Integration of New Female Migrants in Labour Market and Society

A State of the Art Report for the case of Cyprus

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Introduction

Writing a ‘state of the art’ report in the national context of Cyprus is a rather problematic venture. Firstly, the literature available on the subject is mostly ‘international’ and as such we are forced to erect artificial ‘national’ or ‘state boundaries’ in order to confine the ambit of our work. Secondly, there is an inherent contextual problem relating to the de facto division of the country in which we are faced with the fact that Cyprus is a bicultural and bilingual country, but due to budgetary reasons and political issues research fails to properly capture the situation in the whole of Cyprus. For instance, unless the literature is in English or it has been translated into Greek from Turkish, there is usually a failure to deal with the situation in the north of the barbed wire.¹ The third difficulty relates to the fact that the subject of integration in general has never been a subject of study, save for some papers written by the researchers themselves (see bibliography and literature review that follows) and one study by Harakis (ed.)(2005). Moreover, the question of integration of female migrants has never been directly, and to a large extent indirectly examined before, means that this is essentially an exercise of locating the gaps in ‘local’ knowledge in the literature. This reflects the absence of public debate on the general subject matter of ‘integration’. Therefore what follows is an attempt to piece together and locate the knowledge derived from disparate sources, which are not all ‘academic’ or strictly speaking ‘scientific’ in form. Nevertheless, the knowledge derived from various Governmental and non-governmental reports, policy-documents and other publications is crucial in informing us about the theoretical understanding of local actors, policy-makers and the few researchers in the field, as well as making some conclusions as to the theoretical underpinnings of actual policies and the contestations over policies.

As already pointed out there is a problem in trying to locate the policy of ‘integration’ of female migrants in Cyprus, because no literature on the subject exist and instead there is what we have termed as an ‘immigration-integration policy conundrum’ (see Trimikliniotis and Fulias-Souroulla, 2006a). More specifically on the topic of the structure of the labour market for female migrants one has to consider the literature regarding the question of employment, work and labour process in Cyprus with a focus on gender and women as well as locate the position of women within the context of migrant labour in Cyprus.

Introducing the Context: Understanding the conditions for migrant women’s integration

A literature review on the question of integration of new female migrants in labour market and society, as well as policies influencing these processes requires that we begin

¹ One of the few studies published on the question of migration, migrants and settlers in the north is a monograph report by Mete Hatay (2004).
by discussing the broader context of integration, given by the discourse of corresponding policies on migration and integration influencing migrant women in Cyprus. We then delimit the ‘categories’ of immigrants in Cyprus as envisaged by the State’s employment policies and give a brief account of the literature on female migrants in Cypriot social context. When envisaging main topics in relation to migration and gender in Cyprus we focus on the following: gendered occupations; migrant women within other occupations; undocumented female migrants; civic participation; social prejudice, xenophobia and racism; and female marriage migrants. Subsequently we attempt to trace some processes linked to migrants’ integration by analysing public opinion and state authorities’ discourses about migrants in Cyprus. We conclude our literature review by identifying major research gaps on the phenomenon under discussion.

In order to discuss conditions for migrant women’s integration we have to give a brief account of general policies and their effects on female migrants. There are no specifically targeted policies on female migrants or female migrant workers in Cypriot context, except for situations in certain sectors of the economy where the workforce is entirely constituted of women such as domestic work and sex industry. There is no specific evaluation or impact assessment of policy in these fields.

We have already referred to the characteristic of the general policy on migration in Cyprus as an ‘immigration-integration conundrum’, given that so far there is no ‘integration policy’ as such. There is a general immigration policy that regulates the entrance and stay of migrants as well as policies dealing with the employment of ‘temporary permit’ foreign workers on low skill, low paid and low status jobs unwanted by natives; however, these are not integrated as a comprehensive and well-designed migration policy, nor is there a global approach and planning for dealing with immigration-related issues in Cyprus.

As far as labour market policy is concerned, we can observe that the National Report on Strategies for Social Protection and Social Inclusion 2006-2008, under the subheading “2.3.2 Employment policy for foreign workers”, refers to an effort at revising the ‘strategy for the employment of third country nationals’ to protect domestic supply of labour. This is regarded as a strategy to enhance “efforts to promote access to the labour market for persons facing special problems (e.g. women, young persons and older workers), since these persons are affected by the influx of foreign labour force in Cyprus”. The measures envisaged under the new strategy are: strengthening the infrastructure of the Department of Labour for the effective monitoring of the labour market and enhancing the monitoring infrastructure of the new strategy. In terms of aims and goals, according to the declared policy principle, the migrants should enjoy equality of opportunity and treatment with nationals, in matters of employment terms and conditions. Therefore, with the exception of employment in the public sectors that is “mostly reserved for citizens of the Republic”, all labour laws and regulations apply in the case of migrant workers. The employers are obliged to conform and in case of non-

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compliance, they are penalized and “no work permits are granted to them in the future for the employment of foreign workers” (ibid 17).

When it comes to results and policy effects, violation of rights is widely reported throughout research based on narratives of women participants in various research projects. Key informant interviews (Trimikliniotis and Fulias-Souroulla, 2006b) confirm that violations of work-related rights and contractual terms continues to be a frequent phenomenon and domestic workers in particular have many complaints about the following: they are often obliged to work more hours or days than those stipulated in their contract and are not paid accordingly; bad treatment and sexual harassment by employers. Moreover, it was stressed that implementation of existing legislation is problematic. A main factor invoked is the perception which prevails by the authorities and many civil servants, who display negative attitudes and xenophobic predispositions.

