Satisfaction with Life among Adolescents from Returned Portuguese Immigrant Families

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Abstract

A central construct within the positive psychology literature is satisfaction with life. The aim of this study was to determine the level of satisfaction with life among adolescents from returned immigrant families in Portugal, as well as the background, the intercultural contact and the adaptation factors related thereto. The sample consisted of 615 adolescents (mean age = 16.5 years; SD = 1.4). The mean duration of sojourn in Portugal for the sample was 8.4 (SD = 4.6). They answered a self-report questionnaire. A comparison group involving 217 young Portuguese was also included in the study. Adolescents from returned immigrant families revealed similar levels of satisfaction with life in comparison with peers who have never migrated. The notion that geographic mobility of parents is a primary cause of adaptation problems in their children appears to be incorrect. Predictive factors – demographic, intercultural, and adaptation variables – were significantly linked to the satisfaction with life of youth. Combined, these variables explained 37% of the variance in life satisfaction. The results help us understand which variables are important to target when developing interventions to improve the life satisfaction of adolescents from returned immigrant families.

Keywords: Adaptation, Adolescents, Intercultural Contact, Return Migration, Satisfaction with Life.

Introduction

Acculturation refers to the process of culture contact that generally occurs through movement from a place of origin to a different place of settlement. Although migration is often a permanent solution to migratory movements, the return to the place of origin is also a possibility. The acculturation cycle therefore may not end in the receiving societies, but continues during and after remigration and migratory life has a powerful impact on it. Similarly, sociocultural changes also occurred for those who stayed behind. In this sense, the return of migrants to places of origin generates a new cycle of adjustment, a process of re-acculturation (Donà & Ackermann, 2006). The migratory experience shapes identities, perceptions and inter-group relations after return and these aspects need to be researched further.

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For decades, intensive research efforts have concentrated on the cultural adaptation of immigrants to a foreign culture. However, much less attention has been paid to re-entry to one's home country after a sojourn abroad (Martin, 1984; Tamura & Furnham, 1993; Ward, Bochner, & Furnham, 2001). This lack of research interest in cultural re-entry may stem from a widely taken perspective that re-entry should not be problematic since it is "going home". Individuals returning home after extended stay abroad may experience difficulties re-adjusting to their home country. For example, a review of the literature by Isogai, Hayashi, & Uno (1999) found that the majority of returnees to Japan experience difficulties in readjusting. They often feel rejected by the Japanese society, particularly after having returned from a long sojourn abroad, and they frequently struggle with core issues pertaining to identity. Friction is caused by being perceived as having adopted "foreign characteristics" which are incompatible with the Japanese cultural manifestations. These may include increased assertiveness on the part of the returned person, a more individualistic orientation, less conformity to group norms, and for women, a new-found resistance to male-dominated social practices.

Sussman (1986) highlights five difficulties sojourners experience upon their return home. First, the unexpectedness of the re-entry problems may cause the shock to be significantly worse. Most individuals going to another culture are likely to be anticipating adjustment difficulties whereas those returning home are not. Second, changes occur within the individual as a result of the sojourn. Third, changes occur in the home culture itself. Fourth, friends and family expect returnees to be the same as they were before the sojourn and are not expecting new types of behaviour or values. And fifth, friends and family are often not interested in the sojourn, and this is experienced with frustration and disappointment by the re-enterer.

Despite the demographic importance of return migration theoretically, methodology, and substantively, social scientists know relatively little about it (Sopemi, 2008). In this paper we seek to deepen understanding of return migration. It is important for us to understand which factors might increase risk for poor well-being. Identifying factors of risk can help highlight potential foci for prevention and intervention efforts. This paper examines the relationship between re-acculturation, adaptation, and satisfaction with life among adolescents from returned Portuguese immigrant families. The motivation for adolescents in this study to return are mixed, in that remigration was the decision of their parents, who were immigrants, and the adolescents did not necessarily wish to migrate to Portugal.

Satisfaction with life

Despite evidence that immigrants are no worse off than their domestic peers when it comes to mental health problems, there is a dearth of studies that specifically address issues of positive mental health outcomes, such as satisfaction with life, as well as factors associated with these outcomes. The bulk of the studies have focused on negative mental health outcomes. This focus on mental health problems has been criticized by Rogler (1994) who, along with Carballo (1994), has argued for the need to accomplish direct psychological acculturation research in other areas.

Within the field of psychology, the study of "happiness" generally falls under investigations of subjective well-being (SWB). Subjective well-being is a growing area of psychology that focuses on people's emotional and cognitive evaluations of their lives (Diener, Lucas, & Oishi, 2002; Bălţătescu, 2005). The study of subjective well-being is of substantial applied importance (Bartram, 2010). Diener (1995, p. 319) argued that "when policy makers seek to understand how to improve the quality of life, measures of SWB are necessary to complement more objective measures such as economic indices. Indeed, measures of happiness and life satisfaction are now collected in highly industrialized nations to monitor the well-being of these societies. If only

social indicators are considered (e.g., per capita income and crime rates), valuable information is lost about how people weigh and react to their life circumstances."

