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'Diverse Mobilities': Second-generation Greek-Germans Engage with the Homeland as Children and as Adults

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ABSTRACT *This paper is about the children of Greek labour migrants in Germany. We focus on two life-stages of 'return' for this second generation: as young children brought to Greece on holidays or sent back for longer periods, and as young adults exercising an independent 'return' migration. We draw both on literature and on our own field interviews with 50 first- and second-generation Greek-Germans. We find the practise of sending young children back to Greece to have been surprisingly widespread yet little documented. Adult relocation to the parental homeland takes place for five reasons: (i) a personal 'search for self'; (ii) the attraction of the Greek way of life; (iii) the actualisation of the 'family narrative of return' by the second, rather than the first, generation; (iv) life-stage events such as going to university or marrying a Greek; (v) return as escape from a traumatic event or oppressive family situation. Yet the return often brings difficulties, disillusionment, identity reappraisal, and a re-evaluation of the German context.*

KEY WORDS: Greek-Germans; second generation; narratives of return; home; belonging; hyphenated identities

Introduction: Two Mobility Paradoxes

Few studies have been made of the Greek migration to Germany. It is one of the overlooked threads of the tapestry of postwar European migration, despite the fact that Germany was by far the most important destination for Greek labour migration during the 1960s and 1970s. Rather, the main focus in Germany has been on Turkish migrants who, it is true, form the largest national group; but this intense scrutiny – almost an obsession – also reflects the fact that they are seen as the problematic Muslim 'other' and hence as too 'different' from the host society (Thränhardt, 2004, p. 159). Yet the Greeks in Germany were also seen as a group who 'kept to

themselves'; this ethno-cultural self-sufficiency was interpreted by the host society as unproblematic (unlike the reaction to the Turks), and consistent with Germany's self-definition as a country not of immigrants but of 'guestworkers' who would soon return to their home countries.

The conversion of 'guestworker' Greeks into a settled immigrant community, a process which started already in the 1960s, is the first 'mobility paradox' which underscores this paper. A policy of 'rotation' of labour migrants, with fixed-term contracts and frequent returns, in practice led to stable settlement, family reunion, and the birth of the 'second generation' – German-born children of the first-generation migrant workers. This opens up the second mobility paradox: the assumption or expectation that the second generation would remain inexorably linked to the host society, into which they would be socialised, educated and employed. In reality, second-generation children experienced a variety of 'transnational' orientations and mobilities, largely as a result of their parents' continued sense of belonging to Greece. Later in the life-course, many second-generation Greek-Germans have 'returned' to settle in Greece, often independently of their parents. Yet, this resettlement is often a far-from-smooth process; for some, disillusionment brings a reappraisal of their relationship to Germany.

In this paper we use a transnational lens to focus on four types of second-generation return mobility:

- children taken back by their parents on regular visits and holidays, usually to the town and village of origin;
- children 'sent' to Greece for part of their childhood, often in their early school years, then brought back to Germany as older children;
- children taken back 'for good' when the parents decide to return, which they often do for reasons of nostalgia and for the sake of the children's education; however, if the return project fails (e.g. for economic reasons), the family re-emigrates to Germany;
- independent migration to Greece, as adults aged over 18 years.

We explore these homeland links using two sources from two different time periods. The first source consists of German sociological research from the 1970s and 1980s

which sheds light on the then young second generation's ambivalent positionality, especially with regard to their schooling. We look at accounts of their visits to their parental homeland and at the rather widespread practice of placing them in Greece for part of their childhood. The second source of research evidence is our own field data collected as part of a study of second-generation 'identity' in Germany and 'return' to Greece. During 2007-08, fifty mainly second-generation Greek-Germans were interviewed in Greece and Germany and extensive narratives were recorded. As well as describing their feelings of home and belonging, and (for the 'returnees') their experiences of settling in the parental homeland, our research participants also reflected on their childhood transnational mobilities when living in Germany – summer holidays in Greece and longer periods spent in school there in the care of relatives. Our main focus however, is on the adult 'return narratives' and on the dominant emerging themes, both for 'explaining' the decision to relocate to Greece, and for exploring issues of belonging and non-belonging in the ancestral homeland. These issues are interesting, we believe, because of the ambiguity of feelings about 'home', personal identity and emplacement/displacement of this group of 'counter-diasporic' migrants (King and Christou, 2010).

Greek Migration to Germany

Greek migration to Germany can be doubly contextualised: first within the large-scale labour migration that fed guestworkers to Germany during the postwar decades of reconstruction and boom, and secondly within the longer history of Greek emigration to many destinations worldwide.

West Germany's guestworker policy was designed to solve labour shortages over the short and medium terms and act as a hedge against cyclical downturns – as happened briefly in 1966-67 and more long-term after 1974. Greek labour migration to West Germany was confined to the dozen or so years between March 1960, when a bilateral recruitment agreement was signed by the two countries, and November 1973, the time of the 'recruitment-stop'. Similar recruitment agreements were made with other labour supply countries – Italy, Spain, Yugoslavia and Turkey. By 1973 West Germany hosted 2.6 million foreign workers, 250,000 of whom were Greeks. Family reunion and the arrival of dependents pushed the total Greek presence in Germany in 1973 to nearly 400,000 (Esser and Korte, 1985).

Like the other Southern European migrant workers, Greeks were hired for work which was heavy, unpleasant and low-paid – mostly unskilled or semi-skilled jobs in factories, mining, construction and transport. When industrial employment declined in the 1970s and 1980s, many Greeks moved into self-employment in the restaurant business. Others return-migrated to Greece at this time, bringing their young German-born children with them.

