# EXPERIENCES OF EDUCATED TURKISH MIGRANT WOMEN RETURNING FROM CANADA

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
OF
MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

BY

KARLA COMBRES

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE
IN
THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

JUNE 2007

Approval of the Graduate School of Social Sciences

_____
Prof. Dr. Sencer Ayata
Director

I certify that this thesis satisfies all the requirements as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science.

_____
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Sibel Kalaycıoğlu
Head of Department

This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science.

_____
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Helga Rittersberger-Tılıç
Supervisor

**Examining Committee Members**

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Sibel Kalaycıoğlu (METU, SOC) _____

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Helga Rittersberger-Tılıç (METU, SOC) _____

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Tahire Erman (Bilkent, Pol. Sci.) _____

**I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.**

Name, Last name:

Signature :

## ABSTRACT

EXPERIENCES OF EDUCATED TURKISH MIGRANT WOMEN
RETURNING FROM CANADA

Combres, Karla
M.S., Department of Sociology
Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Helga Rittersberger-Tılıç

June 2007, 217 pages

Social science research has been slow to incorporate the international migration of skilled and educated women, and the impacts of their return migration. At the same time, Turkish female migrants have been negatively stereotyped in the literature. This exploratory and descriptive study aims to address these gaps by examining the impacts of emigration and return migration on the social and work lives of educated Turkish women who have returned to Turkey from Canada.

Oral history interviews were conducted with six working-age, educated female returnees in Istanbul and Ankara between February and April 2007. Aside from some common features, the six women in this study differ greatly in terms of age, marital status, field of study and work, length of time in Canada and Turkey, and the opportunities and resources available to them throughout their migrations.

From the interpretive examination of the women's narratives, patterns in their subjective social and work life experiences emerged. The issue of gender was found to pervade all aspects of the women's lives at all stages of their migrations as they negotiated their often contradictory social roles as mothers, wives, daughters, and

professionals. This study also reveals that none of the women migrated as an individual actor. Rather, contextual and stratification factors such as marital status, family configuration, language skills, prior exposure to different cultures, socio-economic background, education and labour force participation were found to shape and influence their initial potential for migration, as well as the processes and outcomes of their migrations.

Keywords: Turkish Return Migrant, Canada, Highly Educated Woman, Work, Family

# ÖZ

KANADA'DAN DÖNEN EĞİTİMLİ TÜRK GÖÇMEN KADINLARIN DENEYİMLERİ

Combres, Karla
Yüksek Lisans, Sosyoloji Bölümü
Tez Yöneticisi: Doç. Dr. Helga Rittersberger-Tılıç

Haziran 2007, 217 sayfa

Sosyal bilimler araştırmaları, vasıflı ve eğitimli kadınların uluslararası göçü ve geriye göçleri konusunu kapsamakta zayıf kalmıştır. Aynı zamanda, Türk kadın göçmenler literatürde negatif bir kalıba yerleştirilmiştir. Bu araştırmacı ve tanımlayıcı çalışma, dış göç ve geriye göçün Kanada'dan Türkiye'ye dönen eğitimli Türk kadınlarının sosyal ve iş yaşamları üzerindeki etkilerini inceleyerek bu boşlukların altını çizmeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Sözlü tarih görüşmeleri, çalışma döneminde olan, geriye göç etmiş altı kadın ile İstanbul ve Ankara'da Şubat ve Nisan 2007 tarihleri arasında yapılmıştır. Bazı ortak özelliklerin yanı sıra, bu çalışmadaki altı kadın yaş, medeni durum, çalışma ve iş alanları, Kanada ve Türkiye'deki çalışma süreleri ve göçleri sürecinde sahip oldukları fırsatlar ve kaynaklar bakımından oldukça farklılık göstermektedir.

Kadınların, kendilerine ait sosyal ve çalışma hayatı deneyimleri, anlatımlarının yorumlayıcı incelemesi ile ortaya çıkmıştır. Cinsiyet ayrımcılığı sorununun, anne, eş, kız çocuk ve profesyoneller olarak, sıklıkla birbiriyle çelişen sosyal rolleri için mücadele ettikleri için göçlerinin her safhasında kadınların yaşamlarına tüm yönlerden

hâkim olduğu anlaşılmıştır. Ayrıca, bu çalışma hiçbir kadının bireysel bir aktör olarak göç etmediğini göstermiştir. Aksine, göçlerinin süreçleri ve getirileri kadar, medeni durum, aile yapısı, dil becerileri, farklı kültürlere daha önce maruz kalmış olma, sosyo-ekonomik geçmiş, eğitim ve iş gücünde yer alma gibi bağlamsal ve katmansal faktörlerin de göç etme potansiyellerini şekillendirdiği ve etkilediği bulunmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Geriye Göçen Türkler, Kanada, Yüksek Eğitimli Kadınlar, İş, Aile

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to Assoc. Prof. Dr. Helga Rittersberger-Tılıç for her insightful comments and guidance throughout my thesis work. Her careful readings were greatly appreciated, as was her ability to ease my stress with her cheerful spirit.

I would also like to thank Assoc. Prof. Dr. Tahire Erman for her helpful comments and observations as an examining committee member.

I owe a special thank you to Assoc. Prof. Dr. Sibel Kalaycıoğlu for her invaluable guidance as an examining committee member and throughout my studies at METU.

I would sincerely like to thank the six women who gave their time and energy to this study while candidly sharing their experiences of migration and return with me.

I am thankful for the generous assistance of my friends, Behiye and Mette, and for the selfless help of my favourite sister, Deena. I am indebted for the many hours they spent helping me with my research and editing despite the vast distance between us.

I am thankful for the friends that I have made at METU during the three years that I have spent in Turkey. They not only helped me to navigate a new university, but also inspired a deep love within me for this country and its people.

I wish to express my profound thanks to my parents, Bunny and Yvonne, for their unfailing love and support throughout all of my endeavours.

Last but not least, I would like to express my gratitude to my best friend and partner, Rhett, for his companionship, constructive criticisms, and constant encouragement.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to examine the effects of migration and return on the social and work lives of educated migrant women who have returned to Turkey from Canada. There is little, if any, knowledge about the nature and scope of the return migration experiences of educated Turkish women. Therefore, this descriptive and exploratory study constitutes a preliminary effort to provide insight on the patterns and processes of their migrations, to bring salient issues to light, and to provide suggestions for future research.

This study attempts to address several current gaps in migration literature. Female and return migrations have traditionally been neglected in scholarship. Where they have been studied, female migrants have overwhelmingly been presented as dependent, desperate individuals with little control over their own migration decisions. Return migration in the literature is often depicted as negative for female migrants, in that it can be seen as robbing them of the autonomy and new responsibilities they have come to enjoy in their new countries of settlement.

The women studied in this thesis do not fit the established mould of dependent, uneducated migrant women usually found in migration literature. They have achieved high levels of education and, in many cases, have transgressed into the 'world of men' by working as professionals or through self-employment. By examining how these women understand the re-construction of their identities and gender roles, given the ruptures and transformations in their lives brought about by migration, this study brings to light the experiences of an overlooked segment of the migrant population.

Although females have always constituted a proportion of migrants crossing international borders, their participation in various types of migration flows, ranging from permanent settlers to undocumented migrants, has become increasingly visible in recent decades as the pace and scope of global migrations have expanded (Castles, & Miller, 2003). Today, more women are migrating to the developed world than men. In spite of this, there has been little research dedicated to the specificity of women's experiences (Buijs, 1993). An acute dearth in reliable sex-differentiated migration statistics has contributed to this neglect. In addition, a widespread understanding of migration as the movement of economically-determined male breadwinners also exacerbated the ignorance of female movements in the literature (Pedraza, 1991; United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women [INSTRAW], 1994).

As research concentrating on female migration experiences began to emerge, women were usually narrowly portrayed as the dependents of male migrant workers (Phizacklea, 1983). Out of this, a pervasive stereotype of migrant women has been established in the South-to-North migration literature, which locates them on the traditional side of a tradition-versus-modernity dichotomy. According to this stereotype, oppressed and uneducated migrant women of the developing world will be emancipated from patriarchal subjugation when they are exposed to the allegedly civilized and egalitarian ways of the Western world (Lim, 1995). This stereotype overlooks the myriad of experiences and backgrounds of migrant women. Furthermore, it has contributed to their unbalanced representation in the literature, as most studies on female migration focus on those who come from low socio-economic backgrounds. As a symptom of this, women's participation in skilled migration has also been neglected (Kofman, 2000).

In the migration literature, Turkish women are represented as the epitomization of the stereotype of migrant women. Besides being represented as uneducated, dependent

housewives or unskilled workers in the informal sector, Turkish migrant women are additionally stigmatized as victims of Islam. This depiction has largely grown out of the literature on the guest-worker migration phenomenon of post-World War II Europe. During the 1950s and 1960s, immigration to Western Europe was dominated by rural, mostly male, workers from the lesser developed surrounding countries to the south and east. Although there is evidence of Turkish women migrating to Europe independently as workers during that period (Abadan-Unat, 1981; Phizacklea, 1983), their migration was mostly noticed following the ban on labour migration put into place across Europe in the mid-1970s. At that time, growing numbers of women and children migrated mostly from rural, conservative areas to Europe to legally join their husbands under family reunification legislation. Unable to speak the languages of the host-countries and usually either unemployed or working in the margins of the economies, these women came to be viewed as undesirable members of European society. As a result, Turkish migrant women are depicted in the migration literature as traditional, oppressed, and unskilled. In short, they are portrayed as the antithesis of 'modern', emancipated, educated western women.

A similar traditional-versus-modern dichotomization has emerged in the literature on women in Turkish society. This has come about as a result of the key role accorded to women by the original architects of Turkey's nationalization project following the demise of the Ottoman Empire (Arat, 1998a; Göle, 1996; Kandiyoti, 1996). The founding fathers of the Republic, led by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, attempted to distinguish the budding young nation from its Ottoman heritage by severing links with Islamic traditions and instead promoting the secularization of Turkish society through a variety of 'modernizing' reforms.

The unveiled, educated young women who emerged onto the public scene embodied the secular, modern ambitions of the Republic. However, the modernizing reforms were not embraced by all parts of Turkish society. Rather, only small numbers of

Turkish women, mostly members of the elite urban bourgeoisie, benefited significantly from the reforms, while substantial proportions were completely excluded.

Statistics on the educational attainment and labour force participation rates of Turkish women provide further evidence of the class-based disproportion of their effects. All Turkish women were encouraged to pursue higher education, as it was considered an important tool for modernization (Abadan-Unat, 1981; Arat, 1998b; Kaya, 2000; Koçtürk, 1992; White, 2003). However, less than ten percent of Turkish women achieve university education (Dayıoğlu, 2000), and most of these are from urban, middle to upper class families (Arat, 1998b; Öncü, 1981). A similar discrepancy exists in the labour force participation of Turkish women. Approximately sixty percent work in the agricultural sector, mostly as unwaged labourers. This majority stands in sharp contrast to the privileged minority of Turkish women who work in highly-skilled, urban-based, white-collar sectors (Moghadam, 2003). Most of the women in these professional jobs stem from urban, secular families with a high socio-economic status.

Because of the rhetoric driving the country's modernization, Turkish women have come to be classified as either traditional or modern, depending on their espousal of the republican reforms. On one side of the spectrum are located the modern, secular, professional, urban women who have embraced the reforms. They are contrasted with women on the other end of the perceived dichotomy, who are seen as traditional, Islamic, and uneducated (Arat, 1998b; İncirlioğlu, 1998). The urban, educated, Islamic women who are increasingly emerging into the agorae since the mid 1980s challenge this dichotomy. They simultaneously affirm their religious identities by veiling while taking advantage of so-called 'modern' opportunities, such as higher education (İlyasoğlu, 1998).

The prevailing binary opposition between traditional and modern used to describe women in Turkish society cannot sufficiently account for the diversity of this group.

Similarly, stereotypes in migration literature depicting Turkish *migrant* women as essentially traditional, uncultured, and subjugated do not take into account the diversity of Turkish women who are moving across international borders. Indeed, increasing numbers of Turkish women are migrating—often alone—to pursue post-secondary education and professional work opportunities (Hemmasi, & Prorok, 2002).

The demographic composition of Turkish migrations to Canada has been much more diverse, and relatively more highly skilled, than those directed to Europe. This is due in large part to the wide range of Canadian policies which, on the one hand, favour skilled labour migration and family reunification and, on the other hand, also include provisions for the immigration of temporary workers and refugees. As a result, members of the Turkish community in Canada differ from each other according to various factors, such as socio-economic status, political inclinations, degree of religiosity, and vocation.

Although we know that educated and skilled Turks are migrating between Canada and Turkey, we know very little about the magnitude or of the experiences of *women* in these movements. Furthermore, there are no existing studies which thoroughly examine the *return* migration experiences of these women. These lacks are symptoms of many deficiencies in the existing migration literature. First, as mentioned above, the bulk of the literature on Turkish migration is set within the context of the European guest-worker period and its aftermath. Not only do these studies focus on different geographic contexts, but they are also ridden with the myopic stereotypes of Turkish migrant women discussed above. Second, studies of skilled migration have yet to fully include women in their scope or to move beyond the existing narrow economic perspectives which typically guide them. Third, studies of return migration remain scant. Where they do exist, they suffer from the same general disregard of skilled migration and, in particular of skilled and educated *female* migration, as do other areas of migration research.

This study aims to take a small step toward alleviating these shortcomings in the migration literature by offering a preliminary investigation into the return migration processes of six educated Turkish women as they moved between Canada and Turkey, as articulated by the women themselves in their oral history narratives. More specifically, the study focuses on any changes these women underwent in their social and work lives. Besides taking into account the meaning the women attach to changes and ruptures in these spheres, this study also examines the cultural, social, and personal contexts in which they occurred. Examples of factors likely to affect these contexts include their age, marital status and labour force participation. Other factors such as their socio-economic backgrounds, level of education, and access to social and economic capital were also identified as having the potential to shape their migration processes. Although a full class analysis is outside of the scope of this study, it is nonetheless interesting to observe whether or not these factors impact the participants' geographic and class mobility and, if so, how.

Some of the issues which arise in this study include the extent to which the women's migrations bring about changes in their positions in the household or their educational and professional trajectories, and how they feel about the changes. Their narratives also reveal how such causal relationships may be inverted, as we learn of the impacts that their social and professional locations have on the outcomes of their migrations.

This type of interpretive analysis offers in-depth insight into the unique experiences of a few members of an otherwise completely overlooked group. The examination of these six narratives does not provide enough data on which we can base generalizations for the wider educated female return migrant population. Nevertheless, some preliminary patterns of similarities and differences among the women were observed. With these initial patterns in mind, recommendations for future research were put forward at the end of the study.

This thesis comprises eight chapters which more or less follow the foregoing discussions in their content and argument development. Following this Introduction in which the context for this study has been set, chapter two examines the treatment in the migration literature of international female migrations between developing countries and the developed regions of Europe and North America. In particular, this chapter establishes the inaccuracy of the prevailing stereotypes of women in the existing South-to-North migration literature. Chapter three begins by offering a profile of women in contemporary Turkish society, and sets this within the context of the changes which took place in the status of women as a result of the early republican reforms. Having established the vast diversity among women in Turkish society, the stereotype of Turkish women in the migration literature is challenged. This chapter closes with a brief introduction to Turkish migration to Canada.

Chapter four begins by calling attention to the relative lack of research on return migration. Following this, it takes a look at the strengths and weaknesses of existing explanations for return migration. This chapter closes by bringing together the main arguments of the preceding two chapters with its own conclusions. That is, that the return migrations of educated female Turkish migrants are completely neglected in the existing literature. Chapter five discusses the research methodology used in collecting the data and describes in detail how the participants were selected and interviewed for this study. Ethical issues that were addressed during the design of this study are raised, and the personal characteristics of the researcher are discussed as they related to her ability to effectively carry out the study.

Chapter six contains the biographies of the six women involved in this study, along with the researcher's interpretive reflections on the social and work contexts of each participant. In chapter seven, preliminary patterns were observed in the social and work experiences of these women as they negotiated their lives between Canada and Turkey.

The final chapter first revisits the original impetus and aims of the study, as well as the general findings. Following this, suggestions for future research are made based on the recurring themes presented in the preceding chapter.

# CHAPTER II

## INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION OF EDUCATED WOMEN

Migration is not a new phenomenon. Since the beginning of history, people have been moving from settlement to settlement, nation to nation, and between regions. What is new is the unprecedented pace and scope of global migration since the last half of the twentieth century and particularly in the past thirty years. This explosive escalation of large-scale movements has been attributed to intense global restructuring and economic integration (Castles, & Miller, 2003; Mittleman, 2000; Sassen, 1998).

An important trend identified within the recent processes of globalization is the feminization of migration (Castles, & Miller, 2003). While women and girls have always been a part of various types of migration flows, ranging from migrant workers to refugee movements, today their participation in migration is more visible than ever, and they constitute a considerable proportion of migrants in all regions of the world.

In order to delineate the various rates and circumstances under which women migrate and the ways in which these are treated in the literature, the main types of female migration are briefly discussed in the next few pages. However, in keeping within the scope of this study, this discussion remains limited to the migration of women between developing countries and the developed regions of Europe and North America, and a greater emphasis is also placed on family- and work-related migrations. After looking at the initial neglect and subsequent stereotyping of migrant women in the social sciences, alternative approaches to the analysis of female migration experiences are examined. The consideration of women's individual backgrounds—such as socio-economic status, stages in the life cycle, and gender roles—in tandem with their migration processes provides the context needed to ensure a more correct

understanding of the migrations and of the women's own perceptions and feelings about them.

## 2.1 Types of Female Migration

The following four major types of migrants are commonly distinguished in migration scholarship: permanent settlers, temporary residents, refugees, and undocumented migrants. These will be reviewed in the first section of this chapter. Slowly becoming more integrated into the migration literature is also the return migration of people to their homeland after spending a significant amount of time in another country. This type of migration will be reviewed in chapter four.

Permanent settlement is a defining feature of the immigration policies of traditional immigration countries, such as Canada and the United States. There, significant numbers of foreign-born people are admitted annually as permanent residents to enjoy the same social and economic rights as citizens, at least officially (INSTRAW, 1994). Permanent residency status is only granted to individuals who meet certain stringent criteria, which qualifies them as members of either economic classes or family classes. Economic immigrants are skilled workers or business persons who are selected on the basis of their labour market skills and, therefore, their capacity to contribute to the economy. In Canada, individual applications are graded and assessed according to a rigorous point system based on criteria such as age, formal training and education, skills, and knowledge of English or French.

Family reunification is an integral part of the permanent settlement programs of traditional immigration countries. Family class immigrants are those whose migration is sponsored by close relatives who are already living the destination countries. Common examples of family class immigrants are spouses or dependent children. This category constitutes an important female migratory movement. The proportion of

women migrants to permanent settler countries is usually at least equal and often greater to that of men (INSTRAW, 1994). In Canada for example, 72% of female immigrants arriving between 1994 and 2003 entered either under the category of family class or as dependents of economic immigrants (Statistics Canada, 2006, p.214). Women also migrate as the principal applicants in economic categories although to a much smaller degree than do men. In Canada, the rate for women is approximately one-third that of men (Statistics Canada, 2006, p. 214).

Temporary residents are those individuals who enter another country's borders lawfully for a temporary purpose, such as education or work. Although women's movements as temporary migrants are smaller than those of men, they should receive more scholarly attention than they do at present. For example, despite immense increases in levels of education among women worldwide (INSTRAW, 1994), references to female temporary student migration remain rare. Also, where women's temporary labour is taken into account, it tends to focus on work in gendered segments of the economy which are unskilled and undesirable.

In these cases of unskilled migration, and in the rare event that skilled female migration is mentioned, women's labour movements are usually viewed from a neo-classical economic perspective. According to this theory, individual rational actors choose to migrate based on the wage differential between their countries of origin and destination. However, female labour migration would perhaps be more appropriately examined at the household-level as explicated by the new economics of labour migration theory. The assumption here is that migration decisions are shaped by household interests, not individual ones (Massey, Arango, Hugo, Kouaouci, Pellegrino, & Taylor, 1998). To illustrate, let us consider the labour migration to Europe during the last half of the twentieth century. When the initial demand for male migrant workers began to taper in the late 1960s, women from Southern Europe and the European periphery continued to be recruited for work in mostly low-paying, non-unionized jobs

in the manufacturing and textiles sectors. However, the migration of the predominantly low-educated village women to fill these jobs cannot be considered the result of their own decision-making. It was on the strong urging of their families that these women finally migrated, with the objective of eventually securing employment for their husbands, or at least ensuring their husband's admission to the countries by way of family reunification (Abadan-Unat, 1977). Therefore, their labour migration must be viewed as a household-strategy.

Besides migrating for reasons of family and work, female migration is also provoked by conflict and persecution. International flows of people who flee their countries due to a fear of persecution on a number of grounds are usually designated as refugee movements, as defined by the 1951 United Nations Refugee Convention (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR], 2000). As migration statistics slowly become more reliable, we are learning that women do not represent as large a proportion of refugee populations as has been the common notion (INSTRAW, 1994). However, this does not necessarily signify that they are persecuted less than men. Decision makers have neglected women's experiences of persecution because it has tended to be approached "through a framework of male experiences" (Spijkerboer, as cited in Haines, 2003, p.327). Interpretations of the grounds for persecution laid out in the Convention typically disregard the sexual and gender-related asylum claims of women, which are often judged as personal, and not persecutory (Patrick, 2004). In this way, female migration is also determined or impeded by international law.

The 1951 Refugee Convention contains strict definitions of acceptable grounds for political asylum. These definitions effectively exclude those who are compelled to move, not for reasons of persecution, but rather to escape desperate socio-economic conditions. As more and more people in the developing world set their sights on migrating to improve their meagre conditions, immigrant-receiving countries are increasingly responding by restricting their immigration laws. Intermediary

organizations have in turn responded by specializing in linking individual migrants with existing networks in the countries of destination. Without international laws and conventions in place to protect their rights, and often without social networks, knowledge of the migration processes and regulations, or the necessary financial resources to ensure successful emigration (Van Impe, 2000), many of these so-called 'economic refugees' (Fekete, 2005) are drawn to such intermediaries. Many of these agencies are illegal and work to sidestep restrictive immigration policies and bring in undocumented migrants, often through human smuggling networks.

Because the undocumented migration of women is exceedingly difficult to quantify, there is very little reliable data available on this type of migration. Results of various amnesty and regularization campaigns indicate that levels of undocumented female migration vary significantly according to country of origin. They also confirm that undocumented women tend to be concentrated in unskilled and undesirable occupations in agricultural, sex, domestic, and other service sectors (United Nations Secretariat, 1995). Black market migration may easily lead to the trafficking of persons (Van Impe, 2000). Women who are desperate to migrate are at a high risk of being trafficked and ending up as vulnerable, exploited, undocumented workers without access to services. While the forced labour of women in various sectors is disconcerting, the sexual exploitation of trafficked women and children in particular is the subject of much research and policy debate (International Organization for Migration, 1995; Van Impe, 2000).

## 2.2 Limited Research on the Migration of Women

Despite increasing levels of female migration from the developing to the developed world, little research has been done on the specificity of the migration experiences of women (Buijs, 1993). Until the mid-1970s, women were completely neglected in migration research. Because data on international migrants was not traditionally

classified by sex, there is little information on which we can base sex-differentiated estimates of migration. In 1998, the United Nations Population Division was the first to release a reliable set of migration estimates for the late half of the twentieth century. According to this, the proportion of female migrants worldwide reached nearly 49 percent in 2000 (Zlotnik, 2003). Among the various regional trends related to the migration of women, we know that the developed world now receives more female than male migrants. The transfer of manufacturing processes from highly industrialized countries to the third world, and the consequent general shift to the service sector in the developed world are major factors in the formation of a supply of female migrants and a demand for their low-cost labour (Sassen, 1998).

The dominance of the human capital model in migration theory until recently is largely to blame for the protracted negligence of women's migration. According to this model, migration is economically motivated. Because men tend more than women to indicate economic motivations for migration, a widespread conception of a migrant as a single, economically-motivated male has been established (Pedraza, 1991; United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women [INSTRAW], 1994). Traditional historical studies privileged male-dominated public spheres such as work and politics while neglecting the private spheres in which women were mostly found (Pedraza, 1991). Of less strategic importance to the state, the domestic sphere inhabited by women was not documented. The inadequacy in data on women's migration has persisted and has been a contributing factor to the lack of recognition of the specificity of female migration experiences. This male-centric focus started to change in various disciplines as women began to enter the public sphere as they joined the labour force and struggled for women's liberation, suffrage and unionization (Pedraza, 1991).

Migration research focused on female experiences has become increasingly prevalent in recent decades (Anthias & Lazaridis, 2000; Boyd, 2003; Kofman, 1999; Moch,

2005; Morokvasic, 1984; Pedraza, 1991; Pessar, 1999; Phizacklea, 1983; Simon & Brettel, 1986). However, much of the literature has continued to locate woman in traditional, domestic roles. As Phizacklea puts it, "wherever a woman comes from, wherever she migrates to, whether or not she works, is married or has children her primary role in life will be defined not as a waged worker, but as a mother and a domestic labourer" (1983, p.2).

As a symptom of this labelling, women's activities in the economic sphere remained completely neglected in migration literature until the mid-seventies (Morokvasic, 1983). Annie Phizacklea's pioneering book entitled *One Way Ticket Migration and Female Labour* (1983) was the first major work to focus on female labour migration. Although the chapters included in this edited volume focus only on women's post-World War II migration to Western Europe, the book remains important. Much of its analysis is valid for women's migration in general, as it relates to gender-related subordination in the work sphere.

In her influential article *Birds of Passage are also Women*, Morokvasic (1984) lamented the little effect that increasing studies on female migration had had on policy, mainstream migration scholarship, and the stereotypical representations of women in media and discourse up to that point in time. Over a decade and a half later, in her review of the developments since the mid-1980s, Kofman found that the migration literature had still not integrated the complexities of female migration in a meaningful way, nor had it moved beyond pervasive stereotyping in its analyses (1999).

## 2.3 Stereotypes of Female Migrants in Existing 'South-to-North' Literature

The migration experiences of female migrants from the developing to the developed world are diverse, with variations stemming from different cultural norms, and regional differences in terms of origin and destination. This great degree of complexity

precludes the formulation of generalizations on the topic. Despite this, a homogeneous portrayal of migrant women as unskilled and uneducated dominates the migration literature. This myopic depiction is based on researchers' tendency to:

> … attribute to migrant women of extremely different origins one and the same simplified cultural background, that is labelled "traditional" (implying immobility and the oppression of women) and is generally contrasted with a Western model of modernity (implying emancipation or, at least, less oppression). (Lim, 1995, p.44)

Embedded in the discourse on migrant women is a tradition-versus-modernity dichotomy which assumes that women from developing countries need to be emancipated from the constraints and oppressions of their countries and cultures of origin. Implicit in this assumption is the belief that emancipation will come about through their migration to developed countries and subsequent exposure to liberal, egalitarian, Western values in those places.

The question of whether migration necessarily leads to emancipatory gains in the life of the migrant woman is debatable and has been investigated by a number of studies (Boyd, 2003; Buijs, 1993; INSTRAW, 1994; Koçtürk, 1992; Mirdal, 1984; Morrison, Guruge, & Snarr, 1999; Pedraza, 1991; Phizacklea, 1983). Perhaps more importantly is the fact that, despite sometimes taking different positions on the advantages and disadvantages of migration for women, these studies have done little to call into question the pervasive one-dimensional rendering of these women in the literature. Let us consider, then, how this stereotype of migrant women from developing countries as unskilled, illiterate dependents of male wage earners has come about.

Immigration laws and restrictions in the main immigrant-receiving regions of Europe and North America have had a significant influence on the emergence of the stereotype of female migrants. In Europe during the 1950s and 1960s, immigration mostly consisted of migrant 'guest-workers' who were recruited on contracts in the industrial

sector to meet labour needs stemming from the post-war economic boom. These guest-worker flows were mostly dominated by male migrants. However, as previously mentioned, there is also noteworthy evidence of female worker migration during that period.[1] By virtue of the type of labour being recruited, most of the workers came from peasant or working class backgrounds in less-developed countries in Southern Europe and the periphery (mainly Spain, Greece, Turkey, Portugal, and Yugoslavia), where high levels of unemployment at the time guaranteed a pool of ready and able workers.

According to the rotation principle agreed upon by the partner countries, guest-workers were required to return to their country of origin after one or two years. The purpose of this principle was two-fold; receiving countries saw it as preventing permanent settlement (and thereby eluding the associated costs), while partner countries were poised to gain from the new experiences and remittances of their returning workers (Geddes, 2003). The temporary nature of the guest-workers' contracts with European governments had far-reaching implications. During this period, the receiving governments made little effort to integrate workers into their societies. Nor did the workers themselves demonstrate much interest in 'integrating' (Nathans, 2004). As a result, guest-workers mostly remained alien to the local populations, even though many of them did not return to their countries of origin as expected.

Guest-worker toils were instrumental in sustaining European economies during the 1960s and early 1970s. Nevertheless, in response to economic recession and the oil crisis of 1973, European governments effectively banned the recruitment of foreign workers in the mid-1970s, thereby stopping all new guest-worker immigration. The subsequent migration of spouses (mostly wives) and children of those guest-workers who remained in Europe was facilitated by family reunification policies. Unequipped with host-country language skills and often without work experience relevant to their

[1] For example, the number of female Turkish migrant workers in West Germany increased from 173 in 1960 to over 140,000 in the mid-1970s (Abadan-Unat, 1981, p.25). Also see Phizacklea (1983) for a more detailed look at female labour migration during this period.

new settings (if any), the migrant women joining their family members were seen as dependents. Those who were not economically active outside of the home were thought to make no valuable contributions to society and were, therefore, seen simply as burdens on the social welfare systems. This, coupled with mounting influxes of asylum-seekers in the 1980s, incited high levels of hostility toward foreigners among the general public.

Urged by mounting public pressure, host governments went to great lengths to repatriate the immigrant populations within their borders, ranging from limiting the residency of new migrants, to offering monetary compensation for the loss of accrued retirement and social security benefits they would forego if they left (Nathans, 2004). These measures had little effect on curbing the permanent settlement of the 'migrants' within their borders. In spite of this, European host governments have been stubbornly reluctant to consider their own as countries of immigration as is evidenced by extensive stringent naturalization and citizenship laws (Cesarani, & Fulbrook, 1996).[2] The European experience, as epitomized in the countries' efforts to stop the transition of its foreign population from temporary to permanent residency, illustrates the extent to which migrant populations are estranged from the mainstream (read: native/local) European population. This is especially the case of migrant women, who are seen as the antithesis of modern, European women.

North American countries—Canada and the United States—differ significantly from most European countries in terms of their immigration policies. Whereas European countries are typically known for their histories of temporary labour recruitment, Canada and the US are considered countries of 'permanent settlement' or 'immigration' (Boyd, 1995). The US admits the largest share of the world's migrant

[2] For example, in Germany, the "Law for Managing and Containing Immigration and for the Regulation of the Residence and Integration of EU-Citizens and Foreigners" came into effect on January 1, 2005. This was the first such legislation to acknowledge that immigration is inevitable and requires active management in Germany (Cyrus, & Vogel, 2005).

population, but Canada receives more immigrants per capita than its neighbour to the south (Massey, et al., 1998).

While many important features distinguish the North American from the European context, the prevalent stereotype of female migrants is the same in both. This is due in large part to the recruitment for labour in receiving countries, which is largely shaped by conventional sex roles. There has been an increase in host-country demand – and in particular, in their major cities – for low-wage, flexible female labour. Women are being recruited to relieve the pressures of the rising service industry caused by the increasingly downgraded manufacturing sector in the developed world. The work of women from developing countries is usually confined to gender-specific sectors of the labour market, which are low-skilled, poorly paid, and sometimes illegal (Buijs, 1993; Koçtürk, 1992; Pedraza, 1991; Sassen, 1998). It is also increasingly common for migrant women to be recruited as 'reproductive labourers' as more and more women in the receiving countries pursue careers outside of the home. Reproductive labour, such as domestic chores and childcare, helps to sustain the productive labour force. Immigrant women employed as domestic workers and nannies contribute to the economic growth of the host society by relieving their female employers of reproductive labour so that they are free to pursue productive labour. In this way, Parreñas sees the 'liberation' of first-world women as being on the backs of third-world women (2001).

Women's status upon entry into the receiving societies also contributes to the dominant stereotypes of female migrants. Most women enter Canada and the US under family reunification provisions (Boyd, 1986), according to which they are typically assumed to have no economic roles and to be the dependents of the heads of their household (usually a male principle migrant) (INSTRAW, 1994). When women are admitted as dependents, their rights to residency and labour market access is often restricted. Where support resources of the host society are available, they may still be inaccessible to

women for many reasons, such as language barriers, personal or cultural barriers, and isolation in the home.

The discussions of migrant women in North America up to this point have remained within the prevalent stereotypes. However, there are some fundamental features distinguishing North American immigration, which have not been incorporated into these representations. Canadian and American policies, which give preference to skilled immigrants, have resulted in a more diverse population of immigrant women than what tends to be portrayed in the migration literature.

Tyree and Donato reported on their findings in the US that immigrant women are more likely than American women to occupy professional positions (1986). They describe the migration streams to the US as highly differentiated socio-economically. In an in-depth investigation of immigrant women in Canada, Boyd (1986) comes to a similar conclusion. That is, in Canada, there is a 'bimodal distribution' of immigrant women in the occupational sphere. Besides occupying jobs in the low-skilled, gender-specific sectors as described earlier, they are also concentrated in highly skilled and professional careers (p. 54). Supporting this argument is a recent study by Statistics Canada (2006), which reported that foreign-born women in Canada are more likely than native-born women to have completed bachelor's and even advanced university degrees, yet that foreign-born women are also more likely to be unemployed or employed in the unskilled manufacturing sector. This distribution can be attributed to the diversity among immigrant women in Canada with regard to their education, social backgrounds and knowledge of official languages. Boyd (1986) laments the persistence of the negative stereotypes of migrant women despite this demonstrated variety among them:

> The European portrayal of the isolation and dependency facing immigrant women is shaped considerably by the recruitment of migrants from less-developed and less-urbanized countries to northern European

> countries where the language of work and social discourse differs from that of the country of origin. […] *the situation is not as monolithic in Canada*. … This variation in isolation and dependency has not been systematically studied, however. Rather, the existent Canadian literature on immigrant women emphasizes the themes found in European studies. (my emphasis, pp.51-52)

I agree with Boyd's argument that the dominant stereotype does not accurately portray many of Canada's immigrant women. However, I would like to take her argument one step further and suggest that the stereotype is no longer (and perhaps never was) representative of immigrant populations in Europe either. In fact, the mid-1970s ban on new guest-worker recruitment did not result in the end of migration into European host societies. Among other flows, these countries were receiving highly-skilled immigrants during the 1970s and 1980s (Geddes, 2003, p.16). However, this movement remained overshadowed by the politically-charged debates on the permanent settlement of family class migrants and asylum-seekers during those decades.

## 2.4 Locating Skilled and Educated Female Migration

The prevalent typecasting of migrant women as uneducated, inexperienced, and 'traditional' has inhibited the progress of female migration studies. Much of the literature is still based on women who stem from low socio-economic backgrounds, and skilled female migrants remain largely invisible in migration studies (Kofman, 2000).

Contributing to this blind-spot in skilled migration literature is the lack of gender-differentiated data which has traditionally plagued migration research in general (Kelson, & DeLaet, 1999). In addition to this, Kofman believes that feminist analyses are to blame for the invisibility of skilled female migrants. Although feminist analyses since the 1980s have recognized the economic activities of female migrants, most feminist studies have continued to depict migrant women as unskilled dependents who,

if working, mostly do so in unfavourable conditions within the informal service sector (2000). While she does not deny that domestic work is by-and-large performed by females, Kofman raises the point that many of these women are actually educated.

The dominant human capital model, that is, the privileging of the economic impacts of migration, is perhaps more to blame for this omission in research (Kofman, 2000). Related to this, fewer studies focus on skilled migration in the sectors of education, health and welfare (EHW), where women often make up a larger proportion of professionals and managers, and where salaries are generally lower (Kofman, 1999). Given their lower potential for income generation, and their stigmatization as supporting old-fashioned, inefficient public-funded institutions and services, the EHW sectors remain neglected in studies related to skilled migration. Kofman points the finger at what she considers to be a neo-liberal agenda underlying research, in which studies of wealth generators, such as transnational corporations, have traditionally been favoured over those looking at the EHW sectors.

'Brain drain' refers to the movement of skilled and educated young people away from their countries to work in other countries. Literature on this topic usually focuses on movements from the developing world in the direction of the developed world. Discussions of 'brain drain' are politically-charged, as developing countries are denied the opportunity to reap the benefits of their social investments in the education and health of these young specialists as they leave and contribute their talents to the development of the economies of the North. Issues related to 'brain drain' are highly topical and, therefore, feature largely in literature on skilled migration. However, in many cases, the sectors under investigation are heavily male-dominated. An example of a 'sexy' industry which boasts a huge potential for wealth generation is the information technology (IT) sector. Young, highly skilled computer engineers and software technicians are being recruited from all corners of the world to meet rising demands for IT specialists in Europe and North America, and their subsequent movements are

receiving a lot of attention in studies of skilled migration. However, because the proportion of men migrating as IT experts is significantly higher than that of women[3], the experiences of the latter are not distinguished in the research. This does little to advance scientific knowledge on the specificity of female migration.

There is some literature which incorporates women (although mostly anecdotally) in studies of education-based migration. However, as in studies on skilled or professional migration, this literature has a heavy economic focus. That is, discussions are limited to the contributions made by foreign students to host economies and the potential impact of their remittance-sending behaviour on their countries of origin (Iredale, 2001). Also considered is their potential contribution to the development of their home countries, should they decide to return.

## 2.5 Moving Beyond the Stereotypes

What has become clear from the foregoing discussion is that the migrations of women are infinitely diverse and, for this reason, cannot be explained by means of simplistic characterizations. Rather, it is necessary to consider the unique backgrounds of individual migrants in analyses of female migration. Changes in the sex roles and family patterns of migrant women are bound up in the socio-economic and cultural contexts in which they occur (Morokvasic, 1984). For this reason, examinations of women's migration experiences, if they are to be complete, must take into account the circumstances and background conditions at each phase of the migration trajectories. More specifically, they must take into consideration factors such as the unique socio-economic positions, stages in the life cycle, household compositions, and gender dynamics shaping migration (Massey, et al., 1998).

[3] For example, in Germany, where a 'green-card'-style program was launched in 2000 to meet the country's rising demand for highly skilled labour in the IT sector, men accounted for 88 percent of the foreign specialists recruited in 2003 (Bauer, & Kunze, 2004, p.21).

By truly exploring the backgrounds of individual migrants, narrow and restrictive depictions—such as those portraying country of origin characteristics as homogeneous—are necessarily broadened. Internal stratifications according to socio-economic status among migrant women may be exposed, including among those from the same country of origin. Enriching our understandings of migrant women's lives inevitably disrupts the myopic dichotomizations of traditional-versus-modern and oppression-versus-emancipation that were discussed earlier in this chapter. The consideration of socio-economic markers, such as educational attainment, work-related skills, and knowledge of the host country's language(s), helps to contextualize the relative success or failure of individuals' migration projects (or even their ability to migrate in the first place).

Gender is also an important analytical concept which can help us to understand the determinants, processes, and consequences of migration as well as the distributions of power and authority at each of those phases (Christou, 2006).[4] Examining migration processes through a gendered lens requires a recognition and consideration of the ways in which men and women each experience migration differently as their sexual identities are disrupted and re-constructed when they move between cultures and are exposed to new societal norms.

As skilled and educated female migration slowly become included in the literature, it will be important to transcend existing economic biases and prevailing conceptual stereotypes in order to capture the experiences of women in a meaningful way. In this study, the examination of individual oral histories has allowed a thorough investigation of skilled female migrants' experiences. Factors such as socio-economic status and gender are considered in the analysis of their narratives. However, systematic and extensive class and gender analyses were not conducted. Rather, these factors were

[4] Gender refers to socially-constructed ideas of femininity and masculinity, which influence the widely-accepted notions of appropriate 'male' and 'female' roles, and shape the behaviour of men and women (Moch, 2005).

instead drawn on to provide context during the elaboration of the women's perceptions and feelings regarding their migration experiences.

The examination of women in Turkish society in the next chapter reinforces the value in distinguishing amongst individuals' backgrounds. As we will see, Turkish women as depicted in migration literature are not representative of all Turkish women, nor of all Turkish *migrant* women.

# CHAPTER III

# CLOSER EXAMINATION OF TURKISH MIGRANT WOMEN

Before taking a look at the representation of Turkish women in the migration literature, it is worthwhile to consider the status of women in modern Turkey. By considering the diverse backgrounds and experiences among these women, we gain a better understanding of which segments of society are moving across international borders and the circumstances under which they are doing so. Moreover, shedding light on the distinctions among Turkish women serves to expose and challenge their one-dimensional portrayal in the European migration literature. Overall, Turkish migration to Canada has been more varied than the migration to Europe. Because of this, the examination of the migration experiences of migrant women between Canada and Turkey may offer new insights into the patterns and processes of their movements which take us beyond the stereotypes.

## 3.1 Assigned Role of Women in the Modernization of Turkey

Any attempt at describing women in contemporary Turkish society would be incomplete without at first referring briefly to the country's modern history. The status of women in Turkey is very much bound up in the dramatic changes in Turkish society which have taken place leading up to and since the inception of the Turkish Republic in the first half of the twentieth century.

