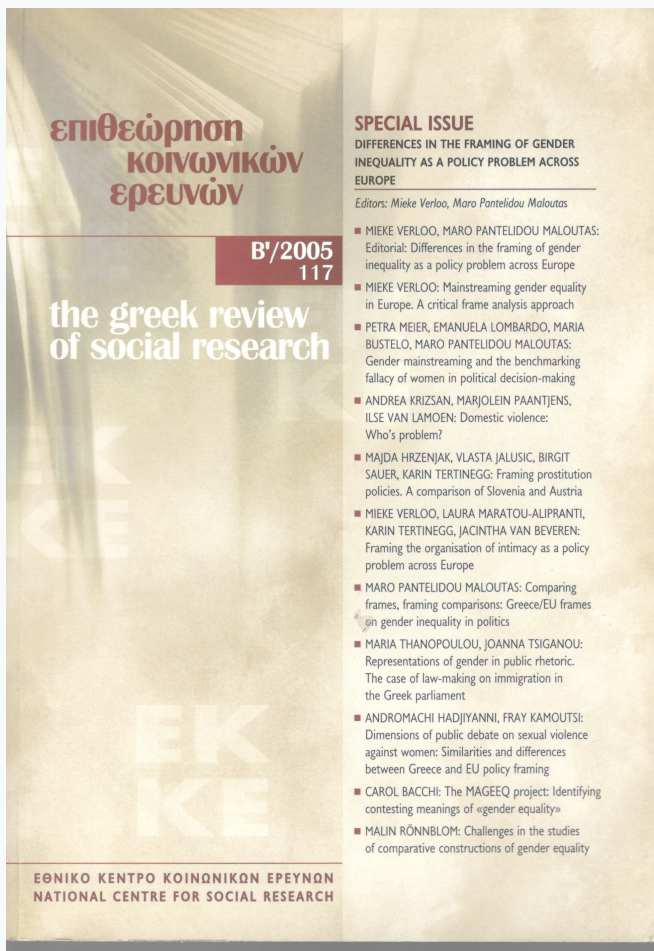


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## Representations of gender in public rhetoric. The case of law-making on immigration in the Greek parliament

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## REPRESENTATIONS OF GENDER IN PUBLIC RHETORIC. THE CASE OF LAW-MAKING ON IMMIGRATION IN THE GREEK PARLIAMENT

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### ABSTRACT

*This article intends to investigate the way in which gender stereotypes, even when latent, are so potent that manage to emerge, leaving their gender inscription on social issues publicly debated in neutral terms. Even in cases of competing political actors representing different fragments of the political spectrum, these stereotypes are actually reproduced identically. They frame in the same way the public speech of politicians regardless of their gender. These arguments are evidenced in the case of law-making on immigration in Greece through the examination of the relevant parliamentary debates. In fact, the analysis of the debate on a single legal provision concerning the issuing of work permits to foreign artists is proven more than adequate for understanding the ways in which social representations on gender are implicated in public rhetoric.*

### INTRODUCTION

Since the 1990s, immigration into Greece has been identified as one of the main contributing factors to processes of social transformation and change.<sup>1</sup>

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1. See for example, K. Kassimati, 2003a, pp. 23-44; M. Veikou, 1998, pp. 479-487; M. Pavlou, 2004a, pp. 367-402. For a review of bibliography see M. Petronoti and A. Triandafyllidou (2003), *Recent Immigration Flows to Greece*, Athens, EKKE, Working Paper 2003/2.

A large number of immigrants are women<sup>2</sup> who represent a «dark figure», since a big part of them is not statistically calculated. Most of them are occupied in the informal sector of the economy or are engaged in illegal or semi-legal activities (i.e. hustling, prostitution, trafficking etc.).<sup>3</sup> They possess a low «status» within their own ethnic group as well as within the society of their host country (in our case Greece). A review of Greek literature on immigration and gender reveals that relevant research remains limited and mainly centered around issues of employment.<sup>4</sup> It also remains limited as far as social representations and stereotypes of gender are concerned.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, existing research focusing on public discourse on immigration does not seem to place specific emphasis on gender.<sup>6</sup> More generally, as it is evidenced through international literature on gender and migration, relevant recent qualitative research tends to a greater use of methods such as interviews, life-histories and participant observation<sup>7</sup> and to a lesser degree discourse analyses.<sup>8</sup>

