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REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT IN AMERICA:  
EXPLORING THE ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS OF RESETTLEMENT WORKERS  
AND ADOLESCENTS

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Faculty of  
Montclair State University in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

by

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Upper Montclair, NJ

May 2019

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Jennifer Brown Urban

MONTCLAIR STATE UNIVERSITY

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

DISSERTATION APPROVAL

We hereby approve the Dissertation

REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT IN AMERICA:

EXPLORING THE ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS OF RESETTLEMENT WORKERS

AND ADOLESCENTS

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Doctor of Philosophy


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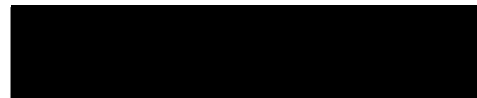
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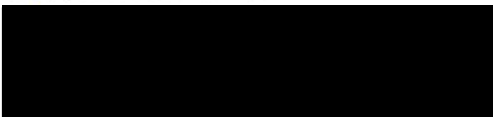
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## ABSTRACT

### Refugee Resettlement in America:

#### Exploring the Attitudes and Perceptions of Resettlement Workers and Adolescents

By Marisa C. MacDonnell

This dissertation explored perceptions and attitudes toward refugees and refugee resettlement and tested the impact of a prejudice reduction intervention derived from extended contact. This dissertation utilized a three-paper approach. Using qualitative data, the first paper explored resettlement workers' beliefs about facilitators and barriers to successful refugee resettlement. Resettlement workers highlighted needs within resettlement service provision and highlighted the growing discrimination against refugees and refugee resettlement within the United States. The second paper examined American adolescents' knowledge and feelings toward refugees. Findings revealed American adolescents' limited knowledge of refugees and demonstrated the significant relationships between prior contact, media exposure to refugee topics, and knowledge of refugees as predictors of attitudes toward refugees and social emotional learning skills. Finally, the third paper tested the impact of a prejudice reduction intervention derived from extended contact with a sub-sample of American adolescents. Using a pre and post-test survey design, results demonstrated that the intervention significantly and positively predicted knowledge and intergroup attitudes toward refugees compared to a control condition. Program, policy, and future research implications are discussed.

*Keywords:* refugees, resettlement, youth development, extended contact

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## CHAPTER I

### Introduction

At the time of this dissertation there are currently 25.4 million refugees in the world (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2019a). According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), a refugee is a person who has left their home country and been granted an authorized status based on prior persecution, or legitimate fear of persecution, due to their religion, nationality, political opinions or membership to social groups (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2019c). When this research began, in the Fall of 2016, the political climate surrounding the topic of refugee resettlement reached a new level of intensity and divisiveness. Since that time, there have been significant shifts in policy, media attention, and opinions on the topic of refugee resettlement within the United States. What began as a study of facilitators and barriers to successful resettlement shifted to something more fundamental. It became clear that Americans were not on the same page when it came to the topic of refugees or refugee resettlement. Not only were there significant differences in American attitudes toward refugees, but there appeared to be confusion over what a refugee was.

This dissertation begins by exploring the insights and voices of those who work most closely with newly arrived refugees: resettlement workers. At the time of data collection, the Fall of 2016, the U.S. resettlement program was still very active. A few months later, the cap on the number of refugees allowed into the U.S. for resettlement was significantly reduced and a ban had been placed on Muslim sending countries ("Donald J. Trump, President of the United States, et al. v. International Refugee Assistance Project, et al.," 2017; Shear & Cooper, 2017). Americans suddenly had very strong and public opinions on the topic of refugee resettlement. While some beliefs or concerns, such as national security, could be considered valid, others, such

as the notion that refugees were here illegally, were simply incorrect. The researcher, having experience in refugee resettlement, program evaluation, and youth development, was interested in understanding more about adolescents' knowledge and feelings toward refugees. Furthermore, the researcher wanted to explore potential methods for reducing prejudice and the transmission of inaccurate data surrounding the topic of refugees and refugee resettlement.

In the following chapter, the first paper provides an introduction and insight into the world of refugee resettlement in the U.S. Through qualitative interviews, three resettlement workers from an active resettlement agency in Southern California shared their beliefs regarding facilitators and barriers to successful refugee resettlement in the U.S. The second paper examines adolescents' knowledge of and feelings toward refugees with a sample of adolescents living in Northern New Jersey. The third paper builds upon the implications from the second paper, with a subset of the sample from the second paper, and tests the efficacy of a prejudice reduction intervention derived from extended contact (Cameron, Rutland, Brown, & Douch, 2006; Wright, Aron, McLaughlin-Volpe, & Ropp, 1997) as a means to reduce bias against refugees and improve social emotional learning (SEL) skills (CASEL, 2017; Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011).

Throughout these papers, the refugee resettlement process will be referenced a number of times. Although there have been significant recent changes to refugee resettlement policies and programs in the U.S., (Amos, 2018; "Donald J. Trump, President of the United States, et al. v. International Refugee Assistance Project, et al.," 2017) it is helpful to understand how the U.S. refugee resettlement program came about. Furthermore, it is important to note that humanitarian crises exist in various parts of the world and millions of people flee their homes seeking refuge in other countries (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2019a). When discussing

refugee resettlement from the standpoint of U.S. policy, and for the purpose of this research, refugees with the formal UNHCR designation are being referenced (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2019c).

### **History of Refugee Resettlement**

Formal refugee resettlement resulted from the Second World War. The war created an exceedingly high number of displaced people living across Europe and quickly became a humanitarian crisis. Initial U.S. resettlement efforts, spearheaded by President Harry Truman, prioritized the resettlement of women and children (Brown & Scribner, 2014). Between the years of 1945 and 1948, the U.S. began to further establish the role of the U.S. government in relocating individuals displaced by war. Prior to this time period, if one were to move to the U.S. as the result of war or persecution, the financial burden would be on the individual or the potential familial tie located in the U.S. This was highly restrictive considering many of these individuals and families were in dire financial situations. By 1948, volunteer agencies began operating in conjunction with government entities to relieve some of the financial burden of resettling these individuals, and resettlement efforts were extended to include men (Brown & Scribner, 2014).

Following WWII, and until the Vietnam War, the resettlement of refugees in the U.S. continued, but existed in an ad-hoc capacity. There was not a formalized process for resettling refugees and the role of government and volunteer agencies were not well defined. The Vietnam War and the resettlement of Vietnamese refugees brought these issues to light. It became clear that not only were Vietnamese refugees getting different services than European refugees, but Vietnamese refugees were also getting less cash assistance. The result was the Refugee Act of 1980 (Kennedy, 1981). The act standardized per capita amounts of cash assistance for all

refugees resettled in the U.S., regardless of their country of origin, and clarified the roles of the government and volunteer agencies. This led to the government being heavily involved in the pre-resettlement activities and screening of refugees, and volunteer agencies taking on the U.S. resettlement process (Brown & Scribner, 2014).

The rules implemented through the Refugee Act of 1980 are reflected in the U.S. resettlement procedures that exist today (Brown & Scribner, 2014). The total amount of refugees accepted for yearly resettlement is approved by the President each year and can change. Up until recently, the resettlement process itself had remained stable. At the beginning of this research (Fall 2016), the U.S. had for the first time in years increased its resettlement capacity for the year, moving from 70,000 to 85,000 refugees, and had planned to accept up to 110,000 refugees in 2017 (U.S. Department of State, 2016). This number spoke volumes in terms of the dire nature of the refugee situation at the time, however, in early 2017 an executive order significantly reduced the cap on refugee admissions from 110,000 to 50,000 (with exceptions for immediate families) and halted the resettlement of refugees from Muslim-majority countries ("Donald J. Trump, President of the United States, et al. v. International Refugee Assistance Project, et al.," 2017). While Syrians were (and are certainly still) at the forefront of media coverage of refugees, they are currently a very small portion of the refugees resettled in the U.S. Some of the largest ethnic groups resettled in the U.S. include Iraqis, Somalis, Congolese, Bhutanese, and Burmese (Alpert & Hussein, 2017).

### **Resettlement Process**

All refugee cases have to be verified by the UNHCR and verification does not typically result in resettlement. The first goal of refugee processing is to safely return the individual or family to the country from which they originated. If that is not possible, the second goal is to

resettle the individual or the family in the location where they are temporarily seeking safety (U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, 2019). For instance, during the Iraq War many refugees fled to Turkey. Once they got refugee status, it was clear that Iraq still posed a safety risk. Many refugees were able to permanently resettle in Turkey.

A very small percentage of refugees, about 1%, will have to be resettled to a third location due to safety or capacity issues in the first country of asylum. Resettlement to a third location is a last resort in refugee processing. Refugees processed through resettlement programs in locations such as the U.S., Canada, Australia, or Germany are part of this 1% (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2019b). If a refugee has to be relocated to a third country, and they have received their UNHCR verification, they then go on to be interviewed by a U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services investigator. If the individual is deemed to not present a safety risk, they will then be referred for resettlement in the U.S. At that point, they wait to be matched with a volunteer agency in the U.S. That match is based on family ties, language capacity or potential employment opportunities. Once they have been matched with a volunteer agency, the agency then has to assure they will have the funds to provide for the individual or family for the first 30 days and provide resettlement services for a year. Once the assurance is complete, refugees have to undergo a medical screening, additional security checks, and begin cultural orientation (U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, 2019).

### **U.S. Resettlement Services**

Upon arrival to the U.S., refugees receive 100% financial support for the first 30 days. During those first 30 days, core priorities include addressing medical issues, finding housing, enrolling children in school, and attending job readiness and ESL classes (U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, 2019). Resettlement services vary greatly in terms of capacity and

opportunities for refugees (Capps et al., 2015). For instance, some resettlement agencies may offer employment support, financial literacy, food security services, youth programming, and support groups, while another agency may only offer resettlement and employment services. These differences in available programming vary based on the needs of the refugee population and the external programmatic grant funds attained by the agency. In general, the U.S. resettlement program emphasizes job placement and self-sufficiency, something that has made the program successful, but also has led to criticism (Brown & Scribner, 2014; Capps et al., 2015).

