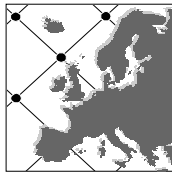MANNHEIMER
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Foreign Wives in the Wake of Tourism. Creating identity on an island in the Greek archipelago

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Arbeitspapiere

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Editorial Note:

Merete Hellum is a doctoral student at the Department of Sociology, Gothenburg University, Sweden. She is writing a doctoral thesis on sociology of culture related to tourism and the rising number of foreign wives entitled 'Symbols, Culture and Gender in the Wake of Tourism. History of Ten Foreign Wives' Creation of Identity on a Greek Island'. Major parts of the field work for this study was carried out during a 6-month stay on the island, supported by the European Commission's TMR programme for young researchers 'Family and the Welfare State in Europe'. The present text is the first version of the empirical work.

Abstract

The study relies on fieldwork carried out during autumn 1997 and spring 1988 on an island in the Greek archipelago. The study focuses on women from northern Europe and overseas who are married to or cohabiting with Greek men and on family formation in terms of creation of identities in a new environment. What happens in the process as these women evolve a meaning and understanding of their situations? How do they make identities in the new environment, and what kinds of symbols are significant for their creation of collective and individual identity? I also ask some questions related to the theoretical approach: is it fruitful to use the terms imaginary place, time/space, similarity and differences in different relations and discourses for an understanding of creation of identity? And are emotions part of this creation of identity and if they are, what can the emotions tell us about how the 'foreign wives' create similarities and differences? When using the terms described above it is possible to analyse the material and find out how people in a new environment create *imagined places*, which become important for a creation of both collective identity and individual identity (self-identify). Emotions are a part of the imagined place of the past, emotions used in the meeting with 'the other'. Apart from the theoretical experiment, which turned out to be fruitful, the central empirical findings are as follows:

It is problematic to talk about one process of understanding as there are complex strategies for these women's creation of identity. It is more precise to talk about different processes depending on the degree of network membership, age, education, values, norms, lifestyle and the individual's personality; however, it is possible to identify some similarities. Distinguishing themselves from 'the other' and 'otherness', represented by Greekness, is an important part of these women's strategies. In this process perceptions and emotions are important factors in their creation of their own identities, both as a group and as individuals. Localism in a broader sense becomes a feeling within people, and in the interaction with 'the other' or 'the otherness' the localism becomes clearer and therefore important in their way of creating identity. In this process of understanding, symbols of Greekness connected to the body and the body's behaviour, traditions and the Greek Orthodox religion are significant for the way the women distinguish themselves from the Greeks. Festivals such as Christmas, shared experiences as women together with a native language or at least a language they command become symbols of closeness and collective memories. The transformation from tourists to foreign wives can be problematic, maybe because of the 'tourist theatre', but also because of being outsiders, with different ways of defining family, family obligations, femininity and masculinity.

Content

Introduction

It can be argued that the world is shrinking, in that it has become more interconnected. Changes in the transportation system are part of the growing interconnection of the world, as is the globalization of media, such as television. Migration and tourism are linked to the interconnection of the world, and may in turn create new attitudes and values that can undermine traditional values connected to the family, sexuality, the body, and the relation between femininity and masculinity (Giddens 1992, Bhabha 1994, Massey 1994, Featherstone, Lash & Robertson 1995, Wison R. & Dissanyake (eds.) 1996, Castells 1996, 1997).

This project addresses aspects of culturally mixed marriages in the context of international mobility. There is little information about mixed marriages, both in terms of quantitative data and of studies related to how culturally mixed marriages create changes on the cultural level in a society, and how foreign women[1] create their own identities in a new environment. This project is a case study of ten foreign wives from northern Europe and overseas, married to Greek men, living on an island in the Greek archipelago. The aim of the study is to focus on the foreign wives from northern Europe and overseas who are married to Greek men and follow the process of family formation in terms of creating identities in a new environment. What happens in the process to a meaning and understanding of their situation? How do they make identities in the new environment, and what kinds of symbols are significant for their creation of identities?

The paper is arranged as follows: first, a short historical overview of population movements in Greece is presented together with tourism and its development in Greece and on the island in question, then the rising tendency in the number of mixed marriages on the island is described. Under the heading '*Foreign Wives Living on the Island',* I present the results of my first investigation of the foreign wives living on the island from which the sample of ten foreign wives is drawn. This description is the background for the main study. Next, the main points of the theoretical framework are described, and theoretical emphases, which are used as analytical tools for the empirical material, are discussed. The different methods used during the fieldwork and their inherent problems are discussed under the heading *Methods*. Then the Greek island in question is described, focusing on the different lifestyles during the winter and the summer. The term *kseni* (outsider), and what it means for the foreign wives are discussed. The next section, '*Family, Kinship and Friendship'*, focuses on problems for the couple related to family issues. In the next section the foreign wives' networks are discussed. Networks are important in their creation of identity. Different discourses of manhood and womanhood, which in turn underlie the gossip around the foreign wives, are considered. In the last section of the working paper, I discuss the importance of emotions in questions related to creation of identity and self-identity in a new environment.

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1 When I refer to the foreign women as a group I include both the officially married and the cohabiting women. There is only one cohabiting woman in the sample of ten women and I include her as a foreign wife too.

Background

Population Movements in Greece. A Short Historical Overview

Population movements, both immigration and emigration, are a major social factor in modern Greek history. Before the Second World War, Greek emigration was mainly to the USA, Canada, Australia and the eastern Mediterranean. After the war Greek emigration was largely within Europe, with Germany as the main destination. Many of these migrants have now returned to Greece.

In the 1960s a second major migration occurred. Because of the great demand for labour in industries in northern Europe, people were recruited from the eastern Mediterranean, mainly from ex-Yugoslavia, Italy, Greece and Turkey, to work in factories. However, since the early 1970s the trend has reversed and a large number of migrants have returned to their home countries. Moreover, there is a new trend in migration to Greece: in the1970s migrants from the Third World started to arrive, and this trend has continued into the 1980s and the 1990s. Since the collapse of the former Warsaw Pact, Greece has experienced a flow of immigrants from such nations as Russia, Romania, Poland, Ukraine, and recently Albania (Teperoglou & Tzortzopoulou 1996, Maratou-Alipranti 1996).

In addition to all the movement to and from the outside world, the 1970 and 1980s were distinguished by internal migration from rural areas to urban centres. Population movements have had a major impact on all aspects of social formation including the institution of the family (Moussourou 1995).

Population movements out of or into Greece, as well as economic developments increase the number of mixed marriages, which have not been investigated to a major extent. These mixed marriages are significant when it comes to questions about changes in interpersonal relations within the institution of the family. The rising number of mixed marriages on the Greek island I studied is not only connected to the development of tourism, but recently to the increasing number of migrants from former Warsaw-Pact countries.

Tourism can be considered as a type of population movement as well. During the last decade the academics discussions about population movements and mobility have led to a growing number of questions about both the influence of tourism on the society and the relation between the tourist and the locals. Many of these questions are formulated in economic, social and cultural terms. However, questions about how tourism and the integration of Europe in terms of the labour force have led to new family forms, such as mixed marriages, have been only briefly discussed (Fox 1977, Travis 1982, Mathieson & Wall 1982, Inskeep 1987, Urry 1990, Craik 1991, Shields 1991, Harrison 1992, Kinnaird, Kothari & Hall 1994, Kousis 1989/96).

Greece is one of the largest recipients of tourists in Europe. The number of tourists visiting Greece has continued to increase from the tourism explosion of 1974-75 to the present, and today around 9

million people visit the country every year. Charter tourism and regular air traffic from Sweden to Greece, for example, has grown from around 225,000 people in 1990 to 460,000 in 1995.[2] The island in question is one example where this expansion has taken place. When the island opened its international airport in 1987, larger airplanes were able to land, and commercial tourism accelerated. Today around 50 planes land at the island's airport every week during the tourist season for package vacations, mostly in Limani, a small village in the south of the island. In 1996, a total of 165,000 people visited the island from various countries. Of these about 29,000 visitors were from Sweden, 9,000 from Norway, 16,500 from Germany, and 15,000 from Austria. Tourists also visit from Denmark, Finland and England, but these countries have not reported statistics on destinations within a country.[3] Furthermore, ferry traffic is not included in the statistics. Many young people travel around as backpackers and arrive at this destination by sea.

New Family Patterns

In the wake of both emigration and tourism, family patterns have changed. Many sociologists and anthropologists dealing with family questions point out different aspects of family issues, connecting them to changes in socio-economic structures and/or population movements. However, most researchers continue to define the nuclear family as if it contained two heterosexual people of the same ethnic and national origin. It is even more amazing that sociologists dealing with migration do not investigate or at least mention mixed marriages when they analyse new family forms.

It is well known that there is a connection between socio-economic changes in a society and new family patterns (Björnberg 1980, Segalen 1986, Giddens 1992). One of the common social and cultural[4] changes in family patterns in a contemporary society is the increase in mixed marriages. Within a tourist-oriented society the number of such marriage increases. In a 1982 study of a village on Crete, in which the inhabitants today have largely changed their income base due to tourism, Kousis shows how family patterns changed from 1950 to 1982. In the pre-tourism period (1950-1964) 90% of the wives came from within the village. By 1982 the rate was 51%. At the same time, the rate for mixed marriages with women from West Germany, England or other European countries increased from zero in the pre-tourism period, to 9% in 1982 (Kousis 1989/1996:229).

In the wake of tourism on the Greek island studied here, marriage between Greek men and foreign women has risen, and it is possible to connect this phenomenon directly to the increasing number of tourists visiting the island. It is possible that the rising number of tourists leads to mixed marriages between foreign men and Greek women as well, but this perspective is not included in this study, basically because it is not as common as the other way around (to my knowledge only three men from abroad who are married to Greek women are living on the island). According to the records of the City

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2 Table 2.10 in SIKA, Luftfartsverket 1991 and 1995, Luftfartsverkets tryckeri, Norrköping, 1992 and 1996. Greece is ranked fourth among tourist destinations of Swedes.
3 Information from the Greek Government Tourist Agency in Stockholm, 22 April 1996.
4 Cultural, culture: 'meanings, values and attitudes shared more or less by a particular group of people'.

Hall of Limani (907 inhabitants in 1991) and Chora (1,629 inhabitants in 1991), there have been 53 marriages between Greek men and foreign women since 1979. In 1979 only two foreign women married Greek men on the island. Between 1980 and 1989 there were 11 marriages and following the tourism explosion in the 1990s, 40 marriages.

Table 1. Mixed marriages registered in the villages of Chora and Limani

Village	Chora		Limani		Total Marriages		Ratio of mixed marriages
	Northern Europe incl. UK and overseas	Former Warsaw Pact	Northern Europe incl. UK and overseas	Former Warsaw Pact	Chora	Limani	
Year							
1979	2	0	0	0	13	1	14%
1980–89	11	0	0	0	143	27	6%
1990–97	19	6	8	7	472	77	7%

* Within total marriages are both marriages between Greek/Greek living other places in Greece, foreign people who comes to the island just for marriage together with local Greeks married to each other. From the middle of the 1980s it has been the island has been a popular place for marriage.

Since 1994, there has been a new tendency in mixed marriages. Before 1994 such marriages were predominantly between Greek men and women from northern parts of Europe, including Great Britain, and from overseas. Today the mixed marriages between Greek men and foreign women tend to involve women from former Warsaw-Pact countries. According to the Limani village records, seven marriages between Greek men and women from former Warsaw-Pact countries took place since 1994. Marriages registered in Chora show the same tendency. Before 1994 no marriages between Greek men and women from former Warsaw-Pact countries were registered. After 1994 there were six, with four in 1997.

Foreign Wives Living on the Island; Described in Quantitative Terms

As mentioned above, there is little quantitative data about mixed marriages,[5] which created a problem when putting together a significant sample of foreign wives to conduct studies of life stories. Consequently, the first thing I had to do was find out how many foreign wives lived on the island. I used the method of 'snowballing' combined with official records from two villages' City Halls to find as many foreign wives as possible. Altogether 75 foreign wives live on the southern part of the island.

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5   There are different problems involved when it comes to statistics on mixed marriages. Sometimes a couple marries in the wife's country of origin and the marriage will be registered there and not in Greece, where the couple actually live. The couple can also choose to get married in the husband's village of origin or another place where they do not live. In these cases the marriage will be registered and recorded in the community where it took place.

To make the collection of the data on foreign wives easier I used a schedule of variables. These included the ages of the foreign wives and their husbands, what kind of work both perform, the husbands' place of origin within Greece, the wives' nationality, whether they had children and how many, whether the couple lived full-time on the island, and whether the couple was cohabiting or officially married.

The following text is based on analysis of the 75 foreign wives living on the island, and provides the background to the main object of this study, which is foreign wives' creation of identity.

Marital Status by Age of Partners

Close to one-third of the couples are cohabiting. Most of them are young: under age 30 for the foreign women and 35 for the men.

Table 2. Marital status by age of partners.

