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Integration of new female migrants in Greek labor market and society and policies affecting integration: State of the Art

Dina Vaiou

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**Integration of Female Immigrants in Labour Market and Society.
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Centre for Research on Women's Issues Athens
Nikis Street, 24, 10557 Athens, Greece
e-mail: diotima@otenet.gr

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Introduction

The issues related to the so-called New (Female) Migration are, to some extent, “new” to Greece and as such they have triggered, since the early 1990s and more so after 2000¹, intense activity, in terms of research, estimates and commentaries. On the part of the state, after a first phase of “surprised concern”, there has been a continuous production of legislation and a gradual development of migration policy, mainly aiming to police and control the influx of migrants. Popular concern has also been expressed, through the press and electronic media, initially inciting defensive and racist reactions towards migrants and later turning also to their conditions of settlement and integration.

After almost two decades, there is by now a considerable bulk of research to do with migration to Greece, to which this report refers², while a number of conferences, public discussions, publications, NGO activities etc testify to the growing interest in the subject. Much of this research is produced in the context of public institutions, some of which were specifically set up for the purpose and in order to conform with EU requirements. Here we can mention, among many, the Hellenic Migration Policy Institute (IMEPO), the Mediterranean Migration Observatory (MMO), the Centre for Research on Minority Groups (KEMO), the Research Center for Gender Equality (KETHI), National Centre of Social Research (EKKE) - all based in, or affiliated with, Ministries and Universities. To this activity we come back in what follows. One of the first institutions to approach migration and the presence of migrants in the Greek labour market is the Institute of Labour of the Confederation of Trade Unions (INE/GSEE) (among its earlier publications, Rylmon 1993).

Researchers involved in all this activity are, as a rule, trained abroad (at undergraduate and/or post-graduate level) and are well-versed in European and international debates, to which they participate and contribute. In this respect, it is rather difficult to identify “specifically Greek” (or any other “nationality”, for that matter) theoretical concepts and analytical categories. However, local experiences raise specific questions or issues, which in turn inform and diversify theoretical formulations. These questions and topics of debate are closely linked to the deep changes in migration flows, in the context of which Greece, a former “origin” of migrants heading for the heartlands of industrialisation, became a “destination” of recent migratory waves.

In what follows, we try to summarise such issues, pointing at the debates which develop around the subject-matter of FeMiPol: integration of female migrants in labour market and society and policies affecting integration. To this end, we make special reference to four research projects in progress, which specifically address issues of gender and migration. We would also like to acknowledge two important edited volumes in English, which, in a number of papers, place migration to Greece in the context of a Southern European debate on migration (King et al 1999, Anthias, Lazaridis 2000).

1. Quantitative concerns

One of the first, and persisting, questions about New (Female) Migration to Greece has to do with the numbers of migrants crossing the borders with or without legal papers. It is worth underlining that these concerns are neither technical nor ideology-free. On the contrary, they are related to

¹ After 2000 there has been a major boost in migration research, based on growing sensitivity on the phenomenon, but also as a partial result of EU funding

² We are not reviewing in this paper research about Greece conducted abroad, as part of European projects, MA theses and PhD dissertations in various European universities

attitudes towards migration, with those who perceive migrants as a threat raising the estimates, while others downplaying them. Research in this context, necessary as it may be, remains generally descriptive, and after a period of rough estimates, it can be divided in two main sub-groups, (a) before and (b) after the 2001 census.

In the first group, there early contributions consist in compiling existing material from population censuses and other sources, identifying categories of migrant and refugee groups and elaborating on push and pull factors (see, for example, Petrinioti 1993). A major upsurge of research and debate, however, emerges after 1997 and is linked to the (quantitative) information drawn from the first “legalisation process” (1997). It consists mainly of elaborations of the data collected in the process of submission of applications by migrants to acquire residence/work permits (Kavounidis 2000, for a critical assessment in the context of FeMiPol, see Zeis, Liapi 2006).

