HAL
open science

Fertile Debates: A Comparative Account of Low Fertility in the British and Greek National Press

Katerina Georgiadis

To cite this version:

Katerina Georgiadis. Fertile Debates: A Comparative Account of Low Fertility in the British and Greek National Press. European Journal of Population / Revue européenne de Démographie, 2010, pp.243-262. 10.1007/s10680-010-9224-8 . hal-00594481

HAL Id: hal-00594481

https://hal.science/hal-00594481v1

Submitted on 20 May 2011

HAL is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.

Fertile debates: a comparative account of low fertility in the British and Greek national press.

Katerina Georgiadis

ESRC Post-Doctoral Research Fellow
Department of Social Policy
London School of Economics

Telephone: +44 20 7955 7658

A.Georgiadis1@lse.ac.uk

Keywords: fertility; Greece; United Kingdom; media; newspaper; anthropology

This article compares how the British and Greek national press debated the phenomenon of low fertility between 2001 and 2009. Specifically, it presents an overview of each set of newspapers' perspectives on the issue, and the most prevalent causes, consequences and solutions with which they associated it. Differences between the print media's representations are not only attributed to the distinct 'policy climate' and 'demographic experience' of each country but also to culturally-specific ideologies concerning the nation, gender, motherhood and personhood. Newspapers do not simply mirror reality but also help to construct it by legimitising dominant discourses about how persons, especially women, ought to manage their reproductive lives. Studying the media is a means of understanding the broader contexts in which individuals' reproductive lives are shaped and experienced.

Des débats féconds : analyse comparative de la prise en compte des faibles fécondités dans les presses nationales britannique et grecque

Mots clés : Grèce, Royaume Uni, medias, journaux, anthropologie

Cet article compare les modalités selon lesquelles les presses nationales britannique et grecque ont débattu du phénomène de faible fécondité au cours de la période 2001-2009. Plus précisément, il donne une vue d'ensemble des opinions d'une série de journaux sur les causes, les conséquences et les solutions les plus fréquemment décrites associées à ce phénomène. Les différences de représentations dans les presses écrites ne sont pas seulement attribuées au « climat politique » et à « l'expérience démographique » propres à chaque pays mais aussi aux idéologies spécifiques et culturellement construites relatives à la nation, au genre, à la maternité et à l'individu. Les journaux ne reflètent pas

seulement la réalité, ils aident également à la construire en légitimant les discours dominants relatifs à la manière dont les individus, et spécialement les femmes, devraient gérer leurs vies reproductives. Analyser le contenu des medias est un outil permettant de comprendre les contextes plus vastes dans lesquels les vies reproductives des individus sont façonnées et vécues.

1. Introduction

A great deal of information about the pan-European phenomenon of below-replacement fertility is communicated to the public and policy-makers through the media yet little is known about how this information is organised, why it is framed in particular ways, and what we can learn from it (for exceptions see Barber and Axinn 2004; Brown and Ferree 2005; Stark and Kohler 2002, 2004). In this paper I focus on how one media form, the press, portrayed low fertility in Greece and the UK between 2001 and 2009. Specifically, I compare Greek and British newspapers' views on the importance of the issue, its causes and consequences and the measures necessary to respond to it. I also examine the reasons behind each set of portrayals and the benefits of analysing and comparing them. I take inspiration from the work of Stark and Kohler (2002, p. 539) who explained widespread cross-national variations in anxiety over low fertility in the popular press according to differences in 'policy climates' and 'demographic experiences'. However, I attempt to develop their argument further by investigating the additional influence of culturally-specific ideologies concerning such constructs as the nation, gender, personhood and motherhood.

Consequently, I draw on studies which consider the political dimensions of demography and fertility (Greenhalgh 1995; Johnson-Hanks 2006; Kligman 1998; Krause and Marchesi 2007; Teitelbaum 1987) and employ anthropological perspectives to theorize reproduction and reproductive politics (Browner 2000; Ginsburg and Rapp 1991; Petchesky 1984). In brief, I regard low fertility as a highly politicised issue, associated with multiple and competing interests, ideologies and values. Accordingly, I do not only view it as an outcome and an expression of individuals' reproductive attitudes and behaviours, but also as a pretext for controlling and scrutinising them. As a result, I contrast the combined influence of demographic trends, policies and ideologies on the low fertility debate of each country's print media. Two key questions inform this analysis: 1) in what ways was low fertility important to the Greek and British press? and 2) how did each set of newspapers suggest that persons ought to manage their reproductive lives?

This research uses two methodological approaches. The first is qualitative thematic analysis which identifies, analyses and reports patterns (or themes) within data, without compromising their contextual richness and idiosyncratic meanings. This is achieved inductively, by coding the data within an epistemological and theoretical framework (in this case, anthropological theories relating to ideologies of the nation, gender, personhood and motherhood) without attempting to fit them into a pre-existing coding structure or the researcher's analytic preconceptions (Braun and Clarke 2006, p.83). The second is a comparative approach that helps to put these themes into perspective, evaluating their content and relationship within different contexts. Using as the units of comparison themes that were established during the course of qualitative analysis provides the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the meanings, perceptions and experiences concerning a particular subject than would be possible using a single-country, quantitative approach. I chose to compare Greece and the UK in part because of my familiarity with both countries through previous ethnographic research, as well as their shared experience in persistently low fertility.

Since 'today most of what people know about the world is mediated in one way or another' (Bird 2010, p.5), many types of media, including magazines, television, radio and online news, would provide a forum for the discussion of low fertility. While a study of these sources would undoubtedly be insightful, the press was identified as the most suitable medium for the purposes of this enquiry because it is highly comparable cross-culturally, well archived, and provides the most detailed and extensive coverage and analysis about the subject under investigation than any other media form. In addition, newspapers have a very broad, national audience with widely varying ages and interests, compared for example with magazines. Women's magazines may offer a more in-depth understanding of prevalent ideologies of motherhood and mothering (Johnston and Swanson 2003), or 'voluntary' and 'involuntary' childlessness (Sass 2004; Hadfield et al. 2007), that ultimately contribute toward the (re-)creation of a low fertility culture. However, due to their specialised focus and narrow target audience, they are less likely than the print media to provide frequent and multi-dimensional commentary on below-replacement fertility per se. Although magazines with a more general readership and current affairs focus (e.g. *Time*, *Newsweek*) would be appropriate in this regard, they are beyond the scope of this paper for practical reasons (e.g. archival access).

A better understanding of how and why low fertility matters to the press strengthens the dialogue between demographers and journalists, and reduces the chances of 'garbled demography' in the 'media marketplace' (Teitelbaum 2004, p. 317). In addition, it makes scholars more aware of the relevance of their work to non-professional audiences and, as a result, improves their chances of gaining public support in favour of policy reform (Stark and Kohler 2002; Wilmoth and Ball 1992). News stories are also worthy of study in their own right because they both generate and challenge dominant assumptions about reproduction, in particular about who should and should not reproduce and under what conditions.

2. The 'demographic experience' and 'policy climate' of Greece and the UK

In this section, I compare the 'demographic experience' and 'policy climate' of Greece and the UK. This is not a comprehensive account of the similarities and differences between the two countries but an overview of the features most useful for identifying whether each country's press coverage was determined by its demographic, policy and ideological setting and in what ways. The population of the UK is almost six times the size of Greece (62 million compared to 11 million) and its average annual growth higher (0.6 per cent compared 0.3 per cent). Whereas most recently the largest contributor to the UK's population increase was natural change rather than net migration (ONS 2010), in Greece the opposite was true (Kotzamanis and Sofianopoulou 2008). Greece started to experience positive natural population change in 2004, following a period during which deaths exceeded births (Eurostat 2010). Population projections estimate that the UK will grow to over 70 million by 2035, while Greece will remain at 11 million. Although both countries have ageing populations, Greece has a much lower percentage of 0-14 year olds than the UK (14.3 per cent compared to 17.6 per cent), a greater proportion of people aged 65 and over (18.6 per cent as opposed to 16.1 per cent), and a higher old age-dependency-ratio (Eurostat 2010).

