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IN SEARCH OF ADONIS:
MARRIAGE STRATEGIES AND GENDER IDENTITY
IN GREEK TRANSNATIONAL MIGRATION

ABSTRACT

Transnational migration, or the circular pattern of mobility between two or more nation-states, has been a relatively new phenomenon studied by social scientists. Focusing mainly on household economics and social networking, scholars are only now accounting for the effects of transnational migration on gender identity or marriage. Using the case of the Greek diaspora, this paper explores how transnational migration itself is used as a marriage strategy among young Greek Canadian women who travel to Greece in search of new lifestyles and potential marriage partners. I argue that the imagining of Greece as the ancestral homeland is realized through satellite television, travel, Internet and other forms of rapidly changing communications by creating a sense of belonging that transcends spatial and temporal distances. The search for an idyllic lifestyle and spouse has implications for how gender identity is performed and constrained by social conventions as individuals move between two different nation-states and two different gender systems. I address what «marriage strategies» constitute in the context of a globally mobile Greek population, and how women, traditionally viewed as a commodity in marriage exchange, utilize education and economic success to become decision makers in their marital choices.

INTRODUCTION¹

Twentieth century Greek migration patterns to North America were characterized by phases of male and family dominated mobility. These

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1. I thank Evangelia Tastsoglou and an anonymous reviewer for their comments and suggestions on this paper.

migrations, from early male sojourners who eventually returned to Greece permanently to entire families escaping political persecution in the 1960s, shaped the Greek diaspora and how it imagines not only the homeland, but itself as well. In Canada, the peak of Greek migration occurred in the mid-1960s when over 10,000 Greek immigrants entered per year (Government of Canada, 1971). This infusion of immigrants was particularly crucial to communities in central and western Canada that, until mid-century, remained small and relatively unorganized. By the late 1960s most new immigrants realized that political and economic conditions in Greece would not improve and decided to stay in Canada. In the western prairie city of Calgary, the influx of Greek immigrants meant expanded possibilities for community building. The first full-time Greek Orthodox priest arrived in 1962 and construction of a permanent church and community center began shortly thereafter (Kolias 1995).

By the mid 1970s the Greek community operated on multiple levels. Locally it occupied a position in the hierarchy of Calgary's different ethnic groups. Within the Canadian legal framework, the community became a recognized ethnic organization that implied the politicization of ethnic identity and the possibility of government funding. On a transnational level it represented a newly organized religious/social body of the Greek diaspora. Thus the Greek community identified and imagined itself within multiple spheres—national, regional, and transnational – each with different reproductive, economic, social, cultural, political and religious purposes. As the twentieth century came to a close however, Greek migration to Canada had all but ceased with less than 300 immigrants recorded for 1996 (Statistics Canada, 1998). Without substantial new immigration, the demographics of the Greek community in Calgary shifted as the immigrant generation retired and their adult second-generation children began defining the meaning of Greekness in the diaspora.²

Migration experiences, and subsequent community building efforts, are gendered and blend the values and practices retained from the homeland with those adopted in the host country. Kinship and social organization reflect the patriarchal structures of the Greek family with specific roles assigned to men and women. Regardless of generation, men still dominate the religious

2. According to community leaders the size of the Greek community is approximately 400 families. Demographic estimates put the Greek population at around five to seven thousand people. The population of Calgary proper is 940,000.

and political spheres of the Greek immigrant community in Calgary. Nevertheless, within the first generation, and certainly by the second generation, the decision making power of women is increasing with higher education and participation in the labor force (Tastsoglou, 1997). While community influence remains firmly in the realm of men, women play more significant roles in domestic and family affairs. Marriage and courtship are impacted by changing gender ideologies with a growing number of second generation men and women marrying at an older age and choosing spouses who are not Greek. For those who do seek Greek mates, the choices and practices deployed reflect an interest in maintaining not only connections within the immigrant community but with the homeland and global Greek diaspora as well.

In this article I sketch the migration practices of second generation Greek Canadian women who, contrary to the male-dominated model of migration, exhibit greater decision making abilities in terms of mobility and marriage practices.³ Women choose to continue the migration cycle begun by their immigrant parents by moving back to Greece in search of particular lifestyles and potential spouses. These women are culturally emblematic of the diaspora/homeland relationship and the complex ways in which gender, migration, transnational networks, technology, nostalgia and memory interact. They represent a new chapter in the history of Greek migration since few Greeks are seeking permanent settlement in Canada. Instead Greek Canadians choose to engage in lifestyles that allow greater mobility and flexibility. Drawing upon improved economic means and educational possibilities the return of the second generation suggests an alternative migration model based on a desire to strengthen one's socio-cultural ties to Greece while downplaying economic considerations.

I argue that second generation migration empowers women to make decisions about marriage, employment, career choices, residence, and ethnic identification. Unlike previous migration models focused on families or single sojourning men, second generation return is largely undertaken on an individual basis by women.⁴ Furthermore, second generation return consti-

3. This article draws upon doctoral research sponsored by UC Santa Barbara and the United States government through a J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholar Research fellowship to Canada (2000-2001).

4. Second generation women were more inclined to live in Greece. Mandatory military service, the inability to replicate Greek values of masculinity and being involved with a family business in Calgary discourage second generation men from this sort of migration.

tutes a type of cultural migration in which Greek Canadian women wish to live a Greek lifestyle in the homeland. The desire for this lifestyle, however, is scripted through nostalgic imaginings produced in the diaspora and reinvented through visits to the homeland. The search for the ideal lifestyle and spouse has implications for how gender identity is performed and constrained by social conventions as individuals move between two different nation-states and two different gender systems. In addition, the types of ideal spouses sought in Greece and Canada exposes underlying assumptions about the development of Greek ethnic and gender identity in the diaspora.

The twenty-four migrant women interviewed for this study range in age from 18 to 56, although over eighty-percent are between the ages of 25 and 35. The parents of most participants immigrated to Canada during the late 1950s to early 1960s and came primarily from Peloponnesos. Indeed several participants are either distantly related or share the same village/town of origin. Participants were identified through their families, friends, and acquaintances in the Greek community and interviewed several times over the course of my eighteen-month field project in both Calgary and Greece. In addition I conducted multi-sited participant observation and a demographic survey to understand the construction of ethnicity, belonging, and nostalgia in the immigrant community.

