

# **GENDER, TRANSNATIONAL FEMALE MIGRATION AND DOMESTIC WORK IN GREECE: AN INTERSECTIONAL REVIEW OF RESEARCH ON FEMALE MIGRANTS' ACCESS TO LABOUR, HEALTHCARE AND COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS**

GÉNERO, MIGRACIÓN FEMENINA TRANSNACIONAL Y TRABAJO DOMÉSTICO EN GRECIA: UNA REVISIÓN INTERSECCIONAL DE LA INVESTIGACIÓN SOBRE EL ACCESO A LOS TRABAJADORES, LA SALUD Y LA COMUNIDAD COMUNITARIA

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## **ABSTRACT**

In global labour markets, migrant workers are mainly found in precarious, low-status/low-wage occupations in undeclared work and the underground/informal sector of the economy which demands a low paid, uninsured, mobile, temporary and flexible workforce. This article argues that migrant women are mostly employed as domestic workers in various countries that demand precarious, low-status/low-wage service workers and personal services. Feminist scholarship on migration underlines, that social constructions of gender and racial stereotypes drive men and women into specific roles and therefore dictate their

## **RESUMEN**

En los mercados laborales globales, los trabajadores migrantes se encuentran principalmente en ocupaciones precarias, de bajo rendimiento estadístico/de bajos salarios en el trabajo no declarado y en el sector clandestino/informal de la economía, que exige una mano de obra mal pagada, no asegurada, móvil, temporal y flexible. Este artículo argumenta que las mujeres migrantes están empleadas en su mayoría como trabajadoras domésticas en varios países que exigen trabajadores y servicios personales precarios, de bajo estatus/bajos salarios. La investigación feminista sobre migración subraya que las construccio-

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experiences. Social constructions of gender cannot be considered separate from social constructions of class, gender, race, ethnicity, and sexuality; female migrants are disassociated from family relationships, community associations, solidarity networks, and become susceptible to discrimination based on race and ethnicity, class and gender in the reception countries. This article provides an intersectional review of research on domestic work, healthcare and community networks in Greece (1990-2018). Intersectionality produces assumptions set in women's race and ethnicity, projecting unequal labour rights among sexes in Greece. Gender, race and ethnicity subject women to obedience, susceptibility and exploitation, confining them to domestic work, and low-paid jobs without social rights. Last but not least, this article suggests that ethnic background and unstable legal residence status works as a mechanism of control and suppression, which in turn force female migrants to accept low wages, refrain from demanding healthcare services and from seeking support from migrant community associations. Employers confiscate their documents, monitor them and threaten to report them to the authorities, thus institutionalising exploitation, leading to forceful application of discipline, consent, subordination, obedience and dependency of domestic workers.

**KEYWORDS:** gender, women, migration, domestic work, healthcare, community associations, Greece.

nes sociales de los estereotipos de género y raza llevan a hombres y mujeres a roles específicos y, por lo tanto, dictan sus experiencias. Las construcciones sociales de género no pueden considerarse separadas de las construcciones sociales de clase, género, raza, etnia y sexualidad; las mujeres migrantes no están asociadas con las relaciones familiares, las asociaciones comunitarias, las redes de solidaridad y se vuelven susceptibles a la discriminación basada en la raza y el origen étnico, la clase y el género en los países de recepción. Este artículo proporciona una revisión interseccional de la investigación sobre trabajo doméstico, salud y redes comunitarias en Grecia (1990-2018). La interseccionalidad produce supuestos establecidos en la raza y el origen étnico de las mujeres, proyectando derechos laborales desiguales entre los sexos en Grecia. El género, la raza y la etnicidad someten a las mujeres a la obediencia, la susceptibilidad y la explotación, limitándolas al trabajo doméstico y a los trabajos mal pagados sin derechos sociales. Por último, pero no menos importante, este artículo sugiere que los antecedentes étnicos y el estatus de residencia legal inestable funcionan como un mecanismo de control y supresión, que a su vez obliga a las mujeres migrantes a aceptar salarios bajos, se abstienen de exigir servicios de atención médica y de buscar apoyo de las asociaciones de comunidades de migrantes. Los empleadores confiscan sus documentos, los monitorean y amenazan con informarlos a las autoridades, institucionalizando así la explotación, lo que lleva a una aplicación contundente de disciplina, consentimiento, subordinación, obediencia y dependencia de los trabajadores domésticos.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** género, mujer, migración, trabajo doméstico, salud, asociaciones comunitarias, Grecia

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Before reflecting upon the socio-political parameters that affect female migration and their access to labour, healthcare and community associations in Greece, it is of a vital significance to contemplate first the exploitative nature of female migrant labour on a theoretical level. For neither migration in general nor female migration in particular is a new phenomenon. On the contrary, revisiting alone the refugee and migrant movements over the last century, one could argue that millions<sup>1</sup> of dislocated, persecuted, and stateless people moved within and outside of Europe and the States during the interwar period, WWII, the era of post-war West, Soviet East, as well as colonised and decolonised Asia (Kofman et al., 2000, pp. 4-5; for a good exegesis of the historical and financial aspect of migration see Koslowski, 2005; for a critique of global capitalist mode of production and migration see Espiritu, 2005). What is relatively new however, is female migra-

tion en masse, for current figures show that female migration constitutes “almost half of the world’s migrant population” (Yilmaz and Ledwith, 2017, p. 39).