It has been suggested that satisfaction with life is one of three components of SWB, the others being positive and negative affect (Andrews & Withey, 1976; Michalos, 1980; Diener et al., 1985). Whereas positive and negative affect refer to the affective, emotional aspects of SWB, satisfaction with life refers to the cognitive-judgmental aspect. This is somewhat different from happiness as a positive emotional state and distress as a negative one. Life satisfaction is a psychological variable that has received attention as an outcome of universal interest that may be particularly useful for studying cultural variation (Diener & Suh, 2000). Shin and Johnson (1978) defined life satisfaction as an overall assessment of one's quality of life based on one's own criteria. Judgments are based on a comparison with a standard one sets for oneself. An appropriate standard cannot be externally imposed. Diener (1984) has pointed out that the hallmark of SWB is that it centers on personal judgments, not upon some criterion judged important by the researcher(s).

Whereas several different scales for the assessment of affective components exist (cf. Argyle, 2001), few attempts have been made to construct psychometrically sound measures of general life satisfaction (Diener, 1984). Diener et al. (1985) developed the Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS) to meet the need for a multi-item scale to measure life satisfaction as a cognitive-judgmental process. Although there are other life satisfaction scales that measure global life satisfaction, many are confounded with items that also measure some aspects of the affective component of subjective well-being or are specific to a particular population.

In a previous investigation, Neto (1993) examined whether specific psychometric findings reported by Diener et al. (1985) could be generalized to a group of participants differing in at least two important aspects, cultural/national background and age, by examining Portuguese adolescents. This study reinforced the viewpoint of Diener et al. (1985) that the SWLS could be used with other age groups, in this particular case with adolescents. Moreover, it supported the cross-national validity of the SWLS. Another investigation focused on psychological correlates of life satisfaction among young Portuguese living in France, the country that received the greatest number of Portuguese migrants in the past three decades (Neto, 1995). The results of this study replicated earlier findings and demonstrated part of the broad network of background and psychosocial variables in which life satisfaction is embedded.

The research reported here will focus on demographic, intercultural contact, and adaptation correlates of global assessment of life satisfaction among returned adolescents from Portuguese immigrant families. Although the foci of satisfaction may vary among migrants, there is a substantial common core of satisfaction or dissatisfaction, regardless of the focus considered (Scott & Scott, 1989).

Returned Emigration to Portugal

This study is relevant in the context of Portugal now being a receiving country, for both returnees and foreign nationals. At the present time Portugal is simultaneously an emigration and an immigration country (Neto, 2006). Historians consider Portuguese emigration as a "structural historical phenomenon" (Serrão, 1974) or as a "structural constant" (Godinho, 1978). In 2002 the number of Portuguese residing abroad close to 4.6 million according to MNE/DGACCP (*Ministério dos Negócios Estangeiros/Direcção Geral de Assuntos Consulares e Comunidades Portuguesas*). Among these Portuguese abroad, 61.11% live in America, 27.08% in Europe, 7.50% in Africa, 3.62% in Asia, and 0.70% in Oceania. The United States, Brazil, France, Canada, Venezuela and South Africa are the countries in which great numbers of Portuguese reside (more than 300 000).

Taking into account the importance of emigration in the Portuguese society, it could be thought that the issue of return was a well-studied subject in this country. Statistical information

and empirical research on return migration are scarce (Rato, 2001). The official numbers of the return of emigrants of the National Institute of Statistics (INE) indicate that during the periods of 1976/81, 1986/91 and 1996/2001 alone more than 295 000 individuals arrived at the domestic territory. Surpassing these values one concludes that, throughout only one quarter of century (1976/2001), almost 600 000 individuals will perhaps have returned, which is considerable given the demographic dimension of the country. Despite the importance of the demographic volume of the return of emigrants, the research of this issue is very scarce, and furthermore most of this bibliography belongs to the 80`s decade (Silva et al., 1984).

The focus of the present paper is to understand the life satisfaction of adolescents from returned Portuguese immigrant families. These adolescents often have to deal with changes associated with acculturation and with the normal developmental changes of adolescence. Both may take place simultaneously and involve rapid change. In spite of evidence that young immigrants do not exhibit more symptoms of psychological disorders than their national peers (Fuligni, 1998), there is a lack of studies that focus on the positive aspects of adaptation among returned immigrant youth and on how they compare with non-immigrant peers.

Objectives

The purpose of this investigation is three-fold. The first objective was to examine whether an emigrant background affects satisfaction with life. For Phinney & Alipuria (1996), one basic question about bicultural individuals is whether they are confused outsiders or special individuals with a broader understanding. The "marginal man" conceptualization (Park, 1950; Stonequist, 1961) is still guiding research. Park's view was that, with migration and the loosening of bonds to his/her original culture, the marginal person - a person at the edge of two cultures - becomes "the individual with the keener intelligence, the wider horizon, the more detached and rational viewpoint" (Park, 1950, pp. 375-376). In contrast, Stonequist (1961) viewed the marginal person as a person caught between two cultures, never fitting in.

