

A. Triandafyllidou (ed.), *Irregular Migrant Domestic Workers in Europe: Who Cares?*, Ashgate, February 2013, pp. 256*Iraklis Dimitriadis*

Anna Triandafyllidou's edited volume "Irregular Migrant Domestic Workers in Europe: Who Cares?" focuses on the situation and challenges that irregular migrant domestic workers face in eight different European countries (Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands and Spain). Based on a series of empirical researches, the book analyses thoroughly the trajectories of irregular immigrant domestic workers, the policies concerning their working status, their access to health services and the right they have to family life. These issues discussed in more than a hundred interviews are presented in eight chapters, one for each country.

In the use of the term "migrant domestic work", the author looks at all types of domestic work (live-in, live-out with one employer and live-out with many employers) that take place in other people's houses and are very personal in nature. Migrant domestic work concerns mainly women and this feminization of migration has been encouraged both by push factors, such as women's unemployment in central Eastern Europe and former Soviet republics, poverty, unemployment and violence in developing countries, and pull factors (demand of migrant workers in western and southern European societies). These factors were mainly due to the major cuts in welfare services in Northern and Western Europe, the rapid ageing of population and the increasing of women's participation in employment outside home.

Initially, the book powerfully describes working conditions and workers' rights as being regulated by the national policies. Immigrant domestic workers should enjoy fundamental rights, regardless their legal status or the existence of a written work contract. In some countries, labour rights exist only in theory, as the fear of being

deported in case of seeking help by the authorities always exists (German and Italian case), while in some others, NGOs may play a crucial role in defending them. Despite the existence of a legal framework that defines salaries, overtime pay and sick leave, the authors make it clear that these issues tend to be regulated actually by the employer and the employee. In addition, immigrants' nationality, social networks and resources are determinants to find better working conditions.

A second dimension examined is that of immigrants' career trajectories. The authors deliver a comprehensive examination of immigrants' efforts to change their career, from live-in workers to live-out ones or outside home to public settings or by joining intermediary companies that provide services to private users. Reading the striking overview of these trajectories, the lecturer observes immigrants' deskilling and downward socioeconomic mobility, considering their education and social status in the country of origin. At this point, the author identifies that the immigrants' trajectories do not follow a typical way and everything depends on the change of life circumstances.

Another important suggestion offered by this book has to do with the study of immigrants' access to health care system. Accordingly, when immigrant domestic workers have typical occupational or chronic illnesses and handicaps, they do not usually consult a doctor, as they do not have the means to pay for a private one. Furthermore, they have the fear of being reported to the police or they do not want to risk their dismissal, if they have to be absent from their work in order to be cured. In some countries, there are special medical health care schemes which may help irregular migrants or they may choose NGOs' services, hospitals on call and emergency rooms of hospitals. In many cases, they totally depend on their employers' good will or their social networks.

Last but not least, the book explores the family life of immigrant domestic workers. From an economic point of view, many immigrant domestic workers send remittances to their children who are left behind in their country of origin or to their families. Then, immigrant workers come up with their own strategies to cope with general difficulties, arising while providing for families, to reunify their families or managing to acquire a visa. Other facets of this issue are the particular difficulties in case of pregnancy and giving birth to a child or in the case of their own children needing care while they work.

All things considered, Anna Triandfyllidou and Thanos Maroukis conclude by comparing migrants' living and working conditions in each EU country. On the base of the previous chapters, the authors interestingly review the actual situation of irregular domestic workers and whether the states and the employers respect immigrants' fundamental rights, especially those of employment, healthcare and family life nature.

In fact, the book is an outstanding contribution to the understandings of working conditions and the fundamental rights of irregular immigrant domestic workers and their trajectories, considered mainly as powerful actors and not as victims. It also has a great significance with respect to contemporary policy debates on migration, employment and citizenship. To be more precise, the editor critically discusses some relevant national policies, but does not refer to omissions in EU migration policy in a whole. This volume is also an excellent tool for policy makers, researchers and students, since it provides a powerful insight into the discursive of irregular migrant domestic workers in Europe. Finally, the difficulty of combining so much data and having interviews from people, that is possibly hesitant or suspicious to cooperate with the researcher, gives extra motivation for reading.