Building integration indices of immigrants in Greece: Definition, measurement and relations with sociodemographic factors

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Definition of indices for evaluating immigration policies in the Greek society

Partners
- National and Kadopistrian University of Athens
- Hellenic Statistical Authority
- Hellenic Migration Policy Institute
- International Migration Organization

Targeted areas of integration
- Labor market
- Housing and living conditions
- Health and social services
- Education
- Political participation
- Acculturation and psychosocial adaptation
Questions of relevance in the psychological study of immigration

Theoretical relevance
- Immigration as a naturally occurring experiment where psychological theories can be tested and further elaborated.
- Immigration as an applied field which calls for interdisciplinary cooperation among social scientists.

Social relevance
- Contribution of psychologists in dealing with important social problems.
- Two levels: societal (e.g., interventions) and institutional (e.g., policies).
Acculturation and adaptation

- **Acculturation**: the phenomena which result when groups of individuals from different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups (Redfield et al., 1936).

- **Adaptation**: the short- and long-term changes (affective, behavioral and cognitive) that derive from the acculturative processes. These are usually summarized in two domains, i.e., sociocultural and psychological (Berry, 1997, 2006).

- The study of acculturative processes is necessary in order to account for fragmented and inconsistent findings in the study of immigration (e.g., Koneru et al., 2007).
Three perspectives in studying acculturation (Ward, Bochner, & Furnham, 2001)

- **The stress and coping approach:** Considers cross-cultural transition as a series of stress-provoking life events that draw on adaptive resources and require coping responses.

- **The culture learning approach:** Views cultural competence as a process of learning the specific behavioral and social skills that are required to negotiate the new cultural milieu.

- **The social identification theories approach:** Draws on the literature of cultural identity and intergroup relations. Also, points to the importance of attitudes, values, expectations and attributions in intercultural encounters.
Acculturation framework (Berry, 1997, 2006)

Group level

- Society of origin
- Acculturating group
- Receiving society

Individual level

- Moderators PRIOR TO acculturation (e.g. age, gender, education, health, language, motivation and expectations)
- Psychological acculturation
  - Behavior changes
  - Acculturative stress
  - Psychopathology
- Adaptation
  - Psychological
  - Socio-cultural

Moderators DURING acculturation (e.g. type of contact, social support, coping strategies and resources)

Adaptation

Psychological Socio-cultural

Acculturation framework (Berry, 1997, 2006)
The case of immigration in Greece
The case of immigration in Greece

- Transition from the emigration to immigration experience since the early ’90s.

- The number of immigrants quintupled within 10 years (1991-2001). Proportion of immigrants estimated to excel 9% or 1,000,000 (non-documentated immigrants not included).

- Immigrants reside in areas all over the country. They usually occupy positions of low status (e.g., construction workers).

- About 60% of native Greeks reported that immigration is harmful (Public Issue, 2010). Greece has the second most negative profile in the EU in evaluating immigration (Eurobarometer, 2008).

- Recently (2010) legalization and citizenship has become easier, esp. for second generation immigrants. However, there are no cohesive, long-term, evidence-based policies.
Building acculturation and adaptation indices: Some methodological and research notes

- Selecting target groups: temporary vs. long-term immigrants, refugees, non-documentated immigrants...
- Reference group: other immigrants, natives
- Self-reports vs. objective measures
- Use of long vs. short scales
- Reliability, validity and comparability of indices
- Building upon already existing databases (e.g., 3-month labor market survey of EL.STAT.)
- Lack of official integration indices of psychological interest.
Participants

- Stratified sampling was used in order to obtain a representative data set in terms of immigrant population characteristics as well as their distribution across the host country, as it appears in EL.STAT records.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country of origin</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Age (mean)</th>
<th>Women (%)</th>
<th>Educ. (9/pts)</th>
<th>Length of Stay (yrs)</th>
<th>Urban (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>1,124</td>
<td>36.2</td>
<td>46.7</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>37.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E.U. new members</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>60.6</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>38.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Europe (non-E.U.)</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>39.8</td>
<td>64.4</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>61.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia, Africa, S.America</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>34.2</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>70.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,843</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>47.3</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>44.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Measures: Acculturation orientation

- **National (Greek) orientation** (3 items, $\alpha=0.76$). Relations with members of the host society, preference over the Greek lifestyle and identity.