However, public discourse is suitable for approaching migration from the point of view of gender since it mirrors society itself. It is addressed to broad audiences and forecasted by multiple social and political actors representing a broad political spectrum. It is produced and reproduced in multiple social spaces<sup>9</sup> such as formal structures and decision-making centers, the Parliament, political parties, associations, mass media, scientific, academic and research activities or publications. Moreover, it is institutionally proactive since it influences policy and law-making processes. Therefore, the

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2. L. Maratou-Alipranti and R. Fakiolas, 2003, pp. 165-188.

3. N. Karakatsanis and J. Swarts, 2003, pp. 239-270; E. Pouloupoulos, 2003, pp. 271-307.

4. See for example, E. Tastsoglou and L. Maratou-Alipranti (eds), 2003, «Gender and international migration: Focus on Greece», *The Greek Review of Social Research*, Special Issue, No 110, A; K. Kasimati, 2003b, pp. 157-192; G. Lazaridis, 2000, pp. 49-79; I. Psimmenos, 2000, pp. 81-102.

5. These themes are dealt with in certain analyses as, indicatevely, in G. Lazos, 1997; G. Lazos, 2002a, 2002b.

6. See for example, among others, A. Triandafyllidou, 1999, pp. 186-205; A. Triandafyllidou, 1998, pp. 488-499; P. Grigoriou, 2003; M. Pavlou, 2004b, pp. 65-70; F. Tsibiridou, 2004, pp. 155-164.

7. K. Willis and B. Yeoh, 2000, p. xii.

8. See for example, R. Nagar, 2000, pp. 228-250.

9. See indicatively, C. Psychopedis, 1996, pp.25-36; A. Cotzabasi, 1996, pp. 79-90; D. Charalambis, 1996, pp. 95-99; Joe Bailey, 2000, pp. 381-401; J. R. MacCarthy and R. Edwards, 2001, p. 765.

study of public discourse and rhetoric constitutes a suitable tool for understanding how society constructs opinions, laws or policies, on a variety of issues. In this sense it is a privileged discourse for exploring social processes, practices, attitudes and representations. As it has already been stated «language is not a transparent medium through which already formed ideologies identities and attitudes are expressed, but rather actively constructs socially shared representations of the world».<sup>10</sup>

For the purpose of this article, the House of Parliament was selected as a privileged social space for the study of the transformation of opinions to laws and to formal policies. Moreover, Parliament represents a unique formal structure with legislative competency and a significant forum of public debate. Additionally, the House of Parliament Archive, rich in material involving proposals, draft-laws, Acts, political and social practices, offers access to a variety of different conceptualizations regarding official policies and official and unofficial social practices. Here, the focus rests on recent draft-laws and parliamentary debates on immigration.

The identification of the material upon which the analysis was built, required the recording of all references on immigration through parliament files: Acts produced during a pre-determined period (1997-2002) and the relevant Debates. Followingly, a specific Act was chosen (Act 2919/2001), because it represents an initial attempt to deal with foreigners in general, which generated a heated discussion within Parliament. Looking more closely at the chosen material from the point of view of gender, it became clear that the Debates for Article 34 of the Draft-Law on the «Issuing of work permits to foreign artists entering Greece», were extremely interesting. The discussion of Article 34 represents the 1/6<sup>th</sup> of the total time length of the whole debate on the draft-law, consuming almost a whole session on its own. It is to be noted that the discussion on the above article does not initially focus on gender. It is suddenly transformed to a debate on gender which spearheads the Opposition's rhetoric for the Article's approval. Among all the speeches on Article 34 of the Draft-Law, analysis focuses on the ones presenting particular interest from the point of view of gender. These are the speeches of eight MPs, six male and two female, representing the whole political spectrum in the Greek Parliament. Initially, the main tool used for analysis was the one proposed by the «MAGEEQ»

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10. L. Phillips, 1998, pp. 848-849. For more on discourse analysis see indicatively, M. Foucault, 1972; E. Laclau and C. Mouffe C., 1985; N. Fairclough, 1989; N. Fairclough, 1992a; N. Fairclough, 1992b; N. Fairclough, 1995; J. Potter, 1996.

project<sup>11</sup> based on an original technique using an abridged grounded theory tool that includes three levels of analysis.<sup>12</sup> This article focuses on the qualitative aspects of the results provided, that is, upon concepts, symbols, meanings, representations, norms and values.

