Perceptions of Work in Albanian Immigrants' Testimonies and the Structure of Domestic Work in Greece

Introduction

Greece has shifted from a country of emigration to a migrant-receiving country. The 2001 census counted 797,091 foreigners which amount to 7.2% of the total population (www.statistics.gr).[1] Although migration to Greece started in the 1970s, Greece became an immigrant country in the 1980s. A growing number of female migrants from third World countries during the period 1987-1991 were employed in the service sector.[2] 75 percent of Filipinos who work in Greece are women and in their vast majority (80%) domestic workers (Cañete 2001: 282, Anderson 2000).[3] Immigration of Bulgarians started in 1989 and their number increased particularly after 1994. As it is officially recorded in the 2001 census, 44.1 percent of those working in services were Albanian, 10 percent Bulgarian, 6.3 percent Ukrainian, 5.3 percent Filipinas and 5.3 Georgian. Despite the fact that the majority of domestic workers are Albanian and that Albanian migration is predominantly family migration, there is a concentration of specific nationalities in domestic work, mainly care work, as 29 percent of Bulgarians and 37 percent of immigrants from former USSR countries are occupied in services, a category identified with domestic work. The predominance of domestic service in the migrant labour force illustrates both the limited working opportunities for female migrants and the demand for domestic labour in Greece. 86 percent of female Filipina working population is occupied in domestic service, while the proportion for Ukrainian is 66.3 percent, for Albanian 51

percent, for Bulgarian 47 percent, for Georgian 59, for Polish 63.8, for Moldavian 64.2. The above trends show that women were involved in single-sex migration with domestic work constituting an employment milieu in which employees are allocated on the basis of their ethnicity and gender. The demand for domestic work as a legitimating reason for immigration is expressed by the Minister of Internal Affairs: 'You should know that there are jobs that are appropriate for a migrant because he [sic] is skilled for that job. But all these things need program. I will repeat what I said earlier. We never had a program in our country, for example, what are these jobs that a migrant who wants to come to Greece can do! They do not know, for example, that <u>all</u> domestic workers have the opportunity to come to Greece and work, and they do an excellent job, which there is nobody to do, because there is not enough demand from the part of Greek citizens' [my emphasis]. [4]

This essay focuses on the working experience of Albanian domestic workers and attempts to analyze the role of gender, class and race hierarchies in the production of their subjectivity. It places the experience of domestic service in the context of the Mediterranean welfare regime and its lack of provisions for children and elderly people. Furthermore, it aims at analyzing the continuities and discontinuities in domestic service between the present and the twentieth century both in terms of the structure of employment and in attitudes towards service. It is based on oral testimonies[5] of migrants who originate in Albania and live and work mainly in Volos, a city in northeastern Greece. The proportion of Albanians in the migrant population is 79%, of Bulgarian 6%, while Romanians comprise 6% as well.

A. Family Structures, Female Labour Participation and the Legal Status of Domestic Work

The growing participation of the female labour force in employment during the 1990s coincides with the explosion of immigrant domestic labour as the 2001 census illustrates, while the withdrawal of women in employment in the 1970s and especially in the 1980s is marked by a sharp decrease of the number of domestic workers in Greece during the same period (table 2). The increasing participation of women in education and the aspirations of Greek women for better paying jobs have made domestic work an undesirable occupation. The withdrawal of Greek women from live-in domestic work during the 1970s indicates that it became an undesirable occupation due also to its construction as a family relationship by state policy.

Greece has the highest percentage (67 percent) of people over 15 married in EU. According to the 1996 National Centre of Social Research the unequal division of roles between the sexes prevailed in 57 percent of metropolitan households while 40 percent of women devoted themselves entirely to housework and children. The proportion of women over 15 in work or seeking work reached a low point in 1982 (Athanassiou 1986: 104-5), which coincided with a sharp decline in domestic work. The number of domestic workers decreased by two thirds between 1961 and 1981 (table 1).

The participation of women in the labour force rose between 1982 and 1999.[6] At the same time, the proportion of the GDP spent on social benefits, education and health was by the mid-1990s the lowest in the EU (Close 2002: 208). Meagerness of public welfare provisions such as family benefits, maternity leave, child care facilities, medical services and school together with the changing economic roles of women and their new

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position in the family led to a growing demand for domestic services. The supply of cheap migrant labour led households that would normally use family labour to use the services of immigrant women.