### **Adolescents, Extended Contact, and SEL**

In addition to gaining insight into refugee resettlement through the lens of resettlement workers, it is important to understand the general public's knowledge and attitudes toward refugees. While it would be interesting to broadly understand Americans' knowledge and attitudes toward refugees across all ages, adolescents, who are in a crucial developmental period, are both shaping their identities and opinions (Smetana & Villalobos, 2009) and are receptive to interventions (Durlak et al., 2011; Durlak, Weissberg, & Pachan, 2010). Younger children often accept the beliefs of the adults in their lives, particularly regarding important social issues such as refugee resettlement. The adolescent period, however, is often characterized as a period of self-exploration (Smetana, Ahman, & Wray-Lake, 2016; Steinberg et al., 2009). Adolescents utilize their developing logic and problem solving skills to begin to explore their own interests and beliefs (Smetana & Villalobos, 2009). While there is evidence that adults discriminate against or have negative perceptions of refugees (Fangen, 2006; Hadley & Patil, 2009; Noh, Beiser, Kaspar, Hou, & Rummens, 1999), there is not a clear understanding of how American youth perceive refugees.

The cognitive changes that occur during adolescence lay the groundwork for how youth will think about important social, moral, and ethical issues (Smetana & Villalobos, 2009). Therefore, interventions targeted at adolescents, with a focus on reducing prejudice, could be particularly useful in changing negative attitudes towards outgroup members. Contact between in-group and out-group populations reduces prejudice and intergroup biases (Paolini, Hewstone, & Cairns, 2007). Not all youth have this opportunity. Instead, extended contact, also known as indirect cross group friendships, has the potential to reduce bias through vicarious experiences of friendships. Although extended contact interventions on the surface may appear to only benefit out-group members, extended contact interventions may also help promote social emotional learning (SEL) competencies that benefit both the self and civil society. Applied psychologists and practitioners working in the field of SEL aim to enhance and develop social emotional and character skills (Berkowitz & Bier, 2007; Elias, 2014; Park & Peterson, 2008). Participants in SEL programs have been shown to demonstrate positive social and emotional skills, such as fewer behavioral problems, and more positive attitudes towards themselves and others (Durlak et al., 2011). SEL programs specifically focused on educating youth about marginalized groups, such as refugees, with the intent of reducing prejudice could be particularly useful in developing social awareness skills. By encouraging adolescents to coexist in a peaceful manner we promote a more civil society and increase the likelihood that youth will carry positive SEL skills into adulthood and apply SEL skills to their daily lives. Individuals who seek to behave in ways that are morally admirable and virtuous may be more likely to achieve eudaimonia or true “human flourishing” (Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Ryff & Singer, 2013).

### **Gaps in the Literature**

In general, this research is venturing into uncharted territory. While there have been studies exploring refugee resettlement within the U.S., much of that research tends to have a clinical or mental health focus (Ellis et al., 2016; Kira, Lewandowski, Chiodo, & Ibrahim, 2014; Lincoln, Lazarevic, White, & Ellis, 2015; Schweitzer, Wyk, & Murray, 2015). The U.S. refugee resettlement program, while highly successful (Brown & Scribner, 2014), is not well understood by many people both in and outside of academia (International Rescue Committee, 2018). In addition, very little research has examined bias against refugees in the U.S. (Hadley & Patil, 2009; Montgomery & Foldspang, 2007). Even as tensions surrounding the topic have risen, no studies to date have explored extended contact interventions as a means of reducing bias against refugees in the U.S. and improving SEL skills.

### **Research Questions**

Attitudes and perceptions of refugees and refugee resettlement will be examined throughout this dissertation; each paper explores the topic through a unique lens. The overarching goal of this research was to explore attitudes and perceptions of refugees through the eyes of resettlement workers and adolescents, both valuable populations to examine but for very different reasons. Resettlement workers know refugee resettlement very well; they know the ins and outs of programming and the refugee resettlement process. For that reason, qualitative interviewing was the best mechanism to capture their insights and experiences. Adolescents, though at a formative point in their development (Smetana & Villalobos, 2009), would likely be unable to speak at length in regard to their knowledge and feelings toward refugees. Therefore, quantitative methods were utilized. Similarly, when testing a prejudice reduction intervention derived from extended contact it was important to garner a collective understanding of the



interventions' efficacy. Thus, quantitative methods were also utilized. Ultimately, the decision was made to seek depth when collecting data on facilitators and barriers to successful resettlement, and breadth when it came to summarizing collective attitudes and perceptions toward refugees and the efficacy of a new prejudice reduction intervention.

Each paper within this dissertation explores a number of research questions. Broadly, though, this dissertation will address the following research questions:

**Overarching Research Question 1:** According to refugee resettlement workers, what are the facilitators and barriers to successful refugee resettlement in the U.S.?

**Overarching Research Question 2:** What are adolescents' perceptions of, and feelings toward, refugees?

**Overarching Research Question 3:** Are interventions derived from extended contact an effective mechanism for improving adolescents' perceptions of, and feelings toward, refugees?

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## CHAPTER II

### **A View from the Other Side: Perspectives of Refugee Resettlement Workers**

#### Abstract

Humanitarian crises worldwide necessitate the existence of refugee resettlement programs. The United States refugee resettlement program, though historically one of the most active and successful resettlement programs, is not well understood. The current paper, using qualitative interviews, explores resettlement workers' beliefs about facilitators and barriers to successful refugee resettlement. Using an Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis and a two-phase coding process, interviews with refugee resettlement workers revealed the importance and need for mental health services, diverse programming, and a thorough Cultural Orientation program. Growing discrimination against refugee communities and refugee resettlement is also discussed. Program and future research implications are shared.

### Literature Review

Historically, the United States has accepted thousands of refugees yearly for permanent resettlement. In January 2017, steps were taken by the executive branch of the U.S. government to halt refugee admissions for individuals and families coming from Muslim-majority countries ("Donald J. Trump, President of the United States, et al. v. International Refugee Assistance Project, et al.," 2017). Initially, the order was not upheld. In March 2017, a second executive order was signed that significantly reduced the cap on refugee admissions from 110,000 to 50,000 (with exceptions for immediate families) and halted the resettlement of refugees from Muslim-majority countries ("Donald J. Trump, President of the United States, et al. v. International Refugee Assistance Project, et al.," 2017). Although this did not completely close refugee admission into the U.S., these actions are indicative of a country divided on the topic of refugee resettlement.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), a refugee is a person who has left their home country and been granted an authorized status based on prior persecution, or legitimate fear of persecution, due to their religion, nationality, political opinions or membership to social groups (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2019a). In 2015, almost 70,000 refugees were resettled in the United States (U.S. Department of State, 2016b). The majority of these individuals and families originate from Myanmar (Burma), Iraq, Somalia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Bhutan (Migration Policy Institute, 2015).

Upon arrival to the U.S., volunteer agencies, known within the field of refugee resettlement as "VOLAGS," assist refugees through their transition to American life and culture. VOLAGS



are the nine<sup>1</sup> U.S. private and state agencies that have a cooperative agreement with the state department to provide resettlement services (Office of Refugee Resettlement, 2019) and are the key providers of services to refugees in the first year post arrival. Services focus on providing basic needs, such as housing and food, and promoting economic self-sufficiency (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Refugee Resettlement, 2012). Resettlement workers employed at VOLAGS play a critical role in the lives of newly arrived refugees. Resettlement workers are usually the first to greet refugees upon arrival to the U.S., and play an important role in brokering refugees' relationships with their new communities, and advocating for their access to social and medical services (Abrahamsson, Andersson, & Springett, 2009; Kenny & Lockwood-Kenny, 2011; Shaw, 2014).

### **Current Political Climate toward Refugees in the U.S.**

Historical opposition to refugee resettlement within the U.S. may perpetuate a lack of institutionalized knowledge surrounding the resettlement process. For example, many U.S. citizens find it difficult to distinguish a refugee from an immigrant (Iowa Pathways; Sengupta, 2015). Furthermore, many people are uninformed as to what the screening process for refugee cases entails, including the lengthy processing times and rigorous security checks. Finally, there is a frequent misconception that refugees are a “drain” on public resources and welfare when, in reality, refugees are required to participate in resettlement services that promote employment and self-sufficiency upon arrival to the U.S. (U.S. Department of State, 2016a). Opposition to

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<sup>1</sup> Church World Service, Ethiopian Community Development Council, Episcopal Migration Ministries, Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, International Rescue Committee, U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, and World Relief Corporation (Office of Refugee Resettlement, 2019).

individuals and families seeking refuge in the U.S. precedes the foundation of the formal U.S. Refugee Resettlement program in 1948. In fact, resistance towards immigrants seeking refuge in the U.S. can be traced back to America's earliest European settlers (Brugge, 1995). Historical polls have documented the American public's resistance toward resettling refugees fleeing Germany, and other European countries beginning around World War II (Newport, 2015). World War II became the catalyst for the creation of the formal U.S. Refugee Resettlement program. In the years following 1948, opposition toward refugees remained evident, spanning from the resistance to resettle Hungarian refugees in the 1950s, to Cuban refugees in the 1980s, to the hesitation to resettle Syrian refugees that we see today (Pew Institute, 2015). More recently, Bloomberg Polls have found that 53% of Americans do not want to accept any Syrian refugees at all, and that 11% of Americans would only be willing to accept Syrian refugees who are Christian (Bloomberg Polls, 2015).