The presentation of the results tries to follow the itinerary of decoding the object of the debate from a gender point of view. This is attempted by means of a schematisation of processes bringing into surface the «gendered» as hidden in the «neutral» and into what appears as «different». In this article gender is considered from two perspectives: First, as an object of discussion during the parliamentary debate of a draft-law on immigration, that is how gender is introduced in the Debate and transformed into an object of the Debate and, second, as an element of the identity of the speakers, that is how the gender of the speakers impinges upon public discourse on gender.

The scope of this article is to examine the ways social representations on gender are implicated in public discourse, the content of these representations and some common features of public discourse on gender.

THE «NEUTRAL» HIDES THE «GENDERED»:  
THE WAYS SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS ON GENDER  
ARE IMPLICATED IN PUBLIC RHETORIC

Social issues are usually publicly discussed in gender neutral terms, while in fact they include gendered dimensions, social stereotypes and representations which are latent. The analysis of the means and ways social representations on gender are implicated in public rhetoric followed various steps. Its starting point was recent legislation on immigration (Act 2919/2001 in particular) and the debate accompanying the legislative process, material initially apparently neutral from the gender point of view. The same holds true for a single legal provision of the draft-law (Article 34 for the «Issuing of Work Permits to Foreign Artists») and the relevant parliamentary debate, on which the analysis focused. This analysis brought into surface gendered dimensions

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11. This article is based on a study, concerning discourse analysis on immigration and gender, which is a part of a European Union project under the title «Policy Frames and Implementation Problems: The Case of Gender Mainstreaming».

12. The first level concerns words and phrases used throughout the text. The second through the use of sensitizing questions deconstructs the texts referring to dimensions of specific ideas and implicit understandings in the text-based categories. The third level organizes the ideas into different positions within these dimensions. For more see M. Verloo's article in the present volume.

related to immigration resulting from the transfer of the scope of the debate on «the work permits to foreign artists migrating into Greece» to the foreign woman artist and to the woman artist in general.

*A legal text and the relevant parliamentary debate, appearing as «neutral» from the point of view of gender: Recent legislation regulating immigration into Greece as a starting point.*

The draft-law (of the Act 2919/2001) claims to regulate the entrance and the registration of foreign nationals as well as the acquisition of Greek nationality. Its general structure exhibits «neutrality», from the point of view of gender, as the reference to women through the use of male terms referring to all citizens excludes from the beginning a gender perspective and its particularities. So, in this context, «equality» is conceived in accordance to the constitutional definition of this term, as «equality of citizens» with no specific reference to gender equality. This conceptualisation of equality brings to mind «single model» theorisations of citizenship where «gender is absent».<sup>13</sup>

The relevant debate about this Act fails to include any gendered dimensions. The concept of immigration seems to be enriched by a variety of frameworks of reference and meaning. Concepts like the reinforcement of the border-line, public and national security, protection of citizens, immigrants' human rights, the increase of criminality, national problems and objectives as related to the minorities' question, the employment question, the issue of social security, the demographic problem and the education of immigrants are the general frameworks mainly used in public discourse on immigration. Although these frameworks and concepts include gendered dimensions, public discourse on immigration does not formally address them. In so doing it refers to them in «neutral» terms from the point of view of gender.

Therefore, one can validly deduce that despite the great number of immigrant women coming to Greece, gender is not officially included into legislative processes and regulations. Exceptional is the case of family reunions, a case reflecting the «domesticity dimension of gender» which brings into mind the early literature on women migrants treated as an undifferentiated category.<sup>14</sup> It seems that contemporary law-making process

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13. As noted by S. Walby, 1994, pp. 379, 385-6, in her critique of the following: M. Mann, 1987, pp. 339-354; T. H. Marshall, 1950, 1975, 1981; B. Turner, 1990, pp. 189-217 and B. Turner, 1991.