The trends in the participation of women in domestic work and in industry over a longer period indicate both the decline of domestic work but also the growing participation of women in the public and private service sector. Day-work especially in the form of cleaning of public and private buildings acquired prominence over domestic work.[7] In Athens in 1951 domestic servants comprised 19.6 of the total female working population while those in industry 38 per cent. In 1961 domestic servants comprised 12.3 of the total female working population while those in industry 31 percent. In 1971 the corresponding numbers were 3.1 percent for domestic service and 32.5 percent for industry. In 1981 domestic service represented 3.6 of the total working population while participation in industry 25 percent. In 1991 servants comprised 2.0 of the total working population while those in industry 14.5. In 2001 domestic servants comprised 6.3 of the female working population while those employed in industry 10.1 of the working population (table 1).[8]

The low numbers of Greek domestic workers in the 1991 census and the decline of domestic work during the period between 1970 and 1990 illustrate that immigrants did not substitute Greek labour but competed mainly with other ethnic groups. It is estimated that Albanian domestic workers were paid about 20 percent less than Filipinas (Lazaridis 2000: 344).

Table 1. Distribution of working population in industry and domestic service in Athens, 1951-2001

Professions	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001

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Domestic Work					
Female	27,928	22,485	6,772	11,371	8,927	30,591
Male	1,139	1,870	6,888	3,085	1,284	1,931
Total	29,067	24,355	13,660	14,456	10,211	33,522
Industry					
Female	54,182	56,262	70,276	78,085	63,898	48,798
Male	123,455	147,129	188,912	204,558	127,478	104,568
Total	177,637	203,391	259,188	282,643	191,376	153,366
Total working population					
Female	142,583	182,268	216,260	313,209	441,344	478,457
Male	441,238	524,066	637,792	751,733	744,872	692,318
Total	583,836	706,294	854,052	1,064,942	1,186,216	1,170,775

Source: Statistique Générale de la Grèce, *Population de fait de 10 ans et plus sexe et profession principale et secondaire ,III Professions, 1951, 1961, 1971, 1981, 1991 ,2001.*

Studies demonstrate that the 'grey economy' pre-dated the arrival of immigrants (Vaiou and Chatjimichalis 1997) and draw the connection of the illegal status of migrants to the increase of the 'grey sector' (Labrianidis et al. 2004: 1196). The deregularization of the labour market and the lack of control and regulation by the state constituted a form of indirect subsidize (Vaiou and Chadjimichalis 1997:196). The growing informalization of the economy should not be attributed solely to a crisis in the mechanisms of control of the labour market that could be reconstituted (Linardos-Rylmon 1998: 74). Rather, it is the very definition of agricultural and domestic labour by the law that denies to these forms

of work the status of labour. Both forms of labour are constituted outside formal labour contracts, working hours, insurance benefits. [9]

The division established by labour legislation within the category of paid domestic workers between non-live-in and live-in domestic workers involves the removal of all labour and insurance rights for live-in domestic workers. The employment of the vocabulary of affect and the institution of the labour relationship as an arrangement between individuals establish continuity between the present policy and that during the first half of the twentieth century, which legitimized the exclusion of domestic service from all legislative provisions (prohibition of child labour, insurance, leave, hours of work, night labour etc.) (Hantzaroula forthcoming).

Live-in domestic work is excluded from the provisions concerning the length of the working day, additional payment for overtime work, prohibition of labour on Sunday or festivals as well as payment for work on Sundays and night work. The arrangement of hours of work relies totally on the employer who is responsible, according to the article of 663 of the Civil Code, to regulate hours of work and rest of live-in domestic worker in order to secure employees' health and the performance of religious and political duties. The only provisions from which live-in domestic workers are not excluded are holiday benefits (ν. 1082/1980), annual leave (β.δ. 376/1971) and compensation for dismissal which is covered by the articles 669-674 of the Civil Code (Court of Appeal of Pireaus 667/2001). The article 256 §4 states that, 'the lapse of claims of servants against landlords is suspended during the service relationship, but not beyond 15 years'. The suspension is justified by the 'specific relationship of trust and protection that binds the live-in domestic wage labourer with the landlord'. [10] Even though insurance against

unemployment is meager in Greece, <u>all</u> domestic workers are excluded from it as well as from insurance against accidents at work.

