

Alexandros Balasis

mpalalex@yorku.ca

Ph.D. student at York University

**“Voices of Migration: Exploring Agency within Canadian Immigration Policy
and Greek Emigration Framework”**

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Biography:

Alexandros Balasis is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in History at York University and has been honored with the HHF International Graduate Fellowship in Modern Greek History. He completed his undergraduate studies in History at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, where he also earned a master's degree exploring the Greek presence at international exhibitions at the turn of the 20th century. At the same time, he holds a second master's degree from York University, focusing on Greek post-Second World War migration to Canada. He has worked as a researcher in "Istorima," Greece's largest oral history archive. His research interests center around transoceanic migration, with a particular focus on migrants' agency and their interactions with migration policies.

Abstract:

With Greeks being among the world's earliest and most well-known diasporas, this paper delves into the little-explored topic of Greek migration to Canada during the 1950s and 1960s. Utilizing the press of the time and the power of oral history, the original thesis aimed to unravel the experiences of Greek immigrants not through an exhaustive presentation of data but by bringing their narrations and agency to the foreground of our research around migration in Greek and Canadian history. Consisting of five chapters, the project investigated the historical context of Greece and Canada during and after the Second World War, the reasons leading to emigration by moving beyond "push-pull" explanations, the Canadian and Greek migration policies, the cases of Greeks that reached Canada as brides and as refugees to underline the diversity of reasons people relocated, and finally the immigrants' experiences in Canada, from their arrival memories to their first steps towards their integration into Canadian society.

Herein I focus on the chapter which deals with the Canadian and Greek migration policies and the immigrant's place within the lines those policies created. Both countries viewed migration as a solution to different issues and formulated their stance accordingly. However, the stories of those who obeyed, exploited, or disregarded the law exemplify the migrants' agency and demonstrate that migration does not follow a predetermined trajectory defined by the relative legal framework set by the nation-state.

Since the establishment of the modern Greek state in 1832, the country has seen two major emigration waves. The first one took place from the late nineteenth to early twentieth century, with the United States attracting the majority of emigrants. Then, right after the end of the Second World War and the Greek Civil War in 1949, a second wave emerged until the 1980s. Those who migrated after the war went through arguably the most challenging decade of modern Greek history as well as its long-lasting effects. The economic devastation, the trauma of the Civil War, and the political instability shaped Greek post-war history, while the deeply rooted anti-communism of the state, which led to social discrimination, imprisonment, and internal exile, exacerbated the hardship many faced. It is estimated that more than one million Greeks left their homeland during this second wave of emigration. Most sought to start a new life in Central Europe, in countries like West Germany and Belgium, while others chose transoceanic destinations. With Canada already known to Greeks since the first migration wave, around 100,000 migrants reached the country after the war.¹ These people, along with thousands of others, navigated their way to Canada through the legal framework governments created to regulate immigration.

By examining the Canadian immigration policy and the Greek framework of emigration, this paper aims to bring migrants' narrations and agency to the foreground of our research. On the one hand, post-war Canadian governments dealt with many immigrants from different parts of the world, willing to try their luck in Canada. On the other hand, Greece had to regulate the outflow of its people, leaving the country in search of a better future. Therefore, comparing their policies is only helpful in investigating how they intersect, permitting Greeks to migrate legally in most cases. However, my goal is not just a comparison of Greek and Canadian migration policies but rather an investigation of the immigrants' place within the lines these policies created. Utilizing a never-before-investigated oral history archive, this research exemplifies the ways immigrants obeyed, exploited, or disregarded the law as the sites of agency in the migration process despite the policies' limiting nature. Hence, it contributes to our understanding of Canada's post-WWII immigration experience and

¹ Michel Bruneau and Giorgos Prevelakis, «Η Χαρτογράφηση της Νεοελληνικής Διασποράς» [“Mapping the Modern Greek Diaspora,”] in *Οι Έλληνες στη διασπορά: 15ος-21ος αι.* [*The Greeks in the Diaspora: 15th-21st Centuries,*] ed. Ioannis Hassiotis, Olga Katsiardi-Hering, and Evridiki Abatzi (Athens:Hellenic Parliament, 2006), 322.

adds to the ongoing efforts of reapproaching the history of Greek emigration with the help of oral history.

