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## FAMILY AND LABOUR IN CORFU MANUFACTURING, 1920–1944

*Dimitrios Kopanas*

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**ABSTRACT:** This article concentrates on the relation between labour and family in the secondary sector of production of Corfu. It argues that family was crucial in forming the main characteristics of the labour force. The familial division of labour according to gender and age is examined not only as a decisive determinant in the categorisation of work positions as skilled and unskilled but also as a factor that defined the temporality or permanence of labour. It also focuses on the role of local and family networks and their effect on the labour market. These questions, thoroughly discussed by labour historians, will be applied to the case of Corfu, in an effort to complete the Greek paradigm.

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Over the last 30 years, research has repeatedly questioned the significance of the sole male breadwinner family and started focusing on a workforce that had been neglected, namely female and juvenile family members. Their participation in raising family income, once downplayed, has become a key subject in understanding labour relations since the emergence of capitalism.<sup>1</sup>

Social and economic history have systematically discussed the role of the family not only as a primary provider of capital and labour to commercial firms and industries but also as an institution whose members are subordinate to the social relations within it. Regarding Greece, the family constituted the core of Greek economy and business, at least since the eighteenth century.<sup>2</sup> The family

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<sup>1</sup> Angélique Janssens, "The Rise and Decline of the Male Breadwinner Family? An Overview of the Debate", in "The Rise and Decline of the Male Breadwinner Family?", ed. Angélique Janssens, special issue 5, *International Review of Social History* 42 (1997), pp. 1–23.

<sup>2</sup> George B. Dertilis, *Ιστορία του ελληνικού κράτους, 1830–1920* [History of the Greek state, 1830–1920], vol. 1, Athens: Estia, 2005, p. 20.

has been examined extensively in the past decades in relation to firms of both the mainland and diaspora.<sup>3</sup>

The Greek historiography of women and gender history has highlighted female waged labour in the industry and services as underestimated and unregistered. Moreover, it has also focused on unpaid domestic labour and labour in family firms. Works on juvenile labour have stimulated scientific interest to discuss the role of apprenticeships in industries and workshops, the context of unskilled labour and remuneration strategies towards children.<sup>4</sup>

Historians mostly from the viewpoint of labour and social history have argued that gender relations are reflected and perpetuated in the field of work.<sup>5</sup> In other words, the labour market is not gender-neutral. It has been pointed out that the categorisation of labour as male, female or juvenile verified and enhanced the social narrative of masculinity and femininity on the shop floor. Male skilled labour was socially recognised as the primary source of family income. Work by women and children was considered by society not only as complementary,<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> See Ioanna Pepelasis Minoglou, "Woman and Family Capitalism in Greece, c. 1780–1940", *The Business History Review* 81/3 (2007); Maria Christina Chatziioannou, *Οικογενειακή στρατηγική και εμπορικός ανταγωνισμός: Ο οίκος Γερούση τον 19ο αιώνα* [Family strategy and commercial competition: the Gerousis family in the 19th century], Athens: National Bank of Greece Cultural Foundation, 2003.

<sup>4</sup> Michalis Riginos, *Μορφές παιδικής εργασίας στη βιομηχανία και τη βιοτεχνία 1870–1940* [Forms of child labour in industry and the craft industries, 1870–1940], Athens: Historical Archive of Greek Youth, 1995.

<sup>5</sup> For gender relations in the service sector, see Efi Avdela, *Δημόσιοι υπάλληλοι γένους θηλυκού: Καταμερισμός της εργασίας κατά φύλα στον δημόσιο τομέα, 1908–1955* [Female civil servants: gender division of labour in the public sector, 1908–1955], Athens: Research and Education Foundation of the Commercial Bank of Greece, 1990. For industry, see Zizi Salimba, *Γυναίκες εργάτριες στην ελληνική βιομηχανία και στη βιοτεχνία 1870–1922* [Women workers in Greek industry and craft-industry, 1870–1922], Athens: Historical Archive of Greek Youth, 2002; Leda Papastefanaki, *Εργασία, τεχνολογία και φύλο στην ελληνική βιομηχανία* [Labour, technology and gender in Greek industry], Heraklion: Crete University Press, 2009.

<sup>6</sup> Efi Avdela and Angelika Psarra, *Ο φεμινισμός στην Ελλάδα του μεσοπολέμου* [Feminism in inter-war Greece], Athens: Gnosi, 1985, p. 93. For a detailed overview of historiography of labour relations and gender, see Avdela, "Work, Gender and History in the 1990s and Beyond", *Gender and History* 11/3 (1999), pp. 528–541; Dimitra Lambropoulou, Antonis Liakos and Yannis Yannitsiotis, "Work and Gender in Greek Historiography during the last Three Decades", in *Professions and Social Identity: New European Historical Research on Work, Gender and Society*, ed. Berteke Waaldijk, Pisa: Pisa University Press, 2006, pp. 1–14; Nikolaos Papadogiannis, "Gender in Modern Greek Historiography", *Historein* 16 (2017), pp. 74–101; Leda Papastefanaki, "Labour in Economic and Social History: The Viewpoint of

but also as unskilled, or semi-skilled, which should be remunerated less.<sup>7</sup> In this context, family relations had a direct effect on the labour market; a work position was perceived as a temporary solution when it required minimum skill whereas positions of an advanced level of specialisation were considered as an opportunity to establish steady employment and better salary conditions.

Skilled and unskilled labour conformed to different labour market patterns. Highly educated or experienced employees like engineers or specialised technicians were often offered work positions that challenged them to migrate to another city or even another country. On the other hand, unskilled workers were forced to offer their labour power themselves. In order to remain informed about the labour market, they had to rely on familial and local networks. Mark Casson argues that families and workplaces are social networks that coexist and interact with physical networks, that is, spaces that facilitate the exchange of information, goods and labour power.<sup>8</sup> The physical network in which these interactions took place was the neighbourhood. Although in big cities anonymity gradually became an important aspect of everyday life, neighbourhoods, in the interwar period, continued to be communities of solidarity and acquaintanceship.<sup>9</sup> In the case of Greek industry, the formation of workers' neighbourhoods enhanced the effectiveness of these networks.<sup>10</sup>

Corfu was the most important economic centre of the Ionian Islands. From the nineteenth century to the end of the interwar period, the island's economy remained mainly agrarian while the residents of the city of Corfu were mostly employed in the secondary and tertiary sectors. The city's socio-economic life was defined by the activity of the port. Corfu served as a link to Western Europe, making its port the most important in northwestern Greece. Port cities like Piraeus, Patras, Ermoupoli and Corfu interacted frequently with external

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Gender in Greek Historiography", *Genesis: Rivista della Società Italiana delle Storiche* 15/2 (2016), pp. 59–83.

<sup>7</sup> Papastefanaki, *Εργασία, τεχνολογία και φύλο* [Labour, technology and gender], pp. 245–246.

<sup>8</sup> Mark Casson, "Networks in Economic and Business History: A Theoretical Perspective", *Innovation and Entrepreneurial Networks in Europe*, ed. Paloma Fernández Pérez and Mary B. Rose, New York: Routledge, 2010, pp. 14–40.

<sup>9</sup> Leda Papastefanaki, "Όψεις της εργατικής εγκατάστασης στον Πειραιά στη δεκαετία του 1930: Φύλο, αγορά εργασίας, σχέσεις παραγωγής" [Aspects of workers' settlement in Piraeus in the 1930s: gender, labour market, relations of production], in *Η πόλη στους νεότερους χρόνους: Μεσογειακές και βαλκανικές όψεις 19ος–20ός αι.* [The city in recent times: Mediterranean and Balkan perspectives, 19th–20th centuries], Athens: Society for the Study of Modern Hellenism, pp. 437–438.

<sup>10</sup> Papastefanaki, *Εργασία, τεχνολογία και φύλο* [Labour, technology and gender], p. 241.

markets; thus, they were more eager to embrace the industrial transformation of their economy.<sup>11</sup>

Table 1  
Factories in Corfu, 1920–1940

| Factory name                        | Products   | Region               |
|-------------------------------------|--|----------------------|
| Aspioti–ELKA graphic arts company   | State monopoly orders for typographic and lithographic works | Mandouki (Avrami)    |
| Pallas Athina oil mill              | Olive pomace oil, soap                                       | Mandouki             |
| Kourouklis–Kallinikos oil mill      | Olive pomace oil, soap                                       | Mandouki (Avrami)    |
| AEVEK oil mill                      | Olive pomace oil, soap                                       | Mandouki             |
| Kallivokas flour mill               | Flour, pasta   | Mandouki             |
| Sofianopoulos flour mill            | Flour, pasta   | Mandouki             |
| Ioannis Dalietos flour mill         | Flour, pasta   | Garitsa              |
| Alexandros Desyllas textile factory | Rope, thread, sacks  | Garitsa              |
| Spyridon Zervos textile factory     | Palm tree fibre products                                     | Garitsa (Palaïopoli) |
| Papyrus paper factory               | Paper, cardboard   | Garitsa (Anemomylos) |
| Margaritis dairy                    | Dairy products   | San Rocco            |
| Apollon ice factory                 | Ice, paraffin  | San Rocco            |

Sources: General State Archives of Corfu, Corfu Prefecture Archive, Folder 34; IKA Archive; Flour mill and pasta workers insurance fund; Workers' personal files.