During the early stages of the influx and from 1950s onwards it was primarily men who migrated mainly for economic reasons as Western Europe experienced rapid growth, even though women did follow this wave but not in large numbers. These developments however, coexisted under the shadows of cold war that sprung ethnic conflicts and wars in the Balkan Peninsula and the countries of the former USSR, along with the expansion of the European family that opened the doors to the “free movement” of people within and outside its periphery (Kofman et al., 2000, p. 5-6). The apogee of this phenomenon was best discerned towards the end of the 1970s and early 1980s, with women taking the lead during the 1990s. It was that particular decade that the economy went through major changes leading to the perpetuation of “labour shortages” in some sectors of the market such as the service sector where female migrants were called to fill in those gaps (Kofman et al., 2000, p. 7). Domestic work became racialised, feminised and the key ground for exploitation as “migrant women from Eastern Europe and the ‘global South’” took the lead in the homecare department (Rodríguez, 2010, p. 2; on the racialisation of domestic work see also Anderson, 1999).

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<sup>1</sup> Indeed, it was a turning point in the history of the 20th century, where countless, masses of stateless people and refugees lost their citizenship rights once the nation-states started to appear. Hannah Arendt in one of the most famous chapters in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* “Decline of Nation-State; End of Rights of Man” explains the tragedy of the refugee crisis of the previous century and the failures of the League of Nations to protect the minorities for “only nationals could be citizens, only people of the same origin could enjoy the full protection of legal institutions” (Arendt, 1968, p. 275).

The latter became the battlefield for conflict, gender inequality, discrimination and denial of rights, as it was women who left these positions in order to enter the industrial market only to be filled in by a new round of migrant women creating what Rodríguez called the “bond of exploitation” or what Irene Hardill wrote: “the twin separations - of gender roles and of homes from workplaces” as a key trend of industrial mode of production (Rodríguez, 2010, p. 2; Hardill, 2002, p. 46). At the same time, Anderson suggests that domestic work became critical in the European periphery due to the fact that more and more employees were seeking extra help at home for vulnerable family members (i.e. the elderly and children). Yet, what was ignored for quite some time was the “racialisation of paid domestic work” (Anderson, 1999, p. 113). Hence, the whole female argument behind international migration was absent, and not widely discussed in the disciplines of sociology or anthropology until 1980s (Mousourou, 2007, p. 159; Sharpe, 2001, p. 4). That drove scholars to study closer the field of migration in relation to gender and examine the mechanisms under which employment among migrant women was subject to exploitation and inequality. Feminist thought undeniably helped to exhibit this demarcation between men and women (Kambouri, 2007, p. 35-36).

Refugees and migrants were left unprotected without equal legal and labour rights (Yilmaz and

Ledwith, 2017, p. 39). Yilmaz and Ledwith declare that migrant women in particular, who are bound to work in domestic service, are always positioned at the bottom edge of the social and financial ladder, without security and under appalling and “exploitive conditions” (ibid). At the same time, domestic workers are employed with the absence of legal papers as they work without contracts, therefore rights are not acknowledged, falling victims of irregular working hours and exploitation (Deshingkar and Zeitlyn, 2015, p. 171). Following the latter, Rodríguez declares that “the privacy of the household” constitutes the fertile ground for “semi-feudal structures of exploitation and, in some cases, sexual violence” (Rodríguez, 2007, p. 65).

The popularity of domestic service according to scholars who studied class was epitomised in the submission of the working class to the middle class. But according to the famous scholar Beverley Skeggs, this discourse of analysis hid the gender dimension of domestic labour for as she argues: “caring employment was not an empty labour market position waiting to be filled (as some class theorists would argue) but caring workers are constructed as female” (Skeggs, [1997] 2002, p. 49). At the same time, one needs to be wary as to what happens to female migrants when they reach the age of retirement. Alongside the alienating conditions under which they work in a foreign country, their legal status under which

they find themselves *in* prohibits them for a retirement scheme proper (Parreñas, [2001] 2015, p. 184).

The previous argument perpetuates further critique on the issue of citizenship as a whole. Gender inequality that characterises transnational migration, recalls an all too familiar ordeal that has been systematically and stubbornly preserved from the emergence of the nation-states until now, namely, the creation of *estranged* populations. For as Dobrowolsky and Tastsoglou rightly suggest, on the one hand (and if one takes the case of the European Union), the latter expanded and opened its borders, crafting a unified coalition among its party members, on the other hand, the remnants of its doctrine (i.e. the nationalist lexicon or better the nationalist rhetoric of nation-states) conserved and still perceive the *new* or *different* as the “Other”; It thus licensed the concurrence of “insiders and outsiders”, projecting unequal sociopolitical and citizenship rights (Dobrowolsky and Tastsoglou, 2006, p. 10). As the authors argue:

[...] national identity, nationality and citizenship are not only about unequal power relations between women and men, but among groups variously involving conquest, colonization, and (im) migration along with other exclusionary practices [...] When it comes to citizens-

hip, gender, racialization and class are intertwined with political, social, cultural, psychological and economic repercussions (Dobrowolsky and Tastsoglou, 2006, p. 10).

Echoing the previous argument, Morrice suggests that the inherent antinomies of the nation-states stratify different populations but also women and men in the host countries. That leaves migrant women in precarious, low-status/low-wage jobs (i.e. denial of Human Rights) since their legal status (i.e. family reunification) puts them in a “dependent status” (Morrice, 2017, p. 604). Even though – and here the author has in mind the legal system in the UK – the legal procedure to apply for citizenship is the same and binding for all sexes, yet designed at the expense of migrant women, since the criterion of selection is based on skills, neglecting cultural differences and leaving them excluded (Morrice, 2017, pp. 605-607).

## 2. GENDER AND THE FEMINIST CONTRIBUTION

Rereading Simone De Beauvoir’s ([1949] 2010) critique of female exploitation within domesticity in her masterpiece *The Second Sex*, the old demons of female domestic labour return all too fashionable if one looks at today’s history of female migration and domes-

tic work. Her work became the front yard of debate among feminists for generations, who considered De Beauvoir's thesis on women as utterly pessimistic. In an attempt to contemplate her gloomy view, Chapman argued that De Beauvoir could find no way out to woman's destiny as *emancipation* was impossible within the attribution of motherhood in an androcentric world. Her only solution was "*not to have children and be men instead*" (Chapman, 1993, p. 195). Vintges argued that De Beauvoir understood biology as a "historical contingency" that enabled men to oppress and confine women at home. In other words, "men have grasped women's biology to relegate women to a specific role - the Other" (Vintges, 1996, p. 43). Simone De Beauvoir in *The Second Sex* writes:

Because housework alone is compatible with the duties of motherhood alone, she is condemned to domestic labor, which locks her into repetition and immanence; day after day it repeats itself in identical form from century to century (De Beauvoir, [1949] 2010, p. 98).