From the circa 350,000 applications interesting results came out, concerning the sex and numbers of migrants by country of origin, their regional distribution in Greece, sectors and branches in which they were employed, etc. For example, according to this register, one third of the applicants for residence/work permits are women, while the single most numerous ethnic group are the Albanians (to which my research focuses) who alone constituted 50.3% of the total, followed by Pakistanis (6.2%), Bulgarians (5.2%), Rumanians (4.8%), Poles (4.7%), Ukrainians (4.0%), Philipinos (3.4%), Egyptians (3.1%), Bangladeshis (2.0%) and many other nationalities in small numbers (below 2.0%). Migrants from the Balkans and former USSR are overwhelmingly women, while those from Pakistan, India, Afghanistan almost entirely men. Women were found to work in domestic and care services and men in construction and fruit harvest. More detailed evidence was subsequently gathered and qualitatively analysed, based on a sample of 1074 migrants (798 men and 276 women, Kavounidis 2002). In this project, aspects of the phenomenon are described and quantified, with particular reference to female migrants. The same data have been used in a number of papers and publications, both in Greece and abroad, basically re-iterating on the findings of Kavounidis (2000, 2002).

After the 2001 general population census, which paid specific attention to migrants, a number of projects developed, including, or specifically focusing on, elaboration of census data (Kritikides 2004, Baldwin-Edwards 2004, 2005, Dimoulas, Papadopoulou 2004). Of those dealing with quantitative questions, a separate group of researchers focus on geographical distributions of migrants and at ever-finer levels of analysis, from regions to urban municipalities (e.g. Kotzamanis 2006, Arapoglou, Sayas 2006). Demographic characteristics and employment status are broken down by sex, but there is no further concern with gender issues (e.g. when developing explanations or forecasts). An exception here is the research in progress of KETHI, specifically addressing the trajectories and settlement patterns of women migrants in Greece³.

2. Legal status and questions of integration

One of the early contributions to the study of migration policy in Greece is included in a broader study by Moussourou (1991). In the context of FeMiPol, issues to do with the legal status of migrants in Greece and the successive “legalisation processes” have already been reviewed in

³ A number of papers based on this on-going research project were presented in the recent Conference organized by IMEPO in Athens, 23 & 24 November 2006: “Migration to Greece: Experiences – Policies – Prospects”. See the contributions of Kapetanopoulos and Iordanidou, Porfyri, www.imepo.gr (Nov. 2006 Conference).

Zeis, Liapi (2006). Here we would like to emphasise the focus of those processes on policing and controlling migration flows and, only recently, a partial turn to more general measures, to the beginnings of a migration policy, which would take into account the contribution of migrants to the economy and society and provide for their integration. The workings of these legislative interventions until now have contributed to retain large numbers of migrants to a status of “illegality”, as well as to a pendular movement of many others to and from such a status (for an elaboration, see also Dimoulas, Papadopoulou 2004). As a matter of fact, questions to do with (il)legality are quite prominent among researchers and policy makers⁴ (Karydis 1996, Fakiolas 1998, 2001).

The issue of migrants’ integration, as can be expected, is high in the research agenda. For example, Baldwin-Edwards (2005), based on a wide survey of quantitative data, proposes indicators for the measurement of immigrant integration. He identifies the following such indicators, for which he then compiles statistical data: legal integration, labour market integration, housing and urban issues, education and language skills, health and social security, social and cultural integration, nationality, civic citizenship and respect for diversity. On the other hand Dimoulas and Papadopoulou (2004), based on an extensive literature review, propose a distinction between “inclusion” and “integration”, which they further develop, through extensive quantitative research (elaboration of census data, questionnaire survey with 1064 migrants, 21 interviews with migrants’ associations). For them, legalisation processes and legal status, language training, labour market participation and housing stability are issues of inclusion (vs. exclusion). Integration refers to questions of family re-unification, participation of children in education, access to and relations with public sector services, participation in associations, networking, socialising with locals, and recognition of cultural identity/otherness.