Marital Status	Cohabiting				Married				Total			
	Female		Male		Female		Male		Female		Male	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Age												
20–30	54	12	23	5	29	15	12	6	36	27	15	11
31–35	28	6	54	12	49	26	32	17	43	32	39	29
36–40	14	3	18	4	19	10	38	20	18	13	32	24
41 and older	4	1	4	1	3	2	18	10	3	3	14	11
Total	100	22	100	22	100	53	100	53	100	75	100	75

Fifty-three of the 75 couples are officially married, and 22 are cohabiting. Out of the 22 couples, 17 include Greek men not originally from the island. Most of the couples with children are married: only two couples with children are cohabiting. Both women in these cohabiting couples are from Germany. Among those cohabiting, 54% of the women are between 20 and 30 years, while the men are some years older: 54% of the men are between 31 and 35 years of age. Among the married couples, 78% of the women are between 20 and 35, and 70% of the men are between 31 and 40. The average age of the female cohabitants is 31.6 years (29.8) and that of the male cohabitants is 33.7 years (32.9).[6] The average age of the married women is 33.1 years, and that of the husbands 37 years. Combining both groups, the average age of the women is 32.5 years, and that of the men 36 years.

Most of the couples (64%) have been together for four to ten years; 75% of the cohabiting couples have been together for two to six years, and 47% of the married couples have been together for four to ten years. The trend is clear and can be connected to the development of tourism. Only 18% of the

couples have been together for more than ten years, which means that the couples met each other before the tourism explosion on the island after 1987. The fact that only 18% of the couples have known each other for more than ten years can be explained both by tourism and by divorce.[7]

It is not surprising that the women's ages are concentrated between 20 and 35, and the men's between 31 and 40. It is possible to connect the age rates directly to the development of tourism on the island. However, it is problematic to claim that both the age of the couples and the length of their relationship is just an effect of tourism. Tourism cannot be considered an isolated phenomenon, but is rather part of globalization, which means that factors such as changes in transport systems and media have to be taken into consideration when it comes to questions about the increase in mixed marriages in a particular society.

Nationalities and Places of Origin

Women from Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and the Netherlands make up 33% of the foreign wives and cohabiting partners on the island, Canadians and Americans 20%, English and Irish 19%, Scandinavians15%, Australians 9% and others 4%. Mainly women from Germany, Canada, and England live in mixed marriages on the island. There is no connection between the volume of charter tourists from a particular country and the number of foreign wives living on the island: the most tourists visiting the island are from Sweden, followed by Germany, but Scandinavian women are only 15% of the wives and cohabitants. One reason could be that many of the women met their Greek partners when both were travelling as tourists, or the women met their husbands elsewhere such as in their own country. Some women also met their partners when they were working on the island, but usually these women were tourists in the past (Hellum 1993). Male migration from Greece to Germany, for example, to find work may mean that German women met their Greek partners in Germany. Another reason may be that Scandinavian women find it more difficult to live in Greece with their partner and are more likely to divorce or return to their own countries before marrying.

Thirty-six percent of the husbands are originally from the island, 34% are from Athens or its surroundings, 13% are from the north of Greece, 12% from the Greek mainland and 5% from other Greek islands or from overseas. Thus nearly two-thirds of the Greek men who are married to foreign women have their place of origin in other parts of Greece rather than the island, either Athens or its surroundings, Thessaloniki, Drama or villages in the north, the Peloponnese or north-west Greece, or islands such as Rhodes and Cyprus. Two of the men can be considered immigrants, since their parents emigrated to the United States, Canada or Australia during the migration wave in the 1950s and 1960s. Nevertheless, both have been living in Greece and on the island for at least the last 17 years.

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6   The couple whose age is 50 for the man and 63 for the woman is included in the first figure and excluded in the second figure.

7   Divorce is not investigated in this study. Statistics show, however, that marriages between women from northern Europe and Greek men often end in divorce. The divorce rate among Swedes is 56.4%, whereas among couples in which only the wife is Swedish the divorce rate is 86.5% (SCB, 1995*, 'Födda, döda, civilståndsändringar',* Befolknings-statistik, part 4).

Why do men from off the island marry foreign women to a larger degree than men from the island? An explanation may be that men from other places are also considered foreigners or 'outsiders' and are not full members of the society either.

Occupations of the Women and their Partners

As mentioned above, Greek men come to the island during the tourist season to find work. Some of these started their own businesses on the island and chose to live there the whole year. Most of the men married to foreign women are occupied in businesses related to tourist activities and have direct contact with tourists during the tourist season. Only 17% do not have direct contact with tourists in their occupations.

Table 3. Occupations of the foreign women and their partners.

Sex	Female		Male	
	%	N	%	N
Occupation				
housewives*	28	21		
employed in tourist-oriented business	37	28	20	15
own business directly related to tourists	9	7	45	34
own business with husband/wife	14	10	14	10
buildings own + work + fishermen*			8	6
academics*	8	6	4	3
public services			4	3
others*	4	3	5	4
Total	100	75	100	75

* not directly in contact with tourists.

Thirty-seven percent of the foreign wives[8] are employed in different tourism-oriented businesses, 14% own the businesses together with their husbands and 9% own and run their own business. Women using their academic education in their work are represented with 8%. In this category there are teachers (mostly in languages), one psychologist and one data engineer. One foreign wife is retired, one is an artist and one works for the veterinary on the island. Most of the women who are basically housewives have children under age six. Other housewives help their husbands in their businesses during the tourist season in addition to their housewife obligations.

None of the Greek men consider themselves homemakers. Nearly two-thirds of the Greek men are occupied in tourism-related occupations such as barmen, gift and jewellery shop owners, or restaurant and bar owners. Wage earners related to tourism activities represent 20% compared to the 37% of wages earned by the foreign wives. Furthermore, the Greek men owning their own businesses directly

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8   Female immigrants: foreign women from the northern parts of Europe, Canada, United States, and Australia.

related to tourism activities make up 45% compared with the foreign wives' 9%. The Greek husbands who work as barmen or own their own bar make up 21% of the total. If the restaurant owners and workers are added this figure is 38%. Two of the Greek men are fishermen; one is co-operating with his wife's restaurant in his profession; one is a civil engineer and has his own office; one is a psychologist and works together with his wife; and one is an archaeologist.

The Sample

From the initial list of 75 foreign women, described above, ten were chosen for case studies. When the sample was chosen I wanted to cover as many *differences* as possible, with regard to nationality, ages, marital status, how long they been living together, presence of children, children's age, how long they been living on the island and both partners' occupations. The sample turned out as follows:

Five of the women are originally from Great Britain, three are from Scandinavia and two are from Australia. They are between the ages of 27 and 42 years and have been living together with their partners between 4 and 18 years. Four of the women describe themselves as housewives, three are employees, two own their own business and one owns and runs a business together with her husband. Of the men, two come originally from the island, three from big cities and five from small towns or villages on the mainland. Three of the men own their own restaurant or bar, two work in the public service, two are employees in the restaurant/bar business, one is a shop-owner, one works in construction and one owns a shop together with his wife. Out of the sample only one woman is not officially married to her partner. Both the women and men have various class backgrounds and education. Only one woman does not have any children.

According to the background data most of the women on the southern part of the island are from Germany, and of course I wanted to have at least one represented in the study. It turned out to be a problem, not only because of my lack of fluency in German, but also because the German women I asked did not want to participate. One central point when narratives are conducted is that the participant's native language must be used: not only will the participant feel more relaxed, but she or he will also be able to describe her or his life without translating her or his experiences. Therefore, I conducted the interviews in the participant's native language. Conversations have been conducted in three languages: Norwegian, Swedish and English.

In order to protect the participants as much as possible, the working paper is arranged by themes that came up in the conversations. The presentation focuses on different pictures given by the participants of the theme in question. All the names used in the presentation, both of persons and villages, are pseudonyms. Some non-critical details have been altered, especially when it comes to conversations between the foreign women about other foreign women in the environment.

Theoretical Framework

Identity is a term that has come to be used in many different ways. In literature about identity the term is combined with other terms, for example cultural identity (and even multicultural identity), social identity, personal identity, sexual identity, ethnic identity, local identity, or collective identity (see e.g. Weigert 1986, Butler 1990, Giddens 1992, Calhoun 1994, van Dijk 1998, Hylland Eriksen 1996, Featherstone 1996, Thörn 1996).

Identity is a problematic term, but analytically can be divided into two parts: on the one hand collective identity is linked to interactions with others or 'the other' rather than within the individual itself. *Self-identity* or personal identity[9], on the other hand, is connected to the individual's own self-project. The distinction points out a difference between collective and self-identity. Self-identity is a mental representation of a person's self as a unique human being with personal experiences and biography. This is represented in accumulated mental models, which are defined by van Dijk as 'representations in personal memory of events or as the term "episodic memory" suggests, of episodes' (van Dijk 1998:79). Episodes in the past construct an abstract self, often in interaction with others. The mental representation of (social) self as a collection of group membership, and the identification processes that are related to such membership representations, and may be assumed to depend on a comparison between the personal and social self. If the membership in a group is in line with a person's self-project, with reference to norms, attitudes, values and resources as a group (material goals and resources), identification may be more or less strong within and with the other group members. As van Dijk points out, establishing groups and how persons experience group membership depends on how strong the bonds are in the interaction between the social and personal self, between the group's 'cement' and the individual's degree of belonging to the group. This is a flexible process, which means that individuals' relations to the group and the group's relation to individuals can change over time (van Dijk 1998:118-121). In the process of group building and group identity and creation of individual's own personal self, consist on many levels at the same time, through similarities and differences. Self-identity in this way of thinking means that a person is identical to himself: the struggle for a kit to hold together a person's biographic story. Identity as a group then refers to a similar idea or ideology or belonging (van Dijk 1998).

Group identity, for example 'outsiders' or in this case 'foreign wives', is also defined from outside. An identity can be ascribed to a group or a person in a particular context. Groups and/or individuals can identify themselves with this kind of externally-defined identity as well (Goffman 1961a, 1961b).

As mentioned above, there are two components, similarities and differences, that in fact are central for a human being in the creation of self-identity. From a sociological point of view it is important to point out that a person can never create a self-identity without a context. It is in the interaction with 'the other', which refers to both the interaction with other human beings and to 'things' such as environ-

ment, place, situated situations[10], myths and symbols. In the process of creation (which is not established) of self-identity, life experiences are of significance. It is through experiences that we discover the world and make some kind of sense out of life. But experiences are connected to situated situations, which means that the situated situation is important for understanding how individuals take care of their experiences and conduct themselves in the process of creating self-identity.

Cultural and/or Local Identity

Bhabha (1994) points out that it is problematic to talk about cultural (national cultures in a state of flux) differences in the world today. Maybe it is more correct to talk about different forms of identification and constructions of identities that are invested with different implications. The cultural level in this sense is linked to the individual level, e.g. how a person constitutes the 'self' or 'selves' in the world today. In contrast to Bhabha, Featherstone (1996) argues that it is possible to talk about cultural differences, but it is important to reconstruct the term 'cultural'. He claims that the interconnection of the world (also called globalization) creates 'localism', a term to which he gives a new meaning. It can be argued that the process of interconnection of the world creates difficulties for individuals in handling the increasing levels of cultural complexity, which leads to a desire to return home as a central theme, whether the home is a real place of origin or imaginary and symbolic (Featherstone 1996).

Generally the terms localism, local and locality have been associated with the notion of a particular space with a set of close-knit social relationships based upon kinship ties and length of residence. Usually the assumption is that physical space is integrated with a cultural identity, which is both enduring and unique, something that forms a particular community with its own unique local culture. But culture or locality can be imagined. Memories, sentiments and myths are also connected to a time/space perspective. Who has not heard older generations refer to the myth of 'the good old days' or 'when I was young…' Every generation invests in a form of nostalgia in which the past seems to be simpler, with more and direct relations, emotional fulfilment and a past where coherence and order were established. In other words, when people create their self-identity the time/space perceptive is crucial as well (Featherstone 1996). The assumption, argues Featherstone, is

> that one's identity and those of one's significant others are anchored in a specific local, a physical space which becomes *emotionally* invested and sedimented with symbolic associations so that becomes a place. (Featherstone 1996:51)

'Place' can be connected to a psychical place and its symbols, but the important thing is that this place in a time/space dimension is *imagined*: a place made up of individuals or group of individuals.

Nevertheless, when individuals create self-identities they always do so in a social context. One way of creating identities or constituting self-identities is to distinguish them from 'the other'. 'Others' can be

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9   I use the term 'self-identity' instead of 'personal identity' because the latter refers more to a biological/psychological approach than to a socially-constructed identity.

10 'Situated situation' means a defined situation or event's specific surroundings or context where the situation is placed.

representative of people in themselves, but also of symbols and signs of a particular local place. The local can be imagined, connected to a physical place or connected to a time/space dimension (Featherstone 1996).

The process of creating identity not only consists of distinguishing 'the other', or more specifically 'the dissimilar'. Identity even refers to commonness. In this work collective memories, signs, symbols, and belonging are crucial for the constitution of identity.

The nation, a concept developed and constructed in the eighteenth century, can be considered an *imagined community*, because it provides a quasi-belonging and fellowship which is attached to those who share a particular symbolic place and space, symbolic in the way that the geographic place is invested and sedimented with symbolic sentiments, which have been invested by people as collective memories that have sufficient emotional power to generate a sense of communality. *Nation* in this sense represents a set of more or less coherent images and memories which deal with the question of the difference and distinctiveness of a people (Featherstone 1996:53).

