



The Psychology of the Recession on the Workplace



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NEW HORIZONS IN MANAGEMENT
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NEW HORIZONS IN MANAGEMENT

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1. Well-being among Greeks and immigrants before and after the current financial crisis

**Alexander-Stamatios Antoniou and
Marina Dalla**

INTRODUCTION

From ancient Greek philosophy to modern day existential and utilitarian philosophy as well as clinical, developmental, humanistic psychology and research, human history has emphasized the pursuit of well-being (for example, Ryff and Singer, 2008). The central role of well-being is provided by Aristotle in Book I of *Nicomachean Ethics* (Aristotle, 1925: 4) which states that: happiness is ‘the highest of all goods achievable by action’ and that it is ‘living well and faring well’. The importance attributed to happiness across cultures and ages is also seen in the *Dhammapada* from India, which describes happiness as independent of material things and sense desires: ‘Let us live happily, without possessions. Let us feed on happiness like the shining gods’ (*Dhammapada*, 2000). However, in the philosophical systems of Confucianism and Taoism personal well-being and happiness consist of pursuing a virtuous life through moral capabilities (Lu, 2001).

Current psychological research has tended to fall into two general viewpoints of well-being (Ryan and Deci, 2001). The hedonic viewpoint focuses on subjective well-being as a ‘relatively stable feeling of happiness one has towards his or her life’ (Oishi et al., 2007: 347), reflecting general perceived life satisfaction and affective balance by the presence of positive affect and the relative lack of negative affect (Diener et al., 2003). According to the hedonistic approach, people around the world tend to reach towards things that bring pleasure and to avoid painful experiences (Oishi et al., 2007), whilst holding the desire to feel positive emotions and to avoid feeling negative emotions (Larsen, 2000). Not surprisingly, over 10000 respondents from 48 nations rate personal happiness as the most important when compared to success, intelligence, knowledge, material wealth, etc. (Oishi et al., 2007); and most people believe that they can move in an

'upward spiral' towards ever greater personal well-being (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). According to research, happy individuals appear to flourish both inwardly and outwardly (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). Perceiving that life is good, and the environment is safe and comfortable, allows people to 'broaden and build' intellectual, social, and physical resources (Fredrickson, 1998; 2001, in Boehm and Lyubomirsky, 2008) leading to greater benefits in many different domains of life.

Eudaimonic conception describes psychological well-being as 'the striving for perfection that represents the realization of one's true potential' (Ryan and Deci, 2001: 146). All efforts to know and to live in accordance with the daimon (a kind of spirit given to all people at birth) and to progressively reach one's full potential gives rise to an optimal eudaimonic state (Ryff and Singer, 2008). People experiencing eudaimonic well-being manifest different aspects of human actualization, such as self-acceptance, the development of positive relations with others, environmental mastery, autonomy, the sense of purpose of life and personal growth. Similarly, the self-determination theory, as a macro theory of human motivation, addresses the idea of eudaimonia and self-realization as central aspects of well-being (Ryan and Deci, 2001). According to this theory, healthy human functioning regardless of culture and stage of development implies the satisfaction of main psychological needs, namely those for autonomy, competence and relatedness (Ryan et al., 2006) leading to the enhancement of both subjective and psychological well-being (Ryan and Deci, 2001).

Although the hedonic and the eudaimonic views highlight different approaches to well-being, they actually reflect complementary sides of the same coin (Tamir and Gross, 2011). While the eudaimonic approach focuses on the type of goals people pursue and on the content of their life, the hedonic view reflects the optimal experience as doing well or as the desired end-state and result. In this sense, both approaches can be seen as different paths to well-being (Seligman, 2002), and most scholars agree that eudaimonic attributes can be associated with subjective well-being (Ryan et al., 2008). In particular, life satisfaction, as an information-based appraisal for which people judge the extent to which their life thus far measures up to their expectations and resembles their envisioned 'ideal' life (Van Hoorn, 2007), has been useful in understanding and predicting reactions to stressful and challenging events in life (Bradley and Corwyn, 2004). Researchers stipulate that life satisfaction is not a simple reflection of actual positive or negative events and conditions. It also reflects an individual's cognitive appraisal of events and conditions (Lyubomirsky, 2001).