Since migration is a temporal and spatial process, I interviewed individuals who were planning a move to Greece, those already residing in Greece, and those who had returned to Canada. The criteria for selecting participants were based on the length and quality of the stay, or planned stay, in Greece. I focused on individuals who inserted themselves into daily Greek life, i.e. by getting married, seeking employment, and creating binding social relations. This contrasts to those who take extended vacations but do not engage in «normal» daily life but instead focus on travel and recreation. In terms of social characteristics, about half of the participants are married with children and the majority work, or have worked, in the tourist industry or as English teachers in Greece. Over seventy percent are college educated and most were born in Canada (although a few were born in the United States or Australia and immigrated to Calgary at a young age). As of this writing approximately 30% had returned to Canada after spending numerous years in Greece.

In this article I explore the meaning of marriage practices in the context of a globally mobile Greek population, and how women, traditionally viewed as a commodity in marriage exchange, utilize education and

economic success to become decision makers in their marital choices. I first discuss transnational migration, the construction of nostalgia in the Greek diaspora, and how Greece becomes a touchstone for ethnic identification by dictating certain patterns of behavior and values. I offer a perspective on the cultural meaning of «marriage strategies» and how they are constituted through transnational migration. I trace the ways in which second generation women decide to relocate to Greece and their construction of Adonis, the ideal Greek male lover/spouse. In conclusion I consider the effects on gender and ethnic identification for Greek Canadian women who, through negotiated constraints, form a transnational lifestyle and the larger implications for Greek ethnic identity and Greek migration.

TRANSNATIONAL MIGRATION AND THE DIASPORIC CONDITION

Transnationalism describes the current phase of the global capitalist economy with a marked increase in the volume and speed of international migration, goods, and services (Basch et al., 1994; Glick Schiller et al., 1992; Rouse, 1995; Smith and Guarnizo, 1998; Mahler, 1999). Based on the global flow of people, products and ideas, scholars are rethinking traditional categories such as nation, state, citizen, race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality and identity. Of particular concern is how people reconstruct and negotiate their cultural identities and imagine their communities across geopolitical borders. Critical of assimilation paradigms, some scholars prefer the terms transnational, hybrid, or creole to refer to the cultural practices of diasporas (Appadurai, 1996; Cohen, 1997; Hannerz, 1996). Transnationalism, when applied to migrants suggests that people transcend national borders and inhabit social spaces where daily practice is shaped by events, relationships, and responsibilities in distant locales. These migrants are sometimes called borderless, stateless or even deterritorialized (Kearney, 1991; Smith, 1994).

Migrant households, social networks, economic resources, political activities, and cultural practices across borders often sustain transnational communities and identities. A basic definition of transnationalism is the process whereby people establish and maintain sociocultural connections across geopolitical borders (Glick Schiller et al., 1992). Transnationalism is also the construction of dense social fields across national borders as a result of the circulation of people, ideas, practices, money, goods, and information (Faist, 1998; Goldring, 1996). Transnational migration is often associated with a cycled movement of people facilitated by rapid transportation and telecommunications. Most scholars agree that the increasing globalization of

capitalism, which has stimulated such technological advances, is the primary cause of transnationalism. In this context, the transnational movement of people is one crucial aspect in the worldwide exchange of capital, commodities, technology, information, ideology, and culture (Appadurai, 1996; Basch et al., 1994; Guarnizo and Smith, 1998; Hannerz, 1996; Ong, 1999).

Although transnational migration may appear to be a recent phenomenon, new research indicates that past migrants built and maintained transnational networks over time, including returning and sending remittances to their homelands (Danforth, 1996; Foner, 2001; Pedraza and Rumbaut, 1996). Indeed the Greek case exemplifies transnational movements both in historical and imagined terms. Throughout the twentieth century Greeks emigrated and returned to Greece in order to fight wars, build houses, marry, care for elderly parents, vacation and retire. Furthermore, the concept of a «global» Greek diaspora is predicated on the historiography of modern Greece and connections with the ancient past (Herzfeld, 1982 and 1987). The Hellenic presence in pre-Roman Italy, Asia Minor, Cyprus, Egypt and the Middle East as ancestral diasporas is invoked in modern Greek discourses. Contemporary dispersals of Greeks are said to follow this long and illustrious ancient history thus providing continuity to the collective memory of Greeks worldwide.

Central to Greek diasporic identity is the symbolic and material connections with Greece upon which collective memory is constructed. Greece was first idealized and imagined by the immigrant generation who contended with Canadian societal values and norms of the 1940s through 1960s.⁵ In the process, Greece promoted particular narratives and myths to its «children» abroad. The most important being the idea that migration was temporary and that the migrant would eventually return to Greece (Chimbos, 1980; Moskos, 1980). While most economically successful immigrants remained in Canada, the myth of return and the bitterness of being in a foreign land became popular themes in Greek music, film and prose.⁶ In creating collective memory, the immigrant generation was

5. I focus on the 1940s through 1960s because this was the height of immigration from Greece to Canada (Statistics Canada, 1998) and when the Greek Canadian community became a political entity.

6. This is particularly true in rebetiko music where such artists as Nikos Kazantzidis and Dimitri Tsitsanis captured the loneliness, bitterness and sadness of leaving home for a foreign land.

compelled to pass the myth of return (and the feeling that one belongs to another place) on to their second-generation offspring. The second generation, however, responded to the collective memory in their own heterogeneous ways – ways that were influenced by Canadian public schools, Canadian multicultural ideologies and practices,⁷ and the ability to pick and choose those aspects of Greek ethnic identity that suited them (given the choices presented by the first generation) (Waters, 1990).

Second generation Greek Canadians relate to Greece, as the homeland, in a number of ways dependent on how collective memory was internalized. For some, relating to Greece may be the main marker of their Greekness, while for others association with the Greek Canadian community is the main marker. Second generation identification with Greece relies on communication with that place through mass media, sports, politics, fashion, Greek popular culture and, most importantly, travel to Greece. The ability to «be Greek» through relations with the homeland can be used as a status symbol in which the individual is a bearer of «authentic» culture, not «hybridized» or «halfie» culture created in the diaspora. How these connections with Greece are maintained indicates how collective memory and identity is a never-finished product that reinvents itself between and within subsequent generations. The interactions of the second generation with Greece differ vastly from their first generation parents, and the consequence is that collective memory takes on a different characteristic, one based on secondary and mediated interaction with the homeland, and not primary and historical contact based on being born and raised in that country.