To sum up: frequent and regular contact with groups of significant 'others' makes it possible to sustain a common culture. When people make their identities, and it becomes even clearer if individuals live in a new context, they refer to both 'the other' and 'the common'. It can be argued that distinguishing against 'the other' *creates* 'the common', which means that people use the mechanism of distinguishing as collective memories, discussed and twisted in a defined group.

Emotions, a Part of Creating Identity

As Featherstone points out, emotions are part of belonging and, as I will argue, are of consequence for how people distinguish ' the dissimilar'. As Calhoun and Solomon point out:

> Emotions are often treated as matters of 'instinct' as vestiges of more primitive past, as aspects of our biology as much as our psychology, unlearned and undetectable. But insofar emotions involve concepts and believe, they may also be learned in a particular culture and, perhaps, learned somewhat differently in different cultures (Calhoun & Solomon 1984:33).

In a traditional Cartesian philosophy, emotions have been reduced to the body. When separating the head from the body, the rational thoughts from the irrational emotions, we get a dichotomy that excludes the interaction between thoughts and emotions. Therefore emotions have been associated with personal 'embodied' experiences which should not be expressed in the public sphere, and as a consequence, less avoidable for socio-cultural analyses. But as several authors argue, emotions are not only personally embodied and private, they are a part of public life. This means that emotions are given social praxis that affects human beings' social behaviour and social relations. As a result, emotions are a meaningful part of how people construct and make their social experience of everyday life intelligible (Calhoun & Solomon 1984, Rosaldo 1990, Solomon 1990, Abu-Lughod & Lutz 1990, Andersson 1994).

Thus, emotions can be both physical and an experience for an individual. But as Solomon argues (1990:250), this is not fundamental for the understanding of our emotions. Emotions are an experience of interpreting the world in a given way. The reality exists for people through a conciseness which remains as a result of an embodied experience, an experience that is not only verbal and/or rational, but also consists of emotions, expectations, impressions, imagination, and memories (Burner 1986:4-5).

Fundamentally, emotions are feelings of pleasure and discomfort, which are difficult to verbalize, because they are the most vague perceptions. In the beginning of a life cycle, perceptions of pleasure and discomfort can be rejected by the individuals, or the individuals can be aware of the perceptions, interpret them and use them in the future (Engelsrud 1995).

To make a distinction between bodies that belong to the individuals themselves and the social gaze bodies in some way designed for, together with the bodies' interaction with society and within the individuals themselves, Bourdieu introduces the terms 'the real body' and 'the idealized body'. Emotions, experiences, and memories are embodied in the real body. On the other hand, it is in interaction with 'other bodies' that 'the real body' is exposed to the social gaze and becomes 'the idealized body', to which 'the real body' reacts. Signs, symbols, and myths are part of how people treat 'the idealized body', and how people treat the person becomes embodied in 'the real body' and turns into experiences, of which emotions are a part. Questions related to the embodied emotions are also related to the *experiences of emotions*, such as pleasure/discomfort, shame/honour and embarrassment/relaxation (Bourdieu 1977/1990, Merleau-Ponty 1962, Lilleaas 1994, Widerberg 1995).

The Gender Dimension

Gender[11] has not been central in the theoretical perspective discussed above, neither in the theoretical perspective of globalization and localism, nor in theories using emotions as a point of departure. But as Kinnaird et al. (1994:24) point out, tourism, which is a part of globalization, is constructed out of one gendered society visiting another. Gender relations both inform and are informed by the social practices of all societies. Gender relations are therefore defined and redefined over time and in different localities. Gender relations are about power and control. Social desires, traditions and perceptions, which are all gendered, are a part of tourism and it can be argued, a part of a *gendered* interconnection of the world and a *gendered* localism. Localism in a broader sense must therefore be different for women than for men, which means that women and men emphasize different aspects of localism when they create their self-identity. Emotions may be the same for both men and women, but the crux is that experiences of emotions differ, which means that the socially situated events (social interaction) where the emotions arise are different.

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11 By gender I mean both a system of beliefs, divided into symbols of masculinity and femininity, and to human beings as divided into men and women. I am also aware of the contemporary postmodern discussion about gender, in which the term becomes more and more problematic.

When people move to a new environment, they leave not only their native cultural and social complexity behind, but also gendered customs. In other words, in the interaction with 'the other' and 'the dissimilar' it is not only a question of different localities meeting each other, it is also a question of differences, that are gendered. It can therefore be argued that men and women have different strategies and different ways of creating identities in a new environment.

Is it fruitful to use the terms imaginary place, time/space, similarity and difference in different relations and discourses (a term which is going to be discussed later in this paper) for an understanding of creation of identity? And are emotions part of this creation of identity and if they are, what can emotions tell us about how the 'foreign wives' create similarities and differences?

Methods

During my stay in Greece I visited my field location three times. My first stay on the island was from mid-September until mid-October 1997. The next period was from the beginning of November until mid-December 1997, and the last period from the end of January until the end of February 1998. Altogether I was on the island for three months over a period of six months. Between the times in the field I lived in Athens, and I used the time there to analyse, do library studies, and to write. There is an explanation for this way of working. According to Prieur (1994), it is important to alternate between closeness and distance in fieldwork. After a while in the field, the interaction with the people you study and the information starts to become common sense and you are not able to see new perspectives. One way of discovering this phenomenon is to look in the researcher's diary. In the beginning of the fieldwork everything is written down. But when you start to look at the information as common sense, the notes in your book become shorter and not as sophisticated. Then it is time to take a break, to get some distance from the field and to reflect on the situation, find new themes and new questions and then return to the field to continue the work. People are different, including researchers. Maybe the alternating between the field and another place would not fit another researcher, but for me it was a perfect way of working.

To understand the situation of the foreign wives, I used the method of narrating and participant observation. Through the narration of individuals it is possible to grasp the cultural complexities which people live in, together with the individual's own opinion of their situation (Burner 1986 and Gullestad 1996). Narratives are also gendered, i.e. the narratives of women and men are shown to be different both with regard to how they are constructed (the form of the narrative) and the content of the stories (Personal Narrative Group 1989, Abu-Lughod 1993, Ehn 1992 and Gullestad 1996). When life stories are compared with each other patterns of equality and differences can be discerned (Peacock 1984).

In working with narrative as a method, interpretation is the key. When people tell their narratives they also *interpret* the memories and experiences of their life. Simultaneously, a process of reflection for the person begins. To grasp the perspective of interpreting and the process of reflection in life-story narrating, I wanted to use a tape recorder. However, this turned out to be a problem. Many of the par-

ticipants did not want to be recorded, and the main reason for that I believe is that the foreign wives live close to each other. They know more or less everybody, and the networks they attempt to construct are fragile. I also soon discovered that there was a lot of gossiping going on, and living in a mixed marriage on a small tourist island turned out to be a delicate subject. Therefore some of the life stories are taped and some are not. Many of the participants were curious about the other participants and wanted to know who they were. They were also curious about the others' opinions. Of course I informed the participants about the condition of confidentiality, and if they wanted to know something about somebody else I referred to this condition.

Life stories do not stand alone, but must be considered within a context. Therefore, participant observations combined with life stories must be carried out in order to determine the interaction between the foreign wives' stories and the context. I spent a lot of time with the foreign wives. I went to arranged coffee mornings, to the playground with their children, helped them with daily routines, went to dinner parties, out for drinks in bars, walks on the beach and I dropped in for coffee during the day. During the coffee breaks in the mornings or afternoons there was a lot of gossiping. Through the gossiping and more informal conversations I learned a lot about the everyday life of the foreign wives. In addition, I also went to the typical male sphere: the coffee shop where just the men socialized. Once I went to a 'bordello' veiled as a bouzouki club with some Greek men, which I have to admit was an experience to remember.

As a researcher I participated in my own empirical work, mainly because I am a foreign woman who lived in the same environment as my informants, although not as a married woman. From my point of view the researcher is always a part of the empirical work. He or she can never be objective.[12] Instead of denying my own feelings in different situations, I wanted to do something positive about it. When I had a feeling about something during my six months in Greece I always wrote it down. In the interaction with the foreign wives during our conversations I also started to remember episodes from my own past, episodes that of course are a part of this study as well. I discussed my own feelings in different situations with my informants and sometimes they agreed with me, and sometimes not. Sometimes during the conversations the embodied feelings came up without my asking or discussing them. It turned out that feelings actually told us a lot about the culture we came from and the culture we live in, especially when it comes to feelings of anger or discomfort in different situations. It has to be pointed out that feelings are not the main tool, neither are they main object of this study, but represent a part of it.

I used the method of open conversation when I conducted the narratives. It was up to the participants to talk about what they thought was important in their lives and in the context in which they lived. No

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12 Within sociology, anthropology, philosophy and theory of science, questions related to objectivity and subjectivity are widely discussed. In the wake of this discussion the role of the researcher's participation in fieldwork, his or her participation in both the fieldwork and in the presentation are important factors to understand a defined context (see e.g. Freeman & Kranz 1979, Lagness & Frank 1981, Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, Callaway, H. 1992, Abu-Loghud 1993, Widerberg 1995, 1996). Today it is accepted within both sociology and anthropology to let the voice of the researcher come through in the scientific presentation of the fieldwork.

life is identical to another, neither are the life stories which this study relates. The analysis was done parallel with the conversations, and many times themes rising from analysing one conversation were used as indicators for new conversations.

A Greek Island, Enjoyable and Mysterious

The island is located in the Cyclades, which stretch from the south of the mainland to Crete in a circle (*kýklos* in Greek means circle). Both the island's geology and historical background separate it visually from other Cycladic islands. The island's dramatic history contains earthquakes, eruptions, and old civilizations. In 1956 an earthquake registering 7.8 on the Richter scale destroyed about two-thirds of the houses on the island. Many homeless islanders, unable to secure government loans to rebuild, fled to other Greek ports, the United States or Australia to begin new lives. Today approximately 10,000 inhabitants subsist principally on tourism and a thriving wine industry. Fishing, the traditional way of life, together with the wine industry today support the tourism industry. Fishermen co-operate with the tavernas and restaurants, and the wineries offer 'A Traditional Greek Wine Festival' to the tourists.

A tourism-oriented society in southern Europe, such as the archipelago of Greece, was in the pre-tourist period (1950-1964) generally self-sufficient and based on agriculture and fishing. The income after the tourist invasion from the 1970s has changed the economy, which is now based on tourism rather than agriculture. When it comes to the case study of the island, the main income for 98% of the population comes from tourism. Before tourism, the island was classified as one of the poorest areas in Greece. Fishing and agriculture, especially pistachio nuts, tomatoes and wine, were the main sources of income for the island inhabitants.

The island has several villages, and Chora is the central one where all the public services are located. Limani is located in the south, and it is basically in this village that the charter tourism has increased. Limani's beach and natural water supply guaranteed it would be the first resort to be fully developed by charter-tour packages. Limani beach and village today offer 30,000 tourist beds during the tourist season. Only 907 people live in the village during the wintertime (as reported for 1991).

Because the island was difficult to visit before it got its airport and its new port, the tourism industry could not develop on a large scale and there was no reason for mixed marriages to increase. Since the mid-1980s the situation has been different. Through charter tourism and the air traffic in general, it has been easier for people to be in contact with each other.

Before 1987 tourism to the island was mainly in form of cruise-ship visitors and backpackers, not the charter tourism that is the main industry of the island today. Charter tourism is associated with more and cheaper hotels, restaurants, and bars. The tourism industry on the island has developed from one aimed to serve luxury-oriented customers to one aimed at tourists who rely on a cheap and relaxed holiday. The charter tourist differs from the luxury tourist in many ways. While a luxury tourist is hunting for experiences connected to what Urry (1990) refers to as 'the tourist's gaze', which means that

the physical environment together with the genuineness of the place are the main objects of the luxury tourist's visit, the charter tourist is typically looking for the 'four (or five) S's': sun, sand, sea, sex (and spirits, i.e., alcohol). It can also be argued that the luxury tourist is seeking adventures related to the 'head' and the charter tourist 'bodily' satisfaction (Veijola & Jokinen 1994). Research on tourism claims that there is a class difference between the charter and the luxury tourist: in both categories, women are more often travellers than men. But female luxury tourists are usually in their forties from the middle class, often academics, whereas female charter tourists are mainly from the working and lower middle classes, between 16 to 24 years old (Karlsson 1994:173-190).

Different Lifestyles

For the inhabitants there are different lifestyles in the tourist season and in the wintertime. During the tourist season (from mid-May to the end of September) the community creates a 'theatre' of bars, restaurants, mini-markets and hotels, all to serve the tourists, especially the charter tourists looking for the 'four S's'. The 'theatre' closes down in the beginning of October, and the beach side of Limani, for example, becomes like a ghost town with only cats, dogs and the wind sweeping around. It is very quiet with no motorbikes and no popular music, just the sound of the waves when they break on the beach. Sometimes if it is nice weather Greek men fish from the beach, but normally, there are no people either on the beach or walking on the promenade. Most of the actors in the 'theatre' have also disappeared to somewhere else, maybe to their own original villages, or Athens, or on holiday to other countries.