Some of the issues raised with respect to inclusion/integration are taken up in a number of other research projects, which sometimes focus on particular ethnic groups or regions in the country (see for example Kassimati 1993, 2003, Papadopoulou et al 2002, Pavlou, Christopoulos 2004). In these research projects there is general reference to “women” and “men” as sex categories, but no discussion of the ways in which integration processes and policies affect in different ways women and men.

3. Employment and social welfare

Insertion of migrants in the labour market, and its effects on the economy and on employment patterns, has been the focus of much research in recent years. Here there are more descriptive contributions and econometric models (e.g. Kanellopoulos 2006), but also more in-depth debate, around labour market segmentation, wages and wage differentials between locals and migrants, skills and de-skilling, migrant entrepreneurship and strategies of survival (Lambrianidis, Lyberaki 2001, Lyberaki, Pelagidis 2000, Naxakis, Chletsos 2001), as well as long-term prospects of job creation in different regions of the country affected by the presence of migrants, repatriates and refugees (Glytsos 1993, Lianos et al 1998). The significant weight of informal activities and forms of employment and of informal arrangements in all sectors of everyday life adds to the complexities of this debate and has been approached in both negative and positive terms (for a discussion, see Vaiou 2003, Vaiou, Hadjimichalis 1997, see also Athens Labour Centre 1995).

The system of social service provision, particularly in the domains of health and welfare is another area of research related with migrants’ employment. It has become quite prominent on

⁴ In the recent Conference organized by IMEPO (see above, fn 3), a whole session was devoted to “Illegal Migration”, as well as a number of papers dispersed in other sessions

the one hand because payment of contributions is a requirement for the residence/work permit process. On the other hand, migrants' social security contributions come forcefully into the discussion about reform and survival of the welfare system in general. Questions here include not only formal regulations for provision, but also migrants' access to social services, as well as attitudes of employees in those services (Kassimati, Psimmenos 2003, Kikilias et al 2001, IMEPO 2004, forthcoming).

As we have underlined in the context of FeMiPol (Vaiou 2006), research on migrant women's insertion in paid work is polarised along two main axes: (a) domestic service and caring and (b) prostitution and trafficking⁵. An interesting "variation" here is research undertaken on migrant entrepreneurship and women migrants' self-employment, as a path to form life-strategies and provide for the second generation (Liapi 2006). Also the biographical evaluation of female migrants developing self-employment initiatives at the sector of tourism in the area of Rhodes (Kontos 2004).

A major contribution in the debates on migrant women's integration, from a variety of perspectives, has been the special issue on "Gender and International Migration. Focus on Greece" of the *Greek Review of Social Research* (A/2003:110), edited by E. Tastsoglou and L. Maratou-Alipranti. In this volume (published in English language), contributors take up major issues to do with female migration, grouped under three categories: (i) multiple and intersecting roles and identities of migrant women and communities of the Greek diaspora, (ii) re-constitution of families and gender relations after migration, (iii) contemporary migration to Greece and the legal, class, racialised and sexualised status of migrant women.

Domestic service and caring is a growing field of research with many contributions, which we discuss below in section 6. Debate starts already with the terminology to be used: should migrant women involved in paid domestic work and caring be called "domestic helpers", as is common in Greek, or "domestic (wage) workers", as proposed by some researchers, which has rather different connotations in Greek (eg. Psimmenos 2006). Extensive qualitative research on domestic work and caring has brought into the debate issues to do, among others, with the conditions of work, relations of power and negotiations of identity among local and migrant women, changes in the content of domestic work practices and the ways in which the lines of gender divisions are (re)drawn. Most of this debate has been taken up and developed further in the four projects presented below, in section 6.

Research on *prostitution and trafficking* on the other hand is rather more limited and most of the information comes from women's organizations/groups and NGOs. In the second half of the 1990s a major study was undertaken by the Non Aligned Women's Movement in the area of Athens, bringing to light the extent of the phenomenon and the conditions under which migrant women drawn in it live. There is no detailed information on the rise of prostitution and the involvement of women from Eastern Europe and the Balkans. Comprehensive reports and literature review have been compiled by Lazari and Laliotou (2001) for KETHI, by I. Emke-Poulopoulos (2001) for the MMO and by the Non Aligned Women's Movement (1999).