The legislative provisions constitute domestic work as an inferior occupation and stand on the side of employers perpetuating the devaluation of domestic work and denying domestic workers full social rights. The revival of domestic work is attributed to the predominance of immigrant labour in the sector and in the vulnerability of workers who accept low remuneration and degrading working and living conditions. The grey zone of live-in domestic work, which concerns mainly care work, continues to be based on its attribution of characteristics that resemble a family relationship, such as protection and trust. In the past, the construction of domestic labour as a family relationship was resisted by employees who revoke it as a working relationship in which extreme exploitation was immanent (Hantzaroula 2005).

B. The Experience of Domestic Work

A form of service masked as family labour, underpaid (and to a large extent child labour) and not recognized as work through its exclusion from labour legislation, which declined only in the late 1970s, seems to have played a central role in shaping not only attitudes towards domestic workers but a middle class habitus in dealing with servants.[11] A large proportion of women who use the services of migrant women were brought up by servants.

All female interviewees (also those who were not identified as domestics) had the experience of domestic work since they migrated to Greece. Teenagers who re-united with their parents looked after elderly women for supplementing family income. A large

number of interviewees migrated alone and left their children with their mothers or mothers in law. These women entered domestic service as live-in workers providing caring for elderly women. Marika came to Greece from Përmet in South Albania in 1996 and worked for four years as a live-in domestic looking after an elderly woman. She left her two children (nine and six years old) in Albania at her mother-in-law. Initially she worked for a month as a cleaner in houses but the expenses of renting a house made it unfavorable. Living with in laws was extremely uncomfortable and made her feeling a burden. Nina a 34 year old woman from Shkodër came to Greece in 1995 when her husband got ill leaving her two-and-a-half year-old daughter with her in-laws. Both Marika and Nina found their live-in posts after relatives had abandoned them for a better future abroad (Canada) or a better post in Greece. The argument that personal attendant services are a step that leads to better paid jobs and to other opportunities has to be evaluated. The interviewees' working experiences indicate that these are dead-end jobs. Yet, even if there are those who move to self-employment or better jobs in terms of status and remuneration – although this is not the case for the interviewees - it is important to stress that there are always women who have to subject themselves to this depressing, isolating and low income and low status occupation. For the younger generation the situation is gloomy as only one third of those who finish primary school continue to secondary education.

Live-in service is perceived by the interviewees who have experienced it as a traumatic experience. Marika says: 'Even if they gave me a million euro, I wouldn't do it again. Is there anybody who can endure this?' Nina who works as a live-in domestic for 10 years uses the discourse of nostalgia to express her desperation with this pattern of

employment. Her sole dream is to live in her own house and to go back with her daughter to Tirana after she finishes school. 'As years go by, I am suffocating', she says.

Family migration and family budgets enable Albanian women to move to day-work or for the younger generation to improve their skills. It is almost impossible for single women to shift to day work and support themselves with such a meager income. Most of the women found their posts through informal networks. These informal networks, which consist of relatives or acquaintances, support the care of elderly people and safeguard the continuity of caring. Day workers were mainly approached by employers in the neighborhood, a move that concurs with the identification of the female Albanian population with domestics produced through the ethnic and gendered segregation of the labour market.

Female migrants are especially disadvantaged in the labour market. As Saskia Sassen argues, although in the past the growing demand of labour in a sector was accompanied by the strengthening of the position of the workers, in the new employment regimes which face an increasing demand for immigrant women their invisibility and disempowerment, such as the lack of citizenship rights, and their concentration on the informal sector of services do not lead to an increase in their bargaining power (Sassen 2003: 260). The persistence of the informal status of domestic labour and its positioning at the periphery of the labour market accounts for the devaluation of domestic work. The devaluation of female labour due to the gender hierarchies that purvey the institutions of labour and their agents structures domestic work as a low status and low income occupation. Notions of gender and ethnicity shape policies and practices that direct

female migrants to specific sectors of economic activity and reinforce the gendered and ethnic division of labour.