For refugees who make it to America, experiences of refugee discrimination are often mediated by time living in the U.S. post resettlement, one's language ability, and one's country of origin (Hadley & Patil, 2009). For instance, refugees from African countries are more likely than Eastern European individuals to experience discrimination (Hadley & Patil, 2009). Additionally, in recent years, the occurrence of terror attacks in the U.S. and Europe have heightened xenophobia and fear of refugee populations, particularly against refugees of Middle Eastern descent (Kira, Lewandowski, Chiodo, & Ibrahim, 2014; Piwowarczyk et al., 2016). Although public acceptance of refugee resettlement in the U.S. is not high, negative perceptions may persist due to a lack of understanding of refugee resettlement processes.

While discrimination may be one barrier to successful resettlement, refugees resettled within the U.S. are influenced by multiple contexts that impact their likelihood for success post

arrival. For instance, refugees must be able to navigate the demands of differing cultural norms and values both individually, but also within their families and the larger society. Unlike immigrants who arrive in the U.S. through more traditional means, refugees have access and are required to participate in resettlement programming that promotes employment, education, and self-sufficiency. At a minimum, refugee resettlement agencies must support refugees for their first 30 days post arrival with access to food, housing, clothing, and support for employment guidance and language training (Capps et al., 2015; U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, 2016).

### **The Resettlement Process**

Granting of formal refugee status allows for protections and assistance that may not be possible without such classification, most notable being the attainment of legal and travel documentation. The UNHCR has three durable solutions for refugees displaced by conflict: voluntary repatriation post conflict, local integration in the first country of asylum, and resettlement to a third country. The majority of refugees voluntarily repatriate back to their country of origin or integrate into local communities where they first sought asylum. Repatriation is not always possible due to safety concerns, and local integration can be challenging for host communities that may lack resources, safe living conditions, or educational and employment opportunities (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2019). In such cases, refugees can seek relocation to a third country. Less than 1% of refugees are resettled in a third location. Currently Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United

Kingdom, United States of America, and Uruguay all have formal refugee resettlement programs (United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees, 2019). The processing times of refugee cases for resettlement to a third country vary greatly worldwide, however, the average case takes approximately 18 months from filing to arrival in the U.S. or another third location (U.S. Department of State, 2016c).

The processing times for refugee resettlement cases vary for a number of reasons. All refugee cases submitted for resettlement are required to have persecution claims verified by the UNHCR. Refugee cases can include individuals or family units seeking resettlement. For U.S. resettlement cases, after persecution claims are verified, refugees will be interviewed by a United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) investigator. If the case is deemed to present no security or safety risks, then the case will be referred for resettlement in the U.S. Refugees then wait to be matched with a VOLAG in the U.S. The VOLAG match is based on family ties, language capacity, or potential employment opportunities. Once the case has been matched with a VOLAG, the agency then has to assure they will have the funds to provide financially for the individual or family for the first 30 days and provide services for one year. Once the assurance is complete, refugees then have to undergo medical screening, additional security checks, and begin Cultural Orientation (U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, 2016). Cultural Orientation is a pre-departure and post-arrival education program provided to refugee newcomers to help them acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to adapt to their new lives and become fully integrated into their communities. Cultural Orientation continues post-resettlement and typically resumes in the first 30 to 90 days post arrival (Cultural Orientation Resource Exchange, 2016). In addition to Cultural Orientation, core priorities post

resettlement include addressing medical issues, finding housing, enrolling children in school, and attending job readiness and ESL classes (U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, 2016).

Resettlement services, however, vary depending on the organizational capacity of the resettlement agency due to funding constraints and geographical resources. More recently, states have disassociated from the federal Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Refugee Resettlement program due to security concerns (Kennedy, 2016), which has further limited funding for resettlement services (Capps et al., 2015). Moreover, participating in resettlement services do not guarantee attainment of employment or education for newly arrived refugees. Studies in the U.S. and abroad have indicated employment related issues can cause significant stress or contribute to post-migration success (Al-Roubaiy, Owen-Pugh, & Wheeler, 2013; Fischer, 2014; Schweitzer, Melville, Steel, & Lacherez, 2006; Sienkiewicz, Mauceri, Howell, & Bibeau, 2013). Fortunately, most refugees within the U.S. are successful in gaining employment post arrival, and many refugee youth go on to attend college and secure employment as adults. Between 2009-2011, for example, refugee men were 7% more likely than their U.S. born counterparts to be employed, and while refugees, as a whole, were less likely to possess a high school diploma, they were equally as likely as other immigrants or U.S. born individuals to possess a Bachelor's degree (Capps et al., 2015).

### **Resettlement Workers**

Not surprisingly, empirical studies with refugee populations often focus on the mental health issues refugees experience post resettlement (Kira et al., 2014; Lincoln, Lazarevic, White, & Ellis, 2015; Schweitzer, Wyk, & Murray, 2015). While this is a necessary and worthwhile area of exploration, the focus on negative outcomes or behaviors misses the normative and positive outcomes that are the reality for many refugees resettled within the U.S (Bal & Arzubagi, 2014;

Capps et al., 2015). The degree to which post migration success is impacted by resettlement services is unknown; however, it is evident that refugees resettled in the U.S. are quite reliant on the support services provided through resettlement agencies (Kenny & Lockwood-Kenny, 2011; Shaw, 2014; U.S. Department of State, 2016d). As a result, it becomes increasingly important to build a greater understanding of the contextual factors that promote positive resettlement outcomes for newly arrived refugees in the U.S. Thus, it is critical to hear the voices of those tasked with shepherding refugees through the resettlement process: resettlement workers.

Resettlement workers deliver the majority of services to newly arrived refugees. Resettlement workers' exposure to multiple cases and clients from varied cultural and ethnic groups makes their perspectives vital to understanding the post arrival experience of refugees. Additionally, resettlement workers are more in tune with the political barriers within VOLAGS, and have a more developed knowledge of the community, including public perceptions and opinions of refugees.

Resettlement workers who themselves had the experience of being a refugee are uniquely positioned to assist new arrivals. These workers in particular, have the advantage of understanding their local communities and are often familiar with the refugee case's culture. More importantly, these individuals have the shared experience of being a refugee, fleeing conflict, and resettling in a foreign location. Employees who share the experience of being a refugee with clients have been posited to contribute to VOLAGS' organizational effectiveness (Smith, 2008). In a recent qualitative study, Shaw (2014) proposed that resettlement workers who were refugees can serve as "bridge builders," suggesting that these resettlement workers may be modeling behavior, a concept based in social cognitive theories (Bandura, 1991). According to Shaw (2014), caseworkers who were refugees were able to model successful

resettlement to newly arrived refugees. Modeling behaviors build confidence, while also effectively providing service due to the resettlement worker's enhanced cultural understanding, language skills, and ability to empathize (Bandura, 1991; Shaw, 2014). Regardless of when a refugee arrived here, or where they came from, the resettlement process is arduous and prompted by a traumatic event. The potential for resettlement workers and refugees to bond over the shared refugee experience "links" their lives in a way many Americans cannot comprehend (Elder & Shanahan, 2006; Elder, Shanahan, & Jennings, 2015).

### **Relational Developmental Systems Meta-theory**

Although this research is exploratory, it is guided by Relational Developmental Systems (RDS) metatheory. Researchers using a RDS meta-theoretical approach posit that development occurs through a bidirectional process whereby the individual and context impact each other (Overton, 2015). This is an especially useful approach when assessing the ways in which contextual factors may improve or hinder the resettlement outcomes of newly arrived refugees. When person ↔ context relations are mutually beneficial, they are considered adaptive (Brandtstädter, 1998). Therefore, the promotion of mutually beneficial relations between newly arrived refugees and their environments, including resettlement workers, improves the likelihood that refugees will thrive post-resettlement.

### **Social Cognitive Theory**

When used in tandem, RDS meta-theory and social cognitive theory provide a useful perspective for understanding the role of resettlement workers in the promotion of successful refugee resettlement. Through modeling positive post resettlement behaviors (Shaw, 2014), these workers have the potential to help newly arrived refugees recognize and find resources to make necessary behavioral adjustments to pursue their goals (Baltes, Lindenberger, & Staudinger,

2006). Thus, by looking at the perceptions and roles of resettlement workers through both a RDS meta-theoretical and social cognitive lens we can better understand the factors or contextual elements that promote positive resettlement outcomes, and provide program and policy recommendations that will aid refugees in adapting well, and contributing to, their post-resettlement environments.

### **Current Study**

The current study will explore resettlement workers' beliefs about factors that promote successful refugee resettlement in the United States. Additionally, this research is intended to reveal some of the barriers to successful resettlement encountered by resettlement workers, and to investigate the potential benefits of resettlement workers who had the experience of being a refugee or immigrant.

Federally mandated services exist for newly arrived refugees within the U.S., and thus there is some transparency as to the minimum services refugees must receive, such as access to basic needs (e.g., access to shelter and food) and employment assistance (U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, 2016). Prior studies have looked at refugee populations within the U.S., however, many of these studies tend to focus on mental health, employment, or other self-report measures that focus on individual outcomes (Ellis et al., 2016; Hadley & Patil, 2009; Ludwig & Reed, 2016; Schweitzer, Brough, Vromans, & Asic-Kobe, 2011; Sienkiewicz et al., 2013) rather than an assessment of how resettlement services aid in the promotion of post arrival success. The current study will explore the gap between required refugee services and individual refugee outcomes to better understand the intricacies of the U.S. resettlement process and relationship between resettlement workers and refugee clients. Specifically, the current study will address the following questions:



**Research Question 1:** According to resettlement workers, what factors promote successful resettlement in the U.S.?

**Research Question 2:** According to resettlement workers, what are the barriers to successful resettlement in the U.S.?

**Research Question 3:** How does a resettlement worker's own experience of being a refugee or immigrant promote successful resettlement in the U.S.?

### **Methods**

Bounded at the case level, this study used Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to better understand factors that promote successful refugee resettlement in the U.S, barriers to successful resettlement in the U.S., and the role of resettlement workers who themselves were immigrants or refugees. There are very few studies on resettlement workers, thus methods such as grounded theory that aim to generate theory or generalize findings would, at this point, be unjustified. It is more important to understand what is happening within the geographical areas and agencies with high volumes of resettled refugees (as opposed to a nationally representative sample) since some states resettle very few, if any, refugees. IPA allows for a deeper understanding of how each participant within the case is positioned to contribute to an understanding of refugee resettlement within the geographical area and agency (Smith, Jarman, Osborn, 1999).

