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**FIRST-GENERATION GREEK PROFESSIONAL MIGRANTS IN AUSTRALIA,
1947 - 1985: PROBLEMS OF SETTLEMENT AND ADAPTATION, AND THEIR
CONTRIBUTION TO THE GREEK-AUSTRALIAN AND AUSTRALIAN
SOCIETIES**

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"IN A STRANGE LAND A STRANGER FINDS A GRAVE
FAR FROM HIS HOME AND BEYOND THE ROLLING WAVES" *

This is the story and fate of the migrant

Manolis died more than a century ago but, the significance of the words on his gravestone will always be appropriate for any migrant buried away from home.

**Inscription on the tombstone of Andonios Manolis, one of the first Greeks who came to Australia and died alone in 1880, at the age of 76.*

This work is dedicated to my brothers Makis and Dimitris in Greece, who remind me of my roots and the years that have gone by. It is also an example to my children that determination in life gives confidence and produces results.

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Certificate of originality

I certify that the substance of this thesis has not already been submitted for any degree and is not being currently submitted for any other degree.

I certify that, to the best of my knowledge, any help received in preparing this thesis, and all sources used, have been acknowledged in the thesis.



A. C. Kondos

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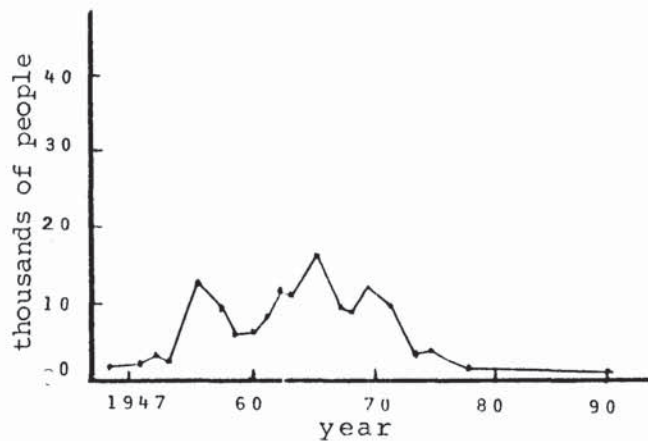
INTRODUCTION

Greek migration to Australia started early in the 19th century and the majority of migrants was made up of people from the mainland and island areas of Greece¹. According to the 1891 Census, there were only 482 Greek born people in Australia and, by 1947, their number had increased to 12,291 of whom, only one quarter were females². Most of the European migration, including that of the Greeks, took place in the 50's and 60's (see Fig.1) when there was lack of work in Europe, and Australia wanted to fill the factories and service the urban population³.

The postwar migration of Greeks showed a peak in the late 60's, and migration continued but at a decreasing rate until 1983, when the number of migrants arriving had decreased to a total of about 500 per year (Fig. 1). By that time, and according to the Census 1948-71, it is estimated that about 300,000 Greeks had entered Australia, although the Community Profiles records, refer to lower figures⁴.

Figure One

Greek Settlers in Australia 1947 - 1989



(ABS Catalogue 3101.01 DIEA)

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- ¹ M. P. Tsounis, 'Greek Community and Pa'ioikia Formations in Australia, 1880's - 1980's', in Greeks in English Speaking Countries, Proc. of 1st Intern. Seminar 1992, Hellenic Studies Forum, Melbourne, 1993, pp. 25-46.
C. A. Price, Southern Europeans in Australia, Oxford Univ. Press, Melbourne, 1963, p. 134.
 - ² J. Zubricki, 'Greek Migrants in Australia: A Demographic Study', Migration Vol. 1, No 2, 1961, Canberra.
 - ³ K. McConnochie, D. Hollinsworth and J. Pettman, Racism in Australia, Social Science Press, Australia, 1993, p. 209.
 - ⁴ Greek Australian Conference, 'Greeks in Victoria: Policies, Directives and Initiatives', Melbourne, Victoria Mimeo, 1987, p. 11.
Community Profiles 1990: Greece Born, Bureau of Immigration Research, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1990, p. vi.
C. A. Price, Greeks in Australia, ANU Press, Canberra, 1975, p. 26.