Although Greek migration to Germany was predominantly male in the early years, the proportion of women soon grew, both because of direct recruitment of women for employment in light industries such as electrical goods, and through family reunion. Kontos (2009) dispels the myth of male-dominated Greek migration to Germany, pointing out that 38 per cent of Greek workers recruited to Germany during 1960-73 were females – a higher proportion than for the other migrant nationalities. This demographic background accounts for the early birth of the second generation, which closely matches the temporal profile of Greek migration to Germany (Figure 1). The fall-off in the graph of births after 1973 is due to return migration and parental ageing, whilst the slight upturn since 1985 probably reflects two influences: new Greek migration to Germany following Greece's accession to the European Community in 1981, and the cohort effect of third-generation births, one generation after the peak in second-generation births in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Compared to Greek migration to other countries, that to Germany is remarkably concentrated in a short period of time, yielding marked cohort effects, as noted above. The modern history of Greek migration falls into two major waves going to different destinations. Between 1900 and 1924 an estimated 420,000 left for overseas, mainly to the United States. Then, between 1945 and 1974, another 1.4 million departed, representing an exodus of one in six of the total Greek population. In the early postwar years overseas destinations (the US, Canada and Australia) predominated, but after 1960 Germany received the lion's share – 595,000 Greeks migrating there during 1960-73. All told, about a quarter of the postwar exodus returned, the rate of return from Germany being much higher than from the overseas destinations (Fakiolas and King, 1996). [1] Geographical closeness and the early history of temporary migration combined to make the 'transnational social field' of Greek-Germans a more intense arena for back-and-forth mobility and an eventual return, when compared to the more distant overseas destinations.

Methods

Two main methodological approaches underpin this paper. The first is an 'excavation' of mainly German-authored sociological literature of the immediate post-guestworker era, i.e. the 1970s and 1980s. We translate interview material relating to the characteristics and experiences of the Greek-German second generation at a time when they were still young. This material is reinterpreted through a transnational optic.

The second method draws from recent multi-sited field research on second-generation 'return' migration to Greece. We interviewed 20 first- and second-generation Greek-Germans in Berlin in order to record their views and experiences of Greek ethnic life in the city, and their attitudes towards and accounts of return mobilities to Greece. Whilst this German fieldwork was important in setting the scene, our main field research was carried out in Athens and Thessaloniki where 30 life-narratives were collected from second-generation Greek-Germans who had relocated there in early adulthood. We knew from the detailed research of Klaus Unger (1983, 1986) that Athens and Thessaloniki had attracted many first-generation returnees, including those originating from other parts of Greece, who relocated to these two major cities for employment and investment reasons. We thought that their attraction would be even stronger for the second generation, whose links with their parental home villages and towns would be relatively weak.

Narrative interviews were often spread across two or more meetings. The main narrative performance was generally prefaced by a short, informal meeting to set up the interview, and a subsequent meeting sometimes took place to discuss the results of the transcript which had been sent back to the participant for checking. Interviewees were recruited via a range of channels: personal contacts of one of the authors, community organisations, and snowball referral (Christou, 2009). The result was clearly not a random or statistically representative sample, but we have no reason not to believe that our informants represent a good cross-section of experience, not least because many consistent themes emerged across the narratives. The interviews were open in format, in order for the participants to relate their 'stories' with minimal interference or guidance from the interviewer.

Transnational Links as Children

Context: 'temporary integration' and 'ethnic colonies'

Despite the reality of family settlement and the birth of the second generation, Germany's Federal Government continued to insist that Germany was *not* an immigration country. This obvious contradiction posed an enormous challenge to policy, which somehow had to reconcile two opposing forces. On one side stood the official desire to preserve the increasingly fictional notion of temporary migration and return to the country of origin. On the other hand, there was a pressing need to accommodate the now-settled migrant population and educate the German-born second generation and the '1.5 generation' brought in as young children under family reunion measures. A 1975 ruling extending equal welfare rights to the children of migrants stimulated the bringing in of children who had been left behind in Greece or sent back there to be cared for by relatives. Esser and Korte (1985) defined this Janus-faced German migration policy as 'temporary integration'.

The complexity of this paradoxical policy stance was further heightened by the 'double *ius sanguinis*' of Greeks in Germany. Migration between two *ius sanguinis* countries, where both states privilege blood descendency as the essential criterion of belonging to the ethno-national community, implies that Greeks in Germany will be highly likely to retain their Greek identity and preserve a strong home-country orientation, even into the second and subsequent generations. As Maria Kontos put it, 'Greek migrants to Germany have been *return-* and *homeland-orientated* from the start' (2009, p. 32, her emphasis). The significance of this remark will become apparent later.

These legal and ideological framings of migration by both Germany and Greece help us to understand the ethnic life within which the Greek second generation grew up in Germany. Thränhardt (2004) uses the term 'ethnic colony' to describe the Greek presence in Germany, reflecting the high degree of national cohesion of Greeks, expressed in many domains of both organised and everyday life. The second generation were part of a set of urban ethnic communities that were often based on common village or district origins in Greece; social life was almost exclusively within the family, reinforced through membership of the Greek Orthodox Church and attendance at Greek schools in Germany. The prevalence of intra-group social contact bound the second generation both to the ethnic colonies created by their parents, and

to their villages and towns of origin, which were regularly visited for holidays and family occasions like weddings and funerals.

Schooling: an ambivalent integration for children

The main sphere within which the second generation's ambivalent integration was negotiated and experienced was education. Greek parents in Germany had three options regarding where to send their children: to German mainstream schools, to Greek government-sponsored Greek schools in Germany, or to schools in Greece. These choices are not mutually exclusive. For instance, children could attend mainstream schools in the morning, and the Greek school in the afternoon; or they could be sent to Greece for part of their schooling, returning to the German system later. These mixed educational experiences created certain dilemmas. Children whose education is 'split' between Germany and Greece may have problems of language, curricula and teaching styles when they move from one system to another. Those who attend both mainstream and Greek schools in Germany are weighed down with two curricula and two sets of homework. Finally the German school system is highly segmented according to academic and vocational routes, with the result that immigrant-origin pupils have difficulty entering the academic *Gymnasium* stream that leads to university.