<sup>11</sup> Christina Agriantoni, *Οι απαρχές της εκβιομηχάνισης στη Ελλάδα τον 19ο αιώνα* [The beginnings of industrialisation in Greece during the 19th century], Athens: Katarti, 2010<sup>2</sup>, p. 130.

Corfu is an interesting case study of a city that demonstrated a significant shift towards the secondary sector of production. Its factories produced a wide range of goods, some of which were highly innovative for their time, such as pomace oil and lithographic prints. Furthermore, industrial labour interacted with other social institutions like the family and the state and formed a population that, even though it was never a majority, played an important role in the formation of local society.

From 1879 to 1920, the population of the municipality of Corfu fluctuated between 25,000 and 30,000 inhabitants, only to reach 34,000 in 1928. The municipal area included the Old Town, the New Town, the suburbs of Garitsa, Mandouki and San Rocco, as well as villages around the greater city area like Potamos, Alepou and Kontokali.

The most important factories of the island were located on the outskirts of the city (Table 1). Industry in the island emerged from the 1870s. As new factories were founded in the beginning of the twentieth century, the need for an abundant labour force kept growing.

The historiography on the nineteenth century in Corfu mainly covers the era of British rule (1815–1864). Sakis Gekas examines the nineteenth-century society and economy of the Ionian Islands, focusing on the institutional and cultural impact of the colonisation of Corfu, such as the emergence of a new culture of entrepreneurship,<sup>12</sup> and the socio-economic factors that led to unification with Greece in 1864.<sup>13</sup> However, information on proto-industrial relations of the British era and their effect on the local secondary sector of production are scarce. References to the industry of nineteenth-century Corfu, after the union of the Ionian Islands with Greece, can be found in the work of Christina Agriantoni,<sup>14</sup> while Grigorios Psallidas has investigated the rise of social solidarity institutions within the labour movement, such as the Workers' Fraternity of Corfu.<sup>15</sup> Despite its name, the fraternity had weak links with the worker population; therefore, it provides little knowledge on labour relations on the shop floor.

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<sup>12</sup> Sakis Gekas, "Business Culture and Entrepreneurship in the Ionian Islands Under British Rule, 1815–1864", *LSE Working Papers in Economic History* 89 (2005) and "Credit, Bankruptcy and Power in the Ionian Islands under British Rule, 1815–1864", *History of Insolvency and Bankruptcy: From an International Perspective*, ed. Karl Gratzer and Dieter Stiefel, Huddinge: Södertörns högskola, 2008, pp. 83–116.

<sup>13</sup> Sakis Gekas, "The Crisis of the Long 1850s and Regime Change in the Ionian State and the Kingdom of Greece", *The Historical Review/La Revue Historique* 10 (2013), pp. 57–84.

<sup>14</sup> Agriantoni, *Οι απαρχές της εκβιομηχάνισης* [Beginnings of industrialisation].

<sup>15</sup> Grigorios Psallidas, "Social Solidarity on the Periphery of the Greek Kingdom: The Case of the Workers' Fraternity of Corfu", in *Greek Society in the Making, 1863–1913: Realities, Symbols and Visions*, ed. Philip Carabott, Aldershot: Ashgate, 1997, pp. 19–33.

The local historiography of the twentieth century is quite limited and fragmentary. From a business history approach, Eleni Vousolinou has worked on the Aspioti–ELKA graphic arts company, focusing on the enterprise’s archive.<sup>16</sup> Aspects of labour relations in the Aspioti factory can be found in Zizi Salimba’s research on women workers in the Greek industrial sector.<sup>17</sup> Aspioti–ELKA, which began as Aspioti Bros in Corfu before merging with Athenian competitor ELKA, was the Greek state’s provider of lithographic and typographic products of monopoly goods such as playing cards, cigarette paper, stamps, bonds and lottery tickets. The Aspioti–ELKA archive, kept in the National Bank of Greece Historical Archive, covers thoroughly the company’s itinerary from the late nineteenth century to its dissolution in the 1990s, containing numerous sub-series of economic data, reports, payrolls, inventories, correspondence and product samples. Apart from the Aspioti–ELKA case, the most important systematic research on Corfu’s factories was the project “Proto-industrial and industrial installations and techniques in the Ionian Islands”, organised by the Department of History of the Ionian University in 2008, under the scientific coordination of Evdokia Olympitou. Important sectors of local production such as olive oil, soap and flour have yet not been examined, while labour in the largest enterprise in the island, Alexandros Desyllas’ linen, jute and hemp-processing factory, has also not been extensively investigated. The common ground of all the aforementioned industries is the absence of an organised business archive; in all these cases, the archive was either destroyed or lost. Therefore, discussing the relation between family and labour in Corfu requires the examination of more sources.

Official state sources are important, even though they are often mediated by the narrative of the male breadwinner family. The Greek Labour Inspectorate was an institution that aimed to ensure the application of the newly established labour laws of the 1910s in the secondary and tertiary sectors of production. The inspectorate’s reports are the most complete sources when it comes to describing working conditions on the shop floor. Moreover, these reports included the basic features of the workforce, such as age, literacy and living conditions, often expressing the inspectors’ middle-class views of workers.<sup>18</sup>

The Corfu Prefecture Archive consists mostly of correspondence between the prefecture and other actors (factories, trade unions, ministries, labour

<sup>16</sup> Eleni Vousolinou, “Η βιομηχανία στην Κέρκυρα: η βιομηχανία γραφικών τεχνών Ασπιώτη–Ε.Α.Κ.Α. (τέλη 19ου αιώνα)” [Industry in Corfu: the Aspioti–ELKA graphic arts factory (late 19th century)] (PhD diss., Ionian University, 2014).

<sup>17</sup> Salimba, *Γυναίκες εργάτριες* [Women workers], pp. 118–119.

<sup>18</sup> Efi Avdela, “Contested Meanings: Protection and Resistance in Labour Inspectors’ Reports in Twentieth Century Greece”, *Gender and History* 9/2 (1999), pp. 313–314.

inspectors). The contents of this archive are chronologically uneven. While the 1940s are covered in detail, there is a lack of information from the 1910s and 1920s that needs to be complemented by other sources.

The Social Insurance Institute (IKA) Archive contains data on flour-mill and pasta-making workers who were granted a pension after their retirement. This data is organised in individual files that include personal information, marital status and family, death certificates, remuneration cards and occupational mobility. In the case where the worker had passed away before retiring, the closest family members (wife or husband) became the rightful beneficiaries of the pension. While IKA files are a good-quality source, their main drawback is the small number of workers that they refer to.

The official censuses of 1920 and 1928 provide data that helps the researcher form a rough image of working life and family, although they have received considerable criticism for their ambiguity.<sup>19</sup> In this article, statistics regarding the number of families, the head of the family and secondary employment will be used.

In order to examine the Corfu case, the geographical unit of the *municipality* was used, instead of the greater areas of the *prefecture* or *province*. The province remained a stable entity while the prefecture changed from one census to the other. In this case, the geographical area of greater Corfu prefecture contained the islands of Corfu and Paxoi in 1907,<sup>20</sup> Corfu, Paxoi and Lefkada in 1920,<sup>21</sup> and Corfu and Paxoi again in 1928.<sup>22</sup> On the contrary, Corfu province contained only the island of Corfu, hence representing a more solid social formation. However, the provincial area of Corfu was mainly agricultural, with the addition of watermills and windmills of limited productivity, mainly producing oil and flour.

<sup>19</sup> Avdela, *Δημόσιοι υπάλληλοι γένους θηλυκού* [Female civil servants], pp. 27–35; Leda Papastefanaki, “Μισθωτή εργασία” [Waged labour], in *Η ανάπτυξη της ελληνικής οικονομίας κατά το 19ο αιώνα* [The development of the Greek economy during the 19th century], ed. Kostas Kostis and Socrates Petmezas, Athens: Alexandreia, 2006, pp. 265–279.

<sup>20</sup> Census Service, *Στατιστικά αποτελέσματα της γενικής απογραφής του πληθυσμού κατά την 27η Οκτωβρίου 1907/Résultats statistiques du recensement general de la population, effectué le 27 Octobre 1907*, vol. 1, Athens: National Printing House, 1909, p. 38.

<sup>21</sup> General Statistical Service of Greece, *Απογραφή του πληθυσμού της Ελλάδος κατά την 19η Δεκεμβρίου 1920/Recensement de la population de la Grèce au 19 Décembre 1920/1 Janvier 1921*, vol. 3, *Στατιστικά αποτελέσματα δια τας Ιονίους Νήσους/Résultats statistiques pour les Iles Ioniennes*, Athens: National Printing House, 1924, p. ζ' [vii].