The current financial crisis which began in 2007 is the worst crisis since

that related to the Great Depression of the 1930s (European Commission, 2009). According to the World Health Organization (2011), the current economic crisis has led to significant declines in economic activity, a rise in unemployment, depressed housing markets and an increasing number of people living in poverty. The macro social conditions, such as economic growth, wealth of a nation, economic inequality, social expenditures (Haller and Hadler, 2006), economic models of taxation, labor supply, economic growth, savings, wage profiles, migration and consumption have a significant effect on life satisfaction (Clark et al., 2008). Previous literature has shown that economic adversity has negative effects on the life satisfaction of all people (Lee et al., 2002), not only for the unemployed, but also for those in employment (Di Tella et al., 2003).

According to Böhnke (2008) in addition to the economic wealth of a nation and its role in life satisfaction outcomes, the amount of social expenditures, 'good' governance performance, healthcare provision and the amount of trust in macro-social structures are also valid determinants of life satisfaction. Bonini (2008) indicates that country level characteristics account for approximately 19 per cent of the variance in personal life satisfaction, with the remaining 81 per cent being attributed to micro-social life domains. According to Clark et al. (2008) income has both an absolute and a relative effect on well-being. The absolute affect is less important as national incomes rise, but the effect is larger in low income economies (Howell and Howell, 2008).

From a psychological perspective, economic crisis is a traumatic and stressful transition in a person's life, which has a negative impact on subjective well-being through job insecurity, income and equity erosion (Askitas and Zimmermann, 2011). This transition is a psychological process of reorientation to allow individuals to function and find meaning in changed situations. The transition is characterized, first of all, by an ending, losing and letting go (Bridges, 2003). This phase can be extremely traumatic with experiences of sadness, fear and resentment, because of the loss of an important chapter in one's life. The second phase is a disorienting neutral zone of psychological realignment whereby feelings of overload and anxieties rise. The third phase in transition according to Bridges (2003) is known as a new beginning that symbolizes the sense of purpose encouraging individuals to accomplish their goals and move towards change.

Greece emerges as an interesting case in the study of life satisfaction, because the country is particularly badly hit by the economic crisis which is spreading to other Member States. Economic crisis, defined as sharp, negative fluctuations in aggregate income (Loayza et al., 2007) hit the Greek economy more than other euro area countries (Sklias and

Galatsidas, 2010). The situation in Greece continues to deteriorate as the country remains in deep recession and faces increasing reform and austerity (EPC, 2011). The structure of the Greek economy with its high budget deficit, low economic growth and the absence of structural changes and interventions within the economy have led to the features of a so-called 'weak economy' (Sklias and Galatsidas, 2010). Harsh austerity measures, unstable economic conditions, high unemployment levels, poverty, and even the possibility of national bankruptcy have created unprecedented social unrest and frustration. In March 2011 the unemployment rate was 16.2 per cent, the highest experienced since the 1960s. The unemployment rate for the 15–24 age group rose from 25 per cent in 2009 to 40.1 per cent in 2011 (Malkoutzis, 2011). Total poverty in Greece was 20 per cent, while the population at risk of poverty in Iceland and in other countries such as the Netherlands, Slovakia and Norway is around 10 per cent (European Parliament, 2011). The trust in national government has receded dramatically and Greek people indicate corruption as a negative aspect of Greek society (Dalla and Motti-Stefanidi, 2010). This has attracted the attention of the media and has become an issue of public concern.

In times of crisis, immigrants are more likely than native residents to be affected by economic conditions, for a number of reasons (Fix et al., 2009). Immigrant workers tend to be concentrated in sectors such as construction, manufacturing, wholesale and hospitality, which are particularly affected by crisis (European Parliament, 2011; Fix et al., 2009). It is estimated that in Spain and Greece, migrants constitute up to 50 per cent of workers in construction, wholesale and hospitality (European Parliament, 2011). In addition, they have less secure contractual arrangements such as temporary, seasonal, and illegal employment. Furthermore, immigrants tend to be younger or belong to the productive age, with less formal education and less experience. In particular, immigrants arriving in a new country during their secondary education, a time of heightened developmental vulnerability, are at risk of leaving school without participating in education and training (Eccles and Roeser, 2003). For example, in America, approximately one half of immigrant children arrive during their secondary education (Ruiz-de-Velasco and Fix, 2001). A number of studies indicate that many immigrants find it difficult to enter the official labor market, because they lack local language skills, and as a result remain on the margins of society (for example, Casey and Dustmann, 2010). Moreover, they experience discrimination in the labor market, a trend that is likely to be exacerbated during economic crisis (European Parliament, 2011; Fix et al., 2009).