I. Emke-Poulopoulos (2001) underlines the scarcity of quantitative information as well as the unreliability of data from police reports. "Hidden prostitution" comes out as a prominent theme, including women who enter the country as "artists" or with tourist visas and remained after the expiry of their visa, working as waitresses (in bars, clubs and cafeterias), hostesses, dancers,

⁵ Women's participation in other segments of the labour market has only marginally been researched (eg. manufacturing, tourism, agriculture, cleaning and catering).

masseuses, strippers, pornographic video actresses, entertainers. It is not documented whether prostitutes in Greece follow the patterns identified in other places: prostitutes from less developed countries of Africa and Latin America tend to be older and less educated than those coming from Central and Eastern Europe and often are married and have children.

The prostitution of young girls and, to a lesser extent, also boys comes out of smaller scale studies, mainly in Athens (Psimmenos 1998, Lazaridis 2001). On the other hand, Lazos (1998) who has been studying prostitution in Greece for many years, raises important questions concerning the rising numbers of local men who contribute to the sustained demand for (ever younger) prostitutes. The effects of their practices on local women and on gender relations are a topic not touched upon by researchers or women's groups.

4. Living Conditions

The importance of living conditions as a mechanism which contributes to migrants' integration is not a prominent theme in the Greek debate. An early contribution in this respect can be found in Psimmenos (1995). In this and later publications, the author argues that migrants in Athens live in spatially segregated ("periphractic" in his own terminology) spaces, isolated from locals (see also Psimmenos 1998, 2000). This kind of argument is highly problematic for Athens (and other Greek cities). It corresponds more to experiences of urban development in the USA and in north-western Europe where the settlement of migrants is identified with the urban peripheries or the formation of some ghetto in the city centre. Although some of these features can perhaps be found in Athens, the geography of migrant settlement organises in and around the city centre and the scale of ethnic concentration is such that one cannot speak of migrant ghettos (see Petronoti 1998 (chapter 4), Vaiou 2003 and also section 6.4 below).

The living conditions of migrants and their access to housing have been systematically analysed in a household survey carried out in 1999 by the Public Institute for Planning and Housing in Athens. In this survey, the (then) inferior conditions of settlement of migrant households compared to local poor ones (for a review, see Emmanuel 2002). Women migrants play a key role in the process of settlement and improvement of living conditions, leading to family integration. In conditions of uncertainty and poverty, they are responsible to make ends meet in their households and it is they, rather than men, who develop strategies of gradually appropriating urban space, using the city and the neighbourhood and identifying safe itineraries in city life (see section 6.4 below)

5. Negotiations of "otherness", racism and xenophobia

More recent research and debate take issue with questions of multi-culturalism and negotiations of identities, hybridity and the discourse on diaspora, mobility and subjectivity, conceptual elaborations and political consensus (Ventoura, Troumbeta 2006). The discourse of locals, which is analysed along with that of migrants, unveils interesting aspects of perceiving the "other" as well as an, often unacknowledged, racism and xenophobia. This line of argument consciously attempts to avoid stereotypes and come to grips with the ways in which such phenomena permeate society and public debate, even when they are not visible at first sight (Varouxli et al 1997, Voulgaris et al 1995, Triadafyllidou 1998).

By now extensive qualitative research with migrant women focuses also on the ways in which migrant women perceive not only the material conditions of their everyday lives, but also changes in their own identity/otherness as they come to contact with locals. A pioneering contribution here is that of Petronoti (with the contribution of Zarkia, 1998), based on an anthropological study of Erythreans in Athens. The recent work put together by Tastsoglou and Maratou-Alipranti in a special issue of *The Greek Review of Social Research*, as well as by Ventoura and Troumbeta (2006) in a special issue of *Synchrone Themata* are major contributions to theoretical debates on these issues.