<sup>22</sup> General Statistical Service of Greece, *Στατιστικά αποτελέσματα της απογραφής του πληθυσμού της Ελλάδος της 15–16 Μαΐου 1928/Résultats statistiques du recensement de la population de Grèce, du 15–16 Mai 1928*, vol. 3, no. 1, *Επαγγέλματα/Professions*, Athens: National Printing House, 1937, p. ρλδ' [cxxxiv].



In all the aforementioned censuses, the municipality refers to the town of Corfu, including the main industrial suburbs of Mandouki, Garitsa and San Rocco, where all the local factories were located. Changes in municipal boundaries depicted in the official censuses were minor. As a result, examining the municipal area of Corfu can give us a clearer picture of the relation between family and factory labour.

As trade union archives focus on labour relations, the family appears indirectly in them. They cover an era from the foundation of the Corfu Labour Centre (EKK) in 1918 to the late 1980s. In this archive, families are usually listed for food and clothing distribution in periods of crises, like the 1940s. These lists provide data on workers' ages, residence, remuneration and working conditions. However, the archive is fragmentary and unorganised, despite a partial classification that was performed by the researchers of the "Proto-industrial and industrial installations and techniques in the Ionian Islands" project in 2008.

In general, sources are uneven: the point of view of the family is represented only by limited oral testimonies. Eight interviews were conducted by the author in 2013. They included factory employees who had worked in the industrial sector of Corfu spanning a period from the 1940s to the deindustrialisation of the 1980s. The narrators all worked in the factories for at least a decade. Three of the workers were employed at Desyllas, two at Dalietos and Sofianopoulos and one at AEVEK. Although the interviews focused on factory life (production, working conditions, syndicalism), family was always present as an important factor of life and career decisions.

The sections that follow examine the role of family in the shaping of the Corfiot industrial workforce. At first, the structure of family and household is described, focusing on the dominance of the nuclear family of a single household and the social relations between its members. In the second section, it will be argued that gender and age were crucial factors that determined the kind of work performed by family members and the views on remuneration as primary, when it referred to adult men, or complementary, when women and minors contributed to the family income. The third and fourth sections describe familial strategies such as secondary employment and the temporality of industrial labour, in accordance with the employees' gender and age. The role of community and kin relations and their impact on the labour market will be investigated in the next three sections.

### *Family and Household Structure in Corfu*

*Household* and *family* are not identical terms. Their interchangeable use in everyday discourse has infiltrated the sources and made their distinction more difficult. Sociologists, social anthropologists but also historians have contributed

to the clarification of their context in an exhaustive discussion that goes beyond the purposes of this article. Nevertheless, a description of the terms as used in the text is necessary.

The household is an “economic unit that is based on income pooling”.<sup>23</sup> Its members usually share a residence and participate in common activities that signify each member’s position in the household.<sup>24</sup> However, deviations from this definition are inevitable due to the diversity of cases. For example, seasonal migrants may not share the same residence with the rest of the household, although they still participate in the group’s economic decisions.<sup>25</sup> On the other hand, family members are connected with each other on the basis of kinship. In that sense, a family can comprise several households while a household can consist of more than one family. Researchers have debated the typology of the family, sometimes drawing opposite conclusions, such as in the case of Greece.<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, for many years the change over time in the structure of a single family has been neglected, in favour of the *photographic description* at a given period.<sup>27</sup> In this article, the types of family that are coined are the nuclear family, consisting of parents and their descendants,<sup>28</sup> and the extended family, which includes other members as well, such as close relatives of either the husband or the wife.<sup>29</sup>

The structure of the Corfiot family was non-uniform. In the city of Corfu different types of family coexisted, following the pattern of other urbanised port cities like Ermoupoli.<sup>30</sup> The nuclear family household was the most common; this was facilitated by the Venetian architecture of the Old Town that consisted of multi-storey buildings with small apartments. Moreover, cities attracted young, single peasants who were in search of employment and could not be followed by their elderly parents, while many came from the adjacent island of Paxoi or from Epirus to seek work. In 1941, more than 10 per cent of the personnel of the flour

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<sup>23</sup> Marcel van der Linden, “Connecting Household History and Labour History”, *International Review of Social History* 38 (1993), pp. 163–173.

<sup>24</sup> Peter Laslett and Richard Wall, *Household and Family in Past Time*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972, p. 25.

<sup>25</sup> Van der Linden, “Connecting Household History”, p. 164.

<sup>26</sup> Roxani Ciftanoglou, “Η ιστορία της οικογένειας στην Ελλάδα: Μερικά προβλήματα μεθόδου” [History of the family in Greece: some methodological problems], *Επιθεώρηση Κοινωνικών Ερευνών* 69 (1998), pp. 228–229.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 233–234.

<sup>28</sup> Raymond Firth, Jane Hubert and Anthony Forge, *Families and their Relatives: Kinship in a Middle-Class Sector of London*, London: Routledge, 1970, p. 58.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 220.

<sup>30</sup> Thomas W. Gallant, *Modern Greece*, London: Arnold, 2001, p. 81.

mill and pasta-making factory managed by Ioannis Dalietos were from Paxoi.<sup>31</sup> In rural Corfu, the extended family was predominant. Households consisted of more than one nuclear family, providing the necessary labour power to accomplish the everyday tasks of agrarian life.<sup>32</sup> Extended families could also exist on the city outskirts and nearby villages, where agriculture was the primary source of income.<sup>33</sup>

Analytical family statistics became available for the first time following the 1920 Greek census. The family was examined under two aspects: *family in the sense of the household* and *family in the sense of kinship*.<sup>34</sup> According to the available data, there were 7,790 families in the sense of kinship living in 6,889 households in the municipality of Corfu. Families had an average of 2.46 children, taking into account the local level of infant mortality (about a third of total number of births). This data may give us a hint about the predominance of the nuclear family living in its own home, but it is not sufficient.<sup>35</sup> It is necessary to take a closer look at household structure and hierarchy.

The head of the household, the *pater familias*, was responsible for the material welfare of the family. His actions and, furthermore, his labour defined the character of the household. For example, a family whose head worked in the fields, assisted by his wife, children and possibly grandchildren, was considered agrarian, both socially and statistically. This was shown clearly in the 1920 census, where households were categorised per sector of production according to the occupation of their head.<sup>36</sup>

Women were responsible for domestic labour and child-rearing, but also worked in the fields or the factory. However, female labour was unregistered throughout the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth centuries. In Corfu, women were declared as “without occupation/no occupation declared”

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<sup>31</sup> General State Archives of Corfu, Corfu Prefecture Archive, Folder 136, Civil conscription of flour mill, pasta and bakery workers of Corfu, 27 March 1941.

<sup>32</sup> Gallant, *Modern Greece*, p. 82.

<sup>33</sup> Family structure in rural Corfu from the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries is discussed in Paraskevi Kouri, “Η γη και η εκμετάλλευσή της στο διαμέρισμα (bandiera) Μελικίων ή Λευκίμης από τον 16ο έως τον 18ο αιώνα: προσεγγίσεις στην τοπική ιστορία” [Land exploitation in the area of Melikia or Lefkimmi from the 16th to 18th centuries: approaches to local history] (PhD diss., Ionian University, 2011).

<sup>34</sup> The *family in the sense of household* is not a literal translation. Originally, the 1920 census uses the term *Familles au sense de recensement* that, according to the definition, corresponds to the number of familial domiciles. The term household is not used at all even though the meanings coincide. A *family in the sense of kinship* consisted of one married couple and their offspring.

<sup>35</sup> Laslett argues that conclusions on the structure of a household cannot be based on quantitative data. See Laslett and Wall, *Household and Family in Past Time*, p. 54.

<sup>36</sup> General Statistical Service of Greece, *Απογραφή του πληθυσμού της Ελλάδος/ Recensement de la population de la Grèce*, p. μθ' [xlix].

at percentages steadily above 80 per cent. In households where a women was the head, usually when the husband had passed away, was not capable of working or was absent for long periods of time, the character of family labour could not be identified from the statistics. Female heads comprised 21 per cent of the total number of families in Corfu.

Table 2  
Families per sector of production in Corfu, 1920 (in percentages)

|                          | Primary sector | Secondary sector | Tertiary sector | No occupation/<br>No occupation declared |
|--------------------------|----------------|------------------|-----------------|--|
| Total                    | 14.15          | 31.80            | 30.25           | 23.80                                    |
| Male head of household   | 17.60          | 38.40            | 35.40           | 8.60                                     |
| Female head of household | 1.10           | 6.90             | 11.00           | 81.00                                    |

Source: General Statistical Service of Greece, *Απογραφή του πληθυσμού της Ελλάδος κατά την 19η Δεκεμβρίου 1920/Recensement de la population de la Grèce au 19 Décembre 1920/1 Janvier 1921*, vol. 3, Στατιστικά αποτελέσματα δια τας Ιονίους Νήσους/Résultats statistiques pour les Iles Ioniennes, Athens: National Printing House, 1924, p. 299.

Trade union data can provide important information on families who were engaged in industrial labour. According to Giorgos Koukoules, this data is valuable in the examination of local paradigms, although in many cases archives were destroyed or remained unclassified.<sup>37</sup> Their union member catalogues usually aimed to organise workers' data (occupation, specialisation, age, residence) for electoral reasons. Nevertheless, workers' families were recorded during periods of crises in order to distribute food and clothing for those in need.