In a little over two decades Greece has undergone a transformation from a relatively homogeneous society to a plural society in which

non-native born people make up nearly 10.3 per cent of the population (IMEPO, 2004). Major population inflows towards Greece include Albanian immigrants, who constitute 56 per cent of the total foreigners in the country, immigrants from other former socialist countries of eastern Europe (Bulgaria, Romania, Georgia) 11 per cent, from Russia 2.3 per cent and from Asian, Arab and African countries (Baldwin-Edwards, 2005). Since 2003, the influx of Asian (Pakistan, Bangladesh and India) and Arab (Syria, Egypt) immigrants has sharply increased. It is estimated that the total number of Asian and Arab immigrants in Greece is no less than 130 000 (10 per cent of immigrants) (Markoutsoglou et al., 2007). The immigrants from Sub-Sahara countries (Nigeria, Ethiopia) constitute approximately 2 per cent of foreigners, although there are no reliable data sources regarding their exact numbers. Germans, Britons, Italians and other Europeans appear as sizeable foreign communities at around 2 per cent each of the total foreign population.

A further group includes ethnic Greek immigrants, Pontics from the Black Sea region (152 204) and Vorioepiotes (100 000), ethnic Greek Albanian citizens (Gropas and Triandafyllidou, 2005) that have either been given Greek citizenship or awarded 5-year homogeneous cards. It is interesting to note that most immigrants have entered the country illegally, at least initially. Currently, about three quarters of the immigrant population has work and permit status (Gropas and Triandafyllidou, 2005). As a result, immigrant patterns in Greece represent features of four different flows: the Balkan flow, the Eastern European, the global flow and the flow of ethnic Greeks who have migrated to Greece from different areas of the Soviet Union and from Albania, mostly from Northern Epirus (Georgas and Papastylianou, 1996).

Greece was the first important foreign destination for Albanian immigrants after 1991, representing the largest Albanian community in Europe (Kasimati et al., 2009). Albanian immigrants in Greece strongly favor integration, which is based on two forms of identification, one with their heritage culture and one with the host country (Antoniou and Dalla, 2009; Dalla and Antoniou, 2011), although they have been intensely stigmatized (Dalla and Motti-Stefanidi, 2010). This paradoxical coexistence between integration and stigmatization by Greek society indicates the partially successful progress of Albanians toward adaptation into Greek society. Greece-Albania monetary remittance flows have been mentioned by Eurostat as one of the most important during 2008–10 (Chukanska and Comini, 2012). Although the crisis in Greece is forcing Albanian immigrants to return home, the statistics show that return is embryonic, only a few have returned (*The Economist*, 2012). A crucial demographic dimension of the Albanian migration in Greece is its youthfulness. Albanian

children constitute the overwhelming foreign nationality in the Greek schools (Gotovos and Markou, 2004). Many of them have no knowledge of Albanian or they are more fluent in Greek than Albanian (*The Economist*, 2012). Furthermore, Albania, despite economic improvement over the last decade still ranks as one of the poorest countries in Europe facing high unemployment, widespread corruption, powerful organized crime networks, etc. (*Economy Watch*, 2012).

In defining Pontic Greeks the notion of repatriation and their Greekness is of great importance although they have never lived in Greece. They are descendants of the ancient Hellenic communities of the southern shores of the Black Sea, who were scattered by Stalin to different areas of the Soviet Union. Although they lived in different countries, these ethnic Greeks have retained the Greek culture, language, religion and customs throughout centuries (Georgas and Papastylianou, 1996). Returning to their ancestral home Pontics are considered as Greek ethnic migrants, encouraged mostly by the state and benefiting from privileged policies such as acquiring Greek nationality. However, they face very similar problems in terms of integrating into Greek society to other migrant groups. These include 'structural' difficulties, such as housing in less affluent areas, residential segregation and severe difficulties entering the labor market with qualifications acquired in the origin counties, sociocultural difficulties such as language problems, and psychological and emotional problems, including differences in socialization, mentality and expectations between newcomers and hosts (Hess, 2010). Thus, these ethnic Greeks, like other immigrant groups are confronted with the typical migration and acculturation process.