The feminist movement sought to reverse De Beauvoir's nihilism but also challenged the classical Marxist canon which failed to study female domestic labour as a distinct enquiry, i.e. as racialised (Rodríguez, 2010, pp. 94-95). However, Karl Marx himself in the *Ear-*

*ly Writings* understood female exploitation in relation to man's as a *sui generis* dialectical interrelationship. As he declared: "In the relationship with *woman*, as the prey and handmaid of communal lust, is expressed the infinite degradation in which man exists for himself [...]" (Marx, [1974] 1999, p. 347). Herbert Marcuse's conceptualisation of Marx's analysis of female exploitation reads as follows:

Marx has portrayed the terrible destruction of the proletarian family by large-scale industry from the middle of the nineteenth century: the exploitation of the labour of women and children dissolved the economic base of the old family; to the increased general exploitation was added the as it were additional exploitation of wife and children by the father, who was driven to the selling of both (Marcuse, [1936] 2008, p. 98).

According to Chapman, feminist traditions directly attacked the family model as an *ideological* barrier towards female emancipation, but all too often fell onto the same issues that Simone De Beauvoir sought desperately to overcome; that of *motherhood*. The purpose was to deconstruct the latter and struggle for the creation of a woman's movement as it was conceptualised in the feminist camp of the 1970s (Chapman, 1993, p. 191). Accor-



ding to Chapman, for the socialist feminists it was difficult to bypass motherhood as many “succumbed to the biological clock”, but it was not so much the case for the radical feminists, though too had their weak moments (ibid). Historically speaking, the feminist movement from the 1960s onwards tried to marry Marxist and anthropological narratives along with themes of family, housework, relationships, public versus private sphere. Yet the discourse of migration and gender within the limits of nation-states and citizenship was absent (Sinke, 2006, p. 85).

### **3. REVIEW OF RESEARCH ON FEMALE MIGRANTS’ ACCESS TO LABOUR, HEALTHCARE AND COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS IN GREECE**

During the period 1990-1995 scientific research in Greece focused on case studies of social stratification and social exclusion with emphasis on social mobility, urbanization and marginalization and on key issues such as the impact of work on specific ethnic groups. Between 1996 and 2000 research focused on the issues of segregation by nationality, race and gender with emphasis on collective identification, on the division of labour and on nationality and religion. During the period 2001-2006, Greek academic literature was committed to the investigation of the imple-

mentations and institutional discriminations in national social welfare, to the development of stereotypes and to issues of legalization, integration and immigration policies. From 2007 onwards, research activity in Greece has focused on case studies, the investigation of economic and cultural integration and social cohesion of immigrants and the analysis of specific issues and particular occupational groups of immigrants, by gender and employment, with emphasis on low-prestige jobs, and on obstacles in the access of social welfare and protection as well as on formation, participation and representation in community collectivities.

### **4. RESEARCH ON FEMALE MIGRANT DOMESTIC WORKERS IN GREECE**

In Greece, a commonly used expression “you work like a Filipina live-in maid” is merged in the popular culture, referring to a woman who works in low-wage services and performs multiple hard chores at home. Greek women, due to entering the waged labour force and also their occupational advancement and lifestyles, refrain from reproductive labour (chores/care of family members-the elderly) and migrant Filipina women are filling this social/labour void thus resulting in the commodification of reproductive labour (Parreñas, 2000, pp. 561, 562, 564). Moreover, the ability to employ a Filipina maid is also seen as a symbol of status, a cultural presti-

ge, or an exported-imported product of consumption with symbolic value (Tyner, 1994, pp. 604-606). According to Greek research, migrants in domestic work are depicted with broken family and community bonds, shattered networks of solidarity and disassociation from collectivities and claims as they are entrapped in exploitative servitude and servile and precarious, low-status/low wage labour. Research experience in the case of Greece includes the following studies:

Anderson and Phizacklea (1997, p. 1) stressed that throughout Europe there has been a massive increase in the demand for personal and household services, including child and elderly care. Domestic workers are from a wide range of nationalities, and although women from the Philippines tend to be more visible, partly because they are better organized but do not constitute the majority of domestic workers. Lazaridis (2000, p. 50) emphasizes that cuts in social protection or inadequate benefits of the welfare state have led to an increase in demand for undocumented, low-cost workers, such as in domestic services. The study of the “community” of the Filipinos, the forms of their collective organization in Athens and their association with specific professions and types of employment is the subject of Cañete (2001). Tastsoglou and Hadjicostandi (2003) focused on migrant women’s diverse experiences in the Greek labour market and the general trends of women’s participation

in informal labour markets, documents the multi-layered nature of their economic and social exclusion, and highlights the intersecting racialization and sexist practices shaping their experiences. Karakatsanis and Swarts (2003) focused on migrant women’s diverse experiences in the Greek labour market, documenting the multi-layered nature of their economic and social exclusion, and highlights the intersecting racialization and sexist practices shaping their experiences. Charalampopoulou (2004) focused on the living and working conditions of Albanian women who migrated to Greece and settled in Patras. Psimmenos and Kassimati (2006) explored the parameters that affect their work and stay conditions and ultimately their perceptions of the Greek institutional and social environment. Sakellis and Spyropoulou (2007) attempt to place migrant work in the hierarchical and exploitative relationships that prevail in the labour market. Immigrant domestic workers and their difficult daily routine is the focus of Vasilikou (2007). In recent years a large number of migrant women from the Balkan and East European countries, mainly working as domestic workers in residences or care services, usually close to elderly people or young children, are part of the economic and family life of many Greeks. Rapti (2007) mentioned that irregular female migrants comprise a cheap workforce which is unprotected by labour law, as their irregular residence or work



status excludes them. Pouloupoulou (2007) mentioned that female migrants mainly work as live-in domestic workers and are caregivers to children and the elderly; they do not occupy positions desirable by Greek women who do not accept this kind of employment. They work without social security coverage and have no time or money to seek medical assistance or undergo gynaecological tests.