As far as Corfu Labour Centre is concerned, the main goal of such lists was not to provide full information about a worker or his family but to serve as a register of those who had rightful access to food and clothing during the Italian and German occupation of Corfu from 1941 to 1944. In some of these catalogues, apart from the workers' names and the number of the family members dependent on them, we get information about their specialisation (for example, lithographer, typographer, etc.), father's name, age, address or area of residence.

<sup>37</sup> Giorgos F. Koukoules, *Για μια ιστορία του ελληνικού συνδικαλιστικού κινήματος* [Towards a history of the Greek syndicalist movement], Athens: Odysseas, 1983<sup>2</sup>.

Three union lists of industrial workers' families have been located in the Corfu Labour Centre Archive, all regarding bread distribution in 1944; the Pasta Workers' Union of Corfu (33 households), the I Anatoli workers' union of Aspioti-ELKA (95 households) and the Tobacco Workers' Union of Corfu (21 households). In all three unions, the vast majority of families were nuclear and living in one house (92 households). In 33 of the 149 households there were other people of kinship living together with the nuclear family, usually elderly parents or unmarried siblings of the husband or wife who were not able to live on their own. It was rare for two nuclear families (that is, at least two married couples) to share the same house and, when it occurred, it always involved a couple living with the husband or wife's parents (only two households). The remaining 24 households comprised of one person, usually a woman who was unmarried or widowed (21 cases). Women living in these unitary households ranged from 27 to 65 years old, were socially considered as unprotected and, since they had no male support, had no other option than to pursue waged labour.<sup>38</sup>

### *Division of Labour According to Gender and Age*

Up to this point, it has been made clear that the nuclear family was the most common form among workers' families in the city of Corfu, even if in some cases these families shared their residence with kinsfolk who did not have the ability to live separately. Household members who had the ability to work contributed to increasing total family income. Their labour differed according to their age and gender. Age and gender division of labour will be examined mainly from the viewpoint of the Greek state since little information is contained in business archives. The primary sources are the labour inspectors' reports and official censuses.

The 1921 Labour Inspectorate report included a detailed table on Corfu's labour force. According to the table, a part of which is reproduced in Table 3, 93 factories and workshops were inspected.<sup>39</sup> Five of the plants that employed the most employees were selected for this research.

Some factories that are unique to Corfu are easily identifiable, like Alexandros Desyllas' factory that produced rope and thread or Aspioti Brothers graphic arts company (before its merger with ELKA in 1928). At these factories, production

<sup>38</sup> Corfu Labour Centre (EKK) Archive, Folder E55, Union lists, July 1944.

<sup>39</sup> Labour Directorate, Ministry of National Economy, *Εκθέσεις του προσωπικού επιθεωρήσεως εργασίας επί της εφαρμογής των εργατικών νόμων, έτος 1921* [Reports of the Labour Inspectorate on the application of labour laws, 1921], Athens: National Printing House, 1924, p. 96.

was based mostly on female labour, which represented about 65–70 per cent of the workforce. Moreover, the report verifies that young girls frequently worked in Desyllas' factory.

Table 3

Industries inspected by the Labour Inspectorate in Corfu  
(by number of employees per gender and age), 1921

| Type of industry or craft         | Number of industries/workshops | Male adults | Female adults | Male minors (12–18) | Female minors (12–18) | Total number of employees |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------|---------------|---------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Tobacco factories                 | 2                              | 2           | 28            | –                   | 2                     | 32                        |
| Flour mills (and pasta factories) | 3 (2 of which also made pasta) | 110         | –             | –                   | –                     | 110                       |
| Pomace oil mills                  | 1                              | 13          | –             | –                   | –                     | 13                        |
| Rope factories                    | 1                              | 120         | 220           | –                   | 60                    | 400                       |
| Paper factories                   | 1                              | 200         | 400           | –                   | –                     | 600                       |

Source: Labour Directorate, Ministry of National Economy, *Εκθέσεις του προσωπικού επιθεωρήσεως εργασίας επί της εφαρμογής των εργατικών νόμων, έτος 1921* [Reports of the Labour Inspectorate on the application of labour laws, 1921], Athens: National Printing House, 1924, p. 96.

The paper factory referred to was obviously Aspioti Bros, sometimes categorised by the Labour Inspectorate as a paper rather than typographic industry, due to its signature production of playing cards. While there seemed to be no minors working in it, according to the inspectorate's report, the company's policy over the years contests this conclusion. Michalis Riginos' research on child labour in Greek industry makes special reference to Aspioti Bros by citing a newspaper article and an anonymous brochure,<sup>40</sup> from the late nineteenth

<sup>40</sup> The article "Εν Βιομηχανικόν κατάστημα" [An industrial shop] was written by Michail Mitsakis and was published in the newspaper *Έστία* in 1887. It is a detailed description of Aspioti Bros installations and working conditions. The brochure "Κοινή γνώμη περί εργοστασίου Ασπιώτη και πραγματικότητες" [Public opinion on the Aspioti factory and reality], written by anonymous author Π.Ι.Κ. [P.I.K.] in 1896, underlines the factory's strict disciplinary policy towards workers. Both articles are mentioned in Riginos, *Μορφές παιδικής εργασίας* [Forms of child labour], pp. 44, 90; Vousolinou, *Η βιομηχανία στην Κέρκυρα* [Industry in Corfu], pp. 73, 185–187.

century, which report on the employment of young girls from the age of eight.<sup>41</sup> Under law 4029 on female and juvenile labour, enacted in 1912, minors could be employed legally from the age of 12. In periods of increased demand, the company took advantage of this law and recruited workers, adult females and minors, to meet orders by expanding the working day by two hours. According to this legislation, minors and female workers in factories that operated seasonally were allowed to work 12 hours per day (instead of 10) for a maximum of four weeks every year. Their names and work position were sent by the company to the prefecture in order to be granted a permit to work overtime.<sup>42</sup> In total, 42 workers, all female, were recruited from July 1913 to June 1914. We know nothing about them but their name, surname and their section of labour on the shop floor. Fortunately, a few of them can be traced in other personnel lists. For instance, Eleni Pouli performed auxiliary labour at the factory in 1913, according to a company document. The following year, she was included in the overtime list as a worker in the playing cards section, while in 1932 she had become the senior bookbinder in the factory's bookbinding department. Lastly, she was traced in a trade union list from 1944, after the Aspioti factory in Corfu had stopped operating. That list discloses her age at the time (45), meaning she was 14 in 1913.<sup>43</sup> When the labour inspectorate report was conducted, the law had been modified so as to comply with the convention of the International Labour Conference in Washington in 1919. The result was law 2271/1920, which increased the minimum age for employment to 14 years.

However, the application of this legislation was not easy to control, especially due to the fact that female birth registers did not exist. Thus, the inspectors could not actually verify female workers' ages.<sup>44</sup> Returning to Table 3, the absence of minors in Aspioti Bros seems dubious, bearing in mind that the pattern that survived over the years had already established the company as one that was based on young women's labour.

In the city's two tobacco factories, female labour dominated the shop floor. We have no further evidence on the organisation of labour in 1921 other than the data contained in the inspectorate report. Nevertheless, an employee list from the 1940s, composed for the purpose of food distribution, can provide more information. In

<sup>41</sup> Riginos, *Μορφές παιδικής εργασίας* [Forms of child labour], p. 44.

<sup>42</sup> General State Archives of Corfu, Corfu Prefecture Archive, Folder 662A, Aspioti Bros applications for the expansion of the working day in compliance with law 4029/1912, 10 July 1913–23 June 1914.

<sup>43</sup> EKK Archive, Folder 30B, I Anatoli workers' union of Aspioti–ELKA, List of employees for food distribution, 1944.

<sup>44</sup> Efi Avdela, "Contested Meanings", p. 318.



1942, there were 28 workers, 20 of whom were women. Not surprisingly, the eight male employees performed the tasks that were considered as more specialised, such as engineering or supervision of machines.<sup>45</sup> It is clear that the organisation of labour and allocation of employees per specialisation met specific gender restraints. Male workers often sought this, such as in the 1914 Thessaloniki tobacco workers' strike, when unions demanded the exclusion of women from higher positions.<sup>46</sup> In one of the biggest tobacco factories in Greece, Matsangos Bros in Volos, women were excluded from better remunerated skilled work since they were not allowed to receive technical training, neither officially from the state nor empirically in the workplace.<sup>47</sup> This notion of skill applies to the organisation of labour in general. Specialised labour is determined by the values that prevail in a society at a given time rather than the features of the work position themselves.<sup>48</sup>

Things were quite different in the flour and pasta-making factories. All three establishments visited by the Labour Inspectorate operated both flour and pasta sections and were probably the three biggest in Corfu: Ioannis Dalietos, Georgios Sofianopoulos and Eftychia (generally referred to as Heirs of Ioannis Kallivokas).<sup>49</sup> According to the report, their 110 employees were adult men.<sup>50</sup>

In subsequent years, the pattern remained more or less the same. Flour mills were usually based on male labour, although there appeared to be a few women workers performing auxiliary tasks like sack sewing and packaging. Again, the evidence comes from different sources. In January 1938, the nationally distributed newspaper *Καθημερινή* published a telegram of gratitude to and support for dictator Ioannis Metaxas signed by the employees of Dalietos' flour mill and pasta-making factory. It is not known whether all of them signed the

<sup>45</sup> EKK Archive, Folder 30B, Tobacco Workers' Trade Union, List of employees for food distribution, 1 November 1942.