Greek parents have high educational aspirations for their children and the academic profile of the Greek second generation is quite good, better than that of the Italians and the Turks (Thränhardt, 1989; 2004). Moreover they want their children to retain as much as possible of the Greek language and culture. This is not only to preserve a sense of Greek cultural identity within the ethnic colony, but it also has a more instrumental purpose: to prepare for a possible return migration, either as a family unit or to enable potential students to enter the Greek university system. Evidence of this is presented later.

Hence we see how the school is a site of 'ambivalent integration' for second-generation Greek-Germans – an ambivalence which reflects both the Greek first generation's commitment to, yet continuous postponement of return, and the German government's uncertain policy towards the integration of immigrants. The scene is now set for a first round of empirical data, on the childhood mobility experiences of the second generation. This is drawn from two sources: contemporary accounts based on field interviews carried out in the 1970s and the early 1980s (especially from

Matzouranis, 1985), and the childhood recollections of our own research participants interviewed as adults in 2007-08.

Of happy visits and traumatic displacements

Three types of childhood return mobility potentially affected the young second generation in Germany: holiday visits, children placed in Greek schools whilst their parents lived and worked in Germany, and children brought back as part of family resettlement.

Childhood holiday visits are mostly remembered with unalloyed pleasure. The dominant memories in the narratives are of warmth, sunshine, the sea, food, and welcoming relatives. Many participants also referred to the freedom they were given to play and roam with their cousins and other village children – unlike the tight rein they were kept on by their parents in Germany. To quote another paper specifically about childhood holiday visits, these were 'idyllic times and spaces' (King et al., 2009), and our evidence concurs with other studies of return holiday visits – for instance of Swiss-Italian children to Southern Italy (Wessendorf, 2007). Such visits took place mainly during the summer, sometimes with extra visits at Easter. Petros, aged 38, interviewed in Thessaloniki in 2008, gave a typical account of his childhood visits:

> Every summer I was in Greece for my summer holidays… I was lucky to be coming over here every summer… I would see my friends, we would fool around… I would play with my cousins in the fields… we would go to the seaside… These memories stay with you.

Only later, in the teenage years, are such accounts tinged with a note of boredom – 'all those relatives, all those long meals, waiting for the adults to stop talking' – and of the ritual of the long drive down through the poor roads of Yugoslavia. However, probably the most problematic aspect of these childhood visits is that they portray a false picture of what the homeland is like to live in long-term. We present evidence of this disillusionment later in the paper.

Even more traumatic, at least for some, was the experience of being sent back to Greece for schooling, in order that both parents could work full-time. Although not unknown in other migration settings, we were genuinely surprised to discover from our interviewees how common this practice of home-country schooling was amongst

the Greeks in Germany. This prompted us to search the earlier German literature on Greek migration to Germany, where we uncovered corroborating contemporary evidence.

Here is the testimony of an 18-year-old female interviewed in Munich in 1971 (Matzouranis, 1985, p.153). Her schooling had followed a shuttle-like existence back and forth between Greece and Germany.

> First, my parents went to Germany. Then, after about a year, my dad came [to Greece] to take us [the children] with him … I had attended primary school in Greece until the second year: after that we came to Germany in 1962. Then my dad sent us to a boarding school in Greece for two years […]. Since then – like at the moment – I have been in Germany without interruption, since 1965… apart from the times we went down to Greece for holidays. I attended a German school and completed my education until the eighth year. I also went to vocational school, another three years. I studied economics and learnt to speak fluent German… and some English. We also learned to type and do shorthand […] then I started work in an office.

In this case, the interviewee was apparently able to cope with her to-and-fro education and secured an office job. In this respect girls may have more options open to them, especially in a post-industrial labour market, than boys (Kontos, 2009; Matzouranis, 1985). The following quote (Matzouranis, 1985, p. 57) is of a Greek father in Germany, lamenting the educational and employment prospects of his 16-year-old son who started his schooling in Greece and then moved to Germany. The date of the interview is 1973; significantly, the onset of the recession.

> What shall I do with Alekos? He only completed the primary school in Greece; that isn't worth anything here. Should I send him back to school here? But he would need to know German. He goes to these courses that supposedly are for learning German, with the priests, but he doesn't learn anything. He is already 16 years old. If only he could go somewhere to learn a trade, but nobody wants to take him on. Our children have no luck. I don't want him to stay unskilled, like me; we want our children to learn something […]. Nobody wants our children, neither the Greeks, nor the Germans.

It is clear from the above two quotes that experiencing periods of schooling in different countries, holding on to the Greek language and identity, and trying to develop a career in Germany, are not an easy combination. For Alekos the situation seems uncertain, even hopeless. For the girl in the first quote, who is more linguistically adept, and who appears to be able to reconcile both the Greek and

German sides of her educational experience, the future is brighter, and may open up more creative transnational alternatives, as we shall see later.

For now, another theme which emerges from the interviews collected by researchers such as Matzouranis (1985) and Liane Unger (1986) is the experience of separation and inter-generational alienation which can develop when children are kept in a different country from that of their parents. This transnational parenting and the often awkward experiences of a separated childhood have been researched quite a lot in recent years, mainly in the context of female migrant domestic workers who leave their children behind in countries like the Philippines and Ecuador.[2] What is interesting is that these same issues confronted Greek migrants in Germany in the 1960s and 1970s. The physical distance separating the two generations at key points in their lives (when their children were growing up), at a time when travel and communication were expensive and far slower, created a kind of ontological void in which different values and lifestyles, not to mention languages, got developed in isolation. This even affected siblings in the same family. Here are two telling examples taken from Matzouranis (1985, pp. 105, 171).

> [Our eldest child] is twelve years old. He completed primary school [in Greece] and is now attending secondary school there. Close to our village there is a boarding school and my mother-in-law visits him every Saturday […] I haven't seen the child for three years, nearly four […]. When we brought our younger children over here to Germany, we had lots of problems, and we don't know what will happen to them. We are thinking of bringing the oldest one over too, in order to see him, because we can't all of us go to Greece (mother, 32, Munich 1972).