Although some advancement concerning women took place during the time of the Ottoman Empire, the reforms made subsequent to its dissolution were revolutionary. The government of the new Turkish Republic, led by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, strove to build a new Turkish nation and national identity distinct from its Ottoman heritage.

Emboldened by their vision of modernizing Turkey, the founding fathers of the Republic—or Kemalists, as they are also known—strove to sever links with the country's Islamic tradition and to establish instead a secular nation-state (Göle, 1996). In order to secularize the country, the government brought religious practice and institutions under the control and administration of the state. Through this agenda, aspects of society that were influenced by Islamic tradition were forcibly transformed to emulate the ways of the Western world, which were perceived by the republican elite as modern and enlightened (Kaya, 2000). Also known as laicism, secularization was an integral part of the state's 'civilizing mission'. By aligning and integrating many of Turkey's laws, policies, and even cultural features with those of the West, the founding fathers of the Republic hoped to free Turkey and its people from the oppressive bonds of tradition. In this way, Turkey's nationalization project is inextricably linked to ideas of modernity and Western civilization.

The original architects of the Turkish nation-building project attached great importance to the role of women in modernization (Arat, 1998a; Göle, 1996; Kandiyoti, 1996). Priority was given to the emancipation of Turkish women from what were perceived as the injustices they suffered under Islamic law during the Ottoman period (Koçtürk, 1992). Reforms targeting women were designed to transform these oppressed subjects of Islamist traditions into modern, active agents in the new secular public sphere.

Several groundbreaking advancements were made concerning women during the early years of the Turkish Republic. Examples include the 'unveiling' of women through the introduction and encouragement of European-style dress, the introduction of a secular civil code which formally accorded women civil rights equal to those of men (with some exceptions), and the granting of full suffrage to women in 1934.

The progress and extent to which women emerged into the agorae were regarded as measures of the progress of the entire modernization programme (Arat, 1998a). The

Kemalists' emphasis on women as markers of modernity was an outcome of pervasive Eurocentric biases toward the Muslim world. In this discourse, which is widely known as 'Orientalism'[5], the East and Muslim world are depicted using terms such as 'primitive' and 'oppressive'. This portrayal is dialectically opposed to conceptualizations of the West as being 'modern', 'progressive' and 'emancipating'. Influenced by this Orientalist narrative of Islam, Kemalists situated women as the primary indicators of modernization in Turkey (Arat, 1998a; Kadıoğlu, 1994; Kandiyoti, 1996). In her feminist reading of Orientalism, Yeğenoğlu (1998) provides an eloquent explanation for the widely perceived correlation between women and modernization:

> The metonymic association between the Orient and its women, or more specifically the representation of woman as tradition and as the essence of the Orient, made it all the more important to lift the veil, for *unveiling and thereby modernizing the woman of the Orient signified the transformation of the Orient itself.* (p.99, original emphasis)

Although an in-depth analysis of the Orientalist influences on Kemalism is outside of the scope of this paper, this much has been included in order to situate the changing role of women in Turkey's early republican days, and to provide context for the general profiling of contemporary Turkish women in the following pages.

### 3.2 Profile of Women in Contemporary Turkish Society

With gender equality guaranteed in modern Turkish law, it was commonly held that all Turkish women had the opportunity to be emancipated if they chose to be (Koçtürk, 1992). However, this view neglects the fact that the modernizing project did not represent the values and interests of all parts of society. The republican reforms, as they relate to women, have been shown to be class-biased. For decades, the effects of the

[5] 'Orientalism' was most famously described and critiqued in Edward Said's book by the same name (1979).

reforms did not reach beyond the elite urban bourgeoisie. The majority of women who were located in poorer, rural areas were effectively excluded from the opportunities which had been legislated in their name. Evidence of the enduring underdevelopment in some regions includes the persistence of the brideprice negotiated in marriage arrangements, low enrolment of girls in school, and high fertility levels (Kandiyoti, 1987). The extent of the effects of the republican reforms is revealed in statistics on educational attainment and labour force participation rates. These tell us that small numbers of Turkish women actually benefited appreciably from the reforms while significant proportions of them were left out of the developments entirely.

### 3.2.1 Education

Having identified education as an important vehicle for both economic development and modernization[6], the government aimed to increase the quality and scope of education by adding to the number of schools and teachers, and legislating mandatory basic education for boys and girls (Arat, 1998b). Women were encouraged to take part in the development of the nation by pursuing higher education as universities were considered symbols of modernity (Abadan-Unat, 1981; Kaya, 2000; Koçtürk, 1992; White, 2003). Speeches made by the revered founder of the Republic, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, stressed the important role that educated women had to play in Turkish society:

> …Circumstances today require the advancement of our women in all respects. Therefore, our women, too, will be enlightened and learned, and like all men, will go through all educational stages. Then, women and men, walking side by side, will be each other's help and support in social life (as cited in Arat, 1998b, p.160).

[6] As Zehra Arat pointed out, education, as a key process of socialization, "was seen as the most effective way of transforming the Ottoman subjects into 'nationalist' citizens with modern and secular minds" (1998b, p.158).

Indeed, the educated, working women who began to emerge into public life embodied the Turkish project of modernity, and they helped to advance a national and secular society. However, the 'emancipated' Republican woman was in fact only represented by middle- to upper-class women living in Turkey's major cities. With only approximately one-fifth of the country's population located in urban areas at the beginning of the new Republic, this privileged segment of society constituted a small minority (White, 2003). For many poor rural women, the idea of leaving home to pursue higher education in the city was in complete opposition to traditional norms and attitudes and, as such, was not considered an option.

Level of education has been said to be positively correlated with class affiliation, especially as it pertains to women (Abadan-Unat, 1981; Arat, 1998b; Kandiyoti, 1987; Koçtürk, 1992; Öncü, 1981; Özbay, 1981). Women who attend university in Turkey stem mostly from urban middle to upper class family backgrounds. Statistics show that they are usually raised in families headed by educated, professional fathers in Turkey's largest cities – Istanbul, Ankara, or Izmir (Arat, 1998b; Öncü, 1981). Besides socio-economic status, access to education also varies significantly by region. Data from the Turkish Statistical Institute showed the percentage of women without education in southeast Turkey in 1990 to be 55.2 percent (as cited in Acar, 2003, p.37). This high level contrasts sharply with the 17 percent of women reported to be without education in western Turkey in the late 1990s (Haceteppe University Institute of Population Studies, as cited by Acar, 2003, p.37).

Overall in Turkey, rates of enrolment at all levels of education are lower for girls than for boys (Dayıoğlu, 2000). In 1999, 45.6 percent of students enrolled in the sixth grade were girls, while 54.4 percent were boys (Ministry of National Education, as cited in Acar, 2003, p.40). This discrepancy becomes more marked beyond the first eight years of compulsory education. In 2001, girls represented only 41 percent of secondary-level students, while boys made up 59 percent (Acar, 2003, p.41). Although just under ten

percent of all Turkish women enrol in post-secondary education (Dayıoğlu, 2000, p.49), they comprise over forty percent of all students enrolled in higher education institutions (National Education Numerical Data, as cited in Acar, p.45). This tells us that only a small privileged minority is able to gain access to post-secondary education, and that those who do are only slightly underrepresented vis-à-vis their male classmates.

### 3.2.2 Labour Force Participation

A relationship has been shown to exist between women's level of education and their participation in the workforce (Dayıoğlu, 2000; Özbay, 1981). According to a recent European Union (EU) Progress Report on Turkey, the overall female employment rate is among the lowest in the OECD countries, at approximately twenty percent (EU, 2006, p.54). Not only is the overall rate of female labour participation in Turkey lower than in most other regions of the world, the rate continues to decrease despite general trends showing female labour participation rates to be increasing globally. This is an alarming development requiring serious research as it could have grave economical and societal impacts (Ecevit, 2003).

Most working Turkish women are located in the agricultural sector. Of these, most are rural peasant women working as unwaged labourers. A decrease in the proportion of women working in the agricultural sector in Turkey has been recorded over the past few decades. While 88 percent of Turkish women were agricultural labourers in 1980 (Moghadam, 2003, p.43), this number was down to 60 percent in the year 2000 (Ecevit, 2003, p.74). This decrease is attributed to rapid rural-to-urban migration caused by a shift away from an agriculturally-based economy.

Women working in the urban-based non-agricultural sector make up a very small proportion of actively employed women in the Turkish labour force. In 1994, women

represented only 16.2 percent of the reported urban labour force (SIS, as cited in Dayıoğlu, 2000, p.45). With little education and virtually no work experience which is relevant to the urban market, rural migrant women exhibit particularly low economic activity rates in Turkey's metropolitan centres.

Of those women who do work in the urban-based non-agricultural labour market, a remarkably high proportion of them can be found in professional or technical occupations requiring post-secondary education (Moghadam, 2003). The ratio of males to females in the top professions is 3:2, despite the fact that females make up a much smaller proportion of the workforce (Koçtürk, 1992, p.79). Again, as is the case in higher education enrolment, although women in the upper professional strata constitute a small minority of all Turkish women, they comprise an important proportion of all professionals in Turkey. The proportion of female academics in Turkey ranks among the highest in the world, having risen above thirty percent in late 1980s (Coşar, as cited in Kabasakal, 1998, p.226). The proportion of female professionals in other high-status occupations is also high in Turkey although it is still usually lower than that of men. In 1990, thirty percent of dentists and 34 percent of lawyers were women. More impressive, however, is that sixty percent of pharmacists in Turkey were women in 1990 (Kabasakal, 1998, p.227). It is normal for professional women in Turkey to be from families with a high socio-economic status. Not only do their families tend to value higher education, they can afford the tuition fees of the best universities and possess social capital in the form of networks which are influential when the time comes to seek employment.

### 3.2.3 Young Urban Islamist Women – Challenging Dual Conceptualizations

The statistics discussed above revealed wide discrepancies in women's educational attainment and employment activities in Turkey. Factors such as social class, gender, and urban/rural distinctions emerged as important determinants of the extent to which

the republican reforms have reached and been embraced by individual Turkish women. As a result, there is a great deal of diversity among them. Nevertheless, there is a tendency in the social sciences and media to pigeonhole them into one of two broad categories. In one group are the modern, professional urban women who have been 'emancipated' by the Kemalist reforms. In the other group are those who were not reached by the reforms; these women are typically conceived as being traditional village women who are uneducated and subjugated by patriarchal norms (Arat, 1998a; İncirlioğlu, 1998). Many rural-to-urban migrant and village women who veil themselves do so out of social convention rather than religious conviction (İlyasoğlu, 1998). Nevertheless, Islam is usually accused as being the source of underdevelopment and women's low status (İncirlioğlu, 1998).

In this dual conceptualization, the 'ideal Turkish woman' (Arat, 1998a) as conceived by the Kemalist reformers maintains its position as the ultimate ambition of all Turkish women. This is a simplistic and essentially linear assessment of women's development which does nothing to disrupt the dominant traditional/Islamic-versus-modern/secular dialectical discourse.

In recent decades, an increasingly visible group has emerged in Turkish society which effectively challenges the dominant ideologies and discourse. During the mid-to-late 1980s, Islamic groups started to become more successful, influential, and politicized in Turkey. During this time, a ban was put in place by the secular establishment which forbade women to cover their heads in public institutions, including universities. This was one of the main impetuses for the political mobilization of devout Muslim women. Today, many young, urban Islamist women are asserting their religious identity by choosing to wear *tesettür*[7], and simultaneously making claims to so-called 'modern'

[7] *Tesettür* refers to appropriate Islamic-dressing, in which the head, neck, shoulders, arms and legs are covered. In Turkey, these criteria are usually met by young urban educated Muslim women who wear colourful headscarves tightened across their foreheads and fastened under their chins. Three-quarter length coats are most often worn over pants or long skirts in order to conceal their womanly curves.

rights and opportunities, such as university education and professional career opportunities (İlyasoğlu, 1998). These women continue to demand their right to participate without restraint in the public sphere whilst vigorously voicing their discontent concerning the headscarf ban and adhering to their religious convictions. The election in 2002 of the Islamist-based Justice and Development (AK) Party further established the rising influence of religious elites. The Party sanctioned many of the claims of young, urban Islamist women, thereby bestowing greater legitimacy upon them in the wider public sphere.

Meanwhile, staunch secularists perceive the rising Islamization of society as a threat to the rights and opportunities accorded to Turkish women through the Kemalist reforms. For them, veiling is associated with a lack of modernity. The tensions between Islamists and secularists are highly politicized, and have been discussed by several researchers, such as Arat (2000), Kaya (2000), and Saktanber (2006).

Although the issues at hand are very complex, the basic argument here is that the prevailing binary opposition between tradition and modernity is overly simplistic and cannot adequately explain the situation of women in modern Turkey. Women in this country range from uneducated to highly educated, and from unpaid to highly paid, depending on a variety of factors such as their socio-economic status and the regions they live in. Although religion in modern Turkey has customarily been associated with ignorance and rural tradition, the emergence of the middle and upper class Islamist women serves to dislocate the dominant dialectic. In place of the rural, ignorant, and oppressed women conjured up by the traditional/Islamic stereotype, these Muslim women are urban, educated and active agents in society.

### 3.2.4 Family

Although there are significant exceptions, women have become increasingly active and have taken on more important roles in Turkish society as a result of the early

republican reforms. However, even for those women who have benefited the most from the reforms, improvements in their status at home have not kept up with improvements in the public sphere. Reforms made in the public sphere did not directly translate into more gender equality in the distribution of household responsibilities. In fact, during the early years of the Republic, a strong emphasis was placed upon the duties of women in the private domain. As well as becoming an educated professional, the ideal Turkish woman was expected to be a good wife and mother (Abadan-Unat, 1981; Durakbaşa, 1998; Kadıoğlu, 1994).

Today, most Turkish women live in nuclear families, especially those in the middle to upper classes in urban areas. Although in this type of family arrangement, husband-wife gender roles are usually relatively egalitarian, men tend to assume the dominant position in most Turkish households (Kağıtçıbaşı, 1981; Timur, 1981). It can be said that the level of subjugation of women in rural areas and small towns tends to be higher than that of educated women in the bigger cities. However, although it is experienced to different degrees, male dominance in the home is generally not challenged. While many professional women are motivated to work for intrinsic satisfaction rather than economic need, there is evidence that even these women prioritize their family roles. In cases of work and family life conflicts, it was found that women at all levels would elect to forego their work-life in order to devote themselves to their families (Abadan-Unat, 1981). As Koçtürk explains, "Even women who have taken the greatest advantage of Kemalist reforms, and who do not hesitate to compete with men on a professional level, are not ready to sacrifice their mother-wife roles" (1992, p.81).

The persistence of sex-based inequalities in Turkish households is not surprising given that legally-enshrined discrimination based on family and marital status was only amended in 2001. Until then, according to the Turkish Civil Code the man was legally deemed to be the head of the household and main provider for his family, and it was his sole privilege to choose the family home (Süral, 2003).

## 3.3 Turkish Women in Migration Literature

Despite the great discrepancies in the status of women in various segments of Turkish society, their portrayal in the migration literature is one-dimensional. This is largely due to the fact that virtually all literature specifically concerning Turkish migrant women is based on the European guest-worker migration phenomenon, which was discussed in the preceding chapter. As of 2005, the 2.7 million Turks living in Europe comprised over eighty percent of the entire number of Turks living abroad around the world (İçduygu, 2006). Most of them ended up in Europe as a result of the guest-worker period migrations during the 1960s and 1970s, or the subsequent family reunification migrations. Although a high proportion of Turkish women who migrated to Europe at the beginning of the guest-worker period did so as skilled workers, their presence was eclipsed by the subsequent large influxes of predominantly unskilled workers (İçduygu, 2004; Paine, 1974).

As discussed in the previous chapter, immigrant women from developing countries—and especially those in the European guest-worker context—are usually painted with the same brush in migration literature. That is, they are portrayed either as uneducated, dependent housewives, or as low-skilled, underpaid workers in dirty, dangerous, or otherwise undesirable jobs (Kadıoğlu, 1997; Mirdal, 1984). But this stereotype is perhaps associated more with Turkish migrant women than with any other group.[8] As Morokvasic (1984) explained, "Turkish women…were often labelled as victims of their "tradition", of Islam, or of male-chauvinist attitudes of their husbands who do not allow them to go to work" (p.889). Resembling the Orientalist biases of the Kemalist reforms in early republican Turkey, it is widely presumed that the migration of 'traditional', 'uncultured', and 'subjugated' women from the underdeveloped Turkish

[8] A 2002 article by Erman, Kalaycıoğlu, and Rittersberger-Tılıç is the one of the only studies to have examined the empowering effects of Turkish migrant women's money-earning endeavours. While the article contributes to bringing current migration literature beyond existing stereotypes of Turkish migrant women, its scope remains limited to the study of internal migrants from low socio-economic backgrounds.

provinces to the civilization of Western Europe will provide the grounds for their emancipation.[9] In an excerpt from an interview conducted by Tahire Koçtürk, a Turkish woman living in Sweden gives a clear articulation of the Turkish-male-as-oppressor and Turkish-woman-as-victim stereotypes:

> There is an assumption that we Turkish women are bleeding under the oppression of fanatical, selfish, sexist male chauvinists. It is as if we must be rescued from our families and our men. (1992, p.128)

Contrary to these stereotypes, more and more Turkish women are migrating to pursue higher education and professional work opportunities. Moreover, many of them are setting out on their own, either as single migrants or ahead of their families (Hemmasi, & Prorok, 2002). This should come as no surprise given the developments which took place in the official status of women in Turkey over the past century. As discussed earlier in this chapter, there is a small but established segment of women in Turkish society who have achieved high educational and professional standings. In spite of this, there are very few studies on skilled and educated Turkish migration. Although such studies are slowly accumulating (Akçapar, 2005; Güngör, & Tansel, 2005a & 2005b), the specificity of women's migration patterns and processes in this type of migration has remained marginal (Hemmasi, & Prorok, 2002).

[9] Female Turkish migrants who do not veil themselves with a headscarf often come to be seen as markers of successful integration in Europe, and more liberated of their so-called 'oppressive' Islamic traditions than their migrant sisters who remain covered. However, this inference fails to take into account an important distinction between Sunni and Alevi Muslims. Unlike devout Sunnis, Alevi women are not required to cover according to their interpretation of Islam. As Ruth Mandel (1996) points out, many of the uncovered Turkish women in Germany are in fact Alevi and, therefore, their exposed hair and neck cannot simply be interpreted as a sign of their emancipation in the West. This discussion is outside of the scope of this study and is therefore not further elaborated here. For more on this topic, refer to Barbara Daly Metcalf's edited book entitled *Making Muslim Space in North America and Europe* and, in particular, chapter eight by Ruth Mandel called 'A Place of Their Own'.

## 3.4 Turkish Migration to Canada

Turkish migration to Canada over the years has been more heterogeneous than it has been to Europe. Three general movements from Turkey to Canada have been identified. First, between the 1920s and 1960, as part of a state-supported program to cultivate a new highly educated generation, many young Turks went to Canada to study.[10] After 1960, the movements consisted mainly of skilled workers. And from 1980 on, migration from Turkey was increasingly made up of unskilled villagers, and economic and political refugees seeking a better life in Canada (Aksan, n.d.). As is the case with most immigrant groups in Canada, Turks have tended to settle down in urban areas. Canadian policies which stress skilled labour recruitment have enabled a steady immigration of professionals and highly skilled workers from Turkey. Also important are the policies supporting family reunification, which have ensured the perpetuation of the various groups discussed above. Out of these migratory movements, a diverse Turkish community has been established in Canada. Similar to their society of origin, the Turkish population in Canada varies according to socio-economic status, political inclinations, degree of religiosity, and region of origin within Turkey.

While there is very little reliable data available on Turkish migration to Canada, the 2001 Census of Canada provides us with some information.[11] The total number of

[10] Many international students choose Canada as the country in which to pursue their post-secondary studies. They are often drawn to Canada by the cultural diversity and stability of the country, and the opportunity to study in English or French and to attend world-class facilities. Although Canada is an attractive destination, the opportunity to study there is mostly limited to a privileged few who can afford the high costs of doing so. While tuition fees are generally cheaper than in the United States, studying in Canada is still very costly for international students, whose fees are usually much higher than those of domestic students. Before entering the country, international students must obtain a study permit and show proof of their ability to fund their education for the duration of the programme to which they have been accepted. In most provinces, foreign students are prohibited from working off-campus. If they want to work, they must compete for a small number of jobs on campus. Health insurance coverage is provided by some provinces. Where it is not provided, international students must secure private health insurance coverage on their own. For more information on post-secondary education in Canada, see Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials (2004).

[11] The Census gathered information based on respondents' ethnic identifications. This means that not all individuals who self-identified as Turks are necessarily from Turkey. Some may have been born in Canada to Turkish parents, while others may come from other countries where there are also ethnic

people claiming a Turkish ethnic identity in Canada was 24,910 in 2001 (Statistics Canada, 2003a). For the purposes of this study, we were particularly interested in the statistics relating to Turkish women in Canada. These tell us that in 2001 most Turkish women in Canada (sixty percent) were married, almost thirty percent had never been married, and only seven percent were divorced. A staggering 92 percent of ethnic Turkish women spoke either one or both of Canada's official languages (Statistics Canada, 2003b).[12] Approximately 54 percent of all Turkish women above the age of fifteen years of age in Canada had achieved at least some post-secondary education by 2001. Of these, 42 percent had earned a degree at the university level (Statistics Canada, 2003c).

The ratio of female to male Turks in the Canadian labour force is a close 8.5:10. Rates of employment are high for both Turkish men and women in Canada, at 88 and 87 percent respectively. Of those women who are employed, almost fifty percent of them work in occupations requiring at least some post-secondary education, while just over thirty percent are located in occupations requiring little skill or training (Statistics Canada, 2003d).

As a result of its more selective immigration policies, Canada has a higher proportion of educated Turkish women working in skilled sectors than Europe. Additionally, in Canada these women are more dispersed among various sectors than they are in Europe. In the latter, skilled migration flows largely consist of short-term 'flexible labourers' (Castells, 1998), such as software engineers and technicians, who migrate to fulfill demands for labour from multinational corporations (Koser, & Salt, 1997; Salt, 1992). Whereas in Canada, the skilled Turkish population is represented by men and

---

Turkish populations, and so on. Generally speaking, the Census still provides us with the best information available on the Turkish community in Canada.

[12] Canada's two official languages are French and English.

women professionals in a broad range of fields, such as engineering, medicine, education, and administration (Aksan, n.d.).

### 3.5 Study of Skilled Female Migration between Canada & Turkey: Rationale

Although the available information on the migration of Turkish university graduates or highly skilled workers is scant, we know that most of it is directed toward North America and Australia (İçduygu, 2006). Yet there exists little to no research on the experiences of women in this movement. By looking at the specificities of women's migration processes in their work and family lives as they move between Canada and Turkey, this study hopes to address this gap. Additionally, in examining a migrant category which tends to be overlooked, I hope to disrupt the existing simplistic and negative stereotypes of Turkish migrant women.

The strengths and weaknesses of the existing return migration literature will be examined in the next chapter, in order to set the context for the remainder of the study.

# CHAPTER IV

# INTERNATIONAL RETURN MIGRATION

## 4.1 Return Migration: Definitions and Omissions

International return migration is broadly defined as the return of emigrants to their homelands to settle after having stayed for a significant period of time in another country (Gmelch, 1980). It is often lamented that this type of migration is acutely understudied and misunderstood. Indeed, it was recently labelled the "great unwritten chapter in the history of migration" (King, 2000, p.8). Until recently, international migration was typically conceived as a uni-directional movement of individuals or groups across national boundaries. Traditional countries of immigration, such as Canada and the United States, took for granted that immigrants who obtained permanent residency status would settle there permanently (Boyd, 1995). This "myth of no return" (Sarna, as cited in King, 2000, p.29) contributed to a prolonged ignorance of emigration by host governments and in the migration literature (Gmelch, 1980).[13]

Although return migration appears to be a very simple concept, it is in fact a complex process which varies depending on a number of factors, such as whether or not the return is voluntary, and the direction in which it occurs. Voluntary returnees are those who choose to migrate of their own accord, while involuntary returnees are those who are compelled to do so because of adverse economic, political, or environmental

[13] The growing body of literature on return migration is an indication that the earlier understanding of migration as a one-way permanent movement has expanded and now also takes return movements into account. Ironically, return is now sometimes conceived in the literature as representing a permanent resettlement in the country of origin. However, many researchers remind us that the return to the homeland *still* does not necessarily signify the end of the migration process. This is evident by the large number of studies investigating phenomena such as 'circular migration', 'shuttle migration', and 'transnationalism' (Basch, Glick Schiller, & Szanton Blanc, 1994; Cassarino, 2004; Ghosh, 2000c; King, 2000). Although these studies establish return migration as only one stage of a dynamic migration cycle, it is one which must not be ignored; the migration processes specific to return must also be examined (Stefansson, 2004a).

conditions. Involuntary return movements, such as refugee movements or forced repatriations, are not within the scope of this study and, therefore, will not be elaborated here.[14] In this chapter, we will first be investigating the literature concerning voluntary return migration from the developed industrial countries of North America and Europe to returnees' less-developed countries of origin. This will provide us a foundation from which to initiate our examination of the skilled and educated female graduates and professionals who have returned to Turkey from Canada.

Although there were a few studies published in the 1960s, return migration literature began gaining ground in the 1970s in association with the dismantling of guest-worker programs in Europe. At that time, migrant workers were increasingly under pressure from their countries of origin and settlement to return (King, 2000). Since then, literature on return migration has continued to be produced. However, it still remains an under-studied aspect of the migration literature, largely because of the lack of reliable statistical information available to support studies or to draw conclusions (Cassarino, 2004; King, 2000). In many countries, there is no official collection of emigration statistics. In Canada, for example, emigration rates are inferred from absences of immigrants in tax filing records (Aydemir, & Robinson, 2006). Where statistics do exist, they are usually based on total national flows, which give no information on emigrants' destinations or individual characteristics (Aydemir, & Robinson, 2006; Ghosh, 2000b). The limited data on return migration has been said to be both a contributing factor and consequence of its relative neglect in the migration literature (King, as cited in Ghosh, 2000b).

[14] For further reading on repatriations or the imposed return of refugees, see Ghosh (2000a) and the UNHCR's *State of the World's Refugees* (2000).

## 4.2 Existing Explanations for Return Migration

One of the earliest and most influential typologies of return migration was elaborated by Cerase (1974), in his study of the return migration of Italian workers from the United States to Italy. In it, he differentiated between four main types of returns, which he associated with migrants' levels of acculturation in the United States (King, 2000). In the first type, the 'return of failure', migrants are described as quickly returning to their countries of origin after having failed to adapt to their countries of settlement. These individuals are easily absorbed back into their home societies. In the second type, the 'return of conservativism', migrants adapt very little to their host societies and, instead, remain oriented toward their homelands throughout their time abroad. In the third type, the 'return of retirement', migrants return at the end of their working life to spend their retirement in their home countries. And finally, there is the 'return of innovation'. This type of return holds the most potential for social change and development in the countries of origin. Innovative returnees, having adapted a great deal to the host cultures, return eager to implement the new values, ideas, and goals they bring home with them. Although it is useful starting point in understanding motivations and effects of return migration, Cerase's typology is not exhaustive.

Subsequent studies on return migration incorporated migrants' initial migration intentions into their investigations. Gmelch (1980) differentiated between temporary and permanent migration intentions. In the first case, migrants intending to stay on a temporary basis usually went to the host societies with a target or goal in mind, such as completing an educational program or saving a certain amount of money. Whether or not they attained these goals was seen as a determining factor of their return migration. For example, after achieving her target educational accreditation, the migrant may immediately return as planned. On the other hand, she may also find she has more opportunities to put her new skills to use in her adopted country, and choose to stay. And of those who intended from the start to stay permanently in the host societies,

some may stay on as planned, whereas others may eventually choose or be compelled to return due to external factors—such as economic crises—or personal factors—such as family crises. Gmelch acknowledges the overly simplistic nature of this explanation, and emphasizes that, in fact, most migrants do not have fixed intentions upon their initial emigration. Rather, their eventual decision to return or to stay is shaped by the opportunities and experiences they have throughout their time abroad.

Most scholars agree that many migrants—regardless of whether they intend to return to their country of origin—entertain a nostalgic and idealised notion of their homeland while they are away (Gmelch, 1980; King, 2000; Markowitz, & Stefansson, 2004). These notions are often based upon the easy-going and pleasant memories made during vacations back home (Stefansson, 2004a). However, if they move back to their homeland, they will usually find that the society has changed. Their unrealistic expectations of return built around this 'myth of return' will often lead to feelings of disappointment, and may cause difficulties in their return adaptation.

Over the years, return migration has come to be seen as a dynamic process resulting from many causes (King, 2000). Motivations for return migration are often simply classified as either push or pull factors, but King (2000) further categorizes them according to their sphere of influence, namely: economic, social, political, or family/life cycle. In the first sphere, reasons for return migration may include the 'push' of economic collapse and high unemployment in the host country, or the 'pull' of a stable financial system and higher wages in the country of origin. Social factors which entice migrants to return may include the potential for upward mobility and status in their home societies, whereas bigotry or conflicting value systems of the host society may drive them to leave. Political push factors for return often come in the shape of restrictions to employment, family reunification, or other citizenship rights on the part of the host country. On the other hand, individuals may be attracted back to their homelands as a result of return incentives offered by the countries, such as

integration assistance, tax benefits, travel costs, and job-matching (Ghosh, 2000c; King, 2000). The final sphere influencing return migration according to King's classification is that of the family or life cycle. This sphere comprises return decisions based on kinship or social ties, such as returning to get married or to care for a sick relative. A common return decision based on life cycle is return upon retirement. Family and life cycle causes for return are generally pull, not push, factors. Although economic or professional factors have been found to exert a lot of influence on decisions to emigrate from one's homeland in the first place, non-economic factors are generally found to most strongly influence the return decision. Although there are a variety of factors taken into account (Cassarino, 2004), family reasons are most often cited as the ultimate deciding factors for return (Gitmez, 1991; Gmelch, 1980; King, 2000; Paine, 1974).

## 4.3 Deficiencies of Existing Return Migration Literature

A major emphasis of return migration literature has been on returnees' reintegration into the labour market and their potential to contribute to social change and economic development of their communities of origin (Ghosh, 2000c; Kirdar, 2007; Paine, 1974; Papademetriou, & Martin, 1991; Steinhilber, 1994). These studies, which examine the effects of return migration, are largely based on male migrants originating from rural, underdeveloped backgrounds (Cerase, 1974; Gmelch, 1980; Krane, 1975; Kudat, as cited in Gitmez, 1991). The underlying assumption is that these individuals have undergone drastic changes through their exposure to and adoption of the technologies and mores of 'advanced' Western nations. Equipped with new values, ideas, and often a significant amount of savings from abroad, it has been anticipated that returnees would make important social and economic contributions to their communities, and to the development of their countries (Kirdar, 2007; Lutz, as cited in Gitmez, 1991). However, many studies have found that returning migrants in fact make no contribution to development, or that their input has been negligible (Ghosh, 2000c; King, 2000).

These critics claim that, rather than adding to the overall progress of society, returnees' savings are usually directed toward conspicuous consumption and small-scale investments (Cassarino, 2004; Conway, Potter, & Phillips, 2005).

The majority of the literature which is specific to Turkish return migration is dominated by the return flows of guest-workers from Europe, and especially Germany. Most of these Turkish returnees articulate the desire to be self-employed upon their return (Gitmez, 1991; Kirdar, 2007; Krane, 1975; Paine, 1974). It has been shown that approximately half of the Turkish workers returning from Germany engage in entrepreneurial activities (Dustmann, & Kirchkamp, 2001), such as purchasing their own taxi or mini-bus. Because these types of small-scale investments do not produce major profits or new jobs, they are not seen as contributing significantly to the home economy (Gitmez, 1991).

The dominant discussions of return migration focus for the most part on the economic aspects of the return of low-to-semi-skilled male workers. However, this is not representative of the increasing heterogeneity of return migrants (Cassarino, 2004). As Conway, Potter, and Phillips explain, "return migrants are demographically selective, behaviourally diverse, they possess differing stocks of human capital, they have divergent attitudes, divergent images of their…homelands, divergent backgrounds, and consequently their experiences, adaptations, and behaviours will rarely be commonly shared…" (2005, p.2).

## 4.4 Locating Skilled and Educated *Return* Female Turkish Migration

As educated and highly skilled Turkish women, the returnees examined in this study are not represented in the current return migration literature. As discussed in the first chapter, studies of international migration are gradually expanding to include more research on the migration of highly skilled people. However, there are still very few

studies on their return migration—and especially that of skilled women, despite figures which suggest that this type of movement warrants more attention. For example, approximately half of all foreign-born graduate students in the United States return to their homelands upon graduation (Finn, as cited in Szelényi, 2003).

Skilled migration is usually depicted in terms of a 'brain drain' versus 'brain gain' dilemma, in which valuable human capital only flows away from poor developing countries and into rich developed ones (Straubhaar, 2000). The return migration of skilled and educated migrants challenges the uni-directionality of this movement, instead locating the home countries as the beneficiaries of 'brain gain' and the host countries as the victims of 'brain drain'. Scholars are calling for more studies on the return of skilled and educated, as well as middle-to-upper class migrants, in order to gain a better understanding of the ways in which their elevated capital impacts their migration processes and their potential for innovation and development in their home countries (Cassarino, 2004; Gmelch, 1980; Regets, 2001).

Given the prevalent stereotypes depicting Turkish migrants as unskilled workers of rural origins in the migration literature (as discussed in the chapters two and three of this paper), it is not surprising that studies concentrating on skilled return Turkish migration remain few and far between. Some examples include Güngör and Tansel's (2005a & 2005b) reports, which look at the return intentions of Turkish expatriates. Akçapar's (2005) report entitled *Turkish Highly Skilled Migration to the United States: New Findings and Policy Recommendations* only offers indirect evidence of skilled Turkish return migration. None of the existing studies conducts an in-depth investigation of the migrants' experiences and processes of migration, nor do they incorporate women in their analysis in a meaningful way.

In this study, the unique experiences of migration and return of six Turkish women are examined through their narrative reflections. As these women had all achieved at least

some post-secondary education by the time of their return, their re-migration constitutes a 'brain gain' for Turkey. By employing qualitative methods, we move beyond unsophisticated generalizations of return migration and, instead, gain a better understanding of the complexities of migration and return, and their impacts on the social and professional lives of these women (King, 2000).

# CHAPTER V

# RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

## 5.1 Objectives

There is little, if any, knowledge about the nature and scope of the return migration experiences of educated Turkish women. Due to the lack of research on this topic, this is an exploratory and descriptive study aiming to bring salient issues to light, provide insight on the patterns and processes of skilled female return migration, and to provide suggestions for future research. This study does not aim to delineate general categories or to make generalizations about the experiences of skilled return Turkish migrant women from Canada.

According to William Petersen's basic definition, an international migrant is a person who crosses national boundaries (1969). This definition can be further categorized according to various types of migration. The main types of migration are discussed in more detail in chapter two and four. The participants of this study are considered international migrants because of their migratory movements across and between Turkish and Canadian borders, and sometimes between other countries as well. In references to their initial movement away from Turkey, the women are defined as 'emigrants'. Upon their return to Turkey, they are referred to as 'return migrants' or simply 'returnees'. While discussing the possibility of their moving away from Turkey once again, we refer to their potential to 're-migrate'. In chapters

Studies have revealed that individuals undergo changes throughout the processes of migration. Although changes may occur in several aspects of the migrant's life, the main focus of this study is on the impact of return migration on the work life and social life contexts of educated return Turkish migrant women. It is assumed that work plays

a major role in the day-to-day lives of these highly educated women, in particular because they have achieved levels of education which far exceed those of the average Turkish woman.[15] For the purposes of this study, the work sphere is conceptualized beyond the realm of professional or career activities to also include the participants' education. Additionally, this sphere is understood as extending beyond the simple act of performing a job to incorporate the extent to which satisfaction and a sense of fulfilment is derived from it. By paying special attention to the work lives of these women, this study aims to disrupt the simplistic representation of migrant women in the literature, according to which they are usually portrayed as uneducated and unemployed, or confined to unstable sectors. In addition, it challenges the tendency to overemphasize the domestic and family roles of women. At the same time, the examination of the women's social context—that is, the spheres of family, friendships, and leisure activities—serves to challenge the dominance of economically-deterministic understandings of skilled migration. In doing so, this study seeks to bring to light some of the ways in which educated Turkish migrant women negotiate the various demands placed upon them as they strive to fulfil their diverse social roles as mothers, wives, daughters, and at the same time, as professionals.

In the next chapter, the migration processes of each woman will be outlined in individual biographies. Based on the oral narratives of each participant and the researchers' interpretive reflections of these narratives, the biographies help to give emphasis to the self-perceptions of the migrants on their own experiences. That is, they help to reveal how the women make sense of their migrations, the meanings that they draw from them, and how their understandings influence their behaviour. Next, this study will endeavour to describe the effects, if any, of their (re)migration in the contexts of their social and work lives, and vice versa. Following this, repeating themes emerging from the analysis of the biographies will be identified.

[15] Statistics show that less than ten percent of Turkish women attain post-secondary education (Dayıoğlu, 2000).

## 5.2 Data Gathering Method

### 5.2.1 Snowball Sampling

The six return migrant women who participated in this study were reached using the purposive and snowball sampling methods. Four of the six participants were personal contacts of mine, whom I selected based on the diverse characteristics sought for representation in this study. Out of these four, I originally met one in Canada before her return to Turkey, and I met two through the Canadian community in Ankara. One of the participants was contacted through a Turkish contact of mine in Canada, and another was reached through one of the participants.

The following criteria were used in the purposive selection of participants; they must: (1) be female Turkish migrants who returned to Turkey from Canada at least six months prior to their participation in this study[16], (2) have spent at least two years in Canada, (3) have been working age[17] during part of their time in Canada and upon their return to Turkey, (4) speak English at an intermediate to advanced level, and (5) have completed at least some post-secondary education. All the participants grew up in either Ankara or Istanbul, two major cities in Turkey, and returned to their city of origin following their migration experience in Canada.

Apart from these shared characteristics, the six participants are quite diverse. They range in age from 24 to 51. Three of them are married (two to Turks, one to a Canadian), two of them are divorced, and one has never been married. Three of them have kids, and two of these are single mothers. Two of the women cover their heads in accordance with their Islamic religious convictions. The participants are similarly

[16] According to Christou (2004), it takes at least six months before the actual processes of return migration have an effect or are felt by the returnee.

[17] Working-age refers to individuals between the ages of 15 to 64.

diverse in their professional lives. For example, three work in office milieus, one is an academic, one works as a teacher, and another one works as a semi-retired freelance researcher and educator. In addition, a variety of career-cycle locations are represented among the participants. Four of the six women stem from upper middle class socio-economic backgrounds, while the two covered women both stem from lower socio-economic strata. Their socio-economic status is determined by factors such as their labour force participation, the nature of their job, and their level of education and income or that of the head(s) of their household. Please refer to the chart in Appendix A which summarizes key demographic, education, and career information about each of the six participants.

### 5.2.2 Research Tools

The methodology selected for the study of educated female return Turkish migrants is non-structuralist and qualitative. The qualitative data used in this study is based on self-administered questionnaires, oral history interviews, and researcher field notes. The open-ended self-administered Pre-Interview Information Form (Appendix B) was given to each participant prior to the interview. Besides collecting basic biographical data, this pre-interview background form gathered information related to their work history and income level. This information helped to guide the subsequent conversation which took place during the interview. Examples of questions from the self-administered questionnaire include: In what year did you migrate to Canada? Under what legal status did you enter Canada? Did you acquire Canadian citizenship? What is the highest level of post-secondary education that you achieved? Do you have children?

Next, oral-history interviews were conducted with the six female migrants selected for this study. Brettel and Hollifield (as cited in Christou, 2003) support the use of qualitative methods for the study of the subjective experiences of migrants. They say: “While it may not be the basis for extensive theory construction, the life history method

has been employed to access the rich texture of the lived experience of being a migrant and the cultural context of decision-making". The personal experiences elaborated in the participants' narratives facilitated the investigation and understanding of the cultural and social contexts in which they took place. The employment of oral history methods allows us to concentrate on specific events and periods in the life of the narrator (Legard, Keegan, & Ward, 2003). But oral history interviews involve more than just the telling of some stories; they help to reveal the *meaning* attached to these events by the narrator. From the narratives emerge "not just what people did, but what they wanted to do, what they believed they were doing, and what they now think they did" (Portelli, 1998, p.67).

In a similar vein, Kofman (2000) has distinguished biographical narrations as particularly effective channels for understanding the often complex web of goals and strategies of migrant women as they experience changes in their family and work structures. According to Maxwell (1998), qualitative studies are particularly useful in understanding the *meaning* of specific situations and actions, and the influence of the contexts in which they occur. Qualitative methods, and in particular oral history interviews, have been distinguished as valuable methods for investigating feminine experience. Unstructured interviews can provide a non-hierarchical context in which both the interviewee and the interviewer are active participants. Therefore, oral history methods are consistent with approaches advocated by feminist researchers (Bryman, 2004; Järviluoma, 2003; Legard, Keegan, & Ward, 2003).

