

# INTERDEPENDENCE BETWEEN WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT AND THEIR REPRODUCTIVE BEHAVIOR IN POST-SOVIET GEORGIA

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**crossref** <http://dx.doi.org/10.5755/j01.em.19.2.6388>

## Abstract

*European Post-Soviet states are characterized with global economic crisis. Therefore, it's very urgent to study the problems of employment and especially women's employment in the context of their reproductive behavior considering the bad demographic situation.*

*Women's labor and public activities often counteract. Such activities prevent women from carrying out family duties. The term "double employment" is often used in the context of women. It implies the double function of women: public and domestic.*

*Transition to market economy brought on equality of men and women and provoked the changes of lifestyle and values. Traditional roles of men and women have changed together with the transformation of mentality.*

*Existing conditions further worsen the poor demographic situation, birthrate decreases and what is the most important, women are less inclined to reproduce.*

*It's desirable to change public opinion about women's labor, as well as stereotypes about women or men. In this case women's public activities and maternal functions will merge efficiently. Reproductive function is one of the most significant components to survive Georgian gene pool and traditions.*

**The type of the article:** Theoretical article.

**Keywords:** female employment, demographic situation, reproducibility.

**JEL Classification:** J13, J16.

## 1. Introduction

European Post-Soviet states are characterized with global economic crisis. Therefore, it's very urgent to study the problems of employment and especially women's employment in the context of their reproductive behavior, considering the bad demographic situation. As its known, women's social status is firmly related to marriage and maternity. Reproductive plans of a family often compel the modern women to abandon their professional career. Therefore, part of women refuses to have child (children) not to lose their qualification, caused by compulsory maternity leave. Because of the current economic crisis, women's unemployment has the significant negative influence on a family's economic conditions in most cases and it limits the family's reproductive plans, creating the vicious cycle.

It is generally known that women's labor and public activities often counteract. Such activities prevent women from carrying out family duties. Women's public activities and different kinds of labor bring on many problems. Besides, hard economic and social conditions provoked forced labor and heavy workload for female employees. Practice shows that women's public and domestic workload don't have equal social effect. Moreover, women's public activities have negative social effect on the family, where women's maternal function is invaluable. Reproductive function is one of the most important functions to survive gene pool and traditions.

Transition to market economy was followed with equality between men and women and provoked the changes in lifestyle and values. Traditional gender roles have changed together with

transformation of mentality, but changes are mainly related to public life and not to family. The modern women often have the function of family's breadwinner together with the traditional function of educator. The modern women's labor, public activities and prestige counteract with the domestic duties. Coincidence of different functions results many problems.

The issues of women's rights and labor are often considered beyond the scope of serious problems, whereas such problems are the main objects of study at present and will exist in the future. The majority of women even don't know their rights defined under the civil code, not even the labor code.

Women from post-soviet Georgia are more involved in family activities than men, against the background of increasing unemployment. According to value systems, superiority of family was always understandable for women, because family was the main condition of not only private happiness, devotion and prosperity, but also certain public status and field of activity.

Duties of taking care for children and family couldn't be adequately represented in legislation and human rights conventions.

The reality and the modern life of mothers changed the stereotypes about women, the reason is that instead of taking passive part/role, they became the mediators and solvers of many domestic (including economical) problems.

## **2. Method**

Before we estimate the women's reproductive behavior and inclination towards reproduction, it's important to understand how their time and especially spare time is distributed and used. Naturally, women spent much time outside the family. It is their working time.

In the modern urban life women personificate forced labor and unbearable life conditions. The official statistics of employed women show decrease even in those fields, where women were employed earlier (trade, catering, material and technical support, registration, etc.). Based on the statistical information and considering that the active working age in women coincides with the childbearing (fertile) age, it is possible to reveal a logical link between employment rate and the level of fertility in our country. Analysis of these data showed: we haven't seen any positive tendencies during the last 10 years. During the 2003-2012 years, the employment rate of women decreased from 51% - to 49.5% (the lowest rate registered in 2008 - 44.9%), the unemployment rate in the same period rose from 11.5% - up to 13,8% (Table 1), which is clearly affected on the already low level of fertility (Table 2).

Most of unemployed women are educated, skilled and qualified persons. Behaviors of such women are conditioned by the specifications of non-traditional labor. They are distanced from the professional labor and step by step expelled from the labor market. Highly qualified personnel or women, who were fired from the factories, lost their professional skills and joined the class of socially unprotected. Besides, it's worthwhile to note the problems of so-called "concealed unemployment" and "incomplete employment" frequently met in urban life.

Part of spare time is spent on domestic activities and serving family members. After these the real spare time is left. We should seek the possibilities of reproductive behavior in the priorities of this spare time.

The study of non-working and spare time of women lets us determine the real possibilities, by means of which the women carry out their functions in the family. Much of non-working time is spent on domestic activities. The study of employed women's time management showed that distribution of time largely depends on the quantity of children. When quantity of children increases, domestic activities are significantly intensified.

It is generally known that after the first child is born, time spent on domestic activities increases by 76% on average. After the second child, time spent on such activities increases further with 22% (Keckhoveli, 2008). If woman is employed outside the family and also performs the family duties, her distribution of time is principally different from mistresses and solitary women. Therefore, such women have extremely less time for personal development.

Unfortunately, no one has estimated the time necessary for restoration of vital energy of woman, who has one or more children and who is employed inside or outside the family (Tchanturia, 2006).