One line of research in this context focuses on issues to do with education and language skills, as processes which contribute to migrants' integration, but also bring to the fore attitudes of racism and xenophobia among young locals. Here, questions to do with teaching the Greek language to migrant children as well as the role of education policy towards their integration more broadly are examined in a number of projects (Skourtou 1994, Pantazi 2006, Trouki 2006, Kyprianos, van Boeschoten 2006). On the other hand, participation in formal education and acquisition of language skills come out in many interviews with women migrants as a major concern – and a conscious life-strategy – for the prospects of their children (or “second generation” migrants).

6. Gender and migration: four research projects

The four projects presented below are carried out at four universities where there are teams working also on curriculum development to incorporate gender perspectives in Higher Education. These research projects are financed by the EU support framework (EPEAEK) and national sources (75%/25% respectively). There is a loose collaboration among teams, which started with an initial workshop to discuss questions of methodology (Syros 2005) and continued with occasional discussions in the context of conferences and seminars⁶. These projects are still in progress and only preliminary findings and interpretations have been presented in a number of conferences⁷.

6. 1. Gender, domestic labour and ethnic identity: the cross-cultural constitution of domestic space in Greece, University of the Aegean, Social Anthropology

This research project concerns paid domestic labour as migrant and local women's work in large urban areas. It focuses on the ways in which gender, in combination with ethnic identity, contribute to give meaning and constitute domestic labour. The project focuses on a comparative study of Filipino, Albanian and Greek women who work as paid domestic workers and examines the cultural and social terms in which these ethnic groups are associated with different sectors of domestic work. Divisions of tasks contribute to constitute the gendered identity of “housewife” and to negotiate relations with husband and children within the domestic space. It is argued that, in the relation with domestic workers, female identity is not constituted through caring for children and the domestic space, but rather through the management of a same-sex hierarchical

⁶ There is a closer collaboration between the teams of Panteion University and NTUA (6.3 and 6.4 below), working on everyday life and migrant women's work

⁷ Such Conferences and seminars include the “Seminars of Hermoupolis” in Syros (2005), where all four projects discussed methodology and presented preliminary steps; National Technical University of Athens Conference *Women and men in the spaces of the everyday*, in Athens (2005); IMEPO Conference *Migration to Greece: Experiences – Policies – Prospects* in Athens (2006); KEMO Conference *Interdisciplinary approaches to the minority and migrant phenomenon: the Greek conjuncture after the end of the Cold War*, in Athens (2006); and various seminars at the four universities

relation often formed with an ethnically “same” or “other” woman. Methodological choices include in-depth participant observation in the spaces of settlement, employment and sociality of domestic workers and life-histories of key informants. Quantitative and qualitative techniques are used in a dialogue between participant observation and life history approaches on the one hand and empirical sample survey on the other.

6.2 Gender dimensions of migration in South-Eastern Europe: integration, work and cross-cultural communication, University of Thessaly, Social Anthropology

The project examines the gendered dimensions of migrant flows in the Balkans, in the context of a densification of political, economic and cultural exchanges, following the developments of the post-communist era in the geopolitics of Southern Europe. Increasing cross-border movements and the emergence of new social relations and forms of political subjectivity and communication play a protagonist role in this process. The project touches on these developments, based on 60 in-depth interviews with migrant men and women in three age groups from Albania and Bulgaria, as well as on ethnographic research in their places of origin and destination and on visual material. The material from interviews is analysed from a cross-disciplinary perspective which studies the narrative strategies of women and men migrants and focuses on three aspects of their lived experience: integration, work and cross-cultural communication.