The interviews were carried out from February to April 2007. Four were conducted in Ankara, and two were conducted in Istanbul. All of them lasted at least one and half hours, with some lasting several hours. During the interviews, the participants discussed their pre-, during-, and return-migration experiences, with a special focus on their daily experiences in their work and social spheres. Consistent with the unstructured nature of this research method, three of the interviews took place while

sharing a meal or in an otherwise social environment. Other informal exchanges, in person, over the telephone, and by electronic mail, also took place with all participants prior to and after the completion of the interviews. Although a word or phrase was occasionally expressed in Turkish or French, the interviews took place mostly in English. If ever the participant or the researcher did not understand something, clarification was sought right away in order to verify that the dialogue was correctly understood.

### 5.2.3 Ethical Issues

Several steps were taken to make the respondents feel at ease. The locations of the interviews, usually in a home or workplace environment, were determined by the participants. Every effort was made to ensure that the encounter was held in a private and comfortable space. The basic aspects of the study were explained to all respondents in a letter attached to the Pre-Interview Information Form (Appendix B), and each of them willingly agreed to participate.

Five of the interviews were digitally-recorded; verbatim transcriptions of these interviews were used for their analysis. After seeking approval from my thesis adviser, external typists were engaged to produce four of the interview transcriptions. Before proceeding with the work, the typists signed a Transcriber Confidentiality Agreement (Appendix C). One interviewee declined to have her narrative recorded. In this case, I took detailed hand-written notes during the course of the interview. Prior to the interview, I was concerned that my note-taking might be distracting or disruptive for the participant, especially since I felt that this particular woman was hesitant about the interview. However, I was pleased when she spoke very freely and openly throughout the interview, showing little to no signs of self-consciousness or apprehension.

In order to protect the anonymity of the participants, I have replaced their names with pseudonyms throughout this study. I have also replaced the names of any other identifiable characteristics, such as names of their family members and institutions with which they have been affiliated, with fictitious ones.

## 5.3 Self-Reflections of Researcher

As much as possible, I tried to express to the participants the valuable contribution they were making to my study by sharing their migration experiences. This helped to establish a positive and collegial relationship throughout the study. I also possess certain personal qualities which I feel facilitated the gaining of trust and establishment of rapport between us. First, as a Canadian who has lived in Turkey for the past two and a half years, I am able to appreciate some of the subtleties of Canadian vis-à-vis Turkish social contexts described in the narratives. As an educated, working-age migrant, I may also be in a better position to understand the changes these women experience in their personal and work lives in connection with their migration. At certain points in every interview, I also sensed common ground based on our shared identity as women.

# CHAPTER VI

# BIOGRAPHIES OF MIGRATION AND RETURN

This chapter constitutes the largest portion of this study. It is sub-divided below into six sections, with each section including the biography of migration and return of one participant in this study. Except for Fulya, the first three sections of each biography focus on the pre-, during-, and return migration experiences of the migrant. Fulya's case is somewhat different, since she has returned to Turkey twice following two separate emigrations to Canada. For this reason, her biography also includes two additional sections which look at her second emigration and most recent return. Following the brief, factual and chronological outline of her migration processes, each woman's biography includes a more substantive section in which the researcher provides interpretive reflections on the impacts of each woman's migrations on her social and work life contexts. These interpretations are based on the women's oral history narratives and are intended to give voice and communicate the meanings expressed by these women who are otherwise unrepresented in current literature.

***Please see the chart in Appendix A which presents the main demographic features, education and career information of all six participants in this study.***

## 6.1 Fulya feels a sense of belonging in both countries

### 6.1.1 Living in Turkey and motivation for migration

Fulya was born in 1956 and was raised in Ankara alongside her two older brothers by her educated parents. She distinguishes the household in which she grew up as being very Western-oriented, secular and liberal compared to the stereotypical Turkish family.

Fulya remembers her parents as always encouraging each of their children to be independent. At an early age, she learned to budget and to be self-reliant. Education and exposure to other cultures and languages were also highly valued by her family. She earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in English linguistics from an established university in Ankara. Afterward, she taught English language and American culture and literature at both her alma mater and another local university for five years while she completed her Master's degree at one of Turkey's top state universities in Ankara.

Upon completion of her Master's degree, she applied and secured a scholarship for a PhD and assistantship at the University of Upper Canada (UUC) in Ottawa, Canada. Her decision to apply to study in this bilingual city was influenced by her fluency in English and French. Although her father died shortly before Fulya was awarded the scholarship, she was confident that he would have been proud of her, and would have supported her decision to go to Canada.

### 6.1.2 The initial migration process and reasons for the first return migration

In December 1983, at the age of twenty-eight, Fulya moved to Ottawa to begin her doctoral studies in the field of language education. Her transition to life in Canada was an easy one, particularly because she already had a whole network of Turkish friends in place upon arrival. Although she appreciated the warm welcome she received from the Turkish community in Canada, Fulya could also find the community to be stifling and petty. Given her keen interest in and previous exposure to other cultures, Fulya had no trouble expanding her network of friends to include Canadians and people from many different countries. She found this to be a very enriching environment. After a few years in Canada, Fulya started dating a Canadian academic named Paul. They married in 1987 after dating for one year.

When asked if she had any intentions to return to Turkey upon her initial migration, Fulya says she went to Canada with an open mind. Already very comfortable in

English, she saw this move as an opportunity to improve her French. She told herself that she would consider staying in Canada if she could secure a good and fulfilling job, and if she was happy there.

Fulya made return visits to her family and friends in Turkey every summer. She and Paul also hosted Turkish family and friends in their home in Ottawa. Because of these frequent visits, Fulya did not feel the need to move back to Turkey permanently. She considered herself fortunate to have the option of returning, unlike some of her friends in Canada who came from war-torn regions.

Her being Turkish led to some of Fulya's first paid work in the academic arena. When a Montreal-based university was conducting a large-scale study on fifty different languages, Fulya was hired to look after the Turkish component, and was sent to Turkey for several weeks to collect and analyze data.

During most of their married life in Canada, both Paul and Fulya taught at the UUC, although they spent just over one year doing research at a university in Holland in the early 1990s. While Paul worked full-time, she mostly worked part-time. Fulya describes her marriage with Paul as being secure and balanced. Decisions are made jointly, and household chores such as cooking and cleaning are mostly shared. However, because Paul had a bigger workload in Ottawa, Fulya would usually have a warm meal ready for him when he came home from work. Together, they decided not to have children.

She acquired Canadian citizenship in 1991, and continued to build her life there until her mother became very ill toward the end of that decade.

### 6.1.3 The first return migration process and reasons for the second migration

Fulya and Paul first returned to Turkey together in 1999 to look after her mother. As a part-time instructor, it was not complicated for her to leave her job at UUC. Paul, on the other hand, had to formally request a two-year leave without pay from his full-time

position there. Upon arrival in Turkey, both found work at local universities in order to meet their modest needs and those of her mother. Although both Fulya and Paul were teaching, most of their energy was focused on her mother and in acting as her advocates to ensure her excellent care throughout several periods of extended hospitalization.

After Fulya and Paul had been in Turkey for approximately two years, her mother's condition continued to worsen, so much so that she had to move into a special care facility. At this point, Fulya quit her job in order to devote all of her spare time to her mother, and Paul applied for and received an extension to his leave from UUC for compassionate reasons. As it turned out, the one-year extension was all they needed in order to be there for her mother right up until her death, and for Paul to complete the semester in Turkey before moving back to Canada. In the end, they had stayed in Turkey for three and a half years. Fulya remains extremely glad that she returned to Turkey to care for her mother.

### 6.1.4 The second migration and reasons for the final return

Fulya and Paul re-migrated to Canada in 2002 after her mother's death, but stayed there less than three years before returning to Turkey a second time in 2005. Fulya cites two major reasons for their decision to leave Canada again: the deterioration of the Canadian state health care system, and the opportunity to partially retire from work.

### 6.1.5 The return migration process and how she coped

After having spent a total of sixteen years in Canada, Fulya returned to Turkey with her husband Paul in early 2005. In doing so, they were able to successfully address the two main factors which led to their decision to return; that is, obtaining better health care and pursuing a more flexible work life.

Paul has purchased private health insurance and, as the daughter of a physician, Fulya is entitled to lifetime insurance coverage in Turkey. They also put some money aside in the event that they need to pay for services from time to time.

Despite a huge need for her qualifications at universities in Ankara, Fulya has decided not to return to teach in academia. Instead, she concentrates on the research projects that she conducts together with her husband, and does some freelance tutoring in business and academic English. She enjoys the independence and freedom of freelancing, as it allows her to travel on a regular basis for work and pleasure. Because of Turkey's proximity to Europe, Fulya and Paul are able to travel there often to deliver workshops and attend conferences.

Having worked and lived significant amounts of time in Canada and Turkey, Fulya identifies herself strongly with both countries. Fulya is disappointed by certain changes in Turkish society since her original migration abroad. She specifically identifies bad traffic conditions and deteriorating social relations, which she feels are exacerbated by increasing rural to urban migration. She is also concerned about rising crime rates, which she sees as adversely affecting her daily routines and mobility.

Still, Fulya says she and Paul are happy to be based in Ankara, where they enjoy the company and security of long-time neighbours, family, and friends. To this day, Fulya remains friends with some people in Turkey with whom she kept in touch during her sixteen years in Canada. She also describes how their circle of friends continues to grow to include people from many backgrounds and cultures, but emphasizes the importance of their associations with Canadians.

Fulya speaks of Paul with much love. She describes their relationship as one in which there is a large amount of mutual respect and balance. As in Canada, they continue to share the responsibility for household chores, decision-making, and travel planning.

Satisfied with their rewarding work and active social lives in Turkey, Fulya and Paul are happy to stay put for now. However, although their family and friendship networks in Canada are very small, they both still miss and love the country deeply. They cope with these emotions by planning return visits and by keeping their options open concerning future country of residence:

> I have a Canadian passport I can use anytime. I'm also still kind of a resident. We didn't declare non-residency. We don't break our ties with Canada. I *love* Canada…it's really a country for me…But for now, we're very comfortable [in Turkey].

### 6.1.6 Interpretive reflections in social and work contexts

**Social Context**

Fulya's earliest socialization in a liberal, educated, upper middle class household in Ankara set the stage for her future migration experiences. In retrospect, she distinguishes the context of her early developmental years from those found in a stereotypical Turkish family:

> I guess I couldn't be considered a typical *Turk* in the first place…I was raised with…Western music, I listened to classical music, went to concerts all the time, I didn't practice the religion that these people practice. And so I guess I can't consider myself really a *real Muslim Turk* in that sense, or a Muslim woman.

This passage shows that Fulya does not consider herself to be typically Turkish. Her description of herself rather locates her as an upper middle woman who was socialized in a family that embraced the Kemalist secularist reforms of Turkey's early republican period.

Also contributing to her later personal and professional activities is the fact that Fulya was raised to be independent and to use her mind. She explains:

> [My dad]…was also an academic. He was an MD [medical doctor] but he also *taught* …it was an academy. So he taught there and he always encouraged me to stay at the university and be an academic and everything.

Here, Fulya emphasizes her father's influence in particular in shaping her career aspirations. In her narrative, she also reflects on how proud he would have been to see his daughter go abroad to pursue a doctoral degree. In this sense, Fulya's occupational and migration decisions cannot be said to be directed by the motivations of an emancipated young woman. Rather, they were shaped by underlying patriarchal values.

**Community**

Her open-mindedness stemming from her early exposure to diverse languages and nationalities not only facilitated her initial adjustment to life in Canada, but became constant features throughout her professional and social life. Although she already had an established network of Turkish friends when she arrived in Canada, she did not limit herself to that community. In fact, she actively sought to distance herself from the Turkish community in Ottawa:

> …because there was a lot of gossip going on. It was a small community and they're always competing with each other. What did you buy? What's your car? What computer? What kind of house? How much is the house? How big is the house? Where do you live? That kind of stuff… I never liked that. And I tried to make friends outside of the Turkish community. I tried to stay away from gossip and competition and things like that.

Max Weber's ideas on status groups are useful for understanding the ties between the members of the Turkish community in Ottawa. This community is essentially a status group which is based on the members' shared ethnic heritage. Social honour is conferred to members based on other members' evaluations of their consumption patterns and standards of living. Although she was Turkish, Fulya did not feel a strong connection with the Turkish community in Ottawa. Instead, the status groups to which

she belonged were formed more on the basis of educational levels and common sets of interests.

From this excerpt, one grasps the qualities that Fulya values in relationships: humility, respect and fairness. Throughout her narrative, she emphasizes the importance she places on these attributes, and her efforts to live according to them. For example, Fulya senses that some people in Turkey expect her to be haughty and arrogant as a return migrant from Canada. For this very reason, she makes a concerted effort to be humble, considerate of others, and to not stick out. The excerpt below illustrates some of the ways in which she does this:

> They say, you've been in Canada for so long, and you don't have any accent, any difficulty finding words or anything like that… you know the code-switching, like if you can't find a Turkish word, you substitute with an English word. I made a very special effort not to do that. I didn't want them to think that I'm snobby and spoiled. I made an effort not to use English words in my Turkish conversations. And it needs a bit of effort, that's all. You just have to think. It's easy to switch to an English word or a French word. I didn't want to do that. It turns people off. And being modest is always nice. I like being modest. And yes I lived in Canada, I had a wonderful life there. But I had a wonderful life here too. And I don't show off. And if people are low income and can't afford things, I don't talk with them like "I take taxis, I don't walk". I don't say that! I just don't bring it up! [Instead we] talk about things that *we* have in common. I just talk to them as an equal, even though our incomes are probably not the same, but…it's never an issue…I make a *big* effort about that.

Also, as a return migrant in Turkey, Fulya feels that others sometimes perceive her as being wealthy. Where matters of money are concerned, she takes a similar approach to the one taken above:

> As the economic situation gets more difficult, I guess people are more aware of financial issues. I try to stay away from money talk. I get this question, "So you're both retired? Is your retirement from Canada or from Turkey?" Because if you get it from Canada, it's more attractive. It's higher. And so it's very difficult to deal with that. I try to not talk

> about financial things. And that's one thing…finances is a huge issue amongst Turks.

The foregoing passages suggest the ways in which Westerners are perceived by many people in Turkey, especially among working class circles, as being rich and boastful. By portraying herself in contrast to these stereotypes, she does not challenge their veracity. Instead of dispelling the stereotypes, her actions serve to reinforce them.

Throughout her time in Canada and elsewhere abroad, Fulya has come to see herself as a representative of many things, including her home country:

> So I found myself doing a lot of ambassadorship. And all my life, I try to be an example for the new generation, as a teacher, as a professor, for my students, in the family, for my nephew and nieces, to be a good couple, to be a good person. And when I go abroad, to be a good Turk, and basically represent Turkey and tell them what it is to be a Turk, and what kind of ambitions we have in life, and wishes and dislikes.

Earlier in her narrative, Fulya differentiated herself from 'typical' Turks. Here, she portrays herself as a representative of her country, and as a "good Turk". These distinctions have grown out of the legacy of Turkey's early republican period and the drive for Turkish modernization. The concept of a 'good Turk' was socially constructed as someone who has embraced secular/Western ideals and republican reforms. This is contrasted against the 'bad Turk' who is seen as someone who adheres to primitive and oppressive Islamic/Eastern ideals. By portraying herself as a 'good Turk', Fulya succeeds in differentiating herself from the stereotype of the 'bad Turk'. However, she does not disrupt the stereotype.

When confronted by aggressive or impolite behaviour in the community or in her relationships, Fulya does not back down. She gives examples of cases where she has written letters to complain about inadequate service, and has dealt with machismo attitudes in Turkey by talking with the men and explaining the disrespect they have shown. She credits this strength of character in part to her liberal upbringing and to her

experience teaching lessons and conveying messages as an instructor. She also believes that part of this strength stems from her experience in Canada:

> I guess this kind of knowledge comes from, definitely from, Canada—pushing and standing up for your rights. We're practicing this both in our family relations and in the relations that we have outside.

Based on this passage, it seems that Fulya's understanding of citizenship has been strongly influenced by her time in Canada, where the protection of the basic civil and political rights of individual citizens is fundamental to the foundations of the liberal democracy. These rights are enshrined in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (Kymlicka, 1995). Turkey, on the other hand, has traditionally adhered to a state-centred rather than an individual-centred model of modernity. But as Keyman and İçduygu pointed out, in the last two decades,

> there have emerged important and politically active civil society organizations, calling for the need to democratize the secular and state-centric model of Turkish modernity by making it more liberal, more civil and more compatible with the language of 'rights'. (2003, p.223)

Fulya attributes her insistence on individual rights to her experience in Canada despite the rise of a more liberal understanding of civil rights and freedoms in Turkey since the 1980s and especially 1990s. This is likely due to the fact that she spent the greater part of the past two decades in Canada and, therefore, may be less conscious of recent changes in Turkish civil society.

**Friendships**

In Canada, Fulya became friends with people of diverse origins:

> For instance, I had a francophone group, as well as other Anglophone groups and other multicultural groups of friends from various different countries like Iran, Lebanon. I had a Polish friend. My best friend when I went to Canada was an Armenian, and Armenians and Turks are supposed to be enemies! So it was a very enriching environment.

Her interest in and comfort with people from such a wide array of cultural backgrounds are a function of her upbringing in an educated, liberal upper middle class household. From an early age, she was exposed to not one, but two foreign languages. Fulya's parents sent her to a reputable private English-language college in Ankara, and she learned French from her mother, who was educated at a prestigious French lycée in Istanbul. Her beloved older brother often brought home interesting international friends that he met at school. For these reasons, Fulya's tendency to seek out exotic friends in Canada was not only a function of her being in a culturally diverse country, but it was also strongly influenced by her cosmopolitan upbringing in Turkey.

Her close friendship with an Armenian is noteworthy given the historically antagonistic relations between the two ethnicities. Furthermore, the friendship was particularly significant since it took place at a time when Turkish-Armenian relations – even in Canada – were critically hostile.[18] In establishing this friendship, Fulya sought the person behind the ethnicity. This ability to overcome common prejudices is something that she continues to seek in her friendships in her return to Turkey.

Fulya and Paul's social circles in Ankara generally include very cosmopolitan individuals, who are also often in mixed-marriages. Among these friends, the mixed-nationality relationship is perceived as normal. However, she does encounter conservative people in Turkey who find it peculiar. The negative and surprised reactions that her inter-ethnic marriage sometimes elicits are undoubtedly linked to the fact that Turkey's population is not very culturally diverse relative to countries like Canada. For this reason alone, mixed-marriages are less common in Turkey and, therefore, more of a curiosity. Another possible reason for negative reactions could be the belief in Islam that Muslim women should not marry outside of their faith, while Muslim men may do so (Tvrtkovic, 2001). This is based on patriarchal notions which locate Muslim men as the primary transmitters of their faith and heads of their

[18] Armenian extremists stormed the Turkish embassy in Ottawa in 1985, in an attack which left one security guard dead.

households. Thus, as long as a Muslim man leads the family, his children will also be raised as Muslims. Although Fulya does not consider herself to be Muslim, she lives in a country whose culture is strongly shaped by its Islamic heritage. The conservative people Fulya encounters who oppose her inter-ethnic marriage likely base their judgements on such notions.

As she did with her Armenian friend, Fulya emphasizes Paul's personal qualities in her attempt to enlighten people who question their marriage:

> I try to educate them basically. I say, "He's a very adaptable person, he *loves* Turkey." And it's true. I'm not lying. And I say, "A lot of Turks don't speak English even if it's taught in schools. But my husband made a huge effort and learned a bit of Turkish so that he could socialize with people. And he understands the culture, he understands the religion…he respects all these. And he just loves Turkey." And they say, "What about your family? How did they receive him?" I always say, "With love. [smiling] They received him with open arms! And that's how it should be. We're all human beings, no matter where we come from. And what counts is that he's a good human being, and he has compassion and love and respect." And when I say those things, of course they think twice.

Although many of their friends in Ankara stem from diverse countries, Fulya underscores their connection to Canadians and Canada as being very important for both of them:

> We have new friends… through the Canadian Embassy, we got a lot of friends. And we *love* to go there…we go for the pub nights and we have found a lot of nice people. Canadians *and* Turks. Both. And they're very very nice people. We really *love* that connection. And that way we keep our Canadian roots too.

**Relationship with husband**

Fulya describes her marriage to Paul as being a true partnership, one in which socializing, household chores and decision-making are all undertaken jointly. Their relationship is portrayed in this way in her description of every stage of their migration processes, including their return. In their first return to Turkey, Paul followed Fulya to

her country of origin to help care for her mother, taking leave from his faculty position in order to do so. Fulya sees this as a sacrifice on his part, and one which is indicative of the priority he places on their marriage and on their relationship with her mother. She says, "Paul left everything – he left his salary. Basically, he said money is not an issue here."

While Paul's relocation to Turkey was a sign of the value he assigns to his marriage, his move to Turkey did not entail a complete abandonment of his career. He would have been aware of the opportunities to teach at English-language universities in Ankara and, indeed, was hired to do so when they arrived in Turkey. Therefore, his relocation did not signal a downward turn in his career path. On the other hand, Fulya did experience downward career mobility over the course of their marriage and migration processes, due to the significant time she spent teaching part-time, or not working at all. It seems that the decrease in the overall amount of time she dedicated to her career in academia was a result of a lowering in her occupational ambitions. This is common among married women who are working (Thompson, 1997). She has been satisfied to assist Paul in his research and to work as a English tutor, despite the fact that she is overqualified for these types of work. Although she describes their relationship as an equal partnership, it would seem that Fulya's career aspirations have been secondary. Nevertheless, her downward career mobility has not led to a downturn in her social mobility. Throughout her narrative, she emphasizes her deep satisfaction with her life.

One aspect of their marriage which is sometimes subject to scrutiny, and which emerged as central to her migration processes, is their decision to not have children. Fulya relates that, in Turkey, womanhood is practically synonymous with motherhood.[19] While speaking about their decision to not have children, Fulya differentiates between reactions in Canada and in Turkey. In Canada it was sometimes

[19] Indeed Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the revered founder and first president of the Republic of Turkey, in a speech made in 1923, stated that "a woman's highest duty is motherhood" (Duben and Behar, as cited in White, 2003, p.153).

noted by people, but the issue was rarely pursued. Whereas in Turkey, it is normal for people to probe in order to uncover suspected grounds for their childless marriage. Her decision to not take up the gender role of mother once again demonstrates the rational command with which she directs her life. Fulya attributes her flexibility and mobility between Canada and Turkey to this critical decision:

> I'm very happy with my decision. And this way, I was able to take care of my mom. Because I saw, for instance, in Canada, how these Turks came and raised their families. And back here, they have their parents still. Some did come, but some stayed back here. And they were just *torn* between their own families and their parents and relatives back in this country. And…terrible, terrible situations happened….some of [the parents back home in Turkey] were neglected… So, I guess that also affected my decision too. Because I knew if I had a child and put her or him in school, I knew that I would be limited…torn. I'm one person, you know, and I have to set my priorities and make my choices and decisions according to that. I'm just one person. I can't be a superwoman. I can't do everything.

By making the decision to not have children, Fulya declined the gender role of mother. In doing so, she enhanced her performance in the gendered role of daughter and caregiver for her ailing mother during her first return migration to Turkey.

**Relationship with family**

As previously mentioned, Fulya was brought up in a family which encouraged and developed the independence and self-sufficiency of her and her brothers. Her initial migration to Canada was thus a source of pride for her parents.

However, as the composition of her family changed over the years, Fulya felt that the expectations of her from her family also changed. Over the course of her first decade or so in Canada, her widowed mother often expressed her desire for Fulya to return to Turkey with Paul:

> My mom always wanted us to come here and get settled here. …we invited her, we almost begged her to come to Canada. I knew and Paul knew that she would love it…She was alone, and she just refused. She said "I traveled enough with your dad and I'm getting old now and I don't want to cross the ocean" or something. Maybe she had fears, who knows? She was aging.

Her mother's request was interpreted as a desire to have Fulya near rather than an expectation for her to return to settle. Instead of moving back, Fulya maintained her ties with family and friends in Turkey through frequent return visits, usually every summer. She expected her life course to continue in this manner; that is, until things changed in the late 1980s. First, her cherished oldest brother died suddenly in 1989. Then, within two years, her only surviving brother went through an acrimonious divorce which left him alone to look after his two kids. These events mark critical departures in Fulya's migration intentions and plans. Up to that point, Fulya saw her life as being completely self-directed, and she had expected it to continue like this. Her return migration to Turkey:

> …was not in the cards for a while. At least, we didn't see that coming. I thought I had my two brothers here…in case of a crisis…and I thought that I could live my life. At least unless a real crisis happened.

With these changes in the structure of her family:

> Things changed and suddenly I didn't have the network anymore…the family network. And my mother wouldn't be independent anymore. And I said, I can't expect my brother to be there for my mom. He's a mother and a father – literally. So, that's it. These things happen I guess.

So when her mother became very ill in the late 1990s, Fulya felt as though the rest of the family would expect her to return to Turkey to care for her. It was out of this sense of duty and her great love for her mother that she returned to Turkey, along with Paul, to care for her in 1999.

During this first return migration episode to act as a caregiver, Fulya made several sacrifices. By living with her mother for the first two years, she gave up some of the

autonomy connected with having one's own abode. Without complaining, Fulya suggests that the living arrangements were not always ideal: "She couldn't take care of this place and, toward the end she was saying, 'Oh, don't touch that….don't touch that'. [laughs] So we couldn't repair anything. We couldn't do any improvements." These inconveniences were minor and were entirely offset by Fulya's sense of contentment at having fulfilled what she considered to be her obligation as a daughter and caregiver:

> …[my mother] thanked me so much, at the end …just before she died, she was thanking me. She was saying, "I wish that all mothers had daughters like you." [long emotional pause] That's a great comfort.

The fulfillment of these role obligations was accomplished by way of her return migration. Fulya's commitment to her gendered family obligations indicates the power with which social institutions such as the family shape and determine the geographic mobility of women.

Now, during their second return migration episode, Fulya and Paul try to get together with family often. However, Fulya sometimes finds these gatherings difficult, because she is reminded of the loss of her dear brother. Still, she enjoys being closer to her two nieces and nephew, all of whom live in Ankara. Reflecting on her surviving brother's messy divorce, Fulya feels that she and Paul can be an example of a healthy marriage for her niece and nephew:

> So what Paul and I are trying really to give them [is] the other side, like, it could be like this. Yes, this marriage didn't work, but it happens. But you know, there's this alternative…And they see how supportive of each other we are, and, *despite* the fact that we don't have children.

Earlier, it was discussed the ways in which Fulya regarded herself as a representative of Turkey, and Turkish values and people during her times abroad. Now that she is in Turkey, she wishes to influence and inspire by example the ideas that her nieces and nephew are developing about committed relationships and marriage.

**Work Context**

A key pull factor which influenced Fulya and Paul's most recent decision to return to Turkey was the opportunity to semi-retire and undertake more self-directed projects:

> We went back [to Canada after their first return to Turkey] and we said, you know, we could retire! We're not trying to put children through university or anything, and whatever the pension that Paul would get would be enough. And I would be teaching and we would do projects. And we just looked at our financial situation and we said it would be enough. And we can live in Turkey, we have a home here. Let's not sell it. It was renovated already, basic renovations were made. And we said, we'll just work on it a bit more and see how we like it. If we like it we'll stay.

Therefore, this return episode is bound up in both their lifecourse and lifestyle. That is, as they approach the end of their working lives, they took stock of their professional and personal ambitions, and found that by moving to Turkey, they would be in a position to better and more easily fulfill them.

By returning, Fulya and Paul were both able leave their habitual work places in academia and the job security that goes along with it. In Turkey, they have been able to pursue joint projects which are self-determined in scope and content, allowing them great independence. Some of the major focus areas in the couple's on-going projects include human rights, conflict resolution, and crisis management. While Fulya's academic background in languages, education and culture constitutes a good fit with these themes, she also notes the positive influence of her Canadian experience on her current work projects, saying that it had a huge impact:

> …because Turkish society is more….unicultural. Well, there are minorities here but they're almost invisible because of the dominant culture. It shouldn't be so. And of course Canada is a huge example for multiculturalism. The things that I learned [in Canada]… First of all, bilingualism. I had a course on that when I was doing my PhD on bilingualism. What is bilingualism really? I didn't know! Although I was a bilingual person….I was a bilingual person in a unicultural society. And then experiencing this Canadian experience was a huge thing for

> me. So I learned among Canadians and got to understand what the problems could be and what the advantages could be. So that huge accumulation of experience and knowledge of course helped me greatly…and getting together with Paul and working with Paul, of course I learned a lot. And then we traveled with that knowledge and with that expertise, and met others.

Fulya expresses her sense of belonging in both countries—of being both Turkish *and* Canadian. However, her narrative reveals that she is not always evaluated as such by others:

> I find that people have very little knowledge of Turkey and Turkish politics, Turkish experience. They just get information from the media, and that's not sufficient. So, in fact, Paul gives them a lot of information *as a Westerner*, which is probably even more valuable. Because they might think I'm biased as a Turk. But he gives a lot of information, for instance, if the European Union issues come up, he has his side of things….

Although she says that she considers herself as a Canadian, she accepts being judged as inferior to Westerners who were *born* in the West. By deferring to Paul as an unbiased authority on Turkey, she strengthens an unbalanced dialectic between the East and the West which privileges the allegedly all-knowing, rational West. At the same time, by excluding herself from the definition of a true Westerner, she devalues the sixteen years she spent living in Canada and inadvertently reinforces the subordinate position of immigrants in countries of settlement.

Since returning to Turkey, Fulya and Paul's work life has become more flexible and relaxed. Thanks in part to their convenient location on the periphery of Europe, they are able to take advantage of many opportunities to travel to conferences and seminars abroad. Their frequent travels to Europe have roused their interest in re-migrating part-time to another country, in particular Sweden. Their vast experience and networks in academia, their stable financial condition, limited family connections left in Turkey, and previous migration experiences all act together to create fertile conditions for an eventual re-migration decision.

As a specialist in languages and cultures, she is very well equipped to understand and deal with the changes that take place when one moves between and interacts with different people from different backgrounds. As she puts it:

> I'm a language and cultures specialist, so I know all about ethnicity and culture shock and all those things…And anomie, when you feel that you're between two countries. When you don't feel you belong to this country and you don't feel you belong to the other country… You know, I think that I belong to both. I don't feel that I'm sort of at limbo or anything like that. I can adjust to both situations very well. Maybe it's because of my nature, maybe it's because I'm a curious person. I like to learn, and I like to interact with people. I like that. Maybe that helps me.

As someone who resided in Canada for sixteen years and who has been married to a Canadian for twenty years, Fulya has the strongest connection to Canada of all the participants. Their decision to not have children and the flexibility of their academic professions has allowed them the most mobility over the years, so that Fulya never felt torn between Turkey and her adopted homeland.

## 6.2 Sibel returned and had to relearn life in Turkey

### 6.2.1 Living in Turkey and motivation for migration

Sibel was born in 1975 in Ankara, where she and her brother were raised by her divorced mother in an upper middle class secular household. From a young age, Sibel was keen to learn English. She learned as much as possible from her mother, who was an English teacher at a local university, and by reading English books and watching English-language movies. While Sibel was a teenager, her mother remarried to a Canadian professional, Gary, who was working with an international organization on a project based in Turkey. Sibel describes her relationship with Gary as a close one: "Gary was like, not a second, but a first father to us."

After completing her undergraduate degree in Business Administration from an exclusive private university in Ankara, Sibel worked as a legal assistant to a Canadian partner in an Ankara-based law practice. After working in this firm for two years, she decided to pursue a Masters of Business Administration (MBA) degree in Canada. Because her stepfather is Canadian, Sibel was granted landed immigrant status in Canada and could thereby enjoy the same tuition fees as citizens of the country.[20] She applied and was accepted to a 'fast-track' three-semester MBA program at a university in Windsor in southern Ontario.

### 6.2.2 The initial migration process and reasons for return

Sibel moved to Windsor on her own in 1998, with the support and encouragement of her mother and stepfather. Her social network upon arrival consisted only of her stepsister who was four hundred kilometres away in Toronto, and her brief relationship with a Turkish boyfriend who studied in the neighbouring American city of Detroit. Although Sibel had been to Canada on vacation before, she found her first month living there to be difficult. Most challenging for her was adjusting to living in the dormitory and learning the subtleties and slang of the English language. However, before long she had become friends with other residents from her dormitory and from her program. She recalls finding it easier to befriend Canadian students than other international students, and she even had a Canadian boyfriend during part of her time studying there.

Sibel completed the MBA program in one and a half years, and afterwards she returned to Turkey to contemplate her next career move. After three months of deliberating, she made up her mind to return to Canada—this time to Toronto—to acquire Canadian work experience. Back in Canada, she lived with her stepsister for a few months while

[20] In Canada, tuition fees for Canadian students are almost three times lower than those paid by international students (Statistics Canada, 2004).

seeking employment. Immediately after finding a job, she began renting an apartment and enjoyed the freedom of living on her own.

Her first job was in the Canadian division of an international consumer goods company. She worked as an assistant product manager and was involved in each stage of the product development and marketing. She was eventually promoted to a category manager position with even more responsibility. Although she enjoyed the professional learning opportunities accompanying this job, she became tired of competition and conflicts among co-workers.

In the meantime, Sibel's personal life was suffering. Because she had to spend several hours each day on public transportation commuting to and from work, she was having a difficult time making new Canadian friends. What is more, she had only maintained contact with a few friends from her MBA program. With time, she began to establish friendships with other Turks whom she met through a mutual friend based in Turkey.

In addition to the long daily commuting times, Sibel's social life was inhibited by her financial situation. Although she was earning a reasonable salary, after paying for food, transportation, and her expensive apartment rental fees, she was left with very little spending money each month. When the lease for her apartment expired after one year, she moved in with another young woman. Not only did this ease her rental payments, but it also had a positive impact on her social life. During the period of a little over a year that they lived together, Sibel met new friends and was able to save enough money for a down payment toward the purchase of her own condominium apartment located in Toronto's downtown core.

After working with the same company for a few years, she decided it was time for a change, and she eventually secured a position as a financial planner for a global confectionery producer. Sibel thoroughly enjoyed her new job. From day one, she felt

valued by the company, and she appreciated its particularly collegial workplace atmosphere.

Toronto was beginning to feel like home to Sibel. She owned her own condominium and car, and she had acquired Canadian citizenship. Her high income permitted her to travel with friends on a regular basis to destinations such as New York, the Bahamas, and Mexico for shopping, cultural activities, and relaxation. Sibel's main circle of friends largely consisted of Turks. On a few occasions, they came together on Turkish *bayrams* (national or religious holidays). She also maintained local family links by joining her stepsister's family to celebrate Canadian holidays from time to time. In addition, when her brother moved from Turkey to work in Canada, he lived with Sibel in her one-bedroom apartment. She kept in touch with family and friends in Turkey through frequent telephone conversations and annual visits there.

It was during one of these return trips to Turkey that she was introduced by a friend to her future husband Emre. After getting to know each other mostly by telephone, they married spontaneously the following year during her subsequent visit to Turkey. With her decision to get married, she also decided to move back to Turkey to move in with her new husband. So at the end of her holiday, she returned to Canada for three months to wrap up her life there. She resigned from her beloved job after training a new employee to replace her. After leaving Canada, but before moving back to Turkey, she and Emre went on a two-week honeymoon to Cuba.

### 6.2.3 The return migration process and how she coped

After migrating to Canada six years earlier, Sibel returned to Turkey in 2004. Not only did she have to adjust to living in her birth country once again, she also faced significant personal and professional adjustments. In Toronto, she had grown

accustomed to her life as a single and successful career woman. Upon her return, she found married life to be strange, and she had difficulties establishing a new career.

Her first year back in Ankara was particularly difficult. Although she had returned knowing that she would suffer a salary reduction, her expectations of finding meaningful employment quickly dissipated. She explains that, in Turkey, virtually all corporate headquarters are located in Istanbul. The fact that she and Emre resided in Ankara was therefore a major drawback for her career.

After several unsuccessful months of seeking employment, Sibel began to feel alienated and depressed. Emre tried to ease her adjustment period by giving her spending money and by organizing holidays to Europe for the two of them. The latter helped somewhat to improve Sibel's frame of mind as she began to realize that living in Turkey, because of its proximity to Europe, offers many travel opportunities.

Still, Sibel chose not to share her feelings with Emre because she felt he would not understand. Instead, she chose to confide in girlfriends who, having also lived abroad, could sympathize with her. As it happens, Sibel's social network in Turkey now mostly consists of foreigners or Turks with overseas experience. While she generally finds it easier to establish deep friendships with Turks than with foreigners, she emphasizes that she can only relate to those Turks who possess a modern mind-set.

For the past two years, Sibel has been working as a general manager for the Ankara branch of a company which provides professional office space around the world. Although the company is global, the scope of Sibel's job is local and bears little resemblance to her Canadian professional endeavours. She continues to search for employment opportunities offering more professional challenge and latitude.

In spite of her less-than-fulfilling work life, there are many things that Sibel enjoys about life in Turkey. In particular, she enjoys the proximity to her mother and Gary as

well as the ability to procure luxury goods and services such as pedicures, golf lessons, and domestic help far cheaper than they are available in Canada.

Still, Sibel misses Canada and is saddened by the idea that she is falling behind in the subtle changes which are undoubtedly taking place in Canadian society. Consequently, besides going to visit at least once a year, she maintains several significant links there. For example, she has retained her Canadian bank accounts and her apartment in Toronto, and she has not officially declared herself a non-resident to Canadian authorities. She explains that these links are not only practical, but also emotionally significant:

> …emotionally, I really wouldn't like to admit, not to myself or anyone, that okay now I'm done with Canada. Like, OK, I'm done with Canada, I'm not living there, I'm living here. For some reason, I always have this thing, like Canada is always a part of me. It will always be a part of me. Or I'm a part of Canada. [laughs] One way or another, it's always like a cushion for me to fall back onto.

It is not surprising, then, that Sibel still contemplates re-migrating to live in Canada again one day. In the meantime, she says she does not regret returning to Turkey and will stay here "for the foreseeable future".

### 6.2.4 Interpretive reflections in social and work contexts

Sibel sums up what she sees as the effects of her return migration in the following sentence: "Socially, [my return migration experience has] been good. Career-wise, it's been horrible." During the remainder of this section, we will examine these social and career aspects of Sibel's migration processes more closely.

#### Social Context

#### Family

Sibel migrated to Canada alone to study and, in doing so, demonstrated a great deal of independence and self-sufficiency. However, her access to education and propensity to

migrate to Canada must also be understood as a function of the conditions and opportunities provided by the socialization processes of her family. First of all, until adolescence, Sibel's family was headed by her single, professional, Western-educated mother. In this upper middle class household, language skills and education were highly valued. Already from an early age, Sibel learned that it is possible for a woman to succeed in both personal and professional spheres on her own.

Her world-view extended beyond the borders of Turkey as result of her early experiences with foreign languages and travel, and a special interest for Canada in particular grew out of her relationship with her Canadian stepfather, Gary. Sibel's migration status upon her initial move to Canada was as a dependent family member of Gary. Not only did this status facilitate her entry into Canada, but it also allowed her to benefit from paying domestic rather than international student fees at her university. Therefore, although she physically migrated unaccompanied, Sibel's initial migration to Canada can be said to have been shaped by a patriarchal conditioning of choice of destination, as well as androcentric structures underlying Canadian immigration policy. In addition, her family's class position influenced her ability to migrate.

The reaction of Sibel's parents to her return migration was mixed. Her mother was thrilled that she was returning because it meant that they would be able to see more of each other. Her mother's outlook was shaped by traditional female gender roles in which the family is the priority. To her, it seemed like a natural decision for Sibel to move back to be near her family and new husband. Sibel describes Gary's reaction as one of surprise and disappointment: "He [said], 'You've got yourself a house, a great job…What are you doing coming back?'" This statement reveals his career- rather than family-orientation to migration.

Throughout Sibel's migration narrative on her time in Canada, there is very little mention of issues of family. Rather, her migration project seemed to be driven by her motivation for self-actualization through professional success. In this sense, her

abandonment of her career in Canada and subsequent return to Turkey to join her husband mark an important rupture in her migration project up until that point because her return was carried out for family-related reasons. However, as we will see later on, once in Turkey, the family sphere does not remain a priority for Sibel. Although they live in the same city, she sees very little of her own mother and stepfather. Her husband's family does not figure at all in the narrative. And as we will see later on in this section, her relationship with her husband is also not a strong feature in her narrative. Sibel seems to once again identify most strongly with her professional endeavours as opposed to her family relationships. Therefore, the losses she has suffered in her work life since her return have contributed all the more to her sense of disenchantment.

**Friendships and activities**

During Sibel's university program in Windsor, she tended to befriend Canadians because, as she put it: "I blended with the Canadians better than I blended with the international students for some reason." Although previous exposure to Canadian culture through her relationship with Gary probably contributed to this, her upper middle class upbringing in Turkey could also have been a factor. For the most part, the values held by her class position in Turkey and her upper middle class colleagues were congruous. In fact, most of the differences between Turkey and Canada to which Sibel had to adjust were superficial and consumption-oriented, such as distinctions in pop culture, fashion, slang in language, retail sales on public holidays, and trendy coffee shops.

While it may be true for the most part that Sibel adjusted easily to life in Canada, she did struggle with the loss of certain status privileges when she first moved there. For example, she found communal living in dormitories to be a challenge:

> I had never stayed at a dorm before. The only dorm experience that I had was through my friends who were staying at the dorm in [her exclusive private university in Ankara], and that was very different. [In Windsor]

> we all shared an apartment. Each apartment had a few rooms that each student had, and then we had a shared bathroom and a shared kitchen. So I went in and I was asking people, "So how often are these dorms cleaned?" I was told, "As often as you like to clean them!" …That was quite tough, in the first few weeks. And then I realized that I had to stop comparing, because that's what I was doing—constantly comparing [Turkey and Canada].