The second case is even more complicated because it illustrates tensions between siblings. The interviewee is a returnee to Greece.

> … the first child we left with my wife's parents in the village because we weren't fully prepared when he was born. We lived in a very small room and the landlady wouldn't allow us to have a child living there. Then he got used to his grandparents and didn't want to come to Germany. Now he is 14 years old and his siblings 10 and 8. But they can't get used to each other or like each other. The two who were in Germany think differently, play games together and are happier. Their older brother doesn't pay attention to them, he is very serious… I'm afraid they don't seem like siblings (father, 47, Volos 1980).

These cases expose the fragility of the relationship between initial migration, education, and subsequent mobility outcomes across the generations. The two most 'rational choices' would seem to be when migrant parents and their German-educated children stay in Germany (but they are estranged from their Greek homeland); or when parents send their children to Greek schools (in Germany or in Greece) in anticipation of a family return migration to Greece (but German-raised children may still experience adjustment difficulties on return: see L. Unger, 1986). Other outcomes bring multiple problems. Parents who send their children to Greece planning a return may end up staying in Germany long-term; difficult decisions ensue. Other parents who have their children educated in the German school system may 'lose' them if the parents retire back to Greece. Even if the parental generation does not return to Greece, the second generation might when they become adults.

Second-Generation Adult Migration: Five Narratives of Return

We now come to our research on the 'return' of the adult second generation to Greece. We put 'return' in quotes because, for those who were born and raised in Germany, this is not a true return migration, but a move to the birth country of their parents. Nevertheless, participants do see their move as a kind of 'real' or emotional return to their ancestral home. For those who were born in Greece and taken to Germany as young children (the 1.5 generation), and for those who were born in Germany but spent part of their childhood in Greece before then being brought back to Germany, the return to Greece perhaps has more concrete meaning, although the emotional weight attached to such a return is not necessarily less. In interpreting our data presented below, we need to reiterate that, compared to much of the existing transnational studies literature, which is sourced from the more assimilatory context of the United States, our study of Germany is rather unique because of this country's exclusionary stance towards immigrants.

Our life-narrative methodology did not explicitly ask the question 'why did you return?'; rather, the circumstances surrounding return were embedded in the narratives, sometimes as an explicit question that the participants asked themselves and then attempted to answer, but also, quite often, as an implicit element of their life stories, as if it were a natural or pre-ordained event. We found that five explanatory narratives of return emerged, sometimes as a simple overriding reason to move to Greece, more often as overlapping rationales.

Realisation of a dream

For many the 'return' to Greece is viewed as the enactment of a dream in which the true self – the Greek self – can only be achieved and expressed by moving to the ethnic homeland. This rationale, the state of being 'at home' in the 'homeland', featured strongly in earlier accounts of the Greek-American return experience (see Soloutos, 1956 for the first generation; Christou, 2006a for the second), and it proved to be relevant to the Greek-German case too.

Theoretically, following Giddens (1991), we interpret this type of 'grounding' in the territory of the homeland as a reworking of the self to fit the quest for personal meaning against the looming threat of personal meaninglessness and the loss of historical continuity that both parental migration and late modernity have produced. Hence 'return' satisfies the search for 'psychic security' and the elusive (and often illusive) sense of well-being.

Some interviewees were very up-front about this motive. Forty-year-old Vaios, born in Hannover and resident in Athens since 2006, made the following generalisation: 'Like all kids born to migrant parents, I always dreamt of returning to my homeland'. He went on to say that this dream was 'a mechanism … which started deep inside me that made me want to come [and live in Greece]'.

Others wanted to live the dream because they thought it would be a continuation of their idyllic memories of childhood holiday visits to see their extended family, with fond recollections of generosity, freedom, and happy times spent in the village or by the sea. In the words of Persephone (27, interviewed in Athens, 2008):

> Because everyone dreams of a different tomorrow, right? When I first came to Greece I also dreamed that things would be like I was on vacation … laughter, partying and all that.

Unsurprisingly (and this is echoed in many other testimonies – see Christou, 2006b; King et al., 2009), the holiday atmosphere disappears when the 'real' return takes place, as Persephone acknowledged: 'Do you know what? I had hard times … because Greece is not what you believed it to be … You have to fight'.

The Greek way of life

Many interviewees who had returned talked of their preference for the Greek over the German 'way of life'; indeed for many this was the very stuff of the dream described above. Respondents articulating this rationale contrasted the warmth, friendliness and spontaneity of Greek people, characterised by loyal family structures, with the coldness, predictability and regimented nature of life in Germany. They also referred to the dominance of work in Germany over leisure and relaxation in Greece and drew attention to the obvious climatic and scenic contrasts (Christou and King, 2010).

What second-generation returnees are looking for is captured in the following quote from Evanthia (27, Berlin). She is a 'double returnee' who first went to Thessaloniki to attend university and to 'live the dream' (her words) of being in Greece, and then returned to Germany where the employment prospects were better.

> The Greeks are more open, a warmer people; they are more communicative, accommodating and helpful. In general it is the way they behave towards their fellow human beings.

Of course, this plays to some extent into well-worn stereotypes about the Greeks' happy-go-lucky character which we will critically analyse through the voices of other participants later. In the following extract from the interview with 60-year-old Andreas (first-generation, Berlin, 2007), we hear a more cynical interpretation about how the second generation have been rather taken in by the false attractions of the country and its people, based on fleeting visits, and how many of them, like Evanthia, 're-return':

> Recently amongst the younger generation there is a tendency to idealise return and what Greece has to offer. What is bad is that this is not based on some logical, realistic evaluation. I would say that it is limited more to the way of life… and less to realistic considerations like work relations, social relations… Let's not forget that what these youngsters think is not the result of an intense experience with the Greek way of life, but their fifteen-day, three or four week summer vacations… Many of these young people who have tried living in Greece have ended up in Germany again.