A major cause of population ageing is low fertility. In Greece, the total period fertility rate (TPFR) dropped below replacement level in the early 1980s and even further in the 1990s, reaching as low as 1.24 children per woman in 1999, otherwise known as 'lowest-low fertility' (Kohler et al. 2002). In the first decade of the 21st century, its TPFR gradually recovered and stood at 1.51 in 2008 (Eurostat 2010). UK period fertility fell below 2.1 children per woman in the mid-1970s, after which it recovered and stabilised (Pearce et al. 1999). In the 1990s it remained mostly below 1.8 children per woman, dropping to a record low of 1.63 in 2001 (Eurostat 2010). Since then it has increased to 1.96 in 2008, its highest since 1973 (ONS 2010). Cohort fertility does not distinguish the two countries as acutely as period fertility, but women born in the late 1960s in Greece had fewer children, on average, than those born in the UK (Sardon 2006).

Both countries have witnessed an overall decline in the proportion of births to younger women (in their 20s) and a rise in those to older women (in their 30s and 40s). Greek and British 30-34 year olds had the highest fertility rate of any other age group in 2007 (Eurostat 2010). The postponement of childbearing may explain the rise in permanent infertility among recent birth cohorts. In the UK, 21 per cent of women born in 1968 were childless compared to 19 per cent in Greece (Sardon 2006). While the two-child family remains the norm in both countries, there is evidence to show that the UK has a higher proportion of large families (with at least three children) than Greece and a lower proportion of one child families (Frejka et al. 2001; Smallwood 2002; Berrington 2004).

Greece has the lowest proportion of live births outside marriage in Europe (5 per cent compared to 44 per cent in the UK in 2006) (Eurostat 2010). Typically, countries with high levels of cohabitating unions also manifest higher rates of births outside marriage and vice versa (Kiernan 1999), but in Greece both are rare. The UK, on the other hand, has a higher percentage of births outside marriage relative to its levels of cohabitation and an unusually high proportion of women who have children outside any union, in other words pre-partnership formation (Kiernan 1999). In 2002, there were 5.2 marriages per 1000 people in Greece compared to 4.8 per 1000 in the UK (Summerfield and Babb 2004). In the same year, first marriages for both men and women represented close to 90 per cent of all Greek marriages compared to 70 per cent of all UK marriages (Eurostat 2010). In both countries men are older than women when they marry for the first time, and Greek men tend to marry even later than their British counterparts (OECD 2008). Finally, fewer marriages lead to divorce in Greece than in the UK (18.1 per cent versus 42.2 per cent in 2000 respectively) (Sardon 2006).

These demographic trends have developed within the context of specific 'policy climates'. Neither country has a demographic policy per se and while both are concerned over their ageing population, only Greece has formerly stated that its population growth and fertility levels are 'too low' and therefore require government intervention (UN 2007). To a certain extent this position is reflected in the country's family policy agenda through its emphasis on large families. However, Greece lags behind other European countries in terms of its overall 'package' of allowances, benefits and services which assist parents with the costs of raising children (Bradshaw and Finch 2002). While the UK spends about 3.5 per cent of its GDP (well above the OECD-26 average of 2.3 per cent) on family benefits, mostly in the form of cash, Greek public spending in this area is

just over 1 per cent of its GDP (OECD 2010). Interestingly, while the benefit system in the UK is comparatively more supportive of those on low incomes, single parents and families on social assistance (Bradshaw and Finch 2002), child benefits decrease proportionately for families with more than one child, whereas in Greece they increase with each subsequent child.

Policies designed to reconcile work and family lives include those associated with flexible working, leave arrangements and service provision. Relative to Greece, the UK has a high rate of part-time employment and considerable measures in place to allow parents the option of working flexibly (Council of Europe 2010). It also has longer paid maternity (39 weeks at 90 per cent of average earnings for the first six weeks, then a flat-rate payment for the remaining 33 weeks, compared to 17 weeks at 100 per cent wage compensation) and paternity leave (two weeks for all fathers at a flat rate of 90 per cent of average weekly earnings, compared to 2 days paid paternity leave for private sector employees at 100 per cent of wage earnings) (Council of Europe 2010; Papadopoulos 2002). However, both countries have a similar length of unpaid parental leave (around 3-3.5 months per parent per child) (Council of Europe 2010). Although data on childcare provision are unreliable, they show that the proportion of children enrolled in pre-school is much higher for those aged three to the minimum compulsory school age than for those under three in both the UK and Greece (Eurostat 2010). For example, only 5 per cent of Greek children aged 0-3 years were formally enrolled in childcare in 2008, compared to 40 per cent of those aged 3-6 years. In the UK, 31 per cent of children aged 0-3 years were similarly enrolled, and 67 per cent of those aged 3-5 years.

In summary, both countries currently experience population growth and positive natural change, yet face an ageing population and low rather than 'lowest-low' fertility. Both lack a demographic policy. Moreover, women marry and have children at a comparable age, the two-child family remains the norm and an almost equal share of recent female birth cohorts is permanently infertile. However, Greece has a more rapidly ageing population, its population growth is considerably more affected by net migration than by natural population change, and its population is set to grow very slowly in the next 25 years. In addition, its fertility is closer to 'lowest-low' rather than replacement level fertility, it has a larger proportion of one-child families than families with three or more children (despite a family policy agenda favouring the latter), it has significantly fewer extra-marital births and cohabiting unions and a lower divorce rate. Relative to the UK, Greece also has a largely ungenerous family policy package, where family/child allowances and benefits are poorly distributed, where work and family life reconciliation measures are minimal, where leave arrangements are either lengthy and unpaid or short and paid, and where pre-school childcare provision is scarce. As Papadopoulos (1998, p. 54) argues, 'Greek family policy, through its inaction, implicitly nurtures and reproduces the ideological assumption that the family is the main provider of welfare in society.' This process, which he describes as 'Greek familism', is very different from that which characterizes the UK's family policy agenda. The question is: do the demographic and policy differences between the two countries explain the variations in their press coverage of low fertility, or is necessary to also examine their ideological differences?

3. Data and methods

This paper analyses articles published between 1st January 2001 and 31st December 2009 in a range of quality or mid-market national newspapers (as opposed to tabloids) with high circulation figures[1]. British articles were identified using the database Nexis® UK. They were drawn from four of the leading quality dailies (*The Daily Telegraph, The Times, The Guardian* and *The Independent*) and their Sunday editions (*The Sunday Times, The Sunday Telegraph, The Observer* and *The Independent on Sunday*), and the most widely read mid-market paper (*Daily Mail*) and its Sunday equivalent (*The Mail on Sunday*). Greek articles were located using the online archives of the country's top four dailies (*Ta Nea, Kathimerini, Elefetherotypia* and *To Vima*) and their Sunday counterparts (*Kathimerini tis Kyriakis, Kyriakatiki Eleftherotypia* and *To Vima tis Kyriakis*)[2]. Both sets of newspapers were selected on the basis that they reflected views from all sides of the political spectrum in order to capture as broad a range of perspectives as possible. *The Times*, *The Sunday Times*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Sunday Telegraph*, the *Daily Mail*, *The Mail on Sunday*, *Kathimerini* and *Kathimerini tis Kyriakis* represent the centre-right view, while *The Guardian*, *The Observer*, *The Independent*, *The Independent on Sunday*, *To Vima*, *To Vima tis Kyriakis*, *Eleftherotypia*, *Kyriakatiki Eleftherotypia* and *Ta Nea* are positioned at the centre-left. While I did not systematically analyse the degree to which issues were of greater concern to either the left- or right-leaning press, I do point to instances where this was obviously the case.