However, as she continued to work and succeed there, she began to appreciate the satisfaction she derived from her own accomplishments:

> Canada was my first experience as an individual, standing up on her own feet, getting her own job. I remember crying after the first time I drove my car out of the lot because, you know, I did it on my own. Because here you know, you see it I'm sure, there's a lot of family support. Whereas over there, people are used to doing things on their own. Here you kind of take it for granted that your parents are supposed to buy you a car, they're supposed to buy you a house if they can afford it.

Sibel's description of the 'normal' expectations of parents in Turkey is framed by her privileged upbringing. Over the course of her migration processes, Sibel began to espouse more achievement-oriented and less materialistic values. She is proud of her autonomous purchase of a condominium in downtown Toronto, and she expresses the great pleasure she derived from simple matters such as going for walks in casual summer clothing in Canada.

Back in Turkey, she experiences dissonance between what she describes as the 'laidback' Canadian lifestyle she grew to love and the importance placed on appearance and items of prestige in Turkish society:

> The amount of money people [in Turkey] spend in proportion to what they make on how they look is disproportionate, compared to [North America] I think. And I get upset a little bit, because that's what my life is turning into.

From her migration experience in Canada, Sibel returned to Turkey with new ideas and ways of dressing. She notes that she feels pressure from her friends to conform to

Turkish female standards of beauty, in which looks and style trump comfort and practicality:

> You know, I miss just the laidback lifestyle, whereas here, I always have to look so prim and proper. I get bored with that. My friends will say, "Why are you walking around in flipflops? Wear some shoes!" And I say, "Oh they're more comfortable…"

This type of social distance arising between non-migrants and returnees over conflicting normative expectations has been documented in literature on return migration (Huseby-Darvas, 2004; Stefansson, 2004b). The style of dress that she describes as being expected of her is a typical lifestyle marker of the upper middle class in Turkey. It is a conservative style which is dressy rather than casual. As the seat of Turkish bureaucracy, Ankara is especially known for the conformist manner in which its residents dress. Informal mechanisms of social control which serve to maintain the boundaries of what is proper or acceptable for a professional, secular Turkish woman to wear are at play here. Ultimately, Sibel chooses to conform to these pressures although she is not comfortable in doing so:

> And I realize that I have also changed since I came back to Turkey. I sometimes criticize myself saying I have become a more shallow person. I care more about, you know, what I wear, how I look, if my hair is done, and this and that. I criticize myself for it. But then I think, you know what, it's a matter of adapting to your environment.

It is interesting that Sibel bases her discomfort with Turkish clothing norms on a comparison with Canada where, it would seem from her narrative, such pressures do not exist. In fact, mechanisms of social control are in place in every society. Sibel's style of dressing both in Turkey before her initial migration and while in Canada was most certainly shaped by the mechanisms in place in each country. She experiences discomfort upon her return because, having lived abroad, she is now aware of these pressures as a form of social control.

Sibel calls attention to her keen ability to adapt to different milieus. Because of this, she feels at home in both Canada and in Turkey. However, she is not entirely satisfied with these multiple identifications as she feels that it prevents her from feeling entirely at home *in one place*:

> [Canada] was home for me. And Turkey is also home for me. And that's the hard thing. I think with everyone going and living abroad and then coming back to their own country… I think we're forever stuck between the two cultures. And we carry a bit of both within us and we just, I guess, take the things that we like from both cultures, and then amalgamate them. Whatever is good for us. I don't really think that I am a typical Turkish person. Neither do I think that I'm a typical Canadian person.

She describes how the impacts of her multiple identifications spill over into her social life and serve to differentiate her from her contemporaries. She says that people in Turkey sometimes consider her to be more Canadian "because I'm very outspoken, and I do things my own way. And the way I interact with people, I'm very comfortable, I don't shy away and things like that… and I speak English most of the time [laughs]!" Meanwhile, she says that Canadians usually consider her to be more Turkish than Canadian because of her tendency to ask personal questions which, in Canada, may seem invasive, but in Turkey are customary. What she is describing represents a common differentiation between the values and practices in individualistic vis-à-vis collectivist cultures. In Canada, which is more individualistic relative to Turkey, personal information is more closely guarded by individuals and is not usually discussed openly. According to Kağıtcıbaşı (as cited in Unsal, 2003, p.302) although Turkish society is increasingly individualistic, it still manages to maintain collectivistic values. In Turkey, discussing private matters is perceived as creating bonds between people and within groups.

What is interesting is that, although Sibel claims to feel equally at home in each country, her social networks in each do not consist of natives; that is, in Canada, the majority of her friends consisted of Turks, whereas in Turkey, her social network

consists mainly of foreigners (especially Canadians) or other Turks who have lived abroad.

Although in her narrative she does not convey having experienced discrimination during her time in Canada, Sibel does recall feelings of social distance and being the 'other' there. In Canada, she found it easier to both establish and maintain relationships with Turks than with Canadians. First of all, the cultural origins that she shared with Turks were an obvious starting point on which to establish friendships. Second of all, their initial meetings were coordinated by mutual Turkish friends in both Canada and Turkey. Although Sibel did maintain a few friendships which had grown out of her MBA program, she was insulted at the apparent ease with which most of her former Canadian classmates abandoned the friendships they had made. The following excerpt once again brings to light the dichotomy between the more individualistic norms in Canada vis-à-vis Sibel's expectations which are based on a more collectivistic understanding of friendship:

> I lost contact with almost every single person from the MBA school…even though when we were there we were extremely close. I was really appalled. Most of the ones that were closer to me were from Toronto. They just went back to their own lives, and really just stopped calling each other and calling me. So I was like, okay here we go again, start all over, find new friends! So that was tough.

Besides socializing with each other, her Turkish group of friends maintained symbolic links to Turkey by occasionally celebrating national holidays, or *bayrams*, together. In her narrative, Sibel asserts herself as a 'modern' Turk by emphasizing the secular nature of these celebrations and gatherings:

> While we were there, we did call each other and celebrate our *bayrams*, kind of like a joke thing. [laughing] We would dress up and go to each other's houses…sometimes…not every year. We did that twice or three times. Just for fun. And I'm not a very religious person, so I don't fast or really do anything that would [require me to do those] things over there. Because they're not really my things.

Back in Turkey, Sibel's social networks are restricted to foreigners—especially Canadians—and a few Turks who have also lived abroad. She retained very few of the friends that she had in Turkey before her migration to Canada, saying: "I found that…with some of the other people from my past, I didn't have much to share. We just didn't have much common ground anymore." Sibel thus describes the feeling of returning as if she came back to a place where everything was the same, yet she had to relearn it.

Her community of foreign friends in Ankara is a status group whose boundaries are marked by the common expatriate status of its members. Although status prestige is not *necessarily* linked with class distinction (Weber, 1971, p. 256), the women belonging to Sibel's community of foreign social contacts all stem from privileged backgrounds and share common life chances. Besides these internally-determined features, the foreign communities to which Sibel belongs are also distinguished by certain exclusionary practices. For example, she regularly attends a bi-weekly social event at the Canadian Embassy, for which access is restricted to the invited guests of Canadian diplomats. She also serves on the board of directors for a women's club which admits only holders of foreign passports.

Although the members of these communities comprise the greater part of Sibel's social networks in Ankara since her return, these friendships do not usually extend beyond a superficial level. Sibel outlines three qualities that she has found her closest friends have in common: (1) they are Turkish, (2) she perceives them to be 'modern', and (3) they have lived abroad. First, she feels that friendships with Turks are usually more meaningful because of their common collectivistic approach to relationships:

> But always, my closer friends have been the Turkish friends. I can establish friendships easily with foreign people; I can relate and I can make sure that they relate. But it's always a wall, I feel, because of the culture. Us Turks, we talk about everything. That's kind of our way of dealing with problems in our lives. Rather than go see a shrink, we talk to each other and complain about our husband, complain about this,

> complain about that. I find foreign people more private. And so, they don't always prefer to talk… Sometimes they think that it may not be right, or it might be rude sometimes. So I think it's about keeping your privacy. Whereas, in Turkey, there is no privacy. It's about personal space.

Once again, Sibel finds herself located on both sides of this private/shared, individualistic/collectivistic dichotomy:

> I think I'm kind of in between. I mean it's relative…You might find a Turkish person to be too intimate, and I think she's fine. But then another Turkish person will be too much for me. It's just different levels. If you're standing in line, or you're standing in the elevator, people will really snuggle up to you. And that's really annoying to me. But that's Eastern, that's how they do it.

It is interesting to note that when Sibel begins to feel that her comfort zone is invaded, she attributes it to the traditions of the East. According to her, her friends must possess a 'modern' mind-set. Her definition of modern, besides being secular and oriented to the West, is rooted in the idea that 'traditional' forms of gender relations are Eastern and outdated. In the next passages, she describes the frustration and disappointment she felt when she learned that her friends do not all share her 'modern' way of thinking:

> A few weeks ago, my girlfriend and I went to Istanbul [with] her husband. He had two [male] friends with him and another two girlfriends that me and my girlfriend knew. So it was a big group. So I talked to everyone, and I talked to those guys as well. And at the end of the evening, I realized that my friend and her husband got really disturbed because I was talking to those two [other men], and especially one of them. And she said, "Well, you know, he came to us and was asking questions about how your marriage is going and this and that." You know, this guy is a friend of a friend of mine and a person to be a friend of mine has to be of *modern mind-set*, and so his friend has to be modern as well. *Modern looking, normal looking people.* And then, he can get this perception that just because I'm having a conversation with him that I might be interested, even though I didn't give any signal or anything like that, it really frustrated me…. because of Turkish tradition, now that I'm married, if I talk to someone and I'm seen from outside as talking too close, people might gossip about that. There is just a weird sexual thing here in Turkey. People are always observing what you're doing, what

> you're saying, how you're acting, to judge you. Whether [or not] you're a good girl…

Sibel perceives that she must censor her interactions with men other than her husband as a married woman in Turkey. If not, she risks being the subject of gossip and other forms of ostracism. Whereas she feels that her way of thinking is modern and 'normal', she finds her friends' comments to be more closely linked to Eastern traditions, which are concerned with the protection of a woman's honour:

> I realized then, that I have created this own isolated world for me where I think that everyone thinks and feels the same way that I do, and even within that group there are, well, maybe some people who are way more Turkish that I am. And I think that's a Turkish thing. Or maybe that's an Arabic thing. I don't know what it is, but it's weird.

As Fox (1977) explained, the honour of a woman in Muslim societies depends not only on *her* behaviour around men, but also on *their* behaviour around her. Indeed, the method of social control present in the excerpt above is more strongly associated with Islamic tradition. However, Sibel's interpretation neglects the fact that gender roles and relations in Canada and the West are also highly directed by pervasive patriarchal systems. Forms of intergender social control are present in every society. Although she might not be aware of it, Sibel's conduct in mixed-sex contexts in Canada was also undoubtedly shaped by such mechanisms.

The third main quality that Sibel requires of a good friend is that they have lived abroad. For her, the social capital they have in common on account of their international experiences is critical in order to be able to truly understand one another. Therefore, it is an important distinguishing feature among her closest friends.

Sibel's social networks, as depicted through her narrative, are wide and varied. However, it seems that she experiences very few intimate friendships. Even in her description of her marital relationship, there appears to be very little passion and very few common interests. It is worthy of note that her husband, Emre, has not lived abroad.

**(Non-)relations with husband**

After a brief transatlantic love affair, Sibel admits that her decision to marry Emre, a man sixteen years her senior, was a rushed one. When she married him, all that had been central to the life she had built for herself, especially the job that she loved and her independence, were perceived as secondary to her husband's career. It was taken for granted that she would sacrifice her job in Canada to move back to Turkey for him. What is more, the option of relocating to the economic capital of Turkey, Istanbul, where she could have enjoyed some professional success and mobility, was not even considered:

> No, he's a civil engineer and he and his partner have been building residential homes here in Ankara, for as long, well, since they graduated basically from school, so there was never any talk of him moving…

Clearly, a move by Emre would have meant a step downward on the professional ladder for him. However, the downward mobility was also acute for Sibel, who was already earning a very high salary, especially for someone in her mid-twenties. Therefore, the fact that there was no discussion about who would have to make that sacrifice is indicative of the patriarchal underpinnings that shape notions which favour males as the head of the household.

With Emre now situated as the main breadwinner in their relationship, we will investigate whether such traditional gender roles also extend to their household duties. Already in his mid-forties at the time of their marriage, Emre had his own household and was established professionally. It is quite likely that a single man of his age and class in Turkey would have hired help to look after his household. In this case, instead of establishing a home together with Emre, Sibel was integrated into his existing routines and way of life when she moved to Turkey. They hire a helper at home so that they do not have to do any of the cooking or cleaning themselves. Sibel speaks of this as an affordable luxury in Turkey (compared to Canada where such services are very expensive), which frees her of household duties so that she can focus on her career.

However, it is interesting to ponder whether this can indeed be considered liberating. First of all, rather than challenging patriarchal conceptions of the family and home as spheres of the woman, hiring another woman to tend to one's household instead reinforces those stereotypes. Furthermore, because Sibel is left with no meaningful functions at home, the only sphere where she can be active and feel valued is limited to her job.

Until the point of her return, a major theme running throughout Sibel's migration processes is her sense of ambition and orientation toward achieving a successful professional life. Her return to Turkey conflicted with these values. In her narrative, she appears to attempt to harmonize this discord by claiming that she was "kind of ready to come back home because…coming back home was always kind of at the back of my mind it's just that…you know… when you get in this routine and you can't really get up and make a move?" In her next breath, however, she recalls, "…my job was so great. And I had a mortgage there. Job's good, life's just starting to…" She lets her voice trail off here. The researcher interprets this as a nostalgic reminiscence of her 'good old life' where she lived according to her own terms.

In order to cope with the abandonment of these critical elements of her identity, Sibel does not speak of her migration as a finished project. As much as possible, she tries to keep her life in Canada a reality. One strategy for achieving this is by entirely excluding Emre from that part of her life. Instead of confiding in him about her struggles in adapting upon her return, she chooses instead to open her heart to her closed community of girlfriends who have lived abroad and have undergone similar trials. Moreover, on her annual (and sometimes biannual) visits to Toronto, she is accompanied by a girlfriend rather than her husband, because "it's just more fun that way".

Not only does Sibel entertain the possibility of one day returning to Canada and resuming her own career path there, Emre does not figure into these reveries, as

evidenced in the following quote: "And then, I'm thinking if one day we get a divorce or something, I probably would not go to Istanbul, but I would go to, probably back to, Toronto." Obviously, re-migrating to Canada is still a very real option in Sibel's mind, despite her marriage. However, there are other personal factors which could influence her ultimate decision. At the age of 32, Sibel is almost at the point in her life cycle where it is necessary to elect whether or not to have children. It does not seem that there is any pressure from Emre for them to have children. And with only one fleeting reference to children in her narrative, the matter does not seem to concern her either. However, this could be a deciding factor in whether or not she is able to return to Canada, should she wish to do so.

**Work Context**

There were many structural factors which had an impact on Sibel's professional course of action. Her initial ambitions were no doubt fostered by her early socialization period. First, her mother set an example by managing a successful teaching career while raising her children on her own. This undoubtedly demonstrated to Sibel that there is more to the life of a woman than her family life. Her business interests and savvy may have a stronger correlation to her relationship with her stepfather, who originally came to Turkey with a United Nations agency working on labour issues and who is presently teaching business classes at a university in Ankara.

After Sibel completed her MBA in Canada in the late 1990s, she chose to seek employment there rather than to begin a career in Turkey. This decision was facilitated by Canadian immigration policy, which granted her the right to work in Canada as a dependent of her Canadian stepfather, Gary. However, the poor economic situation in Turkey at the time was also a push factor which helped shape her decision:

> So after I finished the MBA program in 1999…I had this excruciating 3-month 'what do I do?' period where I came to Turkey and then I was talking to different people, "Can I get a job? Can I get a good job? What do I do?" And I think that was after the first devaluation [of the Turkish

> lira] and the economy was not that great at the time. So everyone told me, you know it's not just the school experience, you should just go back and get some work experience there as well. So I said okay and so I went back.

In her description of her work life in Canada, Sibel demonstrates a lot of confidence in her professional abilities and a willingness to take up challenges:

> What I was doing with Company A was totally marketing, and what I was doing over here [at Company B] was financial planning for the sales team. [It] had nothing to do with what I did before. It wasn't a big problem. There was one other person that was doing the same job when I started and he got sick with the chicken pox my first week when they had to get all of their major reporting done. So, [laughing] I really learned a lot!

Contributing to this confidence and eagerness to learn was her sense of being valued by the company:

> That company was great. I think it's the best company I have ever worked for and the best company I will ever work for in my whole life. They have been so nice. From the moment that they started interviewing me, they wanted to find out where I lived, how I would get to work, because they were…really far [from where I lived], and there was no public transportation, so I had to get a car somehow. So they calculated everything. They made me three separate offers. They made me one offer and then they went back. And the next time, I was ready to sign and they came back with another number—increasing it—saying, "We don't think that's going to be enough for you." And then they came back with a third offer! I was ready to somehow make it work because I wanted to work for that company. But they made it really work.

After her positive experiences in Canada, she arrived in Turkey confident that she would be able to find meaningful work. She initially saw her return as a chance to reinvent herself as a self-employed entrepreneur, but she soon realized that her skills and experience were not valued as much as she had expected them to be:

> I first wanted to do my own thing. Start up a business, find a new idea... [I] couldn't find anything and I decided, 'You know what? I don't really know this market at all'. I wanted to do small business consulting. I

> looked around, [and found] there's really no decent small business here because most businesses are family businesses and family businesses have this notion of "Oh, we know it better than anyone, so we don't really need a consultant." So then I started looking for a job.

Considering the ease with which she had found interesting work in Canada, it is not surprising that Sibel was discouraged by the limited opportunities available in the local labour market after she returned. As she puts it:

> The toughest thing about coming back to Turkey, I think, was finding a good job for myself. Because, you know, I had loved my last job. And even the one before it that I didn't *love*…still I learned so much and I was doing so many important things, I thought.

Because virtually all of the head offices of large consumer packaged goods companies in Turkey are based in Istanbul, she could not find jobs in the upper management or executive-level echelons in Ankara. She feels that if she had been in Istanbul, she would have had more opportunities to work in her field. However, even if that had been the case, she still would have likely suffered a downgrading in her career given the structural constraint of Turkey's weaker position in the global economy relative to Canada. Sibel illustrates this disparity by recalling differences in available technologies:

> I worked for a company doing a job that existed because of the technology that existed. And that technology does not exist in Turkey yet. And I've been here three years. And that technology exists because there was Wal-Mart there, and you could watch real-time what you were shipping, and what you were selling, and what each client was buying from you or if somebody was buying from you. Here, it's not like that. It's more the numbers and the reports that are monthly. It is not real-time in the consumer packaged goods industry [in Turkey].

In her quest for employment in Ankara, she found herself applying to entry level positions and, even then, having her skills and experience doubted by potential employers:

> At one point I went to [an interview for a] junior assistant to project manager position [said with some distaste in her voice]. *That's something I could have done before I left Turkey.* And you know, all the experiences that I had [were listed on] my résumé…you know…product development, and the management of the product cycle, and the pilot project. It was a panel interview and the lady on the panel said, "You mean you *observed* the projects, you can't have *managed* them." So here, I'm getting challenged during an interview, saying "Oh, you're lying!" What do you say to that?! What do you say to that?! I was really disappointed.

Also disheartening was the extent to which her earning potential dropped. She recalls, "At my last job, I was making over $100,000 and the money that people were offering me here was [noise of disgust]...One guy even offered me one billion [Turkish lira] a month!"[21]

Her job search upon her return lasted one year, during which time she grew increasingly miserable. Emre tried to help her feel independent by leaving money for her when he left for work in the mornings. However, this only made matters worse by confirming a disturbing truth in her mind; that is: she was no longer the self-actualizing, independent, successful businesswoman who had headed her own household in Toronto. Instead, she was now professionally demoted, and a member of someone else's household—the salary of whom she depended on.

In a sense, Sibel's life was redirected by her marriage. What was earlier the defining feature of her life—her career—became inconsequential compared to Emre's in ascertaining the status of their household. Still, being employed was an important part of her identity, so she elected to work even though she did not need to financially, and although it entailed a significant demotion. After being recommended by a friend, she was hired for her current job as the general manager of a company providing professional office space in Ankara. Although she is not challenged or stimulated by

[21] In 2004, one billion Turkish lira was equivalent to approximately ten times less than Sibel's most recent monthly salary in Canada.

the job, she remains motivated to work because in so doing she feels useful. To her, one must work outside of the home in order to be recognized as a contributing member of society.

This economic focus is consistent with the rational, methodical decision-making style that she exhibits throughout her narrative. Her spontaneous decision to get married and return to Turkey seems to reveal a lapse in this approach. Nonetheless, given her utilitarian disposition, it is unlikely that the outcomes of her decision were completely uncalculated. First of all, she expected it to be much easier for her to find meaningful work in Turkey. Second, although she expected a reduction in pay, she almost certainly calculated that her standard of living would not suffer given Emre's lucrative salary.

With Emre's high income, Sibel's standard of living in Turkey is as high, if not higher, than it was in Canada. She goes regularly for manicures and pedicures, has a domestic worker visit her home twice per week to do all the cooking and cleaning, and often travels internationally. She also regularly participates in exclusive recreational activities, such as golf and tennis. In effect, it is her husband's place in the productive sphere that determines Sibel's place in the consumption sphere.

Now that she is married, her salary is no longer needed to finance her lifestyle. However, she cannot be fulfilled simply through a life of leisure. From her narrative, she seems disenchanted and at times disinterested by leisure and conspicuous consumption:

> I get bored for example. I hate Saturdays. Can you imagine someone hating Saturdays? I hate Saturdays. I like weekdays, because *I feel more useful*. Coming to work and doing things. Even though I don't love my job, but at least I'm contributing to the economy or doing something for some people. Whereas on Saturday, I go get my nails done because I don't have anything better to do. I've thought about it, why do I do that? Well, what am I gonna do on a Saturday morning and get up, especially if it's winter? What do you do? What do you do?

In this passage, Sibel's utilitarian disposition is again evident. She feels *useful* by going to work, even if it is to a job that she does not enjoy. She is bored by luxurious leisure activities, not necessarily because she finds them superficial, but because they are not derived from *her* achievements in the work sphere. In this sense, by returning to Turkey, Sibel did not lose in financial terms. Rather, she lost her sense of feeling valued. The money she earns now does not enhance her power position in the household because it is simply pocket money. Therefore, although she is working, she is not emancipated; she is dependent on her husband.

It is interesting in the passage above that Sibel expresses an interest in "doing something for some people", yet she does not choose to dedicate her free time to charity work. Her description of life upon her return to Turkey reveals her steadfast fixation on working, to the extent that she is socially isolated. She expects to be emancipated through her work. But because her career in Turkey will never come close to the one she had in Canada, she is destined to remain feeling professionally devalued and dissatisfied as long as she remains in Turkey or married to Emre:

> One thing that really disappointed me about coming back to Turkey, basically Ankara, is I feel like I have to basically put a stop to my career and my career ends here. I don't know what I'm going to do next and I can't get excited about getting places in my work life. I have been said by my manager, "Because you are in Ankara, we are not going to do anything with you. If you move to Istanbul, you will become this and you will become that." They openly told me that. [But going to Istanbul is not an option], not as long as I am married to Emre.

Sibel has several strategies she employs to maintain the sense that she is in control of her life since her return. Besides hiring a domestic worker to free her from traditional gender roles in the home, she continues looking for other work in Turkey. However, because her search mostly entails consulting the career section of the local Sunday edition newspaper, one must wonder if her efforts are genuine. In most countries, networks are important for finding a job, but this is especially true of Turkey. She could choose to leverage the high status of her family and social circles if she were

truly committed to building her life there. Another option for her to consider, now that she has had time to reacquaint herself with the Turkish market, would be entrepreneurship. Also exceptional, but not impossible given her socio-economic status, would be the possibility of commuting between Canada and Turkey for work.

Despite various potential options, Sibel's search for employment is inadequate. Instead, her main strategy for preserving a sense of hope and self-direction is to keep her Canadian dream alive. She does so by maintaining strong ties through relationships with Canadians in Turkey and by traveling there often. But perhaps most importantly, by excluding Emre from this part of her life, she is able to imagine herself resuming her life there as it was: single, independent, and successful. She thus clings to her possible re-migration project as her own private dream, an escape route. In the interim, she remains non-committal about her future plans:

> There are things that I miss from Canada, and when I'm in Canada, there are a lot of things that I miss from Turkey. So it's just about, I guess, accepting those things. And thinking, well this is what I chose to do *for the foreseeable future*, and this is what I'm doing.

Perhaps it will take something drastic like a pregnancy to make her mind up to stay in Turkey for good. Or on the other hand, it may take a broken marriage to finally compel her to re-migrate to Canada. What is certain is that her return migration has not only adversely affected her career in Turkey, but also in Canada should she eventually re-migrate. There, she would not necessarily be able to pick up where she left off. As she puts it:

> By the time I go back to Canada, that technology will have also evolved and I will have to do something else. I mean, I cannot go back to my old job. Even if I went back now, it would just not happen. I'd have to find something else.

## 6.3 Deniz feels that she belongs to Turkey

### 6.3.1 Living in Turkey and motivation for migration

Deniz was born in 1983 into an affluent family in Ankara. Her father's lucrative income as a lawyer provided a very comfortable lifestyle for her family in the city's most exclusive neighbourhoods. She socialized and went shopping regularly, and got her hair done at a salon two to three times per week. She also attended private schools, where she learned English from a young age. While Deniz was in high school, her only sibling, Tolga, migrated to Halifax, Canada to study. After completing high school, Deniz decided to follow in her brother's footsteps by moving to Halifax to pursue a bachelor's degree. She applied and was accepted into one of the city's many universities.

### 6.3.2 The initial migration process and reasons for return

In 2002, at the age of eighteen, Deniz migrated to Halifax and moved in with her brother. There, she began a four-year undergraduate degree program in international development studies (IDS), with a minor in sociology. Her choice of program was driven by her desire to eventually work to improve the situation of poor people in Turkey's eastern provinces. Besides finding her courses stimulating, she felt that her educational experience abroad was particularly enriched by the diversity of her classmates who stemmed from all corners of the globe.

Outside of school, Deniz found it difficult to adjust to her new life in Halifax. First, the textbook English that she had learned in school had not adequately prepared her for her daily activities in Canada. In general, she found people there to be self-absorbed and uncultured. As a very sociable person, she longed for a sense of community, and disliked what she calls the 'hi-and-bye' culture in Canada. That is, she felt that

Canadians were friendly and polite on the surface, but remained distant and would rarely set aside time to get to know new people.

Deniz also found Haligonians to be very ignorant about Turkey. This came as a big surprise to her, because she had expected Canada to be very open-minded and liberal given its culturally diverse population. Instead, she was often confronted with ethnocentric people who held erroneous stereotypes about Turkey. Frustrated by this, she was motivated to learn more about her country so that she could better represent it. In her school projects and presentations, Deniz touched on issues pertinent to her country as much as possible. She made a great effort to correct people's biased notions of Turkey as a backwards and traditional country, and to inform them about its modern history. She also felt that she could represent her country through her actions. To demonstrate Turkish hospitality, she often brought gifts of baklava or homemade Turkish jewellery to neighbours and friends. She felt that the regular 'Turkish' events that she organized in Halifax together with the up-and-coming new Turkish-Canadian generation also effectively raised awareness and promoted a positive image of their homeland.

Many times, she felt very lonely and considered returning to Turkey. At those times, she convinced herself to stay by reminding herself of how privileged she was to have the opportunity to study abroad. She chose to make the most of her time in Canada and to develop herself as much as possible. She did so by travelling, working on improving her English language skills, and playing active roles in student organizations at her university, such as the International Development Students' Society, the Students' Coalition Against War, and the Palestinian Solidarity Society.

Of the few Canadians that Deniz did befriend, most were also from the IDS program, as she found them to be more open-minded and informed than others. However, her circle of friends in Halifax mostly consisted of other international students. She found

herself especially drawn to friendships with other Turks or Arabs with similar cultural values and traditions.

Deniz's attraction to the exotic extended into her romantic life in Canada. Her first boyfriend, Hamid, was a Libyan Arab who had grown up in Italy. She found that they had a lot in common by virtue of the fact that they were both foreigners in Canada. Wary of gossip within the close-knit Turkish community in Halifax, her jealous and protective brother kept a close eye on her relationships with the opposite sex. Although she lived together with Tolga, Deniz managed to keep this relationship hidden from him and the rest of her family for over one year.

When her family finally discovered that she was in a relationship, and that she had kept it secret from them for so long, it took some time before they felt they could trust her again. During the fourth and final year of her bachelor's degree program, Deniz's relationship with her brother became less strained. Not only had they finally settled into living together, but Tolga became less concerned about the potential for gossip in the community. He began to relax about his sister's dating, and apologized to her for having been so controlling during her first three years in Canada.

When Deniz began going out with Kabar, a first-generation Canadian of Pakistani and Filipino origin, her brother did not interfere. Although his father was one of the most successful businessmen in Halifax, Kabar rejected the life of luxury that he had grown up with. Instead, he was more of a 'hippie'; he studied philosophy, played guitar and lived a simple life. Deniz was attracted to Kabar because he had two very different sides to him. Because of his background, he knew how to be a gentleman and to enjoy fine dining from time to time, yet he chose not to live off of his father's wealth.

After two years in Canada, Deniz had undergone a similar transformation. She went from depending fully on her parents to fund her high tuition, living, and shopping

expenses, to wanting to contribute her own hard-earned money to these costs. Based on her excellent academic performance, she secured a small scholarship to subsidize the tuition for her last two years at the university. Through her contacts in Halifax's Turkish community, she was hired to work unofficially as a babysitter in private homes, and as a server at a Turkish restaurant. She also made Turkish-inspired jewellery and fashion accessories, which she sold at a weekly open-air market in Halifax.

According to provincial immigration regulations, she was permitted to seek off-campus employment during the final year of her degree. However, she could only receive a work permit if she produced a letter from her employer confirming that they required her to fill a position for which there were no qualified Canadians. After a Turkish hotel owner in Halifax helped her by inventing a false need for her as an employee, she worked there for a short time as a room cleaner.

Toward the end of her academic program, Deniz was eager to find work in the development field. She had already worked in the field as a volunteer, at the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) during her 2004 summer vacation in Ankara, and felt that she was ready for waged employment. She encountered many official and unofficial obstacles in her quest to find meaningful work in Canada, and especially in Halifax.

When Deniz's mother went to Canada in May 2006 for her daughter's graduation ceremonies, she was dismayed to see the conditions in which her kids were living. Not only was their house a mess, but Tolga and Deniz had become so busy with their own lives that they rarely spent time together. Her mother was pleased with the degree to which Deniz had matured in Canada, but she became concerned that any more time there might completely destroy her daughter's energy and sense of family. After

spending the summer together in Halifax, she convinced Deniz to return to Turkey. However, Tolga remained in Canada.

### 6.3.3 The return migration process and how she coped

Deniz returned to Turkey in August 2006 and proceeded directly to a popular seaside resort town, where she relaxed in the sun for a few months. She returned to Ankara that autumn, expecting that her newly earned foreign degree would ensure that she find a job with relative ease. However, her job search did not turn out to be as effortless as she had anticipated. Only after seven months of searching and working occasionally as an unpaid intern did she finally land a job in her field.

Other aspects of her return have also been challenging. Deniz found many people from her former social circles to be small-minded and uninteresting. She perceives herself as different from her contemporaries who have not migrated and finds that she no longer has much in common with them. Since moving back, she has worked to build a new network of friends—one which includes mainly Turks with foreign experience, and foreigners. Her latest boyfriend is also a Turk who is currently studying in the United States.

There were many aspects of life in Canada that she was unhappy with while she was there. However, now that she in Turkey, she has no regrets about her migration experience, and even speaks of it nostalgically. She is happy to be back in Turkey for the time being, but has plans to re-migrate again within the next couple of years to pursue a master's degree. This time, her destination would not be Canada. Rather, she hopes to migrate to Europe, because it is closer to home and she is interested in European cultures. But ultimately, Deniz says she belongs to Turkey. By going away

again, she only hopes to further develop herself so that she might be in a position to make a more valuable contribution to the development of her country upon her final return.

### 6.3.4 Interpretive reflections in social and work contexts

As the youngest of the six interviewees who participated in this study, Deniz's narrative is marked by her unique stage in her life cycle and her relative lack of formal work experience. She is also the most recently returned participant, having moved back to Turkey less than one year before this study was completed. For these reasons, her biography and interpretive reflections are shorter than the others. Still, a close look at the social and work contexts of her life in this chapter reveals the ruptures and changes brought about through her migration processes.

#### Social Context

#### Family

Deniz's initial migration to Canada and return to Turkey were functions of her family's socio-economic status, as well as her position within the household. International students to Canada pay significantly higher tuition fees than their Canadian counterparts. Her parents' ability to finance a Canadian university education for both of their children is a sign of their affluence. According to Deniz, the total cost of her Canadian education and living expenses is comparable to what it would have cost for her to study at a private institution in Turkey. From her narrative, it seems that less expensive alternatives, such as Turkish state universities, were not considered, and that private or foreign educations were deemed to be the most prestigious options. Foreign degrees and language skills are highly valued in Turkey. Therefore, of the two choices, sending Deniz abroad for her education was ultimately selected by her parents in order

to give her a competitive edge in the Turkish labour market. From this, we see that the outcome of Deniz's migration project was determined by her parents from the very beginning. That is, it was assumed that she would return to Turkey upon completion of her degree.

The fact that Deniz's brother Tolga had migrated ahead of her also made her migration possible, and reveals the dependency structures within her family. First, Deniz occupies a subordinate position in the household as an offspring and dependent of her parents. Her position in the hierarchy was not disrupted by her migration, and she continued to be dependent on her parents financially.

Nevertheless, without the immediate presence of her parents while she was abroad, she experienced a lower standard of living. Although their parents did what they could to provide housing, education and spending money for their kids, Tolga and Deniz had to do their own cooking and cleaning for the first time in their lives in Canada. This became a huge source of conflict between the siblings. She recalls that "at first it was like we were fighting every night. He expected me to do everything. And I was like, 'yes, I will do it'. But I don't want to do it so I am unhappy." As the youngest child and as a female, Deniz held the lowest position within the family hierarchy. During their time in Canada, Tolga took the place of their father as the head of the household. His initial expectation that Deniz assume most of the housework reveals the underlying gender roles in their family. The intensity of these roles was further shown by Tolga's protectiveness of his sister:

> He was a jealous brother. It's a small [Turkish] community [in Halifax]. People talk behind each other[']s backs] so much. So he kind of felt he had a responsibility…to keep me at home. He had that attitude. He felt more protective because my family is not right with us, you know? So he had full responsibility.

Deniz draws a distinction between her brother's pre- and post-migration behaviour. She says he had never exhibited this type of behaviour in Turkey, and attributes his restrictiveness of her mobility and relationships with men in Halifax to the pressure he received from the tightly knit Turkish community there:

> I was like, that is not my brother! What is happening? But it is [the] community there [that] put him in that behaviour. Because the Turkish people there are [saying things] like, "We saw your sister with that guy!"

Koçtürk (1992) explains this social control by families and communities as an attempt to control women's sexuality, which is perceived as dangerous and corrupting. As the head of their household, Tolga saw it as his duty to protect the honour of their family, which was embodied in his sister. Deniz was pleased when finally, during her last year in Canada, Tolga apologized for having been so controlling:

> He apologized, and my last year—last three months—they were the best times of all [the] four years. I just explored a lot because I was free. My brother said, 'Just do whatever you want.' And me and [my boyfriend], we were together holding hands for the first time in a long relationship—in public and everything, so that was so amazing.

Although Deniz interpreted these developments as freedom, her independence and mobility were still dictated by her brother. She was 'free' to have boyfriends only because Tolga allowed her to do so. Even at the top levels of society "women's rights to autonomy remain something that is given to them by men" (Koçtürk, 1992, p.83).

It cannot be said that Deniz's migration to Canada brought about great changes in her decision-making authority, autonomy, or power position within the household. Her decision to return to Turkey was also largely shaped by her parents. Although they had supported her going to Canada, they did not want her to settle there permanently. Deniz

felt that being in Canada and so far away from their parents had had certain negative consequences:

> [In Canada], time is money and time is going so fast so you have to catch it. Everybody is running and it's a marathon. And you just go with it. You don't sit there and breathe and think [of] what you are missing in your life. You don't have much time to think of that. You are just in a marathon and you have to win the race. So I was like, "I can do it! I can do that!" We got used to that lifestyle with my brother, we [had] two separate lifestyles, and we [didn't] really much care about the house because we have all these things going on outside. I don't cook. We have to eat outside because we don't have time to cook at home. And I am becoming more skinny, skinny, skinny, and very ambitious.

She indicated that she and Tolga had become more individualistic and career-driven during their time abroad, and questioned whether it is worth it to leave one's country and family in order to pursue vocational opportunities. Between family and career, she reasons, "You have to make a choice, right?" This reasoning and Deniz's ultimate decision to return to Turkey were conditioned by Turkish cultural values which place more emphasis on the importance of community than the success of the individual. They were also conditioned by traditional gender roles which associate woman with her loyalty and responsibility to her family. These same gender roles were likely at play when Deniz was encouraged by her parents to return, while Tolga was encouraged to stay and attain Canadian citizenship—even if it required marrying a Canadian woman to do so.

Upon her return to Turkey at the age of twenty-two, Deniz moved back in with her parents. It is common in Turkey for young adults to live with their parents until they are married. After being away from their direct supervision for four years, she had to get used to living with them once again. For the most part, she has reoccupied her previous position in the household. Although she negotiated a bit more independence—for example, she says that if she were to have a serious boyfriend now she could bring

him home to meet her parents—this is likely more a factor of her age upon her return migration than the actual migration itself.

Although Deniz earned some of her own pocket money, she remained financially dependent on her parents throughout all stages of her migration. Still, in her narrative, she reveals a level of maturity that she finds is lacking among her non-migrant friends. She feels that, having experienced a lower standard of living in Canada, she now appreciates the privileges and opportunities of home more.

> It's too easy to complain. Something I learned in Canada is to not complain. Because [when] I was here [in Turkey], I was spoiled and kept complaining about something. But there [in Canada], I had to be happy to survive to live. I [had] to try to learn to be happy with what I have. So in here [Turkey], I miss memories [of Canada], but I love my life here. And home means more to me now because now I have my own privacy, I have my own space. I mean before, I wasn't feeling that. But now I know the feeling of that. Maybe because I also grew up….My mom now tells me, "Deniz, you are so different than anybody else here. You learned a lot. You changed a lot."

**Friendships and activities**

Before migrating to Canada, Deniz's circle of friends comprised young Turks who, like herself, benefited from the high socio-economic positions of their parents, and in particular their fathers. With them, her social life consisted mainly of conspicuous leisure activities such as shopping, going to beauty salons, and being 'seen' at the most trendy bars and cafés.

When she moved to Canada, she experienced a deterioration in her social life. First, she found that conspicuous consumption activities such as fashion were not valued as highly in the mid-sized city of Halifax as they had been among her social circles in Ankara:

> When I went there, I was in a big shock. I had a bigger expectation [from Halifax]. And I was like, "I can't live in this city!" It was like a village to me after Ankara. And during that time I was full of…you know the society we live [in] here, especially [the well-heeled neighbourhood she was from]… I was full of [expectations about], not exactly how you *look* but, you know, you have to take care of yourself. I want to…I love seeing good dressed people, good looking people. That was how I was before…more than now. (she giggles). But in Halifax, it was a shock. [I was thinking,] 'Look at those people, what are they are wearing? They are wearing socks with [] flipflops! All those little shocks…

She also found that Canada, and Halifax specifically, lacked significant culture or community, recalling: "The streets are empty, nobody's outside, [and there's] nobody talking to each other." Deniz built her own little community of friends during her time in Halifax. As discussed in the first section of this chapter, her social circles while abroad consisted mainly of other foreign students. Given the high cost of studying abroad, most of her new friends also stemmed from high socio-economic positions in their home countries.

In her quest for a sense of community, Deniz was especially drawn to Turks and others, such as Mediterraneans and Arabs, with cultures resembling her own. Her affinity to Arabs during her time in Canada is significant because it goes against deeply entrenched negative stereotypes in mainstream Turkish society. Indeed, a major reason she kept her relationship with Hamid from her family was because he is an Arab. She feared that her parents would assume that he was controlling, that she would be unhappy, and that if they ever married, she would be forced to relocate to his hometown according to patrilocal traditions.

In her search for community in Halifax, Deniz was also drawn into religion more than she had ever been before:

> I [had] never fast[ed] in my life.[22] But I was fasting there the first two years. Because there are so many people against you, and you see so many Arabs connected with each other. I felt close to them. I was learning about my religion. It happens a lot. There are so many people who come at you with the Koran in their hands and telling you, "Come, join us!", and all this stuff. So it's kind of risky to send your kids there. It's easy to turn right or left—so easy.

What she calls 'risky' is the heightened potential for cultural Muslims to turn to extremist forms of religion when faced with social exclusion or discrimination (Maalouf, 2000). This is particularly salient in this post-9/11 world, where public discourse is dominated by oppositions between East and West, tradition and modernity, Islam and Christianity. This brief divergence from her pre-migration identity as a 'modern', *secular*, young Turkish woman surprised Deniz herself.

