

The Refugee in the Room

The cognitive socialisation of children becomes at risk of psychological deviances between cultures. The child finds themselves at the hand of external influences that jeopardise future chances of social cohesion. “*Rates of post-traumatic stress disorder among resettled refugee children and adolescents are between 7% and 17%*”¹, with a high likelihood in mitigating reduced resilience and a loss of reality.² An illustrious example of this is child soldier-turned-lawyer Deng Adut, who had “*lost the freedom to read and write. Lost the right to be innocent. Lost the right to be a child.*”³ Contemporaneously, children are distinctly categorised against other displaced individuals due to having no background of settled primary socialisation, holding only a disarray of unadorned individualities.

When asked about the security of their children, the parents of my focus group noted “*seeking only the best for their children in a new world*”, yet also denounced the possibility of having a stable foundation within the near future.⁴ The mother stated “*my youngest daughter was brought into a public school with a majority of students of the same cultural background. However, her frailty and difference in lifestyle & dialect alienated her from her classmates.*”⁵ The demonstrated social difference and lack of cultural literacy is a distinct representation of a refugee child being excluded and treated differently despite the ramifications of a typically safe environment. While it is not the meso-level school institution mandating discrimination against the child, it is the younger cohort internally oppressing and creating a micro-level conflict, especially creating psychological resistance for future social mobility.⁶ It is unlikely a refugee would involve themselves into the Australian Eurocentric society appropriately unless they increasingly denounce their heritage. Whereby this becomes a problem for first-generation refugees, it is not an opposed force for adolescent generations due to the need of diffusing an identity to conform to a polarised group.

¹ Fazel, M., Wheeler, J., Danesh, J., (2005), “*Prevalence of serious mental disorder in 7000 refugees resettled in western countries: a systematic review*”, *Lancet*, vol. 365, pp. 1309-1314

² “*11 Negative Effects of Lack of Socializing*”, PTSDJournal, Retrieved from <http://www.ptsdjournal.com/posts/11-negative-effects-of-lack-of-socializing/> [accessed June 5, 2017]

³ Whitbourn, M., (2016, November 7), “*Deng Adut named NSW Australian of the Year*”, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Retrieved from <http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/deng-adut-named-nsw-australian-of-the-year-20161106-gsjfvz.html> [accessed May 6, 2017]

⁴ Focus Group conducted April, 2017

⁵ *ibid*

⁶ Axner, M., “*Healing from the Effects of Internalized Oppression*”, Community Tool Box, Retrieved from <http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/culture/cultural-competence/healing-from-internalized-oppression/main> [accessed May 21, 2017]

A cyclical continual pattern of attitudes hereby epitomises the generational change across society. Treating the concept of identity as a transitional and dynamic process, the dissemination into Australian culture would overtime reach further into an individual's primary socialisation. Focus group participants discussed the common resolution of migration resonated within the underlying continuation of familial lifestyle. One participant mentioned "*[our] children would have an easier life in Australia than us. They'll grow up here and learn the language, the people. We would never truly be people of this country.*"⁷ The cultural assimilation into a defined identity is exhibited to be an impossible task for individuals of a contrastingly different individualism; at times proving unreasonable. Within Australia, '*anglo-conformity*' defines a divergence across refugees seeking to culturally accommodating into the nation.⁸ Whereby sensory and centripetal behaviours would converge over time, a refugee's ethnolinguistics are immalleable and unable to conclusively adapt to society. Startlingly, this cultural transformation contains the potential to become an aberrant fear amongst refugees. The multi-faceted complexity of both change and cultural adaptation creates a prominent concern that misleads refugees into believing an unhealthy adjustment into Australia despite socially-deprived circumstances.

⁷ *ibid*

⁸ Morawska, E., (1994), "*In Defense of the Assimilation Model*", *Journal of American Ethnic History*, vol. 13, no. 2, pp. 76-87