Yet, as Judith Butler argues, 'the racialization of the subject or its gendering or, indeed, its social abjection more generally is performatively induced from various and diffuse quarters that do not always operate as "official" discourse' (Butler 1997: 157). Language problems diminish employees' negotiating power. Most of the interviewees were approached by neighbors and they were given very few money for long hours of work without being able to react.[12] Those who acquired work and residence permission are dependent on their employers as they need a certain amount of contributions in order to get the card.[13] This dependency put them in a disadvantaged position as in order not to lose their residence permission accept low wages and long hours of work. Sonia, who worked for a period in a workshop, had to clean without payment the house of the owner because he registered her in IKA. None of the interviewees asked for an increase in the salary and they accepted the wages the employers decided: 'I did not have the strength. Because I was scared that they will behave differently, and that they will shout at me. I was scared. I said to myself it is better not to talk and to endure'.

The difficulties and the lack of resources especially at their arrival were a ground for fierce exploitation on the part of Greeks. The interviewees were shocked with the conditions in which their relatives, husbands and children lived. The majority of the interviewees in Volos took the lowest quality accommodation and usually rent old houses under the arrangement to renovate them. Due to their hard work and skills many houses have been renovated. The housing conditions improve as the length of stay in Greece is

extended. The huge contrast between houses Greeks lived or expectations of conditions of living and the reality they faced was the first shock.

Live-in service restructures households and leads to a reorganization of family forms. Nina looked after an elderly woman for two and a half years and brought her daughter to stay at the employer's house. She still lives and works after the death of her employer for her son but she works from 9 to 1 in the afternoon as a day cleaner in several households. Nina describes this arrangement as 'being a family without marriage'. The money she gets is very little, so her main employer allows her to work in different houses. She returns at noon, she cooks and they eat the three of them. In the afternoon she is free to meet friends but she is in charge of the whole household.

Arrangements that resemble indentured labour are forms of live-in service under the guise of co-habitation with the promise of marriage or with marriage. Such was the case of Sonia's older daughter from Korçë who was introduced to a divorced Greek man who lived with his mother in a village close to Lamia. He promised to Sonia that he would arrange Moira's papers before she moved to Greece but he kept her in his house for two years using her as a servant. When he and his mother left the house, they even unplugged the phone and when Sonia went to get her daughter back he threatened them with a policeman.

The working place is the place where migrants are confronted by racist attitudes but also the social space where class and race subordination is produced. The racialization of Albanian employees is produced not only in the relationship between employer and employee but also between employees. Sonia described how Greek cleaning women at the airport chose the easiest tasks and they were sitting separately

from non-Greek women smoking and looking at them working. When Sonia questioned their attitude, a Greek woman replied that 'you have nothing to do with us'. The manipulation of cultural differences serves to produce marginalization and intra-class conflict but also class exploitation. The employer cheated Sonia many times and gave her less money knowing that her knowledge of Greek was poor to complain.

The strategy of defacement which is employed by many employers aims at removing every aspect of the individuality of the employees. Marika's employer for whom she worked for four years as a live-in servant did not talk to her. She only asked her what they will have for lunch and dinner and what time she will be back. Even when they had lunch, her employer was asking her what she was going to cook for dinner. When Marika had a day-off, the employer called her to her brother's house and was asking her what time she would be back. This strategy of defacement is a strategy of subordinating the other by reducing her to a mere instrument. Additional attitudes that belong to this strategy are behaving as if the employee is invisible or not asking any questions about her past. This is a way to maintain social distance and employers' domination, which could be destabilized or threatened by a higher educational or social status of the worker. Other interviewees use the metaphor of prison to describe their life in live-in service. Restriction of movement and control of food are modes of discipline that were dominant in pre- and post-war domestic service.

The house was the social space where class distinction was made concrete. It was the place where class consciousness arises out of the recognition of difference produced through the understanding of the illegitimate relation of oneself with possessions and through the exclusion from what one feels entitled to. Live-in service appears as archaic;

as a remnant of outdated relations of exploitation and a violation of rights. The refusal to embody social subordination is an act of defiance and of regaining self-recognition. Lina, a twenty nine year old woman from Tepelenë in south Albania who studied classics, found a post as a live-in worker in Athens. 'It didn't suit me. It didn't. I felt it from the start. But this time, I felt it very strongly. Yes, I did feel it strongly. It was Christmas and there were the boys with their girlfriends, and their parents and they put me to bring glasses and stuff. Those things that we saw in the old movies, I did them! It seemed to me crazy! It was difficult. And I said to myself, where do I find the strength to keep on? For the type of person I am - a proud woman – it was very difficult for me to serve them, as if I was the slave and you the aristocrats. I was so depressed that evening. I cried all night long' [Lina].