The search terms used in each set of newspapers were based on expressions commonly used in the two countries to describe low fertility, which generated the highest quantity of relevant articles. In the online archives of the Greek press, for example, 'underfertility' (*ipoyennitikotita*) or 'the demographic issue' (to *demografiko*) produced the best results. Using native rather than generic terms such as these was important in capturing local meanings and nuances about the subject matter. Combining keywords was also effective. In Nexis® UK, for example, 'low fertility', 'fertility decline' or 'below-replacement fertility' returned fewer articles than looking for such keywords as 'population' and 'fertility' jointly. Differences in the search options available in each database meant that certain terms (such as 'birth rate') were only considered when featured in the indexing, in the headline, as major mentions or as three or more mentions, in order to avoid generating irrelevant articles, whereas others (such as 'low fertility') appeared anywhere in the text.

The aim of this paper was to investigate the Greek and British print media debates over low fertility as a domestic rather than an international or regional concern. Consequently, articles dealing with world-wide or pan-European fertility, or specific regions of the UK and Greece, were excluded from the final analysis if they did not fulfil this purpose. Articles concerned with the birth rates of specific age or ethnic groups were also excluded if they did not incorporate a discussion of national fertility rates. Similarly, those discussing a rise in the domestic birth rate without reference to the fact that it had taken place within a broader context of low fertility were not included. While recognising that a 'baby boom' could reduce the perceived threat of low fertility and the kinds of measures that are necessary to deal with it, it was largely irrelevant to the

[1] This information is based on the latest UK and Greek newspaper circulation figures published by ABC (www.abc.org.uk) and EIHEA (www.eihea.gr) respectively.
[2] *Ta Nea* does not have a Sunday edition.

discussion of its causes and consequences. In the final analysis, a total of 380 articles were reviewed (169 British and 211 Greek)[3].

4. Results

Once identified, all articles were arranged chronologically and coded according to their answers to four key questions: 1) Were they positive, neutral or negative about low fertility? 2) Did they discuss any of its causes? 3) Did they mention any of its consequences? 4) Did they suggest any measures or policies to combat or deal with it? The responses provided by each set of newspapers were recorded, counted and then compared. As no significant shifts in perspective were observed over the eight year period – with the exception of the environmental debate (see 'Consequences of low fertility') – this paper does not provide a diachronic analysis but an in-depth, comparative view of the most prevalent causes, consequences and solutions, and the ideological discourses that inform them.

a) Overview of perspectives on low fertility

The most vigorous discussion about low fertility occurred in the Greek press (Table 1). In both countries the position presented by journalists was primarily a negative one, although the intensity of negativity was far greater in Greece. Table 2 compares the distribution of articles that presented 'facts' about the fertility situation of each country and those that focused on its causes, consequences or solutions[4]. While an almost equal share were 'factual', there was a balance in the Greek press between the consequences of 'underfertility' and the measures to deal with it, with slightly less emphasis on the causes. In the British press, however, reasons were discussed more than outcomes and considerably more than solutions. This suggests that having children was generally perceived to be a private affair, relevant only to the prospective parents. Newspapers in the UK were cautious to deliberate the public cost of not reproducing and even more reluctant to suggest to readers whether or not they should reproduce. In fact, the idea that women had a public duty to procreate was roundly denounced, as the reaction to politicians who dared to offer such a perspective testifies[5]. 'To regard having children as a public matter is to believe that the individual is essentially a tool of the state. The production and rearing of children lie at the very core of personal liberty' (Philips 2004, *Daily Mail*). In contrast, the Greek press described low fertility as a calamity for the nation, against which its citizens had a personal responsibility to act.

The language used exposed this distinction further. Despite the existence of terms such as 'low fertility' (*hamili gennitikotita*) or 'low birth rate' (*hamilos deiktis gonimotitas*), below-replacement fertility in the Greek press was referred to as 'underfertility' (*ipoyennitikotita*), and was characterised as the driving force behind the

[3] Readers' letters were treated as articles.

[4] As some articles suggested a combination of reasons, effects and measures, they were counted more than once.

[5] The politicians in question were: David Willetts, the Shadow Secretary of State for Work & Pensions, who, in 2003, said that the key to the pensions crisis and to economic growth was for Britons to have more children, and Patricia Hewitt, Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, who in 2004 suggested that people should reproduce for the social and economic success of the country.

country's 'demographic problem' (*to demografiko provlima*) or 'the demographic issue' (*to demografiko*)[6]. 'Underfertility' was a 'threat' (Sokou 2007, *To Vima*) that 'plagues our country' (Lakasa 2001, *Kathimerini*), while the 'demographic issue' was 'acute' (Kastrioti 2002, *Kathimerini*), potentially 'fatal' (Lazaridis 2005, *Kathimerini*), a 'nightmare' (Drettakis 2006, *Kathimerini*), a 'sickness' (Koutsopoulos 2007, *Eleftherotypia*) and 'one of the most serious national problems' facing Greece (Kritikos 2005, *Eleftherotypia*). The British press did not use such loaded terms, referring to fertility simply as 'low' or 'below-replacement' and describing the situation as the 'baby bust' (Kay 2003, *The Independent*), the 'baby crisis' (Pearson 2006, *Daily Mail*), the 'baby gap' (Hinsliff 2006, *The Observer*), the 'baby shortage' (McDonagh 2007b, *The Sunday Times*), the 'baby drought' (McKie 2004b, *The Observer*), the 'fertility crisis' (Goodchild and Elliott 2006, *The Independent on Sunday*), the 'fertility time bomb' (Stallman 2005, *The Independent*), the 'shrinking birth rate' (Hinsliff 2005, *The Observer*) and the 'plunging birthrate' (Womack 2003, *The Daily Telegraph*). These linguistic differences show that while both were anxious about the issue, the Greek press was much more concerned about its consequences on the survival of the '*ethnos'* ('nation'), speaking explicitly of an 'infirm' or 'dying' nation rather than a country which suffered from a (temporary) lack of 'babies', as the British press described the UK.

	Greek press	**British press**
Total number of articles	211	169
Number of sources	7	10
Articles per source	30.1	16.9
% of articles with:		
Negative attitude	73.5	46.7
Neutral attitude	25.1	43.2
Positive attitude	1.4	10.1

Table 1 Overview of articles in each set of newspapers

	Greek press		**British press**	
	N	%	*N*	%
Causes	81	27	95	44.4
Consequences	98	32.7	78	36.4
Solutions	99	33	25	11.7
Factual	22	7.3	16	7.5

Table 2 Distribution of focus in each set of newspapers

b) Causes of low fertility

Both debates concerning the causes of low fertility were highly gendered, with a disproportionately female focus that few journalists condemned (Williams 2006, *The Guardian*). The absence of the male perspective was, partly, a response to the

[6] The two other main events comprising the 'demographic [issue]' or 'problem' were the rise in life expectancy, which leads to an ageing society, and the increase in the country's immigrant population.

demographic research available, but also a reflection of a broader, well-documented tendency to hold women accountable for the reproduction of a nation-state (Brown and Ferree 2005; Kannaneh 2002; Yuval-Davis 1996). Linked to this was the propensity to describe women's actions as rational and deliberate (Brockes 2006, *The Guardian*; Carvel 2002, *The Guardian*; Doughty 2002, 2006, *Daily Mail*; Doward 2003, *The Observer*; Frean 2001, 2002, *The Times*; Weathers 2001, *Daily Mail*), a characterisation heavily criticised by scholars for failing to take into account the material and psychological constraints influencing childbearing decisions, the social, gender and power relations underpinning them (Browner 2001; Greenhalgh 1995; Petchesky 1984), and evidence that births are often unplanned (Krause 2009) or, at least, the outcome of continuously evolving intentions, judgements and negotiations (Johnson-Hanks 2005).