Despite the large number of Greeks who came to Australia, Appleyard reported that only a few of Australia's postwar Greek migrants were professionals and, during the 1967 period, only 6% of all Greek migrants were classified as belonging to some professional category⁵. Unfortunately, Appleyard gives no description of the term 'Professionals', which apparently included everyone with some kind of certificate or skill.

The sharp decline of Greek migration at the beginning of the 1980's should be considered a most significant event for the future of Greek culture in Australia. Through the years, Hellenism has been kept alive, to a great extent, by the activities and the spirit of first-generation Greeks who maintained their love for Greece and, as a general rule, have passed their sentiments onto their children.

According to an histogram produced by the Bureau of Statistics 1986, the age distribution of 62% of Greek migrants in 1986 was between the ages of 40 and 64 years, and as a consequence, it would be expected that by the year 2000, they will have reached the age of 55 - 80 years (31% - 55 to 64 and 31% - 65 to 80 years). It has also been estimated that 67% of Australia's Greek-born population has been in Australia for more than 20 years⁶. These figures reflect the long and sustained influence of the first generation migrants on the Greek culture and language, and that within the next ten years, the future of Hellenism will become increasingly dependent on Australian-born Greeks⁷.

In view of the advancing age of the people who have contributed to or played a significant role in the history and the development of the Greek communities in Australia, I considered it vital to record first hand personal information from members of a small, but unique, group of first-generation Greek migrants: those who came with professional qualifications from overseas educational institutions.

Since the beginning of Greek settlement in Australia, Greeks have established viable communities, and it is important to continue documenting events which have been part of people's lives and the community as a whole. In response to this general need, there has been an appreciable volume of literature published during the past two decades.⁸

⁵ R. T. Appleyard, 'The Greeks of Australia: A New Diasporic Hellenism', in S. Vryonis, Jr., ed. Greece on the Road to Democracy: From the Junta to PASOK, 1974-1986, A. Caratzas, N. Rochelle, N.Y. 1991, pp. 363-385.

⁶ Bureau of Immigration Research, Commonwealth of Australia, AGPS, Canberra, 1990, p. 8. See also Appendices 1 and 2.

⁷ Information from the 1986 Census (Comm. Profiles 1990, op. cit. p. 6), indicates that almost 60% of the second generation Greeks were older than 15 years, 23% 15-19, 25% 20-29 and 10% above 30 years. Community Profiles 1990, op. cit. 1990, p. 6.

⁸ An example of this has been given by Spiliadis and Messinis in their book Reflections. T. Spiliadis and S. Messinis, Reflections, Elikia Books, Melbourne, 1988, pp. vii, viii.

The Greek communities in Australia have now reached the stage where they will have to look more critically into their past, collecting and documenting information of past achievements and, especially, on people who have made some impression on the colourful migrant history in Australia. This is a problem facing Greek migrants all over the world.⁹

Many authors have already written the story of the average, non-professional migrants, who worked hard through the years to keep the Greek name respected by the general community, but almost nothing has been written about the skilled, professional migrants who also came to Australia with dreams and aspirations for their futures.

Statistical data on the education of Greeks before migration, has shown that 77% of them had no qualifications at all and, only 2.4% had qualifications of the order of Diploma and above¹⁰. There is some discrepancy in statistical information which shows the lack of reliable data on professional Greek migrants who entered Australia¹¹.

Many Greeks who came with post-secondary qualifications, whether as tradesmen, college or university graduates, had to have their qualifications reassessed for re-accreditation if necessary, or obtain additional qualifications in Australia, before they could practise their professions. It is therefore possible that these Greek migrants had different social requirements and employment expectations from the average migrant and as a consequence, their problems of adaptation and settlement were specific and, to a great extent, different to those of the other migrants.

Because of the very limited documented information in this particular area of migration¹², it was decided to undertake the present investigation, in an attempt to identify points which could provide a clearer insight into the personal and professional experiences of Greek professional migrants in Australia.

⁹ Professor Papanikolas, a Greek- American Historian said at a public lecture in 1993, that 'when I began researching Greek migrant history, I was appalled at how little historical information had found its way into American history books. All Greeks were placed in the category of undesirable aliens, and from that moment, I knew I had to write the history of our migrants' experiences before it was lost to history.' H. Papanikolas, 'Before the Past is Lost', lecture at North State, Chicago, Sociology Dept, University of Illinois, November 1993.

