THE IMPLICATIONS OF MIGRATION, ADAPTATION, AND SETTLEMENT IN A NEW WORLD: A SPECIAL FOCUS ON GREEK-AMERICAN IMMIGRANTS

Marina A. Argyropoulos
B.S., California State University, Sacramento, 2004

THESIS

Submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK

at

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SACRAMENTO

SPRING 2011
THE IMPLICATIONS OF MIGRATION, ADAPTATION, AND SETTLEMENT IN A NEW WORLD: A SPECIAL FOCUS ON GREEK-AMERICAN IMMIGRANTS

A Thesis

by

Marina A. Argyropoulos

Approved by:

__________________________________, Committee Chair
Susan Talamantes Eggman, Ph.D., M.S.W.

__________________________________, Second Reader
Joyce Burris, Ph.D., M.S.W.

__________________________________________________________
Date
Student: Marina A. Argyropoulos

I certify that this student has met the requirements for format contained in the University format manual, and that this thesis is suitable for shelving in the Library and credit is to be awarded for the thesis.

Teiahsha Bankhead, Ph.D., L.C.S.W.

Division of Social Work
Abstract

of

THE IMPLICATIONS OF MIGRATION, ADAPTATION, AND SETTLEMENT IN A NEW WORLD: A SPECIAL FOCUS ON GREEK-AMERICAN IMMIGRANTS

by

Marina A. Argyropoulos

This exploratory and qualitative study examines and explores the migratory experiences of Greek-American immigrants. The participants in this study consisted of 16 adult Greek-American immigrants who have resided in America ranging from 14 to 62 years. The design of this study was based on a semi-structured format and face-to-face interviews. This research was conducted in order to obtain a greater understanding and awareness on the implications and challenges of migration. The focus of this thesis was centered on the concept of loss and grief related to migration, which appears to have parallel similarities in comparison with the theoretical framework of grief related to bereavement. Also, migratory challenges as well as protective factors and resources such as continuing bonds with the native country and resilience, were identified in this research, which could potentially assist newly arrived immigrants with the adaptation and settlement in the new country.

____________________________

, Committee Chair

Susan Talamantes Eggman, Ph.D., M.S.W.

____________________________

Date
DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, Nouli & Katina, who gave me the tools to expand my light and soul.

And to my God. For always believing in me.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to all of those who supported me and encouraged me throughout the process of creating and writing this thesis. First, I would like to thank the 16 Greek-American immigrants who participated in this research. Without them, this thesis would not have been completed. I would also like to thank my thesis advisor, Professor Susan Eggman, for her guidance and assistance, and Dr. Joyce Burris for taking the role of the Second Reader. A huge thank you goes to my loving relationship, friends, and colleagues for their enormous support and positivity. Lastly, I would like to thank all my family members and especially my sister, who has always been by my side despite life’s challenges.

“In order to succeed, we must first believe that we can.”
- Nikos Kazantzakis
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dedication</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgments</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Tables</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background and Statement of the Research Issue</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of the Study</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical Framework</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition of Terms</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assumptions, Justification, and Limitations</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. LITERATURE REVIEW</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migration</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss of Homeland</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coping, Adapting, and Adjusting in the New World</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. METHODS</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview Procedures and Instruments</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF TABLES

Page

1. Table 1 Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Participants ........................................34
2. Table 2 Bereavement Grief & Migratory Grief ..................................................................49
Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Throughout history, immigrants represented and continue to represent a significant percentage of the world’s population. One of the immigrant groups that began its settlement in the 1800s in many different countries of the world, such as the United States and Australia, is the Greek population. According to the 2007 U.S. Census Bureau estimation, there are over 1,380,000 people of Greek ancestry living in the United States. Thousands of Greeks came to the United States in the 1950s and 1960s to seek a better life. Many of them returned home 30-40 years later once Greece joined the European Nation where the economy was booming until recently. The recession began to appear in Greece in 2008, which forced the country to acquire over 100 billions of Euros in loans from other European countries. This financial situation became the catalyst, once again, for creating a new wave of emigration by young Greeks between the ages of 22 and 35 to seek a better future in other countries (Kitsantonis, 2010).

Despite the reason for immigration (political, financial, or educational) migrating to a new country usually involves elements of personal loss as well as significant physical and psychological adaptation (Bhugra & Becker, 2005; Lijtmaer, 2001). Immigrants tend to experience a process of adjustment and acculturation to achieve full integration into their new society and this process can have a considerable effect on an immigrant’s way of life and mental health (Casado & Leung, 2002). As a Greek immigrant myself, my first years in the United States were very difficult and challenging. I immigrated to the
United States with my family at the age of 15 when I had to experience many personal and cultural symbolic losses such as the loss of my homeland, relatives and friends, primary language, and societal norms.

Living in a new country I had to struggle on a continuous basis to achieve a balance between maintaining my cultural/ethnic identity and adjusting in an unfamiliar country and way of life. This transition caused much psychological and emotional distress because I always strived to fit in between two worlds. After a few years, I was finally able to achieve a balance by using my resilience, my support system, and by just accepting that I can have continuing bonds with my country while living in another. This personal experience prompted me to wonder how other Greek immigrants were able to cope, adjust, adapt, and settle in a different world.

**Background and Statement of the Research Issue**

Migration is a geographical, psychological, and social transition that can ignite grieving reactions, emotional distress, and psychological pathology due to the loss of homeland and challenges of resettlement (Bhugra, 2004; Lee, 2010). Social workers, mental health counselors, and medical professionals working with immigrants must be attuned to any social, psychological, and cultural factors related to migration because research has shown that challenges and demands faced in the host country (i.e., employment, language, housing, differences in cultures, loss of identity, migratory grief, and unresolved mourning over the loss of one’s country of origin) can cause a decrease in
psychological functioning as well as mental health complications such as depression and anxiety (Bhugra, 2004; Casado & Leung 2002; Stubley, 2009; Breslau et al., 2011).

Further research emphasizes that the preservation of cultural elements, social/material/personal resources (e.g., family, community, employment, hope, optimism), and mourning the loss of the homeland - - but also having continuing bonds with the country of origin - - could assist with the migrant’s adaptation process in the new country (Henry et al., 2009). Therefore, any implications and challenges due to migration must be taken into serious consideration because mental, psychological, and social complications can arise in an immigrant’s life while trying to adjust in a new and unfamiliar world.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to examine and explore the implications and challenges of migration as well as any factors assisting in the process of adaptation and settlement in the United States based on the experiences of Greek-American immigrants. This research aims to assist any newly arrived immigrant who might be experiencing challenges and changes associated with immigration and/or is trying to accomplish a better and smoother adjustment and transition in the United States.

**Theoretical Framework**

Relating to the concept of grief, scholars and researchers have applied different theories of grief and mourning over the loss of culture, people, and other personal elements left behind in the homeland as a result of immigration. Reactions to migratory
losses and migratory grief appear to be very similar to the reactions, expressions, and processes of bereavement grief as mentioned in Parkes’ (1996) theoretical work and contribution on the loss and course of grief related to the passage of a loved one (Gonzalez, 2005). According to Parkes, the process of grief experienced by the survivors after the death of a loved one usually involves ‘pangs of grief’ (episodes of severe anxiety and psychological pain), which subside after the passage of time but could be triggered or re-evoked by events or memories related to the loss even after years of bereavement. Parkes mentions that at the beginning of the grieving process there is an experience of denial or a disbelief that a loss has occurred. Also, numbness or blunting, shock, arousal, and alarm (feelings of panic and stress) could take place during this stage.

The second stage of grief is searching (pining), which is a restless activity and desire of the bereaved person to find in possible locations the lost person/object. Searching consists of tension, restless movement, preoccupation with thoughts of the lost person/object, development of a perceptual set for that person/object, loss of interest in personal appearance and other attentive matters, calling for that person/object, and attention is directed towards those parts of the environment in which the lost person/object is likely to be. Parkes also mentions that mitigation can evolve during searching, which can provide a comfort sense to the bereaved person based on the feeling or impression that the lost one is around even if not physically seen or heard.

Moreover, the author emphasizes that feelings of anger, irritability, bitterness, and guilt (blaming self or others for the situation) can arise, which usually vary from one
person to another and are classified as a non-continuous state. A period of
disorganization and despair filled with uncertainty and apathy takes place once searching
diminishes and/or once the intense pangs of grief subside. During this phase, depression
becomes the leading motion. This period of disorganization is not a clear-cut phase of
grief but could reoccur in different contexts. Finally, recovery (in terms of gaining a new
identity) is achieved when the bereaved person starts looking at the future and regains
interest in the world through changes in roles and new experiences.

According to the Continuing Bonds model of grief and loss related to
bereavement by Silverman and Klass (1996), the bereaved individuals usually find
comfort and solace when their relationship with the deceased is not completely detached
but is constantly reconstructed in a new way or in a new relationship. For the purpose of
this study, death will be symbolized as the loss of the homeland and the survivor will be
symbolized as the immigrant. This concept would emphasize that when immigrants lose,
grieve and mourn their native country, they tend to incorporate the lost elements from
their culture of origin such as language, personal identity, social support networks,
religion, and traditions into their new life structure. Specifically, the lost culture is not
abandoned but instead becomes a vital entity in the immigrant’s experience of grieving
and mourning. Therefore, instead of “letting go” of any lost cultural elements, this model
of bereavement suggests that the bereaved immigrants have an essential bond with these
elements and continue to preserve this bond in order to assist them in facing the new
reality of immigration and resettlement (Henry et al., 2009; Henry, Stiles, & Biran, 2005; Silverman & Klass, 1996).