The family narrative of return

The fact that Greek migration to Germany has been 'return-oriented' derives from a double explanation: it was a product both of the German guestworker policy and of

the migrants' own intentions to go back after a few years. But the guestworkers morphed into long-term immigrants, and the German authorities shifted from a rotation strategy for migrant workers to a policy of facilitating settlement and family reunion. Family reuinion measures were already in place by the late 1960s, and the migration of family members formed the main migration intake route after the 1973 oil crisis. Throughout this transition, the Greek migrants in Germany preserved their ethnic community characteristics, sustained by ties of kinship, common village and district origins, language, religion and customs. Yet, at the same time, the first generation's pledge to return became more a 'myth of return' (cf. Anwar 1979). Meanwhile the children, having grown up surrounded by constant references to going back, may, in actual fact, be in a better position to carry out the return than their parents, who have become older and more out of touch with the fast-changing realities of their home country.

This notion of the second generation inheriting the return orientation of their parents has been well described by Reynolds (2008) for Caribbean-origin migrants in Britain. We too found the 'family narrative' of return prominent in some of our second-generation participants' accounts, often interwoven with other reasons for return. Kyriaki, 25, second-generation, moved to Thessaloniki two years ago:

> I feel very proud … of being Greek … I believe that this notion that we must be proud of our country has been passed down to us by our parents. That is why I have returned … I owe this to my parents who are still in Germany but who wanted me to come and live here.

Berlin-born Fani (22, interviewed in Thessaloniki, where she moved four years earlier to go to university) talked of her parents' intention to return, but was worried that the Greece of today is very different from their memories of the country as it was when they left:

> In your mind you had a picture of your country, and this happens to your parents too… Now that they are going to move here, in their minds they kept the image of their country as it was… they feel nostalgic. But I don't know if things are going to be the way they expect…

Typical of the perpetual postponement of the first generation's return, and of the fact that this might be felt differently by various members of the family, is the account from Evanthia (Berlin, 2007):

> My parents have been intending to return permanently to Greece 'next year' for decades [laughs], but this year never comes! […] Until recently, both of them worked, so there was this fear of what they would do if they went to Greece… they were at an age when it wouldn't be easy for them to find jobs in Greece. But it's been two years now since my father took early retirement, but my mother is not so keen to take this step, and I understand her completely.

Evanthia's parents have reached the stage in their lives – retirement – when a 'natural' decision to return might be expected, but the enthusiasm for return is not equally shared.

Return as a life-stage event

For the second generation, still relatively young, the life-stage moments for an autonomous return are as follows. Two are marriage or partnership related: the cementing of a relationship with a 'local' (i.e. a non-migrant Greek), often met on a holiday or family visit to Greece; or, conversely, the break-up of a marriage or relationship in Germany and the resultant wish to make a fresh start in a different place. A few instances of these two circumstances occurred amongst our 30 interviewees in Greece. More common, however, was the life-stage associated with leaving school and entering higher education. This is what Evanthia and done, with her degree at university in Thessaloniki, although she had subsequently gone back to Germany. This pathway to the parental homeland is only available to those with a good command of Greek, since they have to take an entrance exam. This exam for diaspora Greeks, widely regarded as easier than that sat by native Greeks, creates some divisions amongst the students, as Evanthia explains:

> I felt this differentiation at the university because the other Greek students from abroad who had passed the special exams were there too. Since the results for the Greeks from abroad came out later, they started attending the university a month or so after classes had started… so the differentiation starts: you can hear [the others say], 'Ah the Germans [have arrived]'.

Return as a quest for personal freedom

Finally, there is migration as 'escape' – an increasingly common trope in gendered accounts of the migration of women (see, for instance, Lisboa, 2003; Mahler and Pessar, 2001; Mushaben, 2009). Recent research on Greek migrant women also reflects this stance; the Greek homeland offers a legitimate escape-route out of the oppressive and patriarchal family and community environment of the Greek ethnic colony in Germany (or elsewhere in the diaspora – see Panagakos, 2004; Tsolidis, 2009).

Many of our interviewees expressed the same syndrome, reacting with different degrees of severity against the 'traditional', village-mentality 'Greek colonies' they had been brought up in, where their personal freedom as teenagers and young adults had been severely limited. Kyriaki (25, Thessaloniki) described her upbringing in Berlin as her 'lost childhood'. She went on to compare life in the two cities:

> I like life here very much; it's not how I lived my life in Berlin… [My life] has changed… I can go out more easily now because my father was too strict with those things, he didn't let us [my sisters and I] go out… Whereas here, Greek girls go out when they are 14… I believe I am freer here – I mean I can go out, and I won't be looking at my watch thinking dad will be awake waiting for me. [We grew up] very religious… we all had to go to church on Sunday, and to Sunday school. We didn't experience childhood: we finished [the German] school, we went to the Greek school in the afternoon, we came home, we studied, and we slept. This is why, when we came down to Greece in the summers, we went crazy!

Denouement: Narratives of Disillusionment

Previous excerpts from our narrative evidence have already provided strong hints that, for second-generation 'returnees' moving to Greece as adults, adapting to the Greek way of life proves to be a bigger challenge than anticipated. The first challenge is finding *a job and an income*; necessary for all participants except those who are still students or stay-at-home mothers dependent on male breadwinners. Virtually all our respondents told of their annoyance and anger at how jobs were accessed and allocated in Greece – largely, it seems, on the basis of nepotism and 'connections'. This corrupted system operates in all sectors of the job market, public and private, high and low skilled. Our participants were for the most part well-educated, many to university level. For those who successfully found work, typical fields of professional

activity were medicine, teaching, translation, and working in companies where a knowledge of languages such as English and German was an asset or requirement.

Two types of critical discourse were applied to the work sphere. First, the way in which jobs were acquired: through favours and personal contacts. Vaios (40) had left Berlin at the end of a job contract there, and had been in Athens a year. He had found a temporary job, but only as a stop-gap and not in his field of expertise. He mused:

> I can see it will be harder to find a proper job because the job market is not as big as it is in Germany… or else, there is the Greek way of having people you know pull some strings… [laughs].