<sup>46</sup> Efi Avdela, "Ο σοσιαλισμός των "άλλων": ταξικοί αγώνες, εθνοτικές συγκρούσεις και ταυτότητες φύλου στη μετα-οθωμανική Θεσσαλονίκη" [The socialism of the "others": class struggle, national clashes and gender identities in post-Ottoman Thessaloniki], *Τα Ιστορικά* 10/18–19 (1993), pp. 171–204.

<sup>47</sup> For the introduction of women in the tobacco industry and the case study of the Matsangos factory in Volos, see Thanasis Betas, "Καπνοβιομηχανία Ματσάγγος εν Βόλω, 1918–1972: Εργασία και επιβίωση στο Βόλο" [Matsangos tobacco industry in Volos, 1918–1972: Labour and survival in Volos] (PhD diss., University of Thessaly, Volos 2015), pp. 94–97, 300–305.

<sup>48</sup> Papastefanaki, *Εργασία, τεχνολογία και φύλο* [Labour, technology and gender], pp. 281–285.

<sup>49</sup> The other mechanical flour mills were Agios Andreas (owned by Andreas Theotokis) and Anastasiou Bros. Both mills had stopped operating by the beginning of the 1930s, although the exact year of their closing down is uncertain.

<sup>50</sup> Labour Directorate, *Εκθέσεις του προσωπικού επιθεωρήσεως εργασίας* [Reports of the Labour Inspectorate], p. 96.



telegram but given that the flour mill workers had a conservative union, it can be assumed that the majority probably did. The total number of signatures reached 52 employees – 35 flour mill and 17 pasta workers – among whom only six were women (five pasta workers and only one working in the flour mill).<sup>51</sup>

The dominance of male labour in flour mills can be observed in 1941 personnel lists as well. Mill owners Ioannis Dalietos and Georgios Sofianopoulos were obliged to compile a detailed list of employees, precisely stating their specialisation and age, for the purposes of civil conscription.<sup>52</sup> These lists verify the aforementioned gender division of labour in the Corfiot food industry but also show that flour and pasta sections follow different age patterns.

As Table 4 shows, flour mill workers were older on average than those working in pasta making (45 compared to 37 years). According to the firms' data, more than 75 per cent of the flour mill workers were over 40 years old, while 45 per cent of the pasta workers belonged to the same age group. This means that the majority of these male employees of these factories were heads of their households; hence their remuneration was probably the primary source of family income.

Table 4  
Flour mill and pasta employees in Corfu per age group and gender, 1941

|           | Flour mills |        |       | Pasta workers |        |       |
|-----------|-------------|--------|-------|---------------|--------|-------|
| Age group | Male        | Female | Total | Male          | Female | Total |
| 12–20     | 4           | 2      | 6     | 4             | 4      | 8     |
| 21–30     | 6           | 0      | 6     | 3             | 3      | 6     |
| 31–40     | 7           | 0      | 7     | 9             | 2      | 11    |
| 41–50     | 32          | 1      | 33    | 14            | 0      | 14    |
| 51–60     | 25          | 2      | 27    | 6             | 0      | 6     |
| 61–       | 4           | 0      | 4     | 1             | 0      | 1     |
| Total     | 78          | 5      | 83    | 37            | 9      | 46    |

Source: General State Archives of Corfu, Corfu Prefecture Archive, Folder 136, Civil conscription of flour mill, pasta and bakery workers of Corfu, 27 March 1941.

<sup>51</sup> *Καθημερινή* (18 January 1938), p. 7.

<sup>52</sup> General State Archives of Corfu, Corfu Prefecture Archive, Folder 136, Civil conscription of flour mill, pasta and bakery workers of Corfu, 27 March 1941.

### Secondary Employment

Family members engaged in a secondary occupation could add to household income and function as a safety net in periods of food crises.<sup>53</sup> The 1920 and 1928 censuses included it, acknowledging its socio-economic impact.<sup>54</sup> Nevertheless, the statistics show that secondary occupation mainly applied to agrarian families, which added to their total income by working either in other fields of the primary sector (for example, husbandry) or in manufacturing closely connected to their main activity, for example, oil mills and flour mills.

This also applies in the Corfiot case, as the census data shows (Table 5). For instance, in 1928, the number of people declaring a secondary occupation was very low (234 of 28,179). As already mentioned, most of them (153) worked in agriculture and registered a second occupation in another area of the primary sector (nearly 50 per cent), while workers in the secondary sector rarely had a second occupation (1.1 per cent).<sup>55</sup> As Petros Pizanias points out, factory work was full-time employment and it was very difficult for workers to dedicate themselves to a second occupation.<sup>56</sup>

Table 5  
Secondary occupation in Corfu municipality, 1928

| Primary occupation    | Total workforce | Workforce that declared a secondary occupation | Industry/ manufacture as a secondary occupation | Agriculture as a secondary occupation |
|-----------------------|-----------------|--|---|---------------------------------------|
| All occupations       | 28,179          | 234  | 24  | 83                                    |
| Industry/ manufacture | 4,074           | 47   | 6   | 4                                     |
| Agriculture           | 1,804           | 153  | 10  | 75                                    |

Source: General Statistical Service of Greece, *Στατιστικά αποτελέσματα της απογραφής του πληθυσμού της Ελλάδος της 15–16 Μαΐου 1928/Résultats statistiques du recensement de la population de Grèce, du 15–16 Mai 1928*, vol. 3, no. 2, *Επαγγέλματα/Professions*, Athens: National Printing House, 1937, pp. 284–285.

<sup>53</sup> Christina Agriantoni, “Βιομηχανία” [Industry], in Kostis and Petmezas, *Η ανάπτυξη της ελληνικής οικονομίας* [Development of the Greek economy], p. 226.

<sup>54</sup> General Statistical Service of Greece, *Απογραφή του πληθυσμού της Ελλάδος/ Recensement de la population de la Grèce*, pp. οζ’–οη’ [lxxvii–lxxviii] and *Στατιστικά αποτελέσματα της απογραφής του πληθυσμού της Ελλάδος της 15–16 Μαΐου 1928/Résultats statistiques du recensement de la population de Grèce, du 15–16 Mai 1928*, vol. 3, no. 1, *Επαγγέλματα/Professions*, pp. πθ’–ζε’ [lxxxix–xcv].

<sup>55</sup> General Statistical Service of Greece, *Στατιστικά αποτελέσματα της απογραφής του πληθυσμού της Ελλάδος της 15–16 Μαΐου 1928/Résultats statistiques du recensement de la population de Grèce, du 15–16 Mai 1928*, vol. 3, no. 2, *Επαγγέλματα/Professions*, pp. 284–285.

<sup>56</sup> Petros Pizanias, *Οι φτωχοί των πόλεων: Η τεχνογνωσία της επιβίωσης στην Ελλάδα το μεσοπόλεμο* [The city poor: the know-how of survival in inter-war Greece], Athens: Themelio, 1993.

Even when it occurred, the expectations of professional development and accumulating work fatigue motivated workers to choose between the two. One of the workers that had a second job was Giorgos Kokkalis. Born in 1931, he began working in Sofianopoulos' flour mill as an assistant carpenter in 1946. He changed work positions twice, first in the flour mill before becoming a pasta worker. For more than two years he combined his job at the factory with working with his four brothers as a photographer. Finally, after ten years in the factory, he decided to dedicate himself to the family business.<sup>57</sup>

### *Industrial Labour: Temporality or Stability?*

Pizanias argues that industrial labour had a temporal character and that low-income workers sought the opportunity to move to an occupation that would guarantee ascending social mobility. This level of occupational mobility and class flexibility have both been contested by Nikos Potamianos, who emphasises the different migration strategies that refugees implemented,<sup>58</sup> and Leda Papastefanaki, who pinpoints its subsequent effect on the debilitation of class analysis.<sup>59</sup> Combining trade union sources with others, like the Corfu Prefecture Archive, from the 1940s onwards, shows that workers' mobility depended, apart from exogenous factors, on their occupation and rank in the workspace hierarchy. Again, age and especially gender limitations are crucial determinants of each worker's specialisation and position on the shop floor.

Unfortunately, it is very difficult to trace employees that left the factory to pursue a different career. Female workers are also hard to trace over time since women changed their surname or even quit their job after getting married. Therefore, it is more convenient to focus on the professional stability of the personnel that remained in the same factories throughout their professional life. The role of the Labour Centre was, in this case, very important. On many occasions, even during the Italian occupation, it kept putting pressure on employers and prevented them from hiring workers that were not union members.

<sup>57</sup> Interview with Giorgos Kokkalis, Corfu, 6 June 2013.