Furthermore, my study relies on oral testimonies and the press. Interviews were retrieved from the *Immigrec* oral history archive. *Immigrec* is an attempt to reapproach Greek immigration history through immigrants' voices. The project was funded by the Stavros Niarchos Foundation and executed by three Canadian universities, McGill, York, Simon Fraser, and the University of Patras in Greece, aiming to contribute to the study of Greek transatlantic immigration. The project includes an archive of more than 400 interviews conducted across Canada between 2017 and 2018, focusing on Greek immigration to Canada following the Second World War, and a virtual museum that exhibits a plethora of relative archival material, such as contemporary newspaper articles and personal photographs of the interviewees. The second set of primary sources for this work is Greek newspapers like *Empros* and *Makedonia* and the Canadian press including *Toronto Daily Star* and *The Globe and Mail*.

Although historiography has extensively studied the Greek diaspora, there has been comparatively less emphasis of historians on migration to Canada. Ioannis Hassiotis, in one of the seminal works for Greek historiography on migration, providing an overview of the history of the modern Greek diaspora, went beyond the romanticized perception of Greek migration as a continuous thread from ancient Greek settlements to modern times.² Nikos Psyroukis had already taken steps in this direction when publishing his study about Greek settlements abroad under a Marxist and anticolonial analytical lens.³ Lina Ventura was among the first to introduce oral history methods in studying Greek migration while also had attempted one of the earliest works providing a theoretical framework of Greek migration.⁴ In our case, the first work on Greek migration to Canada was George Vlassis' 1942 book, which mapped the presence of Greeks in the country, highlighting their achievements and the institutions they

² Ioannis Hassiotis, *Επισκόπηση της Ιστορίας της Νεοελληνικής διασποράς* [*Overview of the History of Modern Greek Diaspora*] (Thessaloniki: Vaniias, 1993).

³ Nikos Psyroukis, *Το Νεοελληνικό παροικιακό φαινόμενο* [*The Modern Greek Parochial Phenomenon*] (Athens: Epikairota, 1974).

⁴ Lina Ventura, *Έλληνες μετανάστες στο Βέλγιο* [*Greek Immigrants in Belgium*] (Athens: Nefeli, 1999); *Μετανάστευση και Έθνος. Μετασηματισμοί στις συλλογικότητες και στις κοινωνικές θέσεις* [*Migration and the Greek Nation: Transformation of Collectivities and Social Positions*] (Athens: Society for Neohellenic Studies/Mnimon, 1994).

created.⁵ However, it marginalized gender issues and presented a success story of the Greek diaspora while overlooking failures. Sociologist Peter Chimbos engaged thoroughly with the Greek Canadian experience following Vlassis' traditional ethnocentric approach.⁶ The earlier lack of focus on gender and class perspectives was addressed again by sociologists such as Eleoussa Polyzoi,⁷ Evangelia Tastsoglou,⁸ and Efrosini Gavaki.⁹ They introduced the analysis of Greek immigrant women as a distinct theme, exploring their experiences, contributions to institutions, and social construction of ethnicity. Recently, a group of Ph.D. theses by Katherine Pendakis,¹⁰ Noula Mina,¹¹ and Christopher Grafos¹² enhanced the historiography of Greeks in Canada by examining the impact of immigration on the political activities and identity formation of Greek Canadians.

Researchers have indicated several factors that shape a country's legal framework around immigration. Immigration policy theories seem to revolve around the role of national policies, various interest groups and state institutions, as well as the impact of foreign affairs.¹³ The ideological question has also been noted by writers like Ninette Kelley and Michael J. Trebilcock, who discussed the two fundamental ideas of liberty and community, as expressed by groups that can influence political decisions. The notion of liberty is the equality of all individuals regarding their moral worth; thus, in the context of migration, it refers to the lack of division between citizens and migrants seeking to enter a country. In contrast, the values of community promote sovereignty

⁵ George Demetrios Vlassis, *The Greeks in Canada* (Ottawa: sn, 1942).

⁶ Efrosini Gavaki, *The Integration of Greeks in Canada* (San Francisco: R and E Research Associates, 1977); Peter Chimbos, *The Canadian Odyssey: The Greek Experience in Canada*, A History of Canada's Peoples (Ottawa: Multiculturalism Directorate, Dept. of the Secretary of State and the Canadian Government Publishing Centre, Supply and Services Canada, 1980).

⁷ Eleoussa Polyzoi, "Greek Immigrant Women from Asia Minor in Prewar Toronto: The Formative Years," in *Looking into My Sister's Eyes: Explorations in Women's History*, ed. Jean Burnet (Toronto: Multicultural History Society of Ontario, 1986), 107–24.