The majority of the interviewees employs the 'hidden transcript' (Scott 1990, Parreñas 2001: 194) and abandon employers when they face racism. Yet, talking back is not uncommon. Resistance to employers' technologies that aimed at producing a docile body, such as the control of communication, subvert the naturalization of hierarchical relationships and strip employers from their mechanisms of subordination. 'I went to clean the floor with the hoover and she listens and comes. She said: 'The hoover should not be used like that', with a tone that I didn't like at all. She said: 'Don't use it like that', she wanted to give me lessons how to clean. And I said: 'If you don't like the way I do it, find someone else'. […] She didn't talk. She was scared' [Lina].

C. The Racialization of the Migrant Population

In Greece, especially between 1990 and 1998 but also to a large extent afterwards, the carceral system has been elevated to the main machine of 'race making'.[14] Loic Wacquant describes the age-old practice that has connected the ghetto with the prison in the U.S. through the association of blackness with criminality. Wacquant traces the historical and social contexts and specificities in which the ghetto developed, yet we could argue that the identification of the Albanian to criminal elaborated by the media in the 1990s and the massive incarceration of Albanian immigrants have supplied a logic of using the Albanian as a proxy of dangerousness. Iordanis Psimmenos argues in his case-study in Athens that a process of ghettoization is taking place with the creation of 'periphractic' spaces in the city where their use (parks, stations, etc.) indicate to the user what he/she can do and what she/he cannot by showing that she/he is not equal to the integrated citizens (Psimmenos 2000: 90-95).

'If identity', as Stuart Hall argues, 'is about questions of using the resources of history, language and culture in the process of becoming, then the question is not 'who we are <u>but how we have been represented and how that bears on how we might represent ourselves</u>' [my emphasis] (Hall 1996:4).

The effects of these images on subjectivity are damaging as they lead to a process of concealment and denial of identity as well as to the diffusion of the strategy of <u>passing</u>, which has been wrongly perceived as simply a strategy of high adaptation of the Albanian population in contrast to other ethnic groups. This means that <u>passing</u> should not be perceived as a cultural attribute of the Albanian population as it is specifically the Albanian that has been crafted by the media and the carceral system as criminal and not so much the other groups.

Siegfried Kracauer has talked about situations of self-effacement, or homelessness, like exile, and the states of mind in which the self is a stranger who does no longer belongs to a place. In these situations the mind becomes a *palimpsest*, in the sense that the self the person was continues to exist beneath the person he is about to become, his identity is bound to be in a state of flux (Kracauer 1969: 83-4). The possibility to make the 'other' culture one's own and the process of stepping out of one's culture can be an act of freedom and at the same time a source of great anxiety (ibid., Laliotou 2006).

Hate speech leads to the impossibility of a positive identification or a split in subjectivity. The interviewees either hide that they are Albanian or they try to differentiate themselves from Albanians: 'I loathed Albanians. I didn't want much contact with them, in order not to show that I am Albanian. I was ashamed and afraid, because I did not have papers or because I felt very inferior. But not anymore' [Rania]. Sonia said that she and her daughter tried not to show that they are Albanian in the bus and they talked in Greek. To be told that you don't show [Albanian] is perceived and used as a compliment by Greeks. Sonia mentioned a neighbour who said to her grandchild: 'Don't talk to the <u>Alvanaki'</u> [little Albanian]. Sonia's grandchild replies all the time angrily 'I am not Albanian'.

These are subjects who have been partially denationalized and experience what Homi Bhabha calls minoritarian conditions of life, which do not exist exlusively at the margins of society or the peripheries of the globe. 'They exist wherever there is an attempt to deny the choice of freedom or to refuse the recognition of equality on the grounds that there must be a normalization or neutralization of 'difference' – in other

words, a majoritarian bias- in the moral ordering of society and its allocation or regulation of resources (Bhabha 2004: 348)'.

The consciousness of marginality breaks when they become objects of the condemning gaze of others. 'When we came here we felt hatred; not hatred but something like shame. I don't know why this stuck with me. I don't know how this happened – to be so ashamed. To hide our origins, and not to be able to say that I am… Of course, it is justified, but how could it be possible. […] I was afraid that they would exclude me. I felt that they looked at us like a dead dog. That's how they looked at us. When I said that I am from Albania, it was as if I said that I come from a country that has only dead dogs. That's how much people loathed us when we said that. So much hatred I felt… What I had in front of me it was very powerful' [Rania].