Nevertheless, Chora during the winter is a community which serves its inhabitants with most modern needs. The village of Limani is more obviously quiet. Of course Chora is not so crowded with people and tourist activities as in the summer time, but the town still offers some nightlife, shopping and public services. Limani, however, offers just one supermarket, one pharmacy, the old *kafeneíon*, a small taverna and a coffeeshop with billiards. In the wintertime people spend most of their time at home, watching TV or videos, reading books, or visiting friends. It can be argued that the social life of the inhabitants moves from the public sphere in the summer to the private sphere in the winter. This is more obvious for the women, as the men still have their *kafeneíon*, where they meet, drink, and play cards. As the women told me:

> – I am never in my house during the summer. I go to the beach, drink coffee at the beach side and we go out to eat as a family.

> – In the wintertime it is pretty boring, actually, nothing is happening and it is the same routine every day.

> – I have to go away from the island during the winter at least for some weeks. If not I go nuts.

Many of the foreign wives who came to Greece or to the island arrived as tourists. They experienced the 'tourist theatre', liked that kind of summer life and wanted to return and work there later. The sum-

mer life can be seen as a big party, and it attracts first of all young people. Among the 75 foreign women, the average age when they met their husbands or partners was 24 years.

TABLE 4. Age at which foreign women met their Greek partners

Sex	Female		Male	
	N	%	N	%
Age				
17–19 years	4	5		
20–25 years	43	58	25	33
26–30 years	20	27	28	38
31–35 years	7	9	15	20
36–43 years	1	1	7	9
Total	75	100	75	100

The following quote describes what was important for one of the women, when she decided to stay on the island. Other foreign women described their impression of the island in terms such as 'fantastic environment', 'I loved the life' or 'it was like a dream in the beginning'.

– Every year I came down here to work in the tourist season. It was the sun and the summer life that attracted me. It was hard to face the everyday life at home when I returned after the summer season. Greece, that was the life anyhow. I had to make a decision and it became Greece and this island.

When the fog of tourists clears from the island and the artificial 'tourist theatre' has disappeared, the tourist areas become ghostly, and a totally different lifestyle appears, one that the foreign wives were unable to imagine until they experienced it.

– People told me how the life was in the wintertime, and I thought I was prepared, but I couldn't imagine that it was so different. Now I like the wintertime, even more than the summer time, because it is not so stressful, so crowded with people, and I have more time to visit my friends and to be together with my husband. In the summer everybody is working so hard, so we do not have time to socialize.

Another foreign wife was not so positive about the life in a Greek village, especially during the winter:

– I am a city girl actually, and not a village girl. I go nuts about the gossiping, no shopping. I love to shop—and nothing to do. The first time I came here I thought it was a beautiful place. I came here in the tourist season to work, and I never thought I'd marry here. I must admit I fell in love with the island, not necessarily my husband at first. I was beautiful, and the men whistled after me in the street. I felt so good, I was young, single, and made money and spent it. I travelled a lot on my own in Europe, everywhere. I was an independent girl. Look at me now. When I got married I let myself go. A wife shouldn't do that, but I did. What was the point, I was married. I was home a lot, eating all the time. I couldn't imagine how it was to be living in a Greek village. But everything happened so fast, married and mother, more or less at the same time.

It is easy to be isolated as a foreign female immigrant in the wintertime, at least at the beginning of the relationship. If the woman does not know Greek, and does not know anybody in the society, the probability of becoming totally dependent upon the man is huge.

– In the beginning I did not have friends, and I did not understand the language. When we went to parties where everyone spoke Greek, I thought they were talking about me. I got a tinge of paranoia then. He wanted me for himself as well, and for a period of time it was like that. But I felt so small and had no self-confidence at all.

– In the beginning I was so homesick. I missed my family and my friends. But my husband helped me to get over it.

– We went to his village of origin for the winter last year and that was the break for me in Greece. The trick is to stay here during the winter I think, if you want to learn the language. The first time I went to the village it was horrible. I didn't understand what they spoke about, and I was much on my own because my husband worked. At big parties or family dinners everybody spoke Greek and I became paranoid because I thought they talked about me. I didn't have any self-confidence at all. The self-confidence came back, largely because I learned to speak the language. That was actually the truly big break for me.

As the above statements describe, it is not easy to live in a new environment for different reasons. Understanding and speaking the language seems to be crucial for the foreign wives' self-confidence, basically because a language is the entrée into a society's social relationships, and through that a way out of isolation. But there are few foreign wives that truly want to be a part of the local society, and instead they build their own networks, sometimes according to nationality.

To be a Kséni, an Outsider

One day I overheard a conversation between an old local woman and a foreign wife living in a village talking about the *ksénoi* who built a new restaurant on the beach. The old local woman did not like it at all. The foreign woman, who in fact owns a shop of her own, tried to explain to the woman that she was a *kséni* too, and the old woman replied that she was not that much of a *kséni* because she was married to a man from the village. As a sociologist working and living in the village, I was treated by the people of the village and especially the old people as a *kséni*—an outsider. And a funny one as well, because I lived on my own as a woman in the wintertime, doing something they did not understand. In the beginning of my stay the old women wanted to know my *andrós* (man's) name. I tried to explain that I did not have one, but gave up after a while and said to them that it was Yiannis living in Athens, someone they did not know. Satisfied with my answer, they did not ask anymore.

Ksénos can be translated as 'foreign, stranger, alien, non-relative, non-villager', or simply 'not one of us'. The opposite term is *dhíkos mas*, meaning 'own' or 'our own' (Dubisch 1993). As Dubisch noted, the distinction between 'inside' and 'outside', between *ksénos* and *dhíkos mas* is not an established one. It depends on whom the *ksénos* is related to. The three foreign men building a new restaurant did not have any connection to the village. They came from a foreign country, they were not married to someone from the village or the island, they did not know anybody, and on top of everything they were

working and not just tourists in the village. For me it was a question of a different matter. I knew some people, both younger Greeks from the village, Greeks from other places in Greece living in the village, and foreigners, especially the foreign women, but still I was an outsider. It can be argued, because of the fact that I did not have a 'man' in my house, that my status in the village was closer to that of a tourist rather than that of the foreign wives. The foreign woman that in fact is Greek/Australian was also defined as a *kséni*. It did not matter that she actually was married to a man from the village, but it helped in the hierarchy of defined *ksénes*. How people in the village define *ksénes* depends on with whom they compare the different categories of *kséni*. As a nation the Greeks are not *ksénoi*. In Athens for example the people from the island defined themselves as *dhíkos mas.* Within the island the people differ, and categorize people as *ksénos* or *dhíkos mas* on a scale of belonging to the island.

> – You are not a person here, you are a foreigner a '*ksénos*'. My husband, is a *ksénos* here, they say so. The islands are like this.

It has to be taken into account that most of the husbands, close to two-thirds, are from elsewhere in Greece, and the locals defined them as *ksénoi* as well. In other words, they are not fully members of the local society either.

The *ksénoi* are grouped into a category, but the category *ksénoi* is not homogeneous, and each person has a place in a hierarchy. In the hierarchy of *ksénoi* we find at the bottom of the pyramid the tourists for whom the locals have no respect. Then come the people who are from other countries but work on the island during the tourist season, then the foreigners who live on the island, then the Greeks who work there during the tourist season, then the Greeks from other places that live on the island. The local people who consider themselves as *dhikoí mas* are people who are born and grew up on the island.

Both the foreign wives and the people from the island defined the foreign wives as *ksénes.* But while the people from the island look at the *ksénes* in a negative perspective, the foreign wives themselves did not. Instead the foreign wives made distinctions derogatory towards the Greek people and their behaviour, and they were especially against the people originally from the island in their way of constituting identity. In the foreign wives' eyes the people from the island are uneducated, uncivilized, greedy and selfish.

In their way of creating identity through distinguishing themselves from 'the other' they used a lot of symbols of Greekness, which they referred to as disgusting or simply, something they did not like. How the Greeks eat was one symbol of 'otherness' which some of the foreign wives did not like. Other symbols of Greekness were connected to the old people's personal hygiene, the Greek women's and men's behaviour, the Greek family organization, traditions and religion. 'Greek hospitality', the foreign women asserted, is a myth.

> – They are just nice to the tourists, because they want their money, in general they are rude and not helpful at all.

– The mentality of the people makes me so angry, they are not polite. I get choked up every time I go home, because people are nice and helpful to you.

The women relate stories about how taxi-drivers in Athens are rude, how Greek people push themselves forward in a line in public offices, how Greek girls working in the supermarket treat you as if you interrupted them in an important matter when you want help, difficulties when you ask for help on the buses with the children, and so on. A long list can be made of stories and experiences of the 'Greek hospitality' filtered through the eyes of the foreign wives.

– Have you seen the Greeks eat? They eat like pigs, put their fork into everybody's food, put the bread into the oil and squeeze it around, they make a lot of noise and one thing I found disgusting is that they smoke when they eat.

– I think the Greek people do not know how to use a knife. They cut the food with their forks and then they eat fast and they don't close their mouth when they eat. I have tried to teach my children a civilized way of eating and one of my children understands, the other one, forget it!!

– I try to teach my children some table manners, because the Greeks do not have any.

So if the Greek way of eating is so disgusting that they have to teach their children another way of eating, what is the right way to eat? According to the foreign wives, it is the eating habits they have been taught in their specific locality.

Some of the foreign wives testified that the old people would call them 'dirt', and replied that it was the old people that were dirty and not they. Here we are dealing with different ways of interpreting 'dirt'. Dirt in Greek is *vróma* and besides meaning sand, soil, and mud, it also means bitch or slut with regard to women. The word *vróma* is linked to another word, *vromáei,* which means that something is out of order. 'Dirt', according to Douglas (1966), is something that is in the wrong place at the wrong time. Embedded in the definition of *kséni* is the thinking of the outsider as a person who can mix up order and coherence. This becomes even more obvious when the foreign woman marries a Greek man, has his children and becomes a part of the family. Talking about the foreign women as dirt is therefore linked to the destroying of an established order, the order of the family. The foreign wives linked the word dirt to the bodily cleanliness of the old people, who they found disgusting.

It is not important whether these experiences are right or wrong, whether Greek hospitality is a myth or a reality, whether Greeks' eating habits actually are disgusting or not, whether the old people are dirty or not, and so on. It is a question of how the foreign wives *interpret* their experiences, and a question of distinguishing 'the other', in their way of creating both a common identity as foreign wives and a self-identity. The way the foreign wives talked about the 'symbols of Greekness' can also be considered as collective memories, which are debated and discussed within a defined group in order to make a collective identity or 'commonness'.

Family, Kinship, and Friendship

The family as a common term is defined by sociologists as a particular social group, the members of which are related by blood or marriage on different levels, forms and combinations. In Greece today the traditional extended family has disappeared and the family has been redefined within a new extent and reality (Moussourou 1995). Though there is no difference in the size of the rural or urban families in Greece today, there are differences in family interpersonal relationships and functions connected to the roles of both genders, values and behaviour.

In Greece the nuclear family, referring to a married couple with children living in a neolocal[13] residence apart from their sets of parents, is the dominant family form today, though not the only form. The practice of both patrivirilocal and matrifocal residence are still common, especially in rural areas (Teperoglou & Tzortzopoulou 1996).

Traditionally in Greece, the family's organization has been the most important component (many will argue the only component) upon which the society is built and in how people organize their everyday lives. Family bonds are still strong in Greece. Neolocal residence has replaced the institution of patrivirilocal and matrifocal residence on a large scale. But the nuclear family in a neolocal residence is embedded in a wider network of kinship and relatives, which is crucial to how people construct their everyday lives. Solidarity and mutual support among close relatives are of importance to family organization in questions of dowry, gifts, finding jobs, help with illness, assistance with loans, and so on (Moussourou 1995, Maratou-Alipranti et al. 1995).

On the island, matrifocal residence has been the traditional way of living, a tradition which many islanders still practice. Other ways of living, such as neolocal residence and the rising unmarried cohabitation, have been more or less accepted in the society as well; however, cohabitation is not equal to marriage (neither in the legal system in Greece, or accepted in the society). In anonymous urban areas such as Thessaloniki and Athens it has been accepted that young people live together before marriage, though not very often. In rural areas it is still a matter of ambivalence (Hellum 1993). Out of the 75 foreign women living on the island, 22 are cohabiting. In most of these cohabiting couples, the men come from other places within Greece. It is possible that the reason for this tendency is that the pressure from a local family forces them into a marriage in order to preserve the family's honour.

Cohabiting can be seen as a new trend to which young people are attracted. Most of the foreign women cohabiting are between 20 and 30 years old, and their partners are somewhat older, between 30 and 35. In addition, partnership or marriage is a question of both political statement and lifestyle for the individuals. One crucial problem for the cohabiting women is that Greek law does not protect them

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13 Neolocal means that the couple lives apart from their parents' household, Patrivirilocal means that the bride moves to the groom's family and lives in his settlement. Matrifocal is the opposite of patrivirilocal, which means that the man moves to the bride's household. Matrifocal on the contemporary island is connected to the praxis of dowry, which means that the family of the bride has to contribute a house when the couple mar-

if they should have problems, such as a breakdown of that partnership. Another problem is the different ways in which Greek men and foreign women think about marriage and cohabitation. Some Greek men consider cohabitation, especially cohabitation with foreign women, as closer to being single than married, and do not think they have the same obligations and responsibilities for their partners as in a legal marriage. The foreign women, however, consider cohabitation equal to marriage (Hellum 1993).