Previous research indicates that general satisfaction of immigrant groups is lower than that of natives (Verkuyten, 2008). Aside from factors such as lower income, or other immigration related problems with the new surroundings, such as the new language, everyday life in the country of settlement raises questions of acculturation: such as the way in which immigrants prefer to relate to the society of settlement (cultural adoption) and the country of origin (cultural maintenance) (Celenk and Van de Vijver, 2011) with regard to attitudes, behaviors and cultural identity. There is evidence that heritage culture identification and mainstream culture identification make different contributions to immigrants' adjustment (Ward et al., 2001). Identification with heritage culture is associated with better psychological adjustment and higher life satisfaction, while immigrants who are more oriented towards the mainstream culture may be subject to increased stressors, such as the lack of supportive networks, and may be at greater risk of depression and lower levels of life satisfaction.

However, other studies (Nguyen et al., 1999; Phinney et al., 2001) report

that the degree to which one adopts mainstream cultural values contributes to psychological adjustment. In this sense, the positive interactions with members of the host culture can improve life satisfaction, since it is easier to acquire basic social skills such as learning a new language and dealing with daily problems of living and getting a job, especially in Greece which has only recently experienced multiculturalism (Besevegis and Pavlopoulos, 2008). According to acculturation theory, high orientation towards heritage culture involves minimal learning for features of the new society, combined with maximal retention of features of one's heritage culture (Berry, 2011). The avoidance of learning from the country of adoption can result in defensive attempts to cope with anxieties concerning acculturation, such as the pressure of assimilation, discrimination, stereotypes, etc., leading people to turn towards their own group.

Based on the previously discussed literature of life satisfaction, which showed that it decreases during the course of the financial crisis and furthermore it is related to immigration difficulties and the acculturation process, we expected the following trajectory of the life satisfaction of immigrants:

Hypothesis 1: Immigrants (Albanians and Pontic Greeks) are expected to show lower levels of life satisfaction than Greeks, before and after the financial crisis. The literature supports that immigrants are exposed not only to negative consequences of the financial crisis; they also differ from natives with respect to immigration difficulties, which can account for their life satisfaction.

Hypothesis 2: Immigrants who are more involved in the mainstream culture, are expected to exhibit higher levels of life satisfaction than immigrants reporting higher levels of heritage culture maintenance at first and second measures. We assume that immigrants reporting more involvement in their heritage culture are more exposed to adaptation difficulties in the host culture as well as to the consequences of the financial crisis.

METHOD

Participants

Overall, 879 people recruited from the wider area of Athens, aged from 18 to 67 years ($M = 35.76$, $SD = 9.45$), participated in this study. The first group comprised 359 (40.8 per cent) participants, 219 (61 per cent) Greek people, 75 (20.9 per cent) Albanian immigrants and 65 (18.1 per cent)

Pontic Greeks. Data was collected in 2008. The second group consisted of 520 (59.2 per cent) participants, 303 (58.3 per cent) Greek people, 114 (21.9 per cent) Albanian immigrants and 103 (19.8 per cent) Pontic Greeks. There were no significant differences regarding participant's age. Of the 359 participants before the crisis, 166 (46.2 per cent) were males and 193 (53.8 per cent) females (Greeks: 109 males and 110 females; Albanians: 31 males and 44 females; Pontics: 26 males and 39 females). The second group after the crisis consisted of 257 (49.4 per cent) males and 263 (50.6 per cent) females (Greeks: 150 males and 153 females; Albanians: 57 males and 57 females; Pontics: 50 males and 53 females). There were no differences regarding the gender of participants.