<sup>58</sup> Nikos Potamianos, *Οι νοικοκυραίοι: Μαγαζάτορες και βιοτέχνες στην Αθήνα 1880–1925* [The homemakers: shopkeepers and master artisans in Athens, 1880–1925], Heraklion: Crete University Press, 2015, pp. 11–12.

<sup>59</sup> Papastefanaki, *Εργασία, τεχνολογία και φύλο* [Labour, technology and gender], p. 26.

The AEVEK oil mill, which produced olive pomace oil and soap, is a useful example. Located in the Mandouki industrial zone, on the coastline, it was founded in 1924 by the Commercial Bank of Greece, which was its main shareholder. After the end of World War II, in 1944, AEVEK's ownership became a matter of dispute. The Commercial Bank claimed that the company's stocks should be returned to it, even though it had sold them to the Italian Banco Nazionale del Lavoro during the Italian occupation. The local agricultural cooperative demanded that the Greek bank should be brought to court for treason and asked the Ministry of Agriculture to mediate to allow the coop acquire the bank's AEVEK stocks. Until the matter was resolved, the state intervened and entrusted the firm's management to the Agricultural Bank of Greece.<sup>60</sup> All correspondence between the banks, the agricultural cooperative and the state are located in the Prefecture Archive. Moreover, the prefecture asked the company to send them two detailed lists, of its blue- and white-collar workers, for the purposes of electing representatives to the company board.<sup>61</sup> According to the prefecture lists from 1944 and Oil Mill Union data from 1940 to 1966, male labour dominated the shop floor, while women, who comprised 20 out of 81 employees, all provided unskilled work such as sack sewing.<sup>62</sup> More than half of these women were oil mill workers for less than five years. Of course, since there is no data available for the pre-war period of the factory (1924–1940), this should not necessarily mean that women worked occasionally at the factory. However, a close look at Table 6 shows that proportion of men working in AEVEK for less than five years was lower than that for women (27 per cent compared to 50 per cent of women).<sup>63</sup> These men also occupied positions that required less specialisation, such as watchmen, or worked in sections alongside more experienced workers.

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<sup>60</sup> General State Archives of Corfu, Corfu Prefecture Archive, Folder 227.

<sup>61</sup> General State Archives of Corfu, Corfu Prefecture Archive, Folder 179, AEVEK to Corfu District Court, Personnel list, 29 November 1944.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> EKK Archive, Folder: Oil Mill Workers, Electoral lists, 23 March 1953 and 27 March 1966.

Table 6  
AEVEK oil mill workers per gender and  
years of labour in the factory, 1944–1966

| Verified years of employment at AEVEK | Total number of workers | Male workers | Female workers |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|----------------|
| Over 20 years                         | 10                      | 8            | 2              |
| 11–20 years                           | 38                      | 32           | 6              |
| 5–10 years                            | 2                       | 1            | 1              |
| 0–5 years                             | 26                      | 15           | 11             |
| Total                                 | 76                      | 56           | 20             |

Source: Corfu Labour Centre (EKK) Archive, Folder 179, AEVEK to Corfu District Court, Personnel list, 29 November 1944; Folder: Oil Mill Workers, Electoral lists, 23 March 1953 and 27 March 1966. Only years that are verified by the sources are included, as there are no personnel lists available for the years 1924–1939.

Table 7  
AEVEK oil mill workers per specialisation and years of labour in the factory,  
1944–1966

| Verified years of employment at AEVEK per department of factory | Over 20 years | 11–20 years | 5–10 years | 0–5 years |
|---|---------------|-------------|------------|-----------|
| Oil pomace production   | 2             | 4           | –          | –         |
| Soap production   | 2             | 2           | –          | –         |
| Warehouse   | 4             | 13          | 1          | 5         |
| Power supply  | –             | 2           | –          | 1         |
| Repairs   | –             | 2           | –          | 2         |
| Technical staff   | –             | 3           | –          | 1         |
| Watchmen, etc.  | –             | 6           | –          | 5         |
| Unskilled workers   | 2             | 6           | 1          | 12        |
| Total   | 10            | 38          | 2          | 26        |

Source: Corfu Labour Centre (EKK) Archive, Folder 179, AEVEK to Corfu District Court, Personnel list, 29 November 1944; Folder: Oil Mill Workers, Electoral lists, 23 March 1953 and 27 March 1966. Only years that are verified by the sources are included, as there are no personnel lists available for the years 1924–1939.

The longest-serving employees of the firm, whose careers spanned more than two decades, were usually specialised workers and thus not easily replaceable. Table 7 shows that skilled labour in oil pomace and soap production provided employees with a steady working environment. The same paradigm applied to soap makers from the island of Lesbos, whose expertise made them indispensable for local businessmen.<sup>64</sup> These workers could remain in the same workplace until their retirement, advancing to better positions in the business hierarchy. This was not only a privilege of male workers, although it was less common for women to achieve higher positions. For example, Eleni Bitsi was appointed as warehouse manager in Aspioti–ELKA and kept her position until the factory stopped operations in 1940.<sup>65</sup> Flour mill and pasta workers' personal pension files from the IKA archive demonstrate a variety of patterns regarding mobility in industrial labour. So far, 14 files relating to Corfiot flour mill employees have been located (Table 8). They cover a wide range of specialisations within local factories.

Table 8  
Flour mill workers by year of birth, work position and years of labour  
(in order of seniority)

| Name                      | Year of birth | Work position     | Years of labour                 |
|---------------------------|---------------|-------------------|---------------------------------|
| Michail Diamantis         | 1886          | Flour weigher     | 36 years (1914–1950)            |
| Eleftherios Anemogiannis  | 1864          | Carpenter         | 35 years (1902–1915, 1915–1937) |
| Gerasimos Vlachos         | 1877          | Wagoner           | 34 years (1903–1937)            |
| Michail Vlachopoulos      | 1889          | Wheat cleaner     | 23 years (1917–1940)            |
| Spyridon Theodorou        | 1869          | Stoker            | 23 years (1908–1911, 1913–1933) |
| Konstantinos Karnabatidis | 1895          | Flour mill worker | 22 years (1927–1949)            |
| Angelos Kalodikis         | 1865          | Janitor           | 19 years (1915–1934)            |
| Ioannis Desyllas          | 1890          | Stoker            | 18 years (1922–1940)            |

<sup>64</sup> Evridiki Sifneos, Nikos Sifounakis and Yannis Koutsouridis, *Ενθύμιον σαπυνοποιίας Λέσβου* [Memories of soapmaking in Lesbos], Athens: Livani, 2002, p. 47.

<sup>65</sup> EKK Archive, Folder 30B.

(Table 8 continued)

|                         |      |                    |                                 |
|-------------------------|------|--------------------|---------------------------------|
| Panagiotis Thymis       | 1875 | Flour worker       | 18 years (1911–1920, 1924–1935) |
| Aristeidis Vlachopoulos | 1881 | Plan sifter worker | 17 years (1919–1936)            |
| Nikolaos Myronis        | 1880 | Flour mill worker  | 16 years (1925–1941)            |
| Dimosthenis Fantopoulos | 1876 | Stoker             | 13 years (1924–1937)            |
| Antonios Dendias        | 1901 | Pasta worker       | 12 years (1916, 1929–1941)      |
| Anastasios Kouimzelis   | 1859 | Engineer           | 12 years (1921–1933)            |

Source: IKA Archive, Flour mill and pasta workers insurance fund, Workers' personal files

The first fact that should be taken into account regarding Table 8 is that these people were pensioners who ended their labour life as flour mill workers and technicians. Hence, no conclusion can be drawn on those who left the flour and pasta industry in order to seek employment in a different sector. However, in all the cases that are presented here, working for the flour mill industry was the job that occupied the biggest part in the workers' professional lifetime. It should also be pointed out that the majority initiated their career in the flour mills quite late in their professional lives. Some workers, such as Angelos Kalodikis and Dimosthenis Fantopoulos, were over 45 years old when they started working in the factories. Unfortunately, tracing their previous occupations in order to establish if there was a common pattern relies on complementary sources. For instance, Panagiotis Thymis was hired in 1911 and worked in the Anastasiou and Sofianopoulos flour mills until his retirement. His marriage certificate from 1904 states that he was working as a grocer in his native Korakiana, a village in the northern part of the island.<sup>66</sup> Others like Eleftherios Anemogiannis and Gerasimos Vlachos worked on and off for more than a decade at Kallivokas' flour mill, before being hired permanently at the factory.<sup>67</sup>

Apart from pasta worker Antonios Dendias, who entered the factory at the age of 15 and was re-employed 13 years later, the apprenticeship from adolescence and gradual ascent to a better position and wage are absent from this sample. Even though the number of files that have been located up to now is small, it seems that flour mill workers were employed at a more advanced stage

<sup>66</sup> IKA Archive, Flour mill and pasta workers insurance fund, Panayotis Thymis, personal file.

<sup>67</sup> IKA Archive, Flour mill and pasta workers insurance fund, Eleftherios Anemogiannis and Gerasimos Vlachos, personal files.

of their career. However, this research remains in progress and the incorporation of new data will complete the picture.