Kassimati and Mousourou (2007, p. 143) noted that the position of the female migrant is determined by reference to her origin society, the community of co-ethnics in the host country and the host society. An understanding of the migratory phenomenon from the point of view of inter-family relations and the gender relations experienced by Albanian first and second-generation migrants in Athens is conducted by Thanopoulou (2007). The daily life of migrant women from Albania and Ukraine and the approach of the migrant woman as an active political subject is analysed by Kambouri (2007). The direct relationship between racism and sexism making women more vulnerable to unemployment and the position of migrants of both genders into the political economy of the country of destination, linked to informal, low-level work, makes women twice as vulnerable. The study of the living and employment conditions of female migrant women under a gender perspective, and the understanding of the peculiarities of female immigration in our coun-

ry on a pan-Hellenic scale, is examined by Alipranti et al. (2007). Stratigaki and Vaiou (2007) mention that access to nurseries and kindergartens for children of migrant domestic workers is a dual path to social integration. Formal and informal practices are related to access to nurseries and schools, as well as migrant mothers' reactions to xenophobic attitudes and behaviour by teachers and other children. Changes in personal characteristics and community relations, perceptions and ideas about what is desirable, what does security mean, how it is secured, and what are the new obligations to secure it, as well as the consideration of the objective conditions and of Albanian live-out cleaners and Ukrainian live-in domestic workers regarding access to social security, health and pre-school care of minors are the main subject of the research by Psimmenos and Skamnakis (2008). The study particularly emphasizes the welfare marginalization of domestic workers. Topali (2008, p. 153) notes in the early 21st century, Filippina live-in domestic workers are called upon to adapt their existence to the needs of employers as defined in each cycle of their lives, not to maintain moments or places of privacy, not to develop a strong sociality differentiated from domestic employers' demands and Greek habits.

Papataxiarchis, Topali and Athanasopoulou (2008) give emphasis to the micro-examination of work practice as a field of relationships

that is culturally formed by the strategies of the workers themselves and their employers. Parsanoglou and Tsiamoglou (2008) conducted a mapping survey of female migrant domestic workers in Greece focusing on employment and civic participation strategies. Kabouri and Lafazani (2008, p. 42) examined the transnational context in which the migration plan is realised as well as the different realities that define it. Liapi (2008, pp. 163-164) examined the impact of public policies and particularly of migration policy in the position of female migrants and the suggestion of policy proposals that support social integration and promote social cohesion. Zavou (2008, pp. 125-126) examines gender and migration from the viewpoint of the antiracist movement, via the organization of particular actions in cooperation with the Network for the Social Support to Refugees and Migrants. Lykogianni (2008) analysed the everyday experiences and practices of female migrant domestic workers residing in Athens. Lyberaki (2009) examined the care activities performed by migrant women and attempts to evaluate the size of the market for care, its implicit cost and ways to reorganize it fairly. Zachou and Kalerante (2009, p. 202) reported that first generation female immigrants from Albania are primarily employed as domestic helpers in Greece. Zavou and Kambourri (2009, p. 243) noted that the overlapping of private/public status and gender-based

division of labour make domestic work an invisible and informal type of employment and distance female migrant workers absent from political claims.

Maroukis (2010) studied through the concept of social capital the living conditions of economic migrants from Albania showing the strategies and networks with which they organize and imply their life and work in the host country's economy and society. Ireland (2011) examined the global and structural forces facilitating the movement of female migrant domestic workers (FMDWs) from developing regions to southern Europe and the Levant. Fouskas (2012) focused on the impact of work and employment on precarious, low-status/low-wage occupations on the collective organization and representation of migrants. One of the five groups researched is female migrants from the Philippines and in particular the repercussions of live-in domestic work on their participation in the migrant work association "Union of Solidarity of Filipino Workers in Greece, KASAPI-HELLAS" as well as in the Greek trade unions. The majority of Filipinos seem to have no membership in their work association and not to claim their labour rights. On the contrary, migrants develop individualist behaviours, rely on informal secondary networks to seek solidarity, and adopt alternatives to survival and protection. Hantzaroula (2012) examines live-in domestic workers from different

regions of Greece and refugees. It focuses on the technologies applied by employers to create a subject in their service and on the awareness of the workers of the mechanisms through which they were formed as subordinates. Bellas (2012) focused on the operation of private placement agencies. These appear to contribute to the reproduction of dominant gender, role and job divisions in order to maintain a boss and maid relationship. A servant who has to have specific working behaviour (“to be obedient” and “to work hard”) and especially personalities. Rozakou (2012) studied African domestic workers in Athens during the crisis in order to map their problems and strategies. Marouf (2013) investigated the situation of domestic workers who work and stay in Greece irregularly. Kambouri (2013) discusses migration, precarity and gender violence in the context of domestic and care work arguing that gender violence can be best conceptualized and understood from the theoretical perspective of precarity, taking as its starting point the narrative of a migrant woman from Zimbabwe living as a domestic and care worker in Greece. Angelidou (2013) based on ethnographic study among Bulgarian migrants women in Athens and the case of the attack against a Bulgarian cleaner/unionist Konstantina Kuneva, argues that female migration has to be understood as the consequence of the demise of the welfare state in former Eastern Europe and as

resulting from the subsequent application of neoliberal politics. Xypolytas (2013) through the case of Ukrainian domestic housewives in Attica examines the way in which one of the most exploitative occupations, that of domestic work of immigrant women, is reproduced. The study argues that the profession undermines family relationships and workers’ solidarity relationships. Lazarescu (2015) focuses on Romanian immigrant women employed in cleaning services in Greece through a comparative analysis of work and social experiences in specific types of work and employment both in the country of origin and in the host country, focusing on career notions and how they contribute to a career in the servitude that leaves immigrant domestic worker without any room for upward social mobility. Fouskas (2016a) examined what perceptions and practices migrant Filipina live-in domestic workers and Palestinian refugee unskilled manual labourers have developed towards collectivity and solidarity. Immigrants and refugees are entrapped in a context of modern slavery and bonded labour conditions, that of domestic work and hard unskilled manual labour.