### **Sample**

The case included three participants who were all resettlement workers employed at the same refugee resettlement agency in Southern California. This particular resettlement agency, or VOLAG, was well resourced resettling an average of 1,000 refugees a year (prior to the 2017 ruling). The agency offered the following services: resettlement case management, employment

counseling, career development, financial education, microenterprise, immigration services, food security, and youth programming. At the time of the interviews, the agency was primarily resettling refugees from Iraq. This purposive sample included racial, ethnic, and educational variation and variation in expertise within the resettlement agency. Participants will be referred to using the pseudonyms Jessica, Amira, and Fatima. Jessica was 27 years-old, identified as White, had six years of refugee resettlement experience specifically in immigration services, and was in the process of completing a law degree. Amira was 26 years-old, identified as White/Middle Eastern, had four years of refugee resettlement experience specifically in financial education and microenterprise, and was in the process of completing a graduate degree. Finally, Fatima was 34 years-old, identified as Black, had seven years of refugee resettlement experience specifically in immigration services, and possessed an Associate's degree (that she attained in the U.S.).

### **Design and Procedure**

Ten resettlement workers were recruited through an email invitation that prompted the individual to consent (see Appendix A) and complete a brief demographic survey (see Appendix B). The researcher gave the workers permission to share the invitation with other interested parties. The demographic survey asked for workers' age, gender, race, whether or not they came to the country as an immigrant or refugee, their country of origin, if they had refugee status, if they were native English speakers, their level of education, their current employer, their job title, and number of years working in refugee resettlement. Multiple resettlement workers responded to the recruitment email, however three specific resettlement workers were included in the current study for three reasons: (1) they all worked at the same agency and therefore their responses could be analyzed collectively as a case, (2) the resettlement agency they were

employed at resettled significantly more refugees than the agencies of other respondents, and (3) they possessed multiple years of experience working with refugees. The researcher had previously been employed at the same resettlement agency as the three resettlement workers, and knew all three individuals prior to the interviews.

### **Measures**

Upon completing the survey, the resettlement workers were prompted to book a telephone interview using an online scheduling platform. Telephone interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim.

**Interview.** The semi-structured interview included open-ended questions about the resettlement worker's role at the agency, and their feelings and experiences of working in refugee resettlement (see Appendix C for full instrument). Questions were asked about barriers and facilitators of successful refugee resettlement in the U.S., including the possible role of recent terror attacks, both domestic and abroad, on their work. There were also specific questions for individuals indicating they had come to the U.S. as an immigrant or refugee. For instance, in the pre-interview survey if the participant indicated they came to the U.S. as a refugee or immigrant, they were also asked the following questions during the interview: "I noticed in the survey you indicated that you came to this country as an immigrant or refugee. Can you tell me a little more about this? (Follow up) In what ways has this experience had an impact on your work?" All three resettlement workers were interviewed in October of 2016. Interviews lasted between 30 – 60 minutes.

### **Data Analysis**

Data analysis consisted of two phases. In phase one, each interview transcript was reviewed independently and a summary of each interview was written and recorded. Special

attention was paid to the resettlement worker's role at the agency and how their experience positioned them to provide insight into facilitators and barriers to successful resettlement. All information summarized in phase one was according to the participant (i.e. explanations of processes, policies, or laws are those of the participant, not interpreted by the researcher or another source). In phase two, the three transcripts were reviewed together and analyzed for notable responses related to facilitators and barriers of successful resettlement. Special attention was also given to responses related to the potential "bridge building" relationship between resettlement workers who had the experience of being a refugee and refugee clients. Thus, coding was conducted with both an a priori and emergent approach through the lens of the researcher. The three transcripts were examined as a whole to pinpoint common themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006) both within each transcript and across the three individual transcripts. Initial codes were generated and then revisited at which point some codes were collapsed into a more comprehensive category or eliminated altogether.

At the time of analysis, only one coder (the primary researcher) was available to code interviews. To assess validity, after coding all data, the researcher allowed a couple of weeks to pass and then recoded parts of the data to check for consistency (Mackey & Gass, 2005). While the majority of the codes remained constant, some additional incidences of certain codes were identified. Initial findings were then shared with one of the three participants to check for resonance and validity (Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell, & Walter, 2016) and were also discussed with more senior colleagues to debrief the coding process (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

**Phase one: Interview summaries.** In phase one, the goal was to summarize the experience of each participant and to map out their unique perspectives, concerns, and cares. It was particularly important that each participant's "orientation toward the world" (Larkin, Watts,

& Clifton, 2006) and individual understanding of the refugee resettlement experience be captured.

*Jessica.* Jessica was a 27 year-old who identified as a White female. She possessed a Bachelor's degree and was in the process of completing a Juris Doctor degree at the time of the interview. Jessica was American born and had worked in the field of refugee resettlement and immigration for six years. In addition to her work with the refugee settlement agency, she was also a judicial clerk for an immigration judge.

At the refugee resettlement agency, the participant worked as an immigration case manager where she legally represented immigrants, refugees, and asylees<sup>2</sup> in immigration cases. Although she was not yet an attorney, she was accredited by the Board of Immigration Appeals to provide legal advice, file cases, and help individuals through immigration processes. At the refugee resettlement agency, Jessica noted that the immigration department served as the “go-to” for clients who may have legal questions or issues. According to Jessica, many refugee clients would seek the assistance of the Immigration Department to file an Affidavit of Relationship or P-3<sup>3</sup> which is a program for individuals trying to get family members access to the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program.

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<sup>2</sup> An asylee is a person who meets the definition of refugee and is already present in the United States or is seeking admission at a port of entry (Homeland Security, 2018).

<sup>3</sup> P-3 is a category of the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program that affords access to members of designated nationalities who have immediate family members in the U.S. who entered as refugees or were granted asylum. Parents, spouses and unmarried children under the age of 21 of the immediate family member can participate in this program (USCIS, 2019).

Jessica believed the community she lived and worked in was able to serve refugees quite well on account of the community's well-established history of resettling refugees. One program she believed was crucial, and offered at the refugee resettlement agency where she worked, was a Cultural Orientation program. Although all refugee resettlement programs are required to provide Cultural Orientation, she felt strongly that Cultural Orientation must properly convey the laws and norms of the client's new city or home. She also felt it was important to clearly articulate the expectations of being a recipient of resettlement services. Jessica claimed that a lot of the stress she saw refugees experience post resettlement was related to language issues or lack of clarity around what was expected of them by both society and the resettlement agency. She also noted how her agency, along with other local agencies, had many former refugees employed as staff members. Jessica saw this as an asset and she believed these individuals could relate well to clients. Although Jessica believed the refugee resettlement agency where she worked provided many services and benefits to refugees, and that the community as a whole was well resourced to serve refugees, she did note a lack of mental health services. In her six years at the refugee resettlement agency, she claimed to have encountered at least a dozen incidents where she witnessed clients experiencing a mental health crisis, either in the context of one-on-one appointments or in classroom settings.

Interestingly, Jessica indicated that over the last couple of years she had noticed more negative attitudes toward refugees both nationally, as evident in the news media, and within her local community. She cited phone threats, bomb threats, and even shootings in the area. She also noted that attitudes toward her job had become more negative. In fact, she described the overall shift in attitudes toward refugees and refugee resettlement to be a "complete and total 180." When further probed about how this barrier might be overcome, Jessica cited that the agency

where she worked used to have a mentorship program that connected American families to refugee families, but that the mentorship program was no longer in operation because grant funding had run out. She believed that such programs, ones that connect Americans and refugees, can be useful in educating and informing the American public about refugees and the refugee process.

*Amira.* Amira was a 26 year-old who identified as a Middle Eastern American female. At the time of the interview, she possessed a Bachelor's degree and was pursuing a Master's degree in Public Policy. Amira was American born and had worked in the field of refugee resettlement for four years.

At the refugee resettlement agency, Amira oversaw the financial education program and the microenterprise<sup>4</sup> program. She noted that most of her time at the refugee resettlement agency had been spent working in microenterprise, helping new refugee arrivals start businesses and get access to small business loans. In her role as a financial educator, she described herself as aiding refugees in the attainment of credit building and auto loans, and providing credit counseling and training. She also noted that prior to being employed at the resettlement agency, she had volunteered with the agency's youth program where she had tutored and helped youth with college applications.

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<sup>4</sup> Microenterprise programs help refugees develop, expand or maintain their own businesses (Administration for Children and Families at DHHS, 2019).

Amira explained her role at the resettlement agency as serving clients at two different phases of the resettlement process. First, in her role as a financial educator, she was often serving clients while they were going through their job search, very soon after they arrived in the U.S. During this time, much of her work would focus on banking and credit building in an effort to build good financial habits once clients were bringing in income. In her other work in microenterprise, she served clients later in the resettlement process, typically about two or more years post arrival – after clients had attained their first job and saved some money - to assist refugees in starting a small business or attaining a loan to start a small business.

Amira believed that culturally appropriate services were the key to successful resettlement. She described culturally appropriate services as having case managers and staff who were fluent in the client's language and understood the culture of the client. For instance, she explained that it was important for staff to understand the gender norms and dynamics that exist within some of the cultures the resettlement agency serves. She noted that some female clients will not shake hands, do not want visitors (including case managers) in the home if a man is not present, and that some issues were off limits to discuss in front of female clients.

While Amira believed it was important to offer a variety of services at one location, or within an agency, she reiterated that proper financial education was one of the most effective ways to set clients up for success. She explained that early financial education can really help clients build assets, move up the economic ladder, and possess an ability to recognize poor financial decisions or scams. She described instances where refugees were often the targets of fake bills and/or scams. Amira described scammers as pretending to be with the Internal Revenue Service or other agencies that refugees recognize as having authority.