As described above, Deniz's friendships in Canada were generally with those who were similar to her in culture and in socio-economic background. Her second boyfriend in Canada corresponded to both of these conditions, while also exposing her to more 'Canadian' ways:

> Kabar, he's Canadian—a pure Canadian—and it was nice to learn [from him]. His father is from Pakistan, his mother is from the Philippines. So Christian and Muslim, married. [His father] is one of the richest men in Halifax. He owns big twin towers [there]… But Kabar decided [to] live the hippie life, hate money, hate all that, try to pay his rent, don't ask any money from his family. He had a [music] group—he was playing guitar and singing. And he was studying philosophy and Spanish history. He wants to be in Doctors Without Borders. Now he's going to [] med school. So he was an intellectual and someone who really changed my whole life. But what I loved about him is, he had more—I mean he had both sides. He's not a cheap man. He knows how to tip, he knows where to go sometimes for a special occasion. He was taking me to a nice restaurant—he was putting some money somewhere and doing that. So he had kind of two cultures.

[22] Fasting, the fourth pillar of Islam, is prescribed during the entire Islamic holy month of Ramadan (or 'Ramazan', as it is known in Turkish). Fasting entails abstaining from food, drink, medicine, smoking, or sensual pleasure—in essence, nothing must pass one's lips—between dawn and dusk (Denny, 1987).

> And for him, I was very interesting and I was really important because I was the person he doesn't have inside him. He tried to be away from his rich family, rich friends, and rich kids of those families. But at the same time, me, I was in the middle. I [had] escape[d] from the small-minded people [in Turkey] who just think of money and stuff. [I] want[ed] to see the life, the local vibe [in Halifax] and I was always going to local bars and trying to explore that lifestyle. So we kind of clicked and found the middle way.

Now that she is back in Turkey, most of Deniz's friendships are again with people who share her socio-economic background. However, she tells me that since her exposure to the more casual styles of Canada, she places less importance on appearances.[23] Nonetheless, an important new criteria for her in all her relationships is that the individual also have international experience:

> I want to keep explor[ing] and learn[ing], but what am I going to learn with the people who stay here and [do] the same here? They live the same. I can only get some updated news from them…What am I going to learn? They just go through the same streets. And they're scared of all the new things, and that's not me! What am I going to do? I need to find the people who lived in Canada, or lived somewhere and then came to Turkey! Only they can understand!

Not only does she perceive herself as different from non-migrants, but Deniz also says that they also see her differently, with sentiments ranging anywhere from jealousy to great interest and admiration.

[23] Nevertheless, it would seem by her attire on the day of the interview—she was wearing skin-tight, shiny black polyester pants—that this is not the case. I interpret this as a form of interview bias in which her narrative, at certain points, was affected by her perception of the interviewer's values. As we have known each other socially for almost two years, Deniz is aware that I am not as fashionable as she is, nor do I attach a great importance to fashion. Therefore, she may be downplaying her social class and her previous emphasis on status markers, such as fashion, in her narrative. This type of selectivity in her narrative is described by Cooley's notion of the *looking-glass self* in which one's words and behaviours are consciously selected based on one's imagination of how he or she is judged by their audience based on their appearance (1964).

**Activities**

Outside of her classes in Canada, Deniz became highly politically active in various societies. She was the head of the International Development Studies Society, and was also actively involved in the Students' Coalition Against War, and the Palestinian Solidarity Society. The high level of political engagement among the university students in Canada impressed and motivated her, and she derived a great deal of pleasure from her involvement in these organizations.

She felt discouraged by the relatively lower rate of political activism that she found among young urban educated Turks upon her return. Although she would like to re-engage in societies similar to those with which she was involved in Canada, she finds that the political realm in Turkey is restricted. Her narrative suggests that she feels her participation in such activities would not be seen as acceptable for someone of her socio-economic status in Turkey because, as she puts it, "In Turkey, people still don't know the difference between anarchists and activists." As a start, she has recently gotten involved as a youth organizer for a secularist conservative Turkish political party in which her father works as an administrator.

**Work Context**

Deniz had her first paid work experiences in Canada, where she earned her own pocket money as a babysitter, a server in a restaurant, and selling handicrafts. She says she became motivated to help her parents with their financing of her education. In addition to assisting her parents, one of the main incentives for Deniz to seek employment was so that she could fit in with her peers, as it is very common for Canadian university students to work in addition to going to school. She wanted to demonstrate that she too was capable of earning her own money, and that she did not depend on her father's wealth. She drew the greatest personal satisfaction from the money she earned through

the sale of her own jewellery collections, because she had invested her creative energy into each piece. Deniz secured all her other jobs through connections in the local Turkish community. However, since her own networks in Halifax were not as elevated as were her fathers' in Turkey, the jobs she found were unregulated and involved menial, gendered labour, such as childcare, cleaning and working as a server in a restaurant. These signified lower living standards for Deniz. Because they did not correspond with her upper class standards, she felt discomfort while performing these types of work.

She recalls that her father was mortified when he learned of the work she was hired to do. It was a shock for a man of his status that his daughter was performing duties such as housecleaning at an unfamiliar hotel. The Turkish community in Halifax resembles the one in Ottawa described earlier in Fulya's biography. In both, social status and honour is based on members' assessments of others' standards of living. Besides being worried about Deniz's safety, her father was concerned about the reputation and honour of his family if faced with gossip and disapproval of the Turkish community related to Deniz's work activities.

It was also Deniz's preference to move out of these tedious jobs and into a position in the development field. However, her access to the formal Canadian labour market upon her graduation was restricted by her status in the country. As a graduate of a Canadian university, she was entitled to apply for Canadian citizenship, which would have given her full access the job market. However, until she applied for citizenship, she would be confined to jobs that she could secure with only a temporary work permit. Making matters worse, the development sector in Canada is not concentrated in Halifax, and job opportunities in the field were limited to only a few non-governmental organizations.

If Deniz had stayed in Halifax without applying for citizenship, she would have remained confined to gendered work in the unregulated informal sector. As Güngör and Tansel describe, foreign degrees and language skills are generally perceived as enhancing the employability of young graduates in Turkey (2005a, Return Intentions of Turkish Students section, para. 16). Consistent with this, Deniz's belief that her Turkish background was not as valuable for her in Canada as her Canadian experience—that is, her academic credentials, volunteer experience and language skills—would be for her in Turkey, was a strong motivating factor in her return.

Emboldened by her exposure to a more meritocratic system in Canada, Deniz arrived in Turkey determined to obtain a job based on her own skills. She demonstrated a great deal of determination during her initial job search. Upon seeing an office representing an international organization such as the United Nations or the European Union, she would bring in her résumé and ask to see the person in charge. This strategy proved successful in securing her a few internships, but did not lead to a job. Deniz soon conceded that making use of one's social networks during a job search is essential to securing a good job in Turkey, and finally started to call on her father's many contacts. However, since the governing political party for which he worked was replaced by a more Islamist-leaning party in 2002, her father's contacts were no longer as influential as they had been before she moved to Canada. Therefore, this job-hunting strategy also proved unsuccessful.

The type of work one does is said to be shaped by the attitudes of others around them (INSTRAW, 1994). In this case, Deniz's job hunt in Turkey was shaped by the attitudes of her peers and parents of what constitutes an 'appropriate' job for someone of her age and social class. Whereas in Canada, unskilled jobs were acceptable among her peers, in Turkey, the prestige gained from doing an unpaid internship in an international organization was perceived as better than earning money doing menial work. She uses the example of her brother, Tolga, who was working delivering pizzas

in Halifax at the time of the interview to describe how work that is deemed acceptable by their social circles in Canada is not necessarily so in Turkey:

> In here [Turkey], you can't do all kinds of jobs to make money. But in there [Canada] you can, because everyone is doing that. If you don't do it, actually, they look at you as [if] you are an alien. Like, how stupid you are—you are just wasting your father's money. They don't give you respect on that. But in here, it's kind of opposite.
>
> In [Canada], that's the equal levels. You deliver the pizzas, but that night, you go to a restaurant with the owner of the pizza store. But in here [Turkey], you can't do that. You have to be so much full of knowledge and so impressive.

Deniz eventually obtained a job as a project manager with a European Union-sponsored project. In this role, she helps to develop educational programs for Turkey which correspond to EU standards. Her initial contact with the employer was made through a personal connection of hers, and her foreign credentials and language skills proved to be important factors in her hiring.

Deniz's processes of migration and return were influenced by many factors along the way. From the foregoing discussion, the primacy of her family's socio-economic status, her gender, and her position within the household as factors has become clear. However, other factors to consider include her age and place in her life cycle. As an unmarried woman who is just embarking on the beginning of her career, return migration involved very little risk on her part.

The combination of these factors, coupled with her educational attainment, will be important factors facilitating her onward migration to Europe, should she eventually decide to pursue post-secondary education there as she has mentioned (INSTRAW, 1994; Lim, 1995). Although Deniz expresses a desire to emigrate again, she insists that she will return to Turkey one day in order to contribute her skills and education to the development of the country's poorer eastern provinces:

> I really want—my ambition, my desire—is to be in the East. That's like oxygen for me, [a] way of living, by thinking to be there one day. But I can't do that now with this level of experience and age and knowledge. And I know I can only gain that with a variety of people. Where? In Europe, in [an] international development studies kind of field.

## 6.4 Ceyda is admired by her peers for her accomplishments

### 6.4.1 Living in Turkey and motivation for migration

Ceyda was born in Ankara in 1971. Her parents migrated from their rural village to Ankara before she was born in order to work and raise their family, which eventually grew to include four daughters and one son. As a young woman, she enrolled in an undergraduate degree program in Turkish language education at a local university. In accordance with her Islamic religious convictions, Ceyda normally wore a *türban*. Faced with the ban on headscarves in all public institutions, she chose to remove hers in order to attend university and earn a degree. While she was still a student at the age of 23, she fell in love with and married a young man named Metin Aydın, who was making a name for himself as a journalist.

Ceyda and Metin started their life together in very humble conditions. Neither set of parents had been able to provide them with an apartment, appliances or furniture when they got married, as is customary among many families in Turkey. Until that point Metin had not accumulated any savings, as he had been sending regular remittances to his family in Istanbul. The couple's financial situation improved once Ceyda graduated and began working as a Turkish teacher in middle and high schools run by the state. By the time their two sons were born—Mohammad in 1995, and Irfan in 2000—they enjoyed a comfortable lifestyle. In her narrative, Ceyda notes that they could even afford to purchase 'luxury' household items such as a dishwasher, washing machine, and nice furniture.

In his work as a high profile journalist, Metin was critical of the secular state establishment. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, government censorship of the press was rampant. Metin began to receive serious threats at this time, and at one point, he was severely beaten. Fearing for the safety of themselves and their children, Metin and Ceyda decided to seek asylum in Canada. After having worked for five years as a teacher, Ceyda resigned from her position. The couple moved all of their furniture into a storage facility in Ankara and moved with their sons to Canada.

### 6.4.2 The initial migration process and reasons for return

The Aydın family arrived in Ottawa in the summer of 2001. Although they spoke no English upon arrival, their initial adjustment was eased by the help of a few Turkish contacts there. These friends helped them navigate their new city as they found a place to live and to furnish their apartment with basic furniture. They also introduced them to the local Turkish community. As refugees, the family was entitled to a small amount of government financial assistance to help them begin their new life in Canada[24], but declined the offer in view of the fact that they had come with their own money and did not need it to get started. Soon after arriving, Ceyda and her husband enrolled in English language classes, which were provided to them by the Canadian government on a part-time basis for a period of two years. Ceyda recalls finding it relatively easy to learn English, and she credits her quick learning curve to her formal education as a language teacher.

During her first year in Canada, apart from attending language classes, Ceyda stayed at home to care for baby Irfan while Mohammad was in school and Metin was working. During her second year, besides studying English, Ceyda began working part-time. Every Saturday, she taught Turkish to children of Turkish origin in Ottawa who did not

[24] They were offered one thousand Canadian dollars which, in 2001, was worth approximately US$650.

speak the language fluently. She was also hired by a foreign language organization to teach a two-month intensive Turkish course to Canadian businesspeople who were being assigned to Turkey temporarily for work. She worked as an instructor for this organization during the summers of 2002 and 2003.

By her third year in Canada, Ceyda decided she wanted to develop her professional capacities. Equipped with English language skills and her bachelor's degree from Turkey, she enrolled in an Early Childhood Education (ECE) postgraduate program at a local community college.[25] There, most of her classmates were Canadians. This was an intensive year-long program which included a combination of coursework and fieldwork. After earning her diploma, she began to work as a teacher and caregiver at a preschool and at a nursery for at-risk children operated by the Children's Aid Society of Ottawa. After a few months working on a casual basis, she was hired to work full-time at the preschool. She enjoyed her work environment and was particularly stimulated by the cultural diversity of the children in her care.

Ceyda was pleased with the progress she was making in Canada. She experienced very little difficulty in finding jobs in her field. She had even succeeded in broadening her education and easily found work in her new vocation as an early childhood educator. She was pleased that she was able to wear her headscarf to work in Canada without any problems. Metin, on the other hand, experienced more difficulty in finding work as a journalist. His intermediate English skills inhibited him from pursuing his profession as a journalist. Instead, he was restricted to low-paying, unskilled work, mostly in the food service sector. He usually worked night shifts, and was home with their children during the day while Ceyda was working.

[25] In Canada, a college is defined as an institution of higher learning which grants degrees and certificates.

Over the course of the Aydın family's four years in Canada, the conditions in Turkey which had led to their flight from the country changed. In 2002, the Islamist-based Justice and Development (AK) Party was elected. In its efforts to attain membership to the European Union, the government passed laws easing restrictions on freedom of speech. Given these developments, and Metin's dissatisfaction with his employment situation in Canada, the couple started to consider returning to Turkey. From Canada, they contacted potential employers in Turkey. When these job enquiries were met with a great deal of interest, they resolved to return to their country of origin. Both Ceyda and Metin secured jobs in Turkey before leaving Canada.

### 6.4.3 The return migration process and how she coped

Ceyda and her family returned to Turkey in 2005. She enjoys being in the same city as her extended family after being away from them for four years. However, she finds that life in Turkey moves at a much faster pace than in Canada, and that she does not see as much of her family as she had hoped to when she returned. Ceyda recalls having difficulties getting used to other aspects of life in Turkey as well. For instance, she found daily life to be very busy and stressful. This was compounded by the noisy, chaotic traffic. Her tastes in fashion had changed and she felt pressure to conform to Turkish styles, unlike in Canada where "people don't care who's wearing what and who's house is how." She was unimpressed by what she considered to be overdramatic television programming and news, and instead started watching American and British television stations:

> And [on] the [Turkish] news: everything is bad, bad, bad. I didn't watch TV for a long long time when we came here. Always you hear from TV bad news... and then they [repeat it], over and over and over [] using [] different words and saying the same thing, over and over. It takes five minutes watching the same thing. Just give me news, you know, it's really horrible. I really miss Canadian news. [Now] I watch CNN, BBC, because I want to see *news*, I want to see what's happening in the world.

> It's ridiculous, it really shocked me. I lived here, I [was] born here, and it was like this before...I [went] to Canada. But now, I can see the bad things.

Ceyda was dismayed to find that typically Western conveniences, such as take-out coffee, remained excessively expensive in Turkey. She found such high pricing of normal goods to be exclusionary, and serving only to exacerbate the wide disparity between Turkey's rich and poor inhabitants. She differentiates this from what she found in Canada: "I like Canada [where] there's not [a] big gap between the rich and poor people. But in Turkey, rich is always rich, and there is a big, big, big gap between the poor people and the rich people." For the most part, Ceyda has come to terms with these minor irritations and says she has re-adjusted to living in Turkey.

Upon their return, both Ceyda and her husband began working in occupations different from the ones they had performed before leaving Turkey. Although no longer working as a journalist, Metin is still in the communications sector. He works as a spokesperson for a high-profile ministry of the Turkish government. He continues to receive lucrative offers of employment from major broadcasting companies in Ankara and Istanbul. However, he prefers to stay in his current job for now, as it is well-paid and secure. Based on Ceyda's narrative and the researcher's conversations with Metin, it seems that he also enjoys the access his job provides him to high-ranking government officials.

Before leaving in 2001, Ceyda taught Turkish to adolescents in a state school. Upon her return, Ceyda's Canadian educational credentials were quickly approved by the Turkish Council of Higher Education. She was thus authorized to begin working in her new position as a kindergarten English teacher in an elite private school in Ankara. With the ban on headscarves still in effect, she decided to remove her *türban* while teaching in order to be able to work. Although she enjoys teaching young children, Ceyda has been disappointed by her experience at this school in the two years since their return. She

finds that her employer demands too much of her, expecting her to work long hours and often on weekends. When the director learned that she wears a headscarf outside of school, he threatened her, insisting that her obligation to unveil extended beyond the school boundaries and into her private life. As Metin explained, this intimidation came to an abrupt end after he summoned the assistance of an influential contact from the governing AK party, the minister of education. Since then, Ceyda's work environment and especially her relations with the school administration have steadily worsened. She explains in her narrative that she has stayed on mostly because her children are entitled to free tuition as long as she works there. On speaking with her recently, she informed me that she will be resigning at the end of this school year, and has already secured a new job at another private school. She will begin teaching English to young children there in the new school year, and is confident that her veiling outside of school will not be an issue with her new employer.

Ultimately, Ceyda's dream is to open her own daycare centre, where she could integrate the special approaches to early childhood education that she learned in Canada. However, such an endeavour would require a huge capital investment, which the couple cannot afford right now. For the time being, they plan to continue working in their new positions and saving and investing their money. The most significant investment that they have made since their return was their purchase of an apartment in a middle-class neighbourhood of Ankara one year ago. Ceyda says they plan on staying in this apartment at least five more years, at which time they will have fully repaid their mortgage debt. Their plans beyond this point are unclear. Perhaps they will purchase a single family detached house in a suburb of Ankara. Or maybe they will relocate to Istanbul, or even to Europe. However, one thing is clear for Ceyda: she would not like to re-migrate to Canada, as it is too far from her extended family.

### 6.4.4 Interpretive reflections in social and work contexts

Throughout her narrative, Ceyda demonstrates great ambition. In her life, she has progressively set higher goals for herself and her family. This determination has taken her from her humble working class beginnings to her belonging to a growing Islamic elite. While she emphasizes that she and her husband have possessed these qualities since before their initial migration, their experience in Canada nonetheless helped to ultimately advance their position upon their return to Turkey.

**Social Context**

**Family**

Ceyda's parents are lower class, observant Muslims who migrated from their village to one of Turkey's biggest metropolitan centres so that her father could work as a bus driver and raise his family in the city. This rural conservative family background is very common among the urban Islamist women who were discussed in chapter three (Kadıoğlu, 1994; White, 2003). Like most of these young women, Ceyda's social mobility beyond her parents' working class origins was first signalled by her pursuit of higher education. Her certification as a teacher and her marriage to a successful journalist further cemented her entrance into a growing middle class in Turkey, one which is distinguished by its strong adherence to Islam in tandem with 'modern' priorities such as education, consumerism, and business savvy.

The Aydın family's middle class Islamist status only influenced their migration to Canada in the sense that Metin was successful enough as a journalist that his criticisms of the secular establishment came to the attention of powerful government officials. Prior to this, they did not have aspirations of going abroad, nor did they have any significant networks in other countries that would have facilitated such a move. The

sole motivation for their move to Canada was to seek asylum from the mounting threats Metin was receiving as a response to his opinions published in the press.

There were many motivations for the return migration of the Aydın family to Turkey. Ceyda stresses the future of their children as a deciding factor. In particular, she had Mohammad in mind. At ten years old, she felt he was at a critical age; if they waited too much longer to return, she feared that he would have a difficult time adjusting to the school system and culture of Turkey. This constituted a life cycle 'pull' factor for their return.

She also stresses their sons' future feelings toward their return:

> It was [a] very hard decision for us, because we had to think [of] them (Mohammad and Irfan). We had to care [for] them. Metin and I, *we* decided [to migrate] and we went there. And [if] we came back, we thought, many, many years later, they can blame us. They can hate us [for] this situation. Maybe they will say, "You [went] there, and then you didn't stay there. Right now this [bad thing] happens because of you"—they can say!

In response to their own concerns, Ceyda and Metin took steps to prepare their sons: "[So] we talk[ed] to them and prepared them [for our return]. [Returning] wasn't hard for us because we prepared ourselves."

Ceyda and her family were also motivated to return by social and economic factors. In the few studies which have considered the specificities of female return migration, women are often portrayed as resisting return migration, and as feeling restricted upon return to their countries of origin (Pedraza, 1991; Rittersberger-Tılıç, 1998). This depiction is based on the assumption that the initial emigration to a developed country necessarily offers migrant women opportunities for increased autonomy, while their husbands struggle with status deprivation as they face discrimination, loss of status in the workplace, and loss of income (Morrison, Guruge, & Snarr, 1999). For these men,

return migration can serve to re-establish their dominant role in the household, while stripping their wives of the autonomy attained while abroad.

In this case, Metin suffered a demotion because he was not linguistically equipped to work as a journalist in Canada. Conversely, Ceyda's professional status improved during her time in Canada. She had found jobs easily and was enjoying her new specialization in early childhood education. Nevertheless, unlike the women commonly portrayed in the literature, she did not resist return migration. Since Metin had been the main breadwinner for their family in Turkey, and given that Ceyda's jobs—although professional—were still located in the relatively low-paying feminized childcare sector, Metin's demotion signified a lower standard of living for the entire family. Ceyda realized that by returning, the whole family would be in a position to benefit from Metin's expected increased earnings. In this sense, Ceyda's lifestyle is shown to be contingent upon her husband's employment status. However, return migration also appealed to Ceyda for her own reasons. She anticipated further professional advances in Turkey as a result of her newly-acquired English language skills, professional qualifications and experience.

Besides family, life cycle, social and economic considerations, their return must also be located within the context of the different political circumstances in Turkey. As discussed a few pages ago, the election of the Islamist-based AK Party into parliament and the subsequent progress in the areas of human rights and freedom of expression signalled to Ceyda and Metin that they could once again build a life for their family in their home country without fear of threats and intimidation.

**Friendships**

As discussed above, Ceyda and her family experienced lower living standards during their time abroad. This was mostly evidenced by the family's restricted income and

living conditions. However, it was also demonstrated through the characteristics of their social circles in Canada, which consisted mainly of low-skilled, working class conservative Turkish immigrants. These people constituted an important community for Ceyda and her family during their time in Canada. Not only did they help them to acclimatize upon arrival, but they were also instrumental in finding work for Ceyda as a Turkish teacher in Ottawa. Their shared religious identity as devoted Muslims was an essential feature of their community.

However, Ceyda distinguishes herself from the other Turkish migrant women in her community in Ottawa:

> I had lots of friends in Canada [who] stayed at home and they cried, "Turkey! Turkey! I miss Turkey!" I know lots of people [who] argue with their husband, [saying], "You brought me here…I want to go [back to] Turkey. I miss my family, I miss Turkey." They didn't even learn English! They just went [to] each other's houses and they just [sat] down and talked Turkish. [They] just spent their time with their own [community]. [I would] never ever do that to Metin. I never ever said those kind of things. We decided, we are right now here…crying doesn't help. What can I do to get something from here? And then I did it.

Ceyda proudly recalls how she "went there and [] studied and [] worked there, and [] didn't stay at home", unlike these women. While this is undoubtedly a function of her higher level of education, she attributes it mainly to personal qualities, namely her opportunism and ability to live in the moment:

> When I was in Canada, I thought sometimes, 'I have never been in Turkey, I [have always] lived here.' Maybe it's my personality— I don't live with my past. I live [in the] present. I was there and I did what I had to do. I could study—there was an opportunity for me—and then I used it. I could work, and I worked there. And right now I am here [in Turkey]. I can't sit and cry, "Ohhh Canada, I miss you." I was like this in Canada too. I was happy with what I had. I missed my family too, but what [could] I do? I was there [in Canada].

Although she needed to work in Canada in order to make ends meet, Ceyda also stresses that she wanted to work so that she could improve her English and enter into Canadian society.

Clearly Ceyda and Metin were of a higher socio-economic status that the members of their particular community of Turks in Canada. As we know from previous biographies in this study, and from the description of Turkish migration to Canada in chapter three, a sizeable proportion of the Turkish community in Canada includes individuals from high socio-economic strata and professional groups. Why is it, then, that this couple's social networks consisted mainly of individuals with less education, poorer financial situations, and not as much ambition? For Ceyda and Metin, their Muslim identity supersedes all other elements of identity. Therefore, it is an important common element which they shared with their Turkish community in Ottawa. There, Turks with educational qualifications similar to this couple were likely to stem from urban, secular families. The facts that Ceyda wears a headscarf and that the family was compelled to flee Turkey because of Metin's criticisms of Turkey's secular institutions are important details which distinguish them from their educated compatriots in Canada.

As expressed earlier, Ceyda focuses on living in the present and seizing current opportunities even upon her return to Turkey. The fact that she does not maintain any significant social networks in Canada can be explained by this, as well as by the unlikelihood that she would re-migrate there.

The Aydın family's return migration did not lead to the recuperation of their former standard of living. Rather, they rose above their former position to occupy an enhanced status among their friends and family. Their migration experience led to better paying jobs upon their return to Turkey. Having learned to get by on a limited budget in Canada, Ceyda and Metin were better equipped to manage this additional income. She

credits her migration in part for her ability to prioritize her spending in a disciplined manner:

> In my life philosophy, I don't like to have lots of things. I want to have one thing, beautiful thing, nice thing. I save my money until…I [am able to] buy it. I'm waiting and if I have money and [the] opportunity, I like to buy [things that are] good and perfect. I like quality. Lots of people like lots of things. I don't want to wear lots of things. I just want to wear *good* things. It's my philosophy. It doesn't come from my immigration, but [my migration] helps me to improve it. Right now I am better than before [in terms of my perspective on] life and thinking.

Ceyda and Metin put these lessons into practice with their purchase of an apartment in Ankara. This major investment was facilitated by the introduction of a mortgage system in Turkey in early 2006. With the system in its infancy and interest rates exorbitantly high, the real estate market is still widely regarded as the domain of the rich. As discussed in Zeynep's biography, it is common for return migrants to invest in extravagant housing as signs of their success abroad. However, the apartment purchased by Ceyda and Metin is not extravagant. It is located in a lower middle class neighbourhood bordering a squatter housing district which is mainly occupied by rural migrants. Still, as the only ones from their social circles who have made such a purchase, they are held in high esteem by their friends and family. Nevertheless, they continue to aspire toward achieving superior status.

Although they have already risen well above their lower-middle class origins, Ceyda and Metin aspire for more upward mobility. In her narrative, Ceyda mentions the likelihood that they will eventually buy a single family detached house in a growing suburb of Ankara. According to Öncü (1997), such ambitions signify a Western-style consumerism which is increasingly prevalent in Turkey. As metropolitan areas become increasingly suburbanized, detached family houses appear as middle class status markers. Ceyda and Metin's goal is likely influenced by their experience in Canada, where this type of housing is very common.

Ceyda differentiates herself from non-migrants. She believes that her migration and return experiences have broadened her mind and given her an objective perspective on the advantages and disadvantages of living abroad. She describes the relative deprivation felt by non-migrants who fantasize about moving outside of Turkey:

> Everyone in Turkey admires foreigners. Everybody [is] saying, "Oh, in Canada… everything is perfect. We're poor…in [Turkey]." [They] think life is always great in Canada. They are admiring without knowing it. I think going [to] Canada [and] coming back [to] Turkey are good experiences for us. We had [the] chance to see with [our] own eyes. Right now, I know the good things. I had [a] really good experience. I know what they are talking [about]. I saw it, I *lived* in it…and I think I'm [a] step [ahead of] them.

In the excerpt above, Ceyda discusses how her migration processes have changed her. However, she also believes that she and Metin possessed unique qualities that differentiated them from their peers even before their initial migration:

> People who live around me…they don't decide easily. They['re] afraid of changing their city...even *city*. We went [to a] different country without knowing the language. We are so brave, Metin and I, because we don't look at life like this. We are looking…and if there is a good thing for our family, we will take it.

Now that she is back in Turkey, she senses the admiration of her peers:

> I'm strong and I am working, but I don't ignore my children, I don't ignore my husband. Everybody admires my family, my relationship with Metin and with my children.

The excerpt above reflects the importance that Ceyda attributes to her roles and responsibilities at work *and* at home. For her, a successful woman is both a work and a family person.

**Relations with husband**

In her narrative, Ceyda portrays her relationship with Metin as being an equal partnership, which has persevered throughout their marriage and through all stages of their migration. To illustrate this partnership, she refers to their handling of finances:

> Before we went to Canada, I didn't have my [own] money [and] Metin never had his own money. It's *our* money. It's in one place. Usually we go [shopping] together and we decide…and we pay together. It's our money. We earn together….we spend together.

She proudly recollects the strength and resilience of their relationship, and credits this to their individual characteristics and handling of difficult situations:

> When we married we didn't have anything, even no marriage ring. We didn't have anything, and we really support[ed] each other and [got] closer. And I can see lots of people, they do have *everything* but…they don't have anything to share and they don't have anything to hold it together. Sometimes having a hard situation—having something bad—it helps to support each other. And living in Canada too, we helped each other [so] much. And right now it's [the] same thing. I think it's Metin's personality and my personality. We like to support each other. The [circumstances] and the personality come together.

Ceyda describes her marriage as completely balanced—a true partnership in which each spouse participates in all aspects with full knowledge and freedom. However, certain parts of her narrative belie this portrayal. For instance, when asked about her migrant status upon entry into Canada and about whether or not the family received any assistance from the Canadian government, Ceyda did not know. In order to answer, she sought clarification from Metin. As Koçtürk (1992) explained, middle-class women are usually not involved in fundamental matters concerning the household. Instead, men wield the most influence in such issues, and women are often content to make contributions to relatively insignificant spheres.

The excerpt below reveals how the members of the Aydın family were involved in the migration decisions *because Metin invited them to be*. In other words, the power to decide lay with Metin, but he chose to share that power:

> I know those kind of people, they don't tell their wife, and they try to do everything by themselves, and they never ask their children. Metin asked us. [He said,] "There's a place, it's called Canada, it's like this…[What] do you think? We should go or stay? He never [told] me, "Now we are going back to Turkey." Never, ever. We [sat] down and we talked. What we should do? What's going to happen? Metin likes to share Metin *could* say, "Okay, now we're moving Canada", and he *could* say, "Okay, now we're going back to Turkey", but it wasn't like that.

This unobserved imbalance in their relationship is a symptom of underlying patriarchal values and norms. These are further evidenced by Ceyda's recognition of Metin for her educational accomplishments in Canada:

> Metin always supports me. Metin said, "Go to your class, go to your class! Do your work! And Metin always [gave] me [the] opportunity to do that. We decided and [he was] never…an obstacle—never ever. [He supported me] always. Always I [tell] people that I studied in Canada because of Metin. Metin helped me because Metin took care of [the] children, Metin cooked, Metin did the cleaning—everything—and I studied, that's why…. I think, Metin and I, we are great team!

From this passage, we learn that Metin helped Ceyda with 'her' household and childrearing duties while they were in Canada. According to Ceyda, by liberating her from her gendered duties, Metin made it possible for her to pursue her education.

It is quite common that gender relations within the migrant household become more balanced as each spouse negotiates the demands and norms of their new society (Buijs, 1993). According to Ceyda's narrative, it seems that some of these changes in their household division of labour have carried over into their new life in Turkey. Metin now cooks occasionally and helps their children with their schoolwork on a regular basis.

Nevertheless, the main part of the household duties remains the responsibility of a woman. Ceyda still performs a larger share of the housework and cooking. However, owing to their upward mobility, they now employ a domestic worker who cleans their house once a week. As discussed in previous biographies, it is common for upwardly mobile women to hire other women to carry out their 'female' duties, thus freeing them to pursue educational and professional opportunities. Also, since their return, the couple can afford to take the family out to a restaurant on busy days when neither spouse has the time or energy to cook. This is a welcome option which eliminates a potential cause for tension in their relationship. Nevertheless, these 'solutions' fail to disrupt or discontinue the widely accepted gender roles which benefit men.

**Work Context**

Although her migration was unplanned and unavoidable, Ceyda did not suffer professionally as a result of her move to Canada. To her surprise, her training as a Turkish language teacher made her eligible for her first jobs in Canada, namely, teaching the language to Canadian children of Turkish origin, and to Canadian businesspeople who were being assigned to Turkey for work. It is important to note that she learned of both of these jobs through her social networks in the local Turkish community.

Realizing that she could not have a full-time career teaching Turkish in Canada and because the length of her stay there was indefinite, Ceyda decided to make the most of her circumstances and develop herself professionally. After taking full advantage of the English courses that were offered to her, she took stock of her skills and determined what options were available to her. Her intermediate English skills precluded her from teaching in a middle and high school setting, as she had done in Turkey. This limitation was a determining factor in her decision to pursue an Early Childhood Education program. After graduating, she had no difficulty in finding work in her field.

Ceyda demonstrated much ambition and initiative throughout her professional pursuits in Canada. Her efforts there resulted in success. It is therefore all the more intriguing that she remained dependent on Metin in her quest for work in Turkey:

> Before we came [back to Turkey], Metin sent my résumé everywhere to find a job. Metin helped me, Metin show[ed] me [the] way…where I should go, what I have to do.

Metin composed cover letters to accompany her résumés. This reliance on her husband can perhaps be explained by Ceyda's lack of experience in the private sector in Turkey. Before leaving her country of origin, she had only worked in state schools. As bureaucratic institutions, these schools likely have very systematic application procedures. Assuming that private schools would offer better wages and career development opportunities to highly-qualified candidates like Ceyda, her job search was limited to the more competitive private sector.

However, let us recall that although Ceyda did not have experience in the Turkish private sector, neither did she have previous experience in the Canadian private sector. Yet she had thrived in Canada without Metin's guidance. This begs the question as to why Ceyda did not seek Metin's help in finding jobs in Canada, where everything was completely unfamiliar to her, yet sought his help in Turkey, where one would assume she would have felt more self-assured. It could be that because Ceyda and Metin were both inexperienced in Canada, she took risks more readily, as she had little to lose. If this is the case, then one can deduce that the unknown and unfamiliar aspects of migration were interpreted by Ceyda as possibilities and opportunities, not obstacles.

With her English skills and newly acquired qualifications as an early childhood educator, Ceyda found work easily in Turkey. While she did not encounter any bureaucratic delays in the recognition of her Canadian credentials, she still faced the state ban on wearing headscarves in public institutions, including schools:

> Right now, [it's the] same thing [as before I left Turkey]. I'm here, I'm working, but I have to uncover my head. If I want to cover my head with [a] scarf, I can't work. If I want to cover my head with [a] scarf, I should stay at home. If I want to work, I have to uncover my head.

Ceyda has chosen to uncover as she did before she migrated to Canada. This decision reflects not only her deep desire to work, but also her commitment to her family. As long as she is employed by the private school, her sons have access to the elite education provided there, a privilege which the family would not be able to afford on their own.

Ceyda's veiling has presented her with challenges throughout her adult life in Turkey. She was compelled to remove her *türban* in order to attend university, to teach in her first job at a state school, and again upon her return to Turkey in her position at a private school. As discussed in section 6.4.3 above, Ceyda's decision to veil outside of work has been challenged by her current school administration.

Chapter three of this study provided a background on Turkey's headscarf ban. In short, the ban is based on the premise that headscarves are symbols of the patriarchal oppression of Islam, and that such symbols do not belong within the confines of the secular state's institutions. While the ban can be understood as an attempt to free women from patriarchy, it has also been interpreted as reinforcing it. Lindisfarne (2002) explains that when the devout Islamic woman marks "her belief sartorially, she becomes visible in public in ways that male believers are not. So Islamist women, and not Islamist men, are subject to discriminatory laws, and middle- and ruling-class pity and scorn" (pp. 416-7). Thus, that Ceyda is forbidden to veil herself at work and is further derided for veiling on her own time is a common form of gender discrimination in Turkey.

As spokesperson for a government ministry, Metin has access to high-ranking AK Party officials and has developed a network of influential contacts since his return to Turkey. As he describes, he appealed to his friend—the minister of education—to

intervene when Ceyda was intimidated by her employer for wearing a headscarf outside of school. Faced with the threat of being closed down by the minister, her employer backed down.

During our interview, Ceyda describes her working conditions as strained and unpleasant, even after the ministerial intervention. During a recent conversation, she casually mentioned that she would be resigning at the end of the school year and beginning work at new school where she was certain that her veiling would not be a problem. She described the new school as belonging to a group of schools which comprise the "best private schools in Ankara". While conducting research after our discussion, I discovered that her future school is one of many facilities worldwide which are inspired by the ideas of Fethullah Gülen, a prominent Turkish Islamic scholar, teacher and author.[26] Her school is part of a wider international network of Gülen-inspired educational facilities and media outlets, which are particularly concentrated in Europe, North America, and the Turkic republics of Central Asia. These schools are indeed renowned for the quality of their education, which is said to be based on national curricula and free of Islamic content (Osman, 2007). Still, I was surprised that Ceyda did not mention the school's association with Gülen during our conversation, especially since she knows of my interest in the obstacles she faces because of her headscarf. Surely her confidence that her veiling outside of school will no longer cause problems stems from the fact that the school itself is formed by a community of Muslim believers. Indeed, it is very likely that this was a major determining factor in her decision to apply to and accept a position at this particular school. This invites the obvious question: did she deliberately avoid mentioning this fact to me, and if so, why?

There are many possible answers to this question. It could be that Metin invoked the influence of his AK Party contacts to help Ceyda obtain the position, and that she did

[26] For more information on the Gülen movement, see Yavuz, & Esposito (2003).

not want that fact to overshadow her abilities as a teacher. Her reticence may also be linked to a perceived social distance between herself and me, a non-Muslim interviewer. Finally, Ceyda may have been hesitant to draw attention to the school's ties to an important Muslim thinker because of the widespread fear of Islamic fundamentalism among Turkey's secular elite and, related to this, her family's serious conflicts with the guardians of the secular state which led them to flee Turkey as refugees less than seven years ago.

Ceyda and Metin's successful reintegration into the Turkish labour market are indicators of changes in social closure mechanisms which have recently taken place in Turkey. Since 2002, when the Islamist-based AK Party was elected into government, the class privileges usually held by the secular elite in Turkey are being increasingly transferred to the country's traditional religious elites, including supporters of the Gülen movement.[27] Consistent with this, Metin was able to call upon the support and political influence of a high-ranking government official in Ceyda's defence when she was being threatened by her current employer for her decision to veil outside of school. Ceyda's current professional success can therefore be largely attributed to existing structural conditions in Turkish society.

[27] In a conversation with social and political scientist Tahire Erman (personal communication, June 13, 2007), she described having met several Turks during a recent research assignment in the United States. Among them, she observed what seems to be increasing numbers of religiously-inclined Turkish students and civil servants whose sojourns abroad are supported by government grants and programmes. Based on her preliminary observations, Erman noted that the aim of such programmes seems to be to further develop the English language and occupational skills of these individuals so that they can strengthen the position of the emerging religious elites (including the governing Islamist-based party) upon their return to Turkey. She emphasized that this is a subject which is yet to be systematically examined. Still, these initial remarks support the notion of the shifting of class privileges to the Islamic elite in Turkey in recent years.

**Future work aspiration**

Ceyda looks forward to her new position, and is happy that once again it gives her children the opportunity to enrol in a distinguished school. However, she does not envision herself teaching at private schools throughout the remainder of her professional life. Rather, she has entrepreneurial aspirations:

> I'm planning to open [a] daycare centre in Turkey. That's my dream, my goal. Right now I don't have enough money to open it. But… *yavaş yavaş*[28], I'm going to do it. Because I like it. I learn[ed] lots of things [in Canada] and I think Turkish people need those kinds of daycare centres [too]. When this school [that] I'm working [at] right now [] ask[ed] me during the interview, "Why? You were working with high school and middle school [before]. Right now, you're going to work with the kindergarten. Why is that? Can you do it?" And I said, "There are lots of Turkish teachers, there are lots of teachers. You can find [them] easily. But I believe Turkish people don't know the early childhood importance. And I think I can be [of] more help, more useful in this area." And I *love* it…it's my goal to open my daycare centre one day.

This aspiration is a direct result of Ceyda's migration experience in Canada. There, her field of study was limited by the fact that she was not perfectly fluent in English. After her return migration, she was in a position to objectively compare the conditions of early childhood education in Canada and Turkey. In doing so, she perceived a gap in Turkey that she could fill.