Even though immigration can be a difficult and stressful life event, adaptation can take place when resilience is used in life-changing situations. Resilience has been defined as a “successful adaptation or the absence of a pathological outcome following exposure to stressful or potentially traumatic life events or life circumstances” (Seery, Holman, & Silver, 2010, p. 1025). In addition, resilience can be demonstrated when an individual has the capacity to use any psychological, social, and physical resources to protect their well-being (Psychological Resilience, n.d.). Literature findings further suggest that resilience factors such as pre-migration preparation, social support, occupation, religion, and personal strengths (i.e., optimism, development of self-confidence) can assist the individual with the process of adaptation and adjustment in the new country (American Psychological Association, 2010; Bhugra, 2004).

**Definition of Terms**

This study concentrates on the following terms: migration, Greek-Americans, loss and grief due to migration, and adaptation. It must be noted that the following terms have been defined and included in different literature and will be analyzed in more a detailed context throughout this thesis.

Migration is referred to as the physical movement by humans from one area to another. A Greek-American is someone of Greek descent living in America. Loss is the
act or instance of losing something of value. Grief is a response or a reaction to a loss. Migratory adaptation is the process of relocating to a new socio-cultural context.

For the purpose of this study, the terms migration and Greek-American imply any first-generation male or female adults of Greek descent who immigrated from Greece, have lived in the United States for at least the past five years, and are currently residing in Sacramento or Placer County. Loss refers to any physical and symbolic losses (e.g., friends, language) experienced by the Greek-Americans due to migration. Grief refers to any emotions, reactions, or responses also experienced by the Greek-Americans due to the migratory losses. Adaptation refers to any helpful coping skills or resources Greek-Americans have used to overcome any grief or loss related to migration and which have assisted them in reorganizing or rebuilding their lives in the United States.

**Assumptions, Justification, and Limitations**

Based on my personal experience and literature findings (as mentioned in the literature review section of this thesis), it is assumed that many people who migrate to another country tend to experience loss and grief related to migration, which can have a significant effect on an immigrant’s life. Furthermore, for an immigrant to be able to adapt and adjust in a new country it is assumed that a process of mourning and a bridging between the familiar and the new culture need to take place. In addition, certain skills and resources such as resilience, social support, and preservation of the native culture are considered helpful when an immigrant settles permanently in another country. I also believe that the experience of immigration can make an individual have a stronger, more
flexible, and a greater positive outlook on life by learning to have continuing bonds with her or his country of origin while living in and recognizing the culture of the new country.

It must be noted that immigration has always been and continues to be an essential component in every part of the world. This study gathered and explored the experiences based on a limited number of Greek-Americans residing in the United States. The intent of this study is to achieve a better understanding, knowledge, insight, and awareness on the implications of migration as well as any other protective factors used as skills or resources for adaptation. Therefore, the results of the research could significantly contribute to the skills, competency, training, and education of any social work, mental health, or medical professional who will be working with immigrants.
Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This literature review concentrates on the effects of migration, which tend to majorly influence an immigrant’s emotional, psychological, and mental state. A special focus is given to the issue of loss and grief due to migration. Factors for successful coping and adjustment in the new world for immigrants are also reviewed. The following themes and subthemes are discussed: migration (acculturation), loss of homeland and subsequent reactions (grief, cultural bereavement, grieving and mourning, and mental health), and adjustment/adaptation in the new world (the role of personal and material resources, social/familial support and spirituality, and preservation of ethnic/cultural identity).

Migration

On a daily basis, millions of people from all over the world migrate and disperse to different countries. Migration has received significant attention from many authors and scholars on multiple dimensions and has been viewed as a significant contributor for the influence in today’s diversity of races, cultures, and ethnicities. Migration has also been considered to be more than a geographical transition, more than a movement, and more than a process of settling in another country, region, or place of residence. Migration has been viewed as a major psycho-social transition and a stressful event that involves various challenges, losses, and changes to one’s identity and environment.
It has been noted that the process of migration usually involves three stages for migrants to resettle (either temporarily or permanently) in new locations based on various reasons such as political, familial, economic, educational, social, and/or religious. The stages of the process of migration, if the individual decides to relocate voluntarily, entail: (a) a pre-migration stage, which includes the decision and preparation of the movement and relocation, (b) a migration stage, which is the actual physical relocation, and (c) a post-migration stage, which involves the process of transition, adjustment, and adaptation of the migrant into a new society and way of life (Bhugra & Jones, 2001; Cheng & Chang, 1999; Ryan, Dooley, & Benson, 2008; Tummala-Narra, 2009).

Furthermore, the classification and specific distinction of migrants is mostly based on the status of voluntary and involuntary decisions. Specifically, individuals are classified as immigrants and/or sojourners (i.e., international students who have a plan to return to the country of origin) when their decision to move to another country is voluntary. Individuals are classified as refugees when their decision to change locations is involuntary or are forced to migrate in order to escape prosecution (Berry, 1997; Bhugra & Becker, 2005; Cheng & Chang, 1999).

Despite the reason for migration, all individuals who immigrate to another country tend to face various challenges and changes in their new life such as adjusting to a new language; adapting to an unfamiliar environment and society; acquiring new
information and daily living skills; gaining exposure to different customs, norms, climate, laws, and regulations; finding occupation, employment, or housing; acquiring financial resources; and most importantly, experiencing cultural uprooting such as leaving behind strong supportive familial and social networks, and acculturation (Aroian, 1990; Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006; Jafari, Baharlou, & Mathias, 2010; Khan & Watson, 2005; Lee, 2010; Schneller, 1981).

**Acculturation**

It has been noted that as immigrants begin their resettlement in a new country, a process of acculturation begins when two groups with different cultures come into continuous contact and have encounters with each other that result in cultural changes; or, when an individual integrates new cultural traits while maintaining elements from his/her culture of heritage. The process of acculturation involves two major issues that concentrate on the immigrant’s desire to maintain his/her native culture and the degree to which s/he would like to connect or be involved with the host society. Four strategies are related to acculturation: assimilation, separation/segregation, marginalization, and integration. Assimilation refers to when an individual abandons his/her own cultural identity and prefers the dominant/host culture’s cultural identity. Separation/segregation is the opposite of the assimilation strategy and refers to when the individual maintains only his/her original cultural identity and/or if s/he is not interested in accepting the dominant culture. Marginalization refers to the concept in which no interest is shown by an individual to accept any of the two cultural identities. Integration (or biculturism)
refers to the maintenance and involvement of both identities from the country of origin and from the host culture, and is seen as the only strategy that contributes less stress to the immigrant’s experience with settlement and adaptation in the new society (Berry et al., 2006; Bhugra, 2005; Laroche, Kim, & Hui, 1997; Madianos, Gonidakis, Ploubidis, Papadopoulou, & Rogakou, 2008).

It has been acknowledged that migrants who settle in a culture similar to their own and who do not feel unaccepted by the dominant culture nor is their cultural identity challenged by labels such as “minority” or “alien,” tend to face less challenging demands, fewer negative psycho-social occurrences of rejection, alienation and poor self-esteem, and fewer complications with adaptation and settlement (Akhtar, 1995; Alvarez, 1999; Bhugra & Becker, 2005; Ryan et al., 2008). For example, a move from Canada or Australia to the United States would not be the same as a move from Korea or Romania due to the distinct differences in language, customs, and traditions (Akhtar, 1995).

Furthermore, migrants are not only influenced by the process of acculturation, but they also have to confront emotional and psychological changes associated with migration that could involve a diverse set of feelings such as excitement, hope, curiosity, and happiness as well as expressions of grief and distress such as worry, anxiety, pain, sadness, nostalgia, disorganization, disorientation, alienation, and isolation. Such feelings are usually mixed due to the changes in one’s environment and experience of loss created by the life-changing event of immigration (Arredondo-Dowd, 1981; Bhugra

**Loss of Homeland**

People experience all kinds of loss throughout their lifetime, and migration involves many elements of personal losses. A spectrum of tangible and intangible elements and symbols from one’s country of origin, which are of significant value to an individual, can be lost due to migration and could initiate a process of grieving reactions and emotional distress (Casado & Leung, 2002; Casado et al., 2010). The loss of the mother language, home, attitudes, traditional values, customs, social structure, social support systems and family ties, status, job or income, environment, religion, and familiar objects and surroundings, may cause a significant effect on a migrant’s adjustment and transition to the new country (Bhugra & Becker, 2005; Casado & Leung, 2002; Henry et al., 2005). Other migration-related losses include: shared values, relationships and places of emotional significance, feelings of security and safety, connectedness to others, and a deep sense of loss of self-identity (Aroian, 1990; Lijtmaer, 2001; Marlin, 1994). These losses can initiate certain emotions, reactions, and responses, which can affect significantly an immigrant’s mental and emotional state.

**Migratory Grief**

Grief has been viewed as a normal emotion, reaction, and response to the losses associated with migration (Bhugra & Becker, 2005; Casado & Leung, 2002). The responses and reactions, which could lead to emotional, mental, psychological, and
sometimes problematic consequences, include: confusion, denial, despair, culture shock (centered around unpleasant feelings of anxiety due to the loss of familiar norms and unfamiliarity with what to do and when in the new host society), nostalgia and homesickness (the yearning, pain, longing, and desire to return to the culture of origin), “ethnocentric withdrawal” (devaluing the new host culture and idolizing the lost culture), “splitting” (devaluing and idealizing the country of origin and host country alternatively), challenges with adjustment, isolation, a deep sense of loss of security, disruption in self-identity and identity development (e.g., having to learn a new language), tendency to self-blame, clinging to lost elements of the native culture, and/or having difficulty making decisions (Akhtar, 1995; Arredondo-Dowd, 1981; Bryan, 2005; Henry et al., 2005; Henry et al., 2009; Lijtmaer, 2001; Murray, 2001; Tummala-Narra, 2009).