Implications for Mixed Marriages with Reference to Family Issues

As mentioned above, a Greek family is traditionally strong. Being part of a family means responsibility and obligation for other members. This solidarity can be difficult for a foreign woman to understand if she comes from another social context where the family's obligations and responsibilities have been taken over by the state, as for example in Sweden, Norway, and the UK. When the foreign wives discussed the families in Greece of which they are a part, they compared them with descriptions of the families in their own localities in the past. This difference is not always seen as negative. How the foreign wives describe negative or positive sides of the different family life depends on the theme in question. The following collage shows some thoughts from the foreign wives about family and the inherent problems.

– In Greece family is life and life is family But I think it is false. Families argue over land. Yesterday the neighbours had a big argument about land.

– The children stay at home until they get married. The Greeks live for their children, and work their asses off for them. At home we pay food and board if we work. Now I am a little Greek when it comes to this matter. I think it is the parents' obligation to take care of the children until they are on their own. But the children have more respect for their parents in my own country, as the parents also have for the children's problems.

– If property is in the husband's name it goes to the children, not to the wife. No Greek man has made a will for his wife. Do not mention something about 'a will' to the Greeks. My husband goes nuts if I want to talk about it. Greek men do not want to talk about it.

– It is sad the way the society has developed in my own country. There is nobody there when you need someone. Here, it can be too much sometimes. The family gives money to members of the family who have 'screwed up'. I think that is wrong. You can never say 'no' to members of the family. My husband's brother was out of work and he came to this island to look for work, but he couldn't manage to find any. He lived in our house, and lived on us financially, for about one year and he was depressed most of the time. He brought us down as well.

– I do not want to be old in this country, because the government does not take care of you like they do in my own country.

ries. The house is usually built near the parents of the bride, and many times it is build as an extra floor on the top of the parents' house.

– My mother-in-law could be a problem when we have children. She tells me that when we have children, she will come to us and live with us during the tourist season, and I am sure she is going to do that.

– Greek men are better fathers than men in other countries. They are closer to their children bodily. Sit with them, hold them close and kiss them. But they do not care about the hard work with them, they do not help in the home.

– My husband will never divorce me because of the children. Men in other countries can just leave their children and wives behind and do not get in touch. Greek men would never do that. In Greece it is the women that divorce their husbands and not the other way around. A Greek man will never divorce if he has children.

The foreign wives make a distinction between their husbands and the organization of kinship within Greece. Greek husbands, especially in their role as fathers, are usually described in positive ways compared to men from their own countries of origin. Kin in general, and especially mothers-in-law, are described in negative terms. It can be argued that it is a question of both defending their own marriage through solidarity with their husbands, and creating self-identity through distinguishing 'the other'. Organization of Greek kinship can be seen as a symbol of 'Greekness', which the foreign wives in many cases use as one way of distinguishing themselves from 'the others'. The way of defending their husbands against 'the other', in this case men from their own localities of origin, is not the only way of creating solidarity with husbands. Especially when it comes to questions about unfaithful men, the foreign wives make a distinction between their own husbands and other Greek men, a theme that will be discussed later in this paper.

When it comes to questions related to 'caring' about other kin, the foreign wives were ambivalent. They thought it was too bad the way their own societies had developed, and referred to the lack of personal contact with people, especially if people got sick or had a crisis in their life. But at the same time they thought there were too many obligations and responsibilities within the family in Greece.

A following episode will illustrate that there can be problems within a mixed marriage because of the different ways of defining both the family and how important a 'collective identity' is for the foreign wives. Just before Christmas one couple argued about family issues. The Greek man wanted to go to his own village to spend Christmas and New Year together with *his family*. The foreign wife wanted to stay on the island and celebrate Christmas together with *her family,* by which she meant herself, her husband, and their children and her friends.

– She doesn't understand. She would rather be here celebrating Christmas with her friends instead of with the family, and I cannot understand why she wants to be with her friends rather than the family. During Christmas and New Year the family should be together, and maybe my father will die next year, maybe this is his last Christmas.

– I am not sitting in the village for two weeks alone while my husband socializes with his friends and goes hunting in the mountains. I want to celebrate Christmas here, just with my family and then go to Anna's house on Boxing Day. We have so much fun here during Christmas. I try to

make the best out of Christmas here with my own traditions. The Greeks do not celebrate Christmas. It is Easter that is important for them.

Firstly, when the Greek man spoke about *his family* he referred to a larger unit based on kinship, and not only to the nuclear family defined by his wife. Secondly, celebrations such as Christmas, New Year and Easter are occasions full of symbols connected to the feasts, which are organized and celebrated in different ways depending on traditions and religious background. 'The Greek Christmas is boring', more than one foreign wife said. Collective symbols such as food (turkey for the English and the North Americans, the famous Christmas-table for the Swedes, ribs of pork, fish or 'lamb made on pegs' for the Norwegians), cakes, Christmas decorations and Santa Claus, which differ from the Greek collective symbols are important for the foreign wives. The high festivals can be considered as moments of returning home, which become important for both the foreign wives and their husbands from other places in Greece. Through the lack of her own family, the networks and her friends with which she shares the collective symbols may become more important than her husband's family.

Rooted traditions, such as how the Greeks give names to their children, may also be a problem. In Greece it is tradition to give the first male child the first name of the husband's father, or if it is a girl the husband's mother, though in the Cyclades the tradition is to name the girl after the wives' mother. Almost all of the foreign wives thought it was a stupid tradition, but the strategies to deal with it were different. Most of the couples followed the tradition. Some couples did not use the traditional name at all. In the cases where the couples broke with tradition the man's family was usually very disappointed. A third strategy was to give the child an extra name on their own, a name which they would use daily, rather than the traditional name.

Other traditions such as dowry can be matter of conflict within the family. Dowries are in fact illegal in Greece today, but still exist in practice in some areas in Greece. The cultural value behind the practice of giving a dowry can be translated into 'caring about children's material needs'. Today, at least in the Cyclades, the bride's parents offer a house to their daughter when she gets married, a home she owns by herself or together with her husband. It can be argued that it is only the conditions of ownership that have changed, while the idea behind the dowry has survived. Usually on the island, the parents of the bride build a second floor on the top on their own house, or they build a new house for the couple. If they cannot afford to build a house, a car may be a substitute.

– My husband was shocked when he understood that my parents did not intend to give us a house, not even a car.

– The Greeks have to give a dowry for their children. They have to be able to build a house for them. The Greeks asked me what we could offer for our two daughters. I said that we put some money into the bank to provide them with an education, but we do not save money to give them a house.

The Fragile Network

One way of creating identity is to make distinctions about 'the dissimilar', embodied in the Greeks and the Greek culture. A result is that wives build networks on their own for the purpose of finding community. As mentioned before, I soon discovered the different networks to which the women belonged. One consists of foreign wives basically from England and Germany with children under preschool age. They regularly arranged coffee mornings, usually on Saturdays, during the wintertime. In addition, they met during the weekdays so their children could play together, sometimes in their homes, but also at a playground near a coffee shop where they enjoyed a cup of coffee after the children had had their fun.

Another network consisted of foreign women, both single and married, of various nationalities. Some of the women in this network owned their own business or worked for somebody else and some were housewives with children. Usually they met for lunch or a drink in a bar during the evening. They also arranged private dinner parties.

The two networks I met with were in many ways similar, but there were also differences between them. In the first network, the discussion was usually connected to child care, different welfare systems, their roles as a wives and mothers, and their bodies. In the other network, children and child care were not discussed, even though some of the women had children. Usually they discussed and commented on men (in particular Greek men), their businesses and inherent problems, the latest party or 'night out with the girls' and themes related to the body such as clothes and beauty.

During the coffee mornings arranged in the first network, different opinions about the role of the wife, as a mother, and the culture they lived in were discussed. One theme in their discussions, which came up often in the first network, was sacrifice in a marriage. A part of married life is to sacrifice, agreed the women, and one added that she wanted to live at least for some years in her own country, because she had given her husband close to ten years of her life living in a Greek village. One didn't like the island, in fact she said she hated the island basically because of all the unfaithfulness she heard about and saw. But she loved her husband and she stayed because of him. We had a good laugh when one woman said that she loved the island, but hated her husband.

One woman was criticized, because she had left her 18-month-old daughter at the kindergarten. The woman in question works in a shop during the day and never attended the coffee mornings in this particular network. When they started to talk about the kindergarten one woman said that she had had her son in the same kindergarten, and that the children had to sit in the bus for an hour and a half every day while the busdriver picked up other kids. She had taken her child out of the kindergarten. Everyone thought that the women with the 18-month-old girl should have heard of this, but the woman under discussion has said that her daughter loves the kindergarten, something the attending women did not believe. One said that she would never give up her children before they were three years old. The children must stay at home with their mothers until they are at least three, some agreed. If not there would be problems with them. One woman had been criticized because she couldn't cope with

her then four-year-old son after a terrible car accident. So the son lived together with her mother-in-law, although not far from her own house.

Not only was the kindergarten under trial, but also the school system. Some of the foreign wives thought the schools in Greece had turned into a 'fashion show', and they referred to how the students dressed, their hairstyles and their taste in music. One foreign wife looked back on her own schooldays in a nostalgic way. A discussion ensued when another foreign wife questioned her way of description of the Greek schools.

   – I think it is a good idea to have school uniforms. I loved mine, and we did not have the problem with pressure to buy expensive clothes for school. Now you see on TV teenagers with long hair, smoking. It is not like that in my own country.

   – Well, didn't you smoke in school?

   – But we were not allowed.

   – Do you think they are here? I think it happens all over the world, not only here in Greece.

   – I think there is more discipline and order in the schools in my own country.

   – Well, I do not agree with you. You know what Beatrice told me, you know the Canadian girl. She has been travelling in and out of Canada for several years now, and her daughter has been in both school systems. Now she has decided to stay in Greece, because she has found the schools better here.

   – But if the schools here in Greece are so good, why do students need private lessons then?

   – But that is another question, we were talking about order and discipline, right? Of course I see the problems with the educational system. But when it comes to order and respect of the teacher I think it is better here in Greece.

Not only did the woman who loved her school uniform make a distinction between 'Greekness' and her own place of origin, but she also used a time/space perspective. The other woman involved in the conversation questioned her nostalgia, and had, maybe some will argue, a more nuanced opinion at least in this particular conversation.

The second network that I participated in had different objects of discussion: children and child care were not on the agenda. Instead it was dinner parties in the past, work and its inherent problems, men—especially Greek men—and the Greeks in general. As in the other network, the body was also an object of discussion, and the symbols of the body were more or less the same: hairstyles, weight, nails, different depilatory methods, and clothes. It can be argued that the way the women spoke about the body and its symbols constituted a type of construction and control of the female body. Another theme connected to the body and its control was how the women handle alcohol. One woman was discussed for her drinking habits.

– Have you heard what Laura did last night? She was so drunk that she fell over in the street twice on her way home. She was together at least when she left the bar with a Greek guy, but I do not know if they did anything. Today she has a bandage on her foot, and you know it was Giorgos the barman's birthday, and she became that drunk. She was making a fool of herself again.

– I cannot understand why she is working in a bar if she drinks so much?

– Don't you? Of course she wants to work in a bar, it is easier to get alcohol, and cheaper as well.

– She just drinks too much. I think she has a problem.

– And she says so many stupid things when she drinks, and she drinks all the time. She embarrasses herself and everybody.

– You know I think the Greek men think she is fun to party with, but nobody wants to have a relationship with her.

– I think you are right. They do not like girls that drink so much.

I asked: Have you spoken to this girl about it? Obviously she needs help?

– We do that sometimes, and she says she will try to control herself. But maybe after one or two days without alcohol she is back again. Others try to tell her also—the Greek men for example.

I replied: Well that's funny, because the Greek men also drink a lot, so why do they talk to her?

– But it is different, you know. They can drink as much as they want, but a woman cannot. They do not want to have a relationship with a girl that drinks too much.

The networks serve different purposes. If women do not want to be isolated, it is a way of socializing. It is also a space where identity is created through collective memories and symbols. The networks provide the foreign women with the security they need in a new environment, by talking about collective memories, such as school systems, parties and other shared experiences in their own language, or at least in a language they command. But at the same time the networks are fragile. In a society where 'everybody knows everybody' the network becomes a tool for social control. Gossiping and blackening other people's characters, such as the woman who worked and had her child in kindergarten or the woman who drank too much, strengthens the network's commonality. But at the same time it prevents differences of opinion.

Some of the foreign wives did not belong to a particular network. They have been invited but chose not to attend, saying, 'I cannot stand the discussions and all the gossiping.' Instead they had a best friend or friends both foreign and Greek with whom they socialized. The women who do not belong to the networks are not as negative when they describe the Greek culture as the women in the networks. But they still distinguish between the Greeks from the island, whom they think are ignorant, and those from other places within Greece.

Gossiping and its Consequences

Analysing gossip and the blackening of a person's character, moral codes and informal roles of a given context become clearer. At the same time gossiping and character assassination are a way of distinguishing 'us' from 'the other' in creating identity.