14. See in D. Kay, 1988, pp. 1-2. For an extended literature review see also M. Morokvasik, 1983, pp. 13-31.

–a process of typification of social reality– excludes gender from discussion and regulation.

*A particular legal provision and the relevant parliamentary debate appearing as «neutral» from the point of view of gender: Focus on the proposed legal regulation for «the issuing of work permits to foreign artists».*

Discourse analysis focusing on a specific legal provision concerning «the issuing of work permits to foreign artists» shows some of the ways in which public debate remains socially neutral, especially from a gender perspective. This analysis looks like a process of «revelation» of the different interplays emerging out from the speeches of deputies and reinforcing the neutrality of public debate described.

One way for the debate to remain «neutral» is related to the interplay between *formality* and *substance*. When the political actors persist on the legal-technical aspects of law-making, the emphasis on formality impedes discussion on the substance of the social issues at hand. In this way, social reality is masked by formality, which in the case of gender appears as gender neutrality.

Another way to preserve neutrality and avoid entering into the substance of social matters is related to the interplay between *serious* and *anecdotal treatment* of the objects under consideration. In certain cases, tragic instances of social life are transformed into jokes and stories provoking laughter and entertainment. Thus, important political actors within parliament having an active role (as legislators) on social matters are transformed into passive spectators. They reach *katharsis* by laughing instead of exercising their authority in problem solving through their legislative competence.

When public discourse, during law-making processes, is limited to the technical, formal and «light» aspects of the issues under regulation, it appears as pretentious. As such it focuses on legal technicalities and fails to face the problem, to determine it and to propose solutions. As a result any possibility of action is hindered. Therefore, the interplays evidenced in public discourse look like layers of defensive social mechanisms contributing to the maintenance of the established social order.

*The emergence of gender in public dialogue: The transition from «the issuing of work permits to foreign artists» to «foreign women artists».*

The proposed provision (34) is presented in gender «neutral» terms. Preceding discussion does not manifest a specific interest in gender either. Nevertheless, during the debate of the proposed regulation on the «the issuing of work permits to foreign artists», gender is introduced suddenly and directly

through an immediate and exclusive identification of foreign artists (immigrants to Greece), to foreign women artists (migrating to Greece). So, public discourse is transformed from «neutral» to deeply «gendered» in a variety of ways.

More particularly, gender is introduced by means of *limited references*, *insinuating comments*, or *extreme examples* and *stories* mocking important social situations, functioning all as illustrations making obvious latent aspects of gendered dimensions, like norms, values and practices. Through these illustrations, an automatic reproduction of social representations on gender is marked. Thus, the preceding «neutral» discussion becomes spontaneously de-neutralized as it is invaded by representations on gender deeply rooted in the social subconscious. The latter manage to emerge through speeches that momentarily resort to common language by use of terms like «stacked» for «arrested foreign women artists», or expressions like, «what are we dancers drawing» for women artists «suffering».<sup>15</sup> In this common language social norms are latent, reproducing common social representations related to the profession of artists and the vulnerability of women.

The above illustrations are accompanied in certain cases by a number of gendered identifications at different levels. The actor (speaker) identifies herself to categories of women related to the object of the debate. Interesting is to note the obvious identification of the woman deputy (who is also an actress) with women dancers. But more interesting are those identifications which are latent. Immigrant women artists are identified to women dancers dancing at entertainment clubs, but also to all women who are suffering. Subsequently, women who suffer are identified to *martyrs*.

Moreover, gender is introduced by means of brief popular expressions referring to hidden and unconscious social representations about the *body* of women dancers. In this way the female body is introduced into the public discourse. It becomes the focus of the discussion through the activation of social representations and metaphors for the body (like the body as an object of desire or as an object of maltreatment), energizing in this way the collective imaginary of the Body (Parliament).

Thus, as the form of the speeches analyzed has indicated, an interesting aspect of public discourse is the automatic and unconscious reproduction of social representations on gender. Through the fast and sudden emergence of

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15. For the relationship of the collective social subconscious with gender see P. Bourdieu, 1996, pp. 10-13.



these representations emphasis is placed on the spontaneous, non-organized and non controllable aspects of public discourse. So one can validly assume that public discourse cannot be conceived as neutral in terms of gender, since gender is imbedded in it, as well as in the social processes producing it.