A common aspect in the two examples is the predominance of male workers over the age of 30. This meant that these people, as heads of their household, were the main wage earners in the family. As has already been mentioned, women and minors were few compared to adult men in flour and oil mills and if they were employed it was usually in performing unskilled tasks. Therefore, conclusions can be made only for these sectors of production that required a minimum specialisation on the part of workers. The temporality of labour in factories that required a lot of unskilled labour, such as Aspioti Bros or Desyllas, could not be measured since there are no personnel lists available for any of them before 1930.

### *Family, Community and the Factory*

Industrial growth in the nineteenth century led to the rapid urbanisation of the cities where factories were established. In Piraeus, workers chose to reside close to the industries, often in houses that were built arbitrarily.<sup>68</sup> The position in the factory hierarchy was an important determinant of residence in Volos. While workers lived on the edges of the city, directors and white-collar employees resided in the central neighbourhoods.<sup>69</sup> Corfu demonstrates similarities with both cities. The main areas where workers' families lived were the suburbs of Mandouki, Garitsa and San Rocco, where labour inspectors repeatedly described living conditions as unhealthy. Rents were reported to be high and houses that were within the workers families' economic reach were described as damp and dark.<sup>70</sup> The main advantage of living in these areas, apart from workplace proximity, was the formation of bonds of solidarity and acquaintanceship between members of the community, who, in many cases, were related through family. Under the constant threat of poverty, workers formed extended family networks that would help them find employment more easily.

In order to examine the role of the neighbourhood and its connection to labour networks, workers' databases have been constructed for a series of trade unions, namely the textile workers, which correspond to the employees of the Alexandros Desyllas textile factory, the Dalietos and Sofianopoulos flour mill workers, AEVEK oil mill workers and Papyros paper factory workers. These lists were originally composed by the trade unions for the distribution

<sup>68</sup> Papastefanaki, *Εργασία, τεχνολογία και φύλο* [Labour, technology and gender], p. 51.

<sup>69</sup> Betas, *Καπνοβιομηχανία Ματσάγγος εν Βόλω* [Matsangos tobacco industry], p. 395.

<sup>70</sup> Labour Directorate, *Εκθέσεις του προσωπικού επιθεωρήσεως εργασίας* [Reports of the Labour Inspectorate], p. 98.



of financial aid in August 1944, in the case of flour mill workers, and a few days before Easter 1945, in the case of the other three unions. This data shows the allocation of workers with an identifiable address or residence in the municipal area. Unfortunately, data on residence is not available for all workers in the sources; however, the available samples do provide an insight into the geographical distribution of workers in factories. As one can observe in Table 9, proximity to the workspace was an important factor in the worker's choice of residence. In all five factories, the majority of employees lived in the same district as the factory.

Table 9  
Number of factory workers per region of residence, 1944–1945

| Factory workers per district (union data, 1944–45) | Desyllas textile factory | Dalietos flour mill and pasta factory | Sofianopoulos flour mill and pasta factory | Papyros paper factory | AEVEK oil mill |
|--|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|-----------------------|----------------|
| Old Town   | 130                      | 8                                     | 4  | 6                     | 11             |
| Mandouki/Avrami                                    | 48                       | 7                                     | 18   | 3                     | 30             |
| Garitsa/ Palaiopoli/ Anemomylos                    | 359                      | 27                                    | 4  | 30                    | –              |
| San Rocco  | 148                      | 4                                     | 9  | 5                     | 11             |
| Outside the municipal area                         | 105                      | 3                                     | 4  | 6                     | 11             |
| Total  | 790                      | 49                                    | 39   | 50                    | 63             |

Source: Corfu Labour Centre (EKK) Archive, Folder 58γ, Corfu Textile Workers' Trade Union, Membership list, 23 April 1945; Folder 55, Millers' Trade Union, Membership list, 31 August 1944; Folder 58γ, Corfu Paper Workers' Trade Union, Membership list, 2 May 1945; Folder 58γ, Corfu Oil and Pomace Mill Workers' Trade Union, Membership list, 22 April 1945.

Although the majority of workers lived in the municipal area of Corfu, a number of workers came from the rural outskirts, for example the villages of Potamos, Kanalia and Alepou. These workers, according to the trade union sources, comprised nearly 12 per cent of the Desyllas workforce. There is no sufficient information on their condition or their property. However, the fact that many of these people were members of the same family can lead to the conclusion that they had no land to farm, hence leaving them with no other option but to work in factories.

It seems that workers tended to work close to their residence when that was possible. This correlation remained strong when labour was abundant and did not need specific qualifications. However, when positions on the shop floor required special skills that could not be found in Corfu's limited labour market, enterprises employed specialised chief workers either from abroad or from other Greek cities. Aspioti–ELKA maintained a tradition of hiring workers from Europe as chief workers or engineers: in 1920, the Italians Eduardo Ambrosini, a lithographer, and Attilio de Giacomo, an engineer, were already employed in the firm<sup>71</sup> while the Germans Albert Thoss, an engraver, and Christian Rauscher, a chromolithographer, were included in employee lists from 1932.<sup>72</sup> This strategy was common across Greek industry: as Agriantoni has demonstrated, foreign workers in Piraeus and Lavrio were bearers of expertise in industrial sectors where Greek workers had no experience.<sup>73</sup>

Chief technicians from other Greek cities were also hired as experts due to their experience or university studies. Anastasios Kouimzelis (Table 8), an engineer from Ermoupoli in Syros, was employed in 1921 at Kallivokas' flour mill and held his position until his retirement in 1933.<sup>74</sup> Georgios Ortentzatos was a chemist from Kefalonia, graduate of the University of Bordeaux, who started a perfume manufacturing business in Corfu. After his firm ceased production, he was hired in 1930 as a chief chemist at Kallivokas' and after 1938 at Sofianopoulos' flour mills.<sup>75</sup>

Local workers could also hold key positions in factories although that was rarely the case. In such examples, the correlation between proximity and factory of occupation becomes weaker. In AEVEK, even though nearly half of the workers lived in Mandouki, where the factory was located, in sectors of production that required special skills the situation was different (Table 10). In the pomace oil production department, all workers lived in districts of Corfu other than Mandouki.

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<sup>71</sup> EKK Archive, Folder 30A, Lithography department list, 19 September 1920.

<sup>72</sup> National Bank of Greece Historical Archive, Aspioti–ELKA Archive, Series 8: Administrative issues, Sub-Series 1: Management, Folder 3, Study on the transfer of the factory in Corfu by Othon Pervolarakis, 31 October 1932.

<sup>73</sup> Agriantoni, *Οι απαρχές της εκβιομηχάνισης* [Beginnings of industrialisation], pp. 214–215.

<sup>74</sup> IKA Archive, Flour mill and pasta workers insurance fund, Anastasios Kouimzelis, personal file.

<sup>75</sup> IKA Archive, Flour mill and pasta workers insurance fund, Georgios Ortentzatos, personal file.

Table 10  
AEVEK workers' residence per department of production, 1944

| Place of workers' residence per production department | Mandouki/Avrami | Garitsa/Palaiopoli | Old Town | San Rocco | Outskirts |
|---|-----------------|--------------------|----------|-----------|-----------|
| Oil pomace production                                 | –               | 1                  | 1        | 2         | 1         |
| Soap production                                       | 2               | –                  | –        | 1         | –         |
| Warehouse   | 8               | –                  | 6        | 7         | 2         |
| Power supply  | 1               | –                  | –        | –         | 2         |
| Repairs   | –               | 2                  | –        |           | 2         |
| Technical staff                                       | 2               | –                  | –        | –         | –         |
| Watchmen, etc.  | 3               | –                  | 4        | 1         | –         |
| Unskilled workers                                     | 14              | –                  | –        | –         | 1         |
| Total   | 30              | 3                  | 11       | 11        | 8         |

Source: Corfu Labour Centre (EKK) Archive, Folder 179, AEVEK to Corfu District Court, Personnel list, 29 November 1944.

### *Family Relations in Factories*

Establishing the spatial allocation of the workforce is an important step towards identifying family networks that interact with labour. However, workforce residence is not sufficient. Employee lists can be derived by combining data from the Labour Centre Archive and the factory. Using the different angles these sources offer, these lists can be enriched with workers' data such as family information, age, religion, date of enrolment in the union or the factory, specialisation etc.

In this case, the father's name and age need to be correlated to the area of residence of the worker, so as to reveal possible family relations between them. Even then, since Corfu is a small town with limited surnames, and hence many people shared the same name, it is necessary to avoid hasty conclusions. Birth and marital certificates are sources that can help towards clarifying family relations. As seen in Table 11, in 1942 there were nine workers with the surname Kremonas. Out of them, only one, Paschalis Kremonas, lived in Campiello, a neighbourhood of the Old Town. He was a limestone scraper in Aspioti–ELKA, who is also listed in the worker payrolls of 1932. The other eight workers of the same surname

lived in Garitsa. Six of them worked in the Desyllas factory (Spyridon, Vasileios, Pavlos, Christina and Olga), Maria Kremona (whose father's name was Spyridon), worked as a pasta worker and Maria Kremona (daughter of Odysseas) worked in the tobacco factory. Spyridon and Vasileios Kremonas (whose father's name was Domenikos) lived on the same street, Iasonos and Sosipatrou, and were obviously brothers. Olga Kremona (daughter of Alexandros) lived on the same street but it is difficult to verify whether she was the wife of Spyridon or Vasileios. However, it is highly probable that she was in some way related to them.