- **Ethnic orientation** (3 items, $\alpha=0.71$). Relations with ingroup members, maintenance of own cultural traditions and identity.

![Bar chart showing acculturation and identity levels]

- National acculturation: 70
- National identity: 52
- National orientation (overall): 64
- Ethnic acculturation: 77
- Ethnic identity: 78
- Ethnic orientation (overall): 78
Measures: Psychological adaptation

- **Life satisfaction** (3 items, $\alpha=.82$). Perceived happiness, satisfaction with life, fulfilled expectations.

- **Mental health** (7 items, KR20=.70). Absence of psychological symptoms, e.g., headaches, insomnia, anxiety, weakness (*reversed coding*).
Measures: Sociocultural adaptation

- **Cultural competence** (6 items, $\alpha=.87$). Carrying out effectively everyday tasks and interactions, e.g., shopping, use of public transport, exchange with state authorities, etc.

- **Support networks** (6 items, $\alpha=.68$). Use of social services or informal resources (e.g., friends and neighbors) when in need.

![Graph showing cultural competence, support networks, and sociocultural adaptation (overall) with values 70, 60, and 65 respectively.]
Measures: Perceived discrimination

- **Personal discrimination** (2 items, $\alpha=.87$). Threat is perceived to be addressed against the self (*reversed coding*).

- **Group discrimination** (2 items, $\alpha=.87$). Undermining of identity is attributed to ethnic group membership (*reversed coding*).
Findings

- The descriptive statistics presented so far confirm the internal consistency of the indices and can serve as a baseline for future research.

- Further information relevant to the validity and interpretability of the scales will be explored by studying:
  - the correlation patterns between acculturation and domains of adaptation,
  - the variation of acculturation and adaptation as a function of sociodemographic factors, and
  - the complex relationships of acculturation and adaptation with other important, non-psychological integration indices of immigrants.
Links between acculturation and adaptation

- **National orientation** was related to increased **life satisfaction** ($r = .39, p < .001$), higher **cultural competence** ($r = .50, p < .001$), and lower level of **perceived discrimination** ($r = -.22, p < .001$).

- **Ethnic orientation** had a positive relationship with **perceived discrimination** ($r = .15, p < .001$); apart from this weak finding, it did not co-vary with any adaptation index.

- The relationship between **national** and **ethnic orientation** was negative, but of trivial magnitude ($r = -.10, p < .001$).

- Significant coefficients were found between domains of adaptation towards expected direction. Moreover, links of **perceived discrimination** with adaptation indices emerged, though of low to moderate size.
Acculturation and adaptation as a function of sociodemographic factors

- A series of multivariate ANOVAs tested for the effect of sociodemographic factors on acculturation and adaptation indices. These factors included country of origin, level of urbanization in the area of residence, length of stay in the host country, education level and sex.

- Because of the large sample, only effect sizes (not the actual significance levels) will be presented.

- It should be noted that these analyses do not reveal causal relationships and require caution in their interpretation since demographic variables are difficult to disentangle in many occasions.
Acculturation and adaptation indices of immigrants as a function of country of origin

![Graph showing acculturation and adaptation indices](image)
Acculturation and adaptation indices of immigrants as a function of urbanization level

Acculturation and adaptation indices of immigrants as a function of urbanization level.
Acculturation and adaptation indices of immigrants as a function of length of stay

- National orientation
- Ethnic orientation
- Life satisfaction
- Mental health
- Cultural competence
- Support networks
- Perceived discrimination (reversed)

η² values: 0.08, 0.03, 0.05, 0.07, 0.01, 0.02
Acculturation and adaptation indices of immigrants as a function of education level