Similar to Jessica, Amira also saw Cultural Orientation as serving a key role in the resettlement process, however, unlike Jessica who felt it was important to convey American laws and norms, Amira felt that a significant amount of time should be committed to providing thorough financial education. Amira also noted that even though the resettlement agency she worked at offered a lot of services, that did not always mean that clients were interested in those services. Amira explained that, in an ideal world, staff can counsel clients early in financial education, but not all clients want such in depth counseling that early in the resettlement process. The result, she explained, is that financial educators often end up seeing clients once a financial emergency has occurred. For this reason, she believed that Cultural Orientation was the perfect time to emphasize the importance of good financial management.

Also, similar to Jessica, Amira had noticed a definite shift in attitudes toward refugees. According to Amira, recent terror attacks, and subsequent reactions by the media and public, have negatively impacted client safety. She described clients as experiencing increased racism and anger. More specifically, Amira said that clients felt uncomfortable coming to the resettlement agency's office, operating storefronts, and expressing their culture in public. This, according to Amira, has made serving refugees more difficult, as it is challenging to get clients to travel to the resettlement agency if they feel unsafe or encouraging clients to start a small business if they feel like they will be targeted. Although Amira identified current attitudes toward refugees as a definite challenge, she described the current political climate as motivating her to continue work in the field and to further pursue her education to make more of an impact at the policy level.

*Fatima.* Fatima identified as a 34-year-old Black female. Fatima had come to the country as an asylee derivative<sup>5</sup>. Although Fatima was not a refugee, her experience as an asylee derivative, she believed, allowed her to relate well to her clients. Fatima shared the same culture and language as many of her clients, and also had the experience of immigrating to a new country. At the time of the interview, Fatima possessed an Associate's degree obtained in the U.S.

Fatima served as an immigration case manager at the refugee resettlement agency. Similar to Jessica, she described her role at the agency as aiding in the processing of immigration cases. She said that she saw herself as an educator and a source of information for clients. Fatima explained that although refugee clients are legally allowed to reside in the U.S., they must adjust their status to become a permanent resident, otherwise known as a green card holder, once the client has been in the country for a year. She also went on to note that at four years and nine months, refugee clients are eligible to apply for U.S. citizenship. Thus, as Fatima explained, there are many opportunities for the paths of refugee clients and immigration case managers to cross due to the immigration applications refugees are required to file, and later may wish to file. Like Jessica and Amira, she also discussed Cultural Orientation, and explained that she taught Cultural Orientation classes to newly arrived refugees. Similar to Jessica, much of Fatima's focus was on the rules and regulations that are applicable to newly arrived refugees. Much of the information Fatima delivered to refugees included warning clients about their travel limitations

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<sup>5</sup> An asylee derivative is the relative of someone granted asylee status within the past 2 years. Asylees can petition for spouses or children to obtain derivative refugee status (USCIS, 2016).

as a newly arrived refugee and the risks of engaging in criminal behaviors. It was particularly important that Fatima explain how violating travel restrictions or engaging in criminal behavior may impact clients' family members pending immigration cases.

Fatima also believed that having a well-established community of refugees can be beneficial to the resettlement process. She indicated that although it was ideal for there to be an ethnic match between the host community and newly arrived refugees, she had seen clients benefit from even small cultural connections such as being from the same region or sharing a language.

She described her own experience immigrating to the U.S. as positive. She noted that there were definite challenges, such as leaving her home, going to a new school, and learning a new language. She explained that through those challenging experiences she learned how compassionate, loving, and understanding a community could be. As a resettlement worker, she said the experience made her want to do anything she could to make the lives of newly arrived refugees easier. She also described her immigration experience as empowering her to inspire clients to believe they can endure the challenges that come with fleeing a country and reminding them of the opportunities they have here in the U.S. Because she came here as a 14 year-old, she said she felt a special connection to youth. She could relate to youth being torn between the cultural ideals of their parents and the cultural ideals of their new culture.

Like Jessica and Amira, Fatima believed attitudes toward refugees and refugee resettlement had become more negative in recent years. She went on to explain that she had recently been a victim of discrimination within the community, and that she and her co-workers within the immigration department at the resettlement agency had been the targets of anti-refugee/immigration groups.

## Phase Two

In phase two, the participants' unique experiences were reviewed simultaneously. The three participants, in this phase, were analyzed as a case – since all three women resided and worked for the same agency - in an attempt to identify meaningful facilitators or barriers to resettlement within the participants' community and resettlement agency. Findings from this phase of analysis are described in terms of facilitators to successful resettlement, including the bridge building role of refugee resettlement workers who were refugees or immigrants, and barriers to successful resettlement.

**Facilitators of successful resettlement.** Facilitators of successful resettlement include services or behaviors that resettlement workers believed would improve the likelihood that a refugee resettled in the U.S. would thrive post resettlement. For the purposes of this research, thriving can be conceptualized as achieving self- sufficiency (Brown & Scribner, 2014) and feeling welcome and capable within the community. While economic self-sufficiency is one of the most common measures of refugee post resettlement success (Capps et al., 2015), for the purposes of this research feeling welcome and capable was included as prior research has documented that newly arrived refugees struggle with feeling unwelcome or unable to contribute to society (Hadley & Patil, 2009; Sienkiewicz et al., 2013).

**Cultural orientation.** When discussing the contextual factors resettlement workers believed fostered successful resettlement outcomes, their responses were often very pragmatic. Each resettlement worker indicated the key role Cultural Orientation played in the resettlement process. While the resettlement workers were referring to the general concept of introducing refugees to U.S. culture and society, they are also referring to the specific *Cultural Orientation* program that exists at resettlement agencies (Cultural Orientation Resource Exchange, 2016).

Although the importance of Cultural Orientation was mentioned by all three participants, their foci varied. Jessica and Fatima were particularly concerned with conveying the laws and norms of U.S. society to refugee clients, while Amira believed that building financial literacy was the key to setting clients up for long term success in the U.S. Though there were variations in participants' beliefs about what should be prioritized in Cultural Orientation curriculums (e.g. the law versus financial education), the participants' beliefs reflected their own experiences working at the resettlement agency. For instance, Jessica and Fatima worked in the immigration department where client success is often dependent on a client's lawful behavior. Amira, on the other hand, worked in financial education and microenterprise where she witnessed clients struggle with poor financial decisions and reap the benefits of good financial literacy.

*Options.* The particular agency where all three resettlement workers were employed offers a variety of services to refugees, including: employment counseling, financial literacy, microenterprise and small business development, youth programming, food security, and immigrations services. Amira and Fatima both indicated how important they believed it was for refugees to have access to an assortment of support services. When discussing accessibility of services, Amira indicated that she noticed observable differences between the agency where she was employed and other local resettlement agencies:

You know, I don't think they [the other resettlement agencies] were offering as comprehensive of services. Like they definitely didn't offer credit building loans and the level of in depth credit reporting counseling that we were doing. Um, but I think that they were helping them open their first bank account and going through that process. But it was, that was kind of coupled with job development and less of its own program.

Fatima compared the potential experience of a newly arrived refugee at a resettlement agency that provides multiple services with that of an agency that solely provides resettlement services:

So sometimes they [the resettlement agency] can tailor to that community instead of just having a, I guess, like cookie cutter life. Like this is what we are supposed to do, let's just do the general. I would say that all helps, and the resources of the organization. So, if the organization has other resources that can help them. Like if the agency is able to resettle you and that is it, and they cannot come back for anything else beyond that point, that doesn't really help someone...

***Cultural sensitivity.*** The need for cultural sensitivity when providing services to newly arrived refugees was consistently mentioned by all three resettlement workers. Participants discussed some of the cultural differences that are likely to present conflict, such as differing gender norms and the ways in which resettlement workers can mitigate cultural conflicts or discomfort between staff and clients. Amira discussed how, in particular, gender norms presented a gray area for many resettlement workers:

So, like needing to understand when it is appropriate to enter a client's house. Let's say it is a woman and she is there by herself, um, or you know when it is appropriate to shake her hand or even discuss particular issues with her or with the man.

Fatima mentioned the ways in which sharing a cultural or ethnic background with refugee clients allowed her to break down communication barriers with which her American born counterparts struggled. Specifically, when talking about parenting practices, Fatima said:

Some of the parents, I will tell them, this is some of the things that my parents did that worked for us, and some of the things my parents did that really did not help a lot. Then they'll go, 'Oh, ok (laughs).' But also, when I tell them, 'hey see I'm a respectful younger

person.’ And you always have to call them, to be respectful, Anty or Uncle, so I will say, ‘Anty, you have to remember this culture can sometimes can be weird and crazy. But you remember, you came here to give your child an opportunity. You not allowing them to explore, it doesn't do much for them.’ And they go, ‘Well, you're right.’

**Bridge builders.** Each of the participants enthusiastically discussed the key role that resettlement workers, who were refugees themselves, have played in fostering successful resettlement outcomes. One participant discussed how these individuals are “filling the gap.” This gap includes the logistical challenges such as language capacity, but also the nuanced expectations of cultural sensitivity. Fatima, whose parents sought Asylum in the U.S., making her an Asylee Derivative, noted how her experience of “country hopping” from Somalia to the U.S. helped her to better serve her clients: “I guess me coming here and not knowing the language and not knowing the culture, I guess really had a lot of effect on me. It made me realize that when individuals were loving and compassionate and understanding, it really makes a big difference.”

**Barriers to refugee resettlement.** Barriers to successful resettlement include services (or lack of services) or behaviors that resettlement workers believed would make it difficult for a refugee resettled in the U.S. to thrive post resettlement.