### 3. Results

The principles of women's employment are homogenous in every field and depend on specifications of field, as well as existing traditions. It's clear that women are still minority in the basic fields of production, but their quantity increases step by step. This fact confirms that when share of private sector in economics increases, many new fields are established, where women can work without strict regulations and where their success depends on personal characteristics and talents. Positive trends are seen in post-soviet area and generally in the whole world. Considering the roles of women in private sector and existing principles of distribution of positions, employed women earn less than men, but this is not the result of existence of discriminating wages. Low quality infrastructure forces women to carry out their reproductive function in very hard conditions. Besides, women need new professions corresponding to demands of market economy.

Against the background of financial distress, violence towards women is frequent in families and at the working places. Women have to work harder and often become the victims of trafficking. They begin to work abroad at totally inappropriate jobs and lose completely their professional skills. Such women have no guarantees of social defense.

**Table 1.** Dynamics of women's employment in Georgia for the last 10 years looks

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Active population (labour force), thousand persons	968.7	971.3	949.5	935.9	933.5	889.7	920.5	907.9	915.6	947.7
Employed, thousand persons	857.0	856.9	829.4	826.8	816.2	746.3	778.6	776.7	795.3	816.9
Self-employed, thousand persons	561.7	560.1	542.8	539.0	522.6	487.0	500.0	475.6	493.2	509.7
unspecified	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.8	4.3	4.2
Unemployed, thousand persons	111.7	114.4	120.1	109.1	117.3	143.4	141.9	131.2	120.3	130.8
Unemployment rate, percentage	<b>11.5</b>	<b>11.8</b>	<b>12.6</b>	<b>11.7</b>	<b>12.6</b>	<b>16.1</b>	<b>15.4</b>	<b>14.5</b>	<b>13.1</b>	<b>13.8</b>
Active rate, percentage	<b>57.7</b>	<b>56.9</b>	<b>55.9</b>	<b>53.6</b>	<b>55.0</b>	<b>53.5</b>	<b>54.3</b>	<b>55.5</b>	<b>55.8</b>	<b>57.4</b>
Employment rate, percentage	<b>51.0</b>	<b>50.2</b>	<b>48.8</b>	<b>47.4</b>	<b>48.1</b>	<b>44.9</b>	<b>45.9</b>	<b>47.5</b>	<b>48.5</b>	<b>49.5</b>

Source: <http://demoscope.ru>

During the last 2003-2012 years, the employment rate of women decreased from 51% - to 49.5% (the lowest rate registered in 2008 - 44.9%), the unemployment rate in the same period rose from 11.5% - up to 13,8% (see Table 1). Accordingly, the general trend of the birth rate is less promising (see Table 2).

**Table 2.** The trend of birth rate

Year	Live births	Birth rate (per 1000 persons)
2003	46 194	10.7
2004	49 572	11.5
2005	46 512	10.7
2006	47 795	10.9
2007	49 287	11.2
2008	56 565	12.9
2009	63 377	14.4
2010	62 585	14.1
2011	58 014	12.9
2012	57 031	11.7
2013	57 878	

Source: <http://demoscope.ru>

Available level of fertility, as it is known, cannot provide a simple reproduction of the population. All these have extremely negative consequences on demographic situation and family values. If in the past labor migration was mainly related to men, transitional period marks the incremental migration of women. Labor migration of married women is extremely troublesome, because it requires the whole series of activities in economics and public sector to relieve the life of these women. We mean preferential credits, micro-financing, legislation for defense of women's labor, development of institutions for children, expansion of network of daily services and establishment of preferential working time for women which is more important (Sakhokia, 2006).

The term "double employment" is often used in contest of women. It implies the double function of women: public and domestic.

Because of the current social and political conditions, state can't establish incomplete workday for women by means of orders and instructions. Stimulation of such workday should become social and economical profits made by employer by means of establishment of incomplete workday. The positive results will be possible only when public opinion about the women's labor, as well as stereotypes about men or women will change. In this case women's public activities and maternal functions will merge efficiently (Kalabikhina, 2009). Reproductive function is one of the most significant components to survive Georgian gene pool and traditions.

#### **4. Discussion**

Transitional period of establishment of market relationships is characterized with negative phenomena in social field. For instance, family's social, economical and moral foundations are shattered. We haven't seen any positive tendencies during the last 10 years. Relationships inside family are common for both gender, but they have different opinion about two phenomena. Women, mostly than men, consider maternity as the necessary condition for self-realization. Besides, women are mostly characterized with selflessness than men.

The process of economic reforms requires new solutions in the field of market economy. Therefore, the modern women logically concluded that they couldn't remain passive consumers and their role couldn't be limited with domestic activities and taking care for children, despite the fact that such activities are tiresome and finally extremely valuable for society.

Women trying to promote in private sector have to overcome many professional problems. Women working in business sector have more responsibility than men, because their management is oriented on human factors and often strives for charity (Global Economics Paper, 2008). Despite the existence of women's labor rights and protective legislation, women have to overcome many objective problems, when they carry out their double function. Therefore, it's necessary to guarantee the protection of rights and social privileges defined in legislation. Government tries to carry out the special social programs, but privileges and aids, intended for socially unprotected population and poor families often aren't enough to encourage the solution of said problem. Existing conditions further worsen the poor demographic situation, birthrate decreases and women are less inclined to reproduce, which is more important.

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