This emphasis on choice led to depictions of women as either the victims or culprits of society. The Greek press claimed women's desire to reproduce was never in doubt. Instead the problem was that a range of socio-economic and policy conditions were limiting their ability to have children early and in abundance. The British press, assumed that excessive choice, especially among the professional, white, middle classes, was encouraging women to postpone motherhood until it was 'too late' (Frean 2003, *The Times*). Indeed, the top five 'causes' (Table 3) mentioned by each set of newspapers suggest that in Greece low fertility was perceived to be, above all, a product of societal constraints, while in the UK it was mainly due to individuals' (i.e. women's) self-imposed restrictions. Given Greece's troubled economy and that low fertility is often used as a 'tool' to discuss other problems (Stark and Kohler 2004), issues such as unemployment, financial difficulties, the structure of the labour market and the lack of government policies were at the forefront of media scrutiny. British newspapers' intense focus on the behaviour of (female) individuals, however, offers the opposite perspective, portraying the ideology of childbearing as a strictly private affair.

	Greek press	**British press**
1.	Rise in unemployment	Postponement of childbearing
2.	Cost of childrearing	Rise in female education & labour force participation
3.	Structure of labour market	Rise in infertility
4.	Lack of government help for families	Cost of buying a house & cost of childrearing
5.	Reduction in marriage rate & rise in divorce rate	Increased difficulty of forming a relationship & balancing work and family life

Table 3 Top five causes of low fertility by country.

Nevertheless, anxiety over changing female aspirations and roles was a feature of both sets of newspapers. The Greek press argued that 'female equality' and growing 'individualism' had triggered a crisis in the institution of marriage and a rise in the divorce rate (Anon 2006, *Kathimerini*; Karanatsi 2008, *Kathimerini*). While the British press suggested that relationships in general had suffered, it also blamed women's novel ambitions and pursuits on the difficulties they faced attempting to balance their work and family lives. This issue was not prioritised by Greek newspapers, perhaps because of the

lower female labour force participation rate in Greece compared to the UK, especially among mothers (Symeonidou 2000).

In addition to those referred to in Table 3, two further causes highlight the differences between the Greek and British press: abortion and voluntary childlessness, respectively. Greece has very low rates of 'modern' contraceptive use relative to other European countries (only 2-3 per cent of women of reproductive age use the pill and 4-10 per cent the IUD), high rates of abortions (estimated to be up to 300,000 per year, most of which are unregistered) and one of the least extensive family planning services in Europe (Georges 1996; Paxson 2002; Halkias 2004; Ioannidi-Kapolou 2004; Tountas et al. 2004; Eurostat 2010). Six per cent of articles referred to the high number of women undergoing pregnancy termination in Greece, making it the sixth most recurring cause of 'underfertility'. Yet instead of a well-rounded discussion of the reasons behind Greeks' low use of reliable contraception and the consequences for women who find themselves unintentionally pregnant as a result, abortions were discussed using the same ideological framework as the leading causes in the debate: either as the product of insurmountable societal constraints or the result of rising levels of individualism.

With abortion occupying a far less central role (only 2 per cent of articles discussed the issue), the sixth most common reason cited for low fertility in the British press was voluntary childlessness. Although a greater proportion of women born in the UK in the 1950s and 1960s remained childless compared to any previous birth cohorts (Sigle-Rushton 2008), the percentage of those who intended not to have children is unknown (Houseknecht 1987). The British print media's spotlight on the 'childfree' reveals the contentious nature of the issue. On the one hand, it was a cause for moral panic, a threat to the social order and a sign of the excesses of individualism and egalitarianism. On the other, it was a symbol and a celebration of the freedom to choose whether or not to mother. In contrast, approximately five per cent of articles in the Greek print media discussed involuntary childlessness, but only one per cent acknowledged the prospect of women choosing not to have children. While this may, in part, mirror differences in actual trends between the two countries (Symeonidou 2000), it is also important to stress that motherhood is central to the 'completion' of a woman in contemporary Greek society, while voluntary childlessness is a contravention of the rules surrounding responsible female behaviour as well as of the principle that motherhood is a moral and social duty (Georgiadis 2006; Halkias 2004; Paxson 2004).

c) <u>Consequences of low fertility</u>

The leading consequence identified in both countries was the ageing of their population. This issue was covered by both right- and left-leaning newspapers and perceived negatively overall. An ageing population was linked to longer working hours and higher taxes (Hale 2002, *Daily Mail*; Georgakis 2004, *Ta Nea*), excessive pressure on the healthcare, pensions and social welfare systems (Shriver 2005, *The Guardian*; Anon 2006, *Kathimerini*), an increasing retirement age (Carvel 2001, *The Guardian*; Anon 2007, *Eleftherotypia*) and rising economic problems due to a growing proportion of savers and non-risk-takers (the old) as opposed to consumers and entrepreneurs (the young) (McKie 2004a, *The Observer*; Papaioannou 2002, *To Vima*). Solutions and attitudes to what one British newspaper described as the 'demographic time-bomb' (Kay

2003, *The Independent*) ranged from encouraging women to have more children (McDonagh 2007a, *The Times*; Georgakis 2004, *Ta Nea*) to increasing the rate of immigration (Romaiou 2003, *To Vima*; Searjeant 2003, *The Times*).

	Greek press	British press
1.	Ageing society	Ageing society
2.	Population decline	Environmental benefits
3.	School closures & fewer Greek pupils	Population decline
4.	Economic under-development	Economic under-development
5.	Smaller and less powerful Armed Forces	School closures & changes to the family unit

Table 4 Top five of consequences of low fertility by country.

In both sets of newspapers, population decline was another important result mentioned but it was of greater concern to the Greek press. While Greece has not yet been affected by negative population growth[7], articles focused on the surplus in the number of deaths over births among Greeks. 'In half a century Greece will disappear!' exclaimed *Eleftherotypia* (Neta 2001). 'Greeks are getting older (and soon, fewer),' proclaimed *To Vima* (Stamboglis 2008) in response to a report by Eurostat that the country's population is expected to fall by 2060. 'The threat of our self disappearance is nightmarish, except that it is real,' said *To Vima* (Papathemelis 2007). The British press only occasionally raised concerns over the fate of the 'British-born' as opposed to the 'foreign-born' population (Johnston 2007, *The Daily Telegraph;* McKie 2004a, *The Observer*; Shriver 2005, *The Guardian*; Craig 2007, *The Sunday Telegraph*). Instead, their main focus was the decline of the middle classes. 'Overall population decline is only being prevented by immigration and a higher birth rate among non-graduate women' (Leapman 2007, *The Sunday Telegraph*); 'The middle classes are letting us down: they must breed more' (Clark 2004, *The Sunday Telegraph*); 'Nowhere is the population decline more marked than among the beleaguered middle classes … they prefer not to reproduce but retreat inside often childless lairs' (Letts 2003, *Daily Mail*). Fertility differences by social class – and educational qualifications – have indeed been identified by demographers in the UK (Buxton et al. 2005; Haines 1989). However, the press simplified and distorted a complex and inconclusive relationship (Rendall and Smallwood 2003; Berrington 2004).