It is widely documented that the high levels of economic growth in the southern part of Cyprus led to a rise in the demand for labour that exceeded the supply of labour from indigenous sources (Matsis and Charalambous 1993). The slow down in the growth of the economy in the 1990s in comparison to the late 1970s and 1980s, together with the rise of inflation, was the basis for the abandoning of the restrictive labour policies practised up to 1990. In contrast with the restrictive policies, 1990 saw a radical change in government policy. For the first time migrant labour was allowed to enter on a much larger scale, to meet the labour shortage in those sectors of the economy that were no longer popular with Cypriots. Matsis and Charalambous (1993: 38) explain the reversal of the policy on “foreign” labour as a result of “excessive demand pressures and the near full exploitation of the indigenous labour supply”. The same authors suggest that the policy to allow entry of migrant labour is due to pressure from employers and the fear of inflation resulting from wage indexation; they suggest that “the employment of foreign labour will eventually lead to a containment of wage increases” (1993: 42). Migrant workers primarily take up menial, low pay and low status jobs that Cypriots do not take; their occupational structure is similar to that of migrant labour in Europe in the 1950s and 1960s (Matsis and Charalambous 1993: 43; Trimikliniotis, 1999; Trimikliniotis and Pantelides, 2003; Trimikliniotis and Demetriou, 2005; Charakis et. al. 2005).

In order to locate female migrants in Cyprus one must examine the literature available on migrants in general, where there is a special reference to female migrants; unfortunately the literature on gender in Cyprus or gendered employment has failed to see the migrant women as part of female labour of Cyprus in the same way that the few studies that exist on labour in Cyprus generally do not consider migrant labour as part of the working class, as pointed out in other works (see Trimikliniotis, 1999 and 2006a for a critique of this nationalistic approaches to the study of labour). Of course the only notable exception form the early 1990s is the work of Matsis and Charalambous (1993), and more recently the literature on migrants and migration in Cyprus is increasingly moving in this direction.

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4 Economic growth of the island during the years 1981-86, averaged around 6%, for 1987-88; it was 7.5%, whilst for 1989-93 it was 5%. Since 1993 it slowed down to an average of about 3%. (PIO 1997a) In the immediate post 1974 period, 1975-80, with an average growth was 10% per annum manufacturing and construction became the leading sectors, as a result of the reconstruction efforts and the booming Arab markets; however this has been drastically altered in the 80’s and 90’s where it is the tertiary sector and tourism that are the main driving force of the economy (Matsis and Charalambous 1993).
The position of women in the labour market, the legislative framework for gender equality, and collective bargaining was examined in an EIRO paper (see Soumeli and Trimikliniotis, 2004). It located that women have a lower employment rate than men and a higher unemployment rate, and are more likely to work part time or on a temporary basis, while their average pay is lower than men's. Even though specific legislation on workplace gender equality has been introduced only recently, bargaining does not appear to deal with equality matters. Women's share of overall employment is significantly lower than that of men. The gap between the numbers of employed men and women in Cyprus is greater than in most of the current EU Member States. Overall, in recent years the composition of employment has displayed a small but steady shift in women's favour. Despite the greater numbers of women in the labour market and, to some extent, a change in the 'patriarchal' structure of employment, the overall situation of women's employment remains "particularly disadvantageous vis-à-vis that of men" given that "women's employment rate lags significantly behind that of men, women's unemployment rate is almost double, and women prefer or are preferred in positions of flexible employment, particularly part-time and temporary employment." Moreover, "women continue to be over-represented in low-skilled jobs, and there are indications that they fill a significant number of jobs in the clandestine economy. This last category includes the large number of female migrant workers employed in the so-called 'sex industry', as well as many migrants employed as domestic workers. In addition, women as a whole constitute the majority of unpaid workers in family enterprises. It should be noted that the largest increase in employment in 2001 (1,400 persons in total) related to private households that employ domestic staff, and was due to the continued increase of migrants employed as domestic workers. (see Soumeli and Trimikliniotis, 2004)

The conclusion of the article is that the position of women in the Cypriot labour market is clearly worse than that of men, in respect both of their participation in employment and unemployment and in relation to the quality of their employment. The same is true with regard to the wage gap between men and women. It is thus necessary to conduct studies relating to occupational segregation, and the factors that determine the wage gap which acts so disadvantageously towards women. With regard to improving women's terms and conditions of employment, the legislative framework has an important role to play. The delay exhibited in previous years in adopting specialised legislation can undoubtedly be counted among the negative developments, while it will be of definitive importance to see whether the recently enacted legislative framework will be put to effective use or not. However, the laws by themselves, no matter how comprehensive, are not enough to wipe out inequality in the workplace and society in general. The social partners are therefore called upon to play a major role both to tackle the gaps, shortcomings and negative provisions of the relevant laws, and to improve the legislation, mainly through establishing a link between the collective bargaining process and equal opportunities (see Soumeli and Trimikliniotis, 2004).
Categories of immigrants in Cyprus as envisaged by the State’s employment policies

Since accession to the EU in 2004, the Republic of Cyprus has categorised various migrant workers in the manner many other EU countries do: EU nationals; nationals of the acceding countries; third country nationals; and refugees and asylum seekers. Up till 2007 when Romania and Bulgaria acceded to EU, workers from these countries were considered to be a ‘special category’ and their visa requirements were often relaxed, even though there were numerous instances where this rule was violated. The legislation prescribes different treatment for each category (therefore, the policy over their employment is different). Female migrants in Cyprus are recruited from these categories. As regards undocumented migrants, the majority are primarily workers who have entered the country legally but remain after their visa conditions have expired - they are primarily ‘over-stayers’. However, the issue of undocumented immigrants is difficult and controversial, and due to obvious reasons very little research has been conducted (see for details Trimikliniotis 2004b:17). Recently, there have reports about an increased number of ‘illegal entrants’ from the northern occupied territories via the so-called ‘Green line’ that divides Cyprus, which forms ‘a soft border of Europe’ according to the relevant EU regulation.

In terms of gendered migration as well as the intersectioned ‘gendered and ethnic’ division of labour we address the broad category of female migrant workers including the groups of domestic workers (the largest group) and ‘entertainment/sex workers’, two groups that in Cyprus denote exclusively migrant women. The group of women in sex industry comprises on one hand women working in cabaret-type venues as ‘artistes’ and on the other hand, women employed in entertainment centres, pubs and bars as barmaids or waitresses. In addition, we mention the following categories of work migrant women: women employed in other tertiary sectors, such as: nurses, sale assistants and waitresses in restaurants and cleaners in hotels; shuttle migration of women working in agriculture/farming; undocumented migrant women. Other categories of migrant women are: refugees and asylum seekers; Pontian Greek women and female marriage migrants (this category is formed from spouses of Greek Cypriots).