Until recently, the dominant Western view of the multiethnic person was consistent with that of Stonequist. Multiethnic people have been portrayed as troubled and anxious outsiders who lack a clear identity. However, the results of recent empirical research have indicated that multiethnic individuals are at no psychological disadvantage in comparison to monoethnic individuals. Researchers have consistently found no differences between self-esteem of multiethnic and monoethnic groups (Phinney & Alipuria, 1996; Sam & Virta, 2003). Two studies have shown that young Portuguese living in France did not differ on loneliness and satisfaction with life from young Portuguese who had never migrated and were living in Portugal (Neto, 1995, 1999). The same results have been found among Portuguese migrants living in Switzerland (Neto & Barros, 2007). In a recent study, adolescents from immigrant families living in Portugal reported fewer mental health problems than Portuguese adolescents who have never migrated (Neto, 2009). In the present study we will present research comparing life satisfaction of adolescents from returned Portuguese immigrant families and young Portuguese living in the same country without migratory experience.

The second aim was to examine whether life satisfaction can be understood on the basis of demographic, intercultural contact and adaptation variables. *Demographic factors* such as, age, gender, and length of sojourn are seen as key factors in understanding the migration experience (Ward et al., 2001). However research on demographic factors has yielded conflicting results regarding the nature of the relationship with life satisfaction. The empirical research is mixed in suggesting that men and women tend to experience reentry differently. For example, for Brabant et al. (1990) gender was the most important variable for predicting re-entry problems. However, Sussman (2001) reported no significant relationships between gender and re-entry difficulties.

Specifically, concerning satisfaction with life, although female teenagers reported more negative affects, they also seem to have experienced greater joys, so that little difference in global happiness or satisfaction was usually found between genders (Diener, 1984; Neto, 1995).

Research findings pertaining to age and well-being are also somewhat ambiguous. Some studies have reported that younger people cope with transitions better while others have concluded that older people have fewer problems (Church, 1982). However, studies conducted on adolescents showed a positive and statistically significant relation between age and depression (Turjeman, Mesh, & Fishman, 2008; Wade, Cairney, & Pevalin, 2002). It seems that older adolescents, in their transition from school to adult life, face adult-like challenges that spare the younger adolescents attending high school. In agreement with that argument, studies have shown that adolescents' overall life satisfaction decreases with age (e.g., Casas, Bălţătescu, Bertran, Gonzáles, & Hatos, 2009).

Similarly to the length of one's stay abroad, the time elapsed since one's return has also been used as a predictor of re-entry adjustment. However, the results of the research related to the influence of the length of time since return on re-entry adjustment are inconsistent (Szkudlarek, 2010). For example, Amit (2010) showed that the number of years spent in Israel does not significantly predict life satisfaction.

The well-being of adolescents with immigrant background is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon (Pernice & Brook, 1996). However, various reviews (e.g., Aronowitz, 1984; Berry, 1997; Rogler et al., 1991; Ward et al., 2001) have identified some *intercultural contact* factors that arguably are important for well-being outcomes: identity, social interaction and perceived discrimination. An important domain is the extent to which changes in identity are related to changes that occur in the process of acculturation. Two aspects which have been found to be very important to adolescents of immigrant background are ethnic identity and majority identity (Phinney, 1990). Group identification implies a sense of belonging and this sense is implicated in the psychological well-being of ethnic majority group members (e.g., Zheng, Sang, & Wang, 2004) Another important indicator of intercultural contact is peer interactions with a migrant background and peers who have not migrated. Lacking a peer network might be detrimental to one's well-being and increase the likelihood of falling into a depressive mood (Turjeman, Mesh, & Fishman, 2008). Ethnic discrimination and prejudice play a major role in the adaptation of immigrants as such experiences diminish the physical and emotional health outcomes of immigrants. Specifically, some studies have shown that perceived discrimination has a strong negative effect on various aspects of immigrants' mental health (Finch, Kolody, & Vega, 2000; Neto, 1995). Berry et al. (2006) found that perceived discrimination was negatively related to psychological adaptation, including life satisfaction.

Adaptation, varying from well-adapted to maladapted, is the long-term outcome of psychological acculturation (Berry, 1997). Ward and colleagues have distinguished two components of adaptation. Psychological adaptation refers to psychological well-being or mental health and satisfaction in a new cultural context, whereas sociocultural adaptation relates to learning new social skills to interact with the new culture, dealing with daily problems of living, and carrying out tasks effectively (Ward & Kennedy, 1999). These two forms of adaptation are interrelated; dealing successfully with problems and positive interactions with members of the host culture are both likely to improve one's feelings of well-being and satisfaction; similarly, it is easier to accomplish tasks and develop positive interpersonal relations if one is feeling good and accepted. In this study, psychological well-being was measured as positive self-esteem, mastery, and frequency of psychological symptoms (lower levels of mental health problems, such as anxiety, depression, and somatic symptoms), while social adaptation was measured as school adaptation, and behavioral problems (i.e., antisocial behavior).