THE MODERN IS OLD-FASHIONED: THE TRADITIONAL  
SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS ON GENDER REPRODUCED  
IN PUBLIC RHETORIC

As it has been already shown, the parliamentary debate on the proposed Article 34 concerning the «Issuing of Work permits to foreign artists entering Greece» constitutes the stimulus for the unraveling of potent social representations on gender. Analysis indicated that social representations on gender reproduced in public discourse are emanating from the exclusive identification of the «foreign artist» to «foreign woman artist». These representations are resulting from the gradual unraveling of the association of ideas during the debate, leading to the uncovering of the social subconscious. They appear interconnected in such a way that the emergence of the one almost simultaneously brings into surface the emergence of another. These have been systematized into five typical representations, described below.

*The «foreign woman artist» as «immigrant»*

During the debate it is interesting that the «foreign person» is perceived as an «immigrant person», as if any entrance of foreigners into the country implied entrance of migrant populations. This is clearly illustrated in the expression «women artists immigrants from Moldavia and the rest (countries)». The term «foreign woman artist» does not refer solely to «women of foreign nationality» but also to «immigrant women» perceived as «second rate» women immigrants coming from the countries of Eastern Europe. By the use of the plural, the above expression refers to quantity and not to quality. It implies devaluation intensified by the fact that the name of the «rest» (in the sense of other) countries of origin of immigrant women artists is not mentioned. So women artists immigrants from the above countries are presented as having a more devaluated occupational status, socially and morally.

Elsewhere, the name of the river (Moldava) is used instead of the adjective (Moldavian) to connote the national identity of the immigrant woman. The conscious or unconscious use of this term, apart from the

aspect of devaluation, links the constant fluidity of the river to the constant migration flows into Greece from the north-eastern European countries. Yet, the use of this term projects the image of a river as a latent threat of catastrophic and uncontrollable natural power flooding over Greece, which in turn reflects the unconscious fear of a threatening flood of immigrants. It brings to mind the image of a river as an uncontrollable source of life similar to the uncontrollable nature of women's powers. In doing so, it expresses unconscious fears about the uncontrollable aspects of illegal immigration. Moreover, the use of the name of a river instead of the adjective referring to the national identity of the foreign women artists coming into Greece from Eastern European countries marks the transformation of a human being non citizen of the host country into a natural element with no face (*persona*), rights and duties and consequently with no active role in the social game. This means that foreign women immigrants having no political rights are not represented in the public sphere.<sup>16</sup> So they are women «staying» in the host country with no voice in parliament and public affairs.<sup>17</sup>

It is remarkable, however, that social representations concerning the perception of foreign women as immigrants are not the dominant representations on gender. The foreign element soon becomes neutralized as discourse is transferred on to the level of morals.

#### *The «immigrant woman artist» as «woman artist»*

The «woman artist» appears in the debate with two identities. The first is the professional identity of the artist and the second refers to her gender identity as woman. The emerging social representations refer to both.<sup>18</sup>

As the social representations related to the professional identity of the woman artist appear in public dialogue, the «woman artist» is presented as an entertainer, that is, an artist of lower professional status, working in entertainment clubs. She offers a spectacle addressed to the senses and the instincts and not to the intellect. It is a spectacle which includes sexual provocation or even annoyance to the socially accepted mores and morals. Such perceptions remain far behind the aesthetic enjoyment of the senses and the sublimation of instincts offered by artistic activities characterized as

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16. See, also, B. Yeoh and S. Huang, 2000, pp. 251-270.

17. See, also, D. Stasiulis and A. B. Bakan, 2000, pp. 383-410.

18. As far as «artistic identity construction» is concerned see also A. Bain, 2005, pp. 5-23.

«beaux arts». Moreover, these perceptions bring into surface the fact that within the domain of arts, hierarchies are evidenced not only based on sex, but also on the type of the artistic activity.

Social representations related to the gender identity of the woman artist present her as a woman of loose morals and/or as a whore (non declared prostitute).<sup>19</sup> So the occupational status of the woman artist is accompanied with an ambivalent legal and moral status related to sexuality. According to these representations the term «artist» connotes also social and moral devaluation related to loose morals and the offending behavior. With respect to the professional category of «women artists» especially representations of «women dancers» also reveal perceptions of women as objects of economic and sexual exploitation as well as «martyrs» in the Christian connotation of the term, as persons suffering due to ordeals.

