakeshaft (1989) cautions, 'If we accept that inequity is due to some inadequacy on the woman's part, then there is a tendency to not look at any other external causes' (p. 84). However, from a sociological perspective, 'internal barriers' are created by the culture and social context in which women develop (Sadker and Sadker 1994). As has been seen earlier, the way society perceives traditional constructions of 'femininity' and 'masculinity' has led to views of women as weak and as lacking self-esteem, unable to achieve certain tasks, like leadership, although my research has shown that some men may also lack self-esteem and may also be considered as unable to lead. Also, Shakeshaft (1989) suggests from this perspective that '[The] remedy is for women to be resocialized so that they will fit into the male world' (p. 82) and as a result, women are the ones who have to change. Such a perception also reads as suggesting that there is a binary distinction between men and women and the way they approach leadership, but I have shown in a previous chapter (Chapter 5) that leadership is fluid and shifting, as I have shown that there is no single 'feminine' or 'masculine' approach. Rather it is more nuanced and, drawing on Francis (2010) that gender is 'complex, contradictory and fluctuating' (p. 485), I argue that both men and women may draw on both of what are considered as traditionally 'feminine' and/or 'masculine' leadership approaches. This pluralism may mean that it is fruitless to believe that change means the adoption of a 'masculine' leadership approach as it appears that there is not one clear 'masculine' or 'feminine' approach. So, as Collinson and Hearn (2003) suggest there is a need to move away from viewing women as having distinctively different ways of managing and leading. A more critical approach towards gender and leadership seems to be needed, given that the differences between men and women are socially constructed and dependent on the situation (Burr 2003) rather than imposed by nature and/or biology. With leadership traditionally defined in 'male' terms and with women being blamed for their under-representation, the option of taking up leadership

roles may be less appealing for some women. And as Shakeshaft (1989) concludes, contrary to popular assumptions:

> Molding ourselves to be imitations of men or becoming successful while the doors are closed to other women will do nothing to restructure society so that the barriers will cease to exist (p. 144).

In order for a reconceptualisation to take place, societal beliefs about women need to change instead of women having to continue to learn how to navigate and adapt into a system that is men-centered.   And as I have shown previously (Chapter 4), women do face a number of hindrances, when they think about or decide to apply for headship and not only so called 'internal barriers'. These hindrances are based on traditional 'masculine' constructions of leadership and gendered assumptions about women's place in society. As Shakeshaft (1989) notes, it is not only women who should change, but also the structure of the society.

Furthermore, although several of the participants in the research (9 women and 5 men) indicated that women should aspire to leadership in order to increase women's participation, my research has shown that many women do have these aspirations. As I indicated in an earlier chapter (Chapter 4) 9 out of the 15 participating women head teachers had clearly planned to apply for headship before obtaining it, and they worked towards it. As early as the mid 1980's Shakeshaft (1985) argued that women's lack of success in obtaining administrative positions was not due to lowered aspirations or lack of motivation on the part of the women. More recently, Grogan and Brunner (2005) found that 40% of the women they studied in the US planned to pursue a leadership position in education. So, a change in women's way of thinking is not enough.

In a previous chapter (Chapter 4) I discussed the 'barriers' that women face when they decide to apply for headship. Among them were the selection procedures, where most of the respondents indicated that men were preferred, and the difficulty of combining career with family. Despite this, Takis, the head teacher who was mentioned above, seems to believe that women find excuses not to participate in headship. He says that it is their responsibility because the state offers help with the children (day-care centres and whole-day schools). His view is contrary to the every-day life experiences of many women who cannot find a place for their child in a day-care facility or a whole-day school. Popular Greek newspapers, like 'Avgi' (9 August 2014) and 'Proto Thema' (22 July 2014) gathered data

from publicly available datasets in the Ministries of Education and Religious Affairs and Health and Social Solidarity and reported that last September (2014) 12,000 families could not enrol their child at a public day-care facility because of lack of available places. Moreover, only 5,804 out of the 11,998 schools offer whole-day programmes that last until 4 o'clock, while the rest finish at 12:15 if they are pre-primary schools or 1:30 if they are primary schools. So, despite the fact that there are existing 'barriers', Takis considers them as just 'excuses' and believes that if women stop making these 'excuses' then in the future there will be more women head teachers.

In addition, in the interviews, many of the women who participated did not draw on the traditional construction of women as lacking confidence (e.g. teachers like Helen and Loukia, and head teachers like Gina and Danai). Instead, they appeared to be sure about themselves and about their abilities, even if they had not decided at this point in time to apply for headship.

To sum up, the responses from the participants discussed in this section stress the individual's responsibility where women's participation in educational leadership is concerned and tend to rest on fixed/essentialised constructions of women/'femininity'. Hence, they seem to remove responsibility from the state, from men and 'masculine' constructed leadership or from other factors that may be considered as 'barriers' and which were discussed in earlier chapters (Chapter 4 and Chapter 5).

6.3. State/policy change

There were seven participants (4 women and 3 men, out of 40) who suggested that in order to have a higher participation of women in educational leadership, changes in policies should occur. They defined these changes as the possible implementation of a quota system for women, the implementation of changes to make the head teacher's job easier and more attractive to both men and women and an increase in the number of child-care facilities.

6.3.1. Quota systems

Over the last half century women have made significant advances in education and in educational leadership but they are still under-represented across the globe and in Greece, as I have shown. The limited women's presence in educational leadership leads to a consideration of whether and how this could be changed. To answer these questions, only one participant (a man head teacher), proposed direct policy interventions such as gender quotas in order to increase the participation of women in educational leadership.

> There could be a quota system, for example that 50% of all headships should be occupied by women. (Marios, MHT, 40-49)

Quota systems have been implemented in several countries as an attempt to increase women's participation in management. Norway, in an attempt to eliminate discrimination and inequality between men and women, passed a Law in parliament in 2003 that stipulates a minimum of 40% representative of each gender on publicly listed boards (Lewis and Rake 2008). Similarly, France and Spain passed quota legislation in the early 2000's (Fagan and Gonzalez Menendez 2012).

The use of radical strategies such as quotas are important tools for promoting equality and are fundamental approaches in some countries, such as the Scandinavian countries even though the achievement of gender equality in the Scandinavian countries is also likely to be a combination of social, cultural and economic factors in addition to the use of quotas, as the Global Gender Gap Report (World Economic Forum 2014) indicates. The same report shows that Greece has dropped 10 places in the global gender rating since 2013 and 21 places since 2006, just before the economic crisis. It is also recognised by British scholars (i.e. Malleson, 2003) that the use of a quota system in certain areas such as the judiciary was likely to emerge as a political issue in the UK. A more recent study from Germany (Stark and Hyll 2014) argues that if there is no quota system, women consider their chances of getting top positions to be lower than men's and so women do not engage in applying. At the same time, less 'able' men are more likely to get such positions. Gender quotas may discourage those men who are less qualified and encourage those women who are more qualified.

In Greece the first time that quotas were implemented was in 2000 and 2001 with two pieces of legislation. The first, Law 2839/2000, stipulates that both genders shall participate

at a quota of 1/3 each, in departmental boards of public administration services, collective managing bodies of public organisations, local administration organisations and related institutions and enterprises. This was done in an attempt to ensure a balanced participation of fully qualified men and women in the decision-making processes of public administration, as well as in the entities of the private sector and the local administration agencies of 1st and 2nd degree (Mayors and Prefects). A year later, Law 2910/2001 was implemented. It requires that the number of candidates of each sex in the local and national elections must be equal to at least 1/3 of the total number of candidates in each party list.

With the first Law an attempt was made to tackle the under-representation of women in public administration. But the phrase 'fully qualified', that was included in it, left room for individual interpretation. The qualifications can be proven by degrees, certificates etc., as well as by being assessed through interviews, where the general knowledge and the personality of the applicant are evaluated. Employing somebody is not just a process of skills sorting. It appears to be also a process of cultural matching between the potential employer and employee (Rivera 2012). Research in the UK and the US regarding employment has shown that similarities in employer-employee gender may be a potent source of interpersonal attraction and may affect the potential hiring (Lareau and Weininger 2003, Wimmer and Lewis 2010). So, men tend to appoint other men or those who match traditional 'masculine' constructions. Other research in the UK has shown that the same interview questions are not asked to men and women candidates. Instead, gender-based questions may be asked, concerning family, mobility and leadership approach (Coleman 2002), which is illegal, but still happens, as Alexandra (a woman head teacher) commented in Chapter 4, p. 94 . Alexandra said that she was asked questions about how she would manage to combine a headship post with having a family. Similarly, data from my research presented in earlier chapters show that the majority of the participants in my research believe that the applicant's gender plays an important role in the outcome of the interview. Finally, research shows that many men (who are the majority in the selection panels) have a vested interests in holding onto power and authority rather than sharing it with women (Brown and Ralph 1996). Research has found that men have a tendency to employ people who look, potentially think and act like them, i.e. they are men or more 'masculine' (Oplatka 2006, Coleman 2011). My research also indicates that several factors can interfere in the interview procedure (like political beliefs, networks and gender). As discussed in Chapter 4, experiences of the research participants

(i.e. Anna and Kostas) indicate that a man candidate would be preferred over a woman candidate with the same qualifications. So, women may lawfully remain under-represented insofar as it could be argued after the interviews that there are no 'fully qualified' women employees (or teachers in the present case) to promote. In spite of the legal framework, women's representation in the top positions in local administration and public organisations remains low. In January 2013 only 8.3% of board seats of the largest publicly listed companies were women, while the same figure in EU was 17.8% (European Commission 2014).

As far as the second Law is concerned, women applicants in the elections have increased but the participation of women in political leadership has not. Maybe this is because Greek society is highly patriarchal and the leadership arena is believed to be 'masculine'. So women tend not to be voted for and as a result there are not many women in the political field. Publicly available data from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, show that in the elections of 2007 only 44 out of the 300 members of the parliament were women, while in the last elections (May 2012) there were only 53 women. Also, in the local elections of 2014, out of the 325 Mayors, only 15 were women.

So, evidence from Greece shows that women's progress has been disappointing, as women's employment outcomes have not improved enough despite the existence of relevant legislation. Similarly in Australia, despite the existence of quotas research has shown that little progress has been made with the implementation of such policies (Ainsworth et al 2010). Ainsworth et al (2010) in their research have confirmed Bacchi's (1996) findings, that there had been a lack of success in instituting 'real' equal opportunities for women as the social and/or structural disadvantage experienced by women remained largely constant. Instead, they all found that there was an engagement in a series of debates regarding legislation and policy about the possible interpretation of quotas and the reforms it should encompass. More recently Svensson and Gunnarsson (2012) discuss how Sweden attempted to adopt a 'gender neutral' equal treatment process, by considering men and women as equals, side by side. However, they note that even though Sweden recognises the need for equality, the policy focuses more on social institutions and structures rather on the individual. But Svensson and Gunnarsson (2012) conclude that by this it appears that the main interest was the outcome (i.e. having more women in higher ranks) rather than equality of opportunities to access higher ranks. Overall, women and their lives and situations as a targeted group might be viewed as not

being the priority in any of the countries studied, rather increasing their numbers in higher ranks has been a priority. As a result, issues such as the domestic division of labour may be considered as largely unaddressed (Bacchi 1996). Other recent studies regarding the employment of women, have also concluded that quota systems may increase the numbers of women but do not provide real equal opportunities as they do not promote any structural changes in the lives of women (i.e. Loutfi 2001, Dubery 2002, Reskin 2003).