6.3. Gender and migrant populations. Aspects of social integration and social policy, Panteion University, Social Policy

The research project has a three-fold object: (a) to develop a cross-disciplinary investigation of the ways in which gender relations and new gender identities are formed in the process of social integration among migrant groups who have settled in Athens, both within migrant communities and in relation to local population groups; (b) to assess critically and from a gender perspective the role of state intervention in social policy directed to migrant populations; (c) to formulate proposals concerning the development of public policies aiming to improve the conditions of migrants’ integration and more specifically to promote equality between women and men. The project combines quantitative and qualitative methodologies and covers four interrelated areas of research: gender relations in everyday life (approached through a series of focus group discussions), gender and domestic work in houses and in cleaning firms (approached through quantitative survey and in-depth interviews with migrant women), research in institutions providing social services, mainly education, childcare, reproductive health (using interviews with migrant women and with employees in those services), cross-generation relations and gender (complementary interviews with migrant women of different generations).

6.4 Intersecting patterns of everyday life and socio-spatial transformations in the city. Migrant and local women in the neighbourhoods of Athens, National Technical University of Athens, Urban and Regional Planning

The research project aims to develop a gender perspective on the transformations which take place in central neighbourhoods of Athens, following the mass settlement of migrants. It brings together three lines of theoretical and empirical elaboration which are either approached separately or combined in pairs: gender, migration and (urban) space, in an attempted synthesis around the concept of everyday life. The project is organised in three interrelated sets of questions. The first looks into socio-spatial transformations in central neighbourhoods of Athens: the reasons why these neighbourhoods are chosen by migrants, transformations in the character and provision of services, developments in the housing market, uses of public spaces and social

infrastructure. The second set of questions looks into the changes in everyday lives of local and migrant women, whose everyday-ness are intersecting through the employer-worker relation and through the uses of urban space: patterns of integration of migrant women, where and how they find work, combinations of paid work and family, conditions of access to leisure and to urban life by migrant and local women. Finally, the third set of questions focuses on gender relations and on the constitution of individual and collective identities through the employer-worker relation: patterns, behaviours and relations which are constituted, adopted, transformed and mutually adapted in the employer-worker relation, gender divisions of labour and relations among women. Research methods include interviews with key informants, elaboration and mapping of statistical data, systematic observation and complete mapping of functions and uses in two neighbourhoods, biographical interviews with migrant women and local women employers of migrants.

These four projects specifically take issue with gender approaches to migration and introduce new topics in the on-going debate or lead to re-consider existing topics/questions, thereby modifying the terms of debate, as well as its foci. Among these topics we could identify the following:

- (i) Negotiations of gender relations among women in the context of paid domestic work and the (non) participation of men, nor the pressure for them to contribute, as was the case in the past.
- (ii) Meanings of inclusion/exclusion in relation to gender and with regard to aspects of isolation to do with live-in domestic work.
- (iii) The terms of “legalisation” and their relevance for women migrant domestic workers.
- (iv) The perspective of everyday life, including three main axes: paid work, family and leisure – and the ways in which these are constituted for local and for migrant women.
- (v) The neighbourhood as a field of social integration (eg via familiarisation with living together, network formation, use of public spaces and public services, etc).
- (vi) The importance of informal arrangements in the process of settlement and integration.

7. Research gaps

The preceding presentation of the state of the art in Greece points to some gaps in research or themes which have not been thoroughly examined.

In terms of “mapping” migrant women’s employment patterns, some segments of employment need to be examined through a gender perspective, such as tourism, agriculture and manufacturing.

Prostitution and trafficking, difficult as it may be, requires more detailed research, both from the perspective of migrant women who are involved and from the perspective of “clients”, i.e. local men who create demand and/or profit from the affordable supply of “sex services”. The operation of transnational trafficking networks and the status of Greece therein is yet another “black box” in this context.

Access of women migrants to welfare and social services (health, childcare, education etc) have to be further researched in order to inform policies which are important in terms of integration and not just informal paths of settlement and getting by.

Cross-generation research would reveal important aspects of the dynamics of change in the process of integration, as well as in processes of identity formation and mutual adaptations between locals and migrants. The prospects of second generation migrants (children of migrants who have either been born in Greece or have gone through the Greek education system) seem to be a major issue in migrant women’s life-strategies, an area of negotiating identity/otherness and a field of policy that has yet to be developed.

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