*The «immigrant woman artist» as «woman-object of exploitation»*

Public discourse refers to the exploitation of foreign women artists, which is related to prostitution covered under the artistic activity and perceived as exclusively performed by women. It is to be noted that the term «exploitation» comes from the Greek antiquity, in an époque where the production of metals was performed by slaves considered by ancient Law as objects and *res*.<sup>20</sup> The use of this term connotes in Greek not only financial and trade activities related to metals (natural products), but also the making of profit out of any devaluated human labour. This devaluation, which has historical roots, is related to types of activity performed by slaves. When exploitation is referring to women artists, it is considered by many speakers as «vulgar». In this way devaluation is projected as deeper. It is referring to social categories whose exploitation is expanded not only beyond legality, but mainly beyond the socially tolerable limits. So foreign women artists, a professional category with no civil and political rights, appear in public dialogue as modern slaves. Therefore social representations accompanying the use of the term «exploitation» attribute to the notion of the «immigrant woman artist», the quality of the «devaluated and degraded human being».

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19. As stated there are «two competing discourses (on the whore position). On one hand, the prostitute is a victim: denied sexual agency she is also denied a voice a place in history, an identity as an autonomous woman. On the other hand, though vilified, the prostitute can speak for and from the margins», in K. Pullen, 2005, p. 1.

20. For the functions of women as objects within the production and reproduction of symbolic capital, see P. Bourdieu, 1996, p. 82 and for the woman as object in general, pp. 75-86.

*The «immigrant woman artist» as «body»*

Through the social representations for the foreign women artists the inferiority of the body<sup>21</sup> in contrast to intellect is projected. Through reference to body, foreign women artists become objects of desire,<sup>22</sup> insinuating also the attractiveness of the fair sex. At the same time, however, their body carries symbolic burden (suffering) coming out from the social devaluation of their professional and moral status which makes their body heavy. By means of popular expressions referring to the situation of women dancers, different forms of women's suffering are projected: the suffering of women in general related to their traditional and passive social roles and the suffering of immigrant women artists, as subjects devaluated and considered as of loose morals.

*The «immigrant woman artist» as «goods and trade»*

The expression «prostitutes in abundance» is a construction through combination of social and financial terms referring to a society in abundance of goods for consumption.<sup>23</sup> Its use transforms the immigrant women artists to goods for consumption. More precisely it implies cheap goods for consumption, that is objects of poor quality and of low value. Moreover, by use of terms like «fabrica – industry», «trade-load of young girls», «enterprise», the young immigrant women artists are transformed to trade loads with increased entrepreneurial value.

*The «immigrant woman artist» as «victim»*

At the heart of the above social representations of gender is a core representation of women as fair-sex. This representation projects immigrant

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21. On *the rise of the body* in consumers' society see, also, Philip A. Mellor and Chris Shilling, 1993, p. 413; M. Featherstone, 1982, p. 33; A. Giddens, 1991; C. Shilling, 1991, pp. 653-672; C. Shilling, 1993. On the *discourse on shame* as related to discourse on body see also E. Etorre, 2000, pp. 403-420.

22. As stated «at particular historical moments, the body of the actress (assumed to be an object onto which male desires were projected) and the body of the prostitute (assumed to be an object onto which male desires were enacted) slipped discursively into one whole/actress», in K. Pullen, 2005, p. 2.

23. See, also, W. Reddy, 1984.

women artists as victims, as a vulnerable social category. Though in certain exceptional moments public discourse presents immigrant women as «cunning» or «devilish» women –women able to survive in any circumstances– the fair-sex dimension (women as impotent, attractive and vulnerable persons) remains dominant.<sup>24</sup>

Thus, contemporary public discourse on gender continues to present immigrant women as social subjects with fragmented social identity (excluding on occasion various other facets of identity), since social representations about them reflect discriminatory and devaluating aspects of their presence in and participation to the social life of the host country. In so doing, their social perception is stereotyped and other facets of immigrant women intensifying their social discrimination and unrelated to the above representations are masked.