In the context of the research project “Unveiling domestic work in times of crisis” (2014-2017) the following works were published: Psimmenos, I. (2017) traced the ways and the means used to secure the consent of female migrant domestic workers to deference by examining

their past and present conditions of work, the labour market, and their social status situation. Bada and Hantzaroula (2017) investigated paid domestic work in twentieth-century Greece by focusing on family relations and on domestic workers' experiences of and emotions toward their labour. Lazarescu and Kouzas (2017) examined the effects of the current recession in Greece on the careers of migrant domestic workers by tracing the changes in the way they understand their occupational and socioeconomic situation during the crisis. Xypolytas, Vassilikou and Fouskas (2017) examined the consequences of the economic crisis in Greece on the families and community organizations of migrant domestic workers. Skamnakis and Malekaki, (2017) examined the effects of the current recession in Greece on the careers of migrant domestic workers by tracing the changes in the way they understand their occupational and socioeconomic situation during the crisis.

## **5. RESEARCH ON FEMALE MIGRANTS' ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE SERVICES IN GREECE**

A large segment of migrants is cut off from the welfare system due to their irregular entry and stay into the country (Fouskas and Tsevrenis, 2014), whilst for those who have attained all necessary documents for residence and emp-

loyment, the volume of income contributions necessary for social insurance does not usually qualify them for either a pension or income subsidies like health, child care etc. Furthermore, informal hiring practices, temporary, precarious, low-status/low wage employment and work-share between different employers, subcontracting and the substantial difficulties workers have in the understanding of bureaucratic rules, make the situation worse (Fouskas, 2016b). Research experience in the case of Greece includes the following studies:

Papadopoulou and Dimoulas (2002) mentioned that the relationship between immigrants and the social services is poor or non-existent. Psimmenos and Kassimati (2003) note that social protection organizations and their staff, regulate, negotiate and compose new control forms regarding access to welfare services and the distribution of social rights for immigrants. In this way they determine the economic and cultural boundaries for the immigrant population in Greece through the formation of new labour values and practices on the part of civil servants. The general framework of the problems identified by the study of Getimis et al. (2003) regarding the operation of social services and healthcare services was related to staff shortages and infrastructure, large workload etc.

Regarding healthcare services, problems detected by the staff of social services in public health agencies are related to the temporary natu-

re of the services that these agencies provide to immigrants. Kapsalis (2003) notes that for immigrants, health is a complicated and complex issue and that the social exclusion they experience has serious consequences on their health. Prolonged unemployment, poor living conditions and poverty negatively affect the psychophysical wellbeing of immigrant populations and minorities in the country. Maratou-Alipranti et al. (2005) showed that regarding the benefits of insured foreigners there are no differences between natives and foreigners. However, many immigrants are not able to afford the cost of an emergency health situation in the case where they have inadequate insurance coverage. Kassimati and Mousourou (2007) indicate that for the female immigrant, health is inevitably linked to her ability to find work and thus be linked to the social security system. Objective and subjective factors influence accessibility and use of the basic social security goods by female immigrants, which leads to shaping their living conditions, habits, values and attitudes towards the state and social forms of solidarity and intensify the search for alternative, informal and individual forms of social protection.

Psimmenos and Skamnakis (2008) point out that female migrants face health insurance problems because of their type of employment which favours the development of uninsured working conditions. Even if fe-

male immigrants are insured, their access to healthcare services is difficult because of: (i) the discrimination they face in their contact with the services, (ii) communication problems and difficulties associated with their workload, (iii) low income and (iv) their life style which is dominated by temporariness. Kambourides (2008) discussed the status of immigrant access to health services in Greece. Mylonas (2009) focused on the issues of access of immigrants to social protection services in Greece. Zografakis, Kontis and Mitrakos (2009) drew conclusions regarding medical care and insurance of the immigrant population in the country resulting from the processing of the results of the Family Budget Survey 2004-2005. Linou et al. (2009) mentions that deficiencies, bureaucracy, long waiting lists, inadequate infrastructure and delays in the issue or renewal of residence permits or asylum seeker documents, result in obstructing the access of many immigrants to public healthcare services. Kotsioni (2011) notes that the equal access of immigrants to healthcare is crucial for their integration into the host society, the prevention of inequalities, but also for safeguarding public health. Inequalities against immigrants in the use of preventive health services (PAP test, mammogram) are observed. Immigrants reported more neglected health needs, and lower health status than the general population. Galanis et al. (2012) focus on the degree of knowledge

and use of health services in Greece by immigrants. Of all immigrants, 20.4% stated that they have good/very good knowledge of the health services in Greece, and most (60.2%) reported moderate knowledge. Almost half of the participants (49.7%) have used the health services in Greece in the last 12 months of their residence in Greece. Lack of understanding and speaking the Greek language is the most important problem of immigrants regarding their access to health services. Fakarou (2012) focused on the data processed from the National Health Survey (2009), the health of the population differs according to gender, age, marital status and education. Immigrants seem to be in better health than the natives, as it is a young aged population. Fouskas (2012) in his research on the effects of employment in precarious, low-status/low wage jobs on the collective organization of the Egyptians, Albanians, Bangladeshis, Palestinian and Philippine migrants on their migrant work associations, detects that representatives of associations undertake an informal mediator role for those in need of hospitalization. Mertens et al. (2012) mentioned that the problems in detention centres are the substandard hygiene conditions, especially overcrowding and lack of personal hygiene facilities, lack of basic supplies and lack of access to fresh air and physical exercise.