Second, there was a barrage of complaints in the interviews about professional standards, working conditions, exploitation and excessive informality and rule-bending. A quote from Zoe (28, Thessaloniki, 2008):

> What can I say? I was used to the strict German system according to which you do your job, you have your working hours, you stay put in your office, you work, and that's it. Here the mentality is that we go to work to sit around for six hours and drink coffee… Of course they do finally do some work… [but then] you don't get paid properly on top of it all… You have to beg to be given what you're entitled to … because the only thing they're interested in is profit… everyone is self-interested…

Pelagia (37) trained in medicine before relocating to Greece eight years ago. She now works as a doctor in Athens.

> The attitude of the average doctor in Greece towards the patient is one of rudeness. When seeing their older patients they say 'Hey grandpa, what's wrong with you?' I would never say that to a patient, no matter how old they are […]. Same thing goes when they [the patients] call me 'my girl'. I'm not your girl; right now I'm your doctor. I need there to be respect between patient and doctor.

A second area of disappointment – at least for female participants – is the issue of *gender relations* in Greek society. Despite the veneer of social modernity and an increasingly 'European' style of life, relations between men and women, and ideas about relationships and marriage were perceived as still very traditional compared to Germany. Sophia (41), who came to Greece in 1997, was 'shocked by the attitudes to

whatever involves the opposite sex'. Fani (24), who relocated to Thessaloniki in 2002, expressed the following view:

> It's not exactly the phallocentric society, but women here are more traditional, they are not independent […] Here it is inconceivable for a woman to have a child without being married. In Germany it's more natural: people won't say to you, you can't do it. It's your choice.

The third topic of frustration was *the environment*. As we have documented this theme in another paper (Christou and King, 2010), we give just one example, from Rebecca (41, returned to Greece in 2004, interviewed in Athens 2007). She was critical of the way Greeks deal with their rubbish, throwing it in the streets or dumping it on waste ground, but also skeptical about the potential for change:

> It's dirty here, what they do with their rubbish, with everything… This whole country works this way. But you're not going to change it, you know, just because you've spent 35 or how many years in Germany… and you come back; you're not going to change things.

Finally there is *immigration*, which in Greece has been the topic of conversation *du jour* for the past 20 years, ever since the first Albanians swarmed across the border in the early 1990s. Although Greeks' own migratory experience in Germany was hardly one of complete integration and equality, returnees are generally surprised and shocked at Greece's racist treatment of immigrants. Again we have written specifically about this in another paper (Christou and King, 2006), so we give just one example, from Fani:

> We [Greek-Germans] don't have the racist element that the Greeks here have … In Germany because we were foreigners amongst foreigners it was natural for us to accept them and for them to accept us. Here … there is too much racism and that annoys me a lot. I mean, I don't care if foreigners are from Albania, or Africa, whatever: I think it's just too much [racism]. They [Greeks] prefer to avoid them rather than have a dialogue with them and learn something different… The more they isolate these people, the worse it is.

Home and Belonging, or the Mobility of the Hyphen

In this final section of the paper we ask the question – direct or rhetorical – 'Where is home?' in order to enter into the more personal space of mobility and belonging. To what extent do our second-generation participants feel 'Greek' or 'German', or some

in-between identity? People who move counter-diasporically enable us to pose interesting questions about the links between ethnicity, identity and generation on the one hand, and migration, transnationalism and mobility on the other. For Tsolidis (2009, p. 182) 'bringing the hyphen home' is about the blurring of hyphenated identities (in her case, of Greek-Australians and Greek-Canadians) in the 'new' (but ancestrally 'old') home, Greece. Here, then, we use the trope of 'home' to explore the mobility of the hyphen – both its mobility in space for second-generationers who are transnationally mobile at different stages of their lives, and its mobility and plasticity in relating the 'Greek' and the 'German' together (or apart) in new ways.

In order to bring the two historical phases of the paper together (childhood and adult 'return'), we focus here on two individuals whom we have already briefly met earlier. Petros and Pelagia are of similar age (late 30s) and both have multi-phase experiences of transnationalism, encompassing both childhood and adult relocations to the Greek homeland.

Petros' narrative included many passages which were highly emotional and angst-laden. We contextualise it by first presenting his biographical time-line. He was born in Stuttgart where he lived and went to school until the age of 14, at which point his parents decided to bring the family back to their small home-town in northern Greece. Petros finished his education, including an engineering diploma, in Greece, did his army service and then, unemployed, 'returned' to Germany for further study and a job, this time in Berlin. He then re-returned to Greece when his father became seriously ill in 2004.

The dilemma which dominated Petros' account was about his fundamental identity given his shifting mobility. Petros defines his 'double nostalgia' for the 'other place' as both a curse and a blessing which has afflicted his entire teenage and adult life.

> The title of my life [is] nostalgia. I tell you it is also a curse… to have to face this dilemma… People who grow up with two languages… it's like growing up not knowing who your parents are, in a way […] In the same way as it is a curse it is also a blessing, because I was lucky enough to experience two cultures: the urban, the harsh, the everything planned, the German system; and the Greek one which is all confusion, the 'come on, so what?' … This enriches you as an individual … but it is, as we say, a knife that cuts both ways.

Petros' double nostalgia is further complicated by the fact that, in both cases, his memories are of places and friendships which no longer exist in the way they were,

'because people move on in relation to you, and you move on in relation to them'. Petros reacted to this by further mobility, distancing himself from his childhood homes in Stuttgart and the small town in northern Greece by relocating first to Berlin and then to Thessaloniki. He was scathing in his reference to Stuttgart:

> I was ashamed of the kind of people Greeks in Stuttgart were… They had become a stereotype… all of them know each other… they disliked the Germans… they were an island… I had nothing in common with them…

And about his small-town friends in Greece:

> I found them with the same thoughts and ideas and taboos that they had from the past… And then I came back from Berlin with a thousand experiences which I could no longer share with them because whatever I would say was considered as something too exotic for them… they were not interested in listening to me.