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6 This is the division line of Cyprus, which nothing more than a ceasefire line. When Cyprus acceded in the EU as a divided island the EU decided to make this into a ‘soft border’ of the EU. See Corrigendum to Council Regulation (EC) No 866/2004 of 29 April 2004 on a regime under Article 2 of Protocol 10 to the Act of Accession At OJ L 161, 30.4.2004).
7 In fact the Annual Report of the European Commission on the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) 866/2004 of 29.04...2004 and the situation resulting from its application’ states that, according to Article 2 of the Green Line Regulation, the Republic of Cyprus “shall carry out checks on all persons crossing the line with the aim to combat illegal immigration of third country nationals and to detect and prevent any threat to public security and public policy”. Article 3 states that “effective surveillance shall be carried out by the Republic of Cyprus all along the [Green] Line, in such a way as to discourage people from circumventing checks at the crossing points.” See Communication from the Commission COM(2006) 551 final, Brussels, 25.9.2006.
8 As identified in FeMiPol, Working paper 2, Key informant interviews (Trimikliniotis and Fulias-Souroulla, 2006b).
Literature on Female Migrants in Cyprus

It has been noted that women’s participation in the migration process and the reasons for which they migrate are evolving. This change represents one of the most significant trends in recent international migration streams and is referred to as the ‘feminisation of migration’; and this is also true about Cyprus. It influences the shaping of roles and affects relationships between men and women in countries of origin as well as of destination. The issue of gendering migration in the Cyprus context has been raised (Trimikliniotis, 1999, 2001b; Trimikliniotis and Pantelides 2003; Kadir, 2001, Lenz, 2001). Whether, as an issue of public discourse or violation of employment/human rights of domestic workers and in particular south-east Asians (Kadir, 2001; Lenz, 2001), or a general issue of belonging and participation of women migrants in civic life (Trimikliniotis, 2003b) the exclusion and racism of migrant women assumes specific forms and raises its own particularities. Apparently, even though many women “endeavour to establish gender equality, the ‘androcentric’ evaluation of gainful labour versus unpaid or at best lowly reproductive work” reproduces gender inequality but on a “racialised level” (Lenz, 2001: 75).

A study involving 71 interviews of Asian female workers in the island’s capital (Lefkosia) revealed that these workers’ right and terms of contract are routinely violated: Only a small fraction of those interviewed worked the required 8 hours per day, whilst the rest were forced to work unpaid overtime, some up to 16 hours a day. Almost half of them are not entitled to rest time, whilst more than half had a ‘curfew’ imposed on them, had no paid vacation and the vast majority had paid agents to secure a job and a work permit for them in Cyprus, some of them at extortionate amounts (Kadir 2001). After all the ECRI second Report referred to them as the most vulnerable group:

“As noted by ECRI in its first report, a particularly vulnerable group appears to be constituted by domestic workers, who comprise almost one third of all legal immigrants working in Cyprus. There have been reports that the terms of contract of these workers are often breached by employers, who may for instance force the women to work much longer hours or during their days off, assign them to duties not provided for by the contract, or dismiss them in an unjustified manner. There have also been reports of inhuman treatment and sexual harassment of these women.”

The question of gender and migration in southern Europe is subject of debate in recent literature and there are some references to Cyprus (Anthias and Lazarides, 2000). Floya Anthias (Anthias and Lazaridis, 2000: 17) develops a conceptual framework for gendering the migration process drawing on the case of Cyprus “to explore more substantively some of the issues relating to the feminization of migration within new migration processes, particularly as they relate to southern Europe”. In this sense, the issues of women migrants and gendered work are discussed by pointing to the analysis of their location in the labour market: “within a secondary, service-oriented or hidden labour market that is divided into

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9 See also FeMiPol WP3 report, the section about Cyprus available at http://www.femipol.uni-frankfurt.de/docs/working_papers/wp3/statistical_analysis.pdf
male and female sectors and reproduces an ethnically and gendered divided labour market”. Therefore, there is a concentration of women’s participation in the service sector, particularly domestic/care service and within the sex or leisure industry. Within the service sector, “the undocumented nature of much migration is therefore important in structuring its relation to the market, in terms of the hidden or private economies” (ibid. 26).

Specifically, the issue of gendering migration in the Cyprus context has been developed in relation to labour market (Trimikliniotis, 1999; Trimikliniotis and Pantelides, 2003). Generally, almost all the books, article or reports based on empirical research focus on the experiences of domestic workers and women in the sex industry and therefore we can identify a large research gap in relation to other categories of women migrants (workers) in Cyprus. Among others, there were empirically investigated issues such as: violation of employment/human rights of domestic workers, in particular south-east Asians (Kadir, 2001; Lenz, 2001), the globalisation of care with a focus on experiences of Filipina domestic workers as carers for elderly (Panayiotopoulos, 2005) and a general issue of belonging and participation of women migrants in civic life (Trimikliniotis and Demetriou, 2005; 2007). A book was published relatively recently (Agathangelou, 2004) which examines the movement of domestic and sex workers to Cyprus, Greece and Turkey and demonstrates that gender, race (ethnicity), and nationality are crucial elements in the constitution of desire economies.

**Main topics in relation to migration and gender in Cyprus**

In this section we attempt to summarize and discuss main issues in relation to our focus, i.e. integration of new female migrants in labour market and society. In this sense we map out different reports, books and journal articles based on empirical research in order to give some insights on the more general and also particular aspects of the topic under discussion.

The majority of migrants to Cyprus are women. Our assertion is supported by an analysis of population data on long-term immigrants\(^\text{10}\) (106,284 people for the years between 1997 and 2004) shows that the sex ratio for long-term immigrants was slightly in favour of female immigrants, six years out of eight (1997-2004); the overall sex ratio was 98 men for 100 long-term immigrant women. Moreover, as already mentioned, women account for approximately half of all immigrants in the period since the mid-1980s\(^\text{11}\). Unfortunately, there are no statistical data split by gender available for sectors of the economy. The only data available regards the distribution of migrant workers, fact that reflects lack of preoccupation and awareness at the level of state authorities about the situation of work migrant women.

\(^{10}\) This is a statistical analysis of data on marriage, mixed marriage and immigration in Cyprus, in Fuli as-Souroulla, M. (2006) Marriages between Greek Cypriots and Foreign Nationals in the Republic of Cyprus, University of Cyprus, unpublished PhD Dissertation.