The issue of secondary interaction can be further problematized when one considers the narrative of travel that is being articulated (Grewal, 1996). For second-generation transmigrants, travel, in the form of vacation, is often the first encounter with the «real» Greece. These vacations often follow the traditional western narrative of travel, after all, Greece was the original tourist destination for British, French and German travelers interested in the supposed cradle of western civilization. In addition to visiting ancestral villages, the second generation often embarks on sightseeing tours to experience the «natural beauty» and historically significant sites of Greece. This phenomenon is less present with returning

7. State-sponsored multicultural practices, such as heritage language instruction, vary regionally and depend on the density of immigrant populations and ethnic groups.

first generation individuals who have less interest in this sort of traveling. Vacationing and touring Greece is different than moving there (semi-) permanently. As Grewal suggests, a different narrative of travel is articulated when one becomes a transmigrant. The old travel narrative (when a transmigrant is still residing in Canada and only goes to Greece for vacation) is denied and subverted or, conversely, enhanced and renewed when the individual approaches traveling to Greece as a more permanent enterprise.

The generational differences within diasporic identity differ also in terms of economic connections. Greeks abroad have strong ties to Greece through remittances sent to families, personal friends and village associations. In addition, Greece created tax shelters and secured social security from host countries for returning nationals (Kostopoulos, 1988). Traditionally, this has been the economic relationship of first generation individuals who also buy property and build homes in Greece. The second generation may have a different economic connection to Greece, particularly as consumers of Greek culture (through tourism) and their labor as skilled and educated professionals. While many first generation return migrants subsist on pensions and social security, second generation migrants (often younger in age) seek work with multinational firms who hire individuals with a knowledge of Greece and the Greek language, but who also have advanced English skills and degrees from American, Canadian or Australian universities. These elite, educated and mobile workers are changing the economic relationship between Greece and various segments of the diaspora.

The connection to Greece can be understood through political activism in the ethnic/diasporic community. Greek Canadians are interested in Canadian foreign policy that has ramifications for Greece. In the past, they have actively sought to change Canadian foreign policy through letter writing campaigns, demonstrations and petitions to the federal government (Panagakos, 1998). Participants in these activities traverse generational lines and may signal the interest of the second generation, in particular, to homeland politics. The Greek state also promotes itself as the beleaguered homeland through newspapers, periodicals and satellite television. Greeks abroad feel an obligation to protect and promote the homeland through politics in the host country (Safran, 1991).

Finally, technology and media are instrumental in creating a global Greek identity. The routinized use of rapid air travel, the Internet, electronic mail, chat rooms, on-line gaming, satellite television, music file-sharing, global

periodicals and cell phone text messaging has changed the speed, quality and scope of interactions between Greeks worldwide. In real time Greeks abroad maintain contact with family and friends, read newspapers and listen to news broadcasts, play popular Greek games like τσβλι (backgammon), download Greek music, conduct business, shop, and promote a variety of perspectives on Greek social and political topics through web pages. Collective memory and nostalgia, originally constructed through the immigrant narrative of longing and bitterness, is transformed by new technologies, political activism and tourism. What results is a different quality to collective memory and new possibilities for the expression of Greek identity and Greek lifestyles.

TRANSNATIONAL MARRIAGE STRATEGIES

«And yet there are very strong reasons for postulating that marriage was not based on obedience to any ideal rule but came about as the end result of a strategy which, availing itself of strongly interiorized principles of a particular tradition, was able to reproduce in a manner more subconscious than conscious any one of the typical solutions explicitly contained in that tradition» (Bourdieu, 1976:120).

Understanding cultural ideals of marriage practices is a central theme in anthropological thought. Most classical anthropologists, in their holistic and structural-functionalist view, reserved a chapter or entire volume to the study of marriage practices found in their particular area of research. The idea that successful marriage unions are the product of successful strategies is well known in the anthropological literature.⁸ Anthropologists have long studied «preferred» marriage partners, such as the patrilineal parallel cousin. Certain partners are preferred for a variety of reasons, the creation of social alliances, the consolidation of property, or the continuation of the lineage (Murphy and Kasdan, 1959; Bourdieu, 1976; van den Berghe, 1979). Bourdieu believes that such strategies are the product of habitus, a culturally specific way of not only acting and speaking, but of thinking and categorizing as well. Habitus, as the basis of daily practice, tends to be naturalized, taken for granted, or assimilated into the subconscious. Marriage practices reproduce the underlying logics of habitus by reinventing

8. Marriage strategies have an important place in evolutionary theories as well (Hiatt, 1981; White and Burton, 1989; Borgerhoff Mulder, 1989). Given the theoretical orientation of this paper, I choose to focus the discussion on cultural models of marriage strategies.

or unconsciously imitating successful strategies. Marriage strategies, in the classical sense of the term, are related to inheritance strategies, fertility strategies, and, according to Bourdieu, even pedagogical strategies. Marriage strategies must be seen as one element of an entire system of biological, cultural and social reproduction by which a group attempts to pass on to the next generation.

On two points in particular I will depart from the traditional thinking of marriage strategies. One, classical theorists tended to emphasize the importance of marriage strategies *between* groups, such as matrilineages and patrilineages and not individuals. Two, that the current research project necessitates a broader vision of the importance of marriage strategies for cultural reproduction. Greek Canadian women and men exercise a certain amount of personal choice in choosing a marriage partner largely based on personal preferences. This, however, is a very simplistic view. Parents, community, society and friends influence single people and the choice one makes in marriage partners has ramifications for relations with others. The «right» mate may be a composite of various characteristics – religion, ethnicity, class, region, education, occupation and social standing among others. Ultimately the choice rests with the individual. While some Greek parents still employ matchmakers, the overwhelming majority (both in Greece and the diaspora) offer only subtle hints (and sometimes not so subtle) to their children concerning proper spouses. Marriage strategies, their implementation and form, are up to the individual.

On the second point, this project deals with a subject foreign to classical theory, that of transnational migration itself as a marriage strategy. Where and how single people seek out marriage partners spans two continents, two (or more) nation – states, and a dizzying array of social situations. The transmigrant literally jets to the homeland in order to find that preferred spouse. Where does this person go? How do they know what to look for? What do they do when they have found it? Bourdieu is correct in assuming that marriage strategies are also strategies for social reproduction. Nevertheless, does employing such a strategy as transmigration challenge what is to be reproduced? Migration is one way in which individuals experience, first – hand, different worldviews. Is there an inherent contradiction between an attempt to reproduce one’s social values and beliefs while actively seeking a marriage partner from a different social world?