Some scholars argue that a gender quota system denies equal opportunities for men and women to compete for available posts and they advocate selection based on merit and not gender (Phillips 1995). They argue that quota systems lead to appointing or promoting less-qualified people who may perform poorly (Holzer and Neumark 2006). Quota systems may also perpetuate negative stigmas regarding the abilities of minorities, as Sowell (2005) has argued in his study of quota systems around the world. A recent study in a US university regarding quota systems and faculty and student recruitment showed that a considerable percentage of faculty participants expressed concerns that quotas' recipients who are underqualified are favoured over qualified non-recipients (Flores and Rodrigues 2006). So, a quota system may be seen as undermining women's efforts for equality.

Maria, a woman head teacher, who is the most experienced head teacher amongst my participants with 21 years of headship experience, on the one hand indicated that there should be an increase in the number of women heads, but on the other hand, that there should not be any quota system for them. Although in the past she was one of very few women head teachers and, as she noted, she had to deal with behaviours that ranged from patronising (from the students' parents) to –what is considered today as- sexual harassment (from her superiors) and despite the fact that she appears to believe in women's abilities and the need for more women's participation in educational leadership, she is opposed to any form of quota system. She suggests that this policy may lead to reverse discrimination, as Crosby et al (2006) also suggest.

> I am against all these quotas for women participation, e.g. in politics. […] isn't there a danger that worthless women will be promoted instead of valuable men? (Maria, WHT, 40-49)

Similarly to common assumptions, she argues that quotas may lead to a reduction in quality as it may lead to having head teachers who are not qualified enough. She does not seem to believe that leadership is associated with 'masculinity' or 'femininity', rather than

with abilities and value regardless of gender. But, she seems to disregard the fact that with the current hiring system many unsuitable men could be hired because of their gender and many suitable women not. Her assumption is that the reason why women do not rise to senior positions has something to do with their suitability.

But Maria seems to disregard the fact that women in Greece are in a disadvantaged position compared with men. As Bradley (1999) argues, the continued dominance of the power men hold over women and the way these power relations are produced and reproduced may lead women to such position.

Also, Phillips (1995) argues:

> selection by merit [...] or gender are not such poles apart for there is no process of admission or appointment that operates by a single quantifiable scale, and the numbers are always moderated by additional criteria. These more qualitative criteria [...] often favour those who are most like the people conducting the interview: more starkly, they often favour the men'. (p. 61)

Furthermore, It is argued that the larger the numbers of women represented in educational leadership, the more possibilities exist to make a difference (Karl 1995). Karl argues that it usually takes a critical mass of women to affect change and I believe that such change may alter the stereotype of men's domination in leadership positions in Greek primary schools, reduce gender discrimination and further the opportunities for women head teachers through the formulation of gender friendly policies. So, quota systems may help to achieve this and still remain essential as far as many women are concerned.

But the application of such policies without questioning why they are applied is criticised by Harding (1991). Tamale (1997) notes that a quota system is 'a single policy [...] a lonely policy, a voice in the wilderness which can achieve little without the support of the policies directed at reducing disparities' (p. 73). A quota system is geared towards increasing participation but the latter cannot be viewed in isolation from the social-economic context. Women's social and economic identities may overlap and interact resulting in interconnected patterns which often reinforce each other. In contemporary Greece, where there is a major recession and social welfare policies are being reduced (Matsagianis 2013), women may find it difficult to participate in leadership even if a quota system for head teachers is implemented.

In conclusion, quota systems, where implemented, have not solved all the issues of society-wide discrimination. Instead, in order to achieve a better balance between men and women in senior posts I argue other forms of change might be necessary along with quota systems. Some of my participants also noted other forms of change in order to enhance women's participation in educational leadership.

6.3.2. Change in head teacher's workload

When asked how women's representation in educational leadership could be increased, two of the respondents, one man head teacher with 3 years of headship experience and one woman teacher who has never thought of being a head but who has not ruled it out, argued that the Greek state should adopt policies in relation to schools that will contribute towards raising women's participation.

> The situation could be changed if we see the foundations of the system. If we break larger schools into smaller ones with 6 classes each, if we appoint secretaries to deal with paperwork and if the extra money is increased. This could encourage women to apply. (Pavlos, MHT, 40-49)

Pavlos argues that the changes he suggests should be implemented by the state, into changes to the structures of the educational system. Pavlos's proposals include reducing the size of schools, as he considers schools with more than six classes very big and difficult to manage. He also proposes the appointment of administrative staff, in order to reduce the amount of administrative work that the head teachers are responsible for. His last words ('This could encourage women to apply') may indicate that women are discouraged from applying because they find the job difficult, while men do not or maybe because the demands and the volume of the work are too much, given women's domestic and childcare responsibilities. His assumption is based on traditional constructions about women as being less able than men in certain tasks, like managing and he might be viewed as drawing on traditional constructions of 'masculinity' and 'femininity'.

So, the changes he suggests for all head teachers include giving financial incentives and reducing the amount of work. The small amount of extra money that the head teacher in Greece receives may have led to teachers being unwilling to apply for headships. As one of

my respondents told me, after the digital recorder was turned off, 'During the last selection, we were 12 applicants for 12 headships. The responsibility and the amount of work to be done cannot be paid for, especially with 115 euros before taxes!'

The Greek head teacher has a variety of duties, pedagogical and managerial. The cost-benefit analysis may appear to lead many teachers to believe that the amount of work is too great and they suggest that the responsibilities should be reduced maybe by either employing assisting personnel (e.g. secretaries) or by increasing the additional payments they are getting. So, headship then might become more attractive for both men and women.

But if the suggested changes occur, maybe more men will be persuaded to apply for headship, too. Given the construction of the job as 'masculine' and that men tend to be preferred in the appointment process (as I have indicated in Chapter 4), this may lead to even fewer women being appointed. Also within the current economic situation in Greece it is highly unlikely either that administrative staff will be appointed or that more financial incentives will be offered to head teachers.

6.3.3. Child-care

The number of women filling dual roles of mother and worker has increased significantly in the last 50 years both in Greece and in the other European Union countries (KETHI 2001). Wolf-Wendel and Wark (2006) indicate that 64% of mothers of young children (aged up to 6 years old) worked outside the home in 1999 in the US, compared with 19% in 1960. In Greece almost 20% of women were working in 1960 (KETHI 2001) and this rose to almost 70% in 2005 (before the crisis) (Kikilias 2007). Also, Coleman (2002) draws on Ruijs (1993) who suggests that, for most women the choice of a management position means choosing not to have a family. In the early 1990's Ruijs (1993) argued that there is a clear and established relationship in most European countries between women's employment and child-care provision. In the present research, almost all women were responsible for the management of their households, despite the fact that they had a partner. Even some men head teachers (five out of ten) who participated in the interviews admitted that they could not have done it without their wives, who were responsible for the children, reflecting the findings of Coleman (2002 and 2009) in England.

Women who shoulder the major responsibility for their homes seem to be able to lead well when their responsibilities at home and at school are in some kind of balance. Achieving such a balance allows women leaders to channel their energies effectively in both spheres (Grogan and Shakeshaft 2011). So, there is a need for child-care provisions for working parents, for changes in the domestic division of labour in Greece (as I indicated in an earlier chapter women do more that 75% of housework) and in expectations of women and men.

There were four participants (three women and one man) who suggested that child-care facilities are necessary in order to have a higher participation of women in educational leadership. Alexandra, a woman head teacher with two older children (26 and 24 years old) who became a head teacher when her children were 22 and 20 years old, argued that more child-care provision should be introduced in order to change women's participation in educational leadership.

> What I reckon is holding them back are family commitments. This is the most important issue and if she can deal with it, I don't know how, maybe by having more kindergartens and more child-provision settings so that she won't worry about her children, then the number will change. (Alexandra, WHT, 40-49)

Similarly, Takis, a man head teacher, who although he said, as noted earlier (Chapter 4) that women find excuses for not becoming head teachers, also commented about the lack of adequate child-care provision:

> The state should give incentives to women and help with the kids should be provided. Day-care centres, whole-day schools should exist for all. (Takis, MHT, 50-59)

In Greece, a number of socio-economic changes have progressively taken place over the last 40 years, such as the loosening of family ties, an increasing distance between young parents and their family of origin, an increase in divorce rates, growing numbers of single-parent families, diminished family size, a change in values, intense urban migration, a migration wave from other nearby countries since the early 1990s as well as a progressive change in educational policy (Bagavos 2001, 2005). These conditions created new demands for early child care and education provision with such services not considered sufficient to fulfil the demand. According to relatively recent estimations, 110,000 children aged between 5 months and 5 years—representing more than the 20% of the population of this

particular age group—attend 1 of the 3,000 nurseries (KEDKE-EETAA 2005, Tsoulea and Kaitanidi 2005). If to this figure we add the additional numbers of preschool children who seek public preschool services instead of private ones due to the recent economic crisis then the whole picture is even more disappointing, as this makes the demand even greater and the available places even scarcer (Efimerida Syndakton, 13 August 2014). In 2003 in Greece only 7% of the children aged 4 and under[13] were enrolled in child-care, compared with 22% in the OECD area on average (Koutsogeorgopoulou 2009). Enrolment is influenced by an insufficient supply of child-care (Daouli et al 2004).

The above data, along with the note that Greece is a country with traditional patriarchal structures (Gassouka 2004) where the major responsibility for the children falls on women, can lead to the assumption that women cannot become head teachers or maybe even work full time. As many participants noted and as discussed in chapter 4, the post demands many hours, with Jenny noting 'It is exhausting! I am the first to arrive at the school in the morning and the last to leave. Sometimes I return in the afternoon [after the school is closed] because I have work to do.'(Jenny, WHT, 50-59), it is easy to see why a change in the availability of child-care provisions might be necessary.

But since 2010, cuts in public expenditure in Greece have been the main reaction to the crisis. Strict consolidation plans have been introduced with IMF and EU programs. A great number of these plans involve cuts in services such as child-care (European women's lobby 2012). In a climate like this, it seems difficult to expect an increase in child-care provision. On the other hand, there are European funds that remain unused. In 2013 data from the Ministry of Finance that was published in the press (newsbomb.gr, 1 November 2014) show that 25% of European funds were not used. Maybe this money could be used, in addition to the money already being used, to increase child-care provisions.

6.4. Wider social change

Some of the participants in my study argued that wider changes are needed in order to increase the participation of women in educational leadership. In Greece, in times of crisis women struggle. In a country where large demonstrations have been taking place during the last 3 years, where new forms of social movements develop, where the far right is

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[13] For children aged 5, education is mandatory and all of them (should) attend pre-school.

starting to grow significantly, the position of women is affected. Golden Dawn, the political party that represents the far right in the Greek political scene, has formed a women's network called the 'White Women Front' (WWF) and has a rather paradoxical relationship with women. Although there are women elected in the Greek Parliament representing Golden Dawn (the wife of its president is a member of the parliament) and even though one would think that WWF would have a solid position on women, gender equality or women's rights, this is not the case. Their only solid position is in their emphasis on the women's traditional roles as mothers, sisters, daughters and the nation's breeding machines without a right to abortion (Ideological library of White Women Front, n.d.).