**Lack of mental health services.** When describing barriers to resettlement, the resettlement workers discussed how there is a lack of mental health services available to refugees. Resettlement workers noted that much of the focus within the U.S. resettlement program is on attaining employment. And while availability of mental health services is a clear issue, there is also the issue of cultural perception. The participants indicated that there is a stigma around receiving mental health services within many of the cultures the resettlement

agency serves. Furthermore, the participants noted that many refugees come from cultures where mental health issues were stigmatized. When discussing the complicated relationship between refugees and mental health services, Fatima said:

It is something that a lot of the communities do lack and a lot of the organizations do lack. Even some of the ones that offer, I did actually remember going to one of the counseling, I think it was for [Organization Name]? But refugees do not use those resources. They don't even know about it. And even when they do, it sounds like, whoa it is not a requirement, and I don't have to. Again, you also have to remember, sometimes culturally to say I do have a depression or those things, there is a stigma that comes with that. But I felt like if it was part of the resettlement package, or some of the benefits I should say, that they are receiving, it is a lot easier for them to use it, and it would just come with the whole organization structure that they are giving.

Also, as Jessica noted, even if the refugee can overcome trauma and mental health issues post resettlement, it is likely to bubble up again in the future on account of the U.S. immigration system:

There was one point where I was teaching citizenship to refugees, and I was discussing how to talk about their refugee process, how they came to the United States, and was very difficult for a lot of people and none of these individuals had had any real counseling. I think that because the way our immigration systems works is that we have people revisit how they fled their country, when, what, why did they make that decision.

***Discrimination.*** Probably the most significant barrier noted by all three participants was the prevalence of discrimination against refugees and resettlement workers. When discussing how the climate around refugee resettlement has changed in recent years, Jessica said:



I think that [City Name] hasn't seen as much of a kickback as some of the more rural parts of the country. I don't want to say rural, but I know there has been other [Agency Name] offices that have had a lot more threats. Like phone threats, bomb threats, and things like that. We have seen more, just individuals targeting some of our clients. A lot of just very rude, just shouting on the streets from cars to individuals that look like they are Muslim or Middle Eastern. Um, sort of we've had some instances when there have been some strange characters lurking around our offices.

All three participants also noted one particular location in Southern California, where many Iraqi refugees are resettled, that has seen dramatic increases in discrimination and hate crimes.

Referring to the impact of the backlash, Amira said:

So, they have definitely impacted the public safety of our clients, right? And the likelihood of clients in [City Name], which is like the main area with a lot of racism and anger towards refugees, like them feeling safe to come to our offices. Um, and just like to go to work and to run their own business and have a storefront and to be really public about their culture...

Discussing this same location in Southern California, participant Fatima shared a particularly disturbing account of an experience she had. She explained:

In my occasion I was actually at the [City Name] office, having lunch at one of the little, it's not even a park, it's like a couple churches right in front of the main entrance, which is on Main Street, with my sister and I had, um, we were sitting, and she was facing away from the street and I was facing the street, and a pick-up truck basically kind of stopped where the light is and basically made a gun hand motion.

It should be noted that the participant sharing this story indicated that during that incident she and her sister were wearing their hijabs, a head covering usually worn by Muslim women in public spaces. This same participant, and another participant, Jessica, also shared an incident where their names, titles, and work addresses were posted on a listserv by a group attempting to discourage resettlement work:

There was the um, this wasn't just in [City Name], but across the country, immigration staff that were accredited were sort of named on a listserv, by sort of this right wing conservative crazy person. Basically, calling for a stop to the work that we were doing, calling us the soldiers of the enemy camps, I don't know what the means, but that is what he called us. That was sort of sent out nationally, so that brought up some security concerns in the office. There were five of us that were on that list.

### **Discussion**

Refugee resettlement workers are tasked with guiding newly arrived refugees through a variety of experiences and challenges. The significant responsibility that resettlement workers take on, however, does not come without obstacles. The participants in the current study suggest that there are a number of factors that promote positive resettlement, as well as a number of barriers. The Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis utilized at the case level to examine the interviews helped reveal barriers and facilitators to successful resettlement that were specific to the resettlement workers' local community. In addition, resettlement workers also discussed some barriers and facilitators to successful resettlement that applied to resettlement in the U.S. more generally.

### **Community Level Facilitators and Barriers to Successful Resettlement**

Participants felt strongly that refugees were not receiving adequate mental health services within their Southern California community. For instance, one of the participants said that she felt mental health services should be “built in” to resettlement service, however, U.S. refugee resettlement policies do not designate mental health services as a core required service in which refugees must participate, unlike ESL or job readiness training, which are required (U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, 2016). Another participant acknowledged that even though she knew of mental health services in the area available to low income individuals, she did not think the services would be culturally appropriate for refugees. Beyond the lack of culturally appropriate mental health services, there is also the issue of getting refugees to agree to participate in mental health services, since, for many refugees, they are coming from a culture where mental health issues are highly stigmatized. Thus, as mentioned above, it becomes imperative to have a strong understanding of the refugee client’s culture in order to identify these barriers early on and consider alternative methods for engaging refugees in mental health services.

Probably the most unnerving revelation from these interviews, was the confirmation that discrimination impacts not only newly arrived refugees, but also resettlement workers living in the Southern California community. This too, unfortunately, is in-line with previous research (Hadley & Patil, 2009) and media portrayals (Bloomberg Polls, 2015). As a result, all participants noted that garnering public support for their work in refugee resettlement has not been easy, and one of the participants went as far as to say she believed discrimination against refugees has impacted funding that previously supported refugee services. While the challenges

are evident, each participant echoed their commitment to, and belief in, the refugee resettlement process.

Although the three resettlement workers voiced their concerns about the barriers to refugee resettlement within their community, they also claimed that this particular community was well-suited to resettle refugees. All three participants noted the benefits of having established refugee communities in the area. These communities have the potential to impact refugees in a variety of positive ways. For example, having established enclaves of certain ethnic groups may help increase cultural awareness. Furthermore, as Fatima explained, refugees do not necessarily have to share the same culture to support each other post resettlement. Coming from the same region or even sharing a language can help refugees feel supported during their transition to life in America.

### **General Facilitators and Barriers to Successful Resettlement**

All three participants suggested that the relationship between resettlement workers and newly arrived refugees has the potential to promote thriving post-resettlement. As previously noted, Shaw (2014) discussed the bridge building role of resettlement workers who were refugees and how these workers have the capacity to model positive post resettlement behaviors (Bandura, 1991). While the participants in the current study certainly noted that refugees and resettlement workers who were refugees bond over shared experiences (Elder & Shanahan, 2006; Elder, Shanahan, & Jennings, 2015), it does not appear that the shared refugee experience is the only mechanism to successfully model and influence post resettlement success. Although the shared refugee experience may be one of the most effective methods for engaging refugees, participants also mentioned the importance of creating contexts that were culturally appropriate. While cultural sensitivity was discussed by participants in terms of respecting the cultural norms

of refugee clients, all three participants also felt very strongly that resettlement agencies need to convey U.S. norms, laws, and culture effectively through Cultural Orientation programs. Thus, from an RDS perspective, a bi-directional exchange and mutual respect of both American and refugee cultures may have the potential to lead to successful refugee resettlement outcomes (Bandura, 1991; Overton, 2015; Shaw, 2014). Because resettlement agencies and resettlement workers are one of the earliest contexts refugees will interact with post-resettlement, it is important that resettlement workers not only convey aspects of U.S. culture but also have a keen understanding of the cultural norms of refugee clients.

### **Limitations**

Although the current study has a number of strengths, there are notable limitations. The researcher's established work in the field of refugee resettlement was known by all participants. Even though most of the participants were not familiar with the researcher on a personal level, they shared knowledge of the resettlement process and the participants' employer. This knowledge may have led to some biased responses. Conversely, the shared experience of working in refugee resettlement between the researcher and participant quickly lead to established rapport and a level of openness that may not have otherwise been possible.

In addition, this study had a very small sample size. Resettlement workers, to date, have been an understudied population. An intentional decision was made to focus on a community that resettled a very high number of refugees and offered a variety of refugee resettlement services. Resettlement workers from less active resettlement agencies may have lacked the experience needed to speak broadly about barriers and facilitators to successful resettlement.

Finally, these interviews were conducted in October 2016, prior to some major changes to U.S. refugee resettlement policy ("Donald J. Trump, President of the United States, et al. v.

International Refugee Assistance Project, et al.," 2017). While refugees are still being resettled within the U.S., the cap on refugee arrivals has been significantly reduced. Restrictions have also been enforced to halt refugee admission into the U.S. from Muslim majority countries. Therefore, it is important that these topics be revisited as the dynamics within refugee resettlement have certainly shifted.

### **Future Directions and Recommendations**

All participants were from the same agency and worked in the same city in Southern California which limits the generalizability of these findings. In addition to larger sample sizes, future studies should extend beyond Southern California to explore the experiences of resettlement workers in other communities that resettle a high number of refugees. While the participants in this study identified both community level and general barriers and facilitators to successful resettlement, it would be interesting to explore the prevalence of the identified community level barriers in other communities. For instance, although each resettlement worker felt that their community served refugees well and offered a lot of services, they also felt there was a lack of mental health services. Similarly, the three resettlement workers touted the well-established refugee communities as a being a facilitator to successful resettlement, but then went on to discuss very serious incidents of discrimination within their community. Thus, even at an agency with a lot of service options in a community with a strong history of resettling refugees, there were still gaps in mental health services and clear incidents of discrimination. These phenomena should be explored within other communities across the U.S.

While this study was far too small and exploratory to draw conclusions beyond the small sample or to make generalizations to U.S. refugee resettlement at large, it does provide a glimpse into refugee resettlement within a very active refugee resettlement community. Further

exploration into the phenomena identified in this study could support important policy changes, such as changes to core resettlement priorities in the first year (U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, 2016), and educational initiatives that may improve social awareness and reduce prejudice (CASEL, 2017). Following a RDS perspective, it may also be useful for researchers to further examine the ways in which refugees contribute to American society. This research touched upon refugee contributions post resettlement through the exploration of the bridge building role of resettlement workers who were refugees themselves. To truly probe the bi-directional relationship between refugees and the U.S. refugee resettlement program, refugee contributions to American society need to be explicitly examined.