The practice of transnational migration as a marriage strategy is located within the historical circumstances that created diasporas and perpetuate

them in the current social moment. Transnational marriage strategies confirm the globalizing tendencies of free-market capitalism, high tech communications, rapid travel, and various nationalisms. Without these twentieth century products the speed and ease of transnational migration would not be possible. It can be argued that the communications and travel revolutions have influenced individuals to broaden the scope of their existence and consider the possibilities of new lifestyles beyond the confines of their local community. The Greek diaspora exists within the imaginings of the homeland with real and practical outcomes – the reliance of the Greek economy on remittances, political support against foreign policies detrimental to the Greek way, cultural and social outlets like satellite television and music concerts, and the popular ideology that all Greeks are one people with one purpose.

It becomes easier to consider then, how marriage strategies can span two continents. In early immigration to the U.S. and Canada Greek men returned to Greece for brides and then brought them back to their adopted country. Today, the children or grandchildren of those unions (and others) practice a different strategy, «returning» to Greece, finding a spouse and staying there permanently or for many years. Having a diasporic consciousness, the feeling that one resides in one place yet belongs to another, is a cause of transnational marriage strategies. Diasporic consciousness is nurtured by nationalist attachments to Greece, attachments that have a long history in Greek communities of Canada and continue to manifest themselves in politics (Panagakos, 1998). Searching for spouses across the Atlantic is not new in the Greek diaspora, however, the current form of marriage strategy employed is and has its foundations in the way the postmodern western world is organizing itself – primarily with speed, communications, capital, and ethnic loyalty.

GREEK CANADIAN MARRIAGE STRATEGIES

Greek Canadian marriage strategies are based on the precepts of Greek immigrant culture formulated by two competing narratives; the immigrant success story in which the Canadian system is credited for allowing them to work hard and flourish economically, and the nostalgia for the homeland in which they remember Greece in particular ways. For Greek immigrant parents, the ideal partner for their son or daughter would be the offspring of a similar Greek immigrant couple in their own community. A potential husband for a Greek Canadian woman should be a practicing Greek

Orthodox Christian, from Greek ancestry (possibly from a specific region of Greece), economically mobile with either a successful business or a college education, have passable Greek language skills, and be devoted to his Greek heritage. An ideal husband is able to navigate in both the larger Canadian society and within the confines of the Greek immigrant community as well. An ideal wife for a Greek Canadian man embodies many of these characteristics as well, including having a job or a college education. The difference, however, is that the woman, like her mother before her, is more heavily invested in the daily practice of Greek culture, particularly with educating the children about their Greek heritage. Across social classes and educational backgrounds, the wife is responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of the house and is expected to participate in various Greek community organizations and activities as well.

Marriage rules in the Greek diaspora are a synthesis of local conditions and values and selectively retained Greek traditions. Interestingly, a spouse directly from Greece does not necessarily have the right combination of attributes or credentials. One specific diasporic stereotype views Greek men (in Greece) as particularly lazy and shifty. Thus Greek men supposedly make poor husbands since an ideal husband for one's Greek Canadian daughter is industrious, values hard work and is a breadwinner. These characteristics reflect an adopted Canadian work ethic and an acceptance of the meritocratic immigrant dream – that those who work hard achieve great things. There is a common perception among diasporic Greeks that those who remained in Greece after the great 20th century migrations (1940s-1970s) remain poor today because they do not have a good work ethic. While this is certainly true in some cases, few diasporic Greeks cite Greece's larger political and economic problems as catalysts for their idealization of Greek poverty. In the diasporic imagination, Greece remains poor and vulnerable because the Greek people themselves are perceived as lacking certain moral and behavioral characteristics necessary to elevate Greece's position in Europe. Constructing Greece as eternally poor may also ease feelings of longing and nostalgia for diasporic Greeks who realize that most will never return to Greece permanently. Interestingly, while diasporic Greeks may perceive Greece as being poor, according to the United Nations Human Development Index for 2002, Greece ranks twenty-fourth among the most highly developed countries in terms of life expectancy, level of education, and income (United Nations Development Programme, 2002). Although Canada ranks third after Norway and Sweden, the relative difference in standard of living between Greece and Canada is exaggerated

by Greek Canadians. In addition, Greek men from Greece, particularly from the lower classes, have the unsavory reputation of being «ladies men» and sexual predators. As Stathi, an elder Greek immigrant father noted, «I've told my daughters over and over again, when they go to Greece, *ta matia sas dekatéssera!* (literally «to have fourteen eyes»). Men over there are only interested in sleeping with as many women as possible and I don't think our girls realize this like the women over there».

While the qualities of industriousness, Greekness, and the ability to function within the Greek immigrant community form the composite of an ideal marriage partner, in reality, many young Greek Canadians do not marry members of their own group. Marrying outside the parameters of the community is a deviation with social consequences ranging from enduring idle gossip to being completely shunned by one's family and co-ethnics. At one end of the spectrum are the more acceptable spouses – those who are only partially of Greek ancestry, are Orthodox Christian but of a different ethnicity like Russian or Serbian, Catholics, and white Canadians who come from «good families». At the other end are partners whose chances of acceptance are slim at best and include non-Christians, blacks, and people of the same sex.⁹ Thus in the ranking of potential spouses, Greek men without prior migration abroad are less desirable than Greek Canadians and Greek men who have immigrated permanently to Canada.

It should be noted that finding an ideal marriage partner is sometimes the goal of the immigrant parents and not necessarily that of their children of marriageable age. The degree of ethnic identification varies considerably within the second generation and some Greek Canadians do not involve themselves in the Greek immigrant community or larger diaspora nor are interested in marrying a person of similar background. Some shy away from dating fellow Greek Canadians because of rampant gossip within the community and the fear of getting a bad reputation. Nevertheless many of the second generation would like to marry a person of Greek ancestry and do actively seek such partners. A difference exists, however, between those willing to choose a partner located in Canada versus one in Greece. This difference is crucial for understanding how Greek Canadians view their own ethnicity and its future.

9. Blacks are especially singled out as unacceptable spouses. A number of Greek immigrant fathers related that the worst possible scenario was if a daughter married a black or a Muslim.

Those with more developed interests in Greek Canada (as opposed to Greece proper) tended to find spouses either within their own community or at Greek social and organizational gatherings in other parts of Canada. As one recently married Greek Canadian woman noted,

«I waited until I was over thirty to get married because I wanted to marry a Greek and it was hard to find someone here in Calgary... mostly because the guys I grew up with were like brothers to me. And I didn't want to marry anyone too much older. Some of the younger girls are doing that now, marrying guys their older sisters dated! My husband is from Vancouver and we met at an AHEPA¹⁰ convention in the States. We were the only two Greek Canadians seated at this big table with all Greek Americans and I guess we just bonded».

