

A Generation Outside: Afghan Refugees in Greece 2003-2016

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Abstract : A considerable number of Afghan asylum seekers in Greece are still waiting for answers about their future and status for personal, social and societal advancement. Most have been trapped in a stalemate of continuously postponed or temporarily progressed levels of integration into the EU/Greek process of asylum. Limited quantitative research exists investigating the psychological effects of long-term displacement among Afghans refugees in Greece. The purpose of this study is to investigate factors that are associated with and predict psychological distress symptoms among this population. Data from a sample of native Afghan nationals ($N > 70$) living in Greece for approximately the last ten years will be collected from May to July 2016. Criteria for participation include the following: being 18 years of age or older, and emigration from Afghanistan to Greece from 2003 onwards (i.e., long-term refugees or part of the 'old system of asylum'). Snowball sampling will be used to recruit participants, as this is considered the most effective option when attempting to study refugee populations. Participants will complete self-report questionnaires, consisting of the Afghan Symptom Checklist (ASCL), a culturally validated measure of psychological distress, the World Health Organization Quality of Life scale (WHOQOL-BREF), an adapted version of the Comprehensive Trauma Inventory-104 (CTI-104), and a modified Psychological Acculturation Scale. All instruments will be translated in Greek, through the use of forward- and back-translations by bilingual speakers of English and Greek, following WHO guidelines. A pilot study with 5 Afghan participants will take place to check for discrepancies in understanding and for further adapting the instruments as needed. Demographic data, including age, gender, year of arrival to Greece and current asylum status will be explored. Three different types of analyses (descriptive statistics, bivariate correlations, and multivariate linear regression) will be used in this study. Descriptive findings for respondent demographics, psychological distress symptoms, traumatic life events and quality of life will be reported. Zero-order correlations will assess the interrelationships among demographic, traumatic life events, psychological distress, and quality of life variables. Lastly, a multivariate linear regression model will be estimated. The findings from the study will contribute to understanding the determinants of acculturation, distress and trauma on daily functioning for Afghans in Greece. The main implications of the current study will be to advocate for capacity building and empower communities through effective program evaluation and design for mental health services for all refugee populations in Greece.

Keywords : Afghan refugees, evaluation, Greece, mental health, quality of life

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