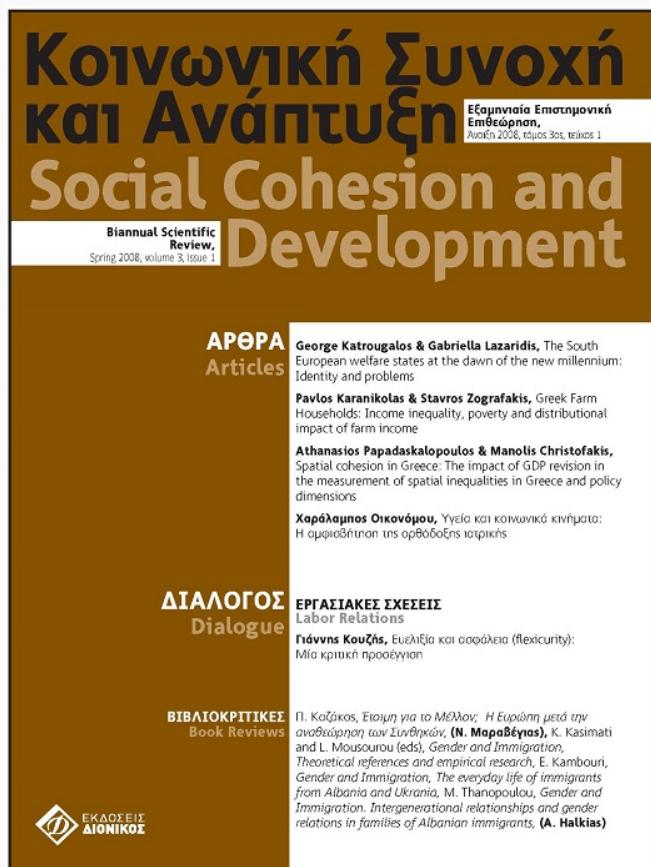


Social Cohesion and Development

Vol 3, No 1 (2008)



Κοινωνική Συνοχή και Ανάπτυξη
Social Cohesion and Development

Biannual Scientific Review, Spring 2008, volume 3, issue 1

ΑΡΘΡΑ Articles

George Katrougalos & Gabriella Lazaridis, The South European welfare states at the dawn of the new millennium: Identity and problems
Pavlos Karanikolas & Stavros Zografakis, Greek Farm Households: Income inequality, poverty and distributional impact of farm income
Athanasios Papadaskalopoulos & Manolis Christofakis, Spatial cohesion in Greece: The impact of GDP revision in the measurement of spatial inequalities in Greece and policy dimensions
Χαράλαμπος Οικονόμου, Υγεία και κοινωνικό κινήμα: Η σφραγίδωση της ορθοδοξίας ταπετίς

ΔΙΑΛΟΓΟΣ Dialogue

ΕΡΓΑΣΙΑΚΕΣ ΣΧΕΣΕΙΣ Labor Relations
Γιάννης Κουζής, Ευελιξία και σοφάλεια (flexicurity): Μία κριτική προσέλγυση

ΒΙΒΛΙΟΚΡΙΤΙΚΕΣ Book Reviews

Π. Κοζάκος, Επιμήν για το Μέλλον: Η Ευρώπη μετά την αναθεώρηση των Συνθηκών, (Ν. Μαραθένας), K. Kasimati and L. Mousourou (eds), *Gender and Immigration, Theoretical references and empirical research*, E. Kambouri, *Gender and Immigration. The everyday life of immigrants from Albania and Ukraine*, M. Thanopoulou, *Gender and Immigration. Intergenerational relationships and gender relations in families of Albanian immigrants*, (A. Halkias)

ΕΚΔΟΣΕΙΣ ΑΙΓΑΙΝΙΚΟΣ

K. Kasimati and L. Mousourou (editors), *Gender and Immigration, Theoretical references and empirical research*, (vol. I), Athens: Gutenberg Publishers, p.p. 299, 2007 (in Greek) E. Kambouri, *Gender and Immigration. The everyday life of immigrants from Alba*

Alexandra Halkias

doi: [10.12681/scad.10062](https://doi.org/10.12681/scad.10062)

Copyright © 2016, Alexandra Halkias



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/).

