MEDIATED COMMUNICATION AND REFUGEE RESILIENCE: A SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY PERSPECTIVE

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We are facing the global refugee crisis. Most refugees and displaced persons come from just a few countries, including Syria, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Myanmar, and Somalia, but the Russian invasion of Ukraine caused a huge unprecedented increase in migration from February 2022 into countries of the European Union. Refugees confront a multitude of obstacles, including securing fundamental needs such as food, water, shelter, and healthcare, as well as reconstructing their lives within unfamiliar communities [1; 6; 7; 9]. They have to deal with the complex social, cultural and economic environments of the host countries [3; 13]. Social psychologists are progressively emphasizing the significance of communication in fostering resilience among refugee populations.

We explore how mediated communication (MC) can promoteresilience, drawing on modern social psychology theories and empirical research. MC refers to the concept of remote communication, where interactions between people are mediated by different technologies: from phone audio and social media, messaging apps, and video conferencing [2], to multisensory virtual reality and metaverse with AI agents).

The concept of resilience and its relevance to refugees is introduced based on the psychological understanding of resilience, defined as an individual's ability to adapt and recover from adversity. It is critical to refugees' well-being [8; 12]. From a social psychological perspective, resilience can be fostered through social support, coping strategies, and positive emotions [4; 10]. We consider MC a powerful tool to promote refugee resilience because it can provide access to social support networks, fostering a sense of connection and belonging, and facilitating access to information and resources. Recent researches [5] give the hope to study the role of MC in promoting resilience among refugees presenting a promising approach to addressing the refugee crisis from a social psychology perspective. Findings indicate that users who predominantly engage in MC featuring video experience a heightened sense of co-presence, which in turn enhances their well-being [11]. It is crucial to consider the cultural and social contexts in which refugees use MC. By leveraging the power of technology, interventions can effectively address the unique challenges faced by refugees, such as displacement, trauma, and social isolation, as well as the specific needs of Ukrainian refugees from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Future research should focus on understanding how to optimize the use of MC to support refugee resilience while addressing these challenges. Researchers should explore the role of cultural and social contexts in shaping refugees' experiences with MC to better support the well-being of refugees, including those affected by the Russia-Ukraine war, and help them rebuild their lives in the face of adversity.

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