THE «DIFFERENT» HIDES THE «IDENTICAL»  
FROM THE GENDER POINT OF VIEW: PUBLIC DISCOURSE  
NON-DIFFERENTIATED BY SEX AND POLITICAL STANCE

All representations on gender apparent in public rhetoric are based on a dichotomous perception of sex, that is on the «difference» between the male and the female in the sense of the social discrimination and devaluation of the female. Impressive remains the fact that «difference» concerning social representations on gender is not met in speeches of deputies of different sex and distinct political orientations. There are two relative remarks when analyzing «voice».

*The different sex of the political actors hides identical views from the gender point of view*

In public discourse on the Article 34 women political actors do not participate considerably. It is to be noted that from the seventeen deputies taking part in the dialogue only two are women. The analysis of all speeches shows that women deputies do not develop a feminine voice/discourse within parliament and thus do not offer their public voice to specific social categories of women with no voice in public arenas, such as immigrant women artists. It also shows that there is an automatic reproduction of the

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<sup>24</sup>. As cited «in the specific case of prostitution, the whore is constructed through often contradictory terms: she is simultaneously dangerous and pathetic», K. Pullen, 2005, p. 5.

above social representations on gender, which is equally distributed between men and women speakers. This seems to be related to the unconscious emergence of these representations coming out of the social subconscious. At the level of the «unconscious» women deputies reproduce traditionally male-centered perceptions of gender and in so doing help the reinforcement and maintenance of the existing social order part of which is the existing gender order.

*The different political stance of political actors hides identical views from the gender point of view*

The speeches analyzed belong to important political actors from all political parties represented in the Greek parliament. That is to say, they cover a broad political spectrum ranging from the Right to the Left-wing. It is important to note that the political stance of the actors does not seem to affect the representations promoted by all speakers. In this case also the spontaneous automatic reproduction of these representations shows that the collective subconscious seems to transcend the distinct political ideologies served by the political parties within the Greek parliament. This is evident in the case of the public discourse on gender and migration, an improvised and ad hoc discourse stimulated on occasion. This may lead to the assumption that the issue of immigration has not called for the attention of the political parties and the political parties do not seem to have elaborated a gender perspective on migration .

Thus, in the content of public discourse gender seems to become a *unifier*, a sort of a normalizing factor of existing differentiation in public political arenas. It is to be further questioned how does such public reference to gender function in the course of public dialogue and political debate.<sup>25</sup>

## DISCUSSION

The analysis of law-making on immigration from the perspective of gender was proved to be extremely fertile, because it led to multiple «discoveries».<sup>26</sup> It has been shown that gender is not always «visible» in public discourse. It

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25. See, also, the relevant literature on gender politics which are defined either in terms of the gendered nature of goals or of the sex of the actors. S. Walby, 1988, pp. 215-232; H. Gottfried, 1998, pp. 464-465; D. Collinson and J. Hearn J., 1994, pp. 2-22.

26. Or else the «recovery of unconscious knowledge», according to the expression of M. L. Davies, 1993, p. 114.

may be hidden in public debates in which gender does not constitute the principle object of discussion. So an interesting part of this analysis is the uncovering of gender within processes that are apparently «neutral,» such as the formulation of legal regulations within Parliament. It was revealed that in cases when gender is not the object of regulation and debate, it may be introduced suddenly. This is the case in the public debate on Article 34 of the draft-law concerning the issuing of work permits for foreign artists. When debated, it was shown that the foreign artists coming to Greece were identified to immigrant women artists/prostitutes of entertainment clubs, coming from Eastern European countries. Through this stereotypical illustration of the foreign artist the debate slips to gender and focuses exclusively on it.

While uncovering gender, it was revealed that the individual researcher who is studying immigration and gender is led to study Greek society's stereotypical perceptions of gender *per se*.<sup>27</sup> Though immigration is in focus, the evolution of public debate leads to the study of the Greek society *per se*. This means that, as far as the foreign woman artist is concerned, relative representations are in fact representations that mirror how Greek society perceives not only women artists, but also women in general. It seems that they are emanating from the social unconscious and are related to the social roles of both sexes as well as to the social hierarchies created on the basis of distribution by sex and the social history of their genesis and emergence. They are representations that emerge spontaneously and are reproduced automatically through language.<sup>28</sup> In this case, public discourse on gender is not differentiated from common conversations. This is another interesting perspective for the analysis of public discourse. It places emphasis to the means and ways the «other» projects the «self».<sup>29</sup>

The analysis led to a process «back to roots», leading to a sort of historical flashback, to images socially forgotten. Social representations on

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27. Contemporary research usually focuses on perceptions of the people of the host country for the immigrants. See indicatively, G. Galanis, 2003, pp. 223-268. However, this research does not refer on what this perception testifies about the inhabitants of the host country. See in A. Marvakis, 2004, pp. 97-106.