The crisis raised the rates of unemployment, especially for women (in March 2013 the rates were 26.8% in the general population, 24.1% among men and 30.4% among women (Hellenic Statistical Authority, 2013)). But it is not only a question of unemployment. It is also a question of working conditions mainly for women, as women lead predominantly in precarious jobs and there are many forced redundancies along with a collapse of wages and labour rights (Karamessini 2011a and 2011b). Men, on the other hand, do not seem to face so many difficulties. Also, everyday experience shows that unequal pay in comparison with men's is the rule, pregnant women are fired or other women are obliged to commit to not having children (!) and are paid less because of this 'danger', the insurance rights of women are brutally violated, and rights are abolished, including changes to the retirement age, maternity leave and childcare. All the above, along with the simultaneous decline of the trade union movement (Avdela 2009), seems to affect predominantly the social groups which are less protected and more vulnerable to pressures of every kind (Gaitanou 2009).

Even the left political formations, that wish to be considered as fighting inequality, seem to remain quite traditional and androcentric with men comrades often prioritising the class struggle against neoliberal globalization over other structural inequalities (such as gender (in)equality) (Kyriakidou 2010). This has led left-wing feminist women in Greece to emphasise their potential different experiences as women, reinforcing gender difference, and to create groups within existing political formations (i.e. Women of SYRIZA Network, that exists within SYRIZA, the Coalition of the Radical Left) or original political initiatives (e.g. the coalition group called 'Women for Another Europe', that participated in the European Elections of 2004).

When I conducted my research, the crisis had just begun and its first consequences were evident. In a climate like this, where 'masculine' constructions seem to be the dominant ones, my participants argue that a change in the way wider society constructs gender is needed. Two particular issues were highlighted: gender and domestic labour and media representation of gender.

6.4.1. The gendered division of work

A number of the respondents (14 out of 40, ten women and four men) indicated that in order to increase the number of women head teachers, a change in the way people think is necessary. This includes changes in the gender roles in the household, in society, and in the way children are being raised.

Dimitris, a man head teacher married with two children indicated:

> But if women's position within society and within the house does not change, it will be very difficult for them (Dimitris, MHT, 50-59)

His response reveals a view of Greek society as patriarchal. As was noted in Greece 'the male dominated structures and the neglect of persistent gender hierarchies still prevail' (Women of SYRIZA Network declaration, 2008). In Greece there is limited research about families, society, gender roles and power with the most recent study being published about a decade ago (Maragoudaki 2005), although in the 1980's there were some studies about domestic responsibilities and roles (i.e. Nikolaidou 1981, Moussourou 1985a and 1985b). In these studies it was noted that the fact that most women were working at that time (as they are today) can be said to have contributed to men starting to deal with domestic work. At that time there was also more help from other members of the family (grandmother, unmarried aunt etc.), so the male contribution tended to be confined to shopping, washing the dishes and walking the children. The major household responsibilities, however, rested with women. Similarly, a study in the US has shown that 'women's work' is typically thought to include preparing meals, doing the dishes, cleaning the house, and doing laundry, whereas 'men's work' includes taking out the trash, fixing things with tools, and taking care of the vehicles (Parkman, 2009). As I mentioned in

Chapter 2 (p. 41) in Greece the everyday situation is similar to that in the US and the lack of literature may imply that this is the 'normal' thing for women to do.

Another Greek study in the mid 1990's (Maratou-Aliprandi 1995) found that the level of men's participation in domestic work depended on their education. Men who have higher education tend to do more around the house. It also depends on the work status of women. In 1995 Maratou-Aliprandi reported that the higher the status of a women's job, the greater the participation of the husband. As women have continued to enter professional fields it may have been expected that men would become more involved in domestic work. However, data from my study suggest otherwise. Katerina, a woman head teacher participant in my study, contrasts with Maratou-Aliprandi's (1995) findings as in her family the opposite is noted, as she is the one with higher education in her family (her husband is a farmer who has not studied beyond junior high school) and yet he does not participate in the domestic chores, because as she said 'he is a traditional man'.

The dominant construction of 'femininity' in Greek society is one that positions women as the ones responsible for the house and as subordinate to men, who sometimes, may offer their 'help' with what are considered to be women's responsibilities. So, the participants suggest that this construction should change in order to change women's representation in educational management. But neither Dimitris nor Katerina offer any suggestions on how this could be achieved.

The suggestion comes from other respondents. For example, Marianthi said:

> If the roles within the family do not change, if the husband does not take up some responsibilities, then nothing can be done. (Marianthi, WHT, 40-49)

She expresses this view, because as she said earlier (laughing sarcastically):

> My husband's responsibility is the bills as he holds our money and some external tasks. Sometimes he picks up the children from their lessons, but not always! (Marianthi, WHT, 40-49)

In Turkel's (1988) view dealing with money 'is [...] a symbol of worth, competence, freedom, prestige, masculinity, control and security' (p. 525). Paying the bills therefore may be seen as reassuring Marianthi's husband of his 'masculinity', as research has shown that holding money and paying the bills is considered as a 'male' thing (Kornrich et al 2012).

According to Marianthi, her husband may have constructed his wife as responsible for all that needs attention around the house and for the children. Marianthi on the other hand, seems to construct the 'masculine' role as the one responsible for financial issues (he pays the bills). So, she proposes that all of these should change. But again, she does not offer a view about how this could be achieved.

A woman teacher suggested that changes in child rearing are necessary. She said:

> If we continue to raise boys differently from girls then nothing will change. And everything that starts from education inside or outside of the family needs many years to have outcomes. So there is a long way ahead of us! (Loukia, WT, 30-39)

Loukia suggests that traditional constructions about 'masculinity' and 'femininity' in Greece can change through education. Greek education has moved forward and now all public schools are co-educational and there are no different curricula for boys and girls contrary to what was happening in the past (see introduction). But the school books that are used in primary schools in Greece include images of gender stereotypical behaviour by men and women (e.g. women are presented as nurses, librarians, ballet teachers, secretaries and paediatricians, while men are presented as soldiers, sailors, artists, engineers, doctors, teachers and astronauts. Also, men are presented as being involved in activities outside of the house and women as being involved in traditional 'female activities' like cooking, baking and knitting) (Hardalia and Ioannidou 2008). Even in the writing and publishing teams for the school books men are the majority and women are responsible mostly for editing (Kadartzi and Pliogou 2007).

A man teacher talked also about the need for change:

> This calls for a change of mentality in the Greek society. Roles change, slowly, but they do change. (Andreas, MT, 40-49)

Similarly, Sullivan (2006), after analysing data sets from the National Survey of Families and Households (NSFH) conducted in 48 states in the US between 1987-2003, proposes an approach to better explain changing gender relations. Based on both others' and his own research findings, Sullivan's approach emphasises that the analysis of gender relations in the family should be linked with an account based on the analysis of daily interaction, negotiation and struggle. He suggests a concept of gender awareness, the development of

which, he explains, involves a process which includes a growing recognition of change in gender relations. In other words, change in gender relations can happen not only as a result of individual interactions between men and women, but also as a result of exposure to changing attitudes and norms in broader societies. By incorporating the broader concept of gender consciousness, Sullivan's approach puts even more emphasis on the 'transformative potential of everyday interaction' (Sullivan 2006, p. 13), and underscores the non-static, ever-changing nature of gender relations. This transformative potential, according to Sullivan, includes two analytic components: cultural meanings, norms and expectations on one hand, and interactive processes on the other. That is to say, change in gender relations can come from both macro-level cultural changes in the larger society and micro-scale changes in interactions between individuals, in an attempt to challenge patriarchy and raise consciousness (Hughes, n.d.). So, Loukia seems to believe that traditional understandings and constructions of gender could be changed through education. According to Loukia, the potential change could come from a combination of change in cultural norms, which includes changes to a different way of raising boys and girls in the family (micro-scale), and a change in the way the wider society contributes to gender education (macro-level). Also research has shown that change in gender relations has not been as rapid as early advocates originally hoped (Sullivan 2006, Mahoney and Knudson-Martin 2009) but it is a slower ongoing process as recent research in the Anglo-Saxon world suggests (Lang and Risman 2006, Hook 2006). However, there has been change as one of my participants indicated:

> There has been a huge change during the last 50 years! Woman has exited from the house, she went to school, she started working, you see men that do several things that 20 years ago they couldn't even imagine doing! This is how they will accept women in higher posts! My children maybe will see it; my grand children will definitely see it! (Jenny, WHT, 50-59)

Jenny can be seen as implying that change is inevitable in a process of linear progression. Women's situation has changed and continues to change, so equality is simply a matter of time. But equality for women is not a linear story of progress from women being restricted into their houses to equality in professional and social life. As I have shown elsewhere (see Introduction) women's participation in the labour market has declined as well as advanced in Greece throughout history. Women have made progress in their participation in social and professional arenas, but it is not simply a matter of time until there are enough women

in leadership. I have shown elsewhere (Chapter 4) that women face a number of challenges when they decide to apply for leadership posts and they are less likely than men to be promoted. Her assumption is that as more women enter the teaching profession it is simply a matter of time until they work their way up and become head teachers. Her view is similar to that of Forbes et al (1988) who argued that in the corporate world: 'Although progress has been slow, women currently entering the work force already are viewing the sky through the broken remnants of the glass ceiling' (p. 9). On the other hand, Leathwood and Read (2009) and Singh et al (2008) challenge the idea of the 'pipeline' theory, i.e. the argument that it is simply a matter of time until the women that are now entering the professions achieve equality with men in senior positions, as there are currently many qualified women but few in leadership positions. It appears that certain professional areas are very resistant to gender changing. As a result, the path to leadership can be described as a 'leaky pipeline' as women seem to drop out on the way to higher posts (White 2001, Allen and Castleman 2001).

Moreover, the Greek educational system and the school curriculum have been described as conservative (Dimitrakopoulos 2004), as research has shown that girl-students are usually taught to maintain distinct roles in the family, with the woman constructed as a wife, a mother and a housewife (Panagiotidou 2013). Hence, girls taught such traditional constructions probably cannot easily overcome the gendered division of work and maybe they cannot challenge them and work their way up to leadership posts. Currently, the left-wing governing party (SYRIZA) has brought criticisms of the existing gender equality policies and reform proposals to the forefront of public debates. But, the current recession climate in Greece, where the unemployment of women has reached 30% in April 2015 (HSA 2015) and rising, it is difficult to achieve gender equality.