Literature and research have particularly emphasized that the loss of the mother language and the struggle to learn a new language are two factors that could contribute to a deep sense of self-identity loss, disorganization, despair, feeling lost (for not being able to communicate with others), and depressive symptoms (Casado & Leung, 2002; Gonzalez, 2005; Mirsky, 1991). The experience of migratory grief also entails a process of bereavement.

**Cultural Bereavement**

Cultural bereavement has been described as a type of grief reaction or of losing something meaningful primarily caused from the uprooting and loss of one’s social structure, way of life, and culture (Bhugra & Becker, 2005; Eisenbruch, 1991; Hardy-
Bougere, 2008). Eisenbruch (1991) conducted an ethnographic study on cultural bereavement in order to explore and measure the grief and bereavement through the experience and interpretation of Southeast refugees (Cambodians) settled in England, the United States, and Australia. The study found that refugees tend to experience cultural bereavement through a variety of feelings such as feelings of guilt over abandoning one’s culture and homeland, feelings of anxiety and/or anger, constant images of the past, preoccupation of the past, and feelings of pain if memories of the past are not kept alive.

In addition, literature and research suggest that mental health clinicians and general practitioners need to recognize and be attuned to cultural differences, bio-psycho-social factors (i.e., personality, age, gender, cultural and religious beliefs and practices, perception and reaction to loss, family, support), and expressions of loss and grief before a mental health or a physical diagnosis takes place (Bhugra & Becker, 2005; Clark, Marley, Hiller, Leahy, & Pratt, 2005; Eisenbruch, 1991; Gonzalez, 2005; Hardy-Bougere, 2008).

For example, Lock and Wakewich-Dunk (1990) conducted a study on 83 first-generation Greek-Canadian women in Montreal who had experienced the concept of nevra (nerves). Nevra, in this study, was described as feeling loss of control, anger, crying or “bursting out” that was usually accompanied by somatic symptoms such as headaches, pain, and dizziness. The study revealed that some of these symptoms were part of the women’s migratory experience with loss due to the involvement of certain factors such as a great longing and nostalgia for the homeland, familial and occupational
conditions, and changes in cultural environment. However, it is suggested that psychiatric and psychological attention must take into consideration all mental health and cultural aspects/factors before ruling out or creating clinical diagnoses (Bhugra & Jones, 2001; Lock & Wakewich-Dunk, 1990).

Literature also recommends being aware of any manifestation of unresolved or complicated grief especially if grief does not subside after a reasonable time, or if the symptoms (e.g. sadness) persist for more than two years due to stressful events and losses (Hardy-Bougere, 2008; Yeong, 2005). In case any symptoms related to grief and loss cause significant mental distress or impairment to one’s daily functioning then psychiatric evaluation might be warranted based on the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (4th ed., text rev; DSM-IV; American Psychiatric Association [APA], 2000). According to the DSM-IV (2000), grief and bereavement vary significantly among different cultural groups and a Major Depressive Disorder could be diagnosed if symptoms such as emptiness, insomnia, fatigue or loss of energy, and diminished ability to think or concentrate, continue to be present two months or more after the death and loss of a loved one.

Although the DSM-IV and other literature materials focus mainly on the grief process based on the loss of a deceased, findings from a qualitative study on the migratory experience of 12 Hispanic immigrant women, who resided in the United States from 2-10 years, found that there are more similarities than (slight) differences between grieving a deceased person and grieving the loss of a country (Gonzalez, 2005).
Therefore, it is recommended that close attention needs to be given to migrants who experience migratory grief because they can be easily misdiagnosed either due to: (1) the differences between their cultural experiences and the standardized clinical perceptions and classifications for mental health (DSM-IV), or (2) when there is no discussion between a therapist and the client about the difficulties associated with migration and fitting in between two different cultures (Alvarez, 1999; Bhugra & Becker, 2005).

Studies have found that one of the helpful things through which migrants can be assisted in restoring their sense of identity, building new relations in the new society, and reducing feelings of loss and grief is when: (a) they integrate some aspects of the majority culture into their new life to achieve balance and stability, (b) they make a connection between their physical and emotional losses and symptoms, and (c) their experiences are being validated within their cultural context (Alvarez, 1999; Bhugra & Becker, 2005; Boulanger, 2004; Marlin, 1994). However, in order for these suggestions and approaches to take form it appears that a process of grieving and mourning needs to take place.

**Grieving and Mourning**

Further research has been conducted to explore the topic of grieving and mourning in relation to immigration. For example, based on study with seven immigrant women of Pakistani origin (ages 28-44), who resided in Canada for less than one year and participated in a self-report demographic questionnaire and open-ended interviews, it was determined that these women experienced feelings of anger, frustration, and blame due to
the migratory losses, hardships (i.e. finding employment), and absence of a “sub community” in the host country (Khan & Watson, 2005).

These results concur with Schneller’s (1981) study that explored the process, phases, and symptoms of mourning based on the theoretical works on grief by Freud, Bowlby, and Parkes through 13 in-depth interviews of Soviet-Jewish immigrants. The immigrants resided in the United States from one month to a maximum of three years (this time period and length were considered to be sufficient by the author for the development of the mourning process). Schneller found that the first phase immigrants went through entailed emotions of anxiety, confusion, anger, physical stress (e.g., headaches, sleep disturbances), and a preoccupation or idealization of the lost culture. The immigrants also experienced a second phase, the disorganization phase, which included a shattered sense of identity/self accompanied with depression due to the disengagement, nostalgia and longing for the cultural lost objects. The third and final stage was found to be composed of challenges in integrating and adjusting into the new culture. The study also discovered that mourning the loss of a country is a longer process than mourning the loss of a loved one. This was indicated because 12 out of the 13 interviewees had not completed the mourning process involving pain and sadness from the loss of the homeland. In addition, it has been supported that any absence from significant moments with loved ones in the native country (i.e., death, weddings, baptisms) could still resurface even after many years of resettlement in the host country (Arredondo-Dowd, 1981; Schneller, 1981).
Moreover, in Schneller’s study, the male participants presented to have a more complete resolution of mourning than the female participants. This finding tends to correspond with an affirmation by Espin (1987) that migration has a different psychological impact on women than on men, which is influenced by social class, home subcultures, gender-roles, and psychological make-up (i.e., ego strength, decision making skills, ability to tolerate ambiguities, and resolution of feelings of loss).

Literature and research further suggest that acknowledging, accepting, and mourning the loss of the lost culture, in addition to preserving and integrating important aspects of one’s past (e.g., history, emotional ties), is a healthier response for “moving forward” with one’s life, recovering from the pain of grief, and adapting into the new settlement (Alvarez, 1999; Henry et al., 2005; Lijtmaer, 2001; Murray, 2001; Stubley, 2009). Some studies propose that an immigrant needs to confront and resolve the loss of his/her native country by detaching from the lost object and/or by abandoning any psychological and emotional ties with the country of origin in order to better adapt to the new country, reinvest in new relationships, and overcome any demands of resettlement (Aroian, 1990; Schneller, 1981).

However, more recent controversial findings suggest that there are positive and negative effects of a relationship between an immigrant and the emotional ties or continuing bonds the individual has with the lost native culture. These findings were based on two qualitative multiple case studies which focused on: (a) the experience and process of loss and mourning related to one’s native culture and immigration, (b) how
immigrants deal with the loss of their homeland and the continuing bonds they had with their native culture, (c) their perceptions of the host culture and the relationship between their native and host cultures, and (d) how immigrants use this experience of loss to adapt in their new host society (Henry et al., 2005; Henry et al., 2009). The aforementioned studies applied the assimilation model, which refers to psychological changes and psychological assimilation, and the continuing bonds model (Silverman & Klass, 1996), which refers to mourning in bereavement and suggests that immigrants integrate the mental representations of the lost elements such as values, language, and traditions of their culture of origin into their new resettlement (Russac, Steighner, & Canto, 2002). Arab, Chinese, Iraqi, and Mexican immigrants who had lived in the United States for at least eight years and came from collectivistic cultures participated in the research. The studies revealed that immigrants, at all stages of assimilation of loss and mourning, continue the emotional attachment they have with their native culture by incorporating rooted and cultural elements such as native language, values, traditions, identity, and customs into their new life structure.

The studies showed that all immigrants had continuing bonds with their native culture even if they had lived in the United States for more than 20 years. However, the degree of each immigrant’s acknowledgement and acceptance of loss provided a clearer picture on how it can impact the psychology, experience, and adjustment of the immigrant in a new country. Particularly, it was revealed that continuing bonds with the native culture can provide solace and assistance with the transition and adjustment into
the new country if the loss of the native culture is acknowledged and mourned. But inner (psychological or emotional) conflict can be created if the loss of the native culture is not mourned, or if the immigrant refuses to recognize the influence of the new culture, and/or if the immigrant is very attached or is having difficulty of letting go of things left behind in the culture of origin. This result could also create major difficulties and challenges with the process of grief, mourning, and adjustment into the host country. Specifically, psychological and mental health complications could manifest in the form of severe anxiety, nightmares, stress disorders, psychological distress, and depression (Casado & Leung, 2002; Hardy-Bougere, 2008; Stubley, 2009).

Based on the studies mentioned above it is suggested that: (a) a process of grief, mourning, and acceptance of the reality of losses could assist migrants with their emotional, mental, and psychological functioning because when a loss is processed and accepted then “the voices of the two cultures are linked via meaning bridges, and the continuing bonds seemed to become resources that could actively enrich the immigrant’s life in the new culture” (Henry et al., 2009, p. 279), and (b) connection, identification, continuity with cultural lost elements, and continuing bonds could provide either a sense of connection and solace with the culture of origin if they are preserved by the mourned immigrant, or, challenges (e.g., psychological distress) and disappointment could surface during the adaptation process in the new host society. Also, real or imagined returns and home visits to one’s country of origin could influence the process of mourning and coping with the migratory losses. These returns could provide immigrants the
opportunity to recreate aspects and characteristics of the original culture in the host culture (i.e., ethnic communities), or even to experience “emotional refueling” by maintaining ties and reconnections with aspects from their ethnic heritage and culture (Akhtar, 1995; Tummala-Narra, 2009).