Table 11  
Workers with the surname Kremonas, 1942

| Name      | Father's name | Gender | Factory                       | Date of birth | Residence                         |
|-----------|---------------|--------|-------------------------------|---------------|-----------------------------------|
| Paschalis | N/A           | Male   | Aspioti–ELKA                  | N/A           | Petridou 8, Campiello             |
| Spyridon  | Domenikos     | Male   | Desyllas                      | 1894          | Iasonos and Sosipatrou, Garitsa   |
| Vasileios | Domenikos     | Male   | Desyllas                      | 1903          | Iasonos and Sosipatrou, Garitsa   |
| Pavlos    | Spyridon      | Male   | Desyllas                      | N/A           | Alkinoou, Garitsa                 |
| Maria     | Odysseas      | Female | Tobacco factory               | N/A           | Iasonos and Sosipatrou 5, Garitsa |
| Maria     | Spyridon      | Female | Flour and pasta manufacturing | N/A           | Mitropolitou Athanasiou, Garitsa  |
| Olga      | Alexandros    | Female | Desylla <sup>a</sup>          | N/A           | Iasonos and Sosipatrou, Garitsa   |
| Christina | Ioannis       | Female | Desyllas                      | N/A           | Stratia                           |
| Sofia     | Alexandros    | Female | Desyllas                      | N/A           | Alexandrou Desylla, Garitsa       |

Source: Corfu Labour Centre (EKK) Archive, Folder 30B, Tobacco Workers' Union of Corfu, 13 November 1942; Folder 55, List of Aspioti–ELKA workers, 4 April 1943; Pasta Workers' Union of Corfu, 18 January 1942; Folder 58, List of unemployed members of the Corfu Textile Workers' Union, 23 April 1945.

Labour networks existed in Dalietos' flour and pasta factory. This firm was founded in 1901 by Georgios Vlachopoulos, a miller from Paxoi. When, in 1909, Vlachopoulos stepped down from the management, Dalietos, the new manager, whose family was also from Paxoi, renamed the firm. The flour mill employed many workers from his home town; among them the Petrou family. All seven male children of the four Petrou brothers (Ioannis, Nikolaos, Spyridon and Athanasios) worked at the factory,<sup>76</sup> while Athanasios' daughter Evangelia married factory worker Antonios Dendias<sup>77</sup> and Spyridon's daughter married factory worker Dimitrios Charalambous.

Another example were the families of brothers Gerasimos and Alexandros Kazianis. Gerasimos, his wife Stamatia and their son Spyridon worked at the flour mill before World War II. Spyridon (born 1924) started working at the age of 17 and years later became a miller, while his younger brother Dionysios (born 1929) started working as a wagoner at the age of 16. According to his narrative, the two brothers were the only minors in the factory after the war. Alexandros' sons, Dionysios (born 1895) and Christos (born 1908), also worked for Dalietos.<sup>78</sup>

Members of a family could be more easily employed in the factories where they had bonds of kinship with at least one employee. Of course, if this employee held a respectable position on the shop floor or if he or she was a white-collar worker, it could be easier to convince the manager to hire members of their family. An example is that of the aforementioned Giorgos Kokkalis. His father, Nikolaos Kokkalis, was a white-collar worker in Sofianopoulos' flour mill and convinced the manager to hire him.<sup>79</sup>

Sometimes family networks were more extensive and are, therefore, not easy to examine. For example, there were 12 workers at Desyllas' factory called Voutsinas, a typical surname in Garitsa, 10 of whom lived on the same street (Alexandrou Desylla St). Although some of the relations are not easy to verify (especially in the case of women, who changed their surname upon marriage), it is clear these people formed a network that played a crucial role in their choice of occupation. These networks appear extensively in larger factories using both male and female unskilled labour (for example, Desyllas' factory), although in some smaller factories family members still work together.

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<sup>76</sup> General State Archives of Corfu, Corfu Prefecture Archive, Folder 136, Civil conscription of flour mill, pasta and bakery workers of Corfu, 27 March 1941.

<sup>77</sup> IKA Archive, Flour mill and pasta workers insurance fund, Panayotis Thymis, personal file.

<sup>78</sup> Interview with Dionysios Kazianis, Corfu, 9 June 2013, and EKK Archive, Folder 59, Millers' Trade Union, Membership list, 1945.

<sup>79</sup> Interview with Giorgos Kokkalis, Corfu, 6 June 2013.

Family data from the Labour Centre show that in Aspioti–ELKA, there were many cases of parents and children that worked together. For instance, in 1932, Spyridon Vlachos was the chief engineer and one of the best paid workers of the company. Born in 1895, he had worked for Aspioti–ELKA since at least 1925, when his name first appears in the sources. In 1942, his son Eleftherios also appears in the personnel lists. Moreover, Antonia Loumbranou, mentioned as a worker in the final years of the Aspioti–ELKA factory in Corfu, was the daughter of night guard Andreas Loumbranos, who was also included in personnel lists since 1932.<sup>80</sup>

Table 12

Members of I Anatoli workers' union of Aspioti–ELKA and their families

| Surname, name               | Age | Kin                 | Gender |
|-----------------------------|-----|---------------------|--------|
| <u>Loumbranos, Andreas</u>  | 60  | Head of the family  | Male   |
| Loumbranou, Ioanna          | 57  | Wife                | Female |
| <u>Loumbranou, Antonia</u>  | 22  | Daughter            | Female |
| Loumbranou, Kalliopi        | 18  | Daughter            | Female |
| <u>Vlachos, Spyridon</u>    | 49  | Head of the family  | Male   |
| Vlachou, Alexandra          | 45  | Wife                | Female |
| <u>Vlachos, Eleftherios</u> | 24  | Son                 | Male   |
| Vlachou, Chrysanthi         | 24  | Wife of Eleftherios | Female |
| Vlachou, Freideriki         | 5   | Daughter            | Female |
| Vlachou, Maria              | 4   | Daughter            | Female |

Source: Corfu Labour Centre (EKK) Archive, Folder 30B. Extract from the union's personnel list of June 1944 (union members are underlined).

In some cases, like the Textile Workers' Union of Corfu, family relations (siblings or father and son/daughter) can be observed by combining age, father's name and residency. Textile workers Dimitrios, Spyridon and Antonios Koutayar were mentioned in the personnel lists of 1942 and 1945 compiled by the union. All of them had the same father's name, Angelos, and lived on the same street, Agias Triados in Garitsa. Although there is a high probability that they were siblings, further information is available only for Spyridon (born 1906)

<sup>80</sup> EKK Archive, Folder 30B, I Anatoli workers' union of Aspioti–ELKA, List of workers and family members, undated, circa 1944.

and Antonios (born 1908). By consulting post-war union lists, these two brothers can be traced as Desyllas workers until at least 1962.<sup>81</sup>

### *Concluding Remarks*

The 1914 novel *Η τιμή και το χρήμα* [The honour and the money] by Konstantinos Theotokis is one of the most important pieces of Greek literature in the twentieth century. The novel follows Epistimi, a middle-aged woman who lives with her husband and daughters in Mandouki. Epistimi is the actual head of the household as her husband is described as lazy and a drunkard. She works at Desyllas' factory and supplements her income by stealing the factory's products to sell elsewhere. Her desire is to find a well-respected and endowed husband for her older daughter. As all Epistimi's plans finally fall through, the young girl decides to work at the factory as well.

Despite the fictional nature of the novel, it is a product of its time. Therefore, it gives us a different point of view on the relation between labour and family. It describes a nuclear family where a woman is the real head, even though she conforms to all everyday life tasks that are socially attributed to women. She is in charge of all domestic tasks and performs unskilled labour, female labour, along with other women from her neighbourhood. Her husband is considered unworthy exactly because he lacks basic features of masculinity, most of all to take on the role of the breadwinning male. Ultimately, Epistimi's daughter, after failing to ensure a beneficial marriage, chooses to seek a position in the workspace where her mother and other members of her local community work.

The novel sums up some of the main points of this article. Family networks, in constant interaction with local communities, formed key mechanisms that kept Corfu's factories supplied with labour power. Kinship seemed to be a crucial determinant in workplace selection. However, the allocation of job positions usually complied to a strict gender and age division of labour.

This division directly affects the sources. It is not surprising that factories that were based on male labour can be approached from different angles using a variety of sources. Unfortunately, data that refers to factories that were based on female and juvenile labour is more difficult to come across. In this case, a combination of different sources, including oral testimonies, is essential towards completing the picture.

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<sup>81</sup> EKK Archive, Folder: Textile Workers, Corfu Textile Workers' Trade Union, Electoral list, 14 February 1953.