⁸ Evangelia Tastsoglou, "Immigrant Women and the Social Construction of Ethnicity: Three Generations of Greek Immigrant Women in Ontario," *Advances in Gender Research* 2 (1997): 227–53.

⁹ Efrosini Gavaki, "Immigrant Women's Portraits: The Socio-Economic Profile of the Greek Canadian Women," *Επιθεώρηση Κοινωνικών Ερευνών* 110, no. 110 (January 1, 2003): 55–75.

¹⁰ Katherine Laura Pendakis, "Political Genealogies of a Generation: Kin, Movement and Party in the Greek Diaspora" (Ph.D. Thesis, York University, 2015).

¹¹ Noula Mina, "Homeland Activism, Public Performance, and the Construction of Identity: An Examination of Greek Canadian Transnationalism, 1900s-1990s" (Ph.D. Thesis, University of Toronto, 2015).

¹² Christopher Grafos, "Canada's Greek Moment: Transnational Politics, Activists, and Spies During the Long Sixties" (Ph.D. Thesis, York University, 2016).

¹³ Katharina Natter, "Rethinking Immigration Policy Theory beyond 'Western Liberal Democracies,'" *Comparative Migration Studies* 6, no. 1 (December 2018): 3.

by allowing or not a stranger's entrance. Governments coping with immigration flows have to address this ideological question while balancing politics and economics.¹⁴ Because together with any ideologies, the economy also shapes the relative legal framework. Migration is frequently determined by the country's financial situation, development, production, and need for additional workforce, pressing even reluctant politicians for openness towards immigration.¹⁵ When all the above parameters are considered, state institutions sometimes have the final word in determining the implementation of the policy that is enacted. Institutions such as ministries or departments mediate between legislation and its practice, affecting the outcome by their ability or will to enforce the law. Hence, migration policies are not solid and unchanging but instead shifting and adaptable frameworks.

Before focusing on post-war Canadian immigration policy, it would be helpful to describe its course until the 1940s. After the boom years of immigration in the early twentieth century, when Minister of the Interior Clifford Sifton implemented a vigorous policy to attract thousands of peasants from across the U.S. as well as Europe and to populate the Canadian plains with agricultural workers, the First World War brought immigration to a halt.¹⁶ This was not only because of the reduced arrivals but also because Canada restricted the admissions of immigrants under the fear of "enemy aliens and agitators" entering the country. Progressively, the labor market demands changed too. Authorities prioritized domestic workers after securing sufficient economic means to maintain themselves.¹⁷ The slow rise of arrivals and admissions following the war years did not last long. The Great Depression practically closed the already narrow open gate of immigration to Canada, for the recession brought immigrants under even more strict controls on their admissions.¹⁸ In the years that followed, the number of deportations – a figure that we usually exclude from our scope of immigration policy – increased. Between the fiscal years 1932 and 1934, for every 100 immigrants reaching the country, more than 27 were deported, with the most common cause for deportation being "public charge," meaning those deemed unable to take care of themselves

¹⁴ Ninette Kelley and Michael J. Trebilcock, *The Making of the Mosaic: A History of Canadian Immigration Policy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 5–8.

¹⁵ Natter, "Rethinking Immigration Policy Theory beyond 'Western Liberal Democracies,'" 1.

¹⁶ Reginald Whitaker, *Canadian Immigration Policy since Confederation* (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, 1991), 7.

¹⁷ Kelley and Trebilcock, *The Making of the Mosaic*, 165,169.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 16.

financially.¹⁹ With Canada becoming closely linked with the U.S., Canadians of Japanese descent faced anti-Asian discrimination and exclusion that characterized the period during the Second World War. When the war ended, the Canadian Immigration Department had enough experience regulating immigration according to the market's needs and the nation's interests.