**Influence of Migration and Migratory Grief on Mental Health**

An enormous and extensive amount of research revealed a strong association between migration, migratory grief, and mental health. Migration, along with other biological, social, and psychological variables such as lack of support or unacceptance by the host society, can impact a migrant’s well being. It could also produce or exacerbate feelings of alienation/isolation and psychological distress (a normal and temporary reaction and response to real life stress) due to the significant losses from migration, or when the host culture and original culture differ significantly (Bhugra, 2004; Cheng & Chang, 1999; Mirsky, Baron-Draiman, & Kedem, 2002).

Migration and grief in response to the loss of country and culture can affect in a high degree mental health (Casado & Leung, 2002; Cheng & Chang, 1999). When immigrants tend to experience a number of stressors related to immigration such as occupational and financial difficulties, differences in norms and values between the native culture and the host society (e.g., nutrition, clothing, sexual behavior), difficulties in readjustment and adaptation, lack of English, lack of social support, and loss of homeland (or difficulty coping with loss), then acculturative stress (result of uneasiness/worry due to life events and challenges from migration) and mental health
disorders could develop (Casado & Leung, 2002; Cheng & Chang, 1999; Jafari et al., 2010; Nasr, 2007). It has also been found that psychological stress related to migration reaches a high point at 27 months and then significantly declines at 44 months during resettlement (Ritsner & Ponizovsky, 1999).

Furthermore, migratory grief has been identified as a significant factor for psychological symptomology in various cultures (Casado & Leung, 2002; Lakatos, 1992). Specifically, a study conducted by Casado and Leung (2002) examined certain factors involving migratory grief and other demographic and social variables that could affect the psychological distress (depression) among elderly Chinese immigrants in the United States. A total of 150 Chinese immigrants between the ages of 55 and 86 years with a range of 0-40 years of residence in the United States participated in the study. Questionnaires and scales that measured migratory grief and loss, acculturation, and depression were used. One part of the study revealed that migratory grief has a significant relationship with psychological distress by contributing 41.5% of the variance. Immigrants who had a higher degree of migratory experience with loss and grief, lower English proficiency scores, were younger in age, and were attached to their homeland (e.g., home visits, difficulty letting go of cultural elements) were more likely to have depressive symptomology. Thus, it appears that migration and migratory grief are influential factors in an immigrant’s well-being.
Coping, Adapting, and Adjusting in the New World

Migrant adaptation has been defined by Ryan et al. (2008) as “the process through which persons reorganize or rebuild their lives after relocating to a new sociocultural context” (p. 2). Research and literature suggest that overcoming barriers associated with migration and acculturation such as learning a new language, finding employment, or receiving support from the community or social network, could lead to better adaptation or resettlement and to a lesser degree of social isolation, loss of self identity, and withdrawal (Aroian, 1990; Eisenbruch, 1990; Jafari et al., 2010; Schneller, 1981).

A study with in-depth interviews was conducted by Aroian (1990) who explored the migratory experiences, psychological and emotional reactions, and sources for adaptation, well-being, and resettlement of 25 Polish immigrants who had resided in the United Stated from four months to 39 years. Aroian (1990) found that the immigrants: (a) experienced loss and disruption for leaving their country, and (b) they considered that finding occupation, learning the host country’s main language, feeling at home (feeling at ease and familiar in a social structure) as well as being accepted by the host culture, were important factors for successful adaptation. All interviewees characterized their first experience with migration and resettlement as stressful but some positive experiences included self-growth and financial opportunities. Aroian further stated that even if many of the Polish immigrants were able to overcome and master some of the challenges such as language and employment, they still reported not feeling at home due to missing their
homeland (described as unresolved grief), or feeling that they were in between two worlds.

**Resources**

Some other important factors that have been mentioned to contribute to a successful adjustment, well-being, and emotional coping with migration, are suggested in a resource-based model of migrant adaptation. These include: (a) personal and skills-based resources such as health, mobility, energy, self-esteem, optimism, hope, self-efficacy, problem-solving, (b) material resources such as money, property, transportation, employment, (c) social resources such as supportive personal relationships, and (d) cultural resources such as literacy, education, and occupational skills (Chou, 2009; Prilleltensky, 2008).

According to Ryan et al. (2008), migration has a major impact on the individual’s resources and these resources are central to the migrant’s adaptation process. The process depends largely on the migrant’s ability to regain any lost resources (e.g. social support) and gain new resources applicable to the host environment (e.g. proficiency in the host language). Furthermore, individuals who tend to obtain and protect things they value or if they feel their resources are threatened to be lost, they most likely use strategies that deal with resource replacement or resource substitution. For example, these strategies involve the replacement of support from the home environment in the country of origin with support from friends, church members, and/or staff from community organizations in the host society (Hobfoll, 2001; Ryan et al., 2008).
**Social/Familial Support, and Spirituality**

Major emphasis has been given to social and familial support (resources someone can turn to for help), which have been recognized as potential psychological and emotional protective factors. These factors usually act against mental and psychological distress (e.g., feelings of loneliness), and serve as main support networks for immigrants (Levecque, Lodewyckx, & Bracke, 2009; Mirsky, 2009; Ponizovsky & Ritsner, 2004; Rivera, 2007). For example, Mirsky et al. (2002) conducted a follow-up study on 68 participants (ages 15-24, who had emigrated from the former Soviet Union to Israel) and found that family and friends were two of the main support networks in the new settlement. Moreover, social networking, social and familial support, religious practices, and ethnic organizations were also found to be helpful in the process of coping and adjusting in the new world as shown by two studies on Pakistani and Palestinian immigrant women (Khan & Watson, 2005; Sharon, 2001). Also, the continuation of practicing the native country’s religion/spirituality and the attendance at religious affiliation in an ethnic community have been acknowledged as some of the ways in order to cope with the host society’s challenges and emotional distress (Cheng & Chang, 1999; Jafari et al, 2010; Lee, 2010).

**Identity and Culture**

A person’s identity can be influenced due to migration (Lee, 2010; Ward & Styles, 2003). Ward and Styles (2003) support that a reinvention of the self can occur due to the migration process which could lead to either positive or negative consequences.
and changes as shown by a study conducted on 154 women who emigrated from the United Kingdom and Eire to Australia. A part of the study concluded that the majority of the participants who had experienced positive changes (in terms of growth in the self) felt more confident, stronger, and independent partly due to their interaction and integration into the community. However, the participants who reported no growth in confidence and strength of self but reported growth in independence, used more of a social isolation strategy from the community and had not developed feelings of belongingness to their adopted country.

In addition, it has been noted that culture – a social process that includes participation from individuals – serves as an important factor in shaping one’s identity, and particularly one’s cultural and ethnic identity composed of religion, rites of passage (traditions), language, food, leisure, socio-cultural qualities, feelings of belongingness, heritage, history and ancestry, self-identification, and having a sense of shared values and attitudes with a group (Bhugra et al., 1999; Cultural Identity, n.d.; McGoldrick, Giordano, & Garcia-Preto, 2005; Phinney, Horenczyk, Liebkind, & Vedder, 2001). As Schneller (1981) states “he [immigrant] cannot abandon easily his culture, because the culture and his basic ‘sense of self’ are intertwined” (p. 117). Most importantly, it has been reported that preservation and retention of the ethnic/cultural identity such as participating in activities within one’s own cultural group as well as becoming integrated into the larger society, is usually associated with higher levels of overall well-being and
better psycho-socio-cultural adaptation in the host culture (Berry et al., 2006; Evergeti, 2006; Knipscheer & Kleber, 2007; Phinney et al., 2001).

**Summary**

Migration is considered to be a major psychosocial transition and a stressful event that involves various challenges, changes, and losses. Going through a process of acculturation, being exposed to a different culture and norms, learning a new language, and losing social support systems or familiar elements from the homeland are just some of the examples of the challenges and losses associated with migration that could lead to migratory grief, mourning, and mental health complications.

Studies have shown that the process of migration and migratory grief entail a variety of symptoms such as excitement, confusion, effect on one’s identity, disengagement, longing for the country of origin, and many more. Thus, it is suggested that professionals working with migrants need to pay close attention not only to any bio-psycho-social factors but also to any cultural differences associated with expressions of loss, grief, and mourning before a diagnosis takes place.

In addition, literature and research recommend that it is best to acknowledge, accept, and mourn the loss of the lost culture but also preserve and integrate important cultural and ethnic elements into the new culture. Some factors such as resources, preservation of ethnic/cultural identity, and social/familial support and spirituality could also assist with the adjustment and settlement in the new society.
This literature review revealed that migration is a complex transition for immigrants that usually involves many challenges and losses until adjustment and settlement in the new country can be reached. The next chapter will focus on the methods and study design of this research involving 16 Greek-American immigrants.
Chapter 3

METHODS

An exploratory and qualitative study design, with a semi-structured format and face-to-face interviews, was used to examine and explore the implications and challenges of migration as well as any factors assisting in the process of adjustment, adaptation, and settlement in the United States based on the experiences of 16 Greek-American immigrants. Participants in this study consisted of nine male and seven female first-generation Greek-American adults (over the age of 18) residing in Sacramento or Placer County and who have lived in the United States for at least the past five years. Research indicates that newly arrived immigrants settling into a new environment experience psychological distress within the first five years, which usually peaks on the 27th month and decreases on the 44th month (Ritsner & Ponizovsky, 1999).