Every single foreign wife argued that there was a lot of gossiping going on, but at the same time they stated that they did not like it. Gossiping is a form of defining a person or a group of persons in a negative way. Gossiping also includes stories that are made up and stories that have a basis in fact but are exaggerated. Usually the gossip was connected to the person's personality, how she behaved and how she took care of her children. The gossip between the foreign wives also included their men, especially the men's affairs. Sometimes the rumours were true, sometimes not, but the wives' ways of dealing with the gossip were different. Some got very upset and tried to find out who had started the gossip in order to talk to that person and ask them to 'mind their own business'. Others did not care and said that that is what happens in a society where everybody knows everybody, and if you believed everything you heard you would go crazy. One woman accused of telling stories that were not true got so upset that it interfered with her sleep. The following episodes will illustrate how the gossip could be. During a conversation with two foreign wives, they gossiped about a third foreign wife and her behaviour.

– *She* goes to everybody's houses, talking shit about the girl *she* visited before. *She* looks upon her daughter as a princess, and *she* says to everybody that *she* will not come to your house anymore because your child does not play nicely with her little princess.

– *She* tells everybody that she and her husband do a lot of things together. But *she* just makes it up because *she* wants it to be that way. They do nothing together, they never go out together.

– *She* wouldn't let her husband go out of the house. *She* says that one of the foreign wives' husbands takes her husband out, and *she* doesn't like it. *She* says a lot of bullshit about our husbands as well. We never say things like that. *She* tries to make him different, more like a man from where *she* comes from.

– Our husbands do not expect dinner at the table at a special time. If there is no dinner, then we go out to eat. But *she* is not like that—*she* has to go home to cook for her husband. He expects that. But maybe *she* likes it.

– What do you think is her worst nightmare?

– Not to be invited to a baby shower.

– *She* always tells everybody about her best friend, but *she* has none. *She* just wants to have a girl called a best friend.

– I think *she* is jealous. Yes *she* is!!

This woman has been frozen out of one particular network. Nobody invites her anymore to the coffee-mornings or to their houses; something that they accuse her of being dependent on, though she still

turns up at some foreign wives' houses now and then for coffee and a chat. There are two major informal laws the woman in question had broken. One is connected to the solidarity of the group (and with that solidarity the famous law of 'do not think that you are better than us'), the other is connected to the fact that she doesn't know the difference between collective gossiping and gossiping between two persons, in which what is said is not supposed to be told to anyone else. However, when the two foreign wives gossiped about the woman, they used the same mechanism that they would use when they make identity as a group, basically built on the idea that 'she is not like us'. Gossiping then can be considered as one way of creating identity. Both the collective gossiping and the gossiping between two persons have the same goal; to create identity through distinctions between 'us' and 'the other'.

Another episode of gossip occurred during my stay and unfortunately I was part of it. One foreign wife went to another foreign wife's house and told her that her husband had been having an affair with a Russian woman, which in fact was not true. The so-called Russian woman referred to me personally, and the gossiping ensued from an occasion when I had been to a bouzouki club with some Greek men. The woman also told the husband of the foreign wife that he was not a man, because he cooked and did the dishes. The same woman also said that women from the country where the other woman came from did not make good wives because they did not adhere to the traditional role of the wife. In other words, the gossiping and backstabbing of different women had also to do with different ways of defining the role of a mother and a wife, and again distinguishing 'us' from 'the other', whether the women defended the traditional roles or not.

So, if a woman breaks the informal laws, such as drinking too much, not staying at home with her children or doing something that nobody else does, it is easy for her to become an object of gossip, and as a consequence, be excluded from the networks. The possibility for isolation is tremendous. As it turned out the gossip was also connected to different opinions of femininity, motherhood and the role as a wife, together with how their husbands behaved (mostly with reference to their affairs).

Discourses about Manhood and Womanhood

Men and Their Affairs

The increase in the number of female tourists and the subsequent rise in the number of mixed marriages has led to a new way of thinking about sexual freedom, symbols of the body, and individuality in tourist-oriented societies in Greece. Both Buck-Morss (1987) and Kousis (1989/96) conclude that the gap between the strict sexual control of the local women and the men's relaxed relationship with foreign women has widened under the influence of tourism.

Regarding gossip about the Greek husbands' affairs, foreign wives agreed that unfaithfulness would be the biggest nightmare in their marriage, and in a tourist-influenced society 'the girls are on a plate', as one of the foreign wives put it. In Greece the relaxed relationship between Greek men and foreign

women has become so common that it has in fact its own name, *kamáki*, which literally means 'harpoon' or 'fishing spear', a reference to what is seen as the predatory character of such relationships.

Northern Europeans and Americans often view southern Europe as exotic. The exotic is often embodied in the Mediterranean man, defined as more sensual, more passionate and more 'primitive' than men from the north. He himself may play into this stereotype, and use it as a means of self-contrast (Gilmore 1987). Today the word *kamáki* is related to both the male person and to the activity he performs. 'He was doing *kamáki* with her' means that he was flirting with a girl for the purpose of having sex. In Zinovieff's interpretation of *kamáki*, the performance reverses the relationship between nations. The Greek man becomes the symbol of the society, which is subordinate to the northern nations, symbolized by the women from the north (Zinovieff 1991). Embedded in such an interpretation are assumptions regarding constructions and conceptions of sexuality and hierarchy, which the Greek men may share, to some extent at least, with other European and European-derived cultures. From that point of view a sexual adventure may be just what a foreign woman is looking (or hunting) for during her holiday. This is a possibility the Greek men may overlook, or deny, since it diminishes their own role as sexually dominant (Dubisch 1995).

Another way of interpreting the institution of *kamáki* is to contemplate the performance as one part of constructing manhood, and one way of establishing hierarchy within the male sphere. To make manhood, man, and masculinity understandable it needs something to establish itself against, such as womanhood, woman, and femininity. From this point of view symbols of the dualism are crucial for understanding. Symbols of manhood and womanhood are many times connected to the body and the body's behaviour. One symbol of manhood is connected to the man's sexual prowess, another to the man's financial status. Both are embodied in the female body of a mistress, which shows that a man has the sexual ability to satisfy two women and the economic ability to take care of both.

In order to live up to the picture of a sexual predator, one discourse about manhood in the Greek society, many Greek men talk a lot about sex and sexual experiences. Many of their jokes refer to sexual activity, and they comment upon women in the streets, basically about their bodily expression. Also they are open about their affairs.[14] To be unfaithful, one Greek man told me, is natural, 'It is a way of being a man.' A foreign woman thought that the pressure from men's friends could be one reason why they were unfaithful. Because if they stayed faithful, they could be considered 'soft', a *yinaikódoulos* (henpecked husband). This word is constructed out of the words *yinaikotós* which means womanish, effeminate, and *doúlos* which means slave: in other words slave to the woman.

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14 Greek women also have affairs, but unlike the men, they keep their affairs out of the public sphere. Greek women discuss and comment upon women who have affairs, but it stays within the commonness of the women's knowledge. There is a lot of silence surrounding it. The woman and her lover try to keep it a secret. The men, however, go to bars, restaurants and coffee shops together with their mistresses. It can be argued that an unfaithful wife is a threat to a man's ability to live up to the image of the sexual predator, meaning that he is not capable of taking care of his wife sexually speaking, and if this came to be public knowledge his status as a man could be damaged.

One day around noon I went for a walk on the main road from a neighbouring village to Limani when a car stopped at the other side of the road and a man asked me: *Kánoume érota;* (Shall we have sex?). I wanted to look at him and ask what kind of idiot did he actually think I was, but I felt uncomfortable and scared, and continued to walk. He started the car and continued. I thought that I should be able to take a walk on the road in the middle of the day without being hassled. Several days later I went to the local coffee shop for a cup of coffee in the evening. I had passed the coffee shop several times in the evenings, just to find a wall of staring men sitting outside. I found the wall hard to break, because I felt uncomfortable with the staring. After a week I thought I had reacted stupidly and decided to break the wall. One of my Greek male friends from Athens arrived together with a local man. He was surprised to see me again and he sat down and we spoke in English. The other man, the local, asked my friend in Greek if I was a *putána* (whore). My friend told him to shut up, because I understood Greek, and he also said that I was far from being a whore. I was very surprised because I had never been hassled like this before, and I had been surprised at my reactions when I faced the wall of men outside the coffee shop, and when the car had stopped in the street; and I wondered why?

When I mentioned this episode to my informants they furnished me with the following explanation:

– They probably looked upon you as a Russian girl or someone from 'Eastern Europe'.[15] Most of these girls are whores, and nowadays the Greek men look at all new female foreigners as girls from 'Eastern Europe' and as whores. It has happened to us also. Once in Chora a Greek man stopped me, and I was pregnant and asked if I was Russian. Do I look Russian? Cars stop on the road even when I am walking with my children, and I feel…not scared but…uncomfortable. I do not like it at all.

A new phenomenon has occurred on the island. Since 1994 many women from former Warsaw-Pact countries have arrived on the island. In most cases, they stay and work illegally in bars and coffee shops. Some bars are also known as veiled bordellos with striptease. Many Greek men prefer to spend their free time in these bars, and many also have women from former Warsaw-Pact countries as mistresses.

The foreign wives spoke negatively when they described the phenomena of women from former Warsaw-Pact countries arriving in the society.

– This phenomenon has really put a damper upon the society.

– They do not come here as tourist girls, they come here just to find a husband. They do not care if the man is already married. The girls from 'Western Europe'[16] have money of their own and come for holidays. Sex comes along and sometimes they fall in love, no harm in that, but these other girls led to a rise in divorces within the society.

– We are surrounded by them now, they live everywhere and it is not possible to find work in the coffee shops anymore because of them.

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15 The foreign wife quoted used the term 'Eastern Europe' to refer to the former Warsaw-Pact countries.
16 When the foreign wife used the term 'Western Europe', she referred to northern Europe, including Great Britain, along with Canada, the United States, and Australia. It is not a question of geographical location, but a way of describing a specific lifestyle.

Stories about unfaithful men, both married to Greek and foreign women, were common. But when the foreign wives spoke about this subject, they added that their husbands were not like that. Only one foreign wife admitted that her husband had had an affair with another woman some years ago when he worked in a bar, and she had felt 'so belittled'. According to the gossip, another Greek husband married to a foreign woman had had several affairs with women from former Warsaw-Pact countries, even during his wife's pregnancy; however, this information was kept from her.

– I can trust him 100 percent, but I have many friends whose husbands have been unfaithful. Some flirting, that's OK, but there are limits.

– I actually think that I have the best marriage out of all of the women. It is different from the others. I see and listen about others' marriages, and therefore I think that my husband is the best of them.

– You know Yiannis, he fucked a lot of tourist girls. She must be pretty stupid if she doesn't know about this. I just can't understand why she married him at all. Just two weeks after they got married he fucked a tourist girl in the restaurant's kitchen. The owner and another guy were on lookout so that nobody could come into the restaurant. He had many girls, many. He says that he married her just because her family was rich…but she has to blame herself a little bit as well...You know she has lost herself. When she came here she was beautiful and stylish. Now she is fat, and during the winters she wears terribly big clothes. She let herself go, you know, after she married him. She put on weight, and that was before she got pregnant. (…) You know Giorgos the owner of the 'Sun Bar', he had an affair this summer as well. He has a wife in Athens, and a newborn baby. What do you say to that? I do not understand how these women with unfaithful men can have any self-respect at all.

I asked the woman why she thought the men had all these affairs, and her explanation was that the Greek men in general were not responsible. They do what they want to do. She also added that she trusted her own husband 100 percent, but as she pointed out, he is not working in a bar. Because if a man works in a bar, she said, he will have affairs all the time.

The bar was mentioned as one place where affairs probably would take place, and therefore a place and profession that the foreign wives do not like their husbands to be involved in. It is therefore surprising that out of the 38% of the Greek husbands involved in restaurant and bar activities, 55% work in or own their own bar. Bars are significant for various reasons. It is probably not a surprise that many Greek men married or living with foreign women work in bars. Bars are a place where people meet, especially in tourism-oriented areas, and out of the ten foreign wives participating, eight met their husband in a bar, whether the man worked there or was a customer. Bars are also a lucrative business for Greek men, a business that besides providing money, also gives the owner status in the society. One foreign wife thought that many Greek men were involved in the bar business to make *kamáki* with foreign women.

Bars are part of the public sphere, traditionally a sphere reserved for Greek men; however, foreign women use the bars as a meeting point as well. Nevertheless, there is a difference between how men and women use the symbol of the bar. The foreign wives who use bars as meeting points look on

them as places where they can socialize together as a group and feel that they are 'still in the market'. Not every foreign wife likes to go to a bar. One said she did not like it because her husband did not like her to visit bars and restaurants. Another thought they were meat markets and stayed away from them during the tourist season.

From Sexual Objects to Respected Mothers?

When we talk about motherhood, the role of a wife and the role of a woman in general, we usually talk about *discourses,* which are culturally and socially formed. Discourse is a complicated term, with at least seven different definitions (Philosophy Lexicon, 1988:117). When I use the term discourse, I intend a Foucauldian definition: a discourse is a regular production of statements, terms, theses, and theories, which together constitute a conception of something. A discourse exists through what Foucault calls a 'praxis of discourse', which means that knowledge depends upon the discourse and the praxis of the discourse, and therefore depends upon a social reality, with all the relative power that surrounds and presupposes the discourse (Foucault 1980, Foucault 1993:7).