¹⁰ Community Profiles, 1990, op. cit., p. 15. See also Appendices 3 and 4.

¹¹ The discrepancy in the statistical information on migrants with qualifications is obvious in Appendices 3 and 4 where it appears to be 2.14% and in Appendix 5 is 4.3%.

¹² S. Castles, C. Mitchell, M. Morrissey and C. Alconso, The Recognition of Overseas Trade Qualifications: Commonwealth Population and Immigration Research Programs, Univ. of Woollongong, Australian Government Publication Services, Canberra, 1989, p. 209; B. R. Chiswick and P. W. Miller, Post Immigration Qualifications in Australia: Determinants and Consequences, Bureau of Immigration Research, Australian Government Publications Service, Canberra, 1992, p. x, 45-47; M. Kidd and F. Brown, Problems Encountered by Overseas Trained Doctors Migrating to Australia, Dept. of Community Medicine, Monash University, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1992, pp. 1-3, 32-39.

In view of the above, this thesis is thus attempting to undertake a detailed pilot study of a sample of first-generation Greek professionals who came to Australia with qualifications from Greece or other parts of the world, during the period 1947 to 1985, in search of a better personal and professional life expectations and to discuss their problems of settlement and adaptation and their contributions to the Greek and Australian communities.

This study includes 45 migrants of Greek origin, who were in possession of tertiary qualifications and had work experience. Such qualifications have been defined as post-secondary studies which lead to the acquisition of a degree, diploma or equivalent qualification¹³.

The study will concentrate on 45 participants, representing nine (9) professions, and an analysis of the gender ratio, their age at arrival, origin and reasons for migration which are presented in Appendices 6, 7, 8 and 9. According to Price¹⁴, traditionally a Greek is someone who no matter where they were born and what their nationality might be, is of Greek descent, identifies themselves as Greek and understands and speaks at least some Greek.

The information has been collected from people who volunteered to participate in the investigations, and who were given a full account of the reasons for which this pilot study has been undertaken. Each participant was made aware of the significance of this investigation which could provide a better understanding and appreciation of the past history and future of the Greek presence in Australia, the socio-historical value of personal histories with regard to the problems faced by professional migrants in their struggle for recognition of their qualifications and establishment in the new country and, finally, the role they played in the development of the Greek communities in Australia and their contribution to the Australian society.

During the planning of the interviews, the codes of ethics laid down by scientific societies and social scientists were fully observed¹⁵. It was soon appreciated that in studies of this nature, the relationship and trust that develops between the researcher and each of the participants, and the moral obligations regarding the conduct of the study, are fundamental to the success of the project. According to Clerke¹⁶, the conduct of the interviews is critical to the quality and volume of the

¹³ Among the 45 individuals who participated in the project, only No. 6 had not completed her Tertiary studies in Greece before migration, but completed her education in Australia, where she has made an impressive contribution to the Greek community.

¹⁴ Price, *Greeks in Australia*, op. cit. p. 4.

¹⁵ B. Barber, J. J. Lally, J. L. Makarushka and K. O'Sullivan, *Research on Human Subjects: Problems of Social Control*, Russell Sage Foundation New York, 1973, p. 4. See also J. Katz, *Experimentation with Human Beings*, Russell Sage Foundation, New York, 1972.

¹⁶ M. Clerke, 'Survival of the Field: Implications of Personal Experience in *Field Work*', *Theory and Sociology*, Vol 2 (1), 1975, pp. 95-123.

information collected. No names have been used in the thesis, and each of the participants has been given a number for identification.

In the method of collection of the information, most of the participants were requested to complete a Questionnaire, the purpose of which was to establish the background of each of the respondents. None of the questions could be considered an invasion of privacy and most of the participants responded in a satisfactory manner.¹⁷ The personal details of those who did not complete the questionnaire were 9 and were taken during the interviews which, on average, lasted 2½ to 3 hours each. All interviews were carried out in Greek, as a free choice of the participants. The interviews were tape-recorded, with the exception of three participants who requested that notes be taken by hand, and the tapes have been kept for future reference.