- National orientation
- Ethnic orientation
- Life satisfaction
- Mental health
- Cultural competence
- Support networks
- Perceived discrimination (reversed)

η² = .02  (Primary)
η² = .01  (Secondary)
η² = .01  (Higher)
Acculturation and adaptation indices of immigrants as a function of sex

Acculturation and adaptation indices of immigrants as a function of sex.
Acculturation and adaptation as a function of sociodemographic factors: summary

- Long-term immigrants, Albanians, and those residing in rural areas (vs. newcomers, immigrants from Africa, Asia or South America, and those who live in big cities) revealed a more positive pattern of acculturation and adaptation, esp. in what concerns national orientation, life satisfaction and cultural competence.

- Education level seemed to relate more with acculturation, rather than with adaptation.

- Sex had the weakest effect on acculturation and adaptation, compared to other demographic variables.
Acculturation and adaptation profiles of immigrants, as they emerged using cluster analysis, were studied in relation to a set of non-psychological integration indices:

- **Income.** A combination of objective (i.e., monthly salary) and subjective (i.e., compared to one’s needs) measures.
- **Living conditions.** Level of satisfaction with the quantity and quality of in-house facilities.
- **Physical health problems.** A composite of positive answers to health-related life events.
- **Political participation.** Being involved in political parties, unions, NGOs or ethnic associations.
- **Language competence.** Greek language skills in oral and written communication.
Acculturation and adaptation profiles (results of cluster analysis)

- Integration (42.6%)
- Ethnic (19.8%)
- National (7.0%)
- Diffuse (29.9%)

The chart shows the Z-scores for various factors across different acculturation profiles.
Acculturation and adaptation profiles in relation to non-psychological indicators

Integration                 \( \eta^2 = .07 \)
Ethnic                      \( \eta^2 = .08 \)
National                    \( \eta^2 = .08 \)
Diffuse                     \( \eta^2 = .02 \)

Income                      \( \eta^2 = .16 \)
Living conditions           \( \eta^2 = .07 \)
Health problems             \( \eta^2 = .08 \)
Political participation      \( \eta^2 = .02 \)
Language competence         \( \eta^2 = .16 \)
Adaptation profiles of immigrants were largely defined on the basis of their acculturation orientation. The terminology proposed by Berry & colleagues (2006) was successfully adopted.

As expected, integration produced the most favorable psychological pattern. Interestingly, support networks seemed to be activated by poorly adapted immigrants.

Integration and, to a lesser extent, the national profile were related to more positive non-psychological outcomes. The ethnic and, especially, diffuse profiles were positioned towards the negative pole, i.e., lower income, worse living conditions, more health problems and lower language skills.
Conclusions

- The indices produced in this project fill in a gap in the study of immigration in Greece; they can serve as a valuable tool in guiding evidence-based policies and interventions.

- In line with previous findings (e.g., Besevegis & Pavlopoulos, 2008; Motti-Stefanidi et al., 2008; Pavlopoulos et al., 2010), national orientation proved to be a more important predictor of adaptation than ethnic involvement.

- Immigrants in Greece do not form a homogenous group; their acculturation and adaptation varies primarily in relation to context variables (e.g., cultural distance, density of residence) and less so as a function of individual characteristics (e.g. sex, education level). This situation demands for focused interventions, in addition to general policies.
Strengths, limitations and future directions

- The methodology of the project (large representative sample, interdisciplinary approach) allows for a deeper understanding of acculturation and adaptation of immigrants.

- However, little is known about non-documented immigrants because they are not included in most studies.

- Replication of findings is strongly suggested since immigrant population is constantly changing, esp. in the light of the present economic crisis in Greece. State institutions, such as EL.STAT., may undertake this task on a periodical basis.

- Causal relations cannot be established using a correlational design. Longitudinal studies are necessary, although quite difficult to carry out with a population of high mobility.
Thank you for your attention!

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References