\(^{11}\) See for details FeMiPol Working paper 3, the section about Cyprus available at http://www.femipol.uni-frankfurt.de/docs/working_papers/wp3/statistical_analysis.pdf
Migrant women in gendered occupations: domestic and sex work

On trafficking and sex work of female migrant workers we are fortunate enough to have a number of international, European and national Reports as well as three books published and on-line resources of media reports on the subject. We therefore have a good starting point for understanding the situation in Cyprus and a basic literature as a point of departure. These are the USA Reports on trafficking, the Robles Report, the Cyprus Ombudsman report of 2003 and the books by Anna Agathangelou The Global Political Economy of Sex, Desire, violence insecurity in Mediterranean nation states, which focuses on the situation in Cyprus, Greece and Turkey; the book by Ramona Lenz (2006) Εμπόριο Γυναικών στην Κυπριακή Δημοκρατία (Sex-Trafficking in the Republic of Cyprus), on prostitution and trafficking of migrant women in the Republic of Cyprus and the book of Chambis Kiatipis Εμπόριο Κοριτσιών (2004).

The issue of the position and specific exploitation of women in the sex industry has received attention particularly after the publication of a report by the Commissioner of Administration in 2003. As previously mentioned, a book was published recently (Agathangelou, 2004) which examines the movement of domestic and sex workers to Cyprus, Greece, and Turkey and demonstrates that gender, race (ethnicity), and nationality are crucial elements in the constitution of the desire economies.

As stated before, the bulk of migrants to Cyprus are women. Within that group, a significant number is given by the women coming to work mostly as live-in domestic workers. They have been employed in Cyprus since the early 1990s and currently form the largest group within the category of migrant workers in possession of work permits. The latest figures show that in 2005, female migrant workers in domestic work constituted a percentage of 31% (or 15,863) from the overall number of migrant workers with work permits (from a total of 52,000 people). Coming mainly from Sri Lanka, the Philippines, India, eastern Europe and former USSR countries, thousands of women work mostly in the houses of the Cypriot upper- and middle-classes performing a variety of domestic and childcare/elderly care functions. Both documented and undocumented women find that their circumstances are precarious economically and to various degrees they are legally unprotected. The task of identifying institutionalised exclusion-inclusion mechanisms is important in relation to the phenomenon of our concern. According to a report about racism, discrimination and xenophobia in Cyprus: “The Cyprus National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2004-2006 considers that ‘immigrants’ are one of the ‘groups at risk’, recognising that it is a group whose members are ‘at risk of exclusion’, following the 2nd ECRI Report, which referred to migrants as a vulnerable group”. Moreover, among the broader category of migrants, the most vulnerable are the undocumented migrants, domestic workers and entertainers. Domestic workers are not unionised and generally reside with the employer, domestic workers and entertainers in Cyprus are exclusively women migrants. The first recommendations for the integration of migrants are clearly stated within the following report: “The lack of any substantial immigration policy in the fields of entry, stay and work as well as the absence of measures for integration of migrants into Cypriot society were

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12 According to statistical data provided by the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance.
described by the Robles report\textsuperscript{14} as the two major weaknesses of the immigration system. The absence of any governmental policy exposes the migrants to risks of ill-treatment especially in the area of employment, where the loss of work often means revocation of the residence permit and the criminalisation of the migrant according at the whim of the employer. Mr Robles expressed content with the adoption of the recommendation of the Cyprus Commissioner of Administration to allow migrant domestic helpers to appeal to the labour disputes court against their employers, which was not possible until recently. He recommends that the Cyprus Commissioner of Administration is bestowed with duties of supervising the integration of migrants in Cypriot society and of submitting recommendations for combating racism and xenophobia” (see Trimikliniotis 2004b:15).

The processes describing integration of migrants are into an incipient phase. Even if the legislation in Cyprus is becoming more updated in relation to the issue, the State and civil society mechanisms to action for migrants’ integration are still embryonic: In view of the total lack of any measures intended to improve employability and skills of migrant workers in previous years, the initiatives described below, for the year 2005 (both the existing ones as well as the imminent ones) will form the first step towards integration of migrants into the labour market. It is anticipated that once the results of these initiatives become apparent and their impact is evaluated, then more initiatives of similar nature will follow (see Trimikliniotis and Demetriou, 2005b: 21). These initiatives refer to activities undertaken as part of projects founded or co-founded by the EC, specifically addressing the issue of vocational training of migrant workers and asylum seekers\textsuperscript{15}. A policy-oriented two-year research (Trimikliniotis, 2005)\textsuperscript{16} examines the segmentation of the labour market and the importance of the informal sector and undeclared work.

When referring to ‘foreign domestic workers’ in Cyprus, Panayiotopoulos (2005) explains how this category can be located within a ‘polarity’, with one pole given by the consensus on that participation both in domestic service and the entertainment-related sex industry increases the likelihood of violence such as “economic violence of agents who act as money-lenders, and of employers who delay payment, the psychological violence of long hours of work with little social contact and in some cases, physical and sexual violence underpinned by the fear of deportation” (ibid. 114). The other pole (more prevalent) consists of the use of benign paternalism to structure relations in the form of patron-client relations, such as through “the advancing of loans and the granting of personal favour, and may encourage carers to behave like ‘member of the family’ and to take part in communal eating or leisure activities” (ibid. 114). The author further develops his analysis arguing that this type of relations have important control functions: “For example, they may make a worker more amenable to working longer hours, or to carrying out work not specified in their contract; or worker may take on illegal second jobs for in-household business, in contravention of their


\textsuperscript{15} Another project which has been operating for the largest part of 2005, funded by the UNHCR, involves the provision of free legal advice to asylum seekers and refugees on the asylum procedure as well as on their rights and obligations with regard to accessing state service (Trimikliniotis, 2005:20).