In Western cultures self-esteem and acting in a consistent way that is congruent with one's personal beliefs are personality factors associated with high levels of subjective well-being (Diener

et al., 1999). By contrast, unhappy people tend to have more psychological symptoms (Proctor, Linley, & Maltby, 2009). Another strong predictor of subjective well-being is the presence of positive social relationships (Argyle, 2001; Neto, 2005). Thus social adaptation may denote positive social relationships.

In sum, this study explored the relations of socio-demographic, re-acculturation, and adaptation variables with life satisfaction. In particular, an attempt was made to identify the differentiated relations of demographic variables, identity, social interaction, perceived discrimination, school adaptation, and behavioural problems with life satisfaction in adolescents of different sex and age groups.

The third aim of this study was to compare the percent of variance accounting for background variables and psychological variables. In accordance with the literature we expect to find a greater percent of the variance in life satisfaction with intercultural and adaptation variables than with demographic variables (Diener, 1984; Neto, 2001). Early SWB researchers focused on identifying the external correlations that lead to satisfying lives. For example, in his influential article, Wilson (1967) catalogued the various demographic factors related to SWB measures. However, after decades of research, psychologists came to realize that external factors often have only a modest impact on well-being reports. For example, Proctor et al. (2009) in their review of 141 empirical studies on life satisfaction among youth concluded that the relationship between demographic variables (i. e., age, gender, race, and socioeconomic status) and life satisfaction was weak and that these variables contribute only modestly to the prediction of youth life satisfaction.

Specifically, based on the above review, three hypotheses concerning satisfaction with life of adolescents from returned immigrant families were tested:

Hypothesis 1. Satisfaction with life scores of adolescents from returned immigrant families will be similar to those of adolescents without migratory experience.

Hypothesis 2. Age predicts life satisfaction among adolescents from returned migrant families. Younger adolescents will show more life satisfaction than older adolescents (Turjeman et al., 2008; Ward et al., 2001).

Hypothesis 3. We hypothesized that intercultural and adaptation predictors will account for a larger proportion of the explained variance in satisfaction with life scores than demographic predictors would.

Method

Participants

The sample consisted of 615 adolescent students, children of returned Portuguese immigrants from France (n = 360), Germany (n = 74), Venezuela (n = 76), Canada and the United States (105) and that have themselves lived in that country. All students were attending Portuguese public high schools in the North of Portugal. The mean age of the participants was 16.51 (SD=1.41) and range from 13 to 19. There were 57.7% girls and 41.8% boys. Seventy five (12.2%) of the participants were born in Portugal, and 535 participants (87%) were born abroad. One of the critical variables in acculturation is duration of time in the settlement culture. The mean duration of residence in Portugal was 8.41 years (SD=4.57). Concerning the neighbourhood 61% is above all composed of people that have never migrated, and 37% is composed of by at least half of the people that have migrated. Ninety-two percent were Roman Catholic.

Table 1: *Characteristics of the sample*

Variables	Returnees (N = 615)
Mean age (SD)	16.5 (1.4)
Sex	
Male	257 (41.8%)
Female	355 (57.7%)
Place of birth	
Portugal	75 (12.2%)
Abroad	535 (87.0%)
Country of immigration	
France	360 (58.5%)
Germany	74 (12.0%)
Venezuela	76 (12.4%)
Canada and USA	105 (17.1%)
Mean age of arrival (SD)	8.4 (4.6)
Duration of sojourn	
Less than 6 years	188 (30.6)
6-10 years	188 (30.6)
More than 10 years	224 (36.4)
Neighborhood	
All different	179 (29.1)
Different	195 (31.7)
Equal	161 (26.2)
Same	48 (7.8)
All same	21 (3.4)

Notes: Neighborhood = Ethnic composition of neighborhood: this scale ranged from 1 (almost all people are not emigrants) to 5 (almost all people are emigrants)

For purposes of comparison, 217 Portuguese adolescents (58.8% females and 41.2% males; mean age=15.18 years, SD = 1.19; 93% low socioeconomic status) were recruited for the study. The proportion of adolescents returned and adolescents without migratory experience by gender was not significantly different (χ^2 (1, 828) = 0.04, p = 0.84). The mean age of both ethnocultural groups (returned adolescents M = 16.51, SD = 1.44; adolescents without migratory experience M = 15.18, SD = 1.19) was significantly different, F(1, 831) = 153.8, p < 0.001, η_p^2 = 0.156. Thus, age was used as a covariate.

Measures

Measures used in the study were assembled by an international group of scholars to study the adaptation of immigrants and ethnocultural youth across cultures (Berry et al., 2006). Measures were either developed for the project, or adapted from existing scales, as described below. In designing the Portuguese version of the items, the author followed the guidelines proposed in the literature on cross-cultural methodology (Brislin, 2000): independent/blind/back translation, educated translation, and small scale pre-tests. Except for the demographic questions, all the items

were answered on a five-point scale. The alphas for the current sample are reported in Table 3 in the diagonal in parentheses.

