Child Adjustment within Immigrant and Refugee Families
Preliminary Meta-analytic Results

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Helping Families Change Conference, Banff 2016
Overview

Why?
- Immigrants & Refugees: World context in 2016
- Meta-analysis

How?
- Strategy
- Studies included

What?
- Preliminary results
- Challenges
- Next steps
Collaboration

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Agnes Sumargi

United States: University of Southern California
Ania Filus
Why study children in immigrant & refugee families?

• UNHCR: over 1,150,000 people will need to be resettled in 2016
  – Regions of the Middle East and North Africa: estimate 369,500 refugees
  – Europe: estimate 215,000 refugees (44% higher than reported needs in 2015)
• Migration presents unique challenges to the adjustment of children
• The primary resettlement countries continually shifting
  – Political context in resettlement country
• Providing services to these families new to our countries
Fazel et al., 2012

• Systematic review of 5,776 displaced and refugee children (44 studies)
• Examined risk and protective factors for psychological, emotional, or behavioural disorders
• Results suggest a number of important risk factors:
  – Exposure to violence prior to and after migration
  – Poor financial support
  – Perceived discrimination
  – Unstable housing post-migration
  – Parental mental health

• Important protective factors centred upon social support (family cohesion; support from peers; positive school experiences)
Contributions of this meta-analysis

• Adjustment among both immigrant and refugee children

• Emphasis upon studies that use strong measures of child adjustment

• Focus is upon newcomers (in the years following migration)
### How to make sense of the available research?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Systematic Review</th>
<th>Meta-Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• A systematic search using explicit search criteria</td>
<td>• A set of statistical procedures for quantitatively summarizing the results of a research domain</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How to best synthesize information across:

1. **diverse** populations
2. various kinds of **research designs**
3. **different measures** of child adjustment
Goals of the current meta-analysis

• To locate studies that looked at how children are doing in families of immigrants and/or refugees

• To include studies that used strong and reliable measures of child problems and strengths
Meta-analysis

1. Define terms
2. Conduct Search
3. Evaluation of abstracts
4. Review of full-text articles
5. Data collection
6. Challenges along the way
Defining terms

Newcomer
- Immigrant
- Refugee
- Asylum-seeker
- Displaced persons

Families
- Child
- Youth
- Adolescent
- Parent
- Families

Adjustment
- Adjustment
- Adaptation
- Well-being
- Mental Health
Identification

- 4,668 records through databases
- 3,391 total records identified

Screening

- 3,391 abstracts reviewed
- 2,514 excluded
  - 440 excluded
  - 128 insufficient info
  - 70 resources
- 877 full-text articles: eligibility
- 440 excluded
- 128 insufficient info
- 70 resources

Eligibility

- 239 (IRR: 88%): studies included
- 202 articles: quantitative
- 37: qualitative synthesis
- 166 excluded

Included

- 36 articles (IRR: 95.7%)
Selecting studies

- All articles coded for the:
  - Characteristics of the study
  - Sample
  - Measures

- Only included measures that are good tools for measuring children’s emotional and behavioural well-being
Selected studies

- 34 samples (36 articles)
- Total of 8,368 youth
- Youth ranged from 18 months to 19 years old
- All samples met newcomer criterion of 10 years or less
- The majority of studies assessed once rather than following youth over time
Information on the young person based on:

- Youth only: 65%
- Parent only: 17%
- Teacher only: 9%
- Multi-informant: 9%
### Sample description: Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status in Host</th>
<th># Studies</th>
<th>Countries of Origin</th>
<th># Youth</th>
<th>Host Countries</th>
<th>Time in Host Country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asylum-Seeker</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Eastern Europe; Africa; Asia</td>
<td>N = 316</td>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>M = &lt; 5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detainee</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Not reported</td>
<td>N = 22</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>M = &lt; 2.5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refugee</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe/FSU, Middle East, South America,</td>
<td>N = 1,342</td>
<td>Australia, Belgium, Germany, UK, USA</td>
<td>M range: 1 to 6.4 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrant</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Africa, Caribbean, Central &amp; South America, East Asia,</td>
<td>N = 4,128</td>
<td>Australia, Canada, Finland, Germany, Israel, Italy, USA,</td>
<td>M range: 1.35 to 8.9 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migrant</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>China, Eastern Europe, Mexico, Northern Africa</td>
<td>N = 371</td>
<td>Italy, USA</td>
<td>M = &lt; 5 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>Immigrant/Refugee</td>
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<td>Africa, Central American, Eastern Europe, Middle East</td>
<td>N = 2,142</td>
<td>Belgium, Norway, UK, USA</td>
<td>M = &lt; 10 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Sample description: Measures of adjustment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status in Host Country</th>
<th>Number of Studies</th>
<th>Overall Adjustment</th>
<th>Internalizing</th>
<th>Externalizing</th>
<th>Depression</th>
<th>Anxiety</th>
<th>Trauma</th>
<th>Self-esteem</th>
<th>Social Support</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Detainee</td>
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<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Refugee</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>X</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Challenges encountered

• Terms don’t always mean the same thing
  – Difficulties in defining terms

• Measurement
  – How measures are selected and used
  – Strength of measures
Next steps

• Constantly evolving process: clarify and adapt our coding
• Move forward with meta-analyses
• Conduct this same strategy to examine how parents adjust following migration (and how they may impact their parenting)
Thank you to our collaborators and colleagues in supporting this research project!

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Please feel free to contact me with any questions or suggestions:

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