In discussing population decline both sets of newspapers proposed who is responsible for reproducing, not only biologically but also in terms of perpetuating the language, culture, beliefs and norms of their nation (Brown and Ferree 2005). In Greek newspapers, this pronatalist objective was structured along racial rather than class lines

[7] In 2008, the population of Greece grew to just over 11 million. However, the latest figures reveal that deaths were more numerous than births between 1998 and 2003 (Eurostat 2009). Although there has been natural population change since (Eurostat 2009), 17.4 per cent of the total number of births between 2004 and 2008 was due to immigrants (Drettakis 2010). In contrast, the population of the United Kingdom was just over 61 million in 2008 (ONS 2009). Although net migration had been the main driver of population change between 1999 and 2008, natural population change was the leading contributor to population growth until mid-1999, while accounting for over 50 per cent of it in 2008 (ONS 2009).

and points to the dominance of an 'ethno-nationalist' vision of Greece, which characterises the nation as a 'homogeneous national community with a shared ancestry and, thus, a shared race/ethnicity, language and religion' (King 2002, p.368). 'Underfertility,' Greek newspapers claimed, was weakening the country both physically and intellectually, firstly by interfering with its ability to defend itself against its more populous neighbours (namely Turkey and Albania) and secondly, by leading to dwindling numbers of Greek schools and Greek school children. In contrast, the British debate promoted a vision of the nation closer to what King (2002) describes as 'civic/cultural nationalist', in which citizens of all ethnic backgrounds are embraced as long as they adhere to the principles of a liberal democratic culture.

Entirely absent from the Greek discussion was the impact of low fertility on the environment. British newspapers expressed a clear interest in the subject. In part, this was due to the determined media campaigning of the 'Optimum Population Trust' (OPT), a charity and think-tank concerned with the effects of population growth on the environment. However, British press interest in the 'green debate' (Williams 2009, *The Guardian*) can also be explained by reports that the UK population was growing at an unexpected pace and would reach 70 million by 2029 (Travis 2009, *The Guardian*). In accordance with the idea that reproduction is a private affair, the majority of articles in the British press were against the argument that, 'families should restrict themselves to having a maximum of two children' (Vidal 2007, *The Guardian*) for the good of the environment. Critics of the OPT maintained that only a higher birth rate could solve the problems caused by Britain's ageing population and the pensions crisis that would inevitably follow (Balakrishnan 2007, *The Guardian*). In addition, they pointed out the irony of targeting the environmental argument at the middle classes who were already experiencing a low fertility rate (McDonagh 2007a, *The Times*).

'We need babies, not Greens,' exclaimed a headline in *The Sunday Times* (Bowditch 2007). 'Mind your own reproducing business,' stated *The Independent* (Lawson 2007). 'The point … is that individual families have the number of children they want to have for the most personal and local of reasons … A period of silence from the population control freaks would now be most welcome,' argued *The Sunday Times* (Lawson 2009). Those in favour of population control for the benefit of the environment claimed that this would lead to a reduction in CO_2 emissions, the end of global warming, water shortages and wars over oil, as well as a halt in the extinction of animal species (Cooper 2006, *The Independent*). Others took a more impartial view (Jowitt 2007, *The Observer*).

The environmental consequences of individuals' reproductive behaviours have not been widely examined by scholars (Murtaugh and Schlax 2009) and the relationship between environmental degradation and human population size is far from straightforward (Harte 2007). The presence of the climate change issue in the British press, and its absence in the Greek, revealed more than a difference in concern over the state of the environment. It revealed a difference in perception over their respective country's position on the world stage. The UK's economically, politically and demographically superior position, gave its media the confidence to invite the public to contemplate the idea of fewer Britons, mainly out of a moral duty to such causes as the environment (Anon, *The Times* 2009). Greece's relative insecurity on the economic and political world stage, as well as its dwindling population, inevitably led its media to focus

on more immediate, national concerns, rather than taking into consideration a global agenda.

d) Solutions to low fertility

Contrary to a number of demographic studies (Gauthier 2007; Gauthier and Philipov 2008), the Greek and British press assumed that pronatalist and family-friendly policies would be effective in increasing fertility, once implemented. *The Guardian*, for example, asserted that a rise in the birth rate of England and Wales to 1.8 children per woman, its highest point in over ten years, 'may reflect Blair policies' (Boseley 2006, *The Guardian*). Both debates over solutions to low fertility reflected each country's dominant 'policy climate' and 'demographic experience'. The British print media tended to agree with the view that fertility levels were 'satisfactory' and that 'no intervention' was necessary to alter them (UN 2007), perhaps because the UK's birth rate had been rising steadily since 2001. Dealing with low fertility was, therefore, part of a broader plan to improve the lives of families in general. In contrast, the majority of the Greek press agreed with the government that fertility was 'too low' and that pronatalist policies were needed (UN 2007). In particular, it favoured a strategy that would increase benefits to large families[8].

In the UK, schemes providing assistance (especially financial) to large families were considered explicitly pronatalist and anti-feminist, encouraging women to 'stay at home' (Ashley 2003, *The Guardian*) and 'breed for the good of the state' (Phillips 2004, *Daily Mail*). They were also opposed on the grounds that they were an infringement on the rights of individuals to have as many children as they pleased. 'The latest wheeze to boost the birthrate by giving cash for babies is very bad news,' reported *The Guardian* in response to an Australian 'baby bonus' scheme (Burden 2004). 'Paying people to have babies is a cack-handed, retrograde, imperialist policy,' it argued. Despite this outlook, the British government's 'laissez-faire' approach was sometimes questioned, possibly due to contemporary appeals by civil society organisations and politicians in favour of action (Dixon and Margo 2006; Willetts 2003). 'Accommodating personal choice, the principle behind rejecting pro-family policy, is no longer expanding but limiting the freedoms of families' (de Waal 2005, *The Observer*). Intense focus was placed on measures being put into effect by the French government (Womack 2003, *The Daily Telegraph*; de Waal 2005, *The Observer*; Allen 2005, *Daily Mail*). 'Why French women are better off,' argued *The Guardian* (Ashley 2003) in reaction to a scheme to give families in France €800 per month upon the birth of their first child and a further €235 per month if one parent stayed at home for the first six months of the child's life. 'Pay us to be mothers,' stated the *Sunday Times* (Craig 2005), following news that French women would get the equivalent of £500 a month to have a third child if they stopped working for a year.

[8] Protected by the Constitution and the Supreme Confederation of Multi-Child Parents of Greece (A.S.P.E.), families with four children or more, otherwise known as the polyteknoi ('multi-child families'), received numerous government benefits (for example, a lifetime pension for the mother and savings on their electricity, water and council tax bills). In 2002 the Greek Conservative Party, *Nea Demokratia*, had made a pre-election pledge to extend the benefits entitled to the polyteknoi to those with just three children ('*triteknoi*'). However it had failed to deliver fully on its promises once in power and, as a result, was subject to widespread criticism in the newspapers (Moutousi et al. 2005; Drettakis 2006, *Eleftherotypia*).