In the new reality that was forming after the war, Canada was among the few countries able to absorb the millions of people seeking to leave the devastated continent. Prime Minister Mackenzie King set the tone of the post-war immigration plan when, in his 1947 speech before the House of Commons, he stated that:

*“The policy of the government is to foster the growth of the population of Canada by the encouragement of immigration. The government will seek by legislation, regulation, and vigorous administration, to ensure the careful selection and permanent settlement of such numbers of immigrants as can advantageously be absorbed in our national economy.”*²⁰

Radical as it may sound, this statement did not bring any significant changes in the Canadian immigration policy. State officials hesitated to implement fundamental changes during the early post-war period; thus, they opted for the strategy of stretching already established policies.²¹ Nevertheless, the necessity of such a statement was unambiguous, even if the policy followed was not as radical. Investments boosted the Canadian economy, which in the late 1940s was booming and in need of skilled workers. And whilst the lack of hands was commonplace, the nature of the policy to be followed was not. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, the disagreement between the Department of Immigration and that of Labor on whether they should promote a short-term approach or organize a structured immigration plan that would not affect labor rights and wages embedded a more profound dilemma. Guest-worker immigration, which would better serve the immediate needs of the labor market, could not meet the

¹⁹ Barbara Roberts, *Whence They Came: Deportation from Canada 1900 - 1935* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1998), 38, 44.

²⁰ House of Commons Debates, 20th Parliament, 3rd Session: Vol. 3, 2644.

²¹ Triadafilos Triadafilopoulos, “Dismantling White Canada: Race, Rights, and the Origins of the Points System,” in *Wanted and Welcome? Policies for Highly Skilled Immigrants in Comparative Perspective*, ed. Triadafilos Triadafilopoulos (New York: Springer, 2013), 20.

demand for skilled workers; hence the government encouraged potentially permanent immigration. Officials worked towards a new framework to reduce the costs of integration for the state. Sponsored immigration permitted immigrants to enter Canada with the prerequisite that a relative established in the country could assist the newcomer.²² The process was far from simple. Because of the intensified Cold War polarization screenings, the RCMP security service rejected numerous applications under communist suspicion. Many immigrants – not only from countries of the Eastern Bloc but also leftists from France and Greece – were declined entry as security threats.²³ During the 1960s, to some extent, because of the economic boom, governments changed the immigration policy towards the increase of the arriving immigrants from “non-traditional” countries, with racial criteria for entrance eased and preference given to specific skills.²⁴

To better understand the policy, we must examine the government’s specific Acts and regulations to control admissions. Aiming to protect Canada’s white European identity, Mackenzie King’s government hesitated to pass radical changes in the country’s immigration policy. The Close Relatives plans simplified the process of immigration for relatives, and together with the Group Movement plan, they triggered an influx of arrivals.²⁵ However, the established legal framework did not permit an uncontrolled influx since non-white immigration was still discouraged. The 1952 Immigration Act was the first entirely new Act since 1910, limiting admissions based on criteria of nationality, property, health, and education, among others, yet it did not bring any significant changes to the existing legislation.²⁶ In 1956 new regulations detailed the long-standing restrictions specifying the only four classes of preferred immigrants who could enter Canada. Allowed to immigrate were applicants of British, American, and French origin, unsponsored immigrants of certain Western European countries, among them Greece, after agreeing to start their own businesses or find a job through the Department of Immigration, sponsored applicants of European countries, the U.S. and some Middle East countries and lastly only sponsored applicants from

²² Whitaker, *Canadian Immigration Policy since Confederation*, 15–16.

²³ Evangelia Tastsoglou, *Re-Appraising Immigration and Identities: A Synthesis and Directions for Future Research* (Halifax: Department of Canadian Heritage, 2021), 18.

²⁴ Whitaker, *Canadian Immigration Policy since Confederation*, 18–19.

²⁵ Mariia Burtseva, “The Specifics of Post-War Canadian Immigration Policy (1945–1957),” *Historia i Polityka*, December 21, 2017, 75–76.

²⁶ Triadafilopoulos, “Dismantling White Canada,” 21.

Asia.²⁷ According to this classification, Greeks had two options to enter Canada, one of them being by providing guarantees about their future job and falling into the third class of sponsored immigration. Note that falling into these categories did not ensure entrance to Canada, as immigrants had to pass various screening processes regarding their health or political beliefs. It was not until 1962 and the Diefenbaker government that Canada moved towards more universal admission plans, implementing new regulations in the direction of lowering the racial barriers. The regulations enacted were primarily motivated by political reasons rather than economic ones. Officials, including the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Ellen Fairclough, acknowledged the concerns of domestic and international critics regarding racial discrimination in Canada's immigration legislation and advocated for a skills-based admission system.²⁸ Nonetheless, the labor market's needs further pushed the government to take action. In 1967, new regulations approved by the Governor-in-Council amended the previous system and introduced a less exclusive point system. Canada, from that moment on ranked applicants in nine categories: education and training, personal qualities, the demand in Canada for the occupation, occupational skills, age, existence of pre-arranged employment, knowledge of French and English, presence of relatives in the country, and employment opportunities in their destination area.²⁹ Although not entirely free of biases, this system sealed the turn of the Canadian immigration policy, opening the door of immigration to the so-called Third World countries and limiting the racial criteria of previous systems.

