

Part IV

**CASE STUDIES OF
REFUGEE PSYCHOSOCIAL WELLNESS**

Mixed Approaches

In this final section we present three chapters that utilize both quantitative and qualitative methods to explore the psychological dimension of refugee flight and migration. One approach is a careful consideration of context and culture, allowing for the “voices” of the refugees to inform the development of quantitative measures. The other approach is the use of alternative strategies to confirm findings, a process referred to as “triangulation.” The case examples in this part address both the development of instruments that are culturally and contextually sensitive, and the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods as a means of confirming the study results.

Chapter 9 presents an interesting and detailed illustration of the use of qualitative techniques to design measures for use in a quantitative study. The authors, Ilene Hyman, Morton Beiser, Sam Noh and Nhi Vu, focus on the impact of pre- and postmigration stress in the lives of resettled Southeast Asian children, especially their mental health. Through the use of case studies and focus groups, three dimensions of stress were found: 1) school adjustment; 2) parent-child relationships; and 3) inter-personal conflict. The authors conclude that the findings illustrate the need to consider cultural and contextual appropriateness when assessing stressful life experiences in immigrant or refugee youth as well as the utility of distinguishing developmental, culture-specific, and situational stressors as conceptually separate domains.

In chapter 10, Colin MacMullin and Maryanne Loughry discuss their mixed-method approach to the study of Palestinian children’s

worries. While the literature is dominated by adult-focused investigations into children's concerns, they present the results of a child-focused study in which children in Beach Camp, Gaza were asked to list and describe the things that worry them. Focus groups were established in which the children elaborated upon these worries, discussed their coping strategies, and suggested advice they would give to younger children who might face similar concerns in the future. MacMullin and Loughry offer suggestions for the utilization of their methodology.

Finally, Joseph Westermeyer has studied the Hmong people for more than thirty years, both in their native Laos and later in resettlement in Minnesota. As a psychiatrist and anthropologist, he has applied his clinical, quantitative and qualitative expertise to his investigations that have pursued: 1) an understanding of clinical research across cultures; 2) the evaluation of checklists and scales as measures of psychological response and symptoms; and, 3) the development of measures that are culturally-appropriate to the Hmong population. Westermeyer gives a sensitive description of the influences in his work in chapter 11 and relates how he designed his research at different stages of migration. In the study of the Hmong culture, their social and emotional adjustment, and degrees of psychopathology, he has established a research approach that captures elements of both quantitative and qualitative methodology.

The interested student, researcher, and even practitioner can learn much from these authors' discussion. Both qualitative and quantitative methods have obvious strengths and limitations, but used together, we see that they can support each other in the development of hypotheses, formulation of research strategies, and verification the findings.