It is above all the name 'Albanian' as a proxy for criminalization, and domestic work as a stigmatized occupation that transfers its devaluing marks on the individual, that create the split in subjectivity and the ambivalence of identification. 'I am very careful [in my job]. I don't want her to tell me 'Oh, Albanian' I don't want this to happen. I am Albanian. I don't hide it. And I am glad that I am. That's what I am. And I want to be. I am not ashamed. I am not. But I don't want the other person to say 'the Albanian did it'. [Giorgia]. The insistence on not be ashamed to be Albanian implies the awareness of stigmatization and the struggle to deal with the shameful parts of subjectivity.

Furthermore, it is the Greek identity that excludes any possibility of inclusion and makes impossible the acknowledgment of the 'right to difference in equality' (Balibar 1994: 56): one has to be Greek or 'at least' Christian Orthodox in order to enjoy a minimum of acceptance.[15] The massive baptizing of Albanian adults and children and the

change of names to Christian are not strategies of adaptation but a result of coercion, reminding us the colonial practices of 'Christianizing the savage negro soul' (Fanon 1967: 142).[16]

Conclusion

The idea of migration as a 'successful' story or 'failure' does not seem relevant. Neither does make sense to judge the experience in terms of betterment or worsening situation. For the younger generation in the age-group 17-25 who left school in Albania without finishing it in order to migrate, domestic work is perceived as a stage to get a better job in the future and try to improve their skills. A pessimistic attitude in the age 30-55 age group prevails due to the lack of mobility and lack of resources and opportunities for improving their skills. Both women and men state that they only live for their children and they call themselves 'the lost generation'.

Bestowing the status of labour to domestic work and eliminating the distinction between live-in and non live-in service would not be enough measures for conferring full social status to female migrants. The stories of the interviewees show that self-esteem and self-recognition are inextricably tied with citizenship rights. The possession of the self is re-established through regaining the status of the citizen. A minority position arises, which is not dialectic in the sense of a relationship of one to the other but a movement between positions, the one-in-the-other. 'It is in this movement that a narrative of historical becoming is constituted […] an effect of the ambivalent condition of their borderline proximity (Bhabha 1997: 434): 'Lately, I would like to be called Greek-Albanian, and Albanian-Greek. A shared name that combines the two [she uses also both her new Christian name and her original one]'. Making allowance to the subjective

understanding of citizenship opens a way to view citizenship rights not as an assertion of an identity and to approach difference not as a restoration of an original identity but as a "process of affiliation". Furthermore, it shows that political subjectivization is a crossing of identities and the enactment of equality by subjects who are in-between (Rancière 1992: 61).

Rania adds that a year earlier she would lie. She would 'put the mask that all Albanian women put on in order to pass for Greek [Voreioipirotisa] […] in order not to feel the disgust in the face of the other when I say that I am Albanian. I have felt that, and I have experienced it myself. First of all I am legal, I have my papers, because a year ago I applied for family reunification,[17] and secondly I feel cleaner […] I truly feel that I am not afraid of anyone and I am not ashamed'.

The above excerpt talks about the power of appropriating the very terms by which one has been abused. Conceiving the speech act as a rite of institution whose contexts are never fully determined in advance and which cannot be tied to its moment of utterance, Judith Butler argues that the possibility for the speech act to take on a non-ordinary meaning, to function in contexts where it has not belonged is precisely the political promise of the performative (Butler: 159-63). The name 'Albanian', as we have seen, is an injurious name and has functioned as a sign of degradation. But when the names of injury of racializing speech are rehearsed by different subjects and in contexts where they have not belonged can revaluate the categories, attribute a meaning that did not previously exist, and embrace subjects and interests that had been excluded from its jurisdiction. Hate speech is an act, as Butler argues, that seeks to silence the one to whom

it is addressed, but the response to hate speech constitutes the "de-officialization" of the performative, its expropriation of non-ordinary means (ibid: 160).

If we want to understand the racial situation not from a universal point of view but as it is experienced by individual consciousness, we have to listen to the language of the social groups that are in a situation of positional suffering (Bourdieu 1999) and expand our understanding of the place of the 'affective' in the realm of public events.

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[1] It is estimated that the total number of residence migrants waves between 800,000 and 1 million while the proportion of immigrants amounts to 8 and 9% of the total population (and over 12% of the labour force) (Labrianidis et al. 2004: 1188).