Athanasopoulou et al. (2013) emphasized that

literature shows that for the protection of public health, interventions of raising awareness of immigrants are necessary regarding the importance of prevention, the adoption of healthy lifestyles and the modification of behaviours concerning healthcare. Kitsaras and Baka (2013) highlighted the relationship between immigrants and the structures of healthcare service provided in Greece and the problems they have to face when they come in contact with healthcare services. Christofilakis (2013) examined the access of socially excluded groups in society and particularly of immigrants to healthcare services in Greece and the role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in this regard. Loannidi-Kapoulou and Vassilikou (2014) highlighted the value of Intercultural Mediation in health as a dynamic process, which aims to facilitate communication and contact between immigrants and their medical doctors, nurses and hospital management/administration in order to achieve better access to healthcare, taking into account their nationality and cultural background. Tsakalou (2014) approached the processes of social exclusion and social services to immigrant victims of sexual exploitation in Greece. Fouskas (2014) focused on the effects of precarious, low-status/low-wage work on the collective organization of Nigerian immigrants in Greece shows that hometown migrant community associations, such as the Nigerian Community in Greece, provi-



de information and assistance to the migrants for general problems such as: legalization, hospitalization and medical care, et al. Angeli (2016) conducted a case law review and interviews with key stakeholders focusing on what are the factors shaping the demand in the context of trafficking of human beings in the domestic work sector to open the debate on trafficking in domestic work in Greece. Teunissen et al (2015) offers insights on the barriers and levers in the provision of mental healthcare for undocumented migrants by general practitioners in Greece. Gkionakis (2016) focused on the Babel Day Centre, and highlighted the psychological first aid project, which was supported by the War Trauma Foundation and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees. Kousoulis, et al. (2016) mention that refugee health in Lesbos is not dissimilar to what can be expected. On arrival, trauma and hypothermia are the main emergencies.

Hermans et al. (2017) assessed medical problems at two Greek refugee sites at Lesbos island, to explore which care is needed and to assess how the provided healthcare can be improved. Papadakaki et al. (2017) focused on the examination of service providers' views on the barriers to migrant healthcare. The study identified major provider and system-related barriers in the provision of primary healthcare to migrants. Eonomopoulou et al (2017) describes common syndromes, the commu-

nicable disease profile and vaccination patterns in newly arrived migrants through a surveillance system that was based on medical records data as well as screening procedures. Irregular migrants that enter Greek borders are generally in good health. Tsitsakis et al. (2017) collected data from five of the six public hospitals in Macedonia and Thrace Region, and carried out a per clinic cross tabulation analysis of admission diagnosis and citizenship variables. The hospitalisation rate of migrant patients due to chronic medical conditions is statistically significantly lower compared to non-migrant patients. Bjertrup et al. (2018) aimed to understand refugees' mental health and narratives of social suffering in regard to experienced violence, the effect of current border closures, and the lack of an onward journey. Refugees in Greece experience psychosocial distress and social suffering as a consequence of their uncertain and disrupted lives and the loss of social networks. Joseph et al. (2018) explored the main challenges to accessing healthcare for refugees in Greece and how these have changed between 2015 and 2018. Provision of healthcare for refugees by NGOs and international bodies has a number of challenges with a lack of translators identified as a key constraint.

Kakalou, et al. (2018) via a descriptive cross-sectional study aimed at analysing the demographic and clinical characteristics of

the population that received services from PRAKSIS. Infectious diseases decreased as the population moved from the islands to the Athens-Piraeus Port, while all other disease categories increased in relative frequency, the difference being statistically significant. Farhat et al. (2018) documents the types of violence experienced by migrants and refugees during their journey and while settled in Greece and measures the prevalence of anxiety disorders and access to legal information and procedures. It provides important data on experiences in different refugee settings and reports the high levels of violence experienced by Syrian refugees during their journeys, the high prevalence of anxiety disorders, and the shortcomings of the international protective response. Gkolfinopoulou et al (2018) analysed data on number of cases per age group for 14 syndromes of public health interest that were collected daily from primary healthcare units of refugee/migrant hosting centres in the country, along with the number of consultations from any cause. Infections represented a small proportion of refugees' health problems. Hemono, et al. (2018) explore stakeholders' perspectives on delivering health services to Syrian refugees at the humanitarian response in Greece from 2015 to 2017. Services should provide human-centred care and gender concordant services by incorporating female healthcare providers and interpreters into medical

teams. Poole et al. (2018) provided data about the mental health status of migrants in transition due to protracted asylum procedures. Syrian migrants face an extraordinarily high burden of major depression disorders as they seek asylum. Maroukis (2018) explores the trajectory of migrant care workers who moved on from the insecurity of the informal labour market of domestic work to work as exclusive bank nurses in hospitals. It reveals how during the crisis these care workers seek refuge in the informal labour market where their journey started. Psinos (2018) examined existing literature about how newly arrived and long-term migrants' health and well-being were affected by the economic crisis in Greece. Fouskas (2018) investigates the cases of Bangladeshi, Filipina, Nigerian, Palestinian and Pakistani migrant workers and how the frame of their work and employment in precarious, low-status/low-wage jobs affect their perceptions and practices regarding health and access to healthcare services. Migrants are entrapped in a context of isolative and exploitative working conditions, i.e., in unskilled labour, textile work, street-vending, personal services, care and domestic work, which lead them to adopt a self-perception in which healthcare and social protection are not a priority. Marmani (2018, pp. 193-194) noted that female asylum seekers are prone to more financial and psychological problems and risks compared to men, due to

poor living conditions, time-consuming bureaucracy regarding recognition of social status, casual and uninsured work and limited information on health and hygiene. Rojek et al. (2018) mentioned that the most common condition was acute respiratory illnesses. Clinicians often made a comprehensive clinical assessment, especially for common syndromes of respiratory and gastrointestinal conditions, but documented their findings less frequently. Matlin et al. (2018) mention that women, including pregnant women, comprise half of all refugees, asylum seekers and migrants and are often disproportionately represented in vulnerable groups, such as victims of gender-based violence, human trafficking and sexual exploitation.