Procedure

Data collection took place before (2008) and after (2011) the financial crisis in Greece. The questionnaires were administered individually to every participant after having obtained his/her cooperation. Each participant was given a randomly ordered questionnaire packet that required them to answer questions. It was emphasized that the data were anonymous, the participation was voluntary and that there was no obligation to participate or to continue participating.

Measures

All questionnaires were translated and back translated from Greek into Albanian and Russian by bilingual speakers. Well-being was measured with the satisfaction with life scale (Pavot and Diener, 1993). This scale assesses satisfaction with the respondent's life as a whole on the basis of their unique set of criteria. The 5 items are global (for example, 'In most ways my life is close to my ideal', 'The conditions of my life are excellent', 'I am satisfied with my life', 'So far I have gotten the important things I want in my life', 'If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing'). The questions were measured on a five-point Likert scale, with one indicating 'strongly disagree' and five 'strongly agree'. The values of Cronbach's alpha coefficients for life satisfaction varied from 0.82 (Pontics), 0.80 (Greeks) to 0.70 (Albanians). According to Pavot and Diener (1993) the satisfaction with life scale has a potential cross-cultural index of life satisfaction.

Immigrants acculturation was measured using an adapted version of the Vancouver index of acculturation (Ryder et al., 2000). The 18 item version used in this study assesses the heritage and mainstream dimensions of acculturation. The two dimensional framework enables us to investi-

gate the integration into two cultures separately. Items were in pairs with regard to different life domains (everyday life style, global involvement, group interaction), with one item in each pair referring to heritage and to Greek culture. Examples of items include 'I am interested in maintaining or developing the tradition of my heritage culture', 'I am interested in Greek traditions'. Each item has a 5-point Likert style rating. Every subscale yields an overall rating of involvement to heritage and to mainstream Greek culture, with a rating of 1 indicating a low degree of culture involvement and a rating of 5 indicating a high degree of culture involvement. In the present sample, the Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the Albanian immigrants were $\alpha = 0.84$ for heritage dimension and $\alpha = 0.75$ for mainstream dimension. For Pontic Greeks, the coefficients for heritage and mainstream dimensions were 0.79 and 0.65 respectively.

RESULTS

Life Satisfaction by Ethnicity Before and After the Crisis

We used univariate analysis of variance to investigate the differences between groups (2 before/after X3 (Greeks, Albanians, Pontics) on a measure of life satisfaction. According to the results, there were significant differences between first (before the crisis) and second (after the crisis) measures of life satisfaction $F(1, 852) = 16.36, p < 0.001, \eta^2 = 2\%$. The mean of life satisfaction of respondents after the crisis was lower than before. Regarding ethnicity, Greeks seemed to show higher levels of life satisfaction than Albanian and Pontics before and after the crisis $F(1, 852) = 45.43, p < 0.001, \eta^2 = 9.7\%$. There was no significant interaction between two measures (before and after the crisis) and ethnicity. Furthermore there were no differences regarding gender and interaction of gender and ethnicity (Table 1.1).

Table 1.1 Means and standard deviations of life satisfaction before and after crisis according to ethnicity

Ethnicity	Before		After		Total	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Greeks	3.57	0.78	3.24	0.73	3.38	0.77
Albanians	3.08	0.87	2.78	0.71	2.89	0.78
Pontics	2.88	0.93	2.74	0.76	2.78	0.82
Total	3.37	0.86	3.04	0.77	3.17	0.82

Table 1.2 Means and standard deviations of heritage and mainstream dimensions of immigrant acculturation

Ethnicity	Albanians		Pontics		Total	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Heritage dimension	3.26	0.74	3.07	0.60	3.17	0.83
Mainstream dimension	3.24	0.67	3.12	0.59	3.18	0.64

Acculturation of Albanian Immigrants and Pontic Greeks Before and After the Crisis

We compared the means of the heritage and mainstream subscale of acculturation of Albanian immigrants and Pontic Greeks with regard to two measures, before and after the crisis. There were the same means of heritage and mainstream dimensions of acculturation of immigrants. These results suggest no ethnic differences on two dimensions of acculturation (Table 1.2).