On the whole, Ceyda is satisfied with the outcomes of her migration processes. Although she does not intend to re-migrate to Canada, she credits her success and upward mobility in Turkey to the experiences she had and the skills she gained there. For her, these were blessings bestowed upon her by God:

> In [the] airplane [on the way to Canada], my husband and I decided it's [a] good decision for us. You are a number one person in Turkey but

[28] *Yavaş yavaş* translates directly as 'slowly slowly'. In this context, it refers to Ceyda's intention to realize her dream of opening her own daycare centre *over time.*

> …when you go to another country, you're zero. You can't explain yourself, you can't talk, [and] you can't tell anybody what you need. These are very important things. We decided that day that we are doing [a] good thing for us and for [our] children. Right now, it's the proof of that day. Because right now, I'm teaching English and kindergarten, and I found a job easily because of my education and my language.
>
> [The Canadian government told me that we] can come back. Just we have to apply for immigration. And right now they have some [immigration] criteria—you have to know English and you have to [be] educated. All [these things], we have. But right now we don't have any plans [to re-migrate to Canada]. Right now, we are okay in [Turkey]. Our children, they don't need a new adventure. Because they…get along with the people, and just got used [to]…the culture [and] school systems. Right now, I don't want to [disturb it]. Now I have a job, Metin has a job, and we're earning good money. When you compare with the Turkish people, it's good money. And we have a house and we are healthy. No problems. *Elhamdulillah*.[29]

## 6.5 Zeynep is the egg-laying hen with the golden bracelet

### 6.5.1 Living in Turkey and motivation for migration

Zeynep was born in 1968 and raised in a cosmopolitan and liberal Istanbul milieu. Her father was a pharmacist, and her mother stayed at home to raise their four daughters. Culture and education were highly esteemed in her family, and among her relatives there were orchestra conductors, musicians, a ballerina, engineers, and other professionals. Also emphasized in her household was inter-ethnic and inter-religious tolerance. This was perhaps influenced by her grandparents' experience as immigrants; they had come to Turkey from the Greek island of Crete, during the 1923 population exchange.[30]

[29] The meaning of *Elhamdulillah* is 'By the grace of Allah', or 'Thank God'.
[30] Under the post-World War I Treaty of Lausanne, the governments of Greece and Turkey agreed to 'exchange' sizeable proportions of their populations who did not share the dominant ethnic or religious identity of the respective countries. Muslim citizens of Greece were resettled in Turkey, and Turkish

From an early age, Zeynep demonstrated a strong work ethic and an international orientation. She was the only child in the family who passed the entrance exam to enrol in one of the country's most prestigious private lycées. This school was based on the French Catholic system, and instruction was carried out almost entirely in French. After high school, Zeynep achieved high marks on the very competitive nationwide university entrance examination, and was awarded a place at what is widely regarded as the most distinguished state university in Istanbul and, by some, in Turkey. It was during the completion of her bachelor of economics degree there that Zeynep met her future husband, Alp, who had also had a privileged upbringing and had attended an excellent private French lycée in Istanbul. She kept her relationship with Alp hidden from her parents who, according to Zeynep, upheld very strict Turkish traditions in their home.

Although she was quickly convinced that Alp was the man of her dreams, she decided to pursue her lifelong goal of moving away from Turkey. She felt that living apart would help her to determine the extent of their love for each other. Also ever since her earlier pen friendship with someone in Québec, Canada, Zeynep had been particularly interested in living in a bilingual French-speaking country. With this in mind, she applied to master's degree programs and scholarships in Canada and Europe. After receiving a scholarship sponsored by the European Commission, she decided to pursue her master's in European economics in Brussels. At the age of 23, Zeynep set out alone to spend one year in Belgium. During this time, she and Alp continued their relationship, and Zeynep secretly visited him in Turkey three times.

For Zeynep, Europe was not far enough away from Istanbul, and she yearned for more adventure:

---

citizens observing the Greek Orthodox religion were resettled in Greece. For further reading on this population exchange, see Hirschon (2003).

> I wanted to establish myself, to develop an idea about my identity, my country, my education. And I wanted to discover North America. For me, that was extremely important. In Europe, as an old continent, I was always curious about what is going on in North America. And for me Canada was the target—the number one country—because of this bilingualism. I really was going in search of the francophonie of Canada.

Zeynep applied and secured a full scholarship for doctoral studies in economics at a university in Ottawa, Canada. Her father was very proud of her academic successes and supported her moves to both Belgium and Canada.

### 6.5.2 The initial migration process and reasons for return

In 1992, at the age of 24, Zeynep moved to Ottawa in Ontario, Canada. At first she was shocked to discover that the city was not as bilingual as she had expected it to be. She quickly realized that her English language skills would need to improve. Still, it only took a few months for her to adjust to her new life in Canada. Her adaptation was eased by the support and friendship she received from her Ph.D. supervisor and his wife who were francophone and Turkish respectively, as well as by her stable financial situation.

For the most part, she enjoyed living independently, studying hard, earning money, socializing with her new Canadian and Turkish friends, and being involved in the Turkish community during her first years in Canada. However, she also remembers suffering bouts of anxiety and extreme loneliness. Not only was she far away from her family, but also from her boyfriend Alp with whom she sustained a challenging long distance relationship.

Zeynep and Alp got engaged in 1995 and married in Istanbul one year later. Her parents were not happy with this, as they were concerned that Alp might negatively affect their daughter's ambitions and potential for success. In October 1996, Alp joined Zeynep in Ottawa, full of expectations that he would be successful in Canada in his

chosen field – the film industry. However, his initial search for employment was unfruitful. Zeynep's scholarship had expired around the same time, and the couple was supported only by her salary as a temporary teaching assistant (TA) at her university.

Frustrated with his unemployed status, Alp spontaneously decided that they should move to Montreal, Québec, where he felt he would have more success in landing a job in film. This marked the beginning of very difficult times for Zeynep. For her, this move entailed commuting the four hundred kilometre return journey between Montreal and Ottawa three times per week in order to continue her studies and TA-ship. Alp was unable to secure a steady job and became aggressive at home. She felt isolated and became sick with depression and exhaustion. When Zeynep's TA-ship came to an end after one year, the couple was left with no source of income and slipped further and further into debt. They applied for government assistance in the form of welfare in order to pay for their monthly rental fees. After discovering the debts of her daughter and son-in-law during a 1999 visit to Canada, Zeynep's mother paid all of their outstanding bills.

While waiting to defend her thesis, Zeynep used her time by auditing classes at the University of Montreal. In doing so, she made good connections with academics in her field, which ultimately led to a job offer following her thesis defence in the spring of 1999. For one year, she worked as a post-doctoral researcher for an interuniversity research centre based in Montreal. Things were looking up for Zeynep. During the course of this year, she had four academic articles published, taught an economics course in French at a Montreal university, and earned a salary which kept the couple afloat financially. At this point, the couple began to seriously consider returning to Turkey because, after nearly four years, Alp had still not been able to obtain a stable job. However, they decided to postpone their return, so that Zeynep could accept a one-

year contract to teach at a university in the province of New Brunswick. During this year, the couple acquired Canadian citizenship and she gave birth to their daughter, Didem.

Zeynep and Alp felt that they would have more opportunities for professional advancement in Turkey, and that they would be in a better position to provide for their daughter there. Although Zeynep had not had any success in securing a tenure track position in Canadian academia, she had an offer from an esteemed university in Istanbul even before their return.

### 6.5.3 The return migration process and how she coped

In July 2001, Zeynep and Alp came back to Turkey full of energy and hope for a better future. The money that they had saved during their last two years in Canada was particularly valuable given the grave economic crisis that Turkey was suffering at the time. Besides these savings, they profited from the sale of two Istanbul apartments that she had inherited, and Zeynep was also earning a good salary in her new job. With all of this money, she hoped to buy the apartment of her dreams in one of the chicest districts of Istanbul.

The small family lived with relatives—first with Alp's grandparents, then with Zeynep's parents—in order to save money during the one year period that it took to find an apartment that met her expectations. The lack of privacy in these living arrangements, coupled with Alp's continued troubles in finding work in his field, strained their relationship. They bought a newly renovated apartment and, shortly after moving in, Zeynep found out she was pregnant again. However, as she was still getting settled in Istanbul and in their new home, as well as building a reputation at work, she did not feel ready to have a second child and elected to have an abortion. This upset

Alp, who interpreted her decision to abort the baby as a sign that she was no longer in love with him. Their relationship continued to deteriorate until Alp left her in 2002.

Still in love with him, Zeynep refused to accept that their marriage was over. For two years, she experienced periods of deep depression and financial stress from the debts of her new apartment. These trials disturbed not only her personal, but also her professional life. Finally, in 2004, her life started to become more positive. Along with all the tenants in her apartment building, Zeynep was awarded a large sum of money as part of a settlement for a legal dispute. With this, she bought a new car and paid off all of her remaining debts. With the exception of a brief but painful relapse with Alp, Zeynep began to date other men and to take up her previous strength of mind and determination once again.

In May 2006, Zeynep and Alp finalized their divorce. Today, she is in a serious long distance relationship with Nicolas, a former francophone classmate from her doctoral program who is still based in Ottawa. Professionally, she is excelling. She enjoys positive relationships with her Turkish students, and her research in football and art economics receives a lot of academic interest. Zeynep has not closed the door on her adopted country. Regardless of whether or not her relationship with Nicolas lasts, she is determined to eventually give Didem the opportunity to discover Canada.

### 6.5.4 Interpretive reflections in social and work contexts

Zeynep's migration processes alternately influenced and were influenced by her personal relationships, class position, gender roles, and educational and professional pursuits. In the following pages, these dynamic correlations will be examined, and tentative interpretations will be put forward.

## Social Context

### Family

While Zeynep demonstrated tremendous perseverance and ambition throughout her academic, personal and migration pursuits, it is important to situate her achievements within the context of her background. The socio-economic position and liberal outlook of Zeynep's family were major conditioning factors in her eventual migration processes. In her upper middle class family, Zeynep grew up comfortably and free from financial worries. She acknowledges her father's hard work as a pharmacist and property-owner as being the source of her family's stable financial situation. Besides financial support, Zeynep also emphasizes the significance of her father's emotional encouragement of her academic and professional pursuits in Turkey and abroad. The role her stay-at-home mother played in shaping her as a young woman receives no recognition in the beginning of her narrative.

Zeynep's family exemplified the modern Turkish family as designed by the Kemalist reforms of the early Turkish republican period. They embraced western culture and placed great importance on the education of their daughters. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that Zeynep's parents supported her enrolment in a very prestigious French Catholic lycée in Istanbul. However, this opportunity was not only a function of her family's upper middle class liberal status. Zeynep demonstrated a particularly high intellectual capacity and was the only child from her family to succeed in the challenging entrance examination for the school.

From an early age, Zeynep was exposed to different cultures and ways of thinking, both at the French school and through her family connections. As descendents of Cretan Muslims who came to Turkey during the 1923 population exchange, Zeynep's family was comfortable with other minority populations, and counted them among their

closest friends. These relationships fostered a level of open-mindedness in Zeynep which set her apart from many Turkish people. For example, she was an undergraduate student in the late 1980s, at a time when the Kurdish language was officially forbidden in Turkey and there were frequent violent clashes between Turkish soldiers and Kurdish activists. Despite this state of affairs, Zeynep recalls proclaiming to her classmates, "I wish [to] speak Kurdish and teach Kurdish. To Kurdish people there in the East, [I wish to teach] economics." Although her expression of support for Kurdish rights and development issues did not extend beyond words, her suggestion is still noteworthy given the highly politicized and divisive nature of these issues at the time.

Besides cultivating tolerance and open-mindedness, Zeynep's exposure and connections to different cultures also had a more direct effect on her migration aspirations and chances. First of all, her ability to speak French shaped her desire to study in a French-speaking country. Her elite education and linguistic abilities almost certainly helped her to secure the European Commission scholarship which sent her to Belgium. Furthermore, it was through her father's close friendship with the Istanbul-based Ecumenical Patriarch of the Greek Orthodox Church that she was awarded a scholarship for study in Canada through the Greek Orthodox community in Toronto.
Although Zeynep received a lot of support from her parents in matters related to her education and career choices, they were against her relationship with Alp from the beginning, and expressed concern that he would derail her drive for success. When she and Alp suffered marital problems and financial debt in Canada, Zeynep kept these hidden from her family. Her decision to suffer in silence could be interpreted as a manifestation of her fear of admitting failure, loss of control, and lack of judgement. Up until that point, Zeynep had always been successful in every aspect of her life. Her marital and financial problems stemmed from the one decision that she had made without the support of her parents, that is, to marry Alp:

> I didn't tell anything. No, I couldn't. How can I? Because, you know, that was my dream marriage. I waited for him for about 5 years! Then how can I say that it's not working well? How can I say that we are fighting every night?

Upon discovery of the couple's dire financial situation in 1999, Zeynep's parents covered their debts. At the age of 31 and married for three years, Zeynep's well-being was still secured through her parent's economic backing. In this sense, although Zeynep was in Canada and had lived away from home for five years, she and Alp remained financially bound to her parents.

During a return visit to Turkey in 1999, Zeynep was reminded of how her life had been in Turkey and how it could be if she returned:

> When I came back in 1999, when I saw my sister's house, when I saw my mother's new apartment, I said, "Why not? Why I'm not living in [a] nice apartment? Why am I still in these conditions [at this age]?" Because I'm from a family with no financial problems at all, I always had nice opportunities to do everything…travel, everything. We never had financial problems.

She felt a sense of discord as she considered her conditions in Canada in comparison to her family's conditions in Turkey:

> I…lived in a very dirty, ugly apartment [in Canada]. I didn't have even a *dressoir*[31] to put my stuff [in]. I had nylon bags under my bed for my shirts, for my bras and everything. This is already enough. As a young woman, I always thought, I don't deserve that.

Positive impressions of one's country of origin during a return visit may have a strong influence on a migrant's return intentions (Güngör, & Tansel, 2005a). This was certainly the case for Zeynep who, upon seeing her family's high living standards in Turkey, was motivated to return and improve her own living conditions. Her narrative reveals her feeling of being worthy of more than what she had in Canada. Therefore,

[31] *Dressoir* is a French term for a dresser, or a chest of drawers.

during her visit, her awareness of her status demotion in Canada became more acute, and she felt that she could reoccupy her upper class living standard by returning to Turkey.

When Zeynep, Alp, and their newborn daughter finally moved back to Turkey in 2001, she once again received unconditional support from her family. Not only did her parents offer the couple their bedroom for almost one year while they searched for their own apartment, the childcare provided by her mother after their divorce enabled Zeynep to excel at work and to establish a very good reputation for herself professionally. Societal changes also rendered Zeynep's single mother status in Turkey less difficult than it would have been in past decades. She remembers that while she was in Canada, it was still not common in her home country for mothers to raise their children alone:

> I always admired Canadian single moms. I said that many, many times to Alp too. …I was in Canada and I was seeing single moms and I said, "I admire them. They are strong, [and] they take care of their kids." …Now [it's] very common [in Turkey]. But I'm one of the luckiest ones because I have mom's support. So that I can go out with my friends, I can have my boyfriend, I can stay in my apartment. You know, I have my full freedom.

Although Alp sees their daughter from time to time, Zeynep has assumed responsibility for almost all of the childrearing duties. As such, she fulfills the role of an educated woman who enjoys a great deal of professional success, as well as the more traditional role of mother and homemaker. Her so-called 'freedom' is achieved only with the help and support of her mother.

**Relations with husband**

Zeynep's relationship with Alp began as a breathtaking love story: Hardworking studious young woman meets bohemian intellectual young man. They keep their affair

secret and meet clandestinely. For five long years, they live in separate countries until finally they marry and are reunited at last. Although Zeynep still speaks of Alp as having been the 'man of her dreams', her narrative reveals a marriage which was ridden with role conflicts and unfulfilled expectations.

After getting married, Alp moved to Canada to be with Zeynep. This simple fact may seem to challenge stereotypes of migrant men who set out either on their own or else followed by dependent wives and children. However, although Zeynep was the main driving factor, Alp's migration was also a calculated move on his part. It is important to note that he viewed his migration as a wonderful opportunity for his own advancement, and fully expected to be a successful filmmaker in Canada.

Although Zeynep had successfully managed her own salary and budget independently for the past four years, she handed over the household finances to Alp when they first got married. She did this despite the fact that she was highly trained in the field of economics, while Alp's field of study was completely unrelated to matters of money. He had a bachelor's degree in English literature and film, and it had taken him eight years to complete it. The fact that he was automatically entrusted with the household finances is indicative of the widely accepted gender roles governing marital spheres of influence.

Contrary to his initial expectations, Alp had a very difficult time securing a stable job in his field. His ability to speak both French and English, though undoubtedly helpful in Canada, did not benefit him as much as they would have in Turkey. As he became increasingly frustrated with his downgraded position in society, he also became more and more selfish. He forcibly uprooted Zeynep from the life she had created for herself in Ottawa, and moved them to Montreal where he thought he would have more success. A few times, he obtained brief but lucrative contracts, and he would spend his earnings carelessly. Most of the time, however, he was without work and would stay at home

wallowing in self-pity. Zeynep enabled this destructive pattern by taking on all the responsibilities of the house in addition to her demanding work and school duties:

> I went to Ottawa three times a week to work [as a teaching assistant and] to see my Ph.D. supervisors …. Maybe for a year or so I went, I commuted—Montreal, Ottawa, Montreal… For what? In order to be able to pay our rent. I took the bus and then came late at night. …I remember I was vomiting when I was preparing my bag. I was very tired, I was sick. …I didn't want to stay in Ottawa—I had friends I could have stayed [with]—but I didn't want to leave him alone. I felt really terrible. Really depression… Add on top of it a marriage which is not working. I mean we didn't have a good sex life. When he was upset, he refused to make sex with me. He was not happy. I was working a lot… I was trying to write my thesis, clean the apartment, cook for him, go to Ottawa, teach, come back [to Montreal]...

This type of 'double workload' is often cited in the literature on migrant women. That is, many migrant women, even if they are working outside of the home and are the sole breadwinners, as Zeynep was, still assume traditional housework duties in the private sphere. Many women do not place demands on their husbands to help, but instead make excuses to justify their indolence (Koçtürk, 1992). Zeynep rationalized her double workload by saying she "was helping him to get off his depression", even though she was also experiencing great emotional and physical distress.

There are obvious differences between Zeynep and the stereotypical migrant women described in the first chapters of this paper, such as her high educational attainment and family class position. In spite of these distinguishing features, Zeynep suffered the same burdens which afflict many migrant women, such as violence and isolation:

> He was hard on me, you know, we were disputing all the time, all the time. And the police came once; he was violent, but he was hitting chairs [and] doors. He tried once [to hit me] but instead of hitting me, he hit the bed. From this perspective, he was careful. But for me even [the raising of one's] voice - this is violence. I didn't tell this to my friends. I lost almost all my friends in Ottawa …he succeeded to cut my relationship

> with my friends because he was so nasty. He didn't want to attend the welcome party for his arrival. He refused the friendship of my friends and … I really started to feel very isolated. At least in Ottawa I [had] had my friends—Turkish, Canadian, my school friends, my Ph.D. supervisor—everyone was there. I was alone in Montreal.

With Alp's employment status irregular at best, and Zeynep's sources of funding from her university expired, they quickly ran out of money and amassed a large amount of debt. When it became clear that Alp was not capable of handling finances, Zeynep took charge of the household budget once again. Even after she began working and earning money in 1999, she maintained strict control over their finances. She recalls, "I controlled [the] money, I put [it] under my account. He was very upset at that time, [saying], 'Why you are doing that? Why are you making us suffer? We have money now, why don't we spend that?'" With great pride, she recounts the amount of money that she managed to save:

> I started to economize. You know how much I economized? In two years combined that he worked as well, I economized fifty thousand dollars US. Fifty thousand dollars US! In two years!! I cooked myself. I really, really, really did a lot. I worked a lot…because I wanted to buy an apartment at that time in Istanbul because I saw that [obtaining a] tenure track job [in Canada] is a dream. Alp will never get a job in Canada, and as long as he doesn't get a job we can't stay here.

In the few studies which have considered the specificities of female return migration, women are often portrayed as resisting return migration (Pedraza, 1991; Rittersberger-Tılıç, 1998). Grasmuck & Pessar described women as tending to spend lavishly and accumulate durable goods, making it more difficult to leave their countries of settlement. Conversely, men are described as strongly return-oriented, and feeling that by returning to their home country, they would resume their former position as head of the household. The authors argued that, in order to realize their goal of return sooner rather than later, men tend to save as much money as possible while abroad (as cited in Pedraza, 1991). Zeynep and Alp's attitudes toward return migration challenge such generalizations. Zeynep's description of Alp reveals contradictory tendencies. During

his first several years in Canada, she says that he very much wanted to stay there, despite the difficulties he experienced in finding meaningful work. She recalls:

> I was always thinking that [I would eventually return to Turkey]. But my husband was very eager to stay in Canada. Indeed we had some fights on that too. He was very… he was *for* Canada and I was *against* Canada. Indeed that was one of the tensions between us.

Nevertheless, toward the end of their time in Canada, Alp was fed up with his lack of employment opportunities there and redirected his goals toward Turkey. Zeynep had started to feel encouraged about her employment prospects in Canada, given her recent work experience as a researcher at a Montreal institute and as a sessional lecturer at a university. However, she concluded that returning to Turkey would be their best option, as she was guaranteed a tenure-track position in a university there.

Indeed, their return to Turkey cemented Zeynep's potential for success in academia. However, Alp continued struggling to find work. Even upon their return, Zeynep performed many typically male gender roles in their household; she was still the main breadwinner and was fully responsibility for their finances. However, her narrative exposes the discomfort in their relationship caused by the persistence of these role reversals:

> The problem was, to tell you the truth, he was not working. He was not making money, and that gave me an excuse to despise him. And since he was not working, this gave him an excuse to [] fight with me, to be jealous with me... He was very aggressive because of that. It's very depressing to have a husband at home and *you* work. … he's not working for several months and I keep paying him… That was the story in Canada and the story will repeat itself in Turkey. There is something wrong here in this story.

Because neither spouse in this relationship was carrying out his or her traditional gendered responsibilities, each of them harboured hostile feelings toward the other. Zeynep's determination to be successful at work and her appeals for Alp to find work

were perceived as un-feminine and inappropriate for a wife. Alp's parents reproached her by saying, "Oh, you're so anxious! You *love* money! You bought an apartment in the chicest district in Istanbul and you're still not happy!" They accused her of being a "very ambitious girl", implying that she was not fulfilling her proper duties as a wife and mother. Alp felt that Zeynep prioritized her career and lifestyle achievements over her family. Indeed, she had had her second pregnancy terminated in order to be able to focus on her work and new apartment. She felt that a second child would inhibit her from succeeding at work. In fact, it has been shown that Turkish women's propensity to have induced abortions increases with their level of education and with the size of city they live in (Tezcan, 1981). Educated women in big cities must engage in more intense competition for limited work opportunities; as such, they are more motivated to limit their family size. As a return migrant, it is possible that these pressures were even more intense for Zeynep, as she was determined to demonstrate that her return migration was one of success, not failure.

Zeynep makes no apologies for her professional success. In her eyes, she had done all she that could to make their marriage work, while supporting her family on her income. Although she does not deny that they suffered bad experiences in Canada, she also takes credit for many of the positive outcomes:

> Now when I look at [our experience in Canada] from away, [I see that in the end] we obtained our citizenship, we had a healthy daughter, [and in Istanbul we had] an apartment, no debt. …I had a secure job. I consider myself a *yumurtlayan tavuk* **[**egg-laying hen].

Zeynep's comments reveal her perception of having given much more to her relationship than she took from it. However, there is very little trace of resentment in her narrative over the collapse of their marriage after all she had done to make it work. Instead, what emerges is the understanding that Zeynep derives great satisfaction from being in control and being perceived as 'perfect' in all aspects of her life. She suffered extreme depression when Alp left her one year after their return to Turkey. While she

was no doubt saddened by the end of their relationship, it seems that it was even more difficult for her to adjust to her sense of failure at not having effectively managed this part of her life. Being without a man left her feeling incomplete:

> I was too depressed, I was crying in the washrooms after teaching during the breaks. I was counting girls and women with rings on street. There, I saw so many, so many people with rings, and I don't have, you know...I was thinking to [commit] suicide.

For Zeynep, being a successful woman entails having a man in her life, even if he does not play a central role.

**Friendships and activities**

During her first years in Canada, Zeynep's closest friends were from the Turkish-Canadian community in Ottawa. This is noteworthy, because in describing her friendships while in Turkey, she emphasized the importance of non-Turkish connections. In her narrative, Zeynep recalls feeling different from 'regular' Turks even before her initial migration:

> I had always this … advanced thinking beforehand. It's not because [] I was abroad that I developed these ideas. To tell the truth, I think [it was due to] the education in [my French lycée], the French education…I mean in eight years you read, you don't [learn] only French [language], but you learn French *thinking*.

Now that she is back in Turkey, she distinguishes herself even more from the Turkish people in her environment. She perceives the combined effect of her superior intellectual aptitudes and her Canadian experiences as enhancing her uniqueness:

> Since I was familiar to learn how to [think] through reading, through intelligentsia, … the current literature, as well as the newspapers and current media, then [I could] learn the thinking of a society. I think I was quite good in doing that in [the lycée] and I did that in Canada too. So I

> think I combined the two [ways of] thinking and I add to [them] my Turkish traditions. I obtained a nice mixture of that!

Another status marker which is emphasized throughout Zeynep's narrative is her ability to speak French. She has a deep veneration for francophone culture, which stems from her early socialization in an elite French education system. This has had far-reaching impacts on her life course, shaping her choice of country of destination (her migrations were directed only to francophone nations) and choice of husband (Alp also attended a French lycée and they spoke French together at home although they were both Turkish). Upon her return to Turkey, Zeynep's circle of friends once again consists mainly of non-ethnic Turks, such as Greeks and Armenians. She explains that many of Istanbul's ethnic minority populations speak French as a second or third language, so with these friends, French is usually the language of communication.

Moreover, Zeynep is adamant that any man in her life must also be able to speak French, as she considers her francophonie to be an integral part of her identity. In this manner, she locates herself in a class of her own, and worthy of more than a Turkish man. In her narrative, she recounts how desperately she wanted to find a suitable boyfriend after her divorce with Alp; she prayed:

> "God, help me to find someone, a *foreign* boyfriend, and especially a francophone…." Because I always believe that I'm very comfortable with a non-Turkish man and someone who speaks French. Because someone who doesn't speak French cannot understand me, even a girlfriend, because I have a very sophisticated taste. I'm very elitist in the sense that the art knowledge, the literature, music and all this stuff that I learned...You know I have a wide range experience on art and literature. So it's not just economics that I'm interested [in]. The whole system of being, you know I am a very open intellectual. Alp was always saying that too, "You're very intellectual. It's hard for you to get someone who understands you. He was good in understanding me, we [had] similar taste,… a way to understand life too, a very sarcastic and distanced positioning. However, he was francophone too. So I knew that a francophone is the one.

This excerpt demonstrates how Zeynep equates French language with civilization and culture. This view is heavily influenced by the dominant ideologies of the Turkish modernization project, which were inspired and shaped by French culture and politics. The emphasis she places on languages and culture is particularly distinguishable after her migration to Canada. As a result of her migration experiences, she has many international social and professional networks. Because of this, it can be said that she regards herself as more of a global citizen than merely a Turk:

> It's very hard to find a Turkish man which fits my thinking. Someone [with] Nicolas' qualifications fits my thinking. If not him, [then] someone at his calibre. Because someone who is not able to combine these different cultures [and] language is not enough to understand me, because I do this very automatically. My daily life is [a] continuous combination of these cultures, these languages. I can easily switch from Turkish to French, from French to English. I'm in touch with many, many people and for me this is just a regular task. These are just my normal friends. Keeping in touch with different sides of the world, different parts of the world, this is my normal life. When you compare this to other people, I'm different from my friends, different from my family, from my cousins…

It seems that Zeynep's migration affected her social status in a variety of ways at various points. Raised in a cultivated, upper class family, she experienced a lower living standard during her time in Canada. While her dysfunctional marriage to Alp was a major contributing factor, we will see in the next section how this was also a function of macro structural factors. With her return to Turkey, Zeynep resumed and eventually surpassed the living standards of her former upper class position. Today, with her transnational connections and experience, she sees herself as an elite global cosmopolitan who eludes categorization.

**Work Context**

As discussed earlier in this biographical interpretation, Zeynep's educational opportunities were strongly shaped by her family environment. Additionally, her move to Canada was related to her Turkishness, as well as her social and cultural capital. In

this excerpt, she speaks of her initial contact with her eventual Ph.D. supervisor in Canada:

> We were talking all the time in French because he was from Québec. I think he also worked a lot for my [Ph.D.] candidacy—to get the scholarship and everything, because of the francophonie maybe? Then once I got there I discovered that the wife of my Ph.D. supervisor was Turkish…She speaks Turkish fluently [and was] born in Istanbul. [We] studied in the same university, in the department of management and everything. So that helped me a lot and then they became my closest friends and they also became my professors at the department.

Unbeknownst to her at the time, Zeynep's shared linguistic, cultural, and educational capital with her Ph.D. advisers gave her access to doctoral study and employment opportunities, as well as funding resources in Canada.

These privileges, coupled with Zeynep's ambition and diligence, led to her success during her first few years in Canada. Her marriage to Alp marked the first major disruption in her steady stream of successes. For example, his forced relocation of her to Montreal added significant strain to Zeynep's workload, and robbed her of the energy required to perform as she had in the past.

Apart from Alp's interference, there were also structural factors which brought about ruptures and changes in Zeynep's career path. On a macro level, she recalls the direct effects that Canada's deteriorating economic situation in the late 1990s had on her:

> I also lived very hard periods of Canada. I mean, I was there for the referendum[32], I was there during the hardest recession. I lived the Chrétien period.[33] I lived all these periods: the budget problem, how to

[32] In 1995, a referendum was held in the province of Québec in which the citizens voted on a motion to pursue independence from the rest of the country. The motion was defeated by a very small margin. The ensuing speculation on the future unity and stability of Canada contributed to the economic downturn of the country in the late 1990s.

[33] She is referring to Jean Chrétien, the prime minister of Canada from 1993 to 2003.

> cut the budget deficit, and all these sufferings. I experienced that in practice too. I mean, they cut from my scholarship, they cut from my research pool, etc. So I experienced it in practice. I couldn't find a job because of the cutbacks too.

Besides being reduced in amount, her scholarship and teaching assistantship were also restricted to a limited number of years. When they expired, she had still not defended her thesis, mostly because she was waiting for one of her advisers to return from maternity leave. With no money coming in and lots of time on her hands, Zeynep wanted to find work. However, because Zeynep's landed immigrant status from Ontario was not recognized in Québec, she was not allowed to work in that province.

Even after formal obstructions to employment were removed upon her attainment of Canadian citizenship, Zeynep still found it difficult to land a tenure-track job in Canadian academia because of what she alleges to be unofficial forms of discrimination:

> For example, University of Montreal, they said, "Okay, we like you. Your qualifications are what we are looking for. You're francophone, you're bilingual, and this and that…" And then they didn't even ask me to give a presentation! Come on, even a [thesis] seminar… they did not give me this possibility! So you live in Montreal, you are a Canadian citizen, you're bilingual. Many, many, many good things. And then, no, you're not as good as—I don't know—maybe an American or someone from western Ontario.

She also recognizes that her potential to find work in Canada was curbed by the limited job market there:

> Maybe [it's an] *obliged* discrimination. Maybe there are not many positions, so that they can't take any chances. There are not many positions because there are not many students, and there are not many students because there are not enough attractions.

She distinguishes the Canadian academic labour market from the one in Turkey:

> In Turkey, you have a lot of private universities offering positions [with] more money to offer, or similar salaries but secure jobs. So these things are that easy because of [the] population—Istanbul [has] fifteen million people [and] Turkey [has] seventy million people—and the demand is high. Education is so important that now more and more private universities get into the sector, into the business. It's a very lucrative business. [The] government subsidizes new openings, there are some private associations. Big companies establish universities under their names. The turnover is so high [in Turkey].

The economic crisis afflicting Turkey in the late 1990s and 2000s did not seem to have the same deleterious affect on the academic sector as it did in other fields. On the contrary, Zeynep was offered an attractive job package at a Turkish university while she was still in Canada, and recalls serious expressions of interest made by dozens of other universities in Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir. While the opportunity for Zeynep to have tenure-track status at a university was certainly a major factor in their decision to return to Turkey, there were other pull factors, such as the prospect of living near family and achieving higher living standards. It was important for Zeynep to reoccupy the privileged societal position in which she had been born and raised:

> In my dream, I was looking for a nice apartment, going shopping, buying nice clothes…Because that's what I was doing when I was a young girl in Istanbul. I had some dream brands [and] dream designer boutiques. I always had in my mind a full-time job in a nice university, with a nice apartment, car and everything. In Istanbul [I would also be] with my parents. For me, that was the best of everything; that was my dream.

The apartment that Zeynep purchased upon their return to Istanbul takes on a central role in her narrative. It can be seen as a symbol of her migration success. Although, as her spouse, Alp was legally entitled to half of the value of the apartment when they divorced, Zeynep describes it always as 'my apartment'. She is exceedingly proud of this attestation of her personal financial savings. According to King (2000), it is common for return migrants to engage in conspicuous consumption, especially in the form of extravagant housing, to act as a marker of their triumphant returnee status.

Located in one of the most elite areas of Istanbul, Zeynep's ultra-modern apartment designed by a professional architect is indeed an important status marker.

Her academic focus on luxury and leisure topics such as the economics of art and sports serve as factors distinguishing Zeynep from others. These are 'sexy' subject matters which garner a lot of attention both inside and outside of academia, and which are traditionally male-dominated fields of research:

> Now I became the star of the department, I have to say. I'm teaching different courses, and I'm kind of on the road to becom[ing] a celebrity in Turkey within the issues I'm working [on]… I'm meeting with professors, football players…really good stuff. [There are] people calling me. I have a wide range of connections. Very interesting thing as a woman, there is no one doing that.

Zeynep's return migration offered her the opportunity for retribution for the status demotion she experienced in Canada. As such, she has gone to great lengths to discriminate between the Zeynep who was in Canada, and the Zeynep who returned to Turkey. In the first scenario, she is the woman who stumbled on her career path in Canada as a result of her destructive marriage and other external factors. In the second case, Zeynep emerges from her migration as a strong woman who employs the lessons she learned during her time abroad in her professional and personal life upon return:

> This is Zeynep after divorce, after having reconstructed my mind. The feeling is different. Now I'm much more self confident. I [consider] myself [an] achieved person. I wasn't like that when I came first [back to Turkey]. I changed the way I'm teaching. I changed the way I dress. And I rebuilt an image of Zeynep *Hoca*[34]: an image of professor of economics. As an image maker, I work on myself. I built an image and I reconstruct[ed] myself as a Canadian person [first] and then Turkish. I remembered all my thinking habits [from] when I was in Canada, how I got rid of the difficult situations. I came out from some difficult situations and I remembered all these and I rebuilt the way I think, I behave, dress and everything.

[34] *Hoca* is a Turkish term meaning 'teacher', 'educator', 'professor', or 'master'. Students in Turkey often refer to their professors by their first name followed by *hoca* as a sign of respect.

> I always remember my habits [from Canada]: being professional, organizing the thoughts, being positive, wanting something and looking for all the options around, and always [prioritizing]. Turkish education does not [teach] that. Thank God I got that and I'm teaching this to my daughter.
>
> My students say that, "Zeynep Hoca, you're different." I always wear suits or *tailleur*[35] … Always, always as if I am going to business recruitment meetings. Always, always full makeup, nice clothes, nice shoes. Because I respect my students. People say, "you changed the look of the department, now everyone is putting [on] suits!"

Here, we see that Zeynep, her students, and her colleagues associate success with western standards of professionalism. Although she 'reconstructs' her image based on these standards, there is one aspect which she had to 'deconstruct' before she could be successful as a professor in Turkey:

> In Canada, there is always this distance between professor and student. You can't smile too much, you can't be so strict. People don't let you [] be yourself in academics. Public life is much more…self-controlled. [Whereas] in Turkey, there are [many] more unwritten rules, through habits, through tradition....
>
> Before going to Canada, I didn't have any experience [teaching] in Turkish university... Sometimes students like to hear their professors speak in Turkish. I was always speaking in English. Students were knocking on my door and talking to me in English even after class. So that showed that I was a different professor, and I wasn't that much liked. This is no good. Maybe in Canada it's good, but in Turkey, you shouldn't do that! You should be friends with them, you should make jokes in Turkish… You can't do that [in Canada]. These…distances, it took about four or five years for me to break them. When I came to [Turkey], I built this wall between me and my students, which is not good. Turks don't like the wall…

This is an indication of the individualist tendencies in Canadian academia versus the collectivist approach to professor-student relations in Turkey.

[35] *Tailleur* is a French term for a lady's tailored suit.

Still, her unique stance as a Turkish-Canadian Francophile sometimes causes conflicts with her students and other Turks:

> My approach is different. I understand the way French think and different points of view may exist in my mind and I can explain them easily. Standard [Turkish] state education does not give that. So in my courses, I try to give that too. Sometimes my students may get angry…regarding Turkish issues, regarding Armenian issues, regarding other issues. I don't like the extreme ideas. [I prefer] in-between, always consensus…trying to find the consensus and trying to challenge. These are new things, new to society. But I try to impose these things in my teaching, in my relationships. And then when I open up my ideas, I see that I'm much more comfortable with foreigners, not with Turkish. Because [Turks] stay at a certain point.

Having been away from Canada for six years and having achieved success, Zeynep now contemplates her migration processes in Canada more positively than she was when she first left:

> In Canada, I finished my Ph.D., I got my citizenship, I have a bank account for my daughter—I send money there—I have good contacts. …I feel Canadian and I love this country, much more than the time when I left Canada, because now I realize very well that I learned my profession. Canada gave me my profession. Like my grandma says, "It's like golden bracelet—it's valid wherever you go." Wherever you go, you have this profession. I'm *so* confident [that] it's not something that I can only practice in a particular corner of the world. I can do that wherever I go...[And] if I decide [to re-migrate to Canada], I know what to do, I know how to live. So this is a good thing, this is a security option for me.

Although there is a strong emphasis throughout Zeynep's narrative on her desire for professional success, it would be overly simplistic to state that her return migration was only driven by the opportunity to earn more money in Turkey. Clearly, socio-economic factors, household strategies, and individual goals all interacted in Zeynep's decisions to migrate initially and to return, and will most certainly be involved in any future decision(s) to re-migrate to Canada or elsewhere.

## 6.6 Meral now always has one foot on the ground

### 6.6.1 Living in Turkey and motivation for migration

Meral was born in Istanbul in 1971. There, she was raised by her working class parents alongside her two brothers. As the only daughter in the household, she was accustomed to getting a lot of attention and being spoiled. As a teenager Meral fell in love with her seventeen-year-old cousin, Murat, who was born, raised, and lived in Canada with his Turkish parents. They wed, in Turkey and in Canada, against the wishes of her parents, who considered them too young to marry.

### 6.6.2 The initial migration process and reasons for return

In 1986, at the age of sixteen, Meral legally entered Canada as a spouse under the family class immigration provision, and applied for Canadian citizenship after moving there. Her move so far away from her family and friends in Turkey was eased by her plan to return every year for a visit. Because of this expectation, she was all the more disappointed to learn that it would take two years for her citizenship application process to be completed and that, during this period, she had to remain in the country or risk invalidating her application.

Meral and Murat's first conjugal home was under the roof of his parents in Toronto. Living with her parents-in-law could be trying. Given her young age, Meral felt that the expectations that they had of her as a married woman were too high. Despite the fact that they lived together with Murat's parents during their entire time in Canada, she never felt as though she was a part of the family.

When she left Turkey, she spoke no English and still had one year of high school to complete. Soon after her arrival in Canada, Meral participated in six months of English

language classes sponsored by the Canadian government. After attaining a working knowledge of the language, she enrolled to complete her high school education. Meral did not have money of her own and sometimes could not even afford public transportation fares to commute to and from school. Too shy to ask her in-laws or her husband for money, she obtained a minimum-wage position at a pizza parlour. This was her first job in Canada, and indeed ever.

As she worked in this menial job and pursued her high school diploma, her two-year waiting period for citizenship finally elapsed. Soon after this, she left her job and went to Turkey on her own on a two-month vacation to see her family. During this visit, it became apparent to Meral's parents that she was still very much in love with Murat. This helped to reduce their worries about their young daughter's marriage.

Once back in Canada, Meral heeded her father-in-law's advice and looked for work which matched her qualifications, instead of returning to the pizza parlour. She submitted her résumé to several employment agencies, calling attention to her computer and typing skills. Through this, she was placed in an office job at one of Canada's largest mobile communications companies. She started as a temporary employee, but through her hard work and determination, she was hired into a secure position in the corporation. Still completing her high school education, Meral was their youngest employee.

In 1990, Meral's first son Ali was born. After six months of maternity leave, she returned to her job. Noted for her ambition and competence, she was internally recruited to work in the financial planning section. In her new job, she earned more money and gained experience in the field she was planning to study.

After completing high school, Meral enrolled in the Certified General Accounting (CGA) program at a well-known and reputable business and technical college in

Toronto. Her decision to study accounting was influenced by her limited English proficiency. Strong in mathematics, she decided to pursue accounting and financial planning, fields in which language skills are less important. Students registered in the college's CGA program had to be employed extracurricularly. It was the policy of her employer to pay three-quarters of their employees' school fees if a certain academic standing was maintained. She thus felt valued by the company and continued to succeed in her position there.

Meral invested her earnings in realty. Acting on her own initiative and drawing only from her own savings—her husband did not have any money—she arranged a mortgage and purchased an apartment in Toronto to rent out for revenue.

When their second son, Bert, was born in 1993, Meral and her family went to Turkey on vacation to see her family. During this trip, her husband decided he wanted them to stay in Turkey. With only one year remaining in her CGA program, Meral wanted to go back to Canada. However, Murat was resolved in his decision and convinced her that they should stay.

### 6.6.3 The return migration process and how she coped

After having lived in Canada for seven years, Meral discontinued her studies, quit her job, and moved back to Turkey with her family against her will. Murat found a job in a mid-sized city in central Anatolia, and Meral followed him there with their two young sons. They stayed there for one year, and then moved to Istanbul where Meral's family was still located. She recounts that Murat found another job and worked hard.