## **6. RESEARCH ON FEMALE MIGRANTS' PARTICIPATION TO COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS IN GREECE**

What has been neglected and/or partially researched in Greece is community representation and participation of male and female migrants in migrant community associations, labour associations and trade unions, in contrast to other countries, such as the United Kingdom, the United States and Canada. Migrant community associations develop different activities at different times. The economic, political and cultural influences affect

the ways in which these associations operate and develop. At the same time, these factors also influence how their members behave and perceive associations. Research experience in the case of Greece includes the following studies:

The study of Kassimati (1992) examines occupational mobility, the migration process, work, socioeconomic conditions, and social exclusion, and investigates the associations and membership in them. Antoniou (1995) approached the issues and perceptions raised by immigrants from Armenia concerning their particular collective identity. Romaniszyn's (1996) studies the social and work context of the undocumented/irregular Pole labourer in Athens and investigates how the Polish Catholic Church aids the immigrants. As part of their research on domestic work Anderson and Phizacklea (1997) focused on immigrant associations in Greece, the Filipino community KASAPI-Hellas and on the Pan-African Union and the Union of Refugees from Ethiopia. Petronoti and Zarkia (1998) in the context of the study they focused on a local immigrant association, that of Union Eritreans of Greece whose offices substitute the meaning of Eritrean territory in Athens. Chtouris, Psimmenos and Tzelepoglou (1999) focused on the exploration of the characteristics of the Muslim minority in Greece, analysing both the Muslims of Thrace and the smaller Muslim groups in

the Dodecanese Islands and problems faced by Muslim refugees and immigrants who reside in Athens. Petronoti (1999) attempted to record the main migrant community associations in Athens. Petronoti (2001) mentioned that immigrants try to overcome constraints by adopting strategies such as cultural heritage and maintaining links with the countries of origin, via collective mobilization i.e. formation of social networks and establishment of ethnic associations. Iosifides (2001) stated a low level of ethnic, community or trade union organization of immigrants that participated is detected in the survey, except for the Philippine immigrants, whose level of community and union organization was of a satisfactory level. Cañete (2001) conducted a brief record of the Philippine organizations; a variety that shows that the Philipinos demonstrate their ability to handle serious problems they and their families face. Antoniou (2003) underlined that many ethnic communities moved from praying in residences, to rented rooms in less developed areas of Athens. In recent years, immigrants have been able to establish Muslim religious and cultural associations which cooperate with associations based on nationality. Dimoulas and Papadopoulou (2004) attempted a recording of the relationship with organized immigrant communities. This relationship appears weak, as only 17.3% of respondents belonged to an association. Schubert (2004) focused her study generally

on immigrant associations in the Athens area. Gropas and Triandafyllidou (2005) in their research on civil participation, point out that lack of high visibility of organizations does not mean that immigrant associations are not active in Greece.

Iosifides, Lavrediadou, Petracou and Kontis (2007) examine how social capital affects the integration of Albanians in Greece in Athens and Mytilene. The majority do not participate in any organization/association concerned with immigration issues. Tonchev (2007) noted that Asian immigrant associations provide multiple activities such as: organization of cultural and sport events and Greek language courses, courses in the native language for the children of Asian immigrants and also in the English language, provision of information and practical advice on procedural matters, interpreters and aid in finding lawyers for court cases of association members. Bagavos, Papadopoulou and Simeonaki (2008) examined the institutions responsible for providing services to immigrants and the immigrant representatives themselves who deal with those agencies. Topali (2008) focused on the study of the religious phenomenon through the example of the Philippine Protestant Church Iglesia in Cristo and compares religious participation to participation in the collective organization KASAPI-Hellas. Kalerante and Zachou (2009) focused on the growing number of Albanian immigrant as-

sociations and attempted to categorize them by creating a non-restrictive standard: cultural associations with reference to the place of origin, associations of friendship, associations of artists and intellectuals, ethnic associations with reference to the place of residence and secondary institutions. Tsakiridi (2009) mentioned that members of migrant associations face multiple problems. They approach their representatives primarily for those issues because of the status and position of being an immigrant and less because of religious or racial identity. Papadopoulos (2009) attempted to prepare an information manual on immigrant associations operating in Greece. The study confirms the absence of immigrant collectivities from the dialogue to improve immigration policies. Koukouzikis (2010) explored the experiences of Sub-Saharan African women in Greece. The role of the forms of their self-organization were highlighted. Maroukis (2010) concluded that Albanian immigrant associations may not have wide appeal in this community but are active and are slowly developing a recognizable presence in the socio-political realm of Albanian migration. A division among immigrant associations on grounds of ethnic origin was identified.