The interaction of two measures (before and after the crisis) and ethnicity (Albanians and Pontics) indicated that the heritage-culture dimension of Albanian immigrants after the crisis was higher than before the crisis. On the contrary, the heritage dimension of Pontic Greeks was higher before the crisis than after the crisis $F(1, 334) = 8.47$, $p < 0.01$, $\eta^2 = 2.5\%$ (Figure 1.1). There was no interaction of measure and ethnicity regarding the mainstream dimension of acculturation of immigrants.

Prediction of the Well-being of Immigrants by Acculturation and Two Measures (Before and After the Crisis)

Regression analysis was used, in order to test the predicted pattern of well-being of immigrants against acculturation and time (before and after the crisis). Step 1 of the model included ethnicity, with the heritage dimension of acculturation entered at step 2. The interaction of the heritage dimension of acculturation with ethnicity was entered at step 3, mainstream dimension of acculturation was entered at step 4 and time (before and after the crisis) was entered at Step 5.

The low heritage dimension of acculturation was significantly related to a high level of life satisfaction $\beta = -0.63$, $t = -2.85$, $p < 0.01$, $R^2 = 3\%$. The interaction of heritage with ethnicity showed positive relations to well-being $\beta = 0.75$, $t = 2.25$, $p < 0.05$, $R^2 = 4\%$. The time before

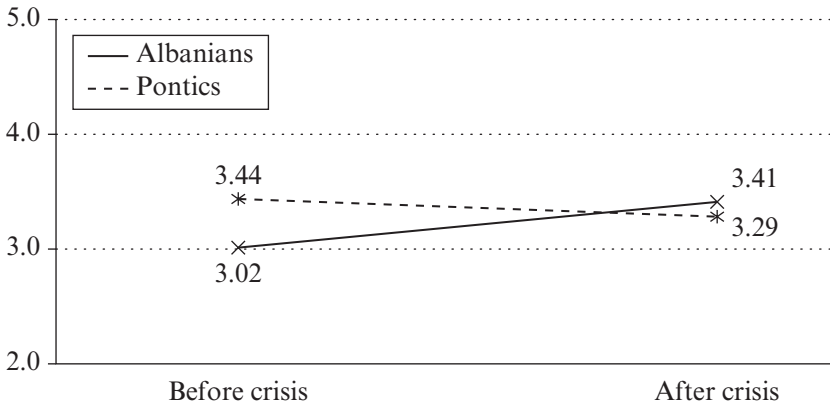


Figure 1.1 Interaction of measure (before and after crisis) and ethnicity (Albanians and Pontics) in the heritage dimension of acculturation

Table 1.3 Hierarchical regression for the prediction of well-being from acculturation and time (before and after crisis)

Prediction variables	Life satisfaction		
	β	t	Total R ²
1. Ethnic group	-.05	-.87	.01
2. Heritage dimension	-.63**	-2.85	.03
3. Interaction of heritage with ethnicity	.75*	2.25	.004
4. Mainstream dimension	.07	1.23	.014
5. Measures (before and after crisis)	-.63**	-2.65	.021

Note: * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$.

the crisis is related to higher well-being $\beta = -0.63$, $t = -2.65$, $p < .01$, $R^2 = 2.1\%$.

The interaction of the heritage dimension of acculturation by ethnicity in predicting life satisfaction indicated that Albanian immigrants who rated themselves high on the heritage dimension of acculturation were more likely to show lower levels of life satisfaction than those with a low score on this dimension. However, the same pattern was not observed with Pontic Greeks (Figure 1.2).

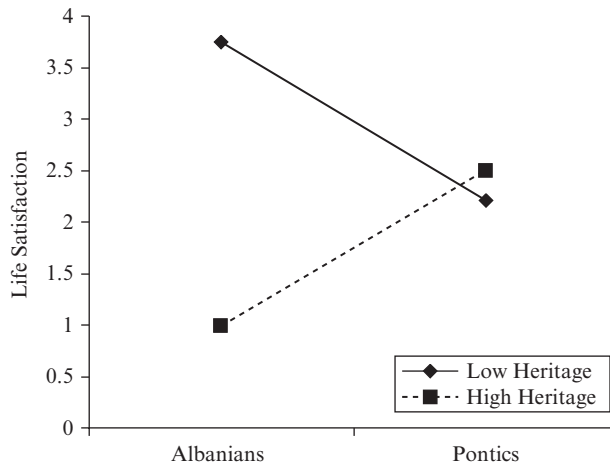


Figure 1.2 Interaction of the heritage dimension of acculturation with ethnicity in predicting life satisfaction