Demographics. This included age, gender, place of birth (Portugal or abroad), age at arrival in Portugal, and religion. Participants also reported their ethnicity and the occupation of both parents.

Cultural identity: Portuguese identity was measured with the item "I feel that I am Portuguese", and returned country identity was measured with the item: "I feel I am Canadian/French...". Responses options ranged from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5).

Ingroup and outgroup social interaction. Ingroup peer interaction (4 items) assessed the frequency of interaction with peers who have lived some time abroad. A sample question is: How often do you spend free time with peers who have lived some time abroad? Outgroup social interaction was reported on a similar scale with 4 items assessing the frequency of interaction with peers who have never left the country. Responses options ranged from *almost never* (1) to *almost always* (5).

Perceived discrimination. This scale consisted of nine items (Neto, 2006). Five of the items assessed direct experience of discrimination - negative or unfair treatment from others (e.g., *I have been teased or insulted because I am a returned immigrant*), and the remaining 4 items assessed the sources of the negative treatment (e.g., teachers, pupils, etc.). Participants responded on a scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*very often*).

Behavioural problems. The scale was based on Olweus (1989), with modifications by the researchers. It included ten items assessing frequency of antisocial behaviours such as stealing, destroying property, bulling, and misbehaving in school. A sample item is: *Cursed at a teacher*. Respondents rated the behaviours on a scale from *never* (1) to *many times during the past 12 months* (5).

School adaptation. This was assessed by means of a seven-item scale. Items came from a variety of sources (e.g., Anderson, 1982; Moos, 1989). A typical item of this scale is *At present I like school*. Responses options ranged from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5).

Psychological problems. This scale consisted of 15 items measuring depression, anxiety and psychosomatic symptoms. Five items measured each of the three areas. The items were taken from the following sources: Beiser and Flemming (1986); Reynolds and Richmond (1985); and depression scales from Robinson, Shaver and Wrightsman (1991). Participants responded on a 5-point scale ranging from *not at all* (1) to *very often* (5). Sample items included *I feel tired*; *I feel tense and anxious* and *I feel lonely even if I am with people* corresponding to psychosomatic symptoms, anxiety and depression respectively. A factor analysis indicated that the 15 items constitute one factor.

Mastery: this was measured using a six-item scale that measured the degree to which individuals feel a sense of mastery and control of their lives. It was based on several existing scales: Connell (1985), Levenson (1981), Paulus (1983) and Pearlin and Schooler (1978). Sample items included: "What happens to me in the future mostly depends on me" and "I often feel helpless in dealing with problems of my life". The scale had an internal consistency of 0.64.

Self-esteem: this was measured using Rosenberg's (1986) 10-item self-esteem inventory. Sample items were "On the whole I am satisfied with myself" and "I have a positive attitude toward myself". The scale had an internal consistency of 0.69.

Satisfaction with life: this scale consisted of 5 items (Diener, Emmons, Larsen and Griffin,1985) and an item in this scale was: "The conditions of my life are excellent". The reliability and the validity of this scale have been previously demonstrated for a Portuguese population (Neto, 1993, 1995).

Procedure

Recruitment of participants was centered around the northern part of the country (in the Douro and Minho regions). The participants were recruited in the following way: we approached schools and asked for permission to have students fill in the questionnaires during class time. In the classroom, participants were asked to fill out a paper-and-pencil questionnaire including demographic questions and items on the scales during a school session. We did not have random samples. Data collection was undertaken by one assistant. The assistant was present to supervise the data collection. The questionnaire was self-explanatory, but a standard instruction was given at the beginning of the session to inform participants that participation was voluntary and that their responses would be kept confidential and used solely for research purposes. The acceptance rate was high: 93% of the people contacted accepted to participate in the study. The questionnaire was administered in Portuguese and took approximately 1 hour to complete.

Results

The mean satisfaction with life score for the entire returned immigrant sample was 3.57 (*SD*=0.83), and that for Portuguese adolescents who never left the country was 3.76 (SD = 0.81). Following a review of different life satisfaction scales, Cummins (1995) proposed a "gold standard" for subjective well-being: For Diener et al.'s scale, this is 65.0 + or - 2.5% of the maximum scale measure. In other words, for 5- point scale, the gold standard is between 3.13 and 3.38, where scores below 3.13 should be interpreted as indicative of poor life satisfaction. The estimated mean scores for life satisfaction for both returned adolescents (M = 3.57) and their national peers (M = 3.76) were above 3.31, the mean score Cummins (1995) suggested as the gold standard for life satisfaction based on Diener et al.'s (1985) scale. Therefore, we may conclude that returned immigrant adolescents and their national peers are quite satisfied with their lives.