To cite this article:

Halkias, A. (2016). K. Kasimati and L. Mousourou (editors), *Gender and Immigration, Theoretical references and empirical research*, (vol. I), Athens: Gutenberg Publishers, p.p. 299, 2007 (in Greek) E. Kambouri, *Gender and Immigration. The everyday life of immigrants from Alba*. *Social Cohesion and Development*, 3(1), 81–83.
<https://doi.org/10.12681/scad.10062>

K. Kasimati and L. Mousourou (editors)

Gender and Immigration, Theoretical references and empirical research, (vol. I),

Athens: Gutenberg Publishers, p.p. 299, 2007 (in Greek)

E. Kambouri,

Gender and Immigration. The everyday life of immigrants from Albania and Ukrانيا (vol. II),

Athens: Gutenberg Publishers, p.p. 261, 2007 (in Greek)

M. Thanopoulou,

Gender and Immigration. Intergenerational relationships and gender relations in families of Albanian immigrants (vol. III),

Athens: Gutenberg Publishers, p.p. 268, 2007 (in Greek)

Three new books on the topic of Gender and Immigration in Greece were published by Gutenberg Press in Athens, Greece. Each one appears as a volume in a series as follows: *Theoretical references and empirical research* (vol.1) by Koula Kasimati and Loukia M. Mousourou, *The everyday life of immigrants from Albania and Ukrانيا* (vol.II) by Eleni Kambouri and *Intergenerational relationships and gender relations in families of Albanian immigrants* (vol.III) by Maria Thanopoulou. These volumes report on fairly extensive research that was conducted in Athens from 2004-2007 within the framework of the research program Pythagoras funded by the European Union. The research itself consisted of four distinct parts, as the two scientific directors report in the first volume: a) "Gender Relations and Daily Life" directed by Maria Stratigaki and Eleni Kambouri, b) "Work and Gender" by Ioanni Sakelli, c) "The Service Sector: Health, Social Insurance, Education: the access of women who are immigrants from Albania and Ukrانيا" by Iordanis Psimmenos and Christopher Skamnaki d) "Intergeneration relations and gender relations" by Maria Thanopoulou. These four research projects yielded the aforementioned three volumes.

All together, these books constitute a useful contribution to the study of immigration in Europe, and specifically to the study of the experience of women who are immigrants, as well as that of the women of the nation of reception. In addition, the substantive focus on domestic workers—one of the main occupations of immigrants to Greece-- and on immigrants specifically from Albania and Ukrانيا who work and live in Athens, establishes the research field in such a way as to maximize access to the crux of immigration in Greece. Last, though not at all least, given the traditional quantitative approach adopted by the majority of studies of immigration in Greece, the methodological focus on qualitative fieldwork, with a combination of extensive interviews (including life history interviews) and guided group discussion, renders these three books a significant addition to the existing literature of the social sciences on immigration in Greece. Within its context, the core qualitative design of the research project these books report on is bold: on-site fieldwork with extensive interviews and focus groups that center on the Albanian and Ukrainian domestic workers themselves, as well as others they have immediate contact with such as the Greeks who hire them to clean their homes, and the Greeks who work in the public services they need to access.

The first volume, *Theoretical references and empirical research* (vol.1) by Koula Kasimati and Loukia M. Mousourou, is divided into three parts which work to present the main coordinates of the larger research project, a summary of the results of each of the four modules of the research and an overview of the findings that attempts to put together a larger picture. The axes that are traced through each of the research modules are as follows: a) Access-Isolation, b) Emancipation-Dependency c) Modernization-The pull of tradition d) Inclusion-Marginalization.