	Greek press	British press
1.	Increase support for large families	Increase family-friendly policies in general
2.	Increase family-friendly policies in general	Bridge gap between desired and actual fertility
3.	Reduce youth unemployment and make labour market more flexible for working parents	Increase support for large families
4.	Implement demographic policy & develop Greek economy	Implement demographic policy & provide free infertility treatment
5.	Bridge gap between desired and actual fertility	Make labour market more flexible for working parents

Table 5 Top five solutions to low fertility by country.

Greek newspapers were generally in favour of government intervention but complained that Greece offered some of the lowest and most 'meagre' family benefits in Europe (Tsoulea 2004, *Ta Nea*). One journalist commented that 'a government which stands next to the family is not necessarily a chauvinist government-nurturer, but simply an active government' (Karaiskaki 2006, *Kathimerini*). The nationalist discourse underpinning measures to support large families was not an issue, since childbearing was considered above all a national duty. What was disputed, however, was how this duty ought to be fulfilled. According to the dominant view, the best way to solve the 'demographic problem' was by encouraging people to have as many children as possible, but a minority believed it was by producing fewer, better citizens. 'To have many children does not constitute a national deed, not even a deed. A national deed is to produce good citizens and this is achieved both by those with many children and by those with few. In addition, there is no need to receive a reward for this because it is amongst our obligations' (Lianos 2003, *To Vima*).

5. Discussion and conclusion

A number of the similarities and differences between the two sets of news sources are worth emphasising. Both the Greek and British press expressed concern over their country's birth rate, presenting a broadly pronatalist message, and both suggested that women were principally responsible for low fertility, with the majority of the blame falling on educated, female professionals. Newspapers warned that failing to reproduce would lead to a decrepit, financial weak society and the loss of its most valued members. However, according to the Greek press, the roots of low fertility were chiefly socio-economic and policy-grounded while according to the British, they were focused on the individual. 'Underfertility' was worrying because it threatened the disappearance of Greece as an ethnically-homogeneous nation, while the UK's 'baby shortage' (McDonagh 2007b, *The Sunday Times*) signalled the prospect of a society less driven by middle class values. In general, while both sets agreed that measures to increase the number of births in each country had to be implemented within a broader pro-family policy agenda or a dedicated demographic policy in order to help bridge the gap between

people's desired and actual fertility, Greek newspapers urged readers to think of childbearing as a national obligation and encouraged them to have large families. In contrast, British newspapers promoted the view that reproduction is ultimately a private choice, which should be respected by supporting all types of families, including the 'childfree'. They also provided an alternative to the pronatalist narrative by prompting their readers to reflect on the idea that it was their moral duty to consider not having many children in order to benefit the environment.

In both countries, a blend of demographic, policy and ideological factors shaped the print media's debate over low fertility. However, resistance to the dominant discourses that emerged from these factors was manifest. This was driven by competing visions of the nation, gender, motherhood and the person. For example, in the British press those against the idea of imposing a limit on births on the basis of infringing on personal freedoms, were sometimes criticised for failing to consider the negative side to the ideology of reproduction as a personal choice. In the Greek press, the government's pronatalist and pro-large family policy agenda was also occasionally condemned for failing to respect definitions of 'good' motherhood based on the 'quality' rather than the 'quantity' of children.

Above all, this study has shown that the issue of low fertility matters to journalists. Yet the information that demographers try to communicate to the public via the press is often lost in translation due to differences in the motivations, interests, target audiences, resources, editorial and professional standards between demographers and journalists (Teitelbaum 2004). While a number of practical steps (e.g. changing the prose, length and quality of press releases) can improve communication between the two sets of professionals (Teitelbaum 2004), so too can awareness and understanding of the ideological, political, cultural and socioeconomic climates in which the press frames and interprets demographic reports.

News sources are one of the key architects and distributors of knowledge and meaning about demographic trends and patterns. Although media consumers are aware of the socially constructed nature of news stories (Fowler 1991; Misiti 2000) and can resist the images and messages that are being conveyed to them, they not only turn to these narratives as a source of information but also allow them, to a certain extent, to inform their ideas about a subject, to shape their identities and even to alter their behaviours (Barber and Axinn 2004; McIntosh and Blalock 2005). While the media cannot be relied upon to inform scholars and policymakers of people's lived realities, they can explain the broader contexts in which those realities are shaped and experienced. On this basis, they warrant further analysis and attention. Future studies could also investigate cross-cultural differences in the degree to which population scientists engage with the media more generally and the way they do so. Are demographers willing to share their views with journalists? How open are the lines of communication between them? To what extent do journalists seek scientific knowledge and do they tend to treat it with respect or scepticism? Are demographers more desirable than politicians as experts on population? The answers to these questions could further contribute to the task of explaining the ways in which the media deals with fertility in different countries.

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the support of the Economic and Social Research Council for providing me with the funding to carry out the research on which this paper is based. I want to thank Dr Ernestina Coast for her guidance, as well as Dr Sara Randall and Professor Nanneke Redclift for theirs, on earlier versions of this paper. I am also grateful to the two anonymous reviewers for their constructive feedback, as well as to Professor Charles Hirschman and Professor Mary C. Brinton for their input during the presentation of a synopsis of this paper at the 2010 Annual Meeting of the Population Association of America in Dallas, Texas. Finally, thanks to N. Paleocrassas for his role in editing the final draft.

References

Barber, S. J. & Axinn, G. W. (2004). New Ideas and Fertility Limitation: The role of mass media. *Journal of Marriage and Family* 66(December): 1180-1200.

Berrington, A. (2004). Perpetual postponers? Women's, men's and couples' fertility intentions and subsequent fertility behaviour. *Population Trends* 117: 9-19.

Bird, E. (2010). Anthropological engagement with news media. *Anthropology News* 51(4): 5-9.

Bradshaw, J. & Finch, N. (2002). A comparison of benefits in 22 countries. Research Report No. 174. Department of Work and Pensions. United Kingdom.

Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2006). Using qualitative thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 3: 77-101.

Browner, C. H. (2000). Situating women's reproductive activities. *American Anthropologist* 102(4): 773-788.

Buxton, J., Clarke., L., Grundy, E., & Marshall, E. C. (2005). The long shadow of childhood: Associations between parental social class and own social class, educational attainment and timing of first births; results from the ONS Longitudinal Study. *Population Trends* 121(Autumn): 17-26.

Council of Europe. (2010). The Council of Europe Family Policy Database. Available at: http://www.coe.int/t/dg3/familypolicy/Database/default_en.asp

Cowan, K. J. (1990). *Dance and the body politic in Northern Greece* Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey.

Dixon, M., &Margo, J. (2006). *Population Politics*. London: IPPR.

Eurostat. (2010). Statistics database. European Commission. Available at: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/statistics/search_database

Fowler, R. (1991). *Language in the news: Discourse and ideology in the press*. London and New York: Routledge.

Frejka, T., Kingkade, W.W., Calot, G., Sardon, J.P., & Confesson, A. (2001). Cohort childlessness and parity in low fertility countries. European Population Conference 2001, Helsinki, Finland 7-9 June 2001.

Gauthier, A. H. (2007). The impact of family policies on fertility in industrialized countries: A review of the literature. *Population Research and Policy Review* 26: 323-346.

Gauthier, A. H. & Philipov, D. (2008). Can policies enhance fertility? *Vienna Yearbook of Population Research* (Special Issue): 1-177.

Georges, E. (1996). Abortion policy and practice in Greece. *Social Science and Medicine* 42(4): 509-519.