To address Hypothesis 1 (Status: returned immigrant, native) X 2 (Gender), analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted with age as a covariate and satisfaction with life as the dependent variable (Table 2). It revealed that the main effect of geographic mobility was not significant, $F (1, 823) = 0.54$, *ns* (returned immigrant youth: *M* = 3.57, *SD* = 0.83; adolescents who never left the country: *M* = 3.76 , *SD* = 0.81), and similarly the main effect of gender was not significant $F (1, 823) = 1.40$, *ns*. Girls (*M* = 3.61; *SD* = 0.81) showed similar levels of life satisfaction to boys (*M* = 3.65 ; *SD* = 0.85). There was no significant geographic mobility X gender interaction, $F (1, 823) = 0.69$, *ns*. These results support Hypothesis 1.

Among returned immigrants, the effect of age was significant, $F (1, 611) = 16.83$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.027$. Younger adolescents (age 13-16; *M* = 3.72; *SD* = 0.78) showed more life satisfaction than older adolescents (age 17-19; *M* = 3.45; *SD* = 0.85). These results support Hypothesis 2.

Table 2: *Satisfaction with Life Means and Standard Deviations for Boys and Girls in the Two Samples*

	Boys		Girls	
	Mean	SD	*Mean*	SD
Returned immigrants	3.59	0.84	3.57	0.82
Adolescents who have never left the country	3.82	0.86	3.73	0.78

Examining among the returned adolescents by country of emigration, a one-away ANCOVA (covariates of age, gender) was performed to examine whether life satisfaction scored differed among returned emigrant groups. This analysis showed no significant effects of the country of emigration on satisfaction with life, [F (5, 608) = 0.17 , *ns*] (France: M = 3.54; SD = 0.83; Germany: M = 3.61; SD = 0.88; Venezuela: M = 3.62; SD = 0.86; Canada and USA: M = 3.62; SD = 0.76).

A correlation analysis was performed that included all the re-acculturation and adaptation variables taken into account, namely life satisfaction, intercultural contact factors (i. e., Portuguese identity, returned country identity, in-group social interaction, out-group social interaction, and perceived discrimination), and adaptation (behaviour problems, school adaptation, psychological problems, mastery, and self-esteem). The correlation matrix is presented in Table 3. As expected, data showed significant negative correlations between perceived discrimination, behavioural problems, psychological problems, and satisfaction with life. Data also showed significant positive correlations between Portuguese identity, interaction with returned peers and with those who have never migrated, school adaptation, mastery, self-esteem, and satisfaction with life.

Table 3: *Descriptive Statistics and Intercorrelations of Acculturation and Adaptation Variables*

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1 – Satisfaction with life	3.57	0.83	(0.85)										
2 – Portuguese identity	3.36	1,24	0.13**	(--)									
3 – Returned country identity	2.95	1.30	0.06	0.17***	(--)								
4 – Perceived discrimination	1.69	0.70	-.16***	-0.14***	0.07	(0.88)							
5 – In-group social interaction	2.78	1.01	0.10*	-0.09*	0.07	0.09*	(0.75)						
6 - Out-group interaction	4.27	0.67	0.15***	0.14***	-0.04	-0.25***	-0.01	(0.70)					
7 – Behavioural problems	1.31	0.48	-.11**	-.08*	-.03	0.28***	-0.03	-0.07	(0.84)				
8 – School adaptation	3,79	0.66	0.28***	0.07	0.02	-0.26***	0.05	0.17***	-0.33***	(0.67)			
9 – Psychological problems	2.49	0.65	-0.36***	-0.06	0.01	0.29***	0.01	-0.14**	0.24***	-0.36***	(0.90)		
10 - Mastery	3.89	0.64	0.35***	-0.09*	0.03	-0.04	0.11***	0.04	-0.07	0.09	-0.12**	(0.74)	
11 – Self-esteem	3.69	0.62	0.51***	0.10*	-0.02	-0.27***	0.11**	0.13**	-0.18***	0.30***	-0.45***	0.33***	(0.77)

Note: Alpha coefficients are in the diagonal in parentheses.*p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001.

Multiple regression models were used to examine the relative strength of the variables in predicting satisfaction with life among returned immigrant youth. Three sets of possible predictors were considered: demographic variables (i.e., gender, age, and duration of sojourn), intercultural contact variables (i.e., Portuguese identity, returned country identity, perceived discrimination, in-group social interaction, and out-group social interaction), and adaptation variables (behavioural

problems, school adaptation, psychological problems, mastery, and self-esteem). Dummy variables were created for gender. The goal was to examine whether acculturation was associated with satisfaction with life after more general socio-demographic factors have been accounted for. Sociocultural and psychological adaptation factors were entered last to determine whether the relationship between acculturation and life satisfaction would change after adaptation factors were introduced into the model.