It seems that for Petros the hyphen is the core of his identity: simultaneously a curse and a blessing, a double-edged sword, or as he put it, 'a knife that cuts both ways'. To the question 'Where does he belong?' it is difficult to give an answer: not 'here' (Greece), not 'there' (Germany), nor even 'somewhere in-between'. Detached from the places he inhabited in the past, he seems to 'belong' only in the present, in the hyphen.

In contrast to Petros' deep inner conflict about who he was and where he belonged, Pelagia had experienced a smoother multiple passage between the two countries. She had been able to build on her dual educational profile, creating career options in medicine in both countries. First, she describes the basic facts of her mobility history:

> I was born in Germany to Greek parents who had already been in the country for a few years. When I was six, my parents decided that we should return to Greece. I started going to the Greek primary school, but my father's job was not going well so, after some years, they decided to take us all back to Germany. Neither my brother nor I wanted that – nobody asked us. So, when I was ten, we returned to Germany […]. I graduated from German high school and went to university in a nearby city… I finished my studies and I started working in Germany – I found a proper job, training to be a doctor. I had the idea to return to Greece after my internship… My friends from Greece, returned migrants, told me there's never a perfect time to go for it, you just do it one day. So I decided that I would. In 2000 I was 29 years old, there were some things I didn't like at work, so I left. I came to Greece, offered my

availability as a doctor on [names small island], had a lovely time there, and now I work in Athens.

Prompted to be more precise about her identity and sense of belonging, Pelagia continued:

> I think that, having grown up in both countries, I miss the elements of the country I do not live in … but the elements I now miss of Germany are much less than the elements of Greece I used to miss when I was in Germany. I feel a personal integrity living in Greece [...] What I miss is seeing my parents, who are still living in Germany. And I kind of miss the order in everyday life, like the bus that comes right on schedule… but I feel more Greek, and better in Greece, than I was in Germany.

Of course, too much should not be read into these two cases. They are instructive only insofar as they illustrate different outcomes from broadly similar biographical backgrounds, in each case segmented into four periods spent alternatively in the two countries.[3] If there is a generalisation to be made, based not on these two individuals but on the broader sample of second-generation returnees, it is that the hybrid or hyphenated identity tends to get preserved, even enhanced, after the second generation 'returns' to Greece. Pelagia hinted at this in her account, but then opted for privileging the Greek side of her hyphen. Other interviewees were more emphatic about the mobility of identity either side of the hyphen in reverse correlation to where they were living. Here is a typical quote, this time from Fani:

> I feel like a foreigner in my own country, but in Germany I am a foreigner too […] I haven't accepted completely that I am in my own country, so my conclusion is that, generally, I don't know [where my home is]. Here I am so infused with the Greek mentality [but] my biggest fear is to forget where I came from – one year I went to Germany four times [laughs] … Let's face it, you take everything with you; it's as if you take your home to Greece.

To be sure, Fani's amusement and surprise at finding herself always identifying (and being identified) with the 'other place' is not unique to the Greek-German case. We observe the same syndrome in other studies of young people brought up in analogous transnational fields – for example Italian *'secondos'* raised in Switzerland who relocate to southern Italy (Wessendorf, 2009).

Concluding Discussion

This paper has taken the long view of the transnational experience of the second generation, based on the Greek-German case. We have noted how homeland ties vary throughout the second-generation lifecourse, with up to four mobility types experienced by the participants at various stages of their lives, each 'return' experience conditioning those that follow. We have uncovered the 'hidden story' of the transnational childhoods of many second-generation Greeks, before moving on to a more detailed examination of adult second-generation relocation to Greece. We have also looked at the return mobility types within the evolving framework of the first generation's transition from temporary guestworkers into settled migrants. The strength of the 'family narrative of return' throughout this transition, and of the Greek 'ethnic colonies' in Germany, helps to explain the otherwise rather counter-intuitive migration stage where the second generation moves to the parental homeland, usually without their parents who remain in Germany. A further surprise from our data is that participants' emotional attachment to Greece generally remains despite the objective difficulties of living there and a degree of disillusionment which results from this.[4] Ways of belonging seem easier to sustain than 'ways of being' in the ethnic homeland.

What distinguishes the second-generationers who return from those who do not? Our qualitative data enable us to give an intuitive rather than a statistical answer (there are no secondary data on second-generation migration to Greece). We identify three main 'drivers' of the phenomenon. First, there is the emotional attachment to Greece and the Greek way of life, often built up continuously over the individual's life-course and deriving from the strong ethnic-community identity amongst the Greeks in Germany, as well as from frequent visits to Greece during childhood and beyond. Set alongside this affective bond with the Greek homeland, there next come certain time-specific triggers or opportunities for return, such as entry to a Greek university, meeting a future partner; or, conversely, the Greek destination is used as an escape-route from some condition or event that has occurred in Germany – a relationship break-up, job loss, or the wish to detach from an oppressive family situation. The third driver is a more selective filter, and relates to the human capital that is needed to turn the return dream into reality. Most of the participants had further or higher education. This, we surmise, gave them the paper qualifications, contacts,

linguistic fluency and personal confidence to make the move, and cope with the often negative consequences.

Finally, how do our research results compare with other studies of second-generation return? The literature suggests three geographical spheres of comparison. First, there are other studies of hyphenated Greeks, mostly from North America (Christou, 2006a, 2006b; Kontos, 2009; Panagakos, 2004; Tsolidis, 2009). Their experiences of return closely match our own findings. They are highly educated and return not for economic motives but for existential and emotional reasons. Two main differences are to be noted, however: the longer distances involved lessen the frequency of childhood return visits; and the longer history of emigration, especially to the United States, means that both first- and second-generation return have been well-established phenomena since at least the 1950s (Saloutos, 1956).