DISCUSSION

The present study examined whether life satisfaction of native Greeks and immigrants is different before and after the crisis and attempted to explain how acculturation orientation is related to immigrant's life satisfaction. By comparing natives' and immigrants' life satisfaction, we were able to show the lower level of life satisfaction of Albanian immigrants and Pontic Greeks versus native Greeks initially and after the crisis. Regarding the contribution of acculturation orientations on life satisfaction, the results indicate the negative relationship between the heritage dimension of acculturation and life satisfaction. However, this relationship is only exhibited among Albanian immigrants.

Comparing Native and Immigrants Life Satisfaction

As expected, Albanian immigrants and Pontic Greeks scored lower on life satisfaction than native Greeks, both initially and after the crisis. This is consistent with other studies showing that in different European countries and in Canada immigrants are less satisfied than natives, with the second generation even less satisfied than their parents (Burton and Phipps, 2010; Safi, 2010). Focusing on the mechanisms leading to such outcomes, researchers found low income to be an important reason for the lower subjective well-being of immigrants, explaining 20 to 30 per cent of

the gap. Personal income and unemployment are statistically significant and negatively correlated with life satisfaction (Safi, 2010). Furthermore, previous research revealed no significant improvement in life satisfaction for immigrants who reside much longer in the new country (Burton and Phipps, 2010).

According to Nguyen (2006), contemporary immigration takes place under the conditions of financial inequalities, the changes in the concentration of poverty and the continuous flow of immigrants. The widening gap between rich and poor make jobs not only low-income, but also less available to immigrants. There are also changes in poverty, which have become concentrated in the inner cities where immigrants settle. In addition, many countries are experiencing a continual replenishment of immigrants. For example, in the middle of an economic crisis, Greece continues to greet many immigrants from Africa and Middle East, due to social and political turmoil in these countries. Overall, socioeconomic disadvantages and other acculturation related factors, such as discrimination experienced by immigrants may have negative impacts on their life satisfaction (Verkuyten, 2008).

The second finding indicates that the financial crisis is associated with some equivalent negative changes to the life satisfaction of immigrants and native Greeks. According to adaptive theory, positive or negative circumstances have the potential to contribute positively or negatively to subjective well-being at a given time (Sheldon and Lyubomirsky, 2009). Previous research indicates the impact of the crisis on well-being. According to the Gallup well-being index in the USA, starting in January 2008 the emotional and life evaluation indices after the crisis dropped much earlier than other indices such as physical health, work environment, etc. (Askatas and Zimmermann, 2011). A previous cross-sectional study of unemployment in Greece has shown that unemployed individuals are less happy than employed individuals. Fifty per cent of unemployed people experienced higher levels of anxiety, trait and state anger and social dysfunction (Antoniou and Dalla, 2011). In another study (Antoniou and Dalla, 2009), unemployment for both native and Pontic Greeks was associated with high levels of neuroticism that encompasses facets of anxiety and impulsivity. When investigating the association between economic crisis and mental health in Greece, Giotakos et al. (2011) found significant correlations between unemployment and visits to the outpatients' department and emergency units of hospitals. In addition, the unemployment rate during the period 1981–2008 was positively associated with the number of homicides.