Securing employment in Turkey was more difficult for Meral than she had expected. She distinguishes her main impediment to finding work in Turkey as the fact that she

wears a headscarf, in accordance with her Islamic religious convictions.[36] But Meral was steadfast in her search for a job, both because they needed a second income in the household to support their growing family, and because she wanted to work and put her education to use. She started to work when she was finally able to convince a cell phone company to hire her for minimum wage. Her mother cared for her children while she and Murat were working.

Meral wanted to finish her final year in the CGA program, and several times raised the idea of returning to Canada to do so. But each time Murat refused to go back. Finally, she quit her job and decided to finish her education in Turkey. Because there was no program equivalent to the CGA, she had to look for something similar. In 1995, she registered in a political science and economics program at a local university, entering at a level corresponding to the second year of her previous curriculum. However, she only studied for one year before she became pregnant. Their third baby, Can, was born in 1997.

After her third and last child turned one year old, Meral started looking for work again. She felt that a second income was needed to support their family. She also indicates that, after her rewarding work and stimulating educational milieus in Canada, she was not satisfied with staying at home. However, Murat discouraged her, saying, "What are you doing? Stay home…look after the kids, the house."

Going back to work presented many challenges. Meral got a job in a private company far from where they resided. At this point, they were living across the city from her mother. Because it was far for her mother to travel to look after the kids, she would often stay with them during the week. Also, the working conditions in this company

[36] As discussed in chapter three, there is a major debate in Turkey over the wearing of headscarves. This debate is located within a long-term conflict between Turkey's history as a Muslim country and the legacy of Atatürk's radical dress reforms at the inception of the Republic. In short, with a goal of modernizing the country through secularization, these reforms effectively outlawed the wearing of religious symbols, such as headscarves, in public agencies, offices, and institutions.

were not conducive to family life. Meral worked long and irregular hours, and on days when her husband could not pick her up from work, she had to endure long travel times by public transportation. On one such night, Meral was attacked by a man armed with a knife after descending from a bus on a dark road near her house. Weary from all the obstacles that seemed to prevent her from pursuing a career in Turkey, she quit her job only one month after she had started.

Meral was out of the workforce for one year. Seeing how unhappy she was, Murat brought a job advertisement to her attention and, to her surprise, encouraged her to apply. The advertised position was in the accounting and finance section of a Canadian organization in Istanbul. Although she met all of the qualifications, she was convinced that she would not be hired. She was still discouraged and lacking confidence after all the obstacles she had had to deal with in her previous quests for work. Still, she applied, albeit mostly to appease her husband. She was called in for an interview and, after a lengthy but fair recruitment process, was hired to start working there in early 2000.

After Meral had settled into her new job, Murat decided that he wanted the family to re-migrate to Canada. She protested and he insisted. Instead of following him, she suggested that he go ahead of them and get established. She told him that only after he had found a job and bought a house in Canada would he be in a position to convince her to leave the life that she was building in Turkey. Before Murat re-migrated in 2001, a friend of his in Canada asked Murat to lend him a large amount of money. He consulted Meral, who reminded him that they could not afford to do so. In spite of her position on the matter, he went behind her back and lent the money, which he obtained on credit and through loans. Meral discovered his deception when her credit card was declined while making a purchase because its limit had been exceeded. She felt embarrassed and betrayed.

Murat went back to Canada to launch a new life for their family. At this point, their relationship was steadily deteriorating. The situation was exacerbated when he tried unsuccessfully to sell Meral's income-generating apartment in Toronto against her wishes. He returned to Turkey one year later after he could not manage to establish himself in Canada. Back in Turkey, he engaged in an extramarital affair and announced to Meral that he wanted to end their marriage. Over the next few years, he vacillated between Canada and Turkey, and between wanting to end their marriage and wanting to stay together. In 2003, after he had left her and Turkey for the third time, she changed the locks and told him, "Go, but don't come back…"

Four years later, Meral and Murat have no contact with each other. She has assumed full responsibility for the parenting of her two youngest kids. Murat is scarcely involved in the lives of his sons. This is also true in the case for their eldest son, Ali, who returned to Toronto at the age of eleven to continue his studies. Although Murat and Ali live in the same city, Ali lives with his paternal grandparents. Meral would like Murat to show more interest and accept more responsibility for their children.

After the divorce, Meral sold the apartment she once owned in Toronto. With very few friends left there, her main interest in Canada remains her son Ali. She says they have regular and frequent contact by telephone, through email, and through real-time electronic messaging over the internet. Ali also returns to Turkey annually to visit his mother, siblings, and maternal extended family. Although she misses him, she is happy Ali returned to Canada at the grade six level, because he now speaks English fluently and will not be limited by language barriers in the future. She is proud of Ali, who initiated his return to Canada on his own.

Meral has since returned to Canada on holidays, and her sons Bert and Can go there every year for a visit. While she has not entirely ruled out the possibility of resettling in

Canada, Meral is content to stay in Turkey for now, where she owns a new house and has a stable job.

### 6.6.4 Interpretive reflections in social and work contexts

Meral has suffered many setbacks at the various stages of her migration processes, both in Canada and in Turkey. While she has struggled at times, she feels that she is now more mature and sees the world through open eyes because of the obstacles that she has had to overcome. In fact, throughout her narrative, she exhibits a remarkable doggedness and ambition, for which she has been equally rewarded and penalized along the way.

#### Social Context

On the surface, the young Meral who left Turkey to join her new husband resembled the stereotype of Turkish women that pervades migration literature. That is, she was very young at the time of her marriage, wore a headscarf, did not speak the language of her country of settlement, came from an uneducated, working class background, and in fact had not yet completed high school at the time of her initial migration. However, within Meral was a budding drive to succeed, which grew with each challenge that was put in her way.

#### Relationship with parents and parents-in-law

In Canada, her living conditions in the home of her parents-in-law were far from ideal. As a bride at the young age of sixteen, she was expected to engage in stereotypical female duties around the home, such as cleaning, and was discouraged from interacting with her husband while he was busy with ‘male’ duties, such as working in the garage. She feels that such enforcements of traditional sex roles restricted their marriage. In addition, Meral sensed jealousy from her mother-in-law concerning her successes in

school and at work. About the relationship between Turkish mothers- and daughters-in-law, she says, "You can be perfect but they'll still find something wrong with you!" During her time in Canada, Meral lived in a patriarchal extended family arrangement (Timur, 1981), in which the household was headed by her father-in-law, who had authority over his wife and son. Murat then had further authority over his wife, Meral. As the daughter-in-law, Meral occupied the lowest position in the family's hierarchy. In her discussion of the inferior status of daughters-in-law in Turkish patriarchal extended family arrangements, Koçtürk (1992) explains that the Turkish bride, or *gelin*[37], is "under the scrutinizing supervision of her mother-in-law" and that "she is trained to adjust to the new household by doing exactly as she is told, learning to be skilful, obedient, quick and hard-working" (p.66).

Despite, and perhaps owing to, the restrictiveness of her home life, Meral learned to be self-sufficient. Not only did she learn English and complete high school, but she went on to study financial accounting, thus becoming one of the most educated people in her family.

With their return to Turkey, Meral's strained relationship with her in-laws relaxed on the whole. However, the fact she and Murat were based in Turkey carried with it new demands. Once a year, usually for two months at a time, her in-laws would come on vacation to Turkey and stay with Meral and Murat. Twice, they hosted Canadian relatives' weddings in their home. She remembers often hosting a full house of visitors, as there was a steady stream of friends and relatives who would call in on her in-laws. Again at the bottom of the family hierarchy, it was left to the *gelin,* Meral, to do all the cooking and cleaning at those times.

[37] The literal translation of *gelin* is 'the one who came'. This term is a further indication of the perception of the Turkish daughter-in-law as an outsider (Koçtürk, 1992).

However, Meral enjoyed the support of her own mother when she returned to Turkey. In particular, her mother's assistance with childcare was critical as it gave her the freedom to work outside of the home. As was the case for Zeynep, Meral's participation in the work sphere was only possible once her mother took her place in carrying out her traditional gendered duties of housework and childcare. In this arrangement, no demands were placed on Murat to contribute to these tasks. It is common for women to share responsibility for the fulfilment of these traditional roles, rather than seeking the assistance of men (Koçtürk, 1992). As such, Meral's 'liberation' from her gendered duties did nothing to challenge the gender roles themselves.

Meral was denied any part in the decision to return to Turkey and, in fact, would have preferred to stay in Canada and continue her life there. As such, her family back in Turkey was not a motivating factor in her return. This is not to say that she does not prioritize family. On the contrary, she asserts that she "could do anything for family." However, she did not see her migration as having a major bearing on the quality of her extended family relations. In other words, one does not have to live in the same city or country in order to enjoy strong family bonds. Still, being near her parents as they age is a source of consolation for her when she has regrets about moving back to Turkey. She reflects: "One day, if I lose them before I die, I will be happy that I lived close to them." In this sense, although she did not willingly return to Turkey, she calls upon her traditional female duties as caregiver and loyal daughter to justify and rationalize her being in Turkey.

**Friendships**

While in Canada, Meral did not keep in close contact with her friends in Turkey. Instead, she concentrated on her social life in Canada. The friends that she socialized with from Mondays to Fridays at school and work were composed of both Canadians

and non-Canadians alike. On the weekends, most of her time was spent with Turkish friends and family.

As her family obligations increased with the birth of each son, Meral's social life became restricted. This is especially true of the time since her return to Turkey and subsequent divorce. She says that that her top priorities are her kids. After preparing their meals, helping with homework, and spending time together, Meral is left with no time for socializing. She describes the feeling of being restricted which comes with all the duties of a single mother; she says, "My foot is always on the ground—I can't fly." Meral's restricted social life is a symptom of the 'double-duties' of professional single mothers, as they struggle to balance their multiple demands in the workplace and at home.

When her children return to Canada once a year on vacation, Meral seizes the opportunity to focus on herself. She exclaims, "I go wild!" Without the immediate responsibilities of having her children around, she goes shopping, travels, and spends time with her male companion. Each night, she does something for herself.

Meral expresses her desire to remarry, and to have someone to share her life with again. However, she maintains that her children are her first priority; any man that wishes to be a part of her life must also love her children. Her current single status also influences her future migration intentions. Although her two youngest children sometimes express an interest in migrating to Canada and joining their oldest brother there, Meral is hesitant: "If I had someone, a husband, I would go back. But I'm too scared to do it on my own."

This marks a point of departure in Meral's narrative. Her earlier accounts reveal a readiness to embark on difficult challenges on her own terms. It is clear by this comment that some of her former ambitions have become more tempered over time.

Bearing the full responsibility for her children, she is less willing to take the risk of migrating again. As a young woman in love and without any responsibilities, Meral's initial decision to move to Canada was an easy one. However, given her current place in her life cycle and the responsibility she bears as the main provider for her children, Meral now demonstrates a higher risk aversion when faced with the uncertainties that re-migration to Canada would bring. Unlike Murat who easily abandoned his obligations to his family and re-migrated to Canada alone, Meral's life course options remain determined by her traditional family role.

**Relationship with husband and its effect on her career**

Through the retelling of her migration experiences over the course of the interview, Meral observes a destructive pattern which existed in her relationship with Murat. She comments, "Every time I make a move, he would change the lifestyle. I think he didn't want me to work."

The first incident obvious to Meral was Murat's sudden insistence on returning to Turkey. She recalls that it came at a time when she was excelling in her accounting studies and receiving a lot of positive attention at work for her initiative and skills. She remembers, "I was doing a good job [and] I was moving ahead. I think I had a good future there." Meral was not consulted nor were her objections heeded in Murat's decision to return to Turkey with their family. Although Murat was born in Canada, he identified strongly with his Turkish heritage. This was evidenced in his frequent visits to Turkey throughout his life, his speaking Turkish at home, and his marriage to a fellow Turk. Although Murat had never lived there before, his move to Turkey can be considered as a form of return migration.[38] Feeling threatened by his wife's success, Murat hoped to reassert his 'male' role as head of the household in his 'return'

[38] Anastasia Christou (2006), in her study of second-generation Greek-Americans' resettlement in the homeland of their parents—Greece—proposes that this is migration is a form of 'return' as it is motivated by migrants' strong ties to their ethnic homeland. She calls this an 'ancestral' return migration.

migration to Turkey. Therefore, the family's return migration was mainly motivated by social pull factors. More specifically, the decision to return was influenced by Murat's expectation of achieving an improved social status in Turkey.

Despite the fact that she had had no say in the decision, she acknowledges that the first years back in Turkey, when they were living on their own and no longer with their in-laws, were some of the best years of their family life. Although Murat did not support her efforts to resume her career after their second child was born, she was not dissuaded.

Meral perceives her husband's second major interference in her career as when she became pregnant with their third child. At the time, she had recently enrolled at a university in Istanbul in order to finish her education, which she had been compelled to desert when they left Canada. About the pregnancy, she says, "This was his thing too, just out of air, the baby came." Noting that they had not planned to have another baby, she believes the pregnancy might have been part of Murat's plan to further disrupt her professional and educational ambitions.

These interferences in Meral's life are indicative of gender roles within the traditional Turkish family structure. As Koçtürk explains, "men have the last word on matters concerning a woman's physical mobility, employment, political preferences, and matters of birth control and sexuality. Women cannot intervene in the decisions of their husbands in these areas" (1992, p. 82).

When Meral secured her current job within an Istanbul-based Canadian organization, Murat at first seemed happy for her. However, once she started earning more money than him, he announced that he wanted to re-migrate to Canada. Again, he felt emasculated and threatened by the challenge that Meral's high income posed to his position as the main breadwinner of the household. She was shocked that he would ask

her to leave her job and life in Turkey after she had already given up those things for him in Canada. When Meral refused to sacrifice everything on Murat's latest whim, he went to Canada on his own and their marriage dissolved soon afterwards.

In Meral's reflections, she occupies a somewhat compassionate stance toward Murat, and takes on much of the blame for the demise of their marriage. For example, she says that by taking the burden of all the household duties upon herself, she relieved Murat of all responsibilities. She regrets this now and says, "He didn't have to do anything. The housework, the kids – they were all on my shoulders." She feels that by freeing Murat from household duties, she contributed to his growing apathy and sense of entitlement, which ultimately played a role in the collapse of their marriage.

Meral also reflected on other factors contributing to the failure of their relationship. In retrospect, she feels that any initial strains on their marriage while in Canada were exacerbated by her young age and period of adjustment to the new culture. Finally, after musing about whether her marriage would have worked out if she had not obtained her current job, she decides to look on the positive side of the situation: "Maybe he would have left me anyway and God helped me." She says that when she heard about his relation with another woman, she finally realized, "I don't need him. Okay, it's his loss." His leaving forced her to realize that she could survive on her own as a single mother: "I don't depend on anyone [now]. If he didn't go, I wouldn't know that."

**Work Context**

Throughout Meral's migration experiences, her work life is a central feature. From the very beginning, despite a number of obstacles, Meral was determined to work and to be self-sufficient. Although she spoke no English on her arrival in Canada, and despite her upbringing in an uneducated family, Meral learned English, obtained post-secondary

education, and went on to succeed in the accounting section of a major telecommunications company. Meral's progress from a lower class conservative background into a growing educated Islamic middle class is similar to the developments observed in Ceyda's biography. As is common among young Islamic women, this upward mobility was largely initiated by her pursuit of higher education. In addition, Meral's handling of the unknown context in which she found herself in Canada ultimately opened a lot of doors for her and further advanced her upward mobility.

From her initial job search in Canada, in which she applied to each and every business along a major road near her home, Meral demonstrated motivation and undeterred persistence. When her original temporary contract at the telecommunications company expired, she went directly to the sales manager and said, "Let me work here. I will work for free, but I want to stay and get experience here!" Her extreme eagerness to secure a job within the company could be interpreted as typical of the female migrant workers who are depicted in existing migration literature as offering cheap, flexible labour. Such women have been portrayed as experiencing 'fourfold oppression' given their positions as migrants, minorities, and women who accept oppressive labour conditions as their fate (Morokvasic, 1983). However, Meral did not accept any such conditions as her fate. Rather, she was confident that if she were given an opportunity to demonstrate her ability to learn and perform well in her job, that she would be duly rewarded.

Indeed, a manager in this company recognized Meral's ambition and arranged for her to fill a one-year temporary vacancy there. When a secure position was advertised, Meral applied and was hired. In her new role, she liaised between the company and government departments to arrange permits and payment for the radio frequencies they used. On her own initiative, she did a close examination of the company's payment records and found that it was paying for more frequencies than it was actually using.

She went to the government agencies on her own to confirm what she had discovered. By uncovering these overpayments, she saved the company a substantial amount of money. Her efforts were rewarded with an internal promotion in the company, which has reinforced her belief that, in Canada, "If you work hard, it pays you." Meral's satisfaction with her merit-based success in Canada was to stand in sharp contrast to the experiences she would have with Turkish firms upon her return to Turkey.

Although she left Canada and her job there against her wishes, Meral was optimistic that she would be successful upon their return to Turkey: "When you come back, you have great expectations. [You think employers] will open arms for you…give you job." She says that these expectations were based on a nostalgic image of Turkey in her mind. That is, a country which was "like heaven [and] like vacation-time". She was disappointed when she found that the reality of living back in Turkey was less than perfect. As discussed in chapter four, it is common for migrants to entertain an idealized notion of their homeland. When this 'myth of return' is invalidated upon their return to their country of origin, many migrants are left feeling disillusioned and displeased (Gmelch, 1980; King, 2000; Markowitz, & Stefansson, 2004).

Meral was faced with many barriers to employment in Turkey. First, and most consistently, was the opposition and interference from her husband. Her coping strategies related to this have already been discussed above. Two other important barriers to her employment in Turkey were the stigmas attached to her headscarf, and the work environment which was not conducive to family life.

While looking for work in Turkey, she found that appearance often matters more than qualifications in the hiring process: "On the telephone, they would say, 'Oh, you're the perfect person for the job.'" But when Meral would go to the company and they saw that she wears a headscarf, they would invent an excuse not to hire her. When confronted with this type of gendered discrimination, she would miss Canada where,

according to her, people do not judge by looking first: “In Canada, people accept people as people.” There, “everybody is a stranger! Everybody is coming from an origin… I never felt like stranger there.” She goes on to say that, “In my own country, I feel like a stranger sometimes.”

Meral’s comments signal fundamental differences between the national identities of Canada and Turkey. The diversity of Canada’s population is the result of centuries of immigration from all corners of the world. Canada was the first country in the world to pass a national multiculturalism law (Leman, 1999), which promoted the equal participation of all citizens, including ethnic minorities, in all aspects of society (Esses & Gardner 1996). Multiculturalism and the social inclusion of all peoples—at least officially—have grown to signify important elements of Canadian national identity. This differs greatly from the case of Turkey. As discussed in chapter three, Turkey’s nation-building project and drive for modernization was largely built upon the desired characteristics of the West, such as modernity and secularism, as juxtaposed with the rejected characteristics of the East, such as tradition and Islam. Therefore, Meral’s social exclusion stems from her identity as a Muslim woman, which is demonstrated by her veiling, and considered by many to be a threat to the dominant secular ideologies of the modern Turkish republic.

In order to overcome this barrier and to secure her first job back in Turkey—in an accounting position with a cell phone company—she says she “actually had to beg. Because I wear a headscarf, in Turkey you couldn’t really find a job.” She persisted by enumerating her credentials and exceedingly relevant experience, until she was finally hired.

Another factor that she considered a barrier to her employment in Turkey is the common workplace culture which, by favouring irregular and long working hours, does not support family commitments and responsibilities. Of those who plan meetings

which run late into the evening, she says: “They don’t have families and don’t think about people who do.” Such practices effectively act as barriers to employment for Turkish women, whose primary roles usually remain their family roles—even in the cases of professional women (Abadan-Unat, 1981).

In Canada, she says you are expected to work hard too, but you are rewarded there by earning more money. Nevertheless, because she wanted and needed to work to help support her family, she had to tolerate such conditions.

When Meral applied for her current job with the Canadian organization, she was convinced that she would not be hired because of her headscarf. However, she was impressed at the fairness of the recruitment procedures, which involved a written and oral exam focussing only on the relevant skills and professionalism of the applicants. Having grown accustomed to the prejudices attached to her headscarf in Turkey, she was surprised that appearance did not seem to be a factor in the screening stage of the recruitment. Disenchanted from all the barriers she had faced until then, she allowed herself little hope for getting the job. Even in December 1999, when she was offered the job and was asked to go and fill in some forms, she was still anticipating a change in their decision up until the last minute.

Meral credits the social and cultural capital achieved during her migration processes, namely her Canadian education, work experience, and her English language ability, for her success in securing her current job. She is happy to be in a position which does not interfere with her family obligations. However, she is frustrated by the lack of potential for upward mobility in the small organization: “Whereas in Canada, I could have gone right to the top. Here, this is only as far as I can go.”

Still, Meral is confident that she remains better off today than if she had never migrated to Canada in the first place. If she had stayed in Turkey, she assumes that today she

would have been a housewife and would depend on a husband. Instead, she obtained some post-secondary education, and is able to raise her children on her own with her sizeable salary. Meral sees her decision to migrate to Canada as having given her the opportunity for upward mobility. However, her progress should also be considered within her wider social context. She had the support of her parents and her parents-in-law in her educational and professional pursuits. In addition, her husband was also university-educated. These factors would have had a positive influence on her achievements. As such, she did not act as a completely autonomous agent.

She often asks herself how her life would have been different if she had not agreed to return to Turkey with Murat. In her reflections, she says, "If I had stayed, I would do well…I would've been much better, but of course you don't know [how things will turn out]." Meral still regrets not finishing her accounting program in Canada, but believes that "God opens doors for you. You choose. And then more doors appear." She says she doesn't think it is helpful to have regrets because you can't change the past by wishing things had gone differently: "The future is always still in your hands." And now, with her son Ali in Canada, and her other sons interested in someday following in his footsteps, Meral's future is also in the hands of her sons. If one day they choose to migrate to Canada, she would strongly consider following them there because, as she says, "My life is really depending on my children."

# CHAPTER VII

## RECURRING THEMES IN THE BIOGRAPHIES

In the last chapter, biographies based on the narratives of six Turkish return migrant women were presented. In the interpretive reflections section of each biography, special attention was paid to the changes in their social and work lives that occurred during or as a result of their (return) migration processes between Canada and Turkey. As presented in the research methodology chapter, these women were selected based on a number of common criteria: they all returned to Turkey from Canada at least six months prior to the study after having spent at least two years there, they had reached working age before returning to Turkey, they speak English at an intermediate to advanced level, and they had all completed at least some post-secondary education before returning to Turkey. Besides these common features, the six women differed greatly according to features such as their age, marital status, personality, field of study and work, length of time in Canada and Turkey, and the opportunities and resources available to them throughout their migrations. Key demographic, education, and career information about each participant is summarized in the chart in Appendix A.

The impacts of the foregoing characteristics converge in a variety of ways in the lives of these women, thus resulting in six unique narratives of migration and return. Nevertheless, we are able to observe certain patterns and common experiences in their social and work spheres. The most noteworthy among these patterns will be discussed in the remainder of this chapter.

## Social Context

### Family

Four of the women in this study—Zeynep, Fulya, Sibel, and Deniz—stemmed from upper middle class families. The high socio-economic status of their families was largely determined by their fathers' university education, economic roles, values and interests. All attended private schools where they were instructed in English and/or French. Zeynep, Fulya, and Sibel were brought up in particularly cosmopolitan surroundings, which emphasized education, classical music, and frequent interaction with people from different cultures. These three women achieved the highest levels of education of all the participants in this study, with two doctoral and one master's degree among them. In this sense, they all epitomize the 'ideal Turkish woman' as conceived by the architects of Turkey's early modernization reforms. The social capital and economic capital of their families, and especially fathers, also played a determining role in their initial migration and educational opportunities abroad. All four of these women maintained their social class position throughout their migration processes. Zeynep and Deniz, however, experienced a lower standard of living while in Canada so they were all the more determined to resume their former high standard of living upon their return to Turkey. As the youngest participant in this study, Deniz remained mostly dependent on her parents financially during her entire time in Canada and upon her return.

The other two participants—Ceyda and Meral—came from lower to lower middle class family backgrounds. They were the only participants who choose to veil themselves in accordance with their Islamic religious convictions, and the only two without any knowledge of English when they first moved to Canada. Ceyda and Meral achieved the most upward mobility of all the participants through their experiences of international migration and return. Ceyda illustrates her upward mobility by contrasting her career

development against that of her sister, who is educated as a teacher but does not work because her husband does not allow her to. Meral credits her international migration with her upward mobility, saying that if she had not gone to Canada, she would have remained uneducated and would have been a housewife. Both of these women demonstrated a lot of resiliency and determination to work throughout their migration processes. While in Canada, both worked hard to attain an intermediate level of English, and neither of them allowed her English language deficiencies to curb her chances for success. Instead, each chose her field of study in view of her language limits and existing skills and education. For example, Ceyda redirected her teaching career away from middle and high school levels and instead earned a diploma in the field of early childhood education, where advanced English was not necessary. Her new skills were valuable upon her return to Turkey, resulting in higher-paying job offers and potential for future entrepreneurial ventures.

The four uncovered women from high socio-economic strata all initially migrated to Canada to pursue post-secondary education. The only two who migrated for reasons other than education were Meral and Ceyda, the veiled participants. These two women went to Canada for family reasons. Meral moved there to join her new Turkish-Canadian husband, while Ceyda went together with her husband and two children as a refugee. Despite differing reasons for migration, all six of the women attended post-secondary institutions and worked in Canada. None had concrete plans to leave Canada when she initially moved there. Rather, all were open to the idea of staying there depending on developments in their personal and professional lives.

All of the women in this study are highly educated. While some had more positive experiences in Canada than others, all were successful in achieving what they set out to achieve at the time of their initial migration, and most exceeded their own expectations. All of the women could have had a future in Canada. Four of the six women—including the two veiled interviewees—became the main breadwinners of their

households over the course of their migration. All of the above-mentioned patterns challenge the stereotypical portrayal of migrant women as unskilled and uneducated dependents of males.

Given the success and achievements of these women during their time in Canada, it is interesting that all of them indeed returned to Turkey. Even more interesting is that in each case, the return migration decision was not an individual, but a family or household one. While studies of skilled migration usually focus on the economically-motivated decisions of individual rational actors (Koser, & Salt, 1997), the narratives of these women show us that their migration decisions are much more complex than what is narrowly portrayed in the literature.

**Relations with husbands/brother**

In their narratives, the six women articulate changes in the dynamics of their social relationships that came about throughout the course of their migration processes, and the meanings or feelings they attach to them. Many of the changes which occurred are related to expressions of gender and the fulfillment or non-fulfillment of various gender role expectations.

All six women became more aware of underlying gender roles during their time abroad and/or upon their return. For example, although Deniz had always occupied the lowest position in her family hierarchy, she only became aware of this when she began living with her brother in Canada. There, he took their father's place as head of the household and had the responsibility to protect Deniz's honour. This, coupled with the social control mechanisms exerted on him by the tightly knit Turkish community in Halifax, resulted in Tolga restricting both Deniz's mobility and her relationships with men. Unlike Deniz's case, the gender roles in Ceyda's household relaxed when her family

moved to Canada. In their efforts to make ends meet in their new country, she and her husband began to share more of the housework and childrearing duties than they had in Turkey.

Although the women became more aware of underlying gender roles, many of them did not challenge the conditions which privileged their male partners. This was the case for Meral and Zeynep, who struggled a great deal with the 'double workload' experienced by many migrant women. Besides assuming all of the traditional housework duties, these two women also became the main breadwinners of their households and took on other traditionally 'male' duties, such as managing the finances and buying realty with their own salaries. In the following excerpt, Kudat describes the likelihood that such circumstances may lead to divorce, as they did for both Meral and Zeynep:

> In cases where the woman is the sole provider, there emerges a relationship that is deviant, unrealistic and unstable, one which presents a potential threat to male authority. In this situation, the burden of the wife reaches superhuman dimensions, for she not only remains the breadwinner of the family, but she also has to see that her husband does not really feel that this is so. This unrealistic and unstable relation seems to be associated with a high divorce rate (as cited in Brettel, & Simon, 1986, p.15).

Although the cases of Meral and Zeynep are particularly acute, it is not uncommon for the other educated return migrant women to also enable patriarchal conditions. For example, today all of the participants in this study except Fulya employ another woman as a housekeeper. Particularly in the cases of the married women, they see this as balancing the gender roles in their households. But although the interviewees themselves may be 'freed' of domestic duties so that they may excel in their work contexts, the perception that these are essentially 'female' tasks is not disrupted.

In this study, family planning has emerged as a common strategy to facilitate or curb women's progress in the work sphere. After several interruptions in her educational and

work pursuits, Meral came to see her pregnancies as a tactic employed by her husband to limit her achievements. She recalls, "Every time I make a move, he would change the lifestyle. I think he didn't want me to work. This was his thing too, just out of [the] air, the baby came." When Zeynep became pregnant just as she was settling into her new job in Turkey, she chose to have an abortion to minimize the disruption on her progress. After having struggled to find a tenure-track position in Canada, she was determined be successful in Turkey. Fulya, on the other hand, decided to forego having children altogether. This decision accorded her a great degree of added mobility and freedom, permitting her to move to Turkey on short notice to care for her ailing mother. Today, because of their decision to not have children, Fulya and Paul are enjoying the benefits of semi-retirement in Turkey. They travel often and take on research projects if and when they choose.

**Implications of their migration for their children**

The impacts of the interviewees' experiences of migration and return extend to their children. At the very least, all of them have ensured that their children are learning (or in some cases maintaining) English language skills. Meral is pleased that her eldest son re-migrated to Canada at a young age so that English will never limit his career options as it did hers. Zeynep is already planning and preparing for six-year old daughter her to eventually study in Canada. And Sibel declares that if she has a child someday she will ensure that he or she also experiences living abroad, as she feels it "makes you a more mature person, it makes you more grounded."

**Friendships**

Except for Fulya, the social circles of all the women in Canada included Turkish friends. For most, their Turkish friends constituted only one part of a more diverse circle of friends. However, for three of the women, their networks in the Turkish

community extended beyond friendship and were instrumental in obtaining their first paid employment in Canada. For example, Zeynep's Ph.D. supervisor was a Turk who had attended the same department in the same elite Turkish university in Turkey as Zeynep had. In her narrative, she suggests that this may have influenced her being selected for the doctoral scholarship and teaching-assistantship in Ottawa. Deniz was hired to work unofficially for Turkish employers in low-paying, feminized jobs such as babysitting, serving in a restaurant, and housekeeping in a hotel. Ceyda, on the other hand, obtained work in her field as a Turkish language teacher through her connections in the Turkish community.

After their return migration, a stronger distinction arises between the social circles of the covered and the uncovered women. Back in their communities of origin, the former group—made up of Meral and Ceyda—socializes mainly with non-migrant Turkish friends and family. On the other hand, the four uncovered women prefer to be surrounded by others who have also experienced living outside of Turkey (read: Europe or North America). As upper middle class foreign-educated Turkish women, it is possible that their basic affinity to western culture stems from their identification with Turkey's western-oriented republican principles. While Fulya's circle of friends in Turkey mostly includes mixed-nationality couples, two of the other uncovered women express a greater preference for Turkish friends with foreign experience than for foreign friends. They claim that it is easier for them to bond with other Turks—and Turkish women in particular—than it is to bond with foreigners. They claim that with foreigners, there is

> always a wall…because of the culture. Us Turks, we talk about everything. That's kind of our way of dealing with problems in our lives. I find foreign people more private. (Sibel)

Zeynep also refers to the notion of a figurative wall which enforces a distance between foreigners and others. She criticizes herself for having built up such a wall herself during her nine and a half years in Canada. She worked hard to dismantle it so that she

could establish friendlier 'Turkish-style' relations with her students. On the other hand, Fulya also discerns a western distancing but has embraced it. She recalls feeling as though her private space was sometimes invaded while teaching in Turkey during her first return episode:

> The students were very different [from Canadian students]. …they were sometimes too close for comfort…I mean, they would come and say, "Oh, can I kiss you?!" It was just unbelievable! And I handled it as much as I could without offending them and trying to be close to them as much as possible and being friendly. But I always kept a distance….

All six participants in this study differentiated themselves from those around them. Fulya, Sibel, and Deniz indicated that they felt different from non-migrant Turks even before their initial migration. For example, Fulya says: "I guess I couldn't be considered a typical *Turk* in the first place…" Similarly, Zeynep feels that she "had always this…advanced thinking beforehand. It's not because [] I was abroad that I developed these ideas." Ceyda and Fulya also found that they did not have a lot in common with other Turks in their respective Turkish communities in Ottawa. Fulya found the educated, established middle class Turks to be too materialistic and competitive, while Ceyda was turned off by the unskilled, unmotivated Turks in her community who complained about life in Canada without taking steps to improve themselves and integrate into Canadian society. Back in Turkey, all of the women either perceive themselves as different from non-migrants, or perceive themselves to be perceived by others as different from them. Many of them speak of having little left in common with non-migrants, and often sense jealousy or admiration from them about their experiences in Canada. Meral relates sometimes being made to feel "like a stranger in my own country" because of her veiling. This feeling is especially acute after having not encountered any problems or obstacles on account of her headscarf while she was in Canada. Many of the women also describe a feeling of being in-between, that is, of not being entirely Turkish or entirely Canadian.

A common strategy for success which has emerged among several of the women is that they did not compare or try to rank their experiences in the two countries. Sibel recalls adjusting to life in Canada more easily only once she stopped comparing with her life in Turkey. Similarly, while in Canada, Ceyda's strategy for success was to not

> live with my past. I live [in the] present. I was there [in Canada] and I did what I had to do. I could study—there was an opportunity for me—and then I used it. I could work, and I worked there. And right now I am here [in Turkey]. I can't sit and cry, "Ohhh Canada, I miss you." I was like this in Canada too. I was happy with what I had.

Although Deniz also claims to have adopted this strategy while in Canada, most of her narrative suggests that, in fact, she was constantly comparing the two countries. It became like a mission for her to educate her peers about her home country, and to correct their misconceptions and lack of knowledge about it. This may be part of the reason that she identifies less with Canada than do the other participants. Now that Sibel is back in Turkey, she continually compares her current situation to what she could have achieved if she had stayed in Canada. Is it the disenchantment with her professional downgrading upon return that is causing her to compare? Would she be less disenchanted if she stopped comparing her life in the two countries as she did in Canada? It is difficult to know whether those who were successful were so because they dealt with the existing conditions in the country they were in without comparing them to conditions in the other country, or if they would have been successful either way.

**Work Context**

All six of the women in this study attended post-secondary educational institutions in Canada. All of them value this education and credit it in part with the success they achieved in Canada, upon their return to Turkey, or both. Ceyda, Zeynep, and Deniz found their academic credentials to be more valuable upon their return to Turkey than

they were in Canada. For example, although Ceyda enjoyed her work as an early childhood educator in Canada, she was mostly confined to lower-paying jobs in the social services sector. However, the combination of her Turkish bachelor's degree in education, and her English language skills and Early Childhood Education diploma acquired in Canada have presented her with the opportunity to work in higher-paying private schools in Turkey. Zeynep refers to her Canadian credentials and experience as a 'golden bracelet', which is valuable wherever she may go in life. However, she was critical of the fact that she experienced such difficulty in obtaining a tenure-track position in academia in Canada—the country that had essentially recruited her for doctoral level studies in the first place. To contrast, she emphasizes the multiple offers of permanent employment she received from Turkey and blames Canadian immigration policy for her relative lack of success.

Unlike the three women discussed above, Meral and Sibel were disappointed with the difficulties they encountered in finding a job related to their field in Turkey. They grew disillusioned as the romantic myth of return that they had both entertained about life in Turkey was violated: "When you come back, you have great expectations. [You think employers] will open arms for you…give you job." (Meral) It should be noted that the main obstacle faced by Meral—that is, her wearing a headscarf was the subject of much scorn in Turkey—was also faced by Ceyda. However, Ceyda reacted to this by choosing to remove her headscarf in order to be able to work as a teacher. Meral, on the other hand, insisted on staying veiled. In doing so, she continued to face challenges in finding work in her field until she was finally hired by a Canadian organization which did not discriminate based on her headscarf.

Throughout their migration processes, these women engaged "in the construction, maintenance and usage of social capital to access resources, career opportunities and to secure employment" (Christou, 2006, p.88). Although Sibel, Zeynep, and Deniz all drew on the high social capital of their families in their initial migration, their time in

Canada signified their first experiences as individuals making it 'on their own'. All three experienced a great sense of achievement and autonomy with their accomplishments during their time in Canada. As Sibel recalls, "Canada was my first experience as an individual, standing up on her own feet, getting her own job. I remember crying after the first time I drove my car out of the lot because I did it on my own." The persistence and determination to succeed was even stronger among Ceyda and Meral. As the only two women who spoke no English upon their arrival in Canada, they had to work twice as hard as the others to move ahead there. As was mentioned toward the beginning of this chapter, these two women are the only two who were significantly upwardly mobile as a result of their migration and return. For them, most aspects of life in Canada were unfamiliar. But rather than treating these unknowns as obstacles, they viewed them as opportunities to be exploited.

Two of the women who experienced feelings of achievement and independence due to their accomplishments in Canada, Sibel and Meral, today feel particularly restricted by their limited career potential in Turkey. Both claim they could have 'gone right to the top' if they had stayed in Toronto, but remain in Turkey where their career prospects are limited because of family obligations.

**Symbols of status and success**

Weber's ideas on status are useful for understanding many elements of the biographies. Most of the participants discuss their participation in a status group at some point during their migration processes. For example, Deniz shares the fact that she participated in groups based on members' shared Islamic faith for the first time in her life while she was in Halifax. She saw this as a reaction to her feelings of isolation and exclusion from the Canadian community. Back in Turkey, Sibel and Zeynep both distinguish themselves from non-migrants; Sibel does so through her participation in a women's club which is only open to foreign passport holders, while Zeynep derives

status honour from what she perceives to be her jet-setting lifestyle and "sophisticated tastes" as a global citizen. Fulya, on the other hand, makes a note of her efforts to distance herself from the closed Turkish community status group in Ottawa because she found it too narrow-minded and stifling.

Most of the women in this study acquired tangible symbols of their success upon migration and/or return. Meral and Sibel each bought an apartment in Toronto before returning to Canada. For Meral, this was particularly significant because, although she was married at the time of the purchase, she financed the apartment entirely with her own savings. For Sibel, her independent purchase of an apartment distinguished her from her upper middle class friends in Turkey who depended on the financial support of their parents for such purchases well into adulthood. Both kept their apartments after returning to Turkey but rented them out to create revenue in their absence. It could also be speculated that they kept the apartments to maintain stronger links to Canada, and to facilitate the option of eventually return there.

Unlike the two mentioned above, Ceyda and Zeynep purchased apartments in Turkey upon their return. Because the mortgage system is still very new in Turkey and interest rates remain prohibitively high, most families still rent rather than purchase their dwelling places. While Ceyda's apartment is not extravagant, it serves to distinguish her and her family from those in their lower to lower middle class social circles, thus conferring them with an elevated status level. Still, they aspire to eventually further enhance their social status by engaging in western-style conspicuous consumption through the purchase of a single family detached home in one of Ankara's exclusive growing suburban communities. Finally, Zeynep's purchase of her 'dream apartment' was a central feature of her motivation to return to Turkey. For her, the ultra-modern apartment in one of the finest neighbourhoods of Istanbul is a form of retribution for the suffering she endured in Canada, and a sign to all around her of her ultimate success upon return.

**Potential to re-migrate**

Post-return re-migration goals or intentions vary among the six women according to their present circumstances, marital and family status, and personal characteristics. Those with the strongest potential to re-migrate to Canada are Fulya, Meral, Zeynep, and Sibel. They happen to be the only participants who attained Canadian citizenship while abroad, and who continue to maintain other strong links there, such as residency status, bank accounts, and close personal relationships.

Deniz and Ceyda spent the least amount of time in Canada, four years each, of all the interviewees. Both express their non-intention to return to Canada because, they say, it is too far away from Turkey. Both say that if they were to ever re-migrate, they would go to Europe. Not only is it much closer to Turkey, but they feel that Europe is more cultured than Canada. It is noteworthy that although they have no plans of returning to Canada, both express regret over not having acquired citizenship. It seems that they wish they had become citizens so that their door to Canada could remain open as a cushion to fall back onto. Nevertheless, Ceyda is likely to stay in Turkey for some time, as she does not care to uproot her children right away again. Conversely, as a single young woman who still enjoys the support of her well-off parents, Deniz is likely to move to Europe in the next couple of years to pursue a master's degree.

---

In this chapter, a few patterns and common experiences in the social and work spheres of the six interviewees were identified. However, it is important to underscore that these cannot be generalized and applied to a wider population of highly skilled return migrant women. Rather, the patterns constitute preliminary observations based on a small sample. Suggestions for future research based on these patterns will be put forward in the next and final chapter of this study.

# CHAPTER VIII

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to address several gaps in the existing migration literature by examining the impacts of emigration and return migration on the social and work lives of educated Turkish women. Since there exists little, if any, knowledge about the specificities of this type of migration, this was a descriptive and exploratory study. Therefore, it did not aim to produce generalizations pertaining to the wider female educated Turkish return migrant population. Rather, it set out to provide insights on the patterns and processes of their migrations, to reveal important issues, and to put forward proposals for future research.

