

## Introduction

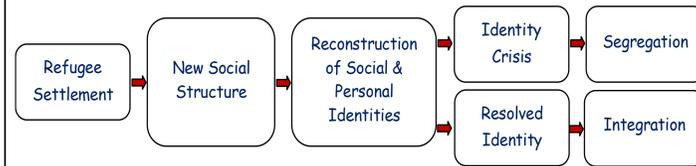
According to Berry (1980), newcomers' preference to maintain their heritage culture and their desire to participate in the larger society determines immigrants' acculturation strategies<sup>1</sup>:

### Berry's Model of Acculturation

	Cultural Maintenance YES	Cultural Maintenance NO
Contact/ Participation YES	Integration	Assimilation
Contact/ Participation NO	Segregation	Marginalization

The attitudes towards acculturation can also be associated with identity crisis and psychological health of newcomers. When a person senses that his/her personal and social identities are not adequate for the social context they are living in, such awareness may disturb the person's psychodynamic balance and lead to "identity crisis" which may result with identity confusion, behavioral disarray, and the absence of identification with recognized roles in a community (Erikson, 1959).

## Hypotheses



- After moving to the country of resettlement and being exposed to a series of unfamiliar norms, rules, institutions, and lifestyles in the new context, refugee individuals are likely to (re)experience "identity crisis".
- Higher levels of identity crisis will be associated with lower scores of acculturation. The individuals who have not resolved identity crisis will manifest lower acculturative attitudes, such as segregation or marginalization, while the individuals who resolved identity crisis will show higher acculturation, such as integration or assimilation.
- Psychologically healthy refugees will adopt integrative strategies, whereas refugees with poor health status will favor segregation.

## Methodology

- 50 Karen refugees from Burma (Myanmar) who have resettled in London, Ontario filled out a survey.
- Identity Crisis Modality (Côté, 1986)<sup>3</sup> and Psychological Health inventories were used to measure identity crisis (current, past, and future crisis) and psychological well-being of refugees.
- Karen Acculturation Measure was developed to measure four dimensions of acculturation (assimilation, separation, integration, and marginalization) among Karen refugees.
- Acculturation attitudes of Karen refugees were identified with exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and cluster analysis.
- Ordinal logistic regression analyses were performed through SPSS PLUM to assess prediction of acculturation on the basis of demographic variables, identity and psychological health predictors.

## References

- Berry, J. W. (1980). Acculturation as varieties of adaptation. In A. M. Padilla (Ed.), *Acculturation: Theory, models and some new findings*, pp. 9-25. Boulder, CO: Westview.
- Erikson, E., (1968). *Identity: Youth and Crisis*. New York: Norton.
- Côté, J. E., (1986). Identity Crisis Modality: A Technique for Assessing the Structure of the Identity Crisis. *Journal of Adolescence*, 9, pp. 321-335.

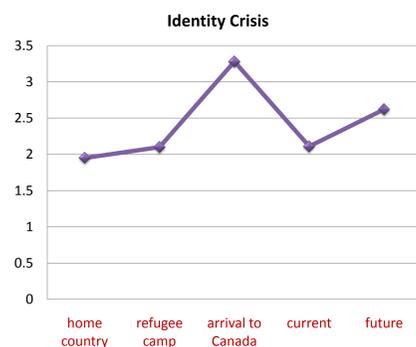
## Conclusion

- Diverse nature of acculturation: Ethnic minorities and members of these minority groups may show varying degrees of immersion into ethnic and host cultures.
- The process of resettlement promotes identity crisis in refugee individuals. Identity crisis can be severe at the time refugees arrive to the host country. It tends to decrease by time. However, thinking about the unpredictable future in the host country can once more elevate identity issues.
- Work/study status, identity crisis, and psychological health are important factors in predicting newcomers' acculturation.
- If identity crisis is successfully resolved, newcomers can find a suitable place in the host society and be ready for the integration process.
- Institutional support should be provided to newcomers (during and after settlement) for improving psychological health and resolving identity crisis.
- Improving newcomers' access to education and job market is a key factor in the integration process.

## Analyses and Results

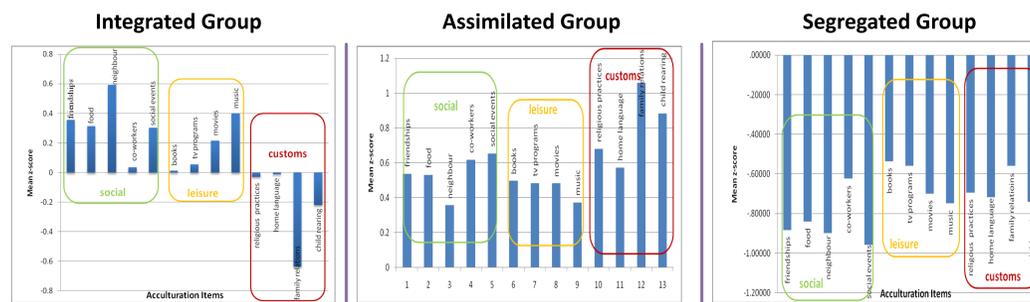
### Identity Crisis

Karen refugees experienced *severe* identity crisis when they arrived Canada. The score for identity crisis decreased at the time of the study, but it increased when the respondents were asked questions about the future.



### Acculturation Attitudes

EFA produced three factors for acculturation attitudes of Karen refugees: Social relations, leisure activities, and customs and values. Cluster analysis grouped individuals into three clusters: Segregated group, integrated group, and assimilated group (none of the participants exhibited marginalized attitudes).



The integrated Karen refugees (30%) indicated involvement in both cultures with preservation of ethnic customs&values while experimenting with new leisure activities and social relations.

The assimilated Karens (36%) showed a strong orientation toward host Canadian culture. They had relatively high scores on both social relations, leisure activities, and customs&values.

The segregated Karens (34%) endorsed high involvement in ethnic culture, thus a separation attitude, with low (negative) scores on each item.

### Factors of Acculturation

Variables	B	Odds Ratio
Male vs. Female	.126	1.134
Single vs. Married	1.197*	3.310
Studying vs. Working	1.238*	3.449
Healthy vs. Moderately Healthy	1.715*	5.557
Moderately Healthy vs. Not Healthy	.509	1.664
No ID crisis vs. ID Crisis	3.845**	46.759
Moderate ID Crisis vs. ID Crisis	3.880**	48.424

\* = p < .05, \*\* = p < .01

- Single Karens were more likely to acculturate (integrate or assimilate) than married Karens.
- Studying participants were also more open to acculturate compared to the participants who were working.
- Karens who indicated lower levels of identity crisis manifested higher levels of acculturation.
- Psychologically healthy Karens were more likely to adopt integrative strategies.

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