For this individual, and other woman like her, the locus of Greek ethnic identity is Greek institutions within Canada. These include such organizations as the AHEPA, Philoptochos,¹¹ Daughters of Penelope, various youth groups centered on folk dance or culture, and the Hellenic Canadian Congress. Although this implies a stronger attachment to Greek Canada, I do not wish to imply that these individuals do not maintain ties to Greece proper. In fact, most visit Greece every few years, keep e-mail or phone contact with friends and relatives, and even send remittances. These women do not, however, wish to marry Greek men and live in Greece. Their imagining of Greece is as the ancestral homeland, birthplace of their parents and a place to enjoy summer vacations. Greece is not a source of primary identification; in essence, it is not «home».

In contrast, other second generation Greek Canadian women develop a nostalgic longing for Greece. In these instances women who have been born, raised and educated in Canada «return» to Greece in search of a particular lifestyle, which includes a spouse. The ways in which women describe their experiences as «going back» or «returning» reveals a deeply embedded, yet contrived, nostalgia for a place in which they have never lived nor have engaged in daily social relations. Their imagining of Greece, and what it is like to live there, is still framed from a Greek Canadian vantage point steeped in diasporic discourses. These discourses, constructed and negotiated

10. American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association.

11. The Philoptochos (literally «friends of the poor») was established in 1931 and is the largest North American organization of Greek Orthodox women. Their goal is to support various charities and conduct philanthropic work as a means of spiritual enrichment.

over decades within the Greek immigrant community, provide an incomplete picture of Greek life in the homeland. While the immigrants themselves might recall the hardships of war, famine and political strife, their second-generation children remember idyllic vacations spent with cousins in the ancestral village, going to the beach and occasional summer romances. *Habitus*, as it is practiced in Greece, does not enter the daily discourses of Greek Canadians whose understanding of Greek daily life is more a historical construct and not a contemporary reality. Yet it is these idyllic vacations and brief interactions with the homeland that provide the impetus for transnational migration among second-generation women. In the next section I consider how women reach the decision to migrate to Greece and their strategies for achieving a desired lifestyle.

The factors leading to competing constructions of «home» as either Greece proper or the immigrant community are not easily distinguished. Many second generation Greek Canadians have similar childhood experiences of identity displacement (i.e. feeling caught between two cultural worlds) as mediated through daily life in Canada and regular visits to Greece. The outcomes of such experiences vary greatly by family and individual. A common thread binding those who identify with Greece however, is that many recall an experiential event or moment in adolescence when they felt they «just knew» that Greece was where they wanted to live. This revelation, further reinforced by diasporic longings and nostalgia, inspires certain individuals to seek a different expression of Greekness. An epiphanic moment in childhood, however, is hardly sufficient for explaining such a practice in depth. While many may toy with the idea of moving to Greece only a small percentage will be motivated enough, and have the proper resources, to do so. In addition to a fundamental desire to live in Greece, successful migrants tend to come from middle to upper middle class families where parents can lend extended financial assistance. While not all parents agree with their daughter's relocation to Greece, all do provide substantial resources to ease the transition.

Finally, while the typical Greek Canadian in Calgary visits Greece every three to four years (Panagakos, 2001), the average is notably higher for these migrant women. In most cases the women recall visiting Greece every summer during childhood and adolescence. Returning annually, particularly when one is a child, means that Greece figures prominently, and readily, in the diasporic imagination. The women recalled the lengthy process of preparing for a trip to Greece – securing plane tickets, shopping for summer clothes, buying gifts, and writing letters to old friends – which would often

begin in the late winter in anticipation for a June departure. Children who visited Greece every three to four years are not likely to retain the same level of language skills, friendships, or interest in Greece as those who visit annually. Visiting Greece, for example, when one is eleven and then again at fourteen or fifteen poses special problems for teenagers who have spent the majority of their summers hanging out in Calgary. Many experience culture shock that can lead to feelings of disillusionment, inadequacy, and resentment towards parents and Greek people in general. While exceptions do exist, the evidence does suggest that the more frequently one visits Greece as a child the more likely a lasting bond will be formed.

PLANNING GREEK CANADIAN FUTURES

Many of the second-generation Greek Canadian women who eventually moved to Greece recalled making the decision as a teenager. As Yianna, a married twenty-nine year old Greek Canadian living in Athens relates,

«My parents sent me to Greece when I was fourteen. They were going through a rough time with the business and my mom was working all the time. They thought it would be good for me to spend the summer with my grandparents. It was the first time I had been on an airplane by myself and I was pretty scared. At first I hated Greece, especially life in the village – everything was so dirty and backward. My aunt didn't even have a phone and this was 1982! We had to go down to the *kafeneio* to make and receive calls. I was there for two months. By the end I didn't want to leave because I had made a lot of friends. Even though by Canadian standards I was still under age, in Greece I could go to discos and even order drinks. No one cared. I think it was the freedom that attracted me at first».

Others first drawn to Greece because of the perception that Greek youth enjoyed a greater freedom echoed Yianna's comments. A common theme in the migrants' stories was a tremendous feeling of liberation; first with the decision to move to Greece and then with the actual move itself. It is well documented that women migrants, even when faced with reproduced patriarchal structures in the host country, do become more assertive and autonomous through their migration experience (Hirsch, 1999; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994). In all these cases, however, women migrants are moving from nation-states with highly institutionalized patriarchy (Mexico and Portugal) to the United States or northern Europe where patriarchy is revealed in subtler ways. These feelings of «liberation» are expressed by Greek Canadian

women, raised and educated within the open-minded Canadian system, are thus subject to scrutiny.

In each case the women expressed a desire to leave their natal immigrant households dominated by fathers and brothers or, more broadly, the constraints of the Greek community in Calgary. This seems a curious paradox considering a majority of the women interviewed were university educated, employed, and seemingly integrated into larger Canadian society. Were not these women already liberated? Marianthi, now in her late thirties and once again living in Canada after ten years in Greece states,

«It doesn't matter where you go in Calgary, you always run into a Greek. How can you date someone, even something as innocent as seeing a show, and not be gossiped about the next day? The Greek community is very close here, almost like living in a village back in Greece and everyone knows everyone's business».