28. As stated, «language users do not “simply” reflect or distort the “world”. Rather, through the use of linguistic and cultural procedures, members constitute the world and in so doing they engage ongoingly and irremediably in the production of social and moral activities», M. L. Davies, 1993, p. 118.

29. Similar remarks have been made in L. Gill, 2000, pp. 212-227.

gender, reproduced through automatic repetition are proved to be historically deeply rooted<sup>30</sup> and determined. They are inscribed in the human thought and the social subconscious.<sup>31</sup> They are a sort of «memory»<sup>32</sup> of preceding social practices, of past social events surviving in words, common language expressions, symbols, metaphors of aspects of social life coming into surface through the revival and energization of the social subconscious. The unearthing of these representations presents specific interest when it occurs in a privileged public space, as the House of Parliament, a public scene. On this scene public discourse resembles to a performance staged not only to the «front» but also to the «back» region,<sup>33</sup> addressing a broad audience. It is «through this performance and its acceptance (that) the illusion is made real and the practice it represents is legitimated».<sup>34</sup>

Therefore, it is important to understand the social meaning of the sudden appearance of gender in this privileged public scene. It seems that the Parliament, through ritual discourse practices and representations emanating from public discourse, constantly verifies and legitimizes gendered discriminations and/or differentiations.<sup>35</sup> In this way it runs a high risk of contributing to the maintenance of status quo<sup>36</sup> and legislating «blindly», that is unconsciously from the point of view of gender. At the same time, reference to gender during public discourse within Parliament seems to have different functions: By promoting devaluating and discriminatory aspects of gender (i.e. the immigrant woman artist/whore), public dialogue projects the *extreme* at the expense of the *normal*, the *worst* at the expense of the *good*, the *vile* and the *dangerous* at the expense of the *lawful* and the *virtuous*.<sup>37</sup> So by transforming immigrant women to «scapegoats», it reproduces the representation of immigrants as a threat for the established societal mores and morals, which in effect may lead to their «dangerisation»<sup>38</sup> and the

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30. See in E. Borneman, 1988, pp. 719-720.

31. P. Bourdieu, 1996, pp. 21, 27-28.

32. B. Misztal, 2003.

33. As K. Pullan, 2005, p. 161 cites to E. Goffman, 1959.

34. K. Pullan, 2005, p. 7. See, also, E. Goffman, 1959.

35. P. Bourdieu, 1996, pp. 17-18.

36. See relevant references focusing on the class or gender politics divide as in S. Walby, 1986; J. Acker, 1989, pp. 235-240; W. Bottero, 1998, pp. 469-490; S. Walby, 1990; A. Pollert 1996, pp. 639-659.

37. P. Bourdieu, 1996, pp. 23-24.

38. On «dangerisation» see M. Lianos and M. Douglas, 2000, pp. 261-272.



fortification of public control. By referring to the «fair sex» dimension of gender, public rhetoric promotes the need for the protection of the vulnerable, invoking thus the «dominant male» to exercise his power strength and in effect the «dominant order» to intensify «protection». As stated male dominance is established enough not to need justification. It may be expressed into social practices and discourse in such a way so to appear as self-evident, identified with discourse.<sup>39</sup>

Finally, the approach of law-making on immigration from a gender perspective was also fertile in showing that before attempting any design and implementation of gender related policies, a lengthy, systematic and in depth process of decoding the social subconscious should be undertaken, that is decoding the social representations on gender inscribed in public discourse, automatically reproduced as self-evident and «natural».<sup>40</sup>

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39. P. Bourdieu, 1996, pp. 15-17.

40. P. Bourdieu, 1996, p. 21.

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