\textsuperscript{16} Titled The Employment Conditions of Migrant Workers, the Role of Trade Unions in the Protection of Labour rights and their integration in the Cyprus Labour Movement, for the Cyprus Labour Institute. The Greek title reads Ι ori apasholisis metanaston ergaton ke o rolos tou sindikalistikou kinimatos stin prostasia ton ergatikon kimennon, ton dikeomaton tous ke stin entksi tous sto kiprako ergaiko kinima.
contracts; and in some case, it may dissuade them from reporting abuse” (ibid. 114). Based on his empirical research related to the female migration from the Philippines to Cyprus, the same author argues that we should understand the transfer of reproductive labour as a form of servitude characterised by the commoditisation and contracts involving the payment of pre-agreed wages, underpinned by legislation on immigration, employment status and social security standards: “Europe has in place extensive social legislation relevant to foreign domestic workers. One paradox of modern servitude is the coexistence of the most oppressive worker-employer relations with extensive social legislation meant to protect immigrant workers” (ibid. 127).

Panayiotopoulos (2005) warns about the need to investigate the institutional and ideological framework of support for the international transfer of care in order to understand why existing legislation is not implemented to protect the welfare of migrant workers. In this sense he identifies the racialisation of domestic workers in Cyprus and elsewhere as an important criterion for the selectivity of the institutional response (see Harris 2002; Anthias and Lazaridis 1999). Thus, the construction of ideas about racial and gender superiority, applied to women migrant domestic workers, is reinforced by their lack of economic and social rights by comparison to Greek Cypriots.

Agathangelou (2004) in an international political economy perceptive on Cyprus, Greece and Turkey attempts to connect domestic work with sex work. Her basic argument is that reproduction is a productive economy, a point that underlines her analytical and empirical framework for linking domestic and sex work in ‘peripheral economies.’ Central to her argument is the notion of ‘economies of desire, whereby the contestations over the labour processes and the exploitative extraction of surplus value, migrant women are perceived as central subjects and actors in ‘racialised gendered class struggles in the desire industries’. Globalisation intensifies the scope for exploiting female labour, the peripheral state is ‘complicit’ in the facilitation of exploitative labour relations which are racialised and gendered. There is racialised division of labour produce: what she refers as ‘white but not quite’ eastern Europeans and south Americans are for sex and sexual gratification’, whilst black bodies are for cleaning one’s self and family.

According to Ramona Lenz (2006) neither the limitations/constraints on migrant women’s free-choices, nor the emphasis given to their ‘exploitation’ are able to describe the situation of these women. She concludes by stating that being female migrants in sex work is not the same as being female victims of sex-trafficking. Therefore, the free-choice decision making cannot be taken-for-granted and used as an excuse for any exploitative relations as regards to employment and residence conditions of women migrants. The author emphasises the necessity of using different approaches in considering combating of sex-trafficking and the protection of sex workers from oppressive conditions of employment. More explicitly, if sex-trafficking needs to be sanctioned by the law and the female victims have to be liberated, those women who freely choose to work in the sex industry need to be officially recognized as work migrants and be protected from exploitation by employers, employment agencies and even government institutions. The author concludes that the aim should be the combating of work migrants’ exploitation in the international sex industry and not the combating of migration into prostitution.
As pointed out elsewhere (Trimikliniotis, 1999, Trimikliniotis and Demetriou, 2005) a sector made entirely by women is the ‘sex industry’ (see Trimikliniotis and Fulias-Souroulla, 2006a and 2006b). The migrant women working in this sector are found under the classifications of ‘artistes’, ‘dancers’ and ‘musicians’ mainly working in ‘clubs’ and cabarets or more exactly, cabaret-type venues. Also migrant women working as waitresses or barwomen in bars, pubs and beer shops are likely to enter into prostitution, sometimes being forced by their employers. The ‘entrepreneurs’ of this ‘industry’ (i.e. pimps) are mainly Greek Cypriots. The figure quoted, 1,200 in 2005\(^\text{17}\) may be an under-estimate as the ‘sex industry’ that also includes other women who are officially ‘tourists’ and in other sectors and do not appear in the statistics (Trimikliniotis, 1999). The regime governing female ‘artistes’ or ‘kalitehnides’ is strict, as they can only stay for 3 months (plus other three months as possible extension) and then they must stay abroad for 3 months, having the right to be re-employed in Cyprus. Their visa is a special one, granted for entertainment purposes and issued by the Ministry of Interior, not by the Ministry of Labour, like in the rest of cases for migrant workers (Trimikliniotis and Fulias-Souroulla, 2006b).

**Migrant women within other occupations**

The relevant literature and sources of statistical data are very poor to inexistent as regards to participation and demand of migrant women in other sectors of the labour market, except for the two already discussed. This represents a gap in knowledge and moreover reflects lack of preoccupation and interest about such issues in the Cypriot society, at different levels like: state authorities, especially the policy-making level, public and academic discourses. However, there are some references regarding discrimination in relation to the employment of female migrant workers in possession of work permits, as discussed in following sections.

Migrant workers in possession of work permits are being employed in low wage- low productivity- low skill jobs under difficult working conditions. Even though the terms of employment stipulate that migrant workers shall have the same rights and contract terms as Cypriot workers, contract violation is a common phenomenon even though very few cases are being reported. The level of unionisation of migrant workers is very low and the authorities do not carry out the appropriate checks on employers as a matter of conscious decision and also by using the excuse of staff shortage (see Trimikliniotis 2005, Workpackage 9). The number of official foreign workers increased by one third between 2001 and 2003 and they were mainly employed in private households (30%), hotel and restaurants (19%), wholesale and retail (11%), agriculture and forestry (9%), construction (8%), manufacturing (8%) and other (15%)\(^\text{18}\). An example of low-wage, low-protection and low-skill sector with high demand for migrant women’s work is the agriculture, usually for seasonal works like for collecting different crops. It is worth noting that this represents a sector characterised by the absence of strong trade union tradition and isolation from other migrants, NGOs and authorities due to specific work conditions in rural areas and farms (ibid.).

\(^\text{17}\) Data made available by the Department of Labour in July 2005.