Indeed certain public places in Calgary were seemingly transformed into typical Greek village structures. The small suburban shopping center located near the Greek Orthodox Church had two *kafeneia* (coffee houses) where the old immigrant men held vigil. One was the McDonald's located in the Walmart and the other was a cafeteria-style restaurant within the mall itself. It was impossible to shop in this location without seeing a family member, fictive kin relation or acquaintance. The village-like quality to the Greek community is confirmed by demographic research verifying Greeks tend to cluster residentially in the southwest quadrant of the city (Panagakos, 2001; ESPRL, 1990). The likelihood of daily interactions with co-ethnics is magnified.¹²

Liberation from the natal immigrant household figures prominently in these migration narratives as well. The structure of Greek immigrant households and families in North America combines a patriarchal system, strict gender roles and a significant amount of responsibility to kin relations like godparents, in-laws and other affines. (Callinicos, 1990; Chimbos, 1980; Costantakos, 1980; Gavaki, 1991; Moskos, 1989; Psomiades and Scourby, 1982; Sant Cassia and Bada, 1992; Tastsoglou and Stubos, 1992; Tsemberis et al., 1999). For a girl growing up in this rigid hierarchy the primary role model is her immigrant mother. Yianna's relationship with her mother is particularly telling,

12. The Greek neighborhood is centered on St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church and community center but also encompasses several Greek-owned businesses and gathering places.

«She was always in the kitchen. When I came home from school I'd go right to work alongside her making dinner or cleaning. When my brothers and father came home they'd watch TV or just relax. She'd kill herself to get them whatever they wanted, even when she was sick or tired, and would never complain. The way she talked to me was always as a command, "Yannoula, help me with the laundry or don't wear your clothes that way", The way she talked to my brothers was always sweet-talk and charm, "Would you like some milk and cookies, Taki?". Its funny, but I find myself doing that with my own kids».

For Yianna and other second-generation Greek Canadian women, activities within the natal household focused on pleasing the men and presenting oneself as a *nikokyra* (or female householder) (Dubisch, 1986). According to the immigrant model, a good wife is one who makes few demands, provides affection and care, and maintains the family honor through her virtue.

To reiterate, when these women speak of «liberation» it is within the context of escaping the patriarchal structure of the immigrant household and the watchful, scrutinizing gaze of the Greek community. It is worth noting that for a growing portion of second-generation women the obvious path to freedom is to marry exogamously, meaning into broader, liberal Canadian society. The participants of this study, however, did not choose to marry outside the Greek community, and, in fact, had internalized certain conceptions about Greece that promoted their identification with the homeland. Liberation means mobility and the freedom to choose the Greek lifestyle over the Greek Canadian.

In most cases the women invested a great deal of forethought and preparation into their move to Greece.¹³ This type of premeditated migration required the women to consider their basic needs once in Greece such as housing, employment and transportation. Without exception each woman received substantial assistance from parents and extended family in both Canada and Greece. The importance of parental support cannot be overstated. Parents enculturate their children into the Greek Canadian subculture and teach them to love and respect the homeland. They lend financial support for college education, vocational training, and provide

13. A small number of participants were in Greece on vacation and either fell in love or became pregnant and decided to stay without having thought about living in Greece before.

room and board for their children often well into their children's adult lives. Greek immigrant parents also finance vacations to Greece and cultivate important social connections with friends and relatives in both the homeland and diaspora. Even after their adult daughter has moved to Greece parents send gifts and familiar things from Canada,¹⁴ provide funding for a car, buy household items or even property, offer emotional support, and visit her when they can. As one father noted,

«My daughter cost me a lot of money when she went to Greece. She didn't have a job for the first six months and was living with my sister. Then she found work but wanted to move out of my sister's house because she said it was too crowded. She was really picky about where she wanted to live and in the end it made more sense to just buy her an apartment and all the furnishings. Now she has her own *nikokyrio* [household] to mind so I still send money».

Extended family and close friends provide support to mobile Greek Canadian women as well. Once she arrives in Greece the woman often stays with relatives until she can find a place to live and secure employment. Being an unmarried adult woman means a certain level of propriety is expected. Some women choose to live with an older unmarried female cousin or aunt indefinitely, citing that it is more discreet than living alone, particularly in the smaller towns and villages. The relative can offer her connections to social networks (and thus potential spouses and jobs) and domestic training on how to run a proper Greek household. Even with family assistance, however, supportive friendships were difficult to cultivate. As Robinette Kennedy notes, family friendships tend to be obligatory and impersonal (Kennedy, 1986: 128). Although a Greek Canadian woman may cohabitate with a female relative, it is not likely a close, revealing friendship will develop. There was consensus among the women that «good girlfriends were hard to find» thus most remained largely unsuccessful in finding female confidants. Consequently as material needs were met, emotional needs often went unfulfilled.

While support from family was crucial during the migration experience, each woman was ultimately responsible for initiating the migration process

14. Comfort items often include English language fashion magazines, clothing, personal hygiene products and cosmetics, and food (the most popular being pre-packaged macaroni and cheese). Even this practice is changing with the influx of American-style products to Greek supermarkets like Marinopoulos and Trofo (found mostly in Peloponnesos).

and sorting out a life once settled in Greece. As noted, many of the women migrants decided to leave Canada as teenagers but had to wait until they were at least eighteen and had finished high school. Most did not, however, leave right after high school but instead pursued higher education to better their chances of employment in Greece. The choices in degrees attained at university reflect the migrants' understanding of their potential position in the Greek job market as skilled female labor. The skill most often sought after by employers was their fluency in English (and sometimes French or German as well) and Greek. A number of the women earned bachelors degrees in English as a Second Language, Travel and Tourism, International Studies, and International Business. The most common avenue for employment, particularly when a woman would first arrive in Greece, was to work in a *frodistorio*, or tutoring school, teaching English. Others entered Greece's tourism industry as guides, interpreters and travel agents.

Throughout the migrant's narrative an irony not lost on the women themselves is revealed. Although a feeling of liberation and freedom often accompanies the move to Greece, most acknowledge that they are financially and socially obligated to their fathers and relatives. This does not cause much concern however because the generosity of parents is expected and it would bring shame upon the parents if they refused to support a child (even one well into their thirties or forties). The western conception of «freedom» must be understood through the Greek lens. What these women see as liberation is independence from parental meddling and community gossip. Social and financial obligation aside, a Greek Canadian woman in Greece is far from the scrutiny of her immediate family and, in larger cities like Athens or Thessaloniki, can achieve a certain level of anonymity without losing ties to her Greek heritage. Given its small size, being anonymous and retaining ties to the Greek immigrant community in Calgary is far more difficult. The metaphor of the Greek immigrant community as a «village» is quite accurate. Perhaps metaphorically speaking, these women are leaving their village to pursue lives in the metropolis, not unlike Greek women in «real» Greek villages back home. The difference is that this metropolis is located several thousand kilometers away and is on a different continent.