Second, there is a closely parallel case to our Greek-German one in Wessendorf's (2007, 2009) research on the Italian-Swiss second generation, the *secondos*: we observe almost identical themes emerging in the narratives. The return is driven by positive memories of holiday visits, close transnational kin networks, and a sense of 'roots' – indeed Wessendorf calls this 'roots migration' (2007). Returning *secondos* find the social environment of their South Italian home-towns rather conservative, especially as regards gender relations; this leads to a 'reverse nostalgia' for Switzerland amongst returnee women.

Thirdly, there is the extensive research on British-Caribbean second-generation return migration by Potter, Phillips, Conway and Reynolds.[5] This paints a generally positive picture of the return experience and impact. Return is educationally selective, and the labour market is weighted to the returnees' advantage: they are able to use their UK qualifications to enter various professional, administrative and business employment sectors. Environmentally they find the Caribbean a more conducive place to live and work, when compared to the inner-city districts where most of them grew up in the UK. Although the Caribbean is by no means devoid of crime, most returnees with children, or planning to have them, see the region as a safer place to raise the 'next' generation.

One can only wonder how this next generation will see themselves in terms of their own identity, and whether their own transnational behaviour will link them back to the diaspora context where *their* parents came from. Will the Greek-born children of

Greek-German returnee parents look to Germany to rediscover part of their ancestral heritage?

Acknowledgement

Notes

1. Statistics on Greek migration and return are complicated by repeat migrants. For instance, many returnees from Germany subsequently re-emigrated, some back to Germany, others elsewhere. This leads to some double-counting of individuals in the statistics.

2. See for example Asis (2006); Dreby (2006); Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila (1997); Parreñas (2005; 2008); Pribilsky (2004). However, most of these cases refer to situations in which only one parent is a migrant; in the Greek case both parents are abroad.

3. Probably more significant is the ages at which the moves took place: 14, 25 and 34 in the case of Petros; 4, 10 and 29 in the case of Pelagia. Gender and education/professional background are also probably highly relevant in distinguishing these two cases, but there is no space to develop these analytical dimensions.

4. Whilst it is true that the bulk of our respondents were planning to stay in Greece rather than go back to Germany, we cannot discount the possibility that some might do so in the future.

5. This research, especially the many papers by Potter and Phillips, is too extensive to fully cite here. For key references see Potter (2005); Potter and Phillips (2008); Reynolds (2008). Much of the bibliography in this area is found in reference lists to the various chapters in Conway and Potter (2009).

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Figure 1   Live births to Greek mothers in Germany, 1960-2010
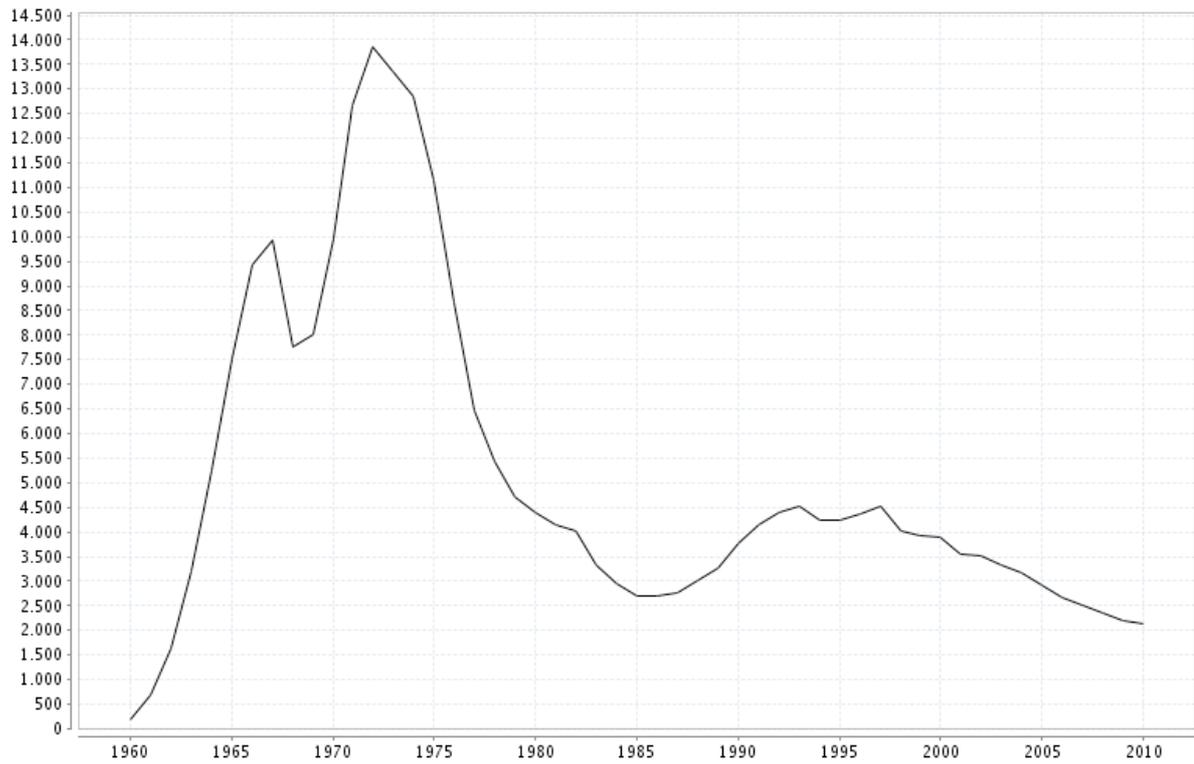
Source: Statistisches Bundesamt (2012)

Table 1   West Germany: foreign population and workers, 1961-81 ('000)

Nationality	Workers				Total migrants			
	1961	1967	1973	1981	1961	1970	1973	1981
Greek	42	140	250	122	52	343	399	299
Italian	197	267	450	285	225	574	622	625
Spanish	44	118	190	81	62	246	286	177
Turkish		131	605	584	7	469	894	1,546
Yugoslav		97	535	336	16	515	673	637
All migrants	549	991	2,595	1,917	686	2,977	3,966	4,630

Source: after Esser and Korte (1985:171)