6.4.2. Media representation

Only one of my participants said that the mass media should bear some of the responsibility for the construction of change for women in Greece, as the media could play a role in raising consciousness and changing attitudes:

The influence of cinema and TV is great on this. We see what is happening elsewhere and we want to become like them. For example, there are many films that show

working women and staying-at-home dads. Why not have them as an example? (Jenny, WHT, 50-59)

Panagiotopoulou (2007) suggests that Greek society is constructed around a conservative model of behaviour which attempts to suppress women's issues, by not promoting women to decision-making positions and by assimilating them into the traditional 'feminine' role of wife, mother and homemaker. These ideas are reproduced in the content of the majority of the Greek media and particularly in television. The media have the power not to merely represent but also construct notions of dominant, hegemonic, subordinate and oppositional 'masculinities' and 'femininities' (Litosseliti 2006). The few research studies that have been conducted in Greece on this issue show very similar results (Kafiri 2002, Kakavoulia et al 2001). They reveal the stereotypes which constitute the representation of women on television and in various sorts of women's magazines. Also, during the last year there has been an increase in the number of new magazines with contents of cookery, arts and crafts, knitting etc., which are considered as 'feminine' subjects, with titles like 'Sweet alchemies', 'Sweet secrets', 'Home and decoration', and 'Burda'. According to McCracken (1993), women's magazines are assumed to provide pleasure, while at the same time 'naturali[se] social relations of power' (p.3). Her argument cannot be dismissed given that their sales flourish in an era when women's unemployment rises, as these reproduce deeply conservative and patriarchal ideologies. For instance in T.V. series or T.V. and magazine advertisements, women are portrayed either as the expression of original sin; as the medium of evil; of forbidden pleasure and of sin; or as a mother – who through childbearing - accepts the superiority of man and whose primary concern is to care for the family. In particular, the woman teacher is usually presented as an unmarried woman, with clothes that are out of fashion, thick glasses and hair worn in a bun (e.g. in the popular TV series 'Savvatogennimenes' (Born on a Saturday) and 'Chara's Café'). Also, she usually has suffered some kind of nervous break-down, and is in love with someone who does not love her back. She is constructed as excessive and sometimes even as monstrous. So, as Leathwood (2003) comments in relation to the representation of women in two UK government videos that were designed to encourage applications to universities in Britain and in magazine images:

The visual representations [of women], whilst open to multiple and alternative readings, are anchored through reference to culturally specific symbolic systems of

meaning which, I suggest, re/inscribe dominant constructions of femininity and masculinity. (p. 9)

So, I argue that the influence of the media can have the opposite result to what is suggested by Jenny as traditional dominant constructions of 'femininity' and 'masculinity' are being presented instead of being challenged. Rarely are the issues concerning intellectual relations between men and women, career development and possibilities for young women that contradict traditional gender norms and so on, ever presented (with the exception of the TV series 'Chara's Café' which is described below). Within this ideological framework, viewers are encouraged to identify with the models provided. So, the Greek woman, as presented in much of the media, should be a sweet, preferably blond 'doll', who attributes her popularity to the social position of her husband or partner and her heterosexuality.

So the media tends to present a homogenised construction of women as relatively powerless, as being subordinate to men and as having to perform their femininity in order to succeed or even to be accepted. So, there is still some way to go to raise children in a way that challenges traditional 'masculine' and 'feminine' identities.

Jenny, the woman head teacher mentioned above, and Lakis, the man teacher, believe that this could be done through programmes on television that depict situations in women's lives in other countries. But as I argued above, the way gender is constructed in several key media programmes that are very popular on Greek television, does not often contest the dominant constructions of 'femininity'. Sometimes they confirm, or reformulate dominant constructions, although there are examples where they contest them. An example is a very popular Greek T.V. series that was produced and first broadcast in 2003, was aired for three seasons (until 2006) and frequently repeated; 'Chara's Café'. Chara is a woman from Athens who decides to start a new coffee house business in a village where men rule (the women even have to ask their husbands how to vote at the elections). Chara is treated very badly by the men, because she is a working-woman owning her own business. In the village women are allowed to work only in their husbands' business, with the exception of the woman school teacher. In the end, she cannot stand the situation and leaves the village and her business to move back to Athens. Chara finds herself in a highly patriarchal environment, with fixed gender constructions for men and women. She challenges accepted constructions of 'femininity' by being in a non-traditional occupation, that is an

'occupation which is, or has been, traditionally undertaken by a man' (Bagilhole 2002, p. 3). She is confronted with the double bind of constructing a professional identity while remaining accountably feminine in an environment where, as Bagilhole (2002) comments, homosocial, 'masculine' culture prevails, and she faces resistance from men. Therefore, Chara faces a no-win situation and is stigmatised as gender deviant because she tries to 'invade' the 'masculinist' work culture, while at the same time she tries to embrace her 'femininity' and is regarded as a 'failed professional' (Papanastasiou 2014). In addition, in this TV series, rural Greece is being portrayed as homogeneous and based on patriarchal values contrary to urban Athens, something Hadjikyriakou (2009) observes. In these terms, the TV series in question failed to view urban and rural identities as multiple, fluid and context dependent (Kirtsoglou 2004). This is one of the very few T.V. series that present a woman as challenging the dominant traditional constructions of 'femininity', but it was produced and it is very popular. So, there may be room for change in Greece.

Other examples from international media include Disney films (like Beauty and the Beast or The Little Mermaid) which are regularly viewed in Greece and tend to promote very traditional narratives of physically attractive, sexually conservative, not overconfident, non employed women, who are fulfilled through an empowering male character and marriage. The women heroines constructed their 'femininity' through powerful male characters. These characters constructed their 'masculinity' through various personal accomplishments. Hence, these films can be seen to reflect and reinforce constructions of a gender binary (Booker 2009). Also, films that are very popular in Greece like 'Bridget Jones's Diary' and series like 'Sex and the City', although involving women with career ambitions who are in 'masculinised' professions (i.e. law, business and journalism), and are financially independent, are also fulfilled through long-term heterosexual relationships. Sometimes, these relationships overshadow their careers, as happened in 'Bridget Jones's Diary', when the heroine enters a relationship with the lawyer Mark Darcy (Adkins 2004), or when Carrie from 'Sex and the City' follows her boyfriend to Paris giving up her journalism career (Rendejas 2011). So, women, even though they are in successful careers, are still presented as needing a man for fulfilment.

Children are exposed to gender stereotypes through TV programmes, too. They frequently watch soeap operas, where women are often constructed as subordinate, passive and indecisive (Bassow 1992, Witt 2000). Also, in commercials for children's programmes, boys are shown more frequently in active roles, while girls are constructed as more passive and

as drawing on caring roles (e.g. they are mothers) (Witt 2000, Zimianitis 2007, Botaiti 2010). So, children are getting used to these traditional constructions, may consider them as natural and may draw upon them in their adult life.

At the same time, it should be noted that in both Greek and international television programmes, viewers are not merely passive recipients of the images. I believe that they posses agency to critically examine and contest the legitimacy of such representations. Whereas some women may attempt to emulate these images, others will reject and resist them. In either case, media images may serve as cultural templates (as Jenny and Lakis indicated) for idealised notions of 'masculinity' and 'femininity'. As a result, I suggest, media programmes should not be dismissed as mere entertainment, but viewed as possible disseminators of culturally idealised gendered images which need critical scrutiny and analysis.

6.5. No change

Out of the 40 head teachers and teachers who participated in my research, two (one woman head teacher and one man teacher) indicated that they did not want any change in the representation of women in educational leadership and one man head teacher indicated that change was not possible.

Rena, one of the respondents who did not want change, was a head teacher at the time of the interview and, as I was informed, resigned from the post a little bit later. Drawing on traditional gender constructions, she said that she did not have any help from her husband because as she indicated 'he is a man'. So, she was responsible for all the domestic work and family care was her responsibilities. Rena said:

> Does it have to be changed? Why should it change? Why should percentages increase? Families will fall apart. It's better to have good families and small female representation, than many women head teachers and broken families. The truth is that a family is kept by the wife. The husband is just a decorative element and sometimes a burden. (Rena, WHT, 30-39)

Another participant opposed to change was Vassilis, a man teacher who was very pleased because he had a man head teacher at his school (he said 'Thank God, a man [is my head teacher]'). He argued against the need for change:

> Why should the situation change? If it changes, this would mean that the woman will have to abandon another role of hers, so something will go wrong. It's better not to have so many women head teachers and more happy families! (Vassilis, MT, 30-39)

They both argue that increasing the participation of women in educational leadership will lead to families breaking down. Perhaps the most important point here is that women are seen as responsible for holding a family together ('The truth is a family is being kept by the wife. The husband is a decorative element and sometimes a burden', said Rena). So, Rena, offers a traditional construction of 'femininity' and women as being in charge of caring for their family and home, but as not being able to draw on the identity of a school leader because of these other responsibilities, despite the fact that at the time of the interview she was a head teacher herself, who said she was thinking of resigning from the post because of the amount of work (and subsequently did so). Vassilis, similarly, claims that women have to juggle with a number of identities and roles with that of the mother as the most important one. In addition, Rena appears as diminishing the man and dismissing him as a 'decorative element'. She can be seen as gaining power from her role as a mother, as Reay and Ball (2000) have argued. Also, in her talk the shifting nature of power (Bradley 1999) is indicated, as she appears as powerful in the family. Both Rena and Vassilis appear to draw on more fixed constructions of gender, where women are constructed in a traditional way that should remain stable.

 Another man head teacher said that:

> The situation will never change. Women will never be equal to men. They can't reach men. (Giorgos, MHT, 50-59)

His response in conjunction with earlier responses where he indicated that men are the ones who are most appropriate for the post of the head teacher ('[They will select] the man [applicant]! He can be successful in the post not the woman', 'A man always knows how to manage things, a woman will never learn') can be seen as drawing on a construction of 'femininity' as necessarily and inevitably subordinate to 'masculinity' and on fixed and essentialised constructions of gender (Papanastasiou 2014). He assumes that 'men are

made to manage' (Reay and Ball 2000) and women are not management material. So, women may be viewed as being trapped in gender constructions that have been ascribed as 'feminine' and do not include leadership, and men in 'masculine' superior roles. He may be assumed as drawing on hegemonic masculinity (Connell 1995) that operates through the subordination of 'femininity' guaranteeing the dominant position of men ('Women will never be equal to men').

The number of the participants opposed to change may be small, as there are only three who hold such views. But these responses raise the question of what is happening more widely in the Greek society and the extent to which Greeks are resistant to change.

6.6. Conclusion

Women face a number of barriers on their way to educational leadership, as has been discussed in a previous chapter (Chapter 4). Both men and women however suggest that change can happen. The majority of the participants in this study, both women and men, indicate that it is women's responsibility to implement change. They tend to believe that women themselves are the reason for their low numbers in headship.

As far as the state is concerned, some respondents in my research suggested that a number of changes should be implemented in order to encourage women to apply for headship. These changes include quota systems for women, provision for more child-care and changes to the head teacher's workload. They do not seem to challenge the notion that childcare is women's responsibility and that balancing a family with a career is a difficult issue for women.

Also, some other respondents indicated that wider social change is probably necessary. They argue that the stereotype of women as linked to family and home should be overcome. Some offer the view that the media can play a part in this, because they show programmes with various constructions of 'femininity' and 'masculinity'. But I suggest that care should be taken not to passively accept these constructions, but to critically view these images of 'femininity' and 'masculinity'.

Finally, there were participants who claimed that there should be no change or that change could not be achieved. They draw on traditional constructions of 'femininity' and

'masculinity', where women are holding a family together, and they assumed that women are subordinate to men.

Overall, it could be argued that most of the participants seemed optimistic about change even though in the current economic climate change is difficult to happen.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSIONS

7.1. Introduction

Having presented, discussed and analysed the research findings in Chapters 4, 5 and 6 this Chapter draws this thesis to a close by reflectively assembling and summarising the conclusions. It begins with a summary of the conceptual and methodological frameworks employed for this thesis. Then, it goes on to revisit and highlight the main research outcomes indicating how the research questions have been addressed. The limitations, strengths and contribution of this enquiry are considered and its implications and recommendations for future research, policy and practice are sketched in the last section.

7.2. Summary of conceptual and methodological frameworks

As has been emphasized throughout this thesis, despite the corpus of international research and literature on women's unequal participation in educational leadership this has been a relatively unexplored area in the Greek setting. The persistent under-representation of Greek women primary teachers in leadership posts documented in statistics presented in Chapter 1 and the absence of pertinent local research seeking to explain it prompted this research in order to cast light on this phenomenon.