The VIF values are all well below 10 and the tolerance statistics all well above 0.20; therefore, there is no strong collinearity within the predictors. Table 4 shows the results of the regression models for the entire sample. The regression model of the first set of demographic variables was significant, F_{change} (3, 593) = 6.46, $p < 0.001$, explaining 3% of the variance. Gender and duration of sojourn were not significant predictors, but older respondents indicated lower general life satisfaction compared to younger respondents. The addition of the intercultural contact variables on step 2 significantly increased the explained variance, R^2_{change} = 0.06, F_{change} (9, 593) = 3.79, $p < 0.001$. The analyses revealed that besides age, Portuguese identity, perceived discrimination, interaction with returned and national peers emerged as significant predictors of life satisfaction. The more adolescents reported Portuguese identity and interaction with returned peers and with peers who have never migrated, and less discrimination, the more likely they were to experience satisfaction with life. The addition of the adaptation variables on step 3 also significantly increased the explained variance, R^2_{change} = 0.28, F_{change} (13, 568) = 25.08, $p < 0.001$. The factors that contributed significantly to the explained variance were age, school adaptation, psychological problems, mastery and self-esteem. The data supported Hypothesis 3 because intercultural contact and adaptation variables accounted for a larger proportion of the explained variance in life satisfaction than demographic predictors.

Table 4: *Regression Predicting Returned Immigrant Adolescents Satisfaction with Life [a]*

Predictor variables	Block 1	Block 2	Block 3
Demographic factors			
Gender	0.02	0.03	-0.05
Age	-0.18***	-0.16***	-0.14**
Duration of sojourn	0.01	-0.02	0.01
Intercultural contact factors			
Portuguese identity		0.10*	0.06
Returned country identity		0.01	0.02
Perceived discrimination		-0.12*	0.02
In-group social interaction		0.13**	0.04
Out-group social interaction		0.10*	0.05
Adaptation factor factors			
Behavioural problems			0.05
School adaptation			0.08*
Psychological problems			-0.14**
Mastery			0.19***
Self-esteem			0.38***
Multiple R2	0.03	0.09	0.37
R2 change and significance	0.03***	0.06***	0.28***

[a] Beta coefficients are reported. *p < 0.05; ** p < 0.01; *** p < 0.001.

Discussion

The satisfaction with life of returned immigrants has not been sufficiently researched worldwide (Amit, 2010). This study investigated the degree of satisfaction with life among returned adolescents, and the factors that may predict the level of life satisfaction among them. All three of our study hypotheses were supported.

Consistent with previous studies (e.g., Neto, 1995; Neto & Barros, 2007; Phinney & Alipuria, 1996), we found multiethnic young people were not at a psychological disadvantage because of their mixed cultural background. Hypothesis 1 was supported: adolescents from returned immigrant families did show similar levels of life satisfaction to peers that had never migrated. Our findings are also consistent with other studies showing that the mean life satisfaction score was beyond the neutral point (Neto, 1995; Sam, 1998). Diener & Diener (1996) discussed this tendency for people to be above average in reported satisfaction with life, concluding that people are motivated to have positive experiences. The data from the current study indicating that adolescents were fairly satisfied appears to be in line with Berry's (1997) conclusion that the majority of immigrants adapt very well to their new societies, despite difficulties in meeting the demands of cultural changes and of living in two cultures.

In general Portuguese immigrants are well accepted which in part reflects the core values shared by the culture of origin and the culture of settlement. The preferred acculturation strategy among young Portuguese in France (Neto, 1995), in Germany (Neto, Barros, & Schmitz, 2005), and North America (Berry et al., 1989) is integration, that is, some degree of cultural integrity is maintained while one moves to participate as an integral part of the larger social network. This preference for integration may, on the one hand, protect immigrants' psychological well-being, as individuals opting for integration tend to experience greater well-being during the acculturation process (Berry, 1997). On the other hand, as they have maintained aspects of the Portuguese culture, the re-acculturation to the country of origin may become an easier process when they return to Portugal.

Younger adolescents (age 14-16) reported more life satisfaction than older adolescents (age 17-19), supporting our second hypothesis. These results are in agreement with previous research showing that younger immigrants were generally better adapted than older immigrants (Berry et al., 2006). It is not easy to explain why this is the case, partly because of the lack of longitudinal studies. Two explanations can be advanced. One is that the younger the acculturating individual, the more "flexible" the person is in terms of conflicts between one's original cultural heritage and that of the new society. Another explanation is that older adolescents are faced with more challenges than their younger peers as they go through the transition from adolescence to adulthood.

Satisfaction with life is a complex phenomenon, being experienced differently by people under varying conditions. Like all complex phenomena, it is caused by an interaction of personal dispositions and situational forces. Our results showed that within the three sets of variables – demographic, intercultural contact and adaptation variables - we found significant predictors of life satisfaction. Among socio-demographic factors, age emerged as a significant predictor of life satisfaction. The inclusion of the demographic variables allowed for their effect to be controlled in regressions. The results of this study showed the complexity of the relationship between the re- acculturation process and its adaptation outcomes among returned adolescents.