The Link Between Acculturation and Life Satisfaction of Immigrants

Psychologists recognize that the connection between life satisfaction and immigration may depend on a range of factors. For example, psychological adaptation referring to feelings of life satisfaction during cross-cultural transitions is positively related to identification with the origin culture; while a preference for integration or assimilation predicts better sociocultural adaptation such as successful daily living and contact with the host culture (Ward et al., 2001). Some other studies indicate positive relationships between integration or assimilation and psychological adaptation (Besevegis and Pavlopoulos, 2008). Following this assumption, we investigated whether two dimensions of acculturation, heritage culture identification and involvement in the host culture contribute differently to immigrants' life satisfaction. Taking into account the two immigrant groups, Albanian immigrants and Pontic Greeks, we found no relationship between the mainstream dimension of acculturation and life satisfaction. On the contrary, low involvement in the heritage culture is a positive moderator of life satisfaction of immigrants. Previous studies in Greece indicate that ethnic involvement has a negative effect on the adaptation of immigrants (Besevegis and Pavlopoulos, 2008). Albanian and Bulgarian immigrants preferring separation felt unwelcome, discriminated against and excluded from the host society (Dalla and Antoniou, 2011). Less acculturated individuals experience more cultural dissonance and conflict with the host culture during the acculturative process more than those who are assimilated (Tadmor et al., 2009), especially in societies with assimilative pressures toward immigrants. A lack of conflict between cultural identities is associated with greater psychological well-being (Downie et al., 2004).

There is evidence that the contribution of high heritage maintenance on life satisfaction varies among Albanian immigrants and Pontic Greeks. High levels of involvement of Albanian immigrants in the heritage culture is associated with lower levels of life satisfaction, whereas there was no effect of this nature for the life satisfaction of Pontic Greeks. According to these results, only Albanian immigrants with high orientation towards their heritage culture feel less happy than Pontic Greeks with high involvement in their background country. It seems that the effect of in-group identification on the life satisfaction of immigrants depends on their background country and the acculturation process does not take the same form for all immigrant groups (Bhatia and Ram, 2001). The prediction of a positive relationship between ingroup identification and psychological adaptation was only supported for Pontic Greeks.

The 'Greekness' of Pontics is part of their acculturation experience and is tightly knitted with a positive position in the ethnic hierarchy of the hosts. They belong to the first accepted ethnic group, as research on the ethnic hierarchy showed (Dalla and Motti-Stefanidi, 2010), although there are no differences in acculturation orientations between Pontics and Albanian immigrants. An important factor in the study of ethnicity, acculturation and psychological well-being in plural societies is the social capital as well as social networks and sense of trust (Heim et al., 2011). However, the presence of group differences on life satisfaction between native and Pontic Greeks indicates that the 'Greekness' appears to have no moderate effect on their psychological health. In this sense, it is important to consider other contextual factors that affect the life satisfaction of Pontic Greeks.

Regarding Albanian immigrants, it seems that the sense of belonging to the heritage group leads to dissatisfaction and feelings of unhappiness. They do not derive life satisfaction from their sense of belonging and sense of inclusion in their heritage country. Support for this finding may result from approach-avoidance conflict theory (Lewin, 1935) that involves two negative threats, fears or frustrations. Such conflicts face immigrants coming from socioeconomically disadvantaged countries and politically unstable regions who may feel uncertainty not only for their adoptive country, but also for their background country (Akhtar, 1999). Albanian immigrants with a high heritage of acculturation have to confront on the one hand, a high heritage maintenance, and on the other hand, the adaptation to their new country, or a high heritage maintenance and the distance from their motherland or their difficulty in return to their background country, due to economic situations. It is possible that failure to negotiate these representations can result in a problematic conflict described as 'caught between a rock and a hard place'. Because such conflicts are highly stressful, these may result in adverse mental health outcomes and low life satisfaction.

CONCLUSION

This study provides evidence that the life satisfaction of Greek people and immigrants in Greece has decreased as a result of the economic crisis. The findings show several similarities with previous surveys in countries with analogous economic problems (Askitas and Zimmermann, 2011). Relatively few studies have examined the life satisfaction of immigrant groups, especially after economic crisis. The current research indicated lower levels of life satisfaction of Albanian immigrants and Pontic Greeks

versus natives. Ethnic group identification seems to have a negative effect on the life satisfaction of Albanian immigrants. Future studies are expected to reveal the way in which how immigrants feel about their life in the country of settlement influences their general life satisfaction.

Furthermore, it is important to examine, for example, why Pontic Greeks that are more accepted than Albanian immigrants in Greece show lower satisfaction than natives. In conclusion, future studies are needed to reveal the association of economic crisis with mental health and life satisfaction. The most important concept to keep in mind for future research is that economic crisis is a traumatic transition that is accompanied by the increase in all of the psychological distress indicators, including general health, sadness and anxiety.

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