More specifically, the aim of this enquiry was multifold. Firstly, it has attempted to illuminate women's and men's experiences of progressing to and holding primary school headship posts in Greece. Secondly, it aimed at examining whether and to what extent these experiences are gendered. Lastly, it also sought to understand the reasons behind women's disproportionate representation in leadership and to explore the participants' constructions about the future and the changes potentially needed in order to improve the situation in Greece.

Interview data were analysed under three main themes: 1) Constructions of career and becoming a head teacher, 2) Constructions of head teachers' identities, and 3) Constructing change.

The conceptual framework in this thesis presented in Chapter 2 was developed in the light of a significant body of international and scant Greek literature on gender and educational leadership, and was guided by the research purpose and questions. So, in Chapter 2 I presented the theoretical framework of the thesis which is feminist social constructionism. I argue that women and men head teachers approach leadership in an interactive, continuously changing way, as a result of both inter-personal and societal cultural influences. Gender relations are constantly reaffirmed, challenged and negotiated. I particularly drew on the work of Burr (2003) on the theory of social constructionism, Francis (2000 and 2010) on gender and social constructionism and on Reay and Ball (2000) on educational leadership and gender. I also drew on the groundbreaking work of Shakeshaft (1989) who was one of the first to research the issue of gender and educational leadership and had a major impact on the literature that followed over the years.

My research is based on the assumption that there are multifaceted interconnected factors that may hinder women's advancement in educational leadership in Greek primary schools. It is also based on the view that there are no uniform 'glass ceilings' between and within societies and cultures (Cubillo and Brown 2003). Rather I argue that educational leadership is a 'situated concept' (Shah 2009, p. 128), which means that it is underpinned by beliefs, values, cultures, in a particular time and place. So, this research set out to identify the reasons for women's uneven participation in leadership in Greek primary education. In addition, it aimed to illuminate the participants' gendered constructions of leadership and their gendered identities. Through comparing women and men leaders' experiences, the ultimate goal was not only to inform theory, policy and practice about the 'obstacles' women teachers may encounter when ascending the hierarchy in Greek primary education but also to provide recommendations for potential reforms in order to increase Greek women teachers' take up of primary school leadership.

The methodological strategy employed in this thesis was comprehensively discussed in Chapter 3, where I referred to the theoretical and methodological choices, and explained the philosophy and rationale underpinning them. With regard to the research paradigm and approach in particular, it was clear that in order to answer 'why' and 'how' research questions, a qualitative, in-depth, feminist, social constructionist approach was required. In alignment with the choice of approach and knowing that there are no 'right' or 'wrong' (Silverman 2009), 'best' or 'worse' (Bogdan and Biklen 2007), 'perfect' or 'useless' (Denscombe 2007) methods, only suitable and fitting ones, purposeful sampling, semi-

structured in-depth interviewing and a general inductive approach to the analysis emerged as the most appropriate means for generating and analysing the data. After presenting and justifying the methodological framework, the process of the pilot research as well as the course of the main research were discussed in the remainder of Chapter 3. The Chapter ended with a critical reflection on issues of the researcher's role, validity, reliability, trustworthiness and ethics.

The data was analysed thematically in the chapters that followed. Extracts from women's and men's talk were reproduced verbatim in order to document what the participants said. The evidence was described and critically discussed to highlight its importance for theory and practice, and to establish a link to the existing body of knowledge.

7.3. Main research outcomes

The study generated rich data that presented the complexity of factors underpinning women's and men's access to and experiences of Greek primary school headship. The findings are briefly summarised below.

The first two research questions aimed at providing insights into heads' and teachers' experiences of primary school headship. How do men and women head teachers approach leadership and how do teachers construct headship? The research data show that despite some accounts of positive constructions regarding women in leadership positions within a) the school context (teacher colleagues, deputy heads, other principals, students), b) the community context (parents and other professionals) and c) the family context (family and relatives), the findings of this project appear to resonate with research elsewhere, i.e. that, once in post, women frequently receive more intense criticism regarding their leading capabilities than their men counterparts (Hall 1996, Reay and Ball 2000, Coleman 2002, Reynolds 2008, Celikten 2009). Having to prove their worth before they can be accepted as effective leaders in combination with excessive identity conflict while in headship has led some women heads and some women teachers to have second thoughts about being head teachers.

The analysis also showed that it appears that being a head teacher is not simple for either men or women. The way head teachers who participated in my research approach

leadership does not seem to be stable nor dependent on traditional gender constructions. Rather, both men and women heads seemed to draw on a range of available approaches to leadership that weren't traditionally gendered. Leadership is seen to involve negotiations of identities, as Francis (2010) and Reay and Ball (2000) also argue.

The third research question's underlying purpose was to explore the elements that positively and/or negatively influence women's advancement to headship and compare them with that of men's. It aimed to explore the 'barriers' and/or enabling factors, if any, that the participants had come across on their way to the top of the school's hierarchy. A key theme that emerged from women's talk as a barrier to their promotion was that many of them did not consider leadership as a career path for them and subsequently had not formed a specific career map leading to headship. Consequently, external encouragement from others, particularly men colleagues, head teachers, and partners, was pivotal in encouraging women and men to apply for leadership and in raising their confidence. What should be noted is that among the teachers who did not discount headship as a career plan, the women appeared to have a more concrete career plan in mind than the men in mind that included management training through seminars and further studies.

Covert discrimination during the interview for promotion was a theme related to career progression. The findings suggest that traditional assumptions underpinning the decisions of the interview panel along with informal discrimination favouring men for headship in primary education have been partly responsible for women's unequal representation in this sector. Even though this is illegal, research from the UK (i.e. Coleman 2002, 2010, 2011) indicates that this is a practice not limited to Greece.

The fourth significant outcome of this research was that despite the generally positive and supportive stance of colleagues, head teachers and family to participants' advancement, some incidences of anachronistic attitudes towards them, which were related to gender, were reported. It appears that the traditional construction of women's incongruity with leadership and men's suitability for it often still exists – particularly among men – and frequently underlies their prejudiced attitude towards women aspirants. Although some of the participating women had managed to become heads, a proportion of the participants said that these influences were important in their decision to reject leadership.

My fifth research question concerned the nature of the challenges that women and men head teachers face. The family and personal lives of women head teachers appear to

necessitate career negotiations and compromises. In order to obtain a balance in their career and life, women often say that they appear to have to make some hard decisions, while men head teachers do not seem to have to deal with the same problem, as their wives tend to take responsibility for undertaking most of the domestic and caring tasks. As Reay and Ball (2002) argue, women have to juggle heavy responsibilities and it is the women who have to sacrifice their career aspirations.

The sixth research question was about the participants' constructions regarding what the future holds for women in educational leadership in Greece and the changes they consider necessary in order to increase women's participation. The participants constructed several levels of changes as necessary. A first level of change was individual change (i.e. that women are the ones who need to change) that was supported by 22 out of the 40 participants (15 women and 7 men). On a second level, change is constructed as state/policy change by seven participants (4 women and three men) suggested that a number of changes that could be implemented in order to help raise the participation of women in educational leadership. On the next level of change, several participants (14, ten women and four men) claimed that a wider social change is necessary in the form of challenging the stereotype of women as linked to family, care and home. In conjunction with this, a woman participant offers the view that the way the media constructs and reflects 'femininity' and 'masculinity' can play a part in what the future holds for women. Finally, some participants drawing on dominant constructions of 'femininity' and 'masculinity' argued that women hold a family together and men are breadwinners and claimed that no change is needed. Another participant was also against change and asserted that it is not going to happen, by drawing on constructions of women as weak, incapable of leading and as subordinate to men. As a whole, the research participants seem to be quite optimistic about change, even though currently in Greece change is difficult to happen because of the recession.

Last but not least, with the seventh research question I wanted to explore and discuss whether the experiences and identities of those who participated in the research are gendered. My data showed that the majority of the participants believed that educational leadership opportunities are highly gendered, as it appears that leadership positions are usually occupied by men, in the selection procedures men are preferred over women and old boys' networks still exist. These findings are consistent with previous research (Coleman 2002, 2007, Eagly and Carli 2003, Shakeshaft et al 2010) who have shown that

traditional gender identities are still constructed. Also, my research has shown that even though universalising 'masculine' and 'feminine' leadership approaches based on Western gendered identities excludes the experiences of other groups who may not be 'womanly' or 'manly' enough, according to traditional stereotypes, educational leadership approaches are more nuanced, ambiguous and fluid.

7.4. Limitations, strengths and contribution of this research

As in all kinds of research, the limitations and strengths of this study need to be acknowledged. As explained in Chapter 3, a feminist social constructionist approach was employed and the data were analysed using a general inductive approach (Dey 1993, Thomas 2006). These methods could be seen as a key strength of this piece of research because they enabled a multifaceted phenomenon such as the one under consideration to be examined in depth (Lieblich et al. 1998, Bassey 1999). Detailed and thorough investigation was the fundamental aim of this enquiry. A feminist social constructionist approach to the research is important in the Greek context because assertions of gender essentialism are common, as my data show, but research findings also show that gender and educational leadership is more complex. A general inductive approach to the analysis allowed deeper insights into women's own lived experiences of progressing to and experiencing primary school headship in Greece. They provided the opportunity to 'view situations through the eyes of participants … [and] catch their interpretations' (Cohen et al 2013, p.444) of women's disproportionate representation in primary school leadership, offering a richer and more comprehensive picture (Taylor et al 1995) of the topic in the specific socio-historical context. In this respect, they can allow 'fuzzy generalisations' (Bassey 1999) to other Greek women and men primary school head teachers with the same or similar experiences over this period. This piece of inquiry is the initial attempt to investigate and provide detailed insights into the reasons underlying Greek women's unequal participation in headship and their constructions of gender and leadership.

Even if limited in scope (40 participants), I argue that this research can offer a valuable substantial, practical, methodological and theoretical contribution. It has generated and recorded the accounts of women's and men's experiences of ascending the hierarchy and working as leaders and teachers in the Greek primary sector. Moreover, I sought to understand and conceptualise women's unequal participation in Greek primary school

headship. As Reay and Ball (2000) have argued, this research demonstrates that there are no particularly distinct ways in which women and men approach educational leadership. Finally, I have given an account of the things that could be done in order to increase women's participation in leadership.

Extending the contribution of this thesis to the international setting, I argue that, since this is one of the few pieces of local research on the topic, it provides the almost unheard Greek perspective on the issue, with all the commonalities and differences that this brings to the existing corpus of literature in the field. This research, therefore, makes a valuable contribution to research and knowledge on women's participation in educational leadership, representing the case of Greece. By taking place in the Greek context, the study aims at responding to Oplatka's (2006) plea for more research investigating women leaders' experiences. Moreover, on the basis that there is limited qualitative research about Greek women in educational leadership, this research adds to the neglected area of women's uneven participating in primary school headship.

Also, the key findings of my research are not very different from the ones in the other countries, even though, as indicated earlier (Chapter 2), the context is quite different regarding the role of the head teachers. Furthermore, my research findings challenge the assumptions about gender and leadership in Greece. Despite Greece being a patriarchal society (see Chapter 2) and despite other research that show that there are distinct 'masculine' and 'feminine' ways of leading a schools (i.e. Taki 2006 and Brinia 2012) I have shown that head teachers tend to approach leadership in a more nuanced way, irrespective of their gender. Finally, even though when I designed the research I expected to find differences between the different areas of Greece and hence I tried to include several different areas, I did not find any such difference.

At the practical level, this study can be used as a tool to raise the awareness of Greek women and men teachers regarding their career advancement prospects. Most importantly, it can offer advice to practitioners, researchers and policy makers in the country regarding the factors influencing women's careers and recruitment in primary school leadership. This could lead to reforms that could improve women's progression to headship.