\(^\text{18}\) Se FeMiPol, Working paper 3, the section about Cyprus available at http:// www. femipol.uni-frankfurt.de/docs/working_papers/wp3/statistical_analysis.pdf
Statistical data on the distribution of migrant workers in sectors of the economy\textsuperscript{19} show a great number of migrants employed in the tertiary sector, such as in tourism and restaurants, without specification of distribution by gender and ethnicity or more detailed specification on the type of activity performed. Moreover, manufacturing and health and social activities (which include nurses) are two sectors employing high numbers of migrant workers and therefore we suppose that there are high percentages of migrant women in these economy sectors. In relation to nurses, we can say that those with temporary work permits are exclusively employed in the private sector health care because they do not meet the conditions to employment in the public sector health care such as good knowledge of the Greek language and Cypriot citizenship. However, there is a great demand for migrant medical staff (nurses and medics) in the public sector health care as well, reality illustrated by the interventions of the competent state authorities who publicly declared that some modifications in legislation are currently under examination to allow employment of migrant nurses in the public sector health care\textsuperscript{20}. Moreover, exclusively migrant women with Greek citizenship and good Greek language skills (proved through a written examination, according to the law), such as wives of Greek Cypriots are employed as nurses and medics in the public sector health care where wages double those in the private medical care.

\textit{Undocumented female migrants and civic participation of female migrants}

There are no studies in Cypriot context regarding irregular female migrants. However, the issue of ‘illegal immigrants’ as a result of the restrictive immigration policy is pinpointed (see Trimikliniotis and Demetriou, 2005a). The legal framework as regards to migration in Cyprus is fragmentary and has developed very rapidly in the 1990s. Prior to 1990 the policy towards migration was restrictive. The policy change, allowing the entry of migrant workers, was seen as a necessary step in resolving the labour shortage; at the same time a new set of measures were introduced to curtail and repress what the authorities term as ‘illegal immigrants’. The net result has been both the failure to control the flow of migration and a fragmentary and inconsistent application of policy on migration. This was partly reflected in judicial decisions on migration cases (see Trimikliniotis and Demetriou, 2005a: 20). In the same study, which was about civic participation of female migrants (ibid. 2005:46) it was found that the least unionised and the lowest paid migrant workers are the domestic helpers, mostly women from south-east Asia, and the agricultural workers. The domestic helpers are fairly active in self-help networks as well as in social activities for various reasons, mainly located in the fact that their community in Cyprus is comparatively large (between 12,000-15,000), they are of same gender, they are mostly residing in urban centres and a significant number of them has been in Cyprus for several years. By contrast, the degree of civic participation of the agricultural workers is low because their place of work and residence is in the country side, away from urban centres. Their country-side location may also account for the fact that the widespread violations of their terms of work by the employers often remain unpunished, resulting in long hours of work with little time for engaging in any form of

\textsuperscript{19} Source: the Department of Labour, Republic of Cyprus, 2005.
\textsuperscript{20} Information given within news broadcasting, in December 2006.
civic activities. Although these findings focus on civic participation, they may help in constructing hypotheses about migrant women’s integration in labour market and society.

Social prejudice, xenophobia and racism in relation to migrant women
At the level of public opinion/grass root and media discourses we can identify an overall social predisposition translated into unwillingness to welcome immigrants. The ECRI Report 2001 on Cyprus addresses issues of integration and multicultural education rising in society. The Report encourages a public debate and raises concern about the unfavourable attitudes of Cypriots towards the presence of ‘foreign’ workers and the way local media pictures negatively the presence of migrant workers in Cyprus.

The process of racialisation of temporary migrant or ‘foreign’ labour in Cyprus is examined by considering policies and rights, discourses around migration found in the Greek-Cypriot press and magazines, and the role of employers and trade unions (Trimikliniotis, 1999). The study examines how conceptualisation of race and racism, and their interrelation with class, are useful in understanding and explaining the processes by which migrants are excluded, inferiorised and exploited. This generalised negative discourse about migrant workers seen as ‘temporary’ and part of ‘a transitional phase’ functions as a barriers of any integration efforts and questions about possible ways to change the generalized unfavourable attitude (in order to make migrants’ integration processes happen).

Research based on interviews and focus groups with migrants in Cyprus illustrated the intensity and types of racial discrimination faced by migrants (Trimikliniotis 2003). The specificity of gendered racism faced by domestic workers was interpreted as ‘(en) gendering servitude’ whereby it realised ‘a domestic politics of shame’ and was described as, “the memory or at least a kind of collective resentment of what was a degrading experience shared by many Cypriot women, forced by poverty to work as a dhoulia – a Greek word literally translated as ‘slave’ but in fact meaning a ‘domestic worker’ for another (...)” (ibid.).

Discriminatory, xenophobic and racist behaviours and attitudes are very common at the grass root level discourses of everyday life in Cyprus. In this sense, “Southern Asians, Arabs and darker skinned persons are routinely called ‘black’ as a term of abuse (...) These instances are so common that many darker skinned migrant workers are just referred to as the ‘black’ 21, as if they have no name (...). Discrimination does not stop there. Even the state authorities have regularly been found to be discriminatory on the ground of colour. Immigration authorities, local state bureaucracies and civil servants routinely treat black people differently from whites” (ibid, 28) 22.

Fieldwork research based on interviews in various private and public firms during 2004 showed strong evidence of racial or ethnic discrimination in employment and at the work place, both public and private. 23 The aim of that specific stage of the research was to identify

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21 In everyday talk in Cyprus they are called pejoratively “mavrouthkia” that literally means “blackies”.
22 As confirmed by FeMiPol, Working paper 2 (Trimikliniotis and Fuliadis-Souroulla, 2006b).
23 The European Dilemma: Institutional Patterns and the Politics of Racism, EU Sixth Framework Programme, DG
and analyse patterns and mechanisms of institutional, taken-for-granted discrimination in local labour markets and education in Cyprus for comparative reasons with seven other European countries. The research located ‘multiple levels, manifestations and dimensions of racial discrimination’ and found structural or systemic discrimination. Twenty expert interviews were conducted in Cyprus with representatives of different organisations (NGOs), journalists, lawyers, MPs and writers. When asked to describe typical examples of discrimination, most experts agreed that one of the main issues is the super-exploitation of migrants at work. Others referred to the discrimination taking place on matters relating to their residence status (permits issuing, renewing visas, deportation etc). Some experts referred specifically to the approach towards domestic helpers, who are treated as inferior human beings (Trimikliniotis 2004:11). Moreover, discourses in mass media and educational system prove lack of tolerance and openness towards immigrants. As regards to media discourse on migrants in Cyprus a qualitative research revealed that “migrant parents consider that what they and particularly their children face in schools is related to the way the media constructs the migrants in Cyprus, who stereotype them in particular ways. In fact the portrayal of migrants on television and radio was repeatedly raised in the focus groups and interviews, as it is an issue of concern, bitterness even, amongst migrant workers themselves” (Trimikliniotis 2003:19).