Among intercultural contact factors, social interaction both with peers who have returned from emigration and those who have not migrated, perceived discrimination, and Portuguese identity emerged as significant predictors of life satisfaction. Age remained a significant predictor in this model. Returned migrants who have more contacts with returned peers and peers who have not migrated were best equipped for developing more life satisfaction. Perceived discrimination clearly decreased life satisfaction. This result supports previous findings of negative influence of negative acculturation experiences on psychological well-being of adolescents (Gil et al., 1994; Rogler et al., 1991). This finding is consistent with a growing body of research demonstrating

that recognizing that one's group membership is a target of prejudice and discrimination carries negative psychological consequences for disadvantaged groups (Schmitt, Branscombe, Kobrynowicz & Owen, 2002). Portuguese identity was positively associated with life satisfaction. Portuguese identification plays an important role in life satisfaction because returned adolescents may attribute value to their national group and derive satisfaction from the belongingness and sense of inclusion.

However, when adaptation variables were added to demographic and intercultural contact variables no intercultural contact factor remained in the model. In this model self-esteem, mastery, psychological problems, and school adaptation emerged as significant predictors, and age also remained a significant predictor. This study suggests that the most important predictor variables of life satisfaction among adolescents of returned migrant background were the adaptation variables.

The strongest predictor of life satisfaction was self-esteem. As Diener (1984) pointed out, high self-esteem is one of the strongest factors of well-being, and several studies have found a relationship between self-esteem and life satisfaction among adolescents (e.g., Dew & Huebner, 1994; Neto, 1993). Campbell *et al.* (1976) found that self-satisfaction showed the highest correlation with life satisfaction of any variable examined.

Another factor related to life satisfaction was mastery. The adaptation to a new cultural context creates a lot of challenges. If one feels in control of these challenges, one's sense of satisfaction improves. The fact that persons with a high level of mastery have higher feelings of life satisfaction is consistent with earlier studies (Neto, 1995; Lachman & Wearer, 1998; Sam, 1998). A practical consequence of this finding is that helping returned adolescents with immigrant background to develop a better sense of mastery may improve the global assessment of life satisfaction.

Another predictor of life satisfaction were the psychological symptoms. In fact the absence of depression and other negative emotions is part of the subjective well-being. Many studies have shown how there is a strong negative relation between depression in particular and satisfaction (Veenhoveen, 1994). In an Australian study Headey and Wearing (1992) also found a negative relation between depression and anxiety, and life satisfaction. If psychological symptoms are distinct from positive affect and satisfaction, they have quite strong negative correlations with them (Argyle, 2001). In light of this, it is obvious that, by reducing the psychological symptoms, the level of life satisfaction can be enhanced.

For most immigrant children and adolescents, school and other educational settings are the major arenas for inter-group contact and re-acculturation. School adjustment can be seen as a primary task of the cultural transition process. Education is conventionally associated with better adaptation and lower levels of stress (Jayasuriya, Sang, & Fielding, 1992), and our results showed that school adjustment was a strong predictor of well-being.

We expected that demographic factors of gender, age, years of residence would account for modest levels of the explained variance in life satisfaction. Psychosocial factors, including re-acculturation and adaptation variables, would account for the larger part of the explained variance in life satisfaction. This was observed supporting our third hypothesis. Our regression model indicated that about 37% of the explained variance in life satisfaction can be accounted for through the combined demographic and personal factors. Only 3% of the explained variance could be attributed to demographic factors. Thus, the demographic variables, as expected, only accounted for a small percentage of variance in life satisfaction. In fact, Andrews and Withey (1976) stated that the demographic variables they assessed accounted for less than 10% of the variance in SWB. Neto (1995, 2002) and Sam (1998) also found that demographic factors were less relevant than personal factors for the understanding of life satisfaction. Thus, to improve one's life satisfaction, early intervention should focus more on psychosocial than on demographic factors as the former can be changed more readily than many of the latter.

Although the findings of this study add to the existing literature on return migration issues and SWB, a number of limitations deserve mention. First, data were collected on student samples

from the North of Portugal where there are strong migration influences. Our findings may not generalize to other age groups or to return migrants living in areas where migration is not a strong issue. Second, the use of self-reported measures does not provide the opportunity to check whether respondents correctly estimated their attitudes and behaviours. External indices that test the validity of self-reported measures would be useful in such a context. Third, data were cross-sectional and causal implications cannot be drawn. Longitudinal studies may help us better understand the temporal relationship between predictor and dependent variables.

Despite the aforementioned limitations, several strengths of this study should be highlighted. It replicates earlier findings and demonstrates the broad network of background and psychosocial variables in which life satisfaction is embedded. It highlights the relevance of cultural factors in the provision of mental health services, and therefore has implications for the evaluation, intervention and treatment of adolescents with returned emigrant backgrounds. In addition, age differences in satisfaction with life are relevant for assisting returned immigrants in the integration process as well as for future research in return migration and health. Clinical professionals must take into account socio-cultural background when planning interventions.

Many emigrants return to Portugal. Better understanding of how re-acculturation processes might exacerbate risk for life satisfaction or facilitate healthier adjustment is a worthy endeavour, especially given the increasing return population in Portugal. The present study offers suggestions for prevention and intervention programs for returned adolescents.

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