It is possible to identify at least two leading discourses about how women in general, and foreign wives in particular, should behave, according to the foreign wives. One is to look upon men and women as equal individuals, and the other as men and women being complementary to each other. These two discourses were in constant opposition to each other and also a base for the gossip, and the inclusion and exclusion of individuals in the networks.

Both of the discourses are linked to the Madonna/whore syndrome, which can be considered a discourse about how women should behave. In many societies and especially in rural Mediterranean societies, a woman gets her status in the society through motherhood. Even though the foreign wife may lose her status as *vróma* (dirt), (a threatening, pollution and profanity of Eve) after she gets married, she will have problems becoming the 'sacred Mother of God'. Zinovieff (1991: 218-219) claims that the foreign wife is unable to become a wife and domestic figure in the neighbourhood, because of her lack of background and knowledge, together with the lack of supporting networks of female relations and friends. As I have pointed out above, in contrast to Zinovieff's approach, the foreign wives are not interested in being a part of the local society, and instead they build their own networks. Replacing the missing link of female relations and friends, these networks function as tools for social control, especially of the foreign wives but also of their husbands' behaviour.

When I discussed the Madonna/whore syndrome with the foreign wives, some of them described the Madonna as related to the role of motherhood and wife, and the whore in relation to the symbol of clothes and to sexual freedom. The classification was also based upon space, which means that the Madonna belongs to the domestic sphere of the home, and the whore in the public sphere. One wife described the Madonna/whore dichotomy with regard to Greek women:

– Madonna is the perfect housewife who takes care of the children and the house. Cooking in the kitchen, cleaning the house every day, looking after the children and having no sex life before marriage. The whore is very sexual. They are different from Greek girls that have to stay at

home, and have no sex life before they get married. The local Greek women never go out. They live for their husbands, children and family.

At the same time she categorized herself in the whore category, and the Greek women in the Madonna category. But she did not look at the behaviour of a 'whore' as something to be avoided. Instead she looked at it as freedom for women. In their opinion the foreign wives, in contrast to Greek women, have the opportunity to 'do what they want to do', or believing that they can visit the public sphere, such as cafés, restaurants, bars and night clubs, without their husbands. Both during the wintertime and the summer time some of the foreign wives visited a bar, a restaurant or a night club once in a while. The wives went just on their own.

– Our husbands do not mind if we go out, get pissed, and return at 5 o'clock in the morning. They will baby-sit.

– We like to flirt and have fun, to feel that we are still in the market. But we always return home.

When the wives went out on their own they usually dressed in latest fashions, and they put on make-up. They would sit or stand at the bar, not sit at the tables, and they danced a lot. Usually they drank cocktails and shots served by the barman. If a Greek man hassled them, they told the man in Greek that they were happily married and if he wanted something further he had to look elsewhere. Usually nobody, excepting friends, spoke to the foreign wives and everybody had a nice time. 'The nights out with the girls' became collective memories, discussed at later meetings.

According to the wives, their husbands did not mind if they 'got pissed and returned at 5 o'clock in the morning.' After one night out with the girls, returning at 5 am, some of the husbands got really angry. One wanted to know what his wife thought about, when she knew that she had a child to take care of some hours later. One other husband was awake, waiting for her to return home. When she did, they had an argument. She was in tears and wanted to return home to her own country.

Another woman drew a totally different picture of Greek women as the Madonnas and foreign women as whores. Actually she placed herself in the category of Madonna and the Greek women in the category of whores. She thought the Greek locals dressed as whores and behaved in a vulgar manner, especially when they went to other homes or with their husbands to restaurants or bars.

– They show too much of themselves. You know with short skirts and very low-cut tops…they wear a lot of make-up as well, and I don't find it sexy. It is just vulgarism. In Scandinavia we never dress like that. We can be sexy with longer skirts and without low-cut tops. They also act as though they are the sexiest things in the world, when in fact they are very ugly.

Another foreign wife thought there was a difference between *why* the Greeks and the women from former Warsaw-Pact countries and they themselves dressed 'sexily'.

– We do it because we want to, not especially because we want to have a man. I know these girls do. If I feel like being sexy, I dress like it. But it is just to feel good by myself.

The foreign wives referred to symbols of the body which are connected to the definition of the Madonna and the whore's sexuality together with objectifying the women when they made the distinction between 'themselves' and 'the other'. A Madonna stays at home and 'does not wear sexy underwear'. The whore, on the other hand, dresses in a vulgar fashion and shows a lot of her body in public places. But the foreign wives deal with the definition of themselves according to the stereotypical definitions of the Madonna and the whore in different ways. One way of creating identity for the foreign wives is to define themselves as whores, but *not* in a negative way. They connect the bodily symbols and the behaviour of the body to the definition of the whore, with freedom and the possibility to do what they want to do without their men. Another way is to adopt the Madonna definition, by defining the Greek and women from former Warsaw-Pact countries as whores. But at the same time, the women who thought the Madonna definition was the 'right' way of behaving pointed out that they were different from the Greek women.

In addition, the wives made distinctions in their way of describing their roles as wives. They used both the Greek women as a point of reference and other foreign wives with regard to their nationality in order to give identity to their lives as wives. The picture is in no way homogeneous, but can be analytically grouped into two categories by defining femininity and masculinity. First, the role of the wife and the role of the husband are complementary to each other: women and men are different and have different roles as husbands and wives. In this case, the foreign women described how women should act, in terms such as 'sacrificing your own life', 'be there for the man and the family', 'she has to cook for the man because he expects it.' They also referred to the foreign women whose husbands helped in the home, or the wife that worked and had children under pre-school age, as 'stubborn,' or 'carrying on with their culture'. One foreign wife said that if a husband helped at home 'he was not a man'.

> – If she (a woman) has a family she must be there for the children. She must be feminine for herself and for her husband. A good mother plays with her children and is there for them all the time regardless of how tired she is. If she does not have a family she must look after her parents, and a good woman must be friendly and very feminine. A bad woman doesn't care for herself. She is selfish and bad with other people. Greek mothers do not care for their children. They do not take care of them emotionally. Well, they give them a home, money and material things, but they do not play and really talk with them. They are not best friends with their children. We are more open with our children compared to the Greeks, we talk about birth control and sexuality. The Greek parents take care of their children the whole time, especially on the islands. Because there is no college or university on the island, the parents expect the children to go into their business after they finish school. The girls just expect to be married and do not care to have an education. I have my diploma from college to fall back on, but just now I do not want to have a career.

> – Well, single life is different from married life, you have to make sacrifices when you get married. You have to sacrifice in love, that's my opinion. I am sacrificing here. When the marriage is important to you, you sacrifice a lot. For many of the foreign girls it is like that.

> – I cannot say that mixed marriages are wrong, but it is difficult, and of course it is better if it is Greek/Greek. You know that you have to go halfway. But we have chosen to marry Greek men and in my opinion we have to deal with it. A Greek man expects to have a hot meal on the table

for lunch, not like in my own country where we grab some sandwiches during the day. He expects to speak Greek at home and not a foreign language. He must feel welcome in his home. But some foreign wives carry on with their own culture. Why do they then come to this country and marry a Greek man if they do not want to change to the Greek style? I know a lot of foreign girls that get married in a Greek Orthodox Church, they christen their children in the church, but they never go there. Their husbands stop going to the church as well, and they must feel very frustrated.

– The Germans become good wives, because they are not so nationalistic, more European-thinking, I think. They respect their husband's traditions and they bring up the children to be Greeks. English girls make bad wives, they do not want to sacrifice. They are too stubborn, they want it their way all the time.

Another way to deal with the dichotomy male/female was to look upon men and women as equal to each other. The wives that thought men and women were equal to each other described the more traditional wives in terms such as 'gave up', or 'is not strong enough'. Some of the foreign wives who had their own businesses had a reflexive outlook. They thought men and women should be equal to each other, but they also realized that this was not the case, especially when married to a Greek man.

– The Germans give up, you know, and they adopt the Greek role of the woman. They live for their husbands and children. I do not do that, I have my own life as well. You have to be very strong, especially in the beginning of the relationship when you have to point out your own meaning, if not it will be difficult. You know you cannot change a man if you have behaved in another way before.

– She has become very Greek, but she will not admit it herself. Would a girl in our country tolerate a husband who works day and night? (mother of a foreign wife)

– You know, Vera, she is not strong. Look at her doing everything for her husband, and he treats her so badly, hits her in public places, and has affairs. I cannot understand why she doesn't leave him, but she says she loves him and she has been here for years now.

– In theory I think men and women should be equal to each other, but I can also see that that is not the case. I am not a feminist, but I get angry when I hear about men who keep the financial situation from their wives, and who more or less 'lock' their wives in the house and tell them what to do and how they should behave. I am an independent person, with a life before I met my husband. When I think about it, it was actually him that became dependent upon me in the beginning. My husband does not help much at home. It is one of the things that makes me angry. It can go one week before he does something. He did help in the beginning…it is a little bit my fault as well, because I have been taking over. In my own country we have a rule where the person who does not cook washes the dishes. When my father washes the dishes, my husband feels guilty and then he does the same. I think doing the dishes is the worst thing my husband knows about.

Motherhood, Status and/or Security?

Embedded in the term *motherhood* are both a natural and biological approach, and the social and culturally-defined meaning of the biological and the natural. To be pregnant is definitely a biological

condition, but to claim that motherhood is natural and follows the biological condition causally, I find hard to believe. Motherhood is defined differently in different cultures and social contexts.

In her book, *The Ideology of Motherhood* (1984), Betsy Wearing claims that women's experience of motherhood depends on what she refers to as the ideology of motherhood. In all societies there is a leading discourse about motherhood, a scenario of how women should behave and feel as mothers. Wearing points out that the discourse describes motherhood as an ideology, which means that it is not open to question about how mothers should behave. By determining the ideology to be 'natural' for a woman to be a mother according to the cultural definition of motherhood, it serves the men in contemporary societies. The ideology of motherhood can be seen as both capitalist and patriarchal at both the macro and micro levels of a society. Serving an ideology in which a woman's care for her child is considered a 'natural' and 'obvious' obligation gives men the position as controllers and decision-makers in all of the major institutions of the society (Wearing 1984: 200-201).

It contrast to Wearing, Johnson (1988) points out that it is not motherhood in itself which has to be blamed for men's control over women, but rather the women's role as wives, and in the relationship between a man and a woman formalized in a marriage, where both the capital and patriarchal interests cross each other. Analytically it is possible to separate the roles of mother and of wife, but in reality most mothers are also wives. Motherhood and the wife's role cross each other in the discourse about womanhood.

Shame and honour in Mediterranean societies are closely related to sexual control over women. Honour derives from men's struggle to maintain, intact, the shame of their kinswomen. Men are responsible for the women's shame, and the women's behaviour is the fundamental reward for successful power in men's relationships to other men (Gilmore 1987: 3-5). If a woman becomes a mother without being a wife, she will bring shame to her family.

The symbol of motherhood and pregnancy may have different contents depending on cultural and social factors. Motherhood in Latin cultures is closely related to the image of the holy Madonna. In Protestant societies, which are more secular compared to the Catholic and Greek Orthodox societies, the Madonna symbol is of less importance (Melhuus & Stølen 1996).

What does motherhood involve for the foreign wives, then? As Zinovieff pointed out, the foreign wife will never become the sacred 'Mother of the God', but motherhood is important for the foreign wives both with regard to her status in society, and even more importantly, with regard to their marriages and their relationship with their husbands.

  – My marriage became so much better after we had children.

  – He gives me more respect now and has become more emotional since the children were born.

  – My husband will never divorce me because of the children.

  – Greek fathers are the best, they will never leave their children.

When analysing how a person tells her story, it is possible to find out what people think is important in their lives. Some of the foreign wives spoke lots about their children, how happy they felt during the pregnancy and after the children were born. Other foreign wives emphasized other aspects of their life such as their business, instead of the children. For the women talking about their children, not only was motherhood important for them but also the role as a wife in more traditional terms.

Motherhood is considered as one way of having security in their relationships. The foreign wives are sure that their husbands will not divorce them because of the children. Other foreign wives, the ones with their own income, were also sure that their husbands would not divorce them. But in addition they said they felt more independent, and as one foreign wife put it, ' if we divorce I would survive anyhow.'

When it comes to the question of status or, more specifically, respect in society, the following episodes will illustrate how Greek people appropriate children and how two foreign wives responded to that.

> – I went for coffee one day in Chora together with one foreign wife. She brought her five-month-old baby with her. The baby was fed when a lot of teenagers from high school came into the café. Around six girls came over to our table, talking, touching and playing with the child. 'This never happens in my own country,' the foreign wife said, and she continued: 'I like this. The Greeks love children and always want to touch them. I do not like it when the old people touch them though, because they always want to kiss them on the mouth, and that is disgusting.'

> – My husband's family does not accept me and life is hard. I am a *kséni nífi* (foreign daughter-in-law) to my mother-in-law, but she loves her grandson to death. I think she respects me in one way now, but she thinks I am weird.