For the most part, the central problem of the Greek emigration post-war policy was that Greece did not have one. As a sending country, it had not enacted a central policy to regulate the movement of emigrants. After the war, it followed the same approach to the issue as it did during the interwar period when the Greek laws did not attempt to control the outflow of people but did attempt to impose control of people coming in from Canada as well, namely the Slavophones. The basic legislation in the interwar period permitted immigration for adults, regulated military service issues, and issued travel documents.³⁰ Emigration killed two birds with one stone for the post-war

²⁷ Kelley and Trebilcock, *The Making of the Mosaic*, 328.

²⁸ Triadafilopoulos, "Dismantling White Canada," 23–24.

²⁹ Kelley and Trebilcock, *The Making of the Mosaic*, 360–361.

³⁰ Christos Mandatzis, *Από τις νέες χώρες στις νέες πατρίδες: Υπερπόντια μετανάστευση από τη Μακεδονία, 1923-1936* [*From New Countries to New Homelands: Overseas Migration from Macedonia, 1923-1936*] (Thessaloniki: Epikentro, 2018), 127–36.

Greek governments as well because, on the one hand, it released the pressure caused by the excess workforce, leading to social tensions, and, on the other, provided the benefits of remittances for the economy. Of course, Greece was not the only sending country lacking the relevant framework. However, what is important to remember in our case is that not only do the sending countries lack a more specific legislation framework, but their policies, except in rare cases, follow the conditions of the host countries. Still, the above does not mean that the sending countries are uninvolved in regulating emigration by encouraging or stopping it.³¹ Emigration policy can also cover issues like relations between the home country and its diaspora, the creation of schools abroad for the second generation, or repatriations, but in Greece, this became systematic only after the 1970s. Nevertheless, focusing on promoting emigration, the country worked towards bilateral agreements with France in 1954, Belgium in 1957, and Germany in 1960.³² Greece was a founding member of the International Committee for European Migration (ICEM), which was established in 1952 and facilitated the migration of European applicants, mediating between countries to alleviate Europe from its excess workforce. In 1952, it was arranged to help 115,000 migrants relocate. Around 20,000 would be Greeks emigrating to the U.S., Canada, and Australia.³³

Greek immigration to Canada was regulated chiefly by the ICEM, yet migration was always on the agenda when officials of the two states met. The Greek newspaper *Empros*, following Spyridon Markezinis' visit to the U.S. and Canada in 1953, reports the key takeaways of the Greek Minister of Finance. Among the aluminum agreements, the title notes the agreements on migration on the first page, and the detailed article underlines that the Canadian government is willing to permit “unlimited Greek immigration to Canada.”³⁴ Similarly, during the 1961 official visit of the Greek Prime Minister Konstantinos Karamanlis to Canada, Greek immigration was celebrated as a

³¹ Loukia Mousourou, *Μετανάστευση και μεταναστευτική πολιτική στην Ελλάδα και στην Ευρώπη* [*Immigration and Immigration Policy in Greece and Europe*] (Athens: Gutenberg, 1991), 173–74.

³² *Ibid.*, 179.

³³ Maria Plaktsoglou, «Η Μεταναστευτική πολιτική της Αυστραλίας προς την Ελλάδα και η Ελληνική μεταπολεμική μετανάστευση (1945–1953)», [“Australian Immigration Policy Towards Greece and Greek Post-war Immigration,”] in *Greek Research in Australia: Proceedings of the Eighth Biennial International Conference of Greek Studies, Flinders University, June 2009*, ed. Marietta Rossetto (Adelaide: Flinders University Department of Languages - Modern Greek, 2011), 720–21.