FINDING ADONIS

While employment and housing are immediate and pressing concerns for migrants everywhere, migrant Greek Canadian women in Greece are

particularly interested in achieving a specific lifestyle which includes a suitable mate. The search for an idyllic lifestyle and spouse has implications for how gender identity is performed and constrained by social conventions. Within traditional Greek migration women were viewed as a commodity in marriage exchange with little bargaining power. Greek immigrant men returned to the homeland chose brides, married, and then brought these women back to North America. In fact, some of these pictures brides are the mothers and grandmothers of the women choosing to return to Greece in search of a spouse themselves. In an utter reversal of typical migration patterns, it is the woman who holds considerable bargaining power because of her economic and class position, marketable skills and education, and Canadian safety net.¹⁵ If a woman's social and economic standing is relatively secure in Canada, and she has enough cultural knowledge to succeed in that society, why move to Greece at all? What is the attraction, particularly given Greece's different standard of living (one deemed «lower» by Western standards) and occasional political strife?

This pattern is atypical in the sense that improving one's economic position is not the impetus for migration. To the contrary many of the women admit giving up certain creature comforts and material possessions when in Greece. Characteristic complaints included not having the same variety, cheaper prices or quality in consumer products like clothing, eyeglasses, shoes, and small appliances. Cars in Greece are relatively expensive to buy and often smaller, shabbier and less desirable than the migrant's car left back in Canada. Foods, particularly ethnic cuisines like Chinese, Thai or Mexican are almost nonexistent, even in Athens. Perhaps the most prevalent complaint was that «you couldn't just take a hot shower, it was a whole ordeal to turn on the *thermosifono* (water heater) and wait fifteen minutes for it to heat up». In sum, material possessions purchased in Greece tended to cost more than in Canada. Most agreed however, that housing was cheaper in Greece, yet also substandard to «Canadian houses» which were described as being big, warm, carpeted and comfortable.

Moving to Greece is part of a life strategy (in addition to a marriage strategy) in which young Greek Canadian women seek lifestyles unattainable in Canada. This lifestyle is an interesting mix of traditional, patriarchal Greek family and social life and the summer tourist culture, which, for most

15. In the event that a marriage does not work out most of the women return to their natal families in Canada.

young Greek Canadians, is just as symbolic of their Greekness as the former. Vacationing in Greece is a common practice that facilitates the construction and maintenance of nostalgic longings in the diaspora. For the second generation these include discourses on fashion and dress, romance and sexual experiences, *maggia* (machismo), going to the beach and to nightclubs. Indeed these discourses reflect the tourist aspect of diasporic Greek culture. Within the same experience, however, Greek Canadians express a deep poignancy for their parents' villages, particularly for certain spaces like a church, *kafenéio*, or ancestral home. Cyclical rituals like religious celebrations and harvests, the cooking of special foods, and lighting candles at one's family tomb in the village cemetery are important activities for visiting Greek Canadians to honor their heritage.

Perhaps no other cultural phenomenon embodies the life strategy better than the search for a spouse. Meeting a future spouse, or men who fit the category of potential spouse, often occurred during summer vacations prior to the woman's move to Greece. Yiota, a thirty-four year old woman living in southern Greece with her Greek husband and children relates,

«We visited Greece almost every summer when I was growing up. My parents are from mountain villages and so my cousins and I would take the bus down to the beach for the day. There were so many good-looking guys! They were different than the Greek boys back in Canada. They seemed more charming and were so much more Greek. I liked the way they talked to me and it was just so romantic to be out on the beach or to go to a disco. When we'd go back to Canada at the end of the summer and I'd get involved with the [Greek] dance group again and go to church school it seemed like all the boys were trying too hard to be *magges* [macho men] but they just looked immature and silly. None of them could speak Greek correctly either».

Constructing an image of the «ideal» Greek man is a transnational process spanning several important developmental years. A Greek Canadian woman is exposed to variations of Greek male identity embodied in the diaspora through her father and other immigrants, brothers, friends, the local priest, sexual partners, and boyfriends. These variations are challenged and reinforced in the homeland through male relatives like grandfathers, uncles or cousins, sexual partners, boyfriends, media images and TV or music personalities (see also Loizos and Papataxiarchis 1991). In Yiota's case, clear differences existed between the diasporic Greek mem she was familiar

with in Canada, and the Greek men she encountered while on vacation in Greece. These different male identities are constructed and reconstructed as Yiota travels between Canada and Greece. With frequent travel she is able to compare the merits of the men, and the potential lifestyles, in each country. The diasporic Greek male usually offers a higher standard of living and more material possessions but does not have the cultural knowledge to behave as a «true» Greek male. In comparison homeland Greeks may have lower earning potential but display the proper cultural cues. The proper cultural cues are both imagined and real. Imagined Greek masculinity is produced while vacationing in Greece through brief encounters with homeland men and does not usually represent the full range of activities, habits and behaviors. In fact, the performance of masculinity experienced is contextual, reserved for non-Greek women, and largely absent from everyday behavior. While this dichotomy is an oversimplification, it was striking how often various migrant women compared the two male types and noted their economic potential versus quality of lifestyle and perceived Greekness. The favorable view of Greek machismo indicates an internalization of patriarchal ideals about male behavior by women. Indeed, displays of machismo may offer women a model in which to contrast or complement their own constructions of Greek femininity.

Just as a migrant woman's ideals of Greek masculinity are formed and reformed through transnational movement, so are perceptions of femininity, the female body and sexuality. The Greek Canadian community, organized along the principles of compulsory heterosexuality, rejects queer lifestyles providing little space for other expressions of Greekness.¹⁶ The narratives of Greek Canadian migrant women fall squarely within these normative discourses even while the women participate in non-traditional migration practices. As feminist scholars have noted, the body is often a site of inscription and performance of identity where the physical, symbolic and sociological intersect (Butler, 1990; Fortier, 2001; Gatens, 1996). The female migrant body represents an alternative form of Greek sexuality framed by an ambiguous state of both familiar and foreign. Greek Canadian women can «pass» as locals based on natural and manufactured physical traits. Indeed, most participants in this study had stereotypical Greek features – curly or wavy dark hair, brown eyes, and olive skin – and identified themselves as

16. In addition to heterosexist normativity, the community shuns non-Orthodox Christian Greeks as well.

«looking Greek». Looking Greek also means manipulating the natural body in culturally specific ways. Being modern and identifying with western culture entails the removal of body hair and the processing of head hair. Blonde, straight hair is highly desired and women spend considerable amounts of money and endure discomfort to achieve the proper look. Coupled with the right style of dress, Greek Canadian migrants are almost indiscernible from their Greek counterparts.