This study used a convenience and snowball sample of subjects located through personal contacts when the researcher obtained approval from the Human Subjects Review Committee at California State University, Sacramento. Once potential participants showed interest and agreed to participate voluntarily in the study, the researcher made separate official appointments to conduct the interviews at a public place (e.g., a café) of their preference in order to maximize comfort and safety. Certain measures were taken to protect the participants from harm and to minimize conflict of interest, coercion, or undue influence. Participants were informed that this study was
strictly voluntary and confidential. Prior to each interview, an informed consent (see Appendix A) was explained to the participants, which they read and signed.

**Interview Procedures and Instruments**

The interviews were conducted either in English or Greek based on each participant’s language of preference (the researcher speaks and writes Greek and English fluently). An interview guide/questionnaire was used (see Appendix B) with general demographic questions and open-ended questions. It consisted of two major parts: (a) exploration of migratory experiences, and (b) factors assisting in the adaptation and settlement in a new country.

In addition, the following took place: (1) each interview did not exceed two hours, (2) participants were notified that they had the right to stop their participation at any time for any reason, and (3) a list of resources was provided to them in case any feelings of discomfort arose during or after the interview so that risk of harm and/or discomfort would be minimized (see Appendix C). The identities, responses, and information of the participants were kept strictly confidential and secure. The recorded information, questionnaires, and hand-written interview notes were secured and stored on the researcher’s USB flash drive (with the file being password protected) in the researcher’s home and in a locked box to which only she had access. All the information and research data was destroyed/deleted at the completion of this thesis (May 2011). It must be noted that no physical procedures were involved, and no drugs, equipment, nor any other form of instrument were used for this research.
Data Analysis

The interviews were audio-taped for better capture of observations, statements, and opinions as well as for analysis of data. Once all the interviews were completed, the data was transcribed in full. The analysis of the content was conducted based on the transcriptions of the interviews and notes taken by the researcher.

In this data analysis, the researcher categorized the responses in three sections: (i) general/demographic information, (ii) migratory experiences, and (iii) possible factors assisting in the adaptation and settlement in a new country. Lastly, the researcher evaluated the responses and findings based on common themes and trends as presented and described in Chapter 4.

Human Subjects Protocol

The Protocol for the Protection of Human Subjects was submitted and approved by the Sacramento State University, Division of Social Work as minimal risk (Human Subjects Approval Number: 10-11-025). The procedure used to reduce the risk to an acceptable level included a resource list which was provided to all the participants (see Appendix C). Also, the subjects were informed that they had the right to withdraw at any time from the study. In the case they felt or experienced some psychological harm such as uncomfortable or painful memories exhibited from verbal and/or non-verbal cues, the researcher had notified the participants that she would stop the process immediately and would provide the resource list in order to minimize discomfort or risk of harm and to maximize safety.
The findings of this research are displayed with the socio-demographic characteristics of the subjects first, followed by a narrative form based on common themes and trends, which attempt to capture the experiences of immigration, feelings, challenges, adaptation, settlement, and points of view of the Greek-American immigrants.

**Socio-Demographic Variables**

A total of 16 first-generation Greek-American immigrants aged between 31 and 81 participated in the study. Approximately 56% of the participants were male and 44% were female. The mean age of the participants was 55. Over 81% of the participants had completed a secondary education, and over 37% had completed tertiary education in the United States or Greece. The mean age when the participants immigrated from Greece to America was around 21. Over 18% immigrated alone, 50% came with a family member(s), and 30% came with a spouse. The length of residence in America among the participants ranged from 14 to 62 years (see Table 1).

**Immigration**

A variety of reasons influenced the participants to leave Greece and immigrate to America. These reasons were centered around education, economy, employment, politics, marriage, betterment of future and life, and ideological motivations.
Table 1

*Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Participants (N=16)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>56.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>43.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 to 40</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 to 50</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 to 60</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>31.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 to 70</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70 and over</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Range: 31-81; Mean: 55; SD: 15.9)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education Level</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>43.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age when first came to America</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 to 15</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 to 20</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>31.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 to 25</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 and over</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Range: 11.5-50; Mean: 20.6; SD: 9.0)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Immigrated</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alone</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With Family Member</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With Spouse</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Years in America/United States</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 to 20</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 to 30</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 to 40</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>31.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41 and over</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>31.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Range: 14-62; Mean: 33.1; SD: 14.1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A Mixed Set of Emotions and Thoughts

Participants reported their initial reactions, feelings, and thoughts during the period when they were preparing to leave from Greece. A mixed set of emotions and conflicted feelings were described by the participants. These mixed emotions and thoughts included sadness, feeling scared, incomprehension of the new society, stress about the unknown, and anxiety for leaving loved ones and a familiar homeland behind. Emotions also included excitement, optimism, enthusiasm, and being able to explore new situations, experiences, and opportunities offered by the foreign country. Specifically, two male participants indicated that they wanted to experience living in a different country in order to create “the uprising of a new life” and to have “a change in personal mentality.”

Experiences in a New Environment

Participants reported their experiences, feelings, and challenges in regards to when they came in contact with their new environment during the first two years. Fourteen (14) out of sixteen (16) participants stated that the first two years in the foreign country were very difficult.

Women – Feelings and Reactions

All female participants indicated they had experienced negative emotions and reactions at the beginning of their arrival. More than half of them reported sadness and depressive symptoms (expressed through tearfulness), homesickness, anxiety and stress for the unknown as well as missing and yearning people or objects such as relatives,
friends, entertainment, and familiar surroundings. One of the female participants stated she experienced cultural shock at the beginning and wanted to be surrounded mostly by other Greeks. She further stated that she spoke to her friends and relatives often via telephone, and felt a strong desire to move back to Greece. Two of the women expressed feeling like an “outsider” and not being completely understood by the American society. Furthermore, two of the women reported that everything seemed completely different to them. They also stated feeling “lost and weird.” Anger, feeling upset, the realization of being in a foreign country away from loved ones, disappointment, loneliness, and nostalgia (especially during the holidays) were some of the words used by one of the women to describe her emotions.

Men – Feelings and Reactions

More than half of the male participants reported that at the beginning their primary purpose was to stay a few years in America, take advantage of the financial or educational opportunities, and return to Greece. The study also showed that seven male participants reported having conflicting feelings and thoughts at the beginning of their arrival. This set of conflicting emotions and thoughts consisted of negative emotions such as nostalgia, moments of sadness, loneliness, and pain for missing the social and entertainment part of Greece. However, they were also preoccupied by thoughts of having made the best decision to leave Greece and live in a different country. They also reported comparing many differences between the two countries such as lifestyle, culture,
and scenery. At the same time, during the first few years they reported having a strong
desire or preoccupation to visit or return permanently to Greece.

In contrast, two of the male respondents found the first few months in the United
States very exciting because everything seemed different. One male participant stated
that the new country did not seem like a foreign land to him, and he enjoyed to be
surrounded by people of different races and ethnicities.

Challenges

All participants reported facing challenges in the new country. The major
challenges identified were adjustment and language.

Adjustment

Many of the participants mentioned that social and environmental adjustment
served as a major challenge at the beginning. This challenge encompassed experiences of
cultural shock, and distinguished differences between the two cultures (i.e., humor,
quality of life, transferring from a rural to an urban environment, academics, etc). Lack
of finances, lack of orientation/direction, lack of transportation (in some situations), and
lack of social relationships were also mentioned during the interviews. One of the female
participants reported that she could not understand at all the American culture when she
first arrived to the new country, and one of the male respondents stated that he had to
“start all over again academically and socially.”
Language

The other major challenge faced by almost all the participants was language. One female respondent mentioned that she used to close her ears when she first heard people speaking English to her because she did not understand the language and she perceived it as “weird and bizarre.” Also, four of the participants, who had some familiarity with the language prior to coming to the United States, reported that they had to spend more time studying due to the differences between the educational systems of the two countries.

Coping and Overcoming Challenges

Despite the migratory challenges and losses experienced, the participants discussed a variety of factors and ways which assisted them in coping and overcoming the difficulties of migration.

Coping and Continuing Bonds

Four of the participants indicated that one of the ways they were able to cope with their emotions and loneliness from being away from the homeland was by maintaining communication and close contact with friends and relatives in Greece via telephone or letters. Two participants reported that they tried to visit Greece every summer in order to connect again with friends and family. One of the female participants stated that the first years in the United States she coped in a negative way by resisting and disliking the American culture as well as by clinging to her Greek identity.
New Relationships and Preservation of the Greek Culture

The development of new relationships with other Greek-Americans, either through a Greek community, church, or other social groups and events (i.e., festivals, folk dancing), was another positive coping skill and a form of a continuing bond with the Greek culture (Hellenism) for the majority of the participants. Many of the participants reported that they were able to establish lifelong friendships and connections from the Greek communities, which assisted them in a major degree to not only deal and cope with some of the emotional challenges of immigration, but also to preserve the elements of the Greek culture. Based on the responses, this preservation was kept through the continuation of the Greek language, socialization, going to church, and keeping the Greek Orthodox religion and traditions alive (i.e., music, dances, holidays), reading the Greek newspapers or watching the Greek channels via satellite, and establishing Greek groups or clubs. All participants indicated that they still have some type of a bond with the Greek culture.

Support

Two females and one male participant emphasized the importance of receiving emotional support from their spouses. These three participants mentioned that their spouses (also Greek-Americans) had immigrated to America years before them, and thus were more knowledgeable in terms of language, obtaining assistance, surroundings, and living in a foreign country. This type of support served as an immense help for them at the beginning of their arrival based on their report. Three other participants also
indicated that they received enormous support from other Greeks-American immigrants either by answering questions and/or by helping them find employment.

**Education, Language, and Occupation**

Seven of the interviewees reported that going to school and enrolling in classes in order to learn the foreign language, became an important factor in dealing with this challenge. Specifically, one female participant indicated that once she started to learn the language she began to like America even more. Three other female interviewees stated that television, books, and “pushing” themselves to read and write also assisted in their learning and dealing with the difficulties of being exposed to a new language. In addition, seven of the participants further disclosed that being occupied either with their family or with employment played a major role in the increase of self-confidence and self-esteem (as stated by one female participant), and in overcoming some of the challenges of living in an unfamiliar country.