³⁴ «Τι επέτυχε ο κ. Μαρκεζίνης εις τον Καναδά» [“What Mr. Markezinis achieved in Canada,”] *Empros*, May 15, 1953, 1,3.

link of friendship between the two countries, implying its encouragement by both.³⁵ Yet, the above articles did not reflect the whole situation. In fact, the Department of Canadian Citizenship maintained its reluctance to endorse substantial Greek immigration, at least until 1955, despite the requests made by Greek organizations or the Greek government. In the following years, an annual influx of 4,000 to 5,000 Greeks was granted entrance, and only after 1964, their numbers surged to unprecedented levels, with a peak of 11,000 in 1967 alone. This shift corresponded to the more receptive Canadian immigration policy described earlier.³⁶

So far, this paper has explored migration as a process shaped by the nation-state disregarding the immigrants' position within the range of its policies. Analysis of the Greek and Canadian press reveals how immigrants were informed about the legal framework governing their migration and how ethnic communities were involved in the discussion around the admission criteria. On the other hand, migrant interviews provide insights into their comprehension of immigration policies and their means of coping with their limitations. With the relative legislation in place, it would be rational to think people followed a pre-arranged path to reach Canada, which is not entirely true. While most migrants planned their journey within the legal framework that mainly Canada had enacted, many chose the shortcuts sponsored system offered or completely illegal ways to migrate.

Those interested in emigrating were informed about Canada's policy by newspaper articles referring to the eligibility criteria or the needs of the Canadian labor market. As newspapers of the time underlined, only certain professions were permitted entrance, with emphasis given to skilled laborers. Another category was those invited by relatives already in Canada. For instance, an article from 1952 titled "Migration to Canada," hosted on the front page of the *Empros* newspaper, explicitly notes that migration to Canada would be limited to Greek nurses and agricultural workers or those with first-degree relatives in Canada.³⁷ A few years later, another article translated from Reuters and published by the same newspaper stated that Canada "needs hands," but potential immigrants were informed that they had a higher chance of being admitted if

³⁵ «Το Πρωθυπουργικόν ταξίδιον εις τας Ηνωμ. Πολιτείας», [“The Prime Minister's trip to the United States,”] *Makedonia*, April 15, 1961, 1.

³⁶ Peter Chimbos, “The Greeks in Canada. An Historical and Sociological Perspective,” in *The Greek Diaspora in the 20th Century*, ed. Richard Clogg (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 92.

³⁷ «Η μετανάστευσις εις τον Καναδά», [“Migration to Canada,”] *Empros*, August 7, 1952, 1.

they were skilled workers.³⁸ The Hellenic Association of Tourist and Travel Agencies held a meeting with the Canadian Consul in Athens in 1957, as reported by *Makedonia* newspaper. With tourist agencies instrumental in the migration process, issuing tickets and providing information to potential emigrants, the Consul emphasized that priority would be given to sponsored spouses, parents, and children of Canadian residents.³⁹

The debate in Canada regarding the appropriate immigration plan that would strike a balance between skilled and unskilled workers was not limited to the Immigration and Labor Departments. It also involved the ethnic communities residing in Canada and their opinions on the direction of the country's migration policy and its impact on the future of Canada. A 1961 article features statements of various local leaders of immigrant communities commenting on Canada's choice to prioritize skilled workers. Peter Palmer, the president of the Greek Community of Toronto, expressed the need to continue unskilled immigration but with a selective approach, talking about "handpicking" migrants.⁴⁰ Palmer could not be so candid, considering the significant numbers of unskilled Greeks reaching Canada. In 1966, his comments were more direct in favor of his fellow Greeks when he underlined the necessity of admitting unskilled immigrants and creating a system that would not promote skills but increase the arrivals.⁴¹ Hence, talking about interest groups participating in policy-making, we should not omit immigrants and their communities advocating for their interests. In the case of the Greeks, it was the continuation of unskilled immigration. However, with the demand for specialized workers rising, such voices could not make a significant impact.

One of such demands bringing Greeks to Canada was that of skilled, or at least trained, domestic servants. Following the Second World War, increased Canadian needs for domestics could only be met by immigrants. Initially, the Department of Labor utilized the large pool of displaced persons. With the demand still exceeding supply, the Department turned to alternatives, encouraging immigration from the U.K. and later approving "bulk orders" from Southern Europe. Experimental recruitment of young Italian women began in 1951 but left employers dissatisfied with their

³⁸ «Ο Καναδάς ζητεί νέους μετανάστες», [*"Canada seeks new migrants,"*] *Empros*, April 21, 1956, 6.

³⁹ «Ποιοι δύναται να μεταναστεύσουν από την Ελλάδα εις τον Καναδά και με ποιαν σειράν προτεραιότητος», [*Who can immigrate from Greece to Canada and in what order of priority,*] *Makedonia*, November 8, 1957, 3.