### **Conclusion**

These findings have useful program implications for resettlement agencies. The interviews reinforced the need for cultural appreciation and sensitivity when working with newly arrived refugees. The participants in this study noted the huge responsibility that all resettlement workers have to respect their refugee clients. While not all resettlement agencies have the capacity to offer an assortment of unique social services, these interviews suggest that offering multiple services at a resettlement agency can be more effective than only offering resettlement services (e.g. not offering employment or immigration assistance). Furthermore, the resettlement workers believed that Cultural Orientation was a critical moment in the resettlement process, and that orientation curricula should be thoughtfully designed to effectively communicate key aspects and expectations of American life.

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### CHAPTER III

#### **Knowledge of Refugees and Predictors of Refugee Tolerance**

##### Abstract

The current study examined American adolescents' knowledge of refugees, and assessed the relationship between prior contact with refugees, media exposure to refugee topics, and knowledge of refugees as predictors of indicators of two Social Emotional Learning (SEL) competencies: social awareness and relationship skills. Social awareness was assessed through a measure of empathy for refugees and a measure of general social awareness; relationship skills were assessed through a measure of intergroup attitudes and a measure of intended behaviors toward refugees. Age group and American identity were also tested as potential moderators. In general, participants demonstrated limited knowledge of refugees, however, prior contact with refugees predicted empathy for refugees, social awareness, intergroup attitudes toward refugees, and intended behavior toward refugees. Furthermore, knowledge of refugees predicted intergroup attitudes toward refugees, and media exposure to refugee topics predicted empathy for refugees and intergroup attitudes toward refugees. Age group and American identity significantly moderated the relationship between knowledge of refugees and intergroup attitudes toward refugees. The need for interventions that improve knowledge and contact with refugees are discussed.

### **Literature Review**

During adolescence, youth undergo cognitive changes that lay the foundation for how they will think about important social, moral, and ethical issues (Smetana & Villalobos, 2009). In today's society, adolescents are frequently exposed to divisive messages on a variety of hot button issues related to gender and sexual equality, immigration, and race relations (Cohen, Kahne, Bowyer, Middaugh, & Rogowski, 2012). Refugee resettlement, in particular, continues to be one of many issues that garners significant attention in political and social arenas, as well as in the media. Yet, to date, not much is known about American youths' knowledge of refugees and refugee resettlement. Furthermore, it is unclear how American youths' prior contact with refugees, media exposure to refugee topics, and knowledge of refugees relates to indicators of tolerance or prejudice, such as social awareness or relationship skills.

### **Refugee Resettlement in the United States**

Historically, the United States has been one of many countries that accepts and resettles refugees (U.S. Department of State, 2016, 2017). Although the U.S. has continued to resettle refugees, the cap on the number of refugees accepted for resettlement has been significantly reduced in recent years due to a ban on refugees from Muslim countries ("Donald J. Trump, President of the United States, et al. v. International Refugee Assistance Project, et al.," 2017). While this has presented obvious challenges for individuals impacted by the ban (e.g. those unable to be resettled due to their country of origin), there have also been challenges for those refugees still able to resettle in the U.S., or refugees recently resettled within the U.S. prior to the ban. Many resettled refugees experience community violence (Garbarino & Kostelny, 1996) and discrimination post resettlement (Hadley & Patil, 2009). As a result, they often report feeling isolated or marginalized post resettlement (Nicassio, 1983; Stewart, 2014; Yako & Biswas,



2014). Iraqi refugees, one of the largest ethnic groups resettled in the U.S., have identified religious and ethnic persecution post resettlement as contributing to feelings of hopelessness and distress (Yako & Biswas, 2014). Although discrimination may be a catalyst for some youth to become more civically engaged (Ellis et al., 2016), experiencing discrimination can lead to both struggles to socially adapt and mental health issues amongst refugee populations (Montgomery & Foldspang, 2007; Salas-Wright & Vaughn, 2014).

### **Development of Intergroup Attitudes**

While negative perceptions of refugees may be common amongst adult populations, youth are less likely to hold well-established biases against refugees and other out-groups. Youths' feelings or attitudes toward refugee populations may not be as well established as adults, however, there is some evidence that prejudicial beliefs begin at a young age (Aboud, 1988; Aboud & Amato, 2001). For example, children as young as two and three years-old already stereotype or fear out-group members (Bar-Tal & Teichman, 2005; J. A. Cameron, Alvarez, Ruble, & Fuligni, 2001), making it all the more necessary to understand adolescents' knowledge and feelings toward refugees.

### **Dominant Approaches to the Development of Intergroup Attitudes in Childhood**

Contemporary theoretical approaches to the study of intergroup attitude development can be grouped into two major categories: domain general and domain specific (Rutland, Killen, & Abrams, 2010). Domain general approaches tend to attribute the development of bias, or prejudicial attitudes, to children's cognitive limitations (Aboud, 1988). According to theories following a domain general approach, because younger children struggle to simultaneously weigh multiple classifications and/or logically classify objects, they are susceptible to developing bias or prejudicial attitudes (Aboud, 1988). As children get older and improve upon their ability

to weigh two or more categories simultaneously, they can begin to comprehend that one person may belong to multiple classifications or groups. Thus, according to domain general theories, as children get older they become less prejudiced, and in fact, most domain general perspectives theorize that prejudice begins to decline around age seven or eight (Aboud, 2008; Bigler & Liben, 2006).

There have been several critiques of domain general theories (Nesdale, 2008; Rutland, Cameron, Milne, & McGeorge, 2005). First, these theories do not consider biases that develop during adolescence (Rutland, 2004). For the study of refugee discrimination, this is particularly important as prejudice against certain national or religious groups does not emerge until after the age of 10 (Nesdale, 2001). Similarly, prejudice and stereotyping continues well into adolescence and adulthood (Dovidio, Glick, & Rudman, 2005; Rutland et al., 2005). Finally, domain general perspectives tend to follow age-related or stage developmental patterns. According to researchers utilizing domain general theories, the development of biases, in addition to the strategies children may utilize to evaluate situations with the potential for bias, are related to a child's age or developmental stage (Kohlberg, 1984; Piaget, 1932).

Domain specific approaches, on the other hand, are a more ecological approach to the study of cognitive abilities. Domain specific approaches pull upon aspects of social, moral, and developmental psychology (Keil, 2006; Rutland et al., 2010). According to domain specific approaches, children have the ability to utilize different forms of reasoning at the same time. Children's behavior is indicative of a reasoning process whereby the child considers the self, the group, and morality (Rutland et al., 2010). Differing from domain general perspectives, this approach posits that multiple domains of reasoning are accessible to children in early childhood

and that children are capable of using more than one type of reasoning from an early age (Rutland et al., 2010).

More recently, Rutland and colleagues (2010; Killen, Elenbaas, Rizzo, & Rutland, 2017) proposed an integrated perspective to the development of intergroup attitudes, the social reasoning developmental approach (SRD). The SRD approach incorporates the domain specific approach with social identity theory (SIT), a social psychology framework (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). While not a developmental approach, researchers using a SIT approach argue that group membership is an integral aspect of self-concept and, therefore, identity development. For example, it has been argued that mere membership in a social group makes individuals predisposed to ingroup favoritism, and often emerges well before youth have the opportunity to learn about outgroups (Dunham, 2018). Combining the domain specific approach with a social identity approach, SRD creates a more contextualized perspective that exposes the interplay between morality and group behavior (Rutland et al., 2010). Ultimately, this perspective helps reconcile the disconnect between moral behavior and prejudice. For example, a child may demonstrate a desire for fairness and justice, yet may also exclude members of certain minority out-groups. Following this framework, it is hypothesized that intergroup attitudes are influenced by a youth's navigation of moral principles and group identity concerns (Rutland et al., 2010). Thus, one way to view the relationship between knowledge and indicators of tolerance or prejudice may be through a theoretical lens that closely examines the role of social emotional character and moral development.

### **Social Emotional, Character, and Moral Development**

By encouraging individuals to coexist in a peaceful manner we promote a more civil society that benefits not only members of out-groups, who may be potential victims of

discrimination, but also members of the in-group, or dominant mainstream culture. Encouraging all individuals to behave in ways that are morally admirable and virtuous increases the likelihood of achieving eudaimonia or true “human flourishing” (Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Ryff & Singer, 2013). Eudaimonia, a key concept of Greek moral philosophy, has been conceptualized differently both within and across the fields of psychology and philosophy, however most interpretations are based on the notion of achieving “true” happiness or well-being.

From the Aristotelian perspective, virtuous behavior is “a social practice exercised by a citizen of an ideal city” and happiness is an “activity in accordance with virtue” (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Simply put, Aristotle theorized that true happiness is dependent on virtuous behavior, and is not passive, but requires action (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). One cannot expect well-being without actively living a virtuous life. In psychology, the study of well-being emerged from researchers such as Erik Erikson, Abraham Maslow, and Gordon Allport, all of whom were interested in positive mental health outcomes and self-actualization (often considered the highest level of development (Park & Peterson, 2008; Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Ryff & Singer, 2013). This humanistic approach emphasized the notion that individuals are operating of their own free will, motivated towards growth, and able to make their own decisions (Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Springer, Hauser, & Freese, 2006).

In modern psychology, the study of eudaimonia has shifted in a more applied direction. Positive psychologists embracing frameworks such as Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), aim to enhance and develop social emotional and character skills (Berkowitz & Bier, 2007; Elias, 2014; Park & Peterson, 2008). There are five core SEL competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, responsible decision making, and relationship skills (CASEL, 2017). One common theme across different models of SEL is the promotion of well-being,

whether it be referred to as thriving, human flourishing, or other conceptualizations of eudaimonia (CASEL, 2017; Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011; Peterson & Seligman, 2004).