With regard to the methodological contribution of this thesis, the employment of in depth interviews encouraging narration of personal experiences of Greek women and men

primary school teachers and head teachers across the country, was a way of approaching an under-researched area in the context of Greece. The scant research on gender issues and equality in education that has been carried out in the Greek setting to date has employed mainly quantitative methodological frameworks. The aim has been mainly to document the general trends on gender equality Greece, offering only 'thin data' and not penetrating deeper meanings, understandings and explanations of phenomena. These studies were not focused on women's individually lived experiences, distinct circumstances, constraints, beliefs and views (Morrison 2007). This thesis proposed an 'alternative' methodological perspective for researching the topic within the Greek milieu.

From a theoretical perspective, the study contributes to the debates around particular theoretical ideas of feminist social constructionism. Drawing on the work of Reay and Ball (2000) and Francis (2010) this study sets out how gender identity is multiple and fluid and not based on traditional constructions of 'femininity' and 'masculinity', contrary to other Greek research, e.g. Brinia (2012). My study has sought to redress the scarce literature on Greek women and educational leadership in Greece by putting forward a theoretical framework to enrich and broaden the debates around 'femininity' and 'masculinity' and leadership. This was done by examining more closely how gender identity is accomplished by head teachers and how it is perceived by teachers in Greek primary schools.

Of course, it needs to be highlighted that, as with all methods and methodologies, this methodological framework is not free of limitations. For example, as qualitative feminist social constructionist research, unavoidably this inquiry is not immune from my own interpretation of the evidence. The reader of this thesis is confronted with my 'judgement' (Letherby 2003), which, even if premised on a robust link to the evidence and the literature reviewed, is still my understanding and interpretation of a large amount of narrative interview data. The data that generated the participants' stories is susceptible to various interpretations and if a different researcher investigated the phenomenon, her/his insights into the data might have been different and this needs to be acknowledged and made explicit. This is why additional local research by other researchers preferably employing the same or a similar methodological strategy is advisable. Additionally, in retrospect, perhaps the employment of focus groups encouraging narration of personal experiences could also provide additional perspectives, opening up the discussion and in a way 'complementing' the individual narrative interview findings. But focus groups were not used, as some of the men and women in the study were reluctant to participate even in individual interviews

and also because my interest was the individual view, not group interactions and collective data.

To conclude, despite the above limitations, as a whole, this thesis achieved and fulfilled the purpose and questions established at the outset. The significance of this research lies in the fact that it helped gain insights into women's common and contradictory experiences of progressing to and experiencing primary school headship in Greece, casts light on the reasons behind women's under- representation in leadership and proposes ways in which to raise participation. The implications stemming from this thesis as well as potential recommendations for future research and practice are debated in a following Section.

7.5. My theoretical journey

I can describe the PhD process as a 'personal journey' during the course of which I gained new insights not just into other women's and men's constructions about gender and educational leadership, but into my own constructions as well. It has also been a personal journey as a feminist researcher, during which my perceptions have been challenged and my awareness of feminist and gender theory has been raised. When I started this journey I had fixed ideas about men and women. I expected to find that women and men approach leadership in different ways and that they draw on essentialised constructions of gender.

It has been partly through extensive reading of feminist and gender theory that my ideas have changed. Equally, though, it has been via the research interviews that I have been able to gain such rich insights that my original preconceptions have shifted. I now believe that gender is not essentially constructed, but it is an active construction that depends on social and cultural contexts. So, as there is not one specific gender identity for women and another one for men, I argue that there are no gender distinct leadership approaches.

7.6. What I would have done differently

It is clearly important to consider what I might have done differently in terms of how I planned, designed and conducted the research. I felt in hindsight, that I rushed into the first round of interviews during the pilot study and did not give full consideration to issues

of power. The rest of the interviews were less methodologically fraught and the data gained was more interesting, due to greater clarity on my part about what I was trying to find out and how I could handle the participants.

There are other practical things I might have done differently, firstly analyse the interviews as I went along, rather than leave them until long after the interviews. I would have asked more questions, clarifying issues and perhaps would have gathered richer data. There are however aspects of the research that I would not have done differently, for example, I would still have chosen to use feminist social constructionism because I felt it was a useful framework through which to analyse the data and felt it had many positive aspects to it as discussed elsewhere in this thesis. Further things I would keep the same were the research questions, as by the end of the process, they captured what I was trying to explore. I also feel that the qualitative approach taken was the most appropriate one.

7.7. Moving forward: Implications of this research and recommendations for future research, policy and practice

This thesis investigated the under-researched topic of women's participation in primary school management in the Greek setting; it suggests certain significant implications and recommendations for future research, policy and practice. With regard to future research in particular, additional local research particularly focusing on Greek women's disproportionate representation in leadership, not only in primary but also in other educational sectors as well, using qualitative methods, is required and advisable in order to build on this enquiry and provide additional insights into the phenomenon and additional research quotas.

Secondly, the scope of this enquiry was to examine the topic of women leaders' in primary education perspective, shedding light on their first hand experiences and mapping their explanations for women's unequal involvement in primary school management. Perhaps women in other educational leadership posts (i.e. educational advisors, directors of local educational authorities, regional directors of primary and secondary education) will offer additional perspectives. So, an interesting expansion and development for this research could be one that examines their experience; this is my plan for future research.

Moreover, this thesis drew on information from and recorded the accounts of women and men head teachers and teachers about how they constructed gender and educational leadership. It is likely that observations in school-meetings and everyday practice of educational leadership can offer another and/or supplementary view of gendered performances in action. Thus, further research might want to look into these performances.

Finally, another possible area of research that emerged from this thesis that appears to beg for further investigation is the phenomenon of men's decreased participation in Greek primary education within the past ten years and their disproportionately high participation in primary school headship. An investigation into the reasons behind this phenomenon could as well be an interesting field of study.

Regarding the impact this thesis can have on policy and practice, the review of women's experiences of progressing to and experiencing primary school headship indicated several 'barriers' for Greek women aspiring to headship. As noted on several occasions throughout this thesis, it is these constraints that have constructed and defined women's uneven involvement in Greek primary education.

More specifically, this enquiry has shown that, despite a slowly changing attitude and positive strides towards gender equality, socio-cultural imperatives and stereotypes about women in educational leadership persevere even in the women-dominated sector of primary education. These stereotypical constructions, which are either expressed by others or, most importantly, are internalised by some women teachers themselves through their socialisation, often inhibit women's progress to primary school headship. Arguably, the durability of gender constructions despite the shifts and minor changes in the numbers of women in educational leadership over the past 10 years, is the most disturbing finding of this thesis.

Thus, if Greek society is to move forward and Greek women teachers are to cease being 'outsiders in leadership' (Blackmore 1999, Coleman 2009), dealing with the problem in its deeply founded patriarchal roots becomes a necessity. If the situation is to be modified, stereotypical assumptions about gendered roles need to be abolished. Providing girls with the opportunity to develop their leadership skills early on and training boys to accept and respect women in these posts and to share household/familial responsibilities, should become the focus of attention in both families and schools.

Drawing from the participants' talk, if higher numbers of women are to pursue leadership positions, it is necessary for the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs to establish formal and/or informal mentoring and/or sponsorship practices aiming at involving women in managerial tasks that could further contribute to more women applying for headship.

Moreover, formal briefing on promotional opportunities needs to be accessible for all and this should be put forward by the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs. This way headship opportunities will become known to all and not only to those who can participate in certain networks, like political networks or 'old boys'' networks, that offer access to inside information.

With regard to the interviews for promotion, it seems that the process is anachronistic and needs to be reviewed and reformed. 'Transparency' throughout the procedure and most importantly when the committee's decisions about who to promote or not take place, could help to achieve a more fair list of potential head teachers, including both men and women. Any attempt at any kind of discrimination (gendered and/or political) could essentially be monitored and avoided as far as possible.

Moreover, the outcomes of this thesis underline the necessity to establish women-friendly policies to help women balance the role conflict that often discourages them from seeking further education and subsequently promotion. Traditional gender role constructions are a barrier to women and so there is a need to develop appropriate structures to change these constructions. This should become the focus of attention for the government's policy makers.

All in all, the outcomes of this thesis reinforce Coleman's (2002) assertion that an amalgam of interrelated factors may pose 'barriers' to women's mobility towards headship. The range of 'barriers' identified in this research is reminiscent of the impediments women in both the developing and the developed world experience. But certain 'barriers' to women's advancement are context – or even time – specific and they have to be confronted and dealt with as such by local governments and authorities in the Greek context. The multiplicity of 'barriers' every woman is confronted with leads me to caution against putting all women teachers in one group. For every woman, the potential 'barriers' and/or enabling influences she may face when seeking to ascend the hierarchy are different and can interact in many ways that can deter or help her attain leadership.

To conclude, this thesis has been a step towards identifying constructions regarding Greek women's and men's representation in leadership of primary schools. The plan is to disseminate its findings as well as the developments this thesis proposes via lectures, conference presentations and publications to relevant stakeholders and intellectuals in Greece and abroad. In an era of recession, change and the questioning of the old reality is needed. I believe it is time for change in Greece in many areas, including gender equality, because as Dougherty (2009) argues 'the fact that women are underrepresented, whatever its cause, is unjust' (p. xi).

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: Interview schedule

Interview questions for Head Teachers

I would like to thank you for helping me with my research. I would also like to ensure you one more time about the issue of confidentiality. Everything you say will be confidential, and will be used only by me for the purpose of this research.

1) Introductory and background questions

- Can you talk me through how you came to be a H.T.?
- Was it something you always wanted?
- What made you to be one?
- Were you encouraged?

2) Selection and recruitment procedures

- I am interested in the selection and recruitment process. Can you talk me through?
- Have you applied before and not get the job?
- How was the interview? Who was on the panel?
- How did you feel about the questions you were asked?
- How do you feel about the selection procedures in general? Do you think that gender, age, experience or anything else have an effect on the result?

3) Experiences in the role

- I would like to ask you a bit more about your experiences in being a Head Teacher.
- How do you see the role of a Head Teacher? (qualities)
- How do you feel you fit in that role?
- How are your relations with the people on top of you, parents, parents' association, students?
- How do you deal with difficult situations, like discipline, conflicts between the staff etc.?
- Would you say you are enjoying the role?

4) Career progression and development

- How do you see your own career development? (seminars, masters etc.)
- Reflecting on your career progress, are you happy with it?
- Do you believe there should be any motives for women who wish to become Head Teachers?

5) How do they see their future

- Where do you see yourself in 10 years' time? Do you think you will still be a Head Teacher?
- Do you plan to reapply for a Headship position? Why/ Why not?
- Do you plan to enrich your qualifications in order to be in a better position when re applying in the future?
- To what extend do you believe there is an equality issue in education? How could that be dealt with?

6) Feedback

That's everything I wanted to ask you. As this is a pilot study, I am interested in your views and feedback.

Is there anything else that you would like to ask me or anything you wish to add?

Thank you very much for your help

Interview questions for Teachers

I would like to thank you for helping me with my research. I would also like to ensure you one more time about the issue of confidentiality. Everything you say will be confidential, and will be used only by me for the purpose of this research.

7) Introductory and background questions

- Can you talk me through how you didn't come to be a H.T.?
- Was it something you didn't want, because you have the teaching experience needed?
- Were you encouraged by your family or colleagues to apply, or not?