**Other Factors**

Additional factors, mostly of psychological nature, were mentioned by six of the interviewees. These factors encompassed patience, resilience, perseverance, determination, and desire to make life better, more comfortable and easier in the new country.

**Adaptation and Settlement**

Participants were asked about the factors that assisted them with their adaptation and settlement in the United States. The findings were almost the same as the ones
described in the ‘Coping and Overcoming Challenges’ section such as maintaining contact with friends and relatives from Greece, starting new relationships, occupation with family or employment, marriage and support from partner, education and language, having goals, attending social functions, receiving social support, and having determination and patience.

**Support Systems**

Fourteen participants reported that their familial and social support systems (i.e., friends, acquaintances) were very helpful factors when they started to undergo adaptation and settlement in the new country. The interviewees indicated that this type of help and support increased their psychological well-being and decreased their loneliness. Moreover, three respondents reported that they received major comfort and encouragement from other immigrants who had lived more years in America. This encouraged the participants to have a more positive transition and adjustment. In addition, two female respondents indicated that enjoying or understanding the new culture as well as finding people with common interests and who experienced the same challenges of immigration, could become helpful factors in the process of adjustment.

**The Greek Community**

The majority of the participants reported that Greek Communities are very helpful because they can provide support, connection, and the continuation of the attachment/bond between Greek-Americans and Hellenism. The respondents indicated that this bond was and still is continued through a variety of elements such as the Greek
Orthodox Church, language, customs, traditions, religious holidays, shared goals and feelings, and emotional support.

**Spirituality**

Thirteen of the participants reported that their spirituality/religion assisted them in a major degree with their adaptation in the new and unfamiliar country. Many of these participants stated that praying helped them by providing them strength, support, relief, liveliness, calmness, and hope. One of the interviewees also reported that the Greek Orthodox Church became the “Alpha and Omega,” meaning an important place to maintain their religious and spiritual beliefs from the motherland.

**Two Homelands**

The participants described their current feelings and thoughts about the United States and Greece. The majority of the participants emphasized that both countries have influenced their lives in a unique way.

**Feelings about the United States**

All 16 participants reported that they feel very good or happy about living in the United States at the present moment. Although it took a very long time to get used to and become integrated into the new and unfamiliar system of the American society (as mentioned by two female participants), all interviewees indicated that they did not regret living in America. On the contrary, the way of life has become more comfortable in the United States, especially now when Greece is experiencing financial challenges and difficulties in the employment sector, as stated by some of the participants. Four
participants also indicated feelings of disappointment and embarrassment due to the current political turmoil faced by Greece. One female participant reported that she never imagined she would live in the United States permanently and that now certain things in Greece seem foreign to her. Another female participant who was clinging to her Greek identity and had a difficult adjustment during the first two years in the United States provided this statement (translated from Greek):

I eventually realized that an ethnic label, even though that is who we are ethnically, is not who I am and does not mean I am better or worse than anyone else. We are all the same and we are just in a different environment. I realized my identity is not challenged by America because Greece will always be in my heart—I carry this with me and nobody can take her and the experiences away. Also, I have no problem to say I am now both: Greek and American, because those are just labels, which do not identify truly who I am. I am a person who happens to understand both cultures now and I can function in both.

Another female participant stated she does not feel as though she belongs 100% either in the United States or in Greece, but feels lucky for having the opportunity to have lived in both countries and to have a relationship with both worlds. Three participants shared that they feel more bonded with America because they always liked the mentality and way of life offered here such as equality, career opportunities, non-judgmental attitude, and respect. Furthermore, the majority of the participants reported that they
consider America as their other homeland because they have created a new life and have obtained satisfaction, maturity, and an open mind due to living in the United States.

**Feelings about Greece**

Greece is still considered as a homeland and a country of ethnic and sentimental value for the majority of the participants. Four of the male participants reported feelings of nostalgia, reminiscing, and missing many elements from Greece such as relatives and friends, surroundings, holidays, and childhood memories. Some of the respondents also shared feelings of sadness and pain when they are absent from significant moments with loved ones in Greece (i.e., weddings, baptisms, major holidays).

Half of the participants stated they will always love Greece but prefer to visit the country only for vacation. Three of the respondents shared that they could live in either country. Three other participants added that they feel “divided” sometimes because they like certain things such as the way of life or entertainment from both countries. One female participant reported that even though she does not live in Greece, it does not mean that she does not consider herself Greek. Many of the participants shared their ethnic pride for being Greek.

**The Meaning of Immigration**

The participants were asked about their meaning and interpretation of immigration based on their experiences. Nine participants indicated that immigration is the essence of leaving your motherland in order to create a better life at a foreign place. One female participant explained that immigration for her meant a lot of pain (by being
away from familiar and beloved things), which eventually subsides when adjustment takes place. Two female interviewees reported that as immigrants they will always feel as “outsiders” in both countries because duality has been experienced. One of these two women stated (translated from Greek):

At the beginning I did not know what immigration was but later understood that I am a foreigner (ksení in Greek) here and a foreigner (ksení) at my country of origin. The people from both countries say I am a foreigner. I feel that I belong now here but I cannot also forget my homeland. I know two motherlands just like a mother who gives her child for adoption and this child has two mothers. So which mother loves the child the most? The birth mother or the mother who adopted it? The same goes for us here. Do we love Greece or America more? We love both because the second mother (America) adopted us and resurrected us.

Two other participants reported pride and a sense of accomplishment for being able to become successful in an unfamiliar world. One female participant considers herself an immigrant but does not know if she still feels like an immigrant anymore. Another male participant shared that immigration is a sense of a new beginning in a non-homogeneous society with a mix of people but also with an emphasis on individuality.

Advice to Newly Arrived Immigrants

Participants were asked what type of advice they could give to a newly arrived immigrant in order to better cope, adapt, and settle in the new country. The following responses were mentioned:
• Have patience and strength
• Realize that it could be difficult at the beginning
• Adjustment takes time but strong feelings will subside
• Be open-minded
• Visit friends and relatives back home
• Refrain from clinging only onto your the cultural elements but also do not detach completely from your roots and customs
• Maintain connection with your culture and be involved in your community
• Find people who will understand your position and who will provide support
• Always remember your purpose
• Learn the language and find an occupation or employment
• Experience and enjoy the American culture and take advantage of the opportunities
• Become familiar with the different systems in the new country (e.g., education)
• Try not to compare the two countries too much and always remember that both countries have their advantages and disadvantages
• Try to make the new country your other homeland
• A good combination of living in both cultures can be obtained and bridged
• Obtain help or resources from your community if needed
Summary

This study analyzed the experiences of 16 Greek-American immigrants. The findings concentrated on socio-demographics, the reasons for immigration, thoughts and emotions, challenges, coping, adaptation and settlement, the meaning of immigration, and advices for newly arrived immigrants. The findings showed that migration can be a very difficult and complex process the first few years in a new country. Participants indicated that they faced losses from the native country and challenges such as adjustment and language. Some of ways participants were able to cope with the new transition as well as adapt and settle, was by preserving their cultural elements, developing new relationships, and obtaining support. The next chapter presents the conclusions, discussions, implications and recommendations for social work, and a summary.
Chapter 5

CONCLUSION

Discussion

This chapter includes a review of the findings as explored and shown from the analysis of the data in this study. This chapter concludes with a discussion of implications and recommendations for social work policy and practice, and a summary.

Bereavement Grief and Migratory Grief

Despite the reason for immigration, the process of pre-migration and migration in a new country usually encompasses a mixed set of emotions and thoughts as well as challenges and feelings, and reactions of migratory grief and loss as shown in this research. The findings from this study suggest that these feelings and reactions of loss and migratory grief seem to be prevalently similar and relevant in comparison with some of the feelings and reactions of bereavement as described in Parkes (1996) theoretical work and as indicated by many authors in the literature review. Based on the findings, the experiences of the majority of the Greek-American immigrants when they came into contact with their new environment show to be parallel and comparable to the experiences and reactions of the bereaved individuals who lost a loved one due to death (see Table 2). As shown in the findings and as suggested in the literature review, the concept of migration appears to be a major psychosocial transition involving various losses, challenges and adjustments, which could cause significant emotional and mental
However, different coping strategies could become helpful during this challenging event.

Table 2

*Bereavement Grief & Migratory Grief*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bereavement Grief Feelings &amp; Reactions</th>
<th>Migratory Grief Feelings &amp; Reactions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Loss: Death of a Loved One</td>
<td>Loss: Native Country</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. ‘Pangs of Grief’
   - Anxiety
   - Psychological Pain

2. Denial or Disbelief
   - Numbness / Shock
   - Alarm / Arousal

3. Searching (Pining)
   - Tension / Restless activity
   - Preoccupation with thoughts of lost person

4. Anger, Irritability, and Guilt

5. Disorganization / Despair
   - Depression
   - Uncertainty
   - Apathy

6. Recovery
   - New Experiences
   - New Identity

1. Anxiety
   - Stress for the unknown
   - Psychological Pain

2. Cultural Shock
   - Comparisons of the two countries

3. Searching (Pining)
   - Missing and yearning people and familiar things from native country
   - Preoccupation and strong desire to move back to homeland

4. Homesickness / Nostalgia

5. Disorganization / Despair
   - Depression
   - Sadness
   - Conflicted Feelings
   - Challenges
   - Adjustment
   - Language

6. Recovery
   - New Experiences
   - Continuing Bonds
   - Adaptation / Settlement
   - Resilience / Resources
Continuing Bonds

Significant tangible and intangible elements and cultural symbols from one’s native country could trigger a process of grieving reactions and emotional distress (Casado & Leung, 2002; Casado et al., 2002). The literature review further supports that once an individual acknowledges, confronts, and mourns the loss of the lost culture while preserving the cultural and ethnic elements, then the process adjustment into the new country could become less challenging (Henry et al., 2005; Henry et al., 2009). This research agrees with this concept because it was indicated in the findings that resistance towards the new culture could be created if the immigrant clings only onto the ethnic identity, or s/he has difficulty of letting go of things left behind in the culture of origin. However, this does not imply that the immigrant should detach or disconnect completely from the continuing bonds s/he has with the native country. Instead, according to the Continuing Bonds model (Silverman & Klass, 1996), solace and comfort can be provided when a bereaved individual maintains an essential bond with the lost person/object. The same concept applies to losses, grief, and mourning due to migration.

