Resettlement and
The Crisis of Identity

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Identity

• Identity: a sense of “personal sameness and continuity" both within oneself, in one’s representation of oneself to others, and in others’ perception of self (Erikson, 1959).

• 3 components of identity
  1. Social identity
  2. Personal identity
  3. Ego identity

• Adolescence-Identity Crisis

• Resolved identity -> suitable place in society & maintain a sense of continuity in social space and time.
Migration/Resettlement

Social Structure
Ideals, values, norms of dominant host and ethnic culture

Social identity
Changing roles

Interaction
Relationships with “other” community members
Changing “in-group relationships”

Personal identity
Modifying goals, values, and beliefs
New presentations of self

Personality
Ego execution of appropriate self presentations

Ego identity
Ego synthesis of old and new self presentations & others’ appraisals

Adapted from Côté and Levine, 2002.
Research Question & Hypotheses

• After moving to the country of resettlement and being exposed to series of unfamiliar norms, rules, institutions, and lifestyles in the new context, refugee individuals are likely to experience a loss in their “sense of continuity”, which may lead to identity crisis and prolongation in identity resolution.

• (6 hypotheses)
Refugees from Burma (Myanmar)

Located in Southeast Asia, Burma shares borders with;
China (2185 km),
Thailand (1800 km),
India (1643 km),
Laos (235 km),
Bangladesh (139 km)
Mae La Oon- Refugee Camp

Burma is on the left, Thailand on the right.
Samples

**Karens**
- 50 refugees from Burma
- 24 male, 26 female
- 18-45 years old
  - 48% between 18-22
- 58% were born in a refugee camp
- Length of residence in Canada: 3-5 years

**Canadians**
- 50 Canadians
- 24 male, 26 female
- 18-45 years old
  - 48% between 18-22
- 100% born and lived in Canada
Survey Package

- Demographics and Life Experiences
- Identity Crisis Modality (Côté, 1986)
- Temporal-Spatial Continuity (Dunkel & Anthis, 2003)
- Identity Issues Inventory (Roberts, 2007)
- Identity Distress (Berman, Montgomery & Kurtines, 2004)
- Psychological Health (WHO)
- Karen Acculturation Measure (Erdogan)
Identity Crisis

* p<.05, ** p<.01
Temporal-Spatial Continuity

* p<.05, ** p<.01
Identity Resolution

* p<.05, ** p<.01
Identity Resolution

* p<.05, ** p<.01
Identity Distress

* p<.05, ** p<.01
Conclusion

- Refugees are distressed over identity issues, feel a sense of loss in “temporal continuity” → identity crisis
- Highest → at the time of arrival and resettlement
- Increases → future
- Social identity (career) most problematic
- Social support
THANKS!

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