The literature on migrant women in Cyprus focuses on discriminatory practices they are subjected, at different levels and on a variety of grounds. Various narratives of these women (participating in different researches) revealed that “many domestic workers are denied basic rights- holiday, money, overtime, rest time and are often subjected to all sort of abuses. Domestic workers have perhaps the worst deal (together with agricultural workers and women working in the sex industry). They work at irregular times and are often forced to work overtime without extra pay. They often suffer psychological (and physical) abuse and the threat of expulsion is commonly employed as a disciplining device” (cited in Trimikliniotis 2003:16). This is only an example that illuminates questions to be taken into account when discussing about integration of migrant women in Cyprus.

In terms of racialised and gendered labour markets, Trimikliniotis and Pantelides (2003:14) analyse the case of Cyprus, addressing theoretical questions in the relevant literature. “Therefore, colour is only one of the signifiers of racism, not exclusively or necessarily the most important. It has been suggested that darker people are more likely to be the target of racism. Regarding Cyprus one may crudely suggest that people from different geographical areas are concentrated in different occupations, with ‘whites’ (northern/central Europeans/Americans) concentrated in more office type work, with a very large number as managers. ‘Black’ people (northern Africa/Arabs, and south east Asians, with the exception of Lebanese and Jordanians), on the other hand, are more likely to be concentrated in manual jobs. However this is a crude and at times misleading picture: there is an anomaly with east Europeans who, depending on their class position of course, generally occupy jobs at the lower end of the market. This is also the case for the Lebanese and, to a lesser extent,
Jordanian migrants”. Thus, the authors argue that racism cannot be reduced to a phenotypic prejudice solely based on colour.

As for the gender dimension, in the case of Cyprus, there is a gendered division of labour based on racial background: “eastern European (white) women are the first preference for the sex industry (prostitution and ‘artists’/‘dancers’), by and large replacing the traditional stereotypes of the ‘exotic’ Asian women working in cabarets, as was the case before the collapse of eastern European regimes. Asian women are preferred for home care and ‘caring jobs’, perhaps linked to some stereotype notion of the ‘black (or dark) maid’. The cultural basis for the position of the Asian maid was found in the category the “kori” (κόρη) in traditional society, where the woman, daughter and wife, ‘served’ the man. This operated together with class, as lower class women were the cleaners and maids in the houses of the rich (αρχοντικά). One must consider the connection between gender and ‘race’, and racism and sexism, if one is to understand the position of migrant women labour and the kind of racialisation they face. We are reminded that “racialised and ethnic minority women are concentrated in the most arduous and poorly paid work” (Anthias and Yuval-Davies 1992: 117) and the experience in Cyprus clearly show this” (ibid).

Female Marriage migrants as Spouses of Greek Cypriots

Marriage migration in Cyprus is a matter attributed to mixed marriages between foreigners/non-nationals and Greek Cypriots. As Cyprus has recently become a country of immigration with a very restrictive immigration policy that allows migrant workers to stay only for a limited period of time, there is no marriage migration in relation to family reunification of migrants already living in the country and opting in their marital choice for a partner from the same country. However, during 2007 the situation is expecting to change with the implementation of EU Directives on the status of long-term immigrants and the right to family reunification. Mixed marriage and immigration are both new and interrelated phenomena in contemporary Cyprus. Working in Cyprus as a foreigner (even if the Eastern-European spouses in the sample are Cypriot citizens- they are perceived and identified themselves as foreigners, with one exception in the sample of 20 spouses), for the majority of the sample respondents, constituted an occasion to face discrimination because of their inferior/marginal status as non-nationals/foreigners; they faced undermining of their working rights, bad treatment because of a double inferior status as foreign women at work (i.e. because of their gender and their marginal status as economic migrants), discrimination concerning wages and unfriendly behaviour of Cypriot work colleagues, and the necessity of good Greek language skills for finding a decent job.

State authorities’ discourse on integration of migrants

A contradictory approach in relation to this topic (as discussed by Trimikliniotis 2004b: 15) is illustrated by The Cyprus National Action Plan for Employment 2004-2006, compiled by the Cyprus Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance pursuant to Article

As discussed by Fulias-Souroulla (2006).
128.3 of the Treaty and within the framework of the Employment Guidelines adopted by the European Council and the Broad Economic Policy Guidelines (BEPGs). Guideline 7 of the plan titled “Promote the integration of and combat the discrimination against people at a disadvantage in the labour market” is the only section dealing with the issue of discrimination and is silent on measures to combat discrimination on the grounds of racial or ethnic origin. On the contrary, it appears to be praising the current system, which attaches migrant workers’ entry visas to specific employers, as a measure, which has minimised unemployment amongst third country nationals. Referring to the Pontian migrants in Cyprus, the Guideline states that they do not face unemployment problems due to the conditions of full employment and thanks to the “special education measures for these people aiming at their social integration (e.g. supportive teaching, language learning and special activities)”. 27

The Report makes it clear that it does not recognise the existence of any social exclusion problems among migrants28 today, and the promotion measures it sets forward for the elimination of social exclusion29 are general and not focused on any group in particular, although special provision is made to encourage persons with disabilities to enter the labour market. However, the Social Exclusion Action Plan recognises that “migrants are a group at risk of being excluded”. Moreover, the Commissioner for legislation and president of the National Organisation for the Protection of Human Rights criticised the Government for regulating only the economic dimension of immigration without formulating a complete immigration policy to include integration measures (Trimikliniotis and Demetriou, 2005b:41).