While this scientific project of synthesis and “inclusion,” so to speak, is itself fraught with some of the difficulties of pulling together heterogeneous elements that mark the social project of “including” immigrants in some, phantasmatic, larger, purportedly inherently coherent whole, the attempt provides some useful, and intriguing, narratives for furthering understanding of immigration in Greece. For example, the authors find that an important factor affecting the experience of women immigrants to Greece is whether these women came to Greece on their own (as did most of the Ukrainian women of the sample), with their families, or only with their children. While the immigrant woman coming to Greece as a head-of-household with her children, carries a heavy burden in her effort towards “assimilation,” the process of having children who attend a Greek school and become members of Greek society was actually found to facilitate the integration of their mother. Thus, Kasimati and Mousourou conclude that with regards to social policy targeting immigrants to Greece, it is important that the cultural specificities of “variables” such as age and gender be taken into consideration in conjunction with the significance of familial ties and relations.

The second volume, *The everyday life of immigrants from Albania and Ukraine* (vol.II) by Eleni Kambouri focuses on the material drawn from two focus group discussions with Greek women who hired Ukrainian and Albanian domestic workers, six focus group discussions with Albanian domestic workers and one focus group with Ukrainian domestic workers. This book is attune to the multiplicity of standpoints and nuances the analysis of the larger research project by exploring Greek domestic space as a dynamic field which becomes, via the presence of immigrant women, a field of negotiation for national and gendered identities.

The material from these focus groups is quite interesting. For example, the excerpts presented of how Albanian women saw Greece when they first arrived graphically portray a mixture of awe and fear, alienation and excitement. One woman relays her first experience of traveling in a Greek bus where there was no indication of how to get a ticket and what to do with it, and the Greek who was checking passengers so that they were “foreigners” and let them go; another comments on her fascination with the image of women driving. These excerpts also display vividly a tendency to rationalize racism, to take on part of the “blame” for displays of Greek racism and nationalism. One woman is shown to comment that “we also have our mistakes” when she says that Greek annoyance with “noise” from Albanian households is justified since “when someone came in, or left, we would all go out to greet them and we made noise... And this noise brought an annoyance.” Ultimately, Kambouri convincingly argues that the presence of immigrant women within Greek households and their contribution to the reproduction of daily life in Greece contains the potential to trouble multiple axis of Greek national “normalcy” at the same time that it challenges the gendered national identities of all involved.

The third volume, *Intergenerational relationships and gender relations in families of Albanian immigrants* (vol.III) by Maria Thanopoulou explores the intergenerational and gender relationships of Albanian families living in Athens. The book reports on 25 semi-structured interviews with Albanian men and women, indicating with appropriate self-reflexivity, some of the difficulties involved in securing the sample, conducting the discussions, as well as transcribing the material gathered. The results are presented both according to the axes of investigation, and according to the material gained for each generation. This enables a graphic and in-depth depiction of the dynamics characterizing identity formation in the context of a social project of "inclusion" for the particular population. One of the main findings, that the book chooses to conclude with, consists of the necessity for a deeper understanding of the national and gendered history of familial and intergenerational relations that accompanies immigrants to Greece. As Thanopoulou has compellingly shown in the analysis, Albanian immigrants to Greece carry with them a culture of familial relating that must be contended with if the receiving nation is to achieve any semblance of "integration."

In sum, these three books probe different aspects of the role played by gender in the interface between Albanian and Ukrainian domestic workers and Greeks. The often suggestive ethnographic material, and the at times penetrating analysis, along with the systematic over-arching effort to move from the micro-level to the macro and back, together render these books an important step in the project of building in-depth knowledge concerning the specificities of gendered immigration, and gendered immigrant-reception, in the contemporary Greek context. However, to steer more clearly away from the risks of the imprint of colonialist discourse on this type of research, among other reasons, the next step that is needed is for similar qualitative work in Athens which, however, would be based on discussions held in the language of the populations being researched.

Alexandra Halkias,
Panteion University