At each interview, the participants were asked the same set of questions, and were all given the opportunity to express themselves without any time restrictions. It was inevitable that in many instances, the discussions extended beyond the content of the questions, but even the additional information, was of value¹⁸. The aim of the interviews was not only to obtain information on the social and professional experiences of the participants, but also to seek their opinions on matters pertaining to the future of Hellenism in Australia and the way they place themselves vis-a-vis Greece and the Greek community in Australia. Sampling for the study was based on a pre-defined, specially selected population and not at random. This was dictated by the relatively small population in the target group, which has nevertheless been large enough to allow the drawing of appropriate conclusions from the interpretation of the information.

The respondents were drawn mainly from Sydney and Melbourne which are the two main centres of Hellenism in Australia¹⁹. Some statistical account of professional Greek migrants in Australia has been published by the Bureau of Immigration Research²⁰, but there was a serious problem associated with the location of suitable individuals to be included in the study, due to the lack of any official or unofficial register of professional Greek migrants and as a consequence, sampling was carried out as a 'Purposive Sampling' method, which includes people on the basis of the aims and

¹⁷ The main purpose of the questionnaire and questions at the interview was an attempt to translate specific objectives into a form in which they can be communicated to the respondent with maximum effectiveness. On this point see R. L. Kahn and C. F. Cannell, *The Dynamics of Interviewing: Theory, Technique and Cases*, Chapter 3, Wiley, Sydney, 1957, pp. 65, 107, 131-143.

¹⁸ G. Bancroft and M. Welsh, 'Recent Experience with Problems of Labour Forces Measurements', *J. Am. Stat. Assoc.*, Vol 41, 1946, pp. 303-312. See also: L. N. Kidder, *Research Methods in Social Relations*, Holt, Rinehart and Winton, 4th Ed., 1981, p. 159; S. Payne, *The Art of Asking Questions*. Princeton Univ. Press, Princeton, 1951, quoted by Kahn and Cannell, *ibid.*, p. 116-115; Kahn and Cannell, 1957, *ibid.* p. 107; Appendix 10 contains the questions asked at the interviews.

¹⁹ According to the 1990 BIR Report on Community profiles, almost half (47.6%) of the Greek born persons in Australia lived in Melbourne, and 29.8% lived in Sydney. Adelaide was the city with the third largest Greek population. Bureau of Immigration Research, Commonwealth of Australia, 1990, *op. cit.* p. 2.

²⁰ Community Profiles, 1990, *op. cit.* p. 1.

objectives of the investigations²¹. The task was difficult because of the personal nature of the interviews, which required the interviewer to pay special attention to the need to re-assure the participants that all information was to be handed in a confidential manner. The fact that the participants represent migrants who came to Australia over a 38 year period, was an advantage because it offered the opportunity to examine one of the most interesting periods of migrant history, when important socioeconomic and political changes affecting migrants were taking place in Australia.

For the purpose of a more comprehensive appreciation of the overall approach to the investigation and the results obtained, the thesis has been divided into five Chapters:

Chapter One provides an overview of the literature of Greek migration to Australia, and more specifically deals with aspects of migration which affected the professional migrants with regard to problems of adaptation, culture, identity, qualifications, language, their struggle for professional recognition and aspects of discrimination which affected their private and professional lives.

Chapter Two is concerned with the reasons which influenced the decision of these professionals to migrate, their socioeconomic and educational backgrounds, the extent to which they were informed about the Australian conditions before migration and the manner in which they dealt with issues in the early stages of their arrival.

Chapter Three examines the general and specific problems associated with the settlement and adaptation of Greek professional migrants in the Australian social environment. Some attention is also given to the differences that have existed between Greek professional men and women.

Chapter Four analyses the problems associated with the recognition of professional qualifications on an individual basis, the factors which influenced the career of first-generation Greek professionals in Australia and their employment expectations and aspirations.

Chapter Five discusses the contribution made by Greek professional migrants to the Greek community and Australian society in the cultural, social and economic spheres, in maintaining the Greek ethnic identity and their perception of the future of Hellenism in Australia.

The concluding section draws together the most significant ideas developed in each Chapter and provides the final conclusions and results.

²¹ None of the Greek Community organisations or the Greek Consulates in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane were in a position to provide any information on professional Greek migrants. It was only through my supervisor, academic staff at universities, the Greek media and the Archdiocese that the location of 45 suitable participants became possible.