As regards civic participation of immigrants this is very restrictive as they are hardly any encouraging legal conditions for this occur. In fact the institutional framework for migrant’s stay and employment, there are hardly any conditions regarding civic participation of immigrants (Trimikliniotis and Demetriou, 2005: 19). The same source identifies ‘restrictive conditions’ that prohibit political participation in elections, unless full citizenship is granted, but there are no formal prohibitions of membership in parties and organisations, right for self-organisation, public rallies, etc. At the level of formal rights, the general rights guaranteed under the Constitution and the ECHR are generally respected. Nevertheless, migrants face a tough regime because, on the whole, issues relating to their stay are considered as falling outside these (ibid, p.19). The anti-discrimination legislation is the only body of legislation with a practical impact on the migrants’ lives, but the issues affected are mostly related to their employment conditions and are only indirectly affecting the migrants’ level of civic participation.

28 Under the sub-heading of ‘social cohesion’, the Cyprus National Action Plan on Employment 2004-2006 states: “Economic inequality, poverty and social exclusion may not, in general, be considered as acute problems in Cyprus. However, pockets of exclusion exist amongst older people, the single-parent families and families whose head is of low educational level” (Cyprus National Action Plan on Employment 2004-2006, p.8). Also, on p.31 of the Cyprus National Action Plan on Employment, following the reference to the full employment of the Pontians, the Report states: “However, the recent increase of economic immigrants entering Cyprus illegally may create conditions of social exclusion”.
29 Cyprus National Action Plan on Employment 2004-2006, p.31: “Strengthening the attractiveness of the labour market and encouraging the participation therein; Improvement of skills; Employment to acquire valuable professional experience; Constant counselling support”.

The major research gaps

There is an absence of research on integration of immigrants in the Cypriot society and the policies affecting these processes. This study is conceived as a first attempt to throw light in the domain. A precedent could be considered the Politis research project mapping the “Active Civic Participation of Immigrants in Cyprus” (Trimikliniotis and Demetriou, 2005). It might be considered as ‘opening the door’ for further research on integration issues that are closely related to civic participation. In this sense, the project identified factors related to the migration model of ‘foreign workers’ in Cyprus that do not allow the full development of migrant communities: “These lead to the very low participation of migrants in the social process, even in their own ethnic/migrant associations. At best, they are involved in religious or cultural groupings, which are of little consequence as far as civic participation is concerned, or self-help networks” (ibid).

As our focus herein is the group of migrant women, we address policies envisaging this category. In relation to policies regulating domestic and care work, at this stage we can identify a significant unintended effect of this policy (or rather lack of policy) in relation to social representations of this occupation in Cypriot context disempowering female domestic workers. Thus, Asian women have become the stereotype of domestic workers/servants and seen as a ‘necessity’ for every household that can afford them. And because they are underpaid (and this happens according to their work contract) employing a domestic worker has become a widespread phenomenon in Cyprus. In terms of gaps in knowledge, the question which arises is to what extent this attitude towards domestic workers affects possible policies of integration regarding this group of migrant women.

On policies controlling prostitution, in terms of gaps in knowledge, the question whether the migrants in Cypriot sex industry are ‘victims’ of certain constraints or they ‘consciously chose this occupation’, constitutes a topic for further debates and research.

As regards to unemployment policies, in terms of identifying knowledge gaps, the NAP/employment (2004-2006) mentions that ‘the recent increase of economic immigrants entering Cyprus illegally may create conditions of social exclusion’ (p.31). Furthermore, the Department of Labour presents foreign workforce as filling shortage of jobs and job market qualitative imbalances through employment on a temporary basis. The identified economy sectors are: hotel and restaurants, manufacturing and the wholesale and retail trade; this also constitute sectors were women are employed. Therefore, we should identify to what extent migrant women are affected by unemployment and in what sectors of the economy is unemployment more likely to occur. Moreover, we should consider this topic in connection to effects of social policies for re-entering the labour market in the case of migrant women.

In this sense, the NAP for employment and social inclusion (2004-2006) specifies a number of measures to pursue for re-entry into the labour market of the long-term
unemployed, but there is no specific reference to migrant workers; however, one of the measures has a very broad focus as long as it aims at the: “improvement of the ability to serve special groups of the population, such as persons with disabilities, the long-term unemployment, women, older workers and other vulnerable persons.”

We can identify as a research gap the issue of policies combating illicit work influencing the situation of migrant women. In terms of negative and unintended policy consequences, so far we can say that many migrant workers are forced into illicit work as a result of the paradox concerning fixed and short-term employment: when their four-year term is up many migrant workers go underground to continue to work, or others who are refused release papers (which is prescribed in their work contract) are forced to run away from their designated address in search of other employment, even if illicit.\(^{30}\) Moreover, refugees and asylum seekers, who are restricted work only in agricultural sectors, are thus forced to work illegally.\(^{31}\)

In terms of negative effects of the policy, it is interesting to identify empirically to what extent these measures establish a very strict and rigid hierarchy of migrants (and implicitly of female migrants) in Cyprus with regard to their access to and mobility in the labour market. Therefore, the question is whether any migrants’ integration policy will reflect, to a certain extent, this hierarchy of access to employment, as this arena is a major one as concerns integration processes.

As regards to migration and naturalisation policies, due to the policy that migrant workers’ permits cannot be extended beyond four years (or six years in the case of some domestic workers), the possibility of acquiring citizenship for these groups is rather slim, unless they are married to a Cypriot or are granted leave to stay on other exceptional reasons. We should note that Cypriot policy makers are very reluctant to grant citizenship to migrants (due to the Turkish policy of settlement and colonisation of the occupied territories). Moreover, as already identified\(^{32}\), the criteria for granting the status of long-term migrants will include proficiency in the Greek language. The latter is very difficult to achieve because, as key informants pointed out, most of the work migrants in Cyprus are not educated and many cannot write even in their language. Besides, there is one more important factor to take in consideration regarding the fact that the Cypriot dialect they hear on an everyday basis and the Greek language are two different things\(^{33}\). This constitutes a topic that needs further research.

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\(^{30}\) Key informants noted that this is a wide-spread phenomenon ((Trimikliniotis and Fulias-Souroulla, 2006b).\(^{31}\)

\(^{31}\) Ibid.

\(^{32}\) Trimikliniotis and Fulias-Souroulla, 2006a..\(^{33}\) See FeMiPol, Wp2 (Trimikliniotis and Fulias-Souroulla, 2006b).
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