⁴⁰ "We Need Skilled Immigrants," *The Globe and Mail*, August 11, 1961, 6.

⁴¹ "New Canadians Cool to New Rules," *Toronto Daily Star*, October 15, 1966, 5.

performance, for Italian girls were considered “primitive villagers,” coming from low-income families and lacking Canadian cleanliness standards and housekeeping methods.⁴² In 1956, the Department explored the alternative of Greece for the first time, and for the following ten years, more than 300 Greek girls were recruited annually as domestics.⁴³ The Greeks seemed to do a better job than the Italians. This was not because they were less “primitive” since they too generally lacked education and came from poor rural families, but because from 1956 to 1964, after permission of the Greek government, the ICEM provided training to young, unmarried women willing to emigrate to Canada.⁴⁴ The training involved teaching the future domestics English, sewing lessons, cooking lessons, and preparing them for their integration into Canadian society.⁴⁵ What concerned employers, though, was that even trained, often Greeks would not last long as domestic servants since soon they “gravitated towards other services or industry” searching for better-paid jobs.⁴⁶ In any case, it has been suggested that female domestics accounted for around 10% of Greek immigration to Canada between 1950 and 1970.⁴⁷

Greeks were not limited to sponsored immigration, however being invited by a Canadian relative seemed to be the most secure way to enter Canada. Greek immigrants could be sponsored not only by Canadian citizens but also by legal residents, making the process a bit easier considering that not many Greeks had relatives obtaining Canadian citizenship.⁴⁸ For some, the link with Canada existed before the war, but for the majority, it was created only recently by their relatives’ migration. With chain migration being a recurrent theme in the interviewee’s narrations, it is essential to stress the cases of women who became the pivot for the relocation of their relatives, adjusting sponsored policy to their and their family’s needs and combining it with skilled migration. Considering the demand for domestic servants and nurses, professions usually performed by female immigrants, Greek women consciously chose to follow

⁴² Franca Iacovetta, “‘Primitive Villagers and Uneducated Girls’: Canada Recruits Domestics from Italy, 1951-52,” *Canadian Woman Studies* 7, no. 4 (September 1, 1986): 14.

⁴³ Marilyn Barber, *Immigrant Domestic Servants in Canada*, Canada’s Ethnic Groups; Booklet No. 16 (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, 1991), 22–23.

⁴⁴ Anonymous, The services of ICEM, Immigrec, <https://virtual.immigrec.com/en#/r1/room-1-map>.

⁴⁵ Mousourou, *ibid.*, 180.

⁴⁶ “Greek Girls Trained as Domestics,” *The Globe and Mail*, March 12, 1959, 18.

⁴⁷ Peter Chimbos, “Occupational Distribution and Social Mobility of Greek-Canadian Immigrants,” *Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora* 14, no. 1–2 (1987): 134.

⁴⁸ Kelley and Trebilcock, *The Making of the Mosaic*, 328.

the ICEM training as a gateway to Canada. After spending the required period working as domestics or nurses, having acquired basic English, and being deemed Canadian residents, they would change their jobs and invite other family members to the country.⁴⁹ Similarly, families resorted to arranged marriages to offer other family members the opportunity of migration through the auspices of kinship. Daughters were getting engaged through correspondence to men already established in Canada, sometimes even without their knowledge. Following their invitation to the country by their future husband, they held a proper marriage soon after their arrival.⁵⁰ Now married, they too could invite their relatives, starting a new chain of migration. In both cases, young women were part of the family's economic strategy to expand its networks and obtain social mobility.⁵¹ Furthermore, sponsoring other family members and allowing them to enter Canada, Greek women played a rare role typically attributed to men, that of the migration initiators, initiating new migration chains. This role was a source of pride for many women, a pioneering status that followed them throughout their lives and was conveyed during their interviews.⁵² These cases of women reveal how existing policies could be exploited in favor of immigrants' interests.

At the same time, the legal framework the countries had established was not enough to discourage those determined to organize their migration illegally. As Canada's immigration policy practically excluded Greeks who did not meet the respective criteria, there were cases of people who reached Canada as sailors and extended their stay in the country as long as possible until they were deported or managed to obtain Canadian citizenship. Greece being traditionally a country with a strong shipping and maritime labor sector, the sea often provided a solution to economic hardships. This did not change after the Second World War, when becoming a sailor continued to be appealing to people, particularly from the more impoverished Greek islands. The story of the anonymous interviewee from Crete, who, when his ship reached Canada in 1964, left it and just did not reembarc, was not uncommon as there must have been a few hundred similar cases over the period we examine.⁵³ Sailors like

⁴⁹ Agape Gournis, 737, June 5, 2018, Immigrec.