8) Selection and recruitment procedures

- I am interested in the selection and recruitment process. Can you talk me through?
- Have you applied before and not get the job? [OR IF THEY USED TO BE H.T.] Why didn't you keep the post?
- How was the interview? Who was on the panel?   IF THEY HAVE
- How did you feel about the questions you were asked?   APPLIED BUT
- •   DIDN'T GET
- •   THE POSITION
- How do you feel about the selection procedures in general? Do you think that gender, age, experience or anything else have an effect on the result?

9) Experiences from teachers

- I would like to ask you a bit more about your experiences as a teacher
- How you came to be a teacher?
- How do you feel about your role as a teacher?
- Have you ever considered applying for Headship? Why?
- How do you see your Head Teacher?

- Do you agree with his/her decisions?

- What would you do differently if you were the Head Teacher in your school?

- What do you think affects the Head Teacher's decisions and the way you are treated? (Age? Gender? Experience?...)

10) Career progression and development

- How do you see your own career development? (seminars, masters etc.)

- Reflecting on your career progress, are you happy with it?

- Do you believe there should be any motives for women who wish to become Head Teachers?

11) How do they see their future

- Where do you see yourself in 10 years' time? Do you think you will still be a teacher or maybe a Head Teacher?

- Do you plan to (re)apply for a Headship position? Why/ Why not?

- Do you plan to enrich your qualifications in order to be in a better position when (re)applying in the future?

DEPENDING ON CURRENT STATUS (whether there was a rejected application or held the position in the past)

- To what extend do you believe there is an equality issue in education? How could that be dealt with?

- What are the main barriers for women? How can they be dealt with? (more points, mentoring…)

12) Feedback

That's everything I wanted to ask you. As this is a pilot study, I am interested in your views and feedback.

Is there anything else that you would like to ask me or anything you wish to add?

Thank you very much for your help

APPENDIX 2: Questionnaire for participants

Information sheet teachers and Head Teachers

1) Name ………………………………………………………………………….

2) School (this will be replaced with a pseudonym)...

3) Are you a: Teacher   ☐ Head Teacher   ☐

4) Gender: Male   ☐Female   ☐

5) Age: Under 30   ☐

      30-39   ☐

      40-49   ☐
               ☐
      50-59

      60 and over   ☐

6) Do you have any children?

    Yes   ☐   No   ☐

    If yes, how many? _____ And what are their ages? _____

7) What is your highest qualification achieved?

Ptychio (Bachelor) ☐

Masters in Education ☐

Other Masters ☐

Doctorate ☐

8) The school that you work is considered

Rural ☐ Urban ☐

9) How many classes are there in your school? ☐

10) How many students approximately are there in your school? ☐

_____

If you are a teacher, please answer questions 11-14.

If you are a Head Teacher, please proceed to question 15.

11) How long have you been working as a teacher? Years ☐

12) How long have you been working in your current school? Years ☐

13) Have you ever considered applying for a Head Teacher's post?

Yes ☐   No ☐

14) Have you ever applied for a Head Teacher's post?

Yes ☐   No ☐

Thank you very much for completing this information sheet

_____

If you are a Head Teacher please answer the following questions

15) How long is your teaching experience? Years ☐

16) How long have you been a Head Teacher? Years ☐

17) How long have you been a Head Teacher in your current school? Years ☐

18) Is this your first headship?

Yes ☐   No ☐

If no, please indicate the number and duration (in years) of previous headship(s)

Headship one ☐   years _____

Headship two ☐   years _____

Headship three ☐   years _____

19) Before you became a Head Teacher were you a deputy head?

Yes ☐   No ☐

If yes, please indicate the number and duration (in years) of previous deputy headship(s)

deputy headship one ☐   years _____

deputy headship two ☐   years _____

deputy headship three ☐   years _____

Thank you very much for completing this information sheet

APPENDIX 3: Research permission

Hellenic Democracy

Ministry of Education,

Lifelong Learning and Religious Affairs

Marousi, 26-11-2009

To: Ms Efthymia Papanastasiou

Pringiponnisson 3

69100 Komotini

Cc: 1. Pedagogical Institute

Mesogeion 406

Agia Paraskevi 15341

2. Educational Advisors of A, B, C and D

3. Local Education Authorities of A, B, C and D

[Areas withheld for issues of anonymity]

Re: Research Permission

In response to your request and keeping in mind the 8th/2009 decision of the E.T.E.T of the Pedagogical Institute, we would like to let you know that we approve your research titled: 'Women in Educational Leadership in Greece', which will be carried out at the schools in the attached list [withheld to preserve anonymity].

1. The research is for three years

2. Before visiting the schools, you should communicate with the head teachers in order to sustain schools' smooth operation.

3. The Pedagogical Institute should be notified about your results.

4. Participating in the study is voluntary.

5. The interviews will take place after working hours and they will last 40 minutes to an hour maximum.

6. The participants should be kept anonymous.

The Local Educational Authorities that are copied in the document should inform the schools where the research will take place. The list with the school is attached.

The administrative Officer

[signed and stamped]

APPENDIX 4: Letter of consent
LETTER OF CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN AN INTERVIEW FOR A RESEARCH PROJECT WITH THE TITLE 'WOMEN IN EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT IN GREECE'

You are invited to participate in a research projects that examines the reasons for the low participation of women in educational management in Greek schools, which is conducted by Efthymia Papanastasiou, a PhD student, in the Institute for Policy Studies in Education (IPSE) at London Metropolitan University, under the supervision of Professor C. Leathwood and Professor J. Robson.

The interviews will form the main body of research and the participants will be female and male Head Teachers and teachers who have the required to become Head Teachers, in 4 distinct areas of Greece. The aim will be to interview 40 Head Teachers and teachers in total. Because of my primary focus on the experiences of women, this will be made up of 25 women (15 Head Teachers and 10 teachers) and 15 men (10 Head Teachers and 5 teachers).

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to complete short data sheet, to gather data on gender, age, length in current post etc.

You will also be asked to be interviewed on the topic of gender and education and your personal experiences and views on educational management. The interview will be conducted in one meeting and will last between forty minutes and an hour. The interview will be tape-recorded. You will have the right not to answer any particular question, or ask for the tape-recorder to be turned off at any time.

Your identity will be protected to the best of the researcher's ability. Your real names will be replaced by pseudonyms. All data and tape recordings will be kept confidential. Please note that your participation in this project is voluntary, you have the right to withdraw at any time and without giving any reasons. Also, be ensured that the information gathered will be used for the research study and publications from the study, but all identities will be kept confidential. In order to protect confidentiality, tapes and all documents relating to the study will be kept in a locked cabinet and password protected electronic storage devices.

For more information or questions, please free to call or email me at the following:

Email address: emmaki@gmail.com

Telephone number: 2531085215 and 6973240307 (mobile)

Thank you very much for considering participating in this study.

Sincerely,

E. Papanastasiou

I have understood the above and I agree to be interviewed

Signature _____

Date_____

APPENDIX 5: Table of participants

Name	Gender	Role	Age	Children	Years of Teaching Experience	Years as Head Teacher	Area	Type of School
Nikos	M	HT	50-59	2	33	10	A	Urban
Katerina	F	HT	40-49	2	22	8	A	Rural
Alexandra	F	HT	40-49	2	27	4	A	Urban
Marios	M	HT	40-49	2	23	3	A	Rural
Ino	F	HT	40-49	2	22	3	A	Urban
Gina	F	HT	40-49	-	20	2	A	Urban
Kostas	M	HT	50-59	-	33	5 (4 in another school)	A	Rural
Giorgos	M	HT	50-59	1	25	6	B	Rural
Maria	F	HT	40-49	-	25	21	B	Rural
Dimitris	M	HT	50-59	2	33	3	B	Urban
Marianthi	F	HT	40-49	2	11	2.5	B	Rural
Jenny	F	HT	50-59	2	20	3	B	Urban
Yannis	M	HT	50-59	2	32	10	B	Urban
Kiki	F	HT	50-59	2	25	5	B	Urban
Christina	F	HT	30-39	-	17	2	B	Rural
Loula	F	HT	40-49	2	13	3	C	Rural
Pavlos	M	HT	40-49	-	20	3	C	Urban
Danai	F	HT	40-49	2	28	7	C	Urban
Leda	F	HT	40-49	3	25	2	C	Urban
Stefanos	M	HT	50-59	2	31	11 (4 in another school	C	Urban
Rena	F	HT	30-39	1	17	1	C	Rural
Lea	F	HT	50-59	2	30	8 (5 in another school)	D	Urban
Takis	M	HT	50-59	3	31	7	D	Urban
Thanos	M	HT	50-59	4	32	15	D	Urban

Vasso	F	HT	40-49	2	25	6	D	Rural
Andreas	M	T	40-49	2	11		A	Urban
Efi	F	T	30-39	3	10		A	Rural
Mina	F	T	30-39	2	13		A	Rural
Eleni	F	T	40-49	1	21		B	Urban
Thodoris	M	T	50-59	2	33		B	Urban
Loukia	F	T	30-39	-	10		B	Rural
Nona	F	T	30-39	1	11		C	Rural
Anna	F	T	30-39	-	10		C	Urban
Roula	F	T	30-39	-	12		C	Rural
Lakis	M	T	50-59	2	33	5	C	Urban
Gogo	F	T	40-49	3	10		D	Urban
Rea	F	T	30-39	-	11		D	Urban
Petros	M	T	30-39	-	12		D	Rural
Dina	F	T	40-49	2	23		D	Rural
Vassilis	M	T	30-39	2	12		D	Rural

APPENDIX 6: Coding tree

INITIAL CODING

A) Becoming a H.T.