The findings of this research showed that one of the ways the majority of the Greek-American immigrants coped and dealt with the losses was by having an essential bond with their roots and cultural elements by: (a) visiting the homeland often, (b) developing new relationships through the Greek communities, thus allowing them to have continuing bonds with their language, traditions, and customs in the new country, and (c) preserving and integrating aspects of their native culture into their new life (e.g., Greek
Orthodox Church, Greek clubs, etc). As discussed in the literature review and as shown in this study, immigrants tend to have higher levels of overall well-being and better psycho-socio-cultural adaptation in the new culture when they preserve their ethnic/cultural identity and become integrated into the new larger society.

Resilience and Resources

The literature review further supports that resilience with personal strengths and skills-based resources, material resources, social resources, and cultural resources tend to contribute to a successful adaptation, well-being, and emotional coping with migration. Some of these resources were reported by the participants in this study such as: (a) spousal/familial and social support systems, (b) learning the new language or obtaining education, (c) finding employment/occupation, (d) personal and psychological factors such as patience, perseverance, self-confidence, and/or determination, (e) being connected to an ethnic community and preservation of culture, and (f) spirituality/religion. Therefore, this study acknowledges that a better adaptation and settlement in a new and unfamiliar country could evolve in more positive way when certain resources and factors are in place.

Implications and Recommendations for Social Work Policy and Practice

The findings of this research indicate that migration can be a difficult life event with many personal losses, stressors, and challenges. Adjusting to a new country and language, and adapting to an unfamiliar environment with exposure to different customs, norms, traditions, and regulations could result to emotional and psychological changes.
The study showed that a diverse set of feelings (e.g., excitement, nostalgia) and mental health complications such as depressive symptoms and stress could take place due to migration. However, resilience and other protective factors can be identified when used in life-changing situations.

Therefore, it is strongly suggested and recommended that social workers, mental health clinicians, and general practitioners who are working closely with immigrants, need to take into account and make a thorough assessment of the cultural elements, potential components of grief and loss related to migration including any manifestation of unresolved or complicated grief, and potential resilience factors when constructing a treatment plan or a case management plan with their clients.

Understanding the possible implications and challenges due to migration could provide a better insight and knowledge for anyone who will be assisting this type of population. Thus, more research and expansion of knowledge on the topic of migratory grief on different cultures could serve as a valuable instrument in the area of social work policy and in social, medical, and mental health services arena. This study could have benefitted in a greater degree if more participants were recruited so that more experiences related to immigration could have been captured and documented.

**Summary**

This research examined and explored the implications, challenges, and helpful factors for adaptation and settlement due to migration. It must be emphasized that successful adaptation and settlement could be obtained as found in this research. This
study, based on the experiences of 16 Greek-American participants, revealed that although migration is a challenging and a long-term process, adaptation can be reached and an essential bond can be maintained and created with the native and the new country. In addition, the experience of immigration can create an outlook of life with positive elements such as creating a better life, and acquiring the ability to become integrated and successful into a new and unfamiliar system.

As mentioned at the beginning of this thesis, my personal experience with migration which consisted of challenges and the struggle to achieve a balance of fitting in between two different worlds, made me realize that adaptation and settlement in a different world can take place without having to forget or abandon my cultural roots. This means that the essence of the native country and the new country could be bridged which could provide potential hope and solace to any newly arrived immigrant.
APPENDIX A

Consent Form for Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research to explore and examine the implications and challenges of migration (specifically on the loss of homeland) as well as any factors assisting in the adaptation and settlement in the United States based on the experiences of Greek-American immigrants.

My name is Marina Argyropoulos, and I am a graduate student at California State University, Sacramento in the Division of Social Work. I am currently working on my master’s thesis and hope that this study will be able to assist any newly arrived immigrant from Greece who might be experiencing any challenges, losses, and changes associated with the immigration in the United States.

If you decide to participate, I will interview you at a time and a location that is convenient and comfortable for you. The entire interview will be audio-taped and should not exceed more than two (2) hours. The interview will be conducted either in English or Greek depending on the language of your preference. During the interview, you will be asked some general demographic questions, your experience with immigration, and any factors you think might be helpful with the adaptation and settlement in the United States. Your responses to the questions will be audio-taped in order to capture all of your observations and opinions. Some questions may seem personal, but you don’t have to answer any of the questions if you do not want to. In case any feelings of discomfort arise during or after the interview and wish to speak to a professional, a list of resources will be provided to you. Also, you have the right to stop your participation at any time, for any reason.

Your identity and responses from this interview will be kept strictly confidential. All of your information will be secured in a private place where only I will be able to have access to. The recorded information and the questionnaires will be destroyed once this study has been completed. In addition, any notes that I will take in relation to the interview will be destroyed at the same time.

A $5 Starbucks gift card will be provided to you after the interview as an expression of my appreciation for your time and participation.

For any questions or comments, feel free to contact me at (916) 202-1765 or by email at sac12859@saclink.csus.edu. For specific inquiries or concerns pertaining to this study or your participation, you may also contact my thesis advisor, Dr. Susan Eggman, by email at eggmans@csus.edu or at (916) 278-7181.
Please note that your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. Your signature below indicates that you have read and understood this page, and agree to participate in the research. A consent form translated in the Greek language is also available for you.

Thank you very much for your time and participation.

__________________________ ______________________
Signature of Participant  Date

__________________________ ______________________
Signature of Researcher  Date
Έντυπο Συγκατάθεσης για Έρευνα Μελέτης

Σας προσκαλώ να πάρετε συμμετοχή σε μια έρευνα για τη διερεύνηση και εξέταση των επιπτώσεων και προκλήσεων της μετανάστευσης (ειδικά για την απώλεια της πατρίδας), όπως επίσης και για οποιοδήποτε παράγοντα που θα μπορούσε να βοηθήσει στην προσαρμογή ζωής και εγκατάσταση στις Ηνωμένες Πολιτείες, βασισμένο πάνω στις εμπειρίες των Ελλήνων-Αμερικανών μεταναστών.

Το όνομά μου είναι Μαρίνα Αργυρόπουλου, και είμαι φοιτήτρια στο California State University, Sacramento στο μεταπτυχιακό τμήμα της Κοινωνικής Λειτουργίας. Αυτή την στιγμή κάνω τη μεταπτυχιακή μου εργασία πάνω στους Έλληνες μετανάστες και ελπίζω ότι αυτή η μελέτη θα μπορέσει να βοηθήσει οποιοδήποτε νεοφερμένο μετανάστη από την Ελλάδα που ίσως να βιώνει προκλήσεις, απώλειες, και αλλαγές εξαιτίας της μετανάστευσης στις Ηνωμένες Πολιτείες.

Αν αποφασίσετε να πάρετε συμμετοχή, θα σας πάρω συνέντευξη σε τόπο και χρόνο που θα είναι βολικά και άνετα για σας. Η συνέντευξη θα είναι ηχογραφημένη και δεν θα υπερβεί τις δύο (2) ώρες. Επίσης, η συνέντευξη θα πραγματοποιηθεί στα αγγλικά ή στα ελληνικά ανάλογα με τη γλώσσα της προτίμησής σας. Κατά τη διάρκεια της συνέντευξης, θα σας ζητηθούν να απαντήσετε σε κάποιες δημογραφικές ερωτήσεις, η εμπειρία σας με τη μετανάστευση, και όποιους παράγοντες πιστεύετε ότι μπορεί να είναι χρήσιμοι για την προσαρμογή ζωής και εγκατάσταση στις Ηνωμένες Πολιτείες. Οι απαντήσεις σας στις ερωτήσεις θα ηχογραφηθούν προκειμένου να αποτυπωθούν όλες σας οι παρατηρήσεις και απόψεις. Μερικές από τις ερωτήσεις μπορεί να φανούν προσωπικές, οστόσο έχετε το δικαίωμα να μην απαντήσετε σε οποιοδήποτε ερώτηση εάν δεν θέλετε. Σε περίπτωση που προκύψει κάποιο αίσθημα δυσφορίας κατά τη διάρκεια ή μετά τη συνέντευξη και θα θέλετε να μιλήσετε με έναν ειδικό, θα σας παράδειξω μια λίστα με πληροφορίες για υποστήριξη. Επίσης, έχετε το δικαίωμα να σταματήσετε τη συμμετοχή σας ανά πάσα στιγμή, για οποιοδήποτε λόγο.

Όλες σας οι προσωπικές απαντήσεις και πληροφορίες από αυτή τη συνέντευξη θα κτηθούν με απόλυτη μυστικότητα και εμπιστοσύνη, και θα κλειδωθούν σε ειδικό χώρο όπου μόνο η ερευνήτρια (Μαρίνα Αργυρόπουλο) θα έχει πρόσβαση. Οι καταγεγραμμένες πληροφορίες, τα ερωτηματολόγια, και οι σημειώσεις θα καταστραφούν μετά την ολοκλήρωση της μελέτης.

Μια δώρο κάρτα Starbucks των $5 θα σας δοθεί μετά τη συνέντευξη ως έκφραση της εκτίμησής μου για το χρόνο και τη συμμετοχή σας.