Georgiadis, K. (2006). *Understanding low fertility in Athens and London: a comparative ethnographic study*. PhD Thesis. London: University of London.

Ginsburg, F. & Rapp, R. (1991). The politics of reproduction. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 20: 311-343.

Greenhalgh, S. (1995). *Situating fertility: Anthropology and demographic Inquiry*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hadfield, L., Rudoe, N., & Sanderson-Mann, J. (2007). Motherhood, choice and the British media: A time to reflect. *Gender and Education* 19(2): 255-263.

Haines, R. M. (1989). Social class differentials during fertility decline: England and Wales revisited. *Population Studies* 43(2): 305-323.

Halkias, A. (2004). *The empty cradle of democracy: Sex, abortion, and nationalism in modern Greece*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Harte, J. (2007). Human population as a dynamic factor in environmental degradation. *Population and Environment* 28: 223-236.

Houseknecht, K. S. (1987). Voluntary childlessness. In Sussman, M. B. & Steinmetz, S. (Eds) *Handbook of marriage and the family* (pp. 369-395). New York: Plenum.

Ioannidi-Kapolou, E. (2004). Use of contraception and abortion in Greece: A review. *Reproductive Health Matters* 12(24 Supplement): 174-183.

Johnson-Hanks, J. (2006). On the politics and practice of Muslim fertility. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 20(1): 12-30.

Johnson-Hanks, J. (2005). When the future decides: Uncertainty and intentional action in contemporary Cameroon. *Current Anthropology* 46(2): 363-385.

Johnston, D., & Swanson D. H. (2003). Invisible mothers: A content analysis of motherhood ideologies and myths in magazines. *Sex Roles* 49(1/2): 21-33.

Kannaneh, A. R. (2002). *Birthing the nation: Strategies of Palestinian women in Israel*. Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press.

Kiernan, K. (1999). Childbearing outside marriage in Western Europe. *Population Trends* 98: 1320.

King, L. (2002). Demographic trends, pronatalism, and nationalist ideologies in the late twentieth century. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 25(3): 367-389.

Kligman, G. (1998). *The politics of duplicity: controlling reproduction in Ceausescu's Romania*. Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press.

Kohler, H-P., Billari, F. C. & Ortega, J. A. (2002). The emergence of lowest-low fertility in Europe during the 1990s. *Population and Development Review* 28(4): 641-680.

Kotzamanis, B. and Sofianopoulou, K. (2008). The demography of EU member states: trends and predictions [In Greek]. *Demo News* 2 (November- December): 1-6.

Krause, E. (2009). 'They just happened': The curious case of the unplanned baby and the 'end' of rationality. Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association. Philadelphia, 2-6 December.

Krause, E. & Marchesi, M. (2007). Fertility politics as "social viagra": Reproducing boundaries, social cohesion, and modernity in Italy. *American Anthropologist* 109(2): 350-362.

Macfarlane, A. (1978). *The origins of English individualism* Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
McIntosh, J., & Blalock, S.J. (2005). Effects of media coverage of Women's Health Initiative study on attitudes and behavior of women receiving hormone replacement therapy. *American Journal of Health-System Pharmacy* 62(1): 69-74.
Misiti, M. (2000). Public opinion and the role of the media. European Observatory on Family Matters Seminar on Low fertility, families and public policies, Sevilla, Spain.
Murtaugh, P.A., & Schlax, M.G. (2009). *Reproduction and the carbon legacies of individuals* 19: 14-20.
OECD. (2008). Family database. SF8: Marriage and divorce rates. OECD – Social Policy Division - Directorate of Employment, Labour and Social Affairs
OECD. (2010). Family policy database. Available at: www.oecd.org/els/social/family/database
ONS. (2010). UK snapshot. Available at: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/glance/uk20snapshots.asp
Papadopoulos, T. (2002). Family Policy In Greece: National Informant's Questionnaire. Social Policy Research Unit. University of York.
Paxson, H. (2002). 'Rationalising sex: family planning and the making of modern lovers in urban Greece.' *American Ethnologist* 29(2): 307-334.
Paxson, H. (2004). *Making modern mothers: Ethics and family planning in urban Greece*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press.
Pearce, D., Giambattista, C., & Aarno, L. (1999). Changes in fertility and family size in Europe. *Population Trends* 95: 3340.
Petchesky, P. R. (1984). *Abortion and woman's choice: The state, sexuality, and reproductive freedom*. Boston: Northeastern University Press.
Rendall, S. M., & Smallwood, S. (2003). Higher qualifications, first-birth timing and further childbearing in England and Wales. *Population Trends* 111(18-26).
Sardon, J. (2006). Recent demographic trends in the developed countries. *Population* (English edition) 61(3): 197-266.
Sass, E. (2004). Reconstructing the image of the voluntarily childfree: an ethnographic exploration of media representation and the childless by choice. MA Thesis: School of Mass Communications, College of Arts and Sciences, University of South Florida.
Sigle-Rushton, W. (2008). England and Wales: Stable fertility and pronounced social status differences. *Demographic Research* 19: 455-501.
Smallwood, S. (2002). New estimates of trends in births by birth order in England and Wales. *Population Trends* 108: 32-48.
Stark, L., & Kohler, H-P. (2002). The debate over low fertility in the popular press: a cross-national comparison, 1998-1999. *Population Research and Policy Review* 21: 535-574.
Stark, L., & Kohler, H-P. (2004). The popular debate about low fertility: an analysis of the German press, 1993-2001. *European Journal of Population* 20: 293-321.
Summerfield, C. & Babb, P. (2004). *Social Trends 34*. London: TSO.
Teitelbaum, S. M. (1987). The fear of population decline. *Population Today* 15(3): 6-8.
Teitelbaum, S. M. (2004). The media marketplace for garbled demography. *Population and Development Review* 30(2): 317-327.

Tountas, Y. Dimitrakaki, C., Antoniou, A., Boulamatsis, D., Creatsas, G. (2004). ‘Attitudes and behavior towards contraception among Greek women during reproductive age: a country-wide survey.’ European *Journal of Obsetrics and Gynecology* 116: 190-195.

UN. (2007). *World Population Policies*. New York: United Nations.

Wilmoth, J.R. & Ball, P. (1992). The population debate in American popular magazines, 1946-90. *Population and Development Review* 18 (4): 631-667.

Willetts, D. (2003). *Old Europe? Demographic Change and Pension Reform*. London: Centre for European Reform.

Yuval-Davis, N. (1996). Women and the biological reproduction of the nation. *Women's Studies International Forum* 19(1/2): 17-24.

Newspaper articles

Allen, P. (2005). Mothers' £6500 bonus for having a third baby. *Daily Mail* 23/09/2005.

Anon (2006). The weight of family burdens too heavy for the young to lift. *Kathimerini* 28/05/2006.

Anon (2007). Opinions. *Eleftherotypia* 27/11/2007.

Anon. (2009). Population growth poses green challenge. *The Times* 31/08/2009.

Ashley, J. (2003). Why French women are better off: Feminists shouldn't be riled by financial incentives for mothers. *The Guardian* 01/05/2003.

Balakrishnan, A. (2007). Does Britain need more babies? *The Guardian* 09/06/2007.

Boseley, S. (2006). Birth rate increase may reflect Blair policies, says expert. *The Guardian* 19/05/2006.

Bowditch, G. (2007). We need babies, not greens. *The Sunday Times* 13/05/2007.

Brockes, E. (2006). The power of one: Spoilt, self-centred and isolated - the product of a selfish society. The one-child family is on the rise, but still these stereotypes persist. Why? Emma Brockes investigates - and reflects on her own experiences as an only child. *The Guardian* 22/07/2006.