Influences

Family

Mentor

Others

Reasons

By default

Aspiration

Degrees

Qualities

Experience

Self-confidence

Selection Procedure

Panel

Political beliefs

Networking
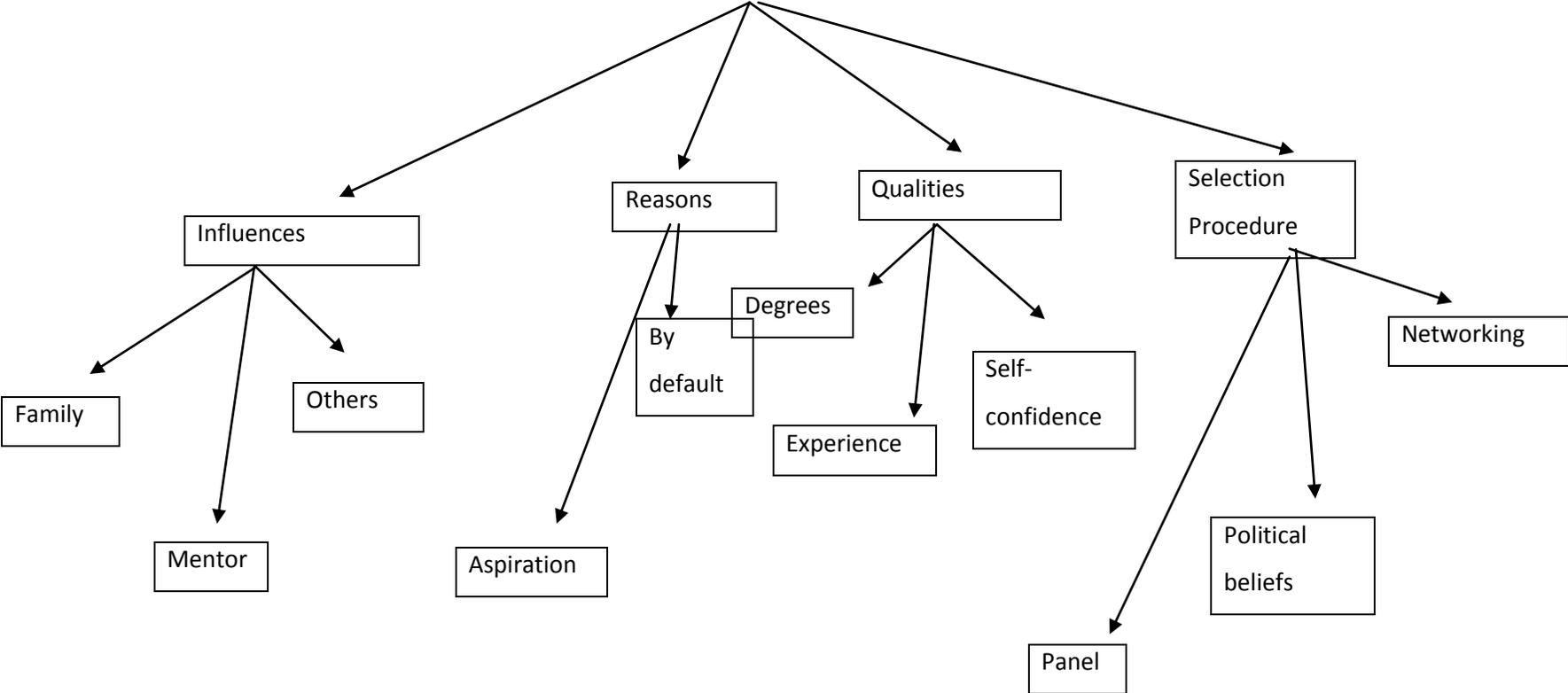
Influences: Who has influenced them to become a H.T. (their family? A mentor? Somebody else?)

Reasons: Why did they become a H.T? (Was it something they always wanted? Did it happen by default maybe because they were the most experienced in their school?)

Qualities: What are the qualities of a good H.T. (the degrees that s/he may hold? His/her experience? Whether s/he believes in her/himself?)

Selection procedure: What factors play a role? (The panel? Applicant's political beliefs? Networking?)

B) Becoming a Teacher

Influences

Reasons

Parents

Society

Personal
Choice

Other

Caring
profession

By chance

Other
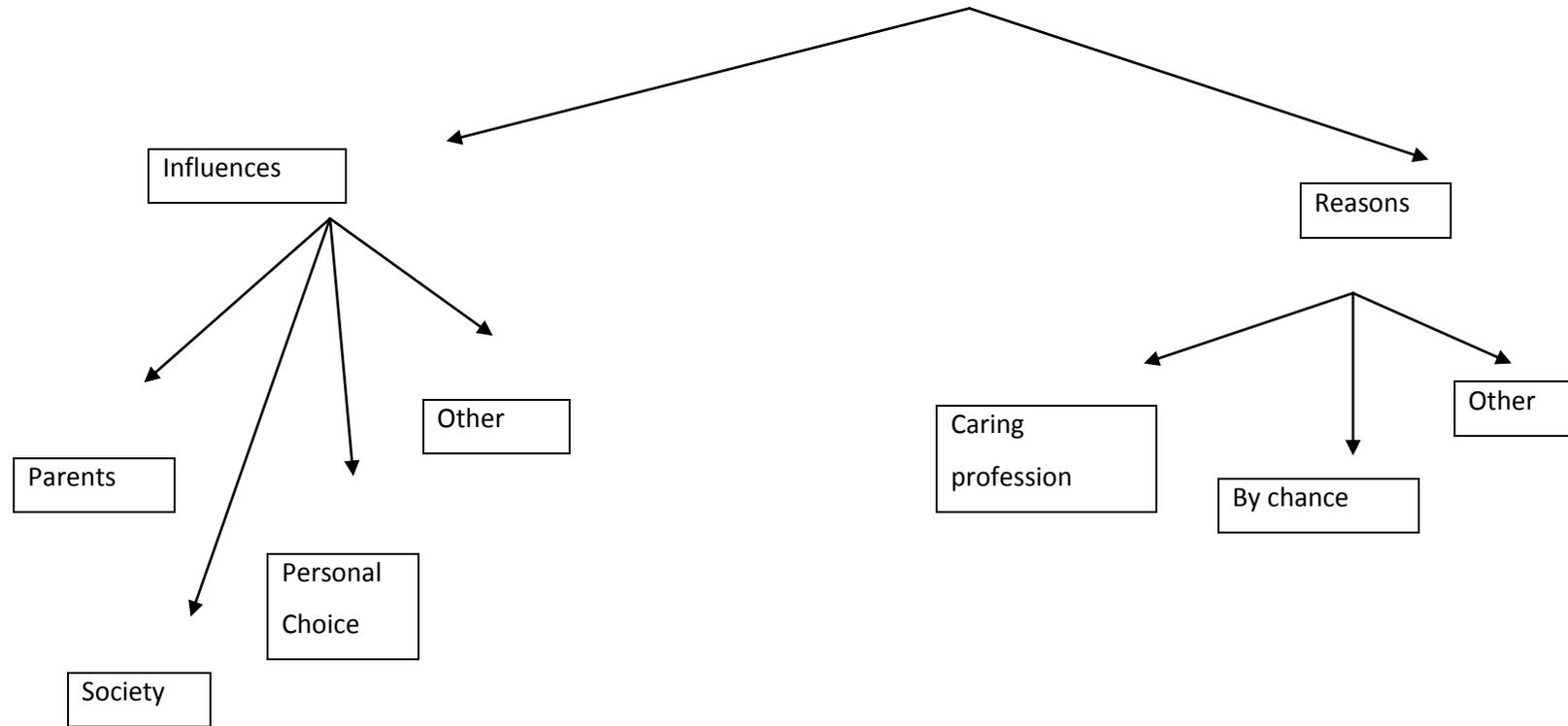
Influences: Who has influenced them to become a teacher? (Their family/parents? The society's beliefs about teaching (e.g. suitable for women, long vacation etc.)? Was it a personal choice? Something else?)

Reasons: Why are they teachers? (Because of the profession's caring nature? Because it just happened (e.g. bad results at the exams)? Because of something else?)

C) Being a H.T.

Barriers

Family

Superiors

Others

Other

Ways of managing

Male/Female

Things to change

Age factor
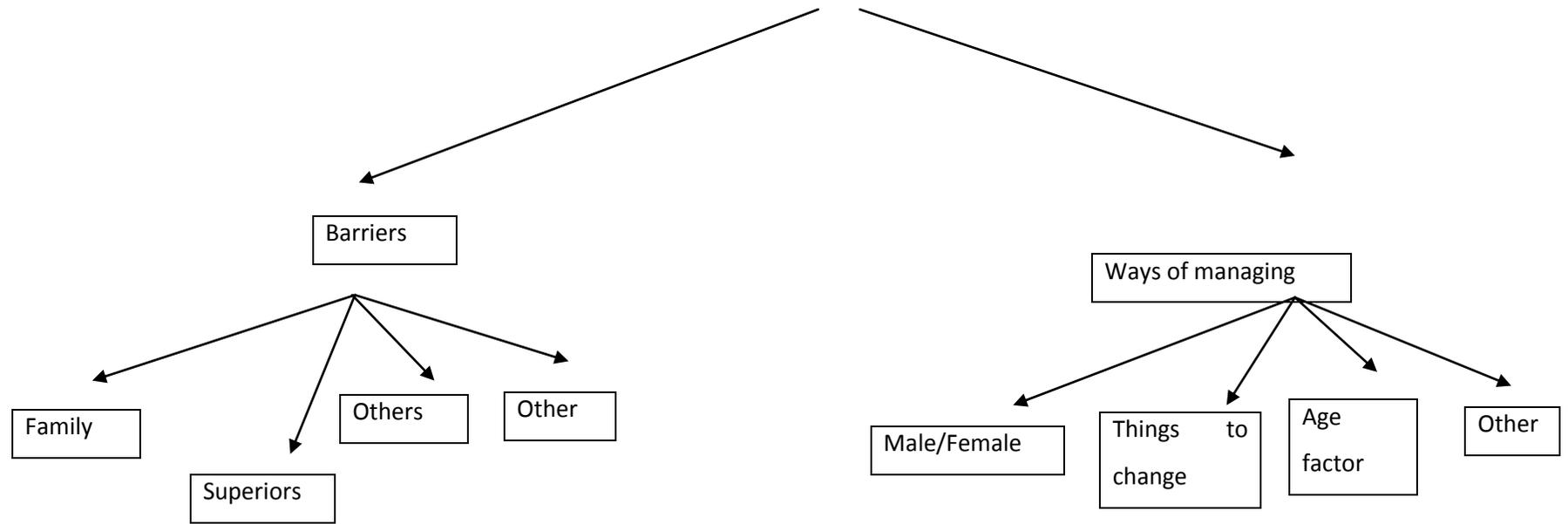
Other

Barriers: What are the barriers that they may face? (Family commitments? The way their superiors treat them? They way others (i.e. parents, children, colleagues, other people) see them? Something else?)

Ways of management: How do they manage their school? (Is there a male/female way and what do they do differently (if anything)? What needs to change? Does their age make a difference (e.g. do younger H.T. adopt a different style?) Something else?)

D) Constructions of gender

```
        D) Constructions of gender
                  │
         ┌────────┴────────┐
         ▼                 ▼
      ┌──────┐         ┌───────┐
      │ Men  │         │ Women │
      └──────┘         └───────┘
        │                 │
    ┌───┴───┐         ┌───┴───┐
    ▼       ▼         ▼       ▼
┌─────────┐ ┌──────┐ ┌─────────┐ ┌──────┐
│Self/ i.d.│ │ Role │ │Self/i.d.│ │ Role │
└─────────┘ └──────┘ └─────────┘ └──────┘
```
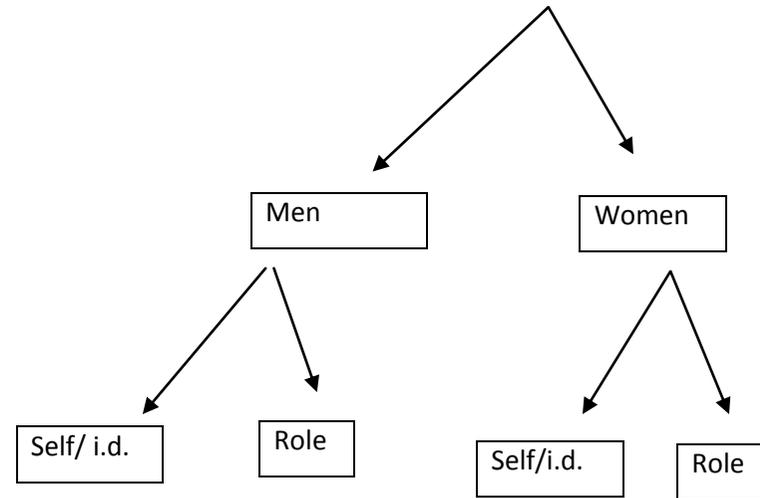
What do males and females believe about gender? How do they see themselves and their role? Are there any differences?

APPENDIX 7: Node identification and the NVivo coding process

Passage of coding identified for a given

Text selected and coded in the identified node.

All passages coded under a given node are brought together

APPENDIX 8: Example of tree node in NVivo