Για οποιαδήποτε απορία ή σχόλιο, μπορείτε να επικοινωνήσετε μαζί μου στο (916) 202-1765 ή με email στο sac12859@saclink.csus.edu. Για συγκεκριμένες ερωτήσεις ή
απορίες σχετικά με αυτή τη μελέτη ή τη συμμετοχή σας, μπορείτε επίσης να επικοινωνήσετε με τη σύμβουλο μου, Δρ. Susan Eggman (Σούζαν Εγγμαν) με email στο eggmans@csus.edu ή στο (916) 278-7181.

Παρακαλώ σημειώστε ότι η συμμετοχή σας σε αυτή την έρευνα είναι εντελώς εθελοντική. Η υπογραφή σας που ακολουθεί σημαίνει ότι έχετε διαβάσει και έχετε κατανοήσει αυτή τη σελίδα και συμφωνείτε να πάρετε μέρος σε αυτή την έρευνα. Σας ευχαριστώ πολύ για το χρόνο και τη συμμετοχή σας.

Υπογραφή Συμμετέχοντα
Ημερομηνία

Υπογραφή Ερευνήτριας
Ημερομηνία
APPENDIX B

Interview Guide & Questionnaire

Part I - General Questions
1. Sex:
2. What is your age?
3. Education Level?
4. How old were you when you came to the United States?
5. Did you come alone or with a family member(s)?
6. How many years have you lived in the United States?

Part II – Migratory Experiences
Please tell me about your experience coming to the United States and how you felt.

7. What made you decide to come to the United States?
8. What was your experience when you left from Greece?
9. What was your experience when you first came (first months/years) to the United States?
   a. How did you feel?
   b. Did you have any challenges/difficulties?
   c. If yes, what type of challenges/difficulties did you have?
   d. How were you able to cope, overcome or deal with those challenges/difficulties?
   e. Which factors assisted you to overcome/deal with those challenges/difficulties?

10. How do you feel about living in the United States now?
    a. How have your feelings about the United States changed over time?

11. How do you feel about Greece now?
    a. How have your feelings about Greece changed over time?
    b. How is your relationship with the Greek culture now here in the United States?
       i) How were you able to preserve this relationship over time?
       ii) What helped?
       iii) What changed in this relationship?

12. What does immigration mean to you?

Part III – Possible Factors assisting in adapting and settling in the new country
13. Please tell me what factors helped you with the adaptation and settlement in the US
14. Has your family and/or other social support systems been helpful to your adaptation and settlement in the US?
   a. If yes, how were they helpful to you?

15. Please tell me about the Greek Community in the Sacramento/Placer County. Was the Greek community helpful at the beginning with your transition in the US?
   a. If yes, how so?
   b. How do you feel about the Greek Community now in relation to your settlement in the US?

16. Has your religion/spirituality assisted you with your adaptation in the US?
   a. If yes, how was it helpful for you?

17. Are there any other factors or ways, from your experience, that you have found helpful with the adaptation in the US?

18. Overall, how do you feel about coming and/or staying in the United States?

19. Do you have any plans of returning back to Greece permanently? Yes/No? Why?

20. Overall, how do you feel about both countries now?
   a. How is your relationship with both countries at the moment?

21. What advice would you give to a newly arrived Greek immigrant in order to better cope with the losses of the homeland?

22. What advice would you give to a newly arrived Greek immigrant in order to have an easier adaptation and settlement in the US?

23. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Thank you so much for your time and participation!
Οδηγός Συνέντευξης & Ερωτηματολόγιο (Interview Guide & Questionnaire)

Μέρος I - Γενικές Ερωτήσεις
1. Φύλο:
2. Ποια είναι η ηλικία σας;
3. Εκπαίδευση;
4. Πόσο χρόνον ήσασταν όταν ήρθατε στις Ηνωμένες Πολιτείες;
5. Είχατε έρθει μόνος σας ή με αλλά μέλη της οικογένειας σας;
6. Πόσα χρόνια έχετε ζήσει στις Ηνωμένες Πολιτείες;
7. Παρακαλώ πείτε μου για την εμπειρία σας όταν ήρθατε στις ΗΠΑ και πώς αισθάνηκατε.
8. Τι σας έκανε να αποφασίσετε να έρθετε στις ΗΠΑ;
9. Ποια είχατε έρθει από την Ελλάδα;
10. Πώς νιώθετε πως μένετε στις ΗΠΑ σήμερα;
11. Πώς νιώθετε για την Ελλάδα σήμερα;
12. Τι σημαίνει η έννοια της μετανάστευσης για εσάς;
13. Παρακαλώ πείτε μου ποιοι παράγοντες σας βοήθησαν με την προσαρμογή και εγκατάσταση στις ΗΠΑ.

Μέρος II - Μετανάστευση και Εμπειρίες
Παρακαλώ πείτε μου για την εμπειρία σας όταν ήρθατε στις Ηνωμένες Πολιτείες και πώς αισθάνηκατε.
7. Τι σας έκανε να αποφασίσετε να έρθετε στις ΗΠΑ;
8. Ποια είχατε έρθει από την Ελλάδα;
9. Ποια ήταν η εμπειρία σας όταν πρωτοήρθατε (τους πρώτους μήνες/χρόνια) στις ΗΠΑ;
   a. Πώς αισθάνθηκατε;
   b. Συναντήσατε προκλήσεις/δυσκολίες;
   c. Πώς καταφέρατε να αντιμετωπίσετε ή να ξεπεράσετε αυτές τις προκλήσεις/δυσκολίες?
   d. Ποιοι παράγοντες σας βοήθησαν να αντιμετωπίσετε/ξεπεράσετε αυτές τις προκλήσεις/δυσκολίες?
10. Πώς νιώθετε που μένετε στις ΗΠΑ σήμερα;
    a. Πώς έχουν τα συναισθήματά σας για τις ΗΠΑ αλλάξει με την πάροδο του χρόνου;
11. Πώς νιώθετε για την Ελλάδα σήμερα;
    a. Πώς έχουν τα συναισθήματά σας για την Ελλάδα αλλάξει με την πάροδο του χρόνου;
    β. Πώς είναι η σχέση σας με τον ελληνικό πολιτισμό/κουλτούρα εδώ στις ΗΠΑ;
        i) Πώς έχουν τα συναισθήματά σας για τον ελληνικό πολιτισμό/κουλτούρα αλλάξει με την πάροδο του χρόνου;
        ii) Τι άλλαξε σε αυτή τη σχέση;
        iii) Τι βοήθησε;
12. Τι σημαίνει η έννοια της μετανάστευσης για εσάς;

Μέρος III - Πιθανοί βοηθητικοί παράγοντες για την προσαρμογή και εγκατάσταση στη νέα χώρα
13. Παρακαλώ πείτε μου ποιοι παράγοντες σας βοήθησαν με την προσαρμογή και εγκατάσταση στις ΗΠΑ.
14. Η οικογένειά σας ή/και άλλα συστημάτα κοινωνικής στήριξης σας βοήθησαν με την προσαρμογή σας και εγκατάστασή στις ΗΠΑ;
   α. Αν ναι, πώς;
15. Παρακαλώ πείτε μου για την Ελληνική κοινότητα εδώ στο Sacramento/Placer County. Σας βοήθησε στις αρχές με την προσαρμογή και εγκατάστασή σας στην καινούργια χώρα;
   α. Εάν ναι, πώς;
   β. Πώς νιώθετε για την Ελληνική Κοινότητα τώρα σε σχέση με την εγκατάστασή σας στις ΗΠΑ;
16. Η θρησκεία / πνευματικότητα σας βοήθησε με την προσαρμογή σας στις ΗΠΑ;
   α. Αν ναι, πως ήταν χρήσιμη για εσάς;
17. Υπάρχουν άλλοι παράγοντες ή τρόποι, από την εμπειρία σας, που έχετε βρει χρήσιμους με την προσαρμογή της μετανάστευσής στις ΗΠΑ;
18. Συνολικά, πως νιώθετε που έχετε και μείνατε στις ΗΠΑ;
19. Έχετε σχέδια να επιστρέψετε πίσω στην Ελλάδα μόνιμα; Ναι / Οχι / Γιατί;
20. Σε γενικές γραμμές, πως αισθάνεστε για τις δύο χώρες τώρα;
   α. Πώς είναι η σχέση σας με τις δύο χώρες αυτή τη στιγμή;
21. Τι συμβουλή θα δίνατε στους καινούργιους Έλληνες μετανάστες προκειμένου να αντιμετωπίσουν τις απόλειες από την πατρίδα;
22. Τι συμβουλή θα δίνατε στους καινούργιους Έλληνες μετανάστες προκειμένου να προσαρμοστούν καλύτερα με την καινούργια τους ζωή στις ΗΠΑ;
23. Θα θέλατε να προσθέσετε τίποτα άλλο;

Σας ευχαριστώ παρά πολύ για το χρόνο και τη συμμετοχή σας!
APPENDIX C

Resources

In case any feelings of discomfort arise during or after the interview and wish to speak to a professional and/or wish to seek support, here is a list of resources:

- **Sutter Counseling Center**: (916) 929-0808
  855 Howe Ave. #1, Sacramento, CA 95825

- **Mental Health Association**: (916) 366-4600

- **Sacramento Crisis Line**: (916) 368-3111

- **Greek Orthodox Church of the Annunciation**
  600 Alhambra Boulevard
  Sacramento, CA 95816-3806
  (916) 443-2033

- **Saint Anna Greek Orthodox Church**
  1001 Stone Canyon Drive
  Roseville, CA 95661-4093
  (916) 772-9372

- **Saint Katherine Greek Orthodox Church**
  9165 Peets Drive
  Elk Grove, CA 95758-7420
  (916) 683-3443
REFERENCES