[2] The number of undocumented labour was estimated to 40,000 in 1980 while in 1989 waved between 30,000 and 76,000 (see Petrinioti: 27).

[3] The recent association of the word Filipina with the domestic worker in Greek language, which works both as a synonym and as a metaphor, reflects the racist attitude towards Filiapinas and the devaluation of domestic work.

[4] Interview of the Minister of Internal Affairs, Public Administration and Decentralization to Panajis Galiatsatos and Vasilis Skouris at the radio channel Alpha news, Tuesday 11 January 2005.

[5] This essay is part a broader project "Pythagoras"-Research Action: Gendered Aspects of Migration in Southeast Europe: Integration, Labour and Transnational Communication (GAME), EPEAEK II. The project is based on 60 life-stories of both men and women. In this paper I use 25 interviews with Albanian women and men in the age group 18-

25 and 30-45. Women interviewees work or have worked as domestic and cleaning workers. The interviews were conducted by Labrini Styliou, Alexandra Siotou, Raymondos Alvanos and I.

[6] The percentage of women in the labour force rose from 27.9 percent in 1982 to 37.3 percent in 1997. During the period 1993-1999 there was an increase in the participation of women in the labour force by 13.3 percent while the corresponding increase for men was less than 2 percent. There was also an increase of 201 percent of the participation of women in the age group 20-24 (Close: 2002 217).

[7] In 1971 cleaning workers at buildings comprised 12.6 of the total female working population.

[8] The sectors of economic activity during the period 1951-2001 include in the category of domestic services paid workers in families, such as housekeepers, cooks, baby-sitters, teachers, pedagogues, day-cleaners, live-in servants etc. Because 'sectors of economic activity' are characterized by a greater consistency between the censuses than categories of 'professions', it is more feasible to compare the distribution of domestic workers in sectors. The 1951 census uses the category 'domestic services in families', the 1961 the category 'valets, male and female servants', the 1971 'personal services', and the 1981 'domestic services'. In the 1991 and especially in the 2001 censuses the category 'private households employing domestic staff' becomes much more prominent as it is included in all tables of economic activity. This consistency had faded in 1971 and 1981 censuses.

[9] Labour legislation did not intervene to labour relationships that were considered as arrangements between family members. It was industrial work that was defined as dangerous for the moral integrity of women and children and not work in agriculture, domestic service or in small enterprises. Since 1985, the lack of local and ethnic minority labour during harvest was covered with foreign labour, namely Yugoslavs and Polish, with three-month tourist visas. Polish workers had special contracts for a three-year period and each of them to work 30 days for 3 months. They worked for 10-14 hours a day; their wage was 1,800 to 2,000 drachmas while the wage of local labour was 5,000 plus social security (Vaiou and Chadjimichalis 1997: 167, 169).

[10] See article 663 of the Civil Code

[11] The meaningful practices and perceptions generated by the class habitus, defined as "the subjective but not individual system of internalized structures, schemes of perception, conception, and action common to all members of the same group or class and constituting the precondition for all objectification and apperception" (Bourdieu 1984: 190).

[12] Sonia was given 15 euro for 15 hours of work. Day workers get 5 euro per hour. According to the General Federation of Labour in Greece, live-in domestic workers get 400 euro a month without insurance. The interviewees' salaries confirm this amount.

[13] Under the social security scheme, domestic workers are covered on the condition that the worker works for one employer. Their contributions are based on the wage of an unskilled labourer.

[14] The 1975/91 law in 1991 illustrates that the legal apparatus penalized migration and criminalized migrants aiming at the exclusion of undocumented migrants from access to institutions and public service (Kourtovic 2001: 167). The absurdity of penal prosecution and expulsion of those who applied for Green Card but did not fulfill the requirements of the law is another illustration of the "Greek apartheid " (ibid.: 171).

[15] For the exclusion of religious and ethnic minorities during the nineteenth and twentieth century that was justified with biological and cultural criteria see, Baltsiotis (2004).

[16] The so-called lack of faith of the Albanian population does not reflect the outlaw of religion of the Hoxha regime but perpetuates the nineteenth-century myth of the lack of a religious sentiment among the Albanian population, which became - reversed as it is - one of the strongest myths of Albanian nationalism perpetuated until today (Baltsiotis 2004).

[17] Family reunification is permitted under the 2910/2001 law.