In contemporary Greece there is more than one way of defining motherhood. As Doumanis (1983) describes, motherhood has gone from collectivism to individualism in Greece. Rural women have learned to view their children as a part of the family, and their upbringing of the children is not based on independence, which they learned by joining the family labour force at an early age. Children were a part of the whole family; their immediate family as a part of the external family, and so on. Family is still important in Greece, and if a family is to survive it must have new members that in return for the rural mothers' care will take care of them in their old age. Today there is another tendency. The fertility rate has dropped in Greece and many couples choose to have just one or two children. Motherhood has also changed, from expectation of certain material and social rewards, to no expectation of being taken care of in old age. The urban mother hopes that she will be allowed to see in her children their value as adult offspring. To be a mother for the rural women also involves a change of status in society, from tolerance to acceptance. Before the first child she is, both to her husband and her mother-in-law, considered as a 'worthless object'. It is after giving birth to a child, especially if that child is a boy, that she acquires the status of a respected person (Doumanis 1983).

Children give the foreign wives respect in society. She can never be the 'sacred Mother of God,' described above, she will always be the *kséni nífi*, the foreign daughter-in-law, an outsider. But through motherhood the Greeks will respect her as the mother of *their* children, although she will never be accepted fully as a part of society and the family.

When the foreign wives described their relationship with, and upbringing of their children, they used the distinction against the Greek way, which was described in negative terms. The Greeks, according to the foreign wives, did not take care of the children emotionally, they were 'not friends with them.' In addition the foreign wives thought Greek mothers spoiled their children, especially the boys.

– A Greek mother will do everything for her son, and a Greek son can never do anything wrong. I think this is the reason why Greek men always think they are right in their behaviour. Their mothers have never told them what is wrong and right. I am sure I will not raise my child that way.

– The children stay at home until they get married. The Greeks live for their children.

– At home we pay if we work. Now I am a little Greek when it comes to this matter. I think it is the parent's obligation to take care of the children until they are on their own.

– Here they work their asses off for their children. But the children have more respect for their parents in my own country and the parents likewise for the children's problem.

– Our children play together, because we do not want our children to play with the Greeks.

Not all of the foreign wives keep their children away from the Greek children. But they still thought that Greek children were 'not polite', 'rude to adults', or ' had no respect at all.'

Creating Identity through Embodied Emotions

In the process of creating identity and self-identity in a new environment, the foreign wives use their embodied emotions to distinguish themselves from 'the other' or 'the dissimilar', emotions which are created out of situations in their past. In other words, localism in a wider definition has penetrated the body, and become a part of people's 'self' or 'selves'. People's 'selves' become clearer in interaction with the dissimilar situations and behaviours, which they either like or do not like. But 'to like something' or not is based on the feelings of pleasure and discomfort, which are fundamental perceptions of human beings. Because the feelings of pleasure and discomfort are the most vague to verbalize, it is important to reflect and be aware in which context or situated situation the emotions are. In analysing the situations, it is possible to clarify the social and cultural conceptions behind the emotions.

People are different, so are the foreign wives. Not only do they have different backgrounds with reference to nationality, class and age, but their husbands are not a homogeneous group either. Several aspects of life are more important to some than others, and therefore, how the foreign wives described their situation with regard to 'I like it' or 'I do not like it' differ. However, it is possible to point out some similar aspects of the most vague emotions of pleasure and discomfort. Perceptions of pleasure were often linked to what Urry (1990) called the 'tourist gaze'. It is these perceptions that the foreign wives first of all fall in love with.

– Sitting on the beach feeling the sun on our faces in February, looking at the children playing on the beach made us realize how lucky we were to live on this island.

– Looking at the view from the top of the mountain filled us with an awe-inspiring pleasure.

– Walking on the empty beach, just listening to the waves made us relaxed.

And as an ending, some words from my own diary:

Thursday 12th of February 1998: Woke up before sunrise today and went out on the balcony. *To feggari*, the moon, which was full, lit up the village up in the mountain in the east and at the same time the sun coloured the sky in the west pink and purple in different settings. It was cold outside, but I did not realize it. The beauty and silence filled me with peace and I will never forget this moment. Now I know what keeps me so attached to this island. It is the feeling it gives me within my body.

Pleasure was also connected to situated events from the past such as parties, 'nights out with the girls' and dinner parties. In addition, the foreign wives 'liked' the Greek men who took care of their children, but they were ambivalent about the Greek family. Some did like the way people took care of each other, some did not like it at all.

Greekness was usually described in terms of 'I do not like it,' especially when it came to how the Greek people ate and their personal hygiene, both associated with the body, and also how the Greek people behaved: their traditions and their religion.

In addition to 'I do not like' or 'I like,' the feelings of anger, frustration, paranoia, lack of self-confidence, and fear were emotions that the foreign wives referred to when they told their stories. Bouras, an Australian foreign wife and professional writer, described her feelings during the beginning of her stay in Greece as follows:

I remember becoming quite desperate and hostile when I failed to make myself understood to a public servant in Athens. My feelings bordered on the murderous or suicidal. It sounds simplistic, this line of reasoning, but for me it is logical and valid (Bouras 1986: 125).

Some of the participants testified that they left all the practical dealing, for example with public offices, to the husband. 'In Greece you need a Greek behind you if you want something to happen,' one foreign wife said. 'I leave all the practical matters to my husband,' another added. 'In the beginning it was so frustrating. I wanted to do things on my own, but the people working in the Greek public offices wouldn't listen to me. Now I do things on my own because I know Greek and also because I now know the people in the offices. But it is easier to have a Greek man or woman behind you,' one foreign wife with her own business said. Of course I discovered this problem on my own, dealing with public offices, especially in Athens. On the island I must admit, they were helpful, but always after I showed them my introduction letter, in Greek, on official paper from EKKE (the National Centre of Social Science), signed by the director and with an official stamp. In Athens, on the other hand, I gave up with the National Bureau of Statistics after five hours of waiting for nothing. My requirements were *polli diskola* (very difficult) to find. Both the attitudes of the people, arrogant, sulky and not helpful at all, together with all the *periménete* (waiting) made me angry. It took me two days to get a birth certificate translated into Greek, together with the registration of a newborn baby into a family. There was a lot of

periménete in the public offices: waiting in different lines for signatures, papers, stamps and payment. All of this made me mad and I started to think, why can't they have computers like they have at home, why do five people have to do one man's job? Paradoxically, I get angry when I deal with public offices in Sweden and Norway as well, but in another way. In the new situation, dealing with the public offices in Greece I found my own culture's organizing of the public service to be 'better' than the Greek way.

So both the foreign wives and I get angry when we deal with public offices, and most of the foreign wives did not like Greekness. The question is why? The crucial factor is that we, as foreigners, are not used to a particular way of dealing with different situations. It is *dissimilar* if we compare it with our own past, or in Featherstone's term, localism. In the process of understanding another situated event, the feeling comes first, then promoting of people's own localism. Thirdly, and importantly the reflection over the situation, a state that is difficult to deal with and one that some individuals never reach.

Concluding remarks

In the beginning of this paper I asked some questions related to the process of understanding for the foreign wives, together with questions related to identity and self-identity in a new environment, and what kind of symbols are significant for their creation of identity and self-identity. In addition I asked some questions related to the theoretical approach. When using terms such as place, time/space, localism, discourse it is possible to analyse the material and find out how people in a new environment create *imagined* places (also described as localism in a broader sense), which becomes important for a creation of both collective identity and an individual's self-identity. Emotions are a part of the imagined place of the past, emotions used when the foreign wives met 'the other'. A part of the theoretical experiment, which turned out to be fruitful, the central empirical findings are as follows:

It is problematic to talk about one process of understanding, strategies of creation of identity and self-identity for the foreign wives. More precise would be to talk about different processes depending on the degree of network membership, age, education, values, norms, lifestyle and the individual's personality. However some similarities are possible to identify. Distinguishing against 'the other' and 'otherness' strongly represented by Greekness, are an important part of the foreign wives' strategies. In this process perceptions and emotions are important factors in their way of creating their own identity both as a group and as individuals. Localism in a broader sense becomes a feeling within people's bodies. Feelings then are used in the interaction with 'the other' or 'otherness'; the localism becomes clearer and therefore important in their way of creating identity.

As I pointed out early in this working paper, the lifestyle during the winter is very different from that in the summer. Many of the foreign women who ended up in a mixed marriage first became acquainted with the society during the tourist season, which is a theatre, created for a period of more or less six months. As the foreign wives testified, it is not easy to live in the environment when the fog of tourism has left the island and the lifestyle changes. It can be argued that a female tourist, who encountered the 'tourist theatre', imagines that this life will continue during the wintertime as well. In the process of

understanding, when a foreign woman changes from a tourist girl to a foreign wife, the vision also changes from 'liking the summer life' to 'don't like the Greeks and Greekness'. However, they always said of their husbands that 'he is not like a Greek.' Solidarity with the husband can be one explanation for this strategy; another is that the foreign wives have made their own opinions about what is representative for Greekness and Greeks, that in fact are clichés and important for their creation of collective identity and self-identity.

Perhaps as a result of the process of distinguishing themselves from the Greeks and Greekness, some foreign wives build their own networks that are important for their creation of identity, both with regard to group identity and for their identity as individuals. As a group they have a lot in common in the new environment. They are all foreign wives or *kseni yinaika/nifi*, outsiders, on the island. The networks are in turn fragile, mostly because of different ways of handling their new situation, with reference to the role as a wife and a mother, but also because of the gossiping. Different strategies are used to handle the networks. Some foreign wives stay away from them, have few friends, and socialize with other couples with a Greek husband and a foreign wife.

The networks have different purposes. First, they are a way of finding community in a new environment. They are also a space where identity is created through collective memories and symbols. The networks serve the foreign women with the security they need in a new environment: talking about collective memories, like school systems, parties and other shared experiences in their own language or at least in a language they command. In a society where 'everybody knows everybody' the networks function as a tool for social control, especially against the foreign wives, but also with regard to their husbands' behaviour. The rules for exclusion and inclusion in the networks were based on social control with regard to discourses about womanhood and manhood.

It is possible to identify at last two leading discourses about how women in general and foreign wives in particular should behave, according to the foreign wives. One is to look upon men and women as complementary to each other and the other as men and women as equal individuals. The picture is in no way homogeneous, but can be analytically grouped into two ways of defining femininity and masculinity. First, the role of the wife and the role of the husband are complementary, which means that women and men are different and have different roles as husbands and wives. In this case the foreign women described how women should act, in terms such as 'sacrificing your own life', 'being there for the man and the family,' and 'she has to cook for the man because he expects it'. They also referred to the foreign women whose husbands helped at home or the wife worked if she had children under preschool age as 'stubborn', and 'carrying on with their culture'. Second, wives that thought women and men were equal to each other described the more traditional wives in terms such as 'they give up' or 'she is not strong enough'. These two discourses were in constant opposition to each other and were also a basis for the gossiping and inclusion and exclusion of individuals in the networks.

The process of understanding, the Greek language became important for some of the foreign wives' self-confidence, mostly because through the language they could manage in the public sphere, but also because of an understanding of and solidarity with their husband. The native language or at least

a language they command, such as English, became important as a symbol of closeness within the networks.

It is possible to identify different symbols of identity-making. First, there are symbols connected to distinction of the Greeks and Greekness. These symbols are connected both to the body (such as the cleanliness of the Greeks and how they eat, Greek women's way of dressing and the body's performance), traditions (such as baby naming, festival celebrations, and organization of the Greek kin and family) and the Greek Orthodox religion. The foreign wives often described the symbols of Greekness in negative terms. Other symbols, that in turn become a basis for collective memories are connected to creation of identity as a group and self-identity. These symbols of collectivism were, for example, symbols connected to festivals such as Christmas, experiences from the past such as nights out with the girls and experiences from their own locality, twisted and discussed in their own native language or at least in a language they command.

'Madonna' and 'whore' can be considered symbols of how women should or should not behave. Symbols connected to the classifications of either a Madonna or a whore often referred to women's behaviour, sexual freedom, and clothes or nakedness, which means what parts and how much of the female body showed in the public sphere. The classification was also based upon space, with the Madonna belonging to the domestic sphere and the whore in the public sphere, represented by bars and restaurants.

One way of constituting identity for the foreign wives is to define themselves as whores but *not* in a negative way. They connect the bodily symbols and the behaviour of the body linked to the definition of the 'whore' with freedom and the possibility to do what they want without their men. Another way is to adopt the Madonna definition, by defining the Greeks and women from former Warsaw-Pact countries as whores. But at the same time the women who thought the Madonna definition was the 'right' way of behaving as a woman, pointed out that they were different from the Greek women.

To sum up, in the process of understanding for the foreign wives, the locality of the past becomes important, although more for some than for others. The change from a tourist to a foreign wife may be problematic, perhaps because of the image of the 'tourist theatre', but also because of being an outsider with different ways of defining family and family obligations and different ways of defining femininity and masculinity.

The foreign wife's situation is fragile, and it must be asked whether this may be one reason for the instability of mixed marriages at least in the context of a tourist-oriented society. Maybe the environment where the couple lives is of importance for the stability of mixed marriages. Mixed marriages are in no way a homogeneous group, first of all it consist of both men and women, second of a wide cultural (or more specific, systems of beliefs) diversity, and more questions related to these basic facts have to be asked. The mixed marriage's condition and surroundings need more understanding and investigation, basically because this form of marriage and family formation is increasing in the world today.

Acknowledgements

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