Oral history interviews were conducted with six return migrants, two of whom were located in Istanbul, and four in Ankara. Each participant selected for this study had to meet the following basic criteria: she had to have spent a minimum of two years in Canada and at least six months in Turkey since her return, she must possess at least an intermediate level of English language proficiency, she must have been working age in Canada and upon her return, and she must have completed at least some post-secondary education. Apart from sharing these basic characteristics, the six women in this study differed greatly according to features such as their age, marital status, personality, field of study and work, length of time in Canada and Turkey, and the opportunities and resources available to them throughout their migrations. The use of in-depth oral history interviews provided us with the opportunity to gain a more accurate understanding of the complexities and contradictions inherent in the migrations of educated Turkish women.

Because of the diversity among the participants, their narratives were each exceedingly unique. Nevertheless, the examination of the narratives revealed tentative patterns—

similarities and differences among them—of the impacts of their migrations on their lives. The main patterns and the researcher's interpretations concerning the social and work spheres of these women's lives were discussed in the last chapter. The details of the observed patterns will not be re-articulated in this section. However, it must be re-emphasized that these patterns did not represent statements of truth which are necessarily relevant to wider skilled female migrant populations. Broad generalizations can only come about from more extensive and rigorous research. Suggestions for such future research will be put forward at the end of this chapter.

Emerging patterns in the subjective social and work life experiences of educated Turkish return migrant women were identified and discussed in the last chapter. However, it is possible to distinguish yet a higher level of abstraction, which extends beyond the limited scope of the social and work life contexts. Some of the most salient conclusions about the migration processes of educated Turkish return migrant women coming out of this more complex level of analysis will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

First and perhaps most importantly, the issue of gender was found to pervade all aspects of the women's lives at all stages of their migrations. These women took on new gendered roles and responsibilities both in Canada and upon their return to Turkey. Throughout their migrations, typical gender roles were challenged. This is something which was met with differing reactions by the women's kith and kin—and in particular by their husbands, brothers, and fathers. The various ways in which the women re-negotiated their gender roles throughout their migration were considered in their individual biographies and in the last chapter.

Another conclusion is that the migration of these women cannot be explained as a matter of individual motivation. Several factors have been shown to shape and influence not only individual migration processes and outcomes, but also migrants'

initial potential for migration. Contextual factors such as migrants' socio-economic status, language skills, prior exposure to different cultures, access to social capital, marital status, and so on, play a decisive role in determining migration decisions and individual migrant's options and life chances once they have migrated. Taking these factors into account, we can rule out the effectiveness of pervasive human capital models to explain the migration of these women. Clearly, their migrations are much more complex than is suggested by such economically-deterministic explanations.

Migrants' backgrounds have also been found to shape their individual expectations and outcomes of migration. In the Introduction, personal factors likely to affect their migration were identified, such as age, marital status, and labour force participation. It can be concluded that these, along with stratification factors such as their socio-economic conditions, levels of education, and access to social and cultural capital, have a strong influence on their individual migration processes and class mobility. The inverse can also be said to be true; that is, that their migration processes have an effect on their individual socio-economic conditions, as well as on their levels of education and access to capital. Although a complete class analysis was outside the scope of this study, some of the main conclusions are discussed here.

The four women who came from upper middle class family backgrounds all maintained their class position throughout their migrations. For this reason, one might conclude that their cross-border movements did nothing to dislocate, challenge, or strengthen their positions. However, such a conclusion would be hasty, as small changes can indeed be observed throughout their migrations. For example, the living standards of all four of these women deteriorated at some point during their time in Canada. Despite this, it is interesting that they do not accept the changed conditions in any way. Rather, they insist on reclaiming their pre-migration upper class living standards upon their return to Turkey. In addition, they continue to uphold traditional power relations, perhaps in reaction to their perceived suffering in Canada.

The participants who originated from the lowest socio-economic strata did not achieve as much education or as high-paying jobs as some of those who stemmed from higher socio-economic strata. Nevertheless, their migration can be said to be an important factor contributing to their greater overall upward mobility than the others. The successes of these women can be generalized into a wider pattern of achieved versus ascribed status. The four women from upper socio-economic backgrounds belong to Turkey's secular elite. Their success is based mostly on their exploitation of their ascribed privileges, such as the education, finances, and social connections of their parents. Conversely, the two women from more humble backgrounds are both members of Turkey's emerging Islamist elite for whom new spaces for upward mobility are increasingly opening up. Ceyda and Meral ultimately achieved success in their migration pursuits, albeit in different ways. Both women demonstrated determination in their pursuit of English language skills, post-secondary education, and their balancing of their work and family roles. Nevertheless, Ceyda's success can be attributed in large part to structural conditions given her connections to high-ranking officials in the governing Islamist-based AK Party.

In this study, Meral emerged as an exceptional case, a true achiever. Without any connections to invoke, nor a family background which cultivated education and foreign experience, Meral drew instead on her own personal motivation and grit throughout her personal development and migration processes. All along the way she was faced by obstacles. When she arrived in Canada, she had not yet completed her high school education, did not speak English, and was restricted by her living arrangement with her parents-in-law. Later, her husband appeared as a constant obstacle to her educational and professional pursuits. Back in Turkey, her veiling was a major barrier to her landing a job for an extended period of time. Today, Meral is educated as an accountant and works in an English-language office environment. Still, she continues to struggle to balance her work and family roles as a single professional mother in Turkey.

The pervasive categorizations of Turkish migrant women as uneducated, traditional, dependents of males do not adequately explain these women considered in this study. Rather, these women are educated and although their decisions are shaped by social restraints, all have demonstrated a great deal of independence and determination throughout their migrations. However, it is important that we do not slip into the overly-simplistic dichotomization of tradition-versus-modernity. This study has shown that although these women in many ways occupy the 'modern' extreme of this dialectic as educated women pursuing their own careers, none can be said to be truly emancipated from their traditional gender roles and responsibilities. The in-depth examination and interpretations of the social and work life contexts of these women demonstrates the ways in which they negotiate their often contradictory social roles as mothers, wives, daughters, and professionals.

**Limitations of the study**

There are several limitations to this study. First, as mentioned above, the small size of the population sample does not allow for the data analysis and conclusions presented to be generalized to the wider population of educated return Turkish migrant women. Nevertheless, the richness of the information garnered through qualitative methods and, more specifically, from oral history interviews, is valuable on its own.

Second, although the oral narratives provided rich data from which to examine the impacts of (return) migration on the social and work lives of these women, their accuracy depends on the reliability and selectivity of the information and experiences that the migrant chose or remembered to share with the researcher. Indeed, the level of trust and willingness to share personal experiences with the researcher may have been influenced by their previous relationship (if any). In this study, four of the participants were personal contacts of mine prior to the study. These relationships varied in intensity from casual acquaintance to workplace friend. On the one hand, I believe that

this fostered a level of trust and familiarity between us which was not as strong as with the remaining two participants. However, I sensed that the participants that I knew beforehand were sometimes not completely frank and open with me. This may be due in part to their reaction to an unfamiliar interview situation. Although I emphasized the confidentiality of the information that they shared and guaranteed their anonymity in the final report, they may still have felt uncomfortable sharing some details with someone whom they see on a social basis.

Finally, my position as a Canadian woman living in Turkey who is about to embark on her own return migration to her country of origin is expected to have assisted in establishing a collegial and empathetic rapport between the interviewees and me. My experiences living in Turkey over the past three years provide me with insight into the Turkish culture that many non-Turkish researchers would lack. Nevertheless, during a few interviews and subsequent analysis of data, I became aware of deficiencies in the depth of my knowledge of Turkey's social, cultural, and political contexts. This may have limited my ability to provide thorough interpretative reflections of the narratives.

**Recommendations for future research**

Future research on the migration experiences of educated Turkish migrants may incorporate a more gendered approach by broadening the scope of the research to include the experiences of educated Turkish men as well as women. This type of study, through the comparison of the two genders, would provide more revelations on the extent of underlying gender roles and their impacts at various stages of migration.

This study has clearly pointed to a complexity of migration decision-making which goes beyond the agency of individual autonomous migrants. In this study, migration decisions, especially in the return context, are made at the family and household levels.

For this reason, future studies should expand to include the perceptions and experiences of the participants' spouses, children, and parents throughout the migration processes.

As mentioned above, qualitative work is important in its own right. Nevertheless, integrating structural elements into an otherwise qualitative study—for example, by examining legal apparatuses, policies, and sampling from different social strata in a systematic way—would allow us to generalize without sacrificing the rich value of the information obtained through qualitative methods. In this way, the structural analysis would not substitute qualitative work, but rather complement it.

Future research could also be extended to include a much larger population sample from which it would be possible to look for categories and general typologies. For example, such a study could attempt to identify cross-classifiable patterns according to Turkish migrant women's socio-economic status of origin, length of time abroad and/or upon return, marital status, age, and whether or not she is covered.

A closer examination of the specificities of the migration of highly skilled and educated women who choose to veil would also constitute an important original contribution to migration literature. As the results of this study indicated, the socio-economic backgrounds and access to social capital of the young, educated, up-and-coming Islamist elite can differ greatly from those of the established secular elite in Turkey. Consistent with this, it is recommended that future research examine the extent to which veiled, educated women draw upon their achieved or ascribed status honour while pursuing their migrations. Such research would also help to disrupt the existing simplistic and negative stereotypes of Islamic women in general and of Turkish migrant women in particular.

It is important that future research extending the parameters of this study in an attempt to develop a better understanding of skilled female (return) migration go beyond

macro-level factors influencing migration and, instead, also take into account the richness and complexity of the micro- and meso-level factors. This would help to ensure that future research not only takes us beyond current uni-dimensional representations of migrant women as dependents, and of skilled migration as economically-motivated, but continues to resist further stereotyping and inadequate categorizations.

## REFERENCES


Abadan-Unat, N. (1977). Implications of migration on emancipation and pseudo-emancipation of Turkish women. *International Migration Review, 11*(1), pp. 31–57.

Abadan-Unat, N. (1981). Social change and Turkish women. In N. Abadan-Unat (Ed.), *Women in Turkish society* (pp. 6–31). Leiden: Brill.

Acar, F. (2003, September 16). Women's education. In World Bank (Ed.), *Bridging the gender gap in Turkey: A milestone towards faster socio-economic development and poverty reduction* (pp. 32–53) [online]. Retrieved May 6, 2007, from World Bank Web site: www.worldbank.org.

Akçapar, Ş.K. (2005). *Turkish highly skilled migration to the United States: New findings and policy recommendations* [online]. Retrieved April 1, 2007, from Koç University's Migration Research Program (Mirekoç) Web site: home.ku.edu.tr/~mirekoc/reports/2005_2006_sebnem_koser_akcapar.pdf.

Aksan, Virginia H. (n.d.) Turks. *Encyclopedia of Canada's peoples* [online]. Retrieved from the Multicultural Canada Project Web site: http://www.multiculturalcanada.ca

Anthias, F., & Lazaridis, G. (Eds.) (2000). *Gender and migration in Southern Europe: Women on the move*. Oxford: Berg.

Arat, Y. (2000). From emancipation to liberation: The changing role of women in Turkey's public realm. *Journal of International Affairs, 54*(1), 107–123.

Arat, Z. (1998a). Introduction: Politics of representation and identity. In Z. Arat (Ed.), *Deconstructing images of "the Turkish woman"* (pp. 1–34). London: MACMILLAN PRESS.

Arat, Z. (1998b). Educating the daughters of the Republic. In Z. Arat (Ed.), *Deconstructing images of "the Turkish woman"* (pp. 157–180). London: MACMILLAN PRESS.

Aydemir, A., & Robinson, C. (2006). Return and onward migration among working men. *Analytical Studies Branch Research Paper Series, 173* (Statistics Canada, Cat. No. 11F0019MIE).

Basch, L., Glick Schiller, N. & Szanton Blanc, C. (1994). *Nations unbound: Transnational projects, postcolonial predicaments, and deterritorialized nation-states*. Amsterdam: Gordon and Breach Science Publishers.

Bauer, T.K., & Kunze, A. (2004). *The demand for high-skilled workers and immigration policy* [online], (Discussion paper No.999). Retrieved April 15, 2007, from Institute for the Study of Labor (IZA) Web site: ftp://repec.iza.org/RePEc/Discussionpaper/dp999.pdf.

Boyd, M. (1986). Immigrant women in Canada. In R.J. Simon, & C.B. Brettell (Eds.), *International migration: The female experience* (45–61). New Jersey: Rowman & Allanheld.

Boyd, M. (1995). Migration regulations and sex selective outcomes in developed countries. In United Nations, Population Division, *International migration policies and the status of female migrants: Proceedings of the United Nations expert group meeting on international migration policies and the status of female migrants, San Miniato, Italy, 28-31 March 1990* (pp. 83–98). New York: United Nations.

Boyd, M. (2003). *Women and migration: Incorporating gender into international migration theory*. Washington: Migration Policy Institute. Retrieved December 4, 2006, from Migration Policy Institute Web site: http://www.migrationinformation.org/Feature/display.cfm?id=106.

Brettel, C.B., & Simon, R.J. (1986). Immigrant women: An introduction. In R.J. Simon, & C.B. Brettell (Eds.), *International migration: The female experience* (2–20). New Jersey: Rowman & Allanheld.

Bryman, A. (2004). *Social research methods* (2nd ed.). Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press.

Buijs, G. (1993). Introduction. In G. Buijs (Ed.) *Migrant women: Crossing boundaries and changing identities* (pp. 1–19). Oxford: Berg Publishers.

Canada. Statistics Canada (2003a, January 21). Ethnocultural portrait of Canada: Highlight tables. *2001 census of Canada* [online], (Cat. No. 97F0024XIE2001006). Retrieved March 13, 2007, from Statistics Canada Web site: www.statcan.ca.

Canada. Statistics Canada (2003b, October 29). Selected demographic and cultural characteristics, selected ethnic groups, age groups, sex, and single and multiple ethnic origin responses for population, for Canada, provinces, territories and census metropolitan areas. *2001 census of Canada* [online], (Cat. No. 97F0010XCB2001040). Retrieved March 13, 2007, from Statistics Canada Web site: www.statcan.ca.

Canada. Statistics Canada (2003c, October 29). Selected educational characteristics, selected ethnic groups, age groups, sex, and single and multiple ethnic origin responses for population 15 years and over, for Canada, provinces, territories and census metropolitan areas. *2001 census of Canada* [online], (Cat. No. 97F0010XCB2001041). Retrieved March 13, 2007, from Statistics Canada Web site: www.statcan.ca.

Canada. Statistics Canada (2003d, November 6). Selected cultural and labour force characteristics, selected ethnic groups, age groups, sex, and single and multiple ethnic origin responses for population 15 years and over, for Canada, provinces, territories and census metropolitan areas. *2001 census of Canada* [online], (Cat. No. 97F0010XCB2001042). Retrieved March 13, 2007, from Statistics Canada Web site: www.statcan.ca.

Canada. Statistics Canada. (2004, September 2). University tuition fees. *The daily* [online]. Retrieved April 7, 2007, from Statistics Canada Web site: www.statcan.ca.

Canada. Statistics Canada (2006). *Women in Canada: A gender-based statistical report* (5th ed.) [online], (Cat. No. 89-503-XIE). Retrieved April 20, 2007, from Statistics Canada Web site: www.statcan.ca.

Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials (CICIC). (2004, August 25). *Postsecondary education systems in Canada: An overview* [online]. Retrieved June 28, 2007, from CICIC Web site: http://www.cicic.ca/en/page.aspx?sortcode=2.16.21#1.7.

Cassarino, J-P. (2004). Theorising return migration: The conceptual approach to return migrants revisited. *International Journal on Multicultural Societies, 6*(2), 253–279.

Castells, M. (1998). *End of millennium*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Castles, S., & Miller, M.J. (2003). *The age of migration* (3rd ed.). London: The Guilford Press.

Cerase, F.P. (1974). Expectations and reality: A case study of return migration from the United States to Southern Italy. *International Migration Review, 8*(2), 245–262.

Cesarani, D., & Fulbrook, M. (1996). Introduction. In D. Cesarani, & M. Fulbrook (Eds.). *Citizenship, nationality and migration in Europe* (pp. 1–14). London: Routledge.

Christou, A. (2003). Migrating gender: Feminist geographies in women's biographies of return migration. *Michigan Feminist Studies*, *17*, 71–103.

Christou, A. (2004). 'Negotiating the 'insider'/ 'outsider' within: epistemological interdisciplinarity, biographical methods and ethical perspectives in the life stories of second-generation Greek-American returning migrants', *Proceedings of the life history and biography network conference* [online]. Retrieved January 8, 2007, from European Society for Research on the Education of Adults Web site: http://www.esrea.org/conferences/Esrea%202004/ESREA-papers/christou.pdf.

Christou, A. (2006). Crossing boundaries—Ethnicizing employment—Gendering labor: Gender, ethnicity and social networks in return migration. *Social & Cultural Geography, 7*(1), 87–102.

Conway, D., Potter, R.B., & Phillips, J. (2005). The experience of return: Caribbean return migrants. In R.B. Potter, D. Conway, & J. Phillips (Eds.), *The experience of return migration: Caribbean perspectives* (pp. 1–25). Aldershot, England: Ashgate.

Cooley, C.H. (1964). *Human nature and the social order*. New York: Schocken.

Cyrus, N., & Vogel, D. (2005). *Current immigration debates in Europe: A publication of the European migration dialogue – Germany*. Retrieved December 29, 2005, from the Migration Policy Group Web site: www.migpolgroup.com.

Dayıoğlu, M. (2000). Labor market participation of women in Turkey. In F. Acar, & A. Günes-Ayata (Eds.), *Gender and identity construction: Women of Central Asia, the Caucasus and Turkey* (pp. 44–73). Leiden: Brill.

Denny, F.M. (1987). *Islam and the Muslim community.* San Francisco: HarperCollins.

Durakbaşa, A. (1998). Kemalism as identity politics in Turkey. In Z. Arat (Ed.), *Deconstructing images of "the Turkish woman"* (pp. 139–155). London: MACMILLAN PRESS.

Dustmann, C., & Kirchkamp, O. (2001). *The optimal migration curation and activity choice after re-migration* [online], (Discussion paper No.266). Retrieved May 10, 2007, from Institute for the Study of Labor (IZA) Web site: ftp://repec.iza.org/RePEc/Discussionpaper/dp266.pdf.

Ecevit, Y. (2003, September 16). Women's labor and social security. In World Bank (Ed.), *Bridging the gender gap in Turkey: A milestone towards faster socio-economic development and poverty reduction* (pp. 73–106) [online]. Retrieved May 6, 2007, from World Bank Web site: www.worldbank.org.

Erman, T., Kalaycıoğlu, S., & Rittersberger-Tılıç, H. (2002). Money-earning activities and empowerment experiences of rural migrant women in the city: The case of Turkey. *Women's Studies International Forum, 25*(4), 395–410.

European Union (EU). (2006). *Turkey 2006 progress report* [online]. Commission of the European Communities. Retrieved April 6, 2007, from EU Enlargement Web site: http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2006/nov/tr_sec_1390_en.pdf.

Fekete, L. (2005). The deportation machine: Europe, asylum & human rights. *Race & Class, 47*(1), 64–91.

Fox, G.L. (1977). "Nice girl": Social control of women through a value construct. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society, 2*(4), 805–817.

Geddes, A. (2003). *The politics of migration and immigration in Europe*. London: SAGE.

Ghosh, B. (Ed.). (2000a). *Return migration: Journey of hope or despair?* Geneva: International Organization for Migration and the United Nations.

Ghosh, B. (2000b). Introduction: Return migration: Journey of hope or despair? In B. Ghosh (Ed.). *Return migration: Journey of hope or despair?* (pp. 1–6). Geneva: International Organization for Migration and the United Nations.

Ghosh, B. (2000c). Return migration: Reshaping policy approaches. In B. Ghosh (Ed.), *Return migration: Journey of hope or despair?* (pp. 181–226). Geneva: International Organization for Migration and the United Nations.

Gitmez, A.S. (1991). Migration without development: The case of Turkey. In D. Papademetriou, & P.L. Martin (Eds.), *The unsettled relationship: Labor migration and economic development* (pp. 115–134). London: Greenwood Press.

Gmelch, G. (1980). Return migration. *Annual Review of Anthropology, 9*, 135–159.

Göle, N. (1996). *The forbidden modern: Civilization and veiling*. Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press.

Güngör, N.D., & Tansel, A. (2005a). *The determinants of return intentions of Turkish students and professionals residing abroad: An empirical investigation* [online], (Discussion paper No.1598). Retrieved April 15, 2007, from Institute for the Study of Labor (IZA) Web site: ftp://repec.iza.org/RePEc/Discussionpaper/dp1598.pdf.

Güngör, N.D., & Tansel, A. (2005b). *Return intentions of university-educated Turkish expatriates* [online], (Discussion paper No.1604). Retrieved April 15, 2007, from Institute for the Study of Labor (IZA) Web site: ftp://repec.iza.org/RePEc/Discussionpaper/dp1604.pdf.

Haines, R. (2003). Gender-related persecution. In E. Feller, V. Türk, & F. Nicholson (Eds.), *Refugee protection in international law: UNHCR's global consultations on international protection* (pp.319–350). Geneva: Cambridge Univ. Press; United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNCHR]. Retrieved December 10, 2006, from UNHCR Web site: http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/publ?id=41a1b51c6.

Hemmasi, M., & Prorok, C.V. (2002). Women's migration and quality of life in Turkey. *Geoforum, 33*, 399–411.

Hirschon, R. (2003). *Crossing the Aegean: An appraisal of the 1923 compulsory population exchange between Greece and Turkey.* New York: Berghahn Books.

Huseby-Darvas, É.V. (2004). *Extra Hungarian non est vita?* The relationships between Hungarian immigrants and their homeland. In F. Markowitz, & A.H. Stefansson (Eds.). *Homecomings: Unsettling paths of return* (pp. 76-90). Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books.

İçduygu, A. (2006). *Turkey and international migration, 2005/2006: SOPEMI report for Turkey*. Istanbul: Continuous Reporting System on Migration (SOPEMI) of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)

İlyasoğlu, A. (1998). Islamist women in Turkey: Their identity and self-image. In Z. Arat (Ed.), *Deconstructing images of "the Turkish woman"* (pp.241–261). London: MACMILLAN PRESS.

İncirlioğlu, E.O. (1998). Images of village women in Turkey: Models and anomalies. In Z. Arat (Ed.), *Deconstructing images of "the Turkish woman"* (pp.199–223). London: MACMILLAN PRESS.

International Organization for Migration (IOM). (1995). *Trafficking and prostitution; The growing exploitation of migrant women from Central and Eastern Europe*. Budapest: IOM.

Iredale, R. (2001). The migration of professionals: Theories and typologies. *International Migration, 39*(5), 7–26.

Järviluoma, H., Moisala, P., & Vilkko, A. (2003). *Gender and qualitative methods*. London: SAGE.

Kabasakal, H. (1998). A profile of top women managers in Turkey. In Z. Arat (Ed.), *Deconstructing images of "the Turkish woman"* (pp. 225–239). London: MACMILLAN PRESS.

Kadıoğlu, A. (1994). Women's subordination in Turkey: Is Islam really the villain? *Middle East Journal, 48*(4), 645–660.

Kadıoğlu, A. (1997). Migration experiences of Turkish women: Notes from a researcher's diary. *International Migration, 35*(4), 537–557.

Kağıtçıbaşı, Ç. (1981). Value of children, women's role and fertility in Turkey. In N. Abadan-Unat (Ed.), *Women in Turkish society* (pp. 74–95). Leiden: Brill.

Kandiyoti, D. (1987). Emancipated but unliberated? Reflections on the Turkish case. *Feminist Studies, 13*(2), 317–338.

Kandiyoti, D. (1996). Contemporary feminist scholarship and Middle East studies. In D. Kandiyoti (Ed.), *Gendering the Middle East: Emerging perspectives* (pp. 1–27). London: I.B.Tauris Publishers.

Kaya, I. (2000). Modernity and veiled women. *European Journal of Social Theory, 3*(2), 195–214.

Kelson, G.A., & DeLaet, D.L. (1999). Introduction: The invisibility of women in scholarship on international migration. In G.A. Kelson, & D.L. DeLaet (Eds.), *Gender and immigration* (pp. 1–17). London: Macmillan.

Keyman, E.F., & İçduygu, A. (2003). Globalization, civil society and citizenship in Turkey: Actors, boundaries and discourses. *Citizenship Studies 7*(2), 219–234.

King, R. (2000). Generalizations from the history of return migration. In B. Ghosh (Ed.), *Return migration: Journey of hope or despair?* (pp. 7–55). Geneva: International Organization for Migration and the United Nations.

Koçtürk, T. (1992). *A matter of honour: Experiences of Turkish women immigrants*. London: Zed Books.

Kofman, E. (1999). Female 'birds of passage' a decade later: Gender and immigration in the European Union. *International Migration Review, 33*(2), 269–299.

Kofman, E. (2000). The invisibility of skilled female migrants and gender relations in studies of skilled migration in Europe. *International Journal of Population Geography, 6*, 45–59.

Koser, K., & Salt, J. (1997). The geography of highly skilled international migration. *International Journal of Population Geography, 3*, 285–303.

Krane, R.E. (1975). Effects of international migration upon occupational mobility, acculturation and the labor market in Turkey. In R.E. Krane (Ed.), *Manpower mobility across cultural boundaries* (pp. 161–204). Leiden: Brill.

Kymlicka, W. (1995). *Multicultural citizenship: A liberal theory of minority rights*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Legard, R., Keegan, J., & Ward, K. (2003). In-depth interviews. In J. Ritchie, & J. Lewis (Eds.), *Qualitative research practice: A guide for social science students and researchers* (pp. 138–169). London: SAGE.

Lim, L.L. (1995). The status of women and international migration. In United Nations, Population Division, *International migration policies and the status of female migrants: Proceedings of the United Nations expert group meeting on international migration policies and the status of female migrants, San Miniato, Italy, 28-31 March 1990* (pp. 29–55). New York: United Nations.

Lindisfarne, N. (2002). Starting from below: Fieldwork, gender and imperialism now. *Critique of Anthropology, 22*(4), 403–423.

Maalouf, A. (2000). (trans.). *In the name of identity: Violence and the need to belong*. New York: Arcade Publishing.

Mandel, R. (1996). A place of their own: Contesting spaces and defining places in Berlin's migrant community. In B. D. Metcalf (Ed.), *Making Muslim space in North America and Europe* (147–166). Berkeley: Univ. of Calif. Press.

Markowitz, F., & Stefansson, A. H. (Eds.). (2004). *Homecomings: Unsettling paths of return*. Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books.

Massey, D.S., Arango, J., Hugo, G., Kouaouci, A., Pellegrino, A., & Taylor, J.E. (1998). *Worlds in motion: Understanding international migration at the end of the millennium*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Maxwell, J.A. (1998). Designing a qualitative study. In L. Bickman & D.J. Rog (Eds.). *Handbook of applied social research methods* (pp. 69–100). London: Sage Pub.

Metcalf, B. D. (Ed.). (1996). *Making Muslim space in North America and Europe*. Berkeley: Univ. of Calif. Press.

Mirdal, G.M. (1984). Stress and distress in migration: Problems and resources of Turkish women in Denmark. *International Migration Review, 18*(4), 984–1003.

Mittleman, J. H. (2000). *The globalization syndrome: Transformation & resistance*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Moch, L.P. (2005). Gender and migration research. In M. Bommes, & E. Morawska (Eds.), *International migration research: Constructions, omissions and the promises of interdisciplinarity* (pp.95–108). Hants, England: Ashgate.

Moghadam, V.M. (2000). Gender and economic reforms: A framework for analysis and evidence from Central Asia, the Caucasus, and Turkey. In F. Acar, & A. Günes-Ayata (Eds.). *Gender and identity construction: Women of Central Asia, the Caucasus and Turkey* (pp. 23–43). Leiden: Brill.

Moghadam, V.M. (2003). *Modernizing women: Gender and social change in the Middle East*. 2nd ed. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Pub.

Morgan, E. (2003). Against the odds: An exploratory study of Mexican immigrant women with technical education. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences, 25*, 201–221.

Morokvasic, M. (1983) Women in migration: beyond the reductionist outlook. In A. Phizacklea (Ed.). *One way ticket migration and female labour* (pp. 13–32). London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Morokvasic, M. (1984). Birds of passage are also women… *International Migration Review, 18* (4), 886–907.

Morrison, L., Guruge S., & Snarr, K.A. (1999). Sri Lankan Tamil immigrants in Toronto: Gender, marriage patterns, and sexuality. In G.A. Kelson, & D.L. DeLaet (Eds.), *Gender and immigration* (pp. 144–162). London: Macmillan Press.

Nathans, E. (2004). *The politics of citizenship in Germany: Ethnicity, utility and nationalism.* Oxford: Berg.

Olson, E. (1985). Muslim identity and secularism in contemporary Turkey: "The headscarf dispute". *Anthropological Quarterly, 58*(4), 161–171.

Öncü, A. (1981). Turkish women in the professions: Why so many?. In N. Abadan-Unat (Ed.), *Women in Turkish society* (pp. 181–193). Leiden: Brill.

Öncü, A. (1997). The myth of the "ideal home": Travels across cultural borders to Istanbul. In A. Öncü, & P. Weyland (Eds.), *Space, culture and power: New identities in globalizing cities* (pp. 56–72). London: Zed Books.

Öncü, A., & Weyland, P. (Eds.) (1997). *Space, culture, and power: New identities in globalizing cities*. London: Zed Books.

Osman, M.N.M. (2007). *Turkey's Gulen movement and global Islamic activism* [online]. Retrieved May 29, 2007, from Fethullah Gülen Web site: http://en.fgulen.com/content/view/2338/14/.

Özbay, F. (1981). The impact of education on women. In N. Abadan-Unat (Ed.), *Women in Turkish society* (pp. 106–180). Leiden: Brill.

Paine, S. (1974). *Exporting workers: The Turkish case*. London: Cambridge UP.

Papademetriou, D., & Martin, P.L. (Eds.). (1991). *The unsettled relationship: Labor migration and economic development*. London: Greenwood Press.

Parreñas, R.S. (2001). *Servants of globalization: Women, migration, and domestic work*. Palo Alto, CA, USA: Stanford University Press.

Patrick, E. (2004). *Gender-related persecution and international protection*. Washington: Migration Policy Institute. Retrieved December 6, 2006, from Migration Policy Institute Web site: http://www.migrationinformation.org/Feature/display.cfm?ID=216

Pedraza, S. (1991). Women and migration: The social consequences of gender. *Annual Review of Sociology*, *17*, 303–325.

Pessar, P.R. (1999). Engendering migration studies. *American Behavioral Scientist, 42*(4), 577–600.

Petersen, W. (1969). *Population* (2nd ed.). Toronto: Collier-Macmillan Canada.

Phizacklea, A. (Ed.). (1983). *One way ticket: Migration and female labour.* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Portelli, A. (1998). What makes oral history different. In R. Perks, & A. Thomson (Eds.), *The oral history reader* (pp. 63–74). London: Routledge.

Regets, M.C. (2001). *Research and policy issues in high-skilled international migration: A perspective with data from the United States* [online], (Discussion paper No.366). Retrieved April 15, 2007, from Institute for the Study of Labor (IZA) Web site: ftp://repec.iza.org/RePEc/Discussionpaper/dp366.pdf.

Rittersberger-Tılıç, H. (1998). *Vom Gastarbeiter zum Deutschler: Die Rückkehrergemeinschaft in einer türkischen Kleinstadt*. Diss. Essen U., 1997. Potsdam: Verlag für Berlin-Brandenburg.

Said, E.W. (1979). *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books.

Saktanber, A. (2006). Women and the iconography of fear: Islamization in post-Islamist Turkey. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society, 32*(1), 21–31.

Salt, J. (1995). Migration processes among the highly skilled in Europe. *International Migration Review, 26*(2), 484–505.

Sassen, S. (1998). *Globalization and its discontents*. New York: The New Press.

Sassen, S. (1999). *Guests and aliens*. New York: The New Press.

Simon, R.J., & Brettell, C.B. (Eds.). (1986). *International migration: The female experience*. New Jersey: Rowman & Allanheld.

Stefansson, A. H. (2004a). Introduction. In F. Markowitz, & A.H. Stefansson (Eds.). *Homecomings: Unsettling paths of return* (pp. 2-20). Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books.

Stefansson, A. H. (2004b). Sarajevo suffering: Homecoming and the hierarchy of homeland hardship. In F. Markowitz, & A.H. Stefansson (Eds.). *Homecomings: Unsettling paths of return* (pp. 54-75). Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books.

Steinhilber, B. (1994) *Grenz Überschreitungen. Remigration und Biographie – Frauen kehren zurück in die Türkei*. Frankfurt: Edition Hipparchia.

Straubhaar, T. (2000). *International mobility of the highly skilled: Brain gain, brain drain or brain exchange* [online], (Hamburg Institute of International Economics discussion paper No. 88). Retrieved May 10, 2007, from German National Library of Economics Web site: http://opus.zbw-kiel.de/volltexte/2003/695/pdf/88.pdf.

Süral, N. (2003, September 16). Legal framework for gender equality. In World Bank (Ed.), *Bridging the gender gap in Turkey: A milestone towards faster socio-economic development and poverty reduction* (pp. 10–31) [online]. Retrieved May 6, 2007, from World Bank Web site: www.worldbank.org.

Szelényi, K. (2003). *Explaining the migration and settlement of foreign graduate students: Global integration theory and the theory of cumulative causation* [online]. Retrieved May 15, 2007, from UCLA Center of Global Comparative Research Web site: www.isop.ucla.edu.

Tezcan, S. (1981). Health problems of Turkish women. In N. Abadan-Unat (Ed.). *Women in Turkish society* (pp. 96–106). Leiden: Brill.

Thompson, P. (1997). Women, men, and transgenerational family influences in social mobility. In D. Bertaux, & P. Thompson (Eds.), *Pathways to social class: A qualitative approach to social mobility* (pp. 32–61). Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Timur, S. (1981). Determinants of family structure in Turkey. In N. Abadan-Unat (Ed.), *Women in Turkish society* (pp. 59–73). Leiden: Brill.

Tvrtkovic, R.G. (2001). When Muslims and Christians marry. *America, 185*(6), 11–14.

Tyree, A., & Donato, K.M. (1986). A demographic overview of the international migration of women. In R.J. Simon, & C.B. Brettell (Eds.), *International migration: The female experience* (pp. 22–41). New Jersey: Rowman & Allanheld.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2000). *The state of the world's refugees: Fifty years of humanitarian action.* New York: Oxford University Press.

United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women [INSTRAW]. (1994). *The migration of women: Methodological issues in the measurement and analysis of internal and international migration*. Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic: INSTRAW.

United Nations, Population Division. (1995). *International migration policies and the status of female migrants: Proceedings of the United Nations expert group meeting on international migration policies and the status of female migrants, San Miniato, Italy, 28-31 March 1990.* New York: United Nations.

United Nations Secretariat. (1995). Measuring the extent of female international migration. In United Nations, Population Division, *International migration policies and the status of female migrants: Proceedings of the United Nations expert group meeting on international migration policies and the status of female migrants, San Miniato, Italy, 28-31 March 1990* (pp. 56–79). New York: United Nations.

Unsal, Y. (2003). The impacts of individualism/collectivism, self-esteem, and feeling of mastery on life satisfaction among the Turkish university students and academicians. *Social Indicators Research, 61*, 297–317.

Van Impe, K. (2000). People for sale: The need for a multidisciplinary approach towards human trafficking. *International Migration*, Special Issue *20*(1), 113–131.

Weber, M. (1971). Class, status, party. In K. Thompson, & J. Tunstall (Eds.). *Sociological perspectives: Selected readings* (pp. 250–264). Baltimore: Penguin Books.

White, J. (2003). State feminism, modernization, and the Turkish republican woman. *NWSA Journal*, 15(3), 145–159.

Yavuz, H., & Esposito, J.L. (Eds.) (2003). *Turkish Islam and the secular state: the Gülen movement.* Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracure University Press.

Yeğenoğlu, M. (1998). *Colonial fantasies: Towards a feminist reading of Orientalism*. London: Cambridge University Press.

Zlotnik, H. (2003). *The global dimensions of female migration*. Washington: Migration Policy Institute. Retrieved December 4, 2006, from Migration Policy Institute Web site: http://www.migrationinformation.org/Feature/display.cfm?id=109

# APPENDICES

## Appendix A. Participant Demographic, Education, and Career Information

| Name[1] | Original Migration Status | Current Occupation | Marital Status | Number of Children | Education | Headscarf? | Years in Canada | Years Back in Turkey | Age[2] | SES[3] of Parents | Current SES |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Fulya | Student | Freelance researcher/ teacher | Married (to Canadian) | None | Ph.D. | No | 16 | 1st return: 3.5<br>2nd return: 2 | 51 | Upper middle | Upper middle |
| Deniz | Student | Working on EU project | Single | None | Bachelor's | No | 4 | 0.83 | 24 | Upper middle | Upper middle |
| Zeynep | Student | Economics professor | Divorced (single mother) | 1 | Ph.D. | No | 9.5 | 6 | 39 | Upper middle | Upper middle |
| Meral | Wife | Accountant/ financial planner | Divorced (single mother) | 3 | College/ University | Yes | 7 | 14 | 36 | Low | Middle |
| Ceyda | Refugee | English teacher | Married (to Turk) | 2 | Bachelor's | Yes | 4 | 2 | 36 | Low | Middle |
| Sibel | Student | Office manager | Married (to Turk) | None | Master's | No | 6 | 3 | 32 | Upper Middle | Upper middle |

1. All names are pseudonyms
2. Age may include approximations
3. SES = Socio-economic status

**Appendix B: Pre-Interview Information Form**

Dear (participant's name),

Thank you for your participation in my study! Through my research, I am taking an in-depth look at the experiences of return educated female migrants from Canada to Turkey, such as you. I am specifically interested in your daily life experiences in the contexts of family, friends, and work.

The questions on the following pages will provide me with basic facts and background information about you, which will help me to formulate my questions once we start the interview. During the interview, there are no right or wrong answers. In fact, it will be more like a conversation, in which you describe your daily life and migration experiences to me, and *what you think* about those experiences.

**Everything you share with me will be kept strictly confidential;** your name and any identifiable characteristics (names, workplace, etc.) will be changed in the final report.

Your experience as an educated return migrant is valuable for my research. **Thank you very much for volunteering your time and insight to help me with this study!**

Karla

**1. In what year did you migrate to Canada? _____**

**2. How many years did you stay in Canada? _____**

**3. Under what legal status did you enter Canada?**
(student, spouse, dependent, refugee, worker, other?)
_____

**4. Did you acquire Canadian citizenship? _____**

**5. In what year did you return to Turkey? _____**

**6. In what year were you born? _____**

**7. What is the highest level of post-secondary education that you achieved? In what subject?**
_____
_____

**8. At what level would you say you speak English?**
(i.e., intermediate, high intermediate, fluent, mother tongue?)
_____

**9. At what level would you say you speak Turkish?**
(i.e., intermediate, high intermediate, fluent, mother tongue?)
_____

**10. What is your marital status?** (single, in a relationship, married, divorced, widowed)?
_____

**11. Do you have children? _____**

**If yes, how many? _____**

**How many of them live at home? _____**

**Do your children speak English? _____**

**12. Are there any other members of your household? If yes, who are they?**
_____
_____
_____

**13. Did you work in Turkey before emigrating to Canada? If yes, what type(s) of work did you perform?**

_____
_____
_____

**14. Did you work in Canada? If yes, what type(s) of work did you perform?**

_____
_____
_____

**15. Did you work upon your return to Turkey? If yes, what type(s) of work did you perform?**

_____
_____
_____

**16. What is the approximate annual income of your household? If money is earned in a currency other than new Turkish liras (YTL), please indicate the approximate corresponding level in YTL from the categories below.**
(please select one category)

_____Under 40,000 YTL
_____40,000 – 99,999 YTL
_____100,000 – 199,999 YTL
_____200,000 – 499,999 YTL
_____500,000 – 999,999 YTL
_____100,000,000 YTL or more

**17. What is your personal annual income? If money is earned in a currency other than new Turkish liras (YTL), please indicate the approximate corresponding level in YTL from the categories below.**
(please select one category)

_____Under 20,000 YTL
_____20,000 – 39,999 YTL
_____40,000 – 59,999 YTL
_____60,000 – 79,999 YTL
_____80,000 – 99,999 YTL
_____100,000 or more

**THANK YOU!**

## Appendix C: Transcriber Confidentiality Agreement

This study is being undertaken by Karla Combres in partial fulfilment for the Master of Science in Sociology degree program at Middle East Technical University.

I, _____, the Transcriber, agree to:

1. keep all the research information shared with me confidential by not discussing or sharing the research information in any form or format (e.g., recordings, transcripts) with anyone other than the Researcher.

2. keep all research information in any form or format (e.g., recordings, transcripts) secure while it is in my possession.

3. return all research information in any form or format (e.g., recordings, transcripts) to the Researcher when I have completed the transcription tasks.

4. after consulting with the Researcher, erase or destroy all research information in any form or format regarding this research project that is not returnable to the Researcher (e.g., information stored on computer hard drive).

Transcriber

| _____ | _____ | _____ |
|---|---|---|
| (print name) | (signature) | (date) |

Researcher

| _____ | _____ | _____ |
|---|---|---|
| (print name) | (signature) | (date) |

If you have any questions or concerns about this study please contact:
**Karla Combres**
Home: (phone number)
Cell: (phone number)
Email: (email address)