⁵⁰ Chrisoula Constantinidis, 550, June 12, 2017, Immigrec.

⁵¹ Barber, *ibid.*, 23.

⁵² Noula Mina, "Taming and Training Greek 'Peasant Girls' and the Gendered Politics of Whiteness in Postwar Canada: Canadian Bureaucrats and Immigrant Domestics, 1950s–1960s," *The Canadian Historical Review* 94, no. 4 (2013): 532.

⁵³ G.A., Landed immigrant, Immigrec, <https://virtual.immigrec.com/en#/r1/room-1-map>.

him were called ship-jumpers and often were not eager to return home. In 1962 James Dimitrios and his friend Anthony Gaitanis after hiding from the Canadian authorities for more than two years, decided to surrender because “they were tired of being exploited by employers” who knew that in 1959 they had jumped off their ship when they reached Montreal. They reported that there were at least 1,000 similar cases of ship-jumpers in the greater Montreal area alone.⁵⁴ The phenomenon was not limited to Canada nor appeared for the first time after the war. Alexander Kitroeff, studying ship-jumpers’ history in the U.S., writes that cases of deserters from Greek ships frequently featured before the Second World War in the American press. The *New York Times* in 1942 reported that out of 8,000 seamen who reached the U.S. illegally, around 3,000 were Greek sailors, while after the war, the number of ship-jumpers sharply increased.⁵⁵

The cases of Greeks arriving legally as tourists in Canada but extending their stay were similar to that of ship-jumpers. The shortcut of a brief visit to Canada that was never meant to be temporary was pretty straightforward. After issuing a visitor visa in Greece, at the Canadian port of entry, immigrants had to convince the border service officer about the reason for their visit. Typically, tourists had to provide a roundtrip ticket and 250 dollars cash to fund their trip. Of course, their stay was to be longer than the permitted, if not permanent. An anonymous interviewee who followed the above procedure explains that after arriving in Montreal as a tourist, he settled there while evading the police. He believed the Canadian authorities were not actively searching for individuals staying longer than their permitted duration as long as they were “hardworking” and had a “normal life,” like himself.⁵⁶ Although the risk of deportation was always present, Greeks from disadvantaged backgrounds were willing to accept it and seize the opportunity. Despite the potential consequences, both interviews and articles about ship-jumpers and tourists suggested that it was easy to avoid detection because Canada was rewarding diligent and peaceful immigrants.

In conclusion, this paper highlights the interplay between migration policies and immigrant agency in shaping the emigration movement. Migration policies establish

⁵⁴ Eric Geiger, “1,000 Ship-Jumpers in Montreal, Officials Told by 2 Greek Sailors,” *The Globe and Mail*, January 27, 1962, 1.

⁵⁵ Alexander Kitroeff, “Ship Jumpers: An Unspoken Chapter of Greek Immigration to the United States,” *The Pappas Post*, April 16, 2020, <https://pappaspost.com/ship-jumpers-an-unspoken-chapter-of-greek-immigration-to-the-united-states/>.

⁵⁶ Anonymous, Round trip ticket, Immigrec, <https://virtual.immigrec.com/en#/r1/room-1-map>.

the legal framework for people planning their relocation, which can significantly impact their migration decisions and trajectories. The Canadian government built its migration policy according to the country's economic and political needs. In contrast, the Greek ones did not form a uniform framework around it, encouraging emigration to release the accumulating socio-economic pressure. However, the way immigrants understood the legal framework, placed themselves within it, and navigated through it could not be shaped by any government or law. This becomes evidenced by immigrants who found ways to circumvent legal restrictions by exploiting sponsored systems, like domestics or brides, or entering Canada as sailors or tourists, extending their stays beyond the permitted duration. Such examples demonstrate that the law does not exist independently but that its comprehension and interpretation are equally crucial to its conception. Despite special regulations and legal frameworks, there is no prescribed path for migration. Immigrants, rather than being victims, had the ability to make strategic decisions to navigate through legal restrictions and find alternative means of achieving their migration goals.

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