Burden, H. (2004). Lie back and think of the bank balance: The latest wheeze to boost the birthrate by giving cash for babies is very bad news. *The Guardian* 24/05/2004.

Carvel, J. (2001). Britain ages as pregnancies fall: Retirement at 72 needed to keep workforce balance. *The Guardian* 23/03/2001.

Carvel, J. (2002). Modern women choosing to have smaller families. *The Guardian* 17/05/2002.

Clark, R. (2004). The middle classes are letting us down: They must breed more. *The Sunday Telegraph* 14/11/2004.

Cooper, T. (2006). A lower birth rate means less pollution; Global Warming debate. *The Independent* 30/03/2006.

Craig, A. (2005). Pay us to be mothers. *Sunday Times* 25/09/2005.

Craig, O. (2007). 'We just don't want to have a family': Britain's population is booming as migrant women give birth here - but increasingly British couples are choosing to remain childless. *The Sunday Telegraph* 16/12/2007.

de Waal, A. (2005). Prosperity is a family affair: The government is happy to promote the welfare of children but is failing to support their parents. *The Observer* 26/06/2005.

Doughty, S. (2006). More women delay first baby until their 40s. *Daily Mail* 24/02/2006.

Doughty, S. (2002). The childless choice: One in five women of 40 has not had a baby. *Daily Mail* 28/06/2002.

Doward, J. (2003). Wanted: a baby boom. With nearly one woman in four not having any children, the population decline of Britain will start falling after 2040 - with disastrous consequences. *The Observer* 14/12/2003.

Drettakis, M. (2006). Families with three children, can become *polyteknes* at a small cost [In Greek]. *Kathimerini* 05/03/2006.

Drettakis, M. (2006). Demographic nightmare [In Greek]. *Eleftherotypia* 26/11/2006.

Frean, A. (2001). Birthrate slumps to the lowest on record. *The Times* 11/05/2001.

Frean, A. (2002). Birthrate at record low as women opt for jobs. *The Times* 17/05/2002.

Frean, A. (2003). Women pining for babies they leave too late. *The Times* 27/06/2003.

Georgakis, I. (2004). Underfertility: A 'torpedo' for Insurance [in Greek]. *Ta Nea* 22/01/2004.

Goodchild, S., & Elliott, F. (2006). The fertility trap - The £500,000 question: should you have a baby while young, or gamble with your body clock - and risk losing? A new study shows that the choice faced by women is increasingly stark: a family or a career? *The Independent on Sunday* 19/02/2006.

Hale, B. (2002). The under-30s blues: They can't buy a home and will be worse off than their parents. *Daily Mail* 08/07/2002.

Hinsliff, G. (2005). Falling birth rate threatens closure of primary schools: 'Bridget Jones' attitudes lead to 50,000 drop in potential pupils. *The Observer* 12/06/2005.

Hinsliff, G. (2006). Overwork triggers £11 billion baby crisis: Career pressure limits women's choices. 'Baby gap' rises to 90,000 births a year. *The Observer* 19/02/2006.

Johnston, P. (2007). One in four babies is born to a foreign parent. *The Daily Telegraph* 23/08/2007.

Jowitt, J. (2007). Three's. *The Observer* 11/11/2007.

Karaiskaki, T. (2006). And 1, and 2, and 3, and 4 children ... [In Greek]. *Kathimerini* 17/03/2006.

Karanatsi, E. (2008). A country full of … wrinkles [In Greek]. *Kathimerini* 13/05/2008.

Kastrioti, D. (2002). Battles over distribution [In Greek]). *Kathimerini* 20/03/2002.

Kathimerini (2006). The ageing of the population undermines the economy [In Greek]. *Kathimerini* 13/10/2006.

Kay, W. (2003). Will families suffer from a demographic time-bomb? It will not be long before the burden of the number of over-60s falls. *The Independent* 27/09/2003.

Koutsopoulos, K. (2007). The gradual decline of the population has begun [In Greek]. *Eleftherotypia* 17/02/2007.

Kritikos, P. (2005). The demographic [issue] beyond half-measures and fake measures [In Greek]. *Eleftherotypia* 05/07/2005.

Lakasa, A. (2001). Pupils 'the victims' of the system [In Greek]. *Kathimerini* 21/06/2001.

Lawson, D. (2007). A retort to the population control freaks. *The Independent* 06/11/2007.

Lawson, D. (2009). Enough, population doom merchants. *The Sunday Times* 29/03/2009.

Lazaridis, E. I. (2005). Solutions to the very important demographic problem [In Greek]. *Kathimerini* 08/01/2005.

Leapman, B. (2007). Third of graduate women will be childless. *The SundayTelegraph* 22/04/2007.

Letts, Q. (2003). Best of luck, my little one. *Daily Mail* 01/02/2003.

Lianos, T. P. (2003). The privileges of the *polyteknoi* [In Greek]. *To Vima* 26/01/2003.

McDonagh, M. (2007a). The cry should go up in Europe: More babies, please. *The Times* 13/07/2007.

McDonagh, M. (2007b). Pricing children out of existence. *The Sunday Times* 29/07/2007.

McKie, R. (2004a). Special Report: The Age Revolution: Living with Britain's population timebomb. *The Observer* 25/01/2004.

McKie, R. (2004b). Recognise this? We need more of them: From China to Italy to India - the world is facing a baby drought. What will falling numbers mean for the globe? *The Observer* 26/09/2004.

Neta, V. (2001). Within the century Greece will disappear!.. [In Greek]. *Eleftherotypia* 24/04/2001.

Papaioannou, G. (2002). Holes in our piggy banks [In Greek]. *To Vima* 04/08/2002.

Papathemelis, S. (2007). A demographic policy is a question of initiatives [In Greek]. *To Vima* 04/02/2007.

Pearson, A. (2006). Oh baby, this IS a crisis. *Daily Mail* 22/02/2006.

Phillips, M. (2004). Breed for the good of the state. *Daily Mail* 22/09/2004.

Romaiou, G. (2003). Greeks ... the foreigners. *To Vima* 26/10/2003.

Searjeant, G. (2003). People are good for us - in moderation. *The Times* 28/02/2003.

Shriver, L. (2005). No kids please, we're selfish: The population is shrinking, but why should I care, says Lionel Shriver. My life is far too interesting to spoil it with children. *The Guardian* 17/09/2005.

Sokou, K. (2007). Underfertility threatens Greece [In Greek]. *To Vima* 06/03/2007.

Stallman, R. (2005). Letter: Why the child-free are unhappy. *The Independent* 04/07/2005.

Stamboglis, D. (2008). The Greeks are getting older (and soon, fewer) [In Greek]. *To Vima* 27/08/2008.

Travis, A. (2009). UK population growth to 70 million challenged. *The Guardian* 21/10/2009.

Tsoulea, R. (2004). Births are not worth it [In Greek]. *Ta Nea* 13/03/2004.

Vidal, J. (2007). UK needs a two-child limit, says population report. *The Guardian* 11/07/2007

Weathers, H. (2001). Singles: Why women are leaving it too late to find a man. *Daily Mail* 15/01/2001.

Williams, Z. (2006). Men have babies too. *The Guardian* 21/02/2006.

Williams, Z. (2009). To breed or not to breed: Attenborough is probably right about population growth. But, as so often, we'll deal with it later. *The Guardian* 15/04/2009.

Womack, S. (2003). Have three babies to sustain the population. *The Daily Telegraph* 12/12/2003.