Looking local and behaving local are different constructs however. As one Greek man noted of his Greek Canadian girlfriend,

«When we first met I asked which high school she had gone to since there were two in our town. I hadn't seen her before so I thought she must have gone to the other one. But then she went to answer and she had an accent and didn't talk quite right, then I realized she had to be American.¹⁷ At first I was fooled because she did *paréa* (company) with some local people, not tourists or other Greek Americans».

Greek Canadians (and their American or Australian counterparts) display contradictory cultural cues that distort the categories of foreign (*xéni*) versus Greek woman. As Sofka Zinovieff notes in her study of *kamaki*, tourist women are often propositioned by lower-class Greek men who view the women as game to be hunted (Zinovieff, 1991). These men gain social prestige among their peers by sexually conquering women of supposedly superior western European or North American societies. Greek Canadian women become foreign when they behave like tourist women characterized as open, sexually free and easily duped. Some Greek men also noted the tendency of foreign women to flaunt their money and expensive possessions like brand-name clothing and personal electronics. *Kamaki* is particularly likely when Greek Canadians travel within Greece away from ancestral villages and watchful kin. Visiting popular islands like Mykonos, Santorini or Rhodes means stressing the touristic aspects of one's Greekness including heightened sexual freedom. Confusion can ensue for Greek men pursuing Greek Canadian women they deem *xénes*. Since the women speak Greek it is impossible for the men to discuss or insult the women with their friends (Zinovieff, 1991:211). Being of Greek «blood» adds confusion since the women prove they belong both genealogically and geographically to the Greek ethnos.

17. «American» was usually the default category to identify Greek Canadians, Americans and Australians.

Greek Canadian female sexuality exists in a transformational context that bridges foreign and local conceptions of femininity. These competing sexualities marginalize women already on the cusp of two cultures who are perceived simultaneously as outsiders/insiders, Other/Greek, dirty/clean, and Eve/Virgin Mary. With marginalization comes flexibility, however, since transmigrant women move between Greek and Canadian social worlds. The physical relocation of the body, and its identities, means the renegotiation of one's subject position vis-à-vis the family, sexual partners, friends and co-ethnics.

CONCLUSIONS

Migrants from Albania, Russia, the Philippines, and other countries, enter Greece with the hopes of a better economic future or temporarily as an entry to richer nations in the European Union. Migration, driven by global capital flow and international politics, remains primarily an economic or political practice. Transnational migration, and the forging of networks through transnational social spaces, is a hallmark of the contemporary geopolitical world. While many past migrants retained close ties to their homeland, only recently have technological advances influenced habitus and the global imagining of diasporas and other displaced groups to such a degree. Transnational migration provides a unique opportunity, however, to consider alternative forms of migration inspired by nostalgia or feelings of marginalization. The movement of second-generation Greek Canadian women to Greece (and often back to Canada) is not motivated by political or economic factors. The objective of migration is to embrace the Greek lifestyle and to find a Greek spouse or partner.¹⁸ Indeed, transnational migration itself becomes a kind of marriage practice in which acceptable spouses are sought after in the homeland.

The Greek Canadian women discussed in this paper constitute a non-traditional migrating population who exercise considerable free-will, choice, economic and even intellectual power in deciding how, if and when

18. The women themselves often cite the search for a spouse as a reason for moving to Greece. In only one case has a woman remained in Greece without marrying or being joined by her father and/or mother. Some women did bring their spouses back to Canada, but only after failing to achieve certain economic objectives in Greece. Divorce was more prevalent when a couple would move to Canada since some spouses did not adjust well to the lifestyle.

migration will occur. Nevertheless, as transnational bodies occupying different nation-states across time and space, they are disciplined within domestic, communal, and national levels of patriarchal domination. Relying upon paternal support for the initial cost of migration, household expenses and even the house itself, migrant Greek Canadian women sometimes concede to fatherly wishes in order to maintain good relations. Furthermore, residing in Greece means adopting local patterns of propriety, particularly when in and around the ancestral village or town. Reputation, once ruined, is difficult to mend and can strain relations not only with local kin but also with one's parents back in Canada. Romantic entanglements, often a reason for migration, must be carried out discreetly until marriage promises are formalized. Intimate relationships are complicated by the ambiguous nature of Greek Canadian sexuality which can encourage Greek men to prey upon these women as if they were foreign tourists. In several cases women yielded to unwanted or unprovoked sexual advances either because they feared for their safety, or because they did not have the cultural knowledge to discourage such behavior.

Gender and ethnic identity are further entangled once the migrant woman has married and begins to bear children. Ideas of *nikokyrio*, motherhood, child rearing, and obligations to extended and immediate kin are culturally distinct from diasporic Greek cultural knowledge and practices in Canada. For example, one woman related how her Greek husband was disgusted by her Greek cooking (even though she thought she was an excellent cook) and insisted she learn the proper way of preparing meals from his mother. Those Greek Canadian women with children often complained that Greeks in the homeland, for all their religious bluster concerning Turkish and Albanian Muslims, were not very pious after all since they failed to attend regular church services. This observation signals a deep rupture in the construction of Greek ethnicity between homeland and diaspora. In the diaspora, association with the Greek Orthodox Church is almost synonymous with Greek ethnicity itself and not attending calls one's ethnic loyalty into question. Having children often sparked a desire to return to Canada to be closer to one's family and to allow one's children to enjoy the advantages of the Canadian education system and strong economy. For the migrant woman, returning to Canada seemed a likely possibility but most Greek husbands proved reluctant to leave their home, family and social positions. The majority of Greek Canadian women wanting to return to Canada did so, although in some instances it led to divorce, separation and, in once case, child abduction.

This type of migration is just one facet of a complex system in which individuals and their families negotiate movement within and beyond Greece. With the prospects of a more stable economy and European political integration fewer Greeks are permanently relocating to North America. This retraction characterizes a particular historical moment and is further distinguished by the desire of Greeks born and raised in the diaspora, and under certain conditions of nostalgic longing, to maintain and strengthen ties to the homeland. Greek Canadian women choosing Greek lifestyles represent one interpretation of Greekness on the wide spectrum of second-generation ethnic expression. Perhaps the continued interaction and negotiation of diasporic and homeland cultures signal, above all, the need for scholars to reinterpret established paradigms of ethnicity/assimilation versus diaspora/multiculturalism. When considering the variation in personal experience, the social construction of ethnicity, and feelings of belonging, the reality of «coming home» is complex and unexpected.

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