Lazarescu (2010) offered an overview of migration from Romania to Greece. The main organization of the Romanians Stephen the Great is weak due to its role being limited to cul-

tural events. Following the accession of Romania to the EU, there has been no increase in the degree of active involvement and participation of Romanians in their community. Nikolova (2010) made a recording and investigation of Bulgarian emigration and mention that the association Vasil Levski (1998-2003) offered courses in Greek and Bulgarian and free counselling sessions regarding the legalization of 2001. Han Asparuch and Intelkt are the most active associations in this direction. Maroufof (2010) reviews migration from Poland to Greece. The research identifies the existence of about 15 Polish organizations in total but neither the representatives nor the associations are active any more. Poles are mainly concentrated in the Attica region in Little Poland, an area close to the Catholic Church of Savior Christ. Nikolova and Maroufof (2010) mentioned that Georgian associations are cultural, aiming at the conservation of Georgian tradition, they offer traditional dance courses, teach the Georgian language to Georgian children, provide necessities for integration in Greek society. Ukrainian associations can be contacted only by phone as they do not have permanent offices. Lazarescu and Broersma (2010) investigated the reasons for entry, residence and the social support networks of Pakistani and Bangladeshi immigrants. Both appeal to formal associations for help. The representatives are living in Greece for a long period of time

and have become familiar with the Greek language and bureaucratic procedures.

Papageorgiou (2011) examined the role of religion and the community of Indian Sikhs in Greece. Their first, most populous and better organized association, is the Indian Cultural Association in Greece. In each region of Greece where a large number of Indians live, an association with its own administration is formed. Fouskas (2012) focuses on the cases of Egyptian, Albanian, Bangladeshi, Palestinian and Philippine migrants in Athens and how the frame of their work and their employment in low-status/low-wage affects their participation in their migrant work associations Union of Egyptian Workers in Greece/EL RAPTA, Albanian Immigrant Workers Union in Greece, Bangladeshi Immigrant Workers Union in Greece, Union of Palestinian Workers in Greece and Union of Solidarity of Philippine Workers in Greece/KASAPI-Hellas in Athens and in the Greek trade unions as well. The majority of migrants does not claim established workers' rights and does not seek membership in any associations and unions and seek alternative solutions to achieve survival and protection. Christopoulou (2013, pp. 13-14) mentioned that a variety of temples and worship places (gurudwaras) exist in the areas that the Indian communities live. Some are also linked to particular cultural associations and associations exist beyond the religious affiliation lines. Papadopou-

los, Chalkias and Fratsea (2013) examined the challenges that immigrant associations and non-governmental organizations faced in contemporary in Greece mainly through spatial data. They provide an analysis of the geographical distribution and the differences that these two types of organizations have. Fouskas (2014) focused on the consequences low-status/low-wage work has on the collective organization and representation of Nigerian immigrants in Greece and how the frame of their work and their employment affects their participation in the immigrant hometown association Nigerian Community in Greece and in Greek trade unions. Nigerians depend on informal and impersonal social networks in search of solidarity and thus resort to alternative means of ensuring survival in Greek society, far from collectivities. Lakka and Konstantinou (2016) attempted to chart the specific characteristics and needs of the communities of refugees and immigrants living in Greece. Vathakou and Lalagianni (2017a) investigated obstacles encountered by immigrants in their efforts to integrate, into Greek social and working environment. Manos et al. (2017) stated that the collective activity and representation of Albanian immigrants is related to the promotion of issues related to their stay and their legal status in Greece. Vathakou and Lalagianni (2017b) explored the process of cultural integration of Nigerian migrant women in Greece. Ch-



ristopoulou and Leontsini (2017) focused on migrant women's associations and networks in Athens and examined the condition of prospects of migrant women for associational activity and their results. It is emphasised that labour, motherhood and culture comprise domains of action for the formation of networks and associations.

## 7. CONCLUSION

International Labour Organization (ILO) (2018) emphasises that at present, domestic workers often face very low wages, excessively long hours, have no guaranteed weekly day of rest and at times are vulnerable to physical, mental and sexual abuse or restrictions on freedom of movement (ILO, 2018). In this article we have argued that exploitation of domestic workers can partly be attributed to gaps in national labour and employment legislation, which often reflects discrimination along the lines of sex, race and caste (ILO, 2018). Migrant women, for example, receive lower pay and have fewer employment opportunities than other groups of workers (Balourdos and Chysakis, 2012). Feminist scholarship on migration underlines that in the context of globalization social constructions of gender and racial stereotypes drive men and women into specific roles and organize their experiences (Parreñas, 2000, pp. 563, 564, 560-581). Social constructions of gender

cannot be considered separate from social constructions of class, race, nationality and country of origin (Tyner, 1994). Migrant women are employed as domestic workers thus as labour migrants in various countries that continuously demand precarious, low-status/low-wage service workers and domestic work (Tyner, 1994, p. 608; Parreñas, 2000, p. 563). Under precarious, low-status/low wage jobs migrants are exposed to employment-generating activities that do not guarantee safety. International division of labour and the feminisation of migrant wage labour based on patriarchy and subordination as well as class, gendered and racial stereotypes are manifested within the labour recruitment process, helping to channel migrant Filipina women of the migration flows into the domestic services (Tyner, 1994, pp. 690-594; Parreñas, 2000, p. 563). Regarding domestic work, more than 67.1 million (ILO, 2016:2-3) women and men of different ages, classes and nationalities are pushed nowadays to work in businesses, households and for individual employers undertaking various tasks such as cleaning and providing care, companionship and supervision (Psimmenos, 2013, pp. 15-17). In the above, one could add all types of helpers for the care and safety of persons and properties, beauty care, entertainment, agricultural work, manual labour, constructions, crafts, food services, entertainment industry, itinerant trade and the street economy occupa-

tions, all of which are characterized by similar types of inequality, the erosion and deregulation of labour gains, collectivities and capabilities of tackling labour market exploitability (Psimmenos, 2013, pp. 15-17). Moreover, this workforce is unable to state any claims and intervene on labour issues in a collective and organized manner and is exceptionally vulnerable to alienation, exclusion, ill treatment and to extreme exploitation and vulnerability. Migrant Filipina live-in domestic workers are trapped in a context of modern slavery and bonded/unfree/forced labour conditions and being invisible or hidden from view are confined in more vulnerable positions and exacerbating exploitative practices.

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