The SEL framework offers as a pragmatic solution for researchers with applied or action-oriented research goals. SEL is rooted in the perspectives of researchers, educators, and child advocates with the intent of promoting positive development among youth (CASEL, 2017). This interdisciplinary perspective, along with the concrete focus on promoting specific competencies (i.e. self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, responsible decision making, and relationship skills) helps bridge the research-practice gap. Thus, approaching research from a SEL framework helps increase the likelihood that findings may be used to inform classroom activities or interventions. The current research will focus on two of the five core SEL competencies: social awareness and relationship skills. These two competencies are particularly useful for exploring the development of intergroup attitudes, as both competencies have a specific focus on fostering and supporting relationships with others from diverse backgrounds (CASEL, 2017).

**Social awareness.** Social awareness competencies include the abilities to take others' perspective and empathize with others, in addition to demonstrating respect for others and an appreciation for diversity (CASEL, 2017). Identity development is a focal aspect of the adolescent period (Phinney & Rosenthal, 1992). While many adolescents engage in a process of self-exploration and seek to increase their understanding of their own ethnic background (Fuligni, Hughes, & Way, 2009), many adolescents also explore other cultures in order to develop a more sophisticated understanding of themselves and the world around them as part of the individuation process (Mazor & Enright, 1988). Adolescents who are knowledgeable about

other social groups and issues may be more likely to have (or eventually develop) feelings of empathy.

**Empathy.** Through the development of social awareness skills, it is theorized that youth increase the likelihood that they will exhibit empathy for others, such as having an awareness for other people's emotions and perspectives (CASEL, 2017). Furthermore, when youth find ways to relate to others who possess similar world views, values, personality traits, and physical characteristics (Damon, 2004), they promote a more civil society. The ability to relate to others, either through shared experiences or strong empathic skills may be particularly meaningful when trying to promote positive intergroup relationships. Studies on intergroup contact have frequently assessed the potential for intergroup contact to improve individuals' abilities to empathize and perspective take as a means to reduce prejudice (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). Empathy toward out-groups, in prior studies, has led to reduced prejudice toward out-group members (Batson et al., 1997; Stephan & Finlay, 1999) which has potential to improve relations between in- and out-group members.

**Relationship skills.** In addition to understanding adolescents' social awareness skills and empathy toward refugees, it is also important to understand how adolescents' feel about refugees and intend to behave toward them. Being able to form healthy relationships with individuals from diverse groups not only encourages more peaceful interactions among different groups of individuals, but can also help promote strong individual and social competencies (CASEL, 2017).

**Intergroup attitudes.** Intrapersonal, interpersonal, and cognitive competencies can be facilitated through positive communication, social engagement, relationship building, and teamwork with members of out-group communities (CASEL, 2017). Positive intergroup attitudes

are the first step toward increasing the likelihood that adolescents will seek out opportunities to engage in, or establish, relationships with out-group members. Intergroup attitudes include the positive or negative feelings American adolescents have toward refugees. Positive intergroup attitudes include feelings such as wanting to be friends with an out-group member and negative intergroup attitudes include feelings of prejudice, discrimination, or bias against out-group members (Allport, 1954; Hewstone & Brown, 1986).

***Intended behavior.*** Although positive intergroup attitudes are an integral step toward building positive relationships between in- and out-groups, ultimately the broad intention is to promote more positive intergroup attitudes that will lead to prosocial interactions between American and refugee adolescents. Prior research has demonstrated a distinct difference in individual attitudes and individual behavior (Aboud, Mendelson, & Purdy, 2003; L. Cameron, Rutland, Brown, & Douch, 2006). For instance, Cameron and colleagues' 2006 study, which tested different methods of extended contact, found that such interventions were successful at improving intergroup attitudes, but not as effective in changing intended behaviors.

### **Predictors of Social Awareness and Relationship Skills**

There are a variety of contextual and relational factors that could influence social awareness and relationship skills, particularly related to the topic of refugees and refugee resettlement. Prior contact with refugees, either directly or through the media, along with existing knowledge about refugees and the refugee process likely effect how one feels toward refugees.

**Prior direct contact.** Broadly, the direct contact hypothesis proposes that contact between members of different social groups will result in more positive intergroup attitudes (Allport, 1954; Paolini, Hewstone, & Cairns, 2007). Studies over the past 50 years have

demonstrated that, overall, direct contact between in and out-groups reduces prejudice. High quality direct contact, such as friendships with out-group members, contributes to more positive intergroup attitudes toward out-group members (Islam & Hewstone, 1993). However, simply having an acquaintance who is an out-group member, is less likely to lead to improved intergroup attitudes. For example, Cameron and colleagues (2011) found that youth who had less high-quality contact with Indian English children were more impacted by a prejudice reduction intervention than those who had a lot of high-quality prior contact with Indian English children. Thus, it is likely that youth who have had a lot of prior contact with refugees, or had very high-quality experiences, are likely going to have more social awareness and positive relationship skills.

**Media.** While prior contact is a logical predictor of an individual's social awareness or relationship skills, not all youth have the opportunity to interact with refugees. Like many controversial political issues, refugee resettlement has been heavily covered in the media. In today's digital age, many adolescents are unintentionally exposed to political messages via social media (Bowyer, Kahne, & Middaugh, 2017; Cohen et al., 2012). Recently, Bowyer and colleagues (2017) looked at the impact of incidental exposure to online political messages and the extent to which youth comprehend the messages. Although youth are more likely than older adults to get their news from social media (Mitchell, Kiley, Gottfriend, & Guskin, 2013), prior knowledge of an issue appeared to be more predictive of comprehension than incidental exposure through online media platforms (Bowler et al., 2017).

**Knowledge.** In addition to influencing comprehension, knowledge is arguably one of the biggest determinants of human flourishing (Pinker, 2018). In fact, the CASEL framework recommends integrating the promotion of SEL core competencies into core subjects such as



reading, math, and history (CASEL, 2017). Continually applying knowledge and science has led to human flourishing across a variety of domains such as health, prosperity, safety, peace, and happiness (Pinker, 2018). By accessing one's knowledge of refugees, such as the legality of refugees' immigration status or knowledge of what a refugee is, youth may be more likely to apply that knowledge to their daily lives, leading to positive outcomes such as increased empathy and social awareness, and improved relationship skills observable through their intergroup attitudes and intended behaviors toward refugees.

### **Current Study**

As previously noted, both ethnic identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) and age (Dovidio et al., 2005; Nesdale, 2001; Rutland et al., 2005) are theorized to play a role in the development of intergroup attitudes. The current study explored American adolescents' knowledge of refugees, and assessed the relationship between prior contact with refugees, media exposure to refugee topics, and knowledge of refugees as predictors of indicators of two Social Emotional Learning (SEL) competencies: social awareness and relationship skills. More specifically, the following research questions were addressed:

**Research Question 1:** To what extent do adolescents understand the concept of refugees and refugee resettlement?

**Research Question 1a:** Do group differences exist between high school and college students' understandings of the concept of refugees and refugee resettlement?

**Research Question 2:** To what extent does exposure to media focused on refugees predict adolescents' empathy toward refugees, social awareness, intergroup attitudes and intended behaviors toward refugees?

**Research Question 2a:** Does age group impact the strength of the predictive relationship between adolescents' exposure to media focused on refugees and adolescents' empathy toward refugees, social awareness, intergroup attitudes and intended behaviors toward refugees?

**Research Question 2b:** Does American ethnic identity impact the strength of the predictive relationship between adolescents' exposure to media focused on refugees and adolescents' empathy toward refugees, social awareness, intergroup attitudes and intended behaviors toward refugees?

**Research Question 3:** To what extent does adolescents' knowledge of refugees predict adolescents' empathy toward refugees, social awareness, intergroup attitudes and intended behaviors toward refugees?

**Research Question 3a:** Does age group impact the strength of the predictive relationship between adolescents' knowledge of refugees and adolescents' empathy toward refugees, social awareness, intergroup attitudes and intended behaviors toward refugees?

**Research Question 3b:** Does American ethnic identity impact the strength of the predictive relationship between adolescents' knowledge of refugees and adolescents' empathy toward refugees, social awareness, intergroup attitudes and intended behaviors toward refugees?

**Research Question 4:** To what extent does adolescents' perceived prior contact with refugees predict adolescents' empathy toward refugees, social awareness, intergroup attitudes and intended behaviors toward refugees?

**Research Question 4a:** Does age group impact the strength of the predictive relationship between adolescents' perceived prior contact with refugees and adolescents' empathy toward refugees, social awareness, intergroup attitudes and intended behaviors toward refugees?

**Research Question 4b:** Does American ethnic identity impact the strength of the predictive relationship between adolescents' perceived prior contact with refugees and adolescents' empathy toward refugees, social awareness, intergroup attitudes and intended behaviors toward refugees?

### **Methods**

Data collection occurred in Winter, Spring and Fall of 2018. Students were recruited from both college classrooms and from an after-school college access program for high school students.

### **Sample**

Participants were 135 high school ( $n = 66$ ) and college students ( $n = 69$ ). Participants were recruited from a high school college access program and social science classes at a public university, both in Northern New Jersey. It should be noted that students recruited from the college access program participated in an array of intensive out-of-school time activities, including after school programming, a summer program, a mentorship program, and a Saturday program. All students in the college access program were invited to participate in the survey ( $N = 140$ ), and four classes at the university ( $N = 100$ ) were invited to participate (56% response rate). The majority of the sample was female (79%). Students were between the age of 15 and 25 and had a mean age of 18.96 ( $SD = 2.74$ ). The racial breakdown was as follows: 40% White, 26% Black or African American, 5% Asian, 1% Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, 25% identified in some

other way, and 3% did not answer the question about race. Those who identified as “some other way” were prompted to provide more details about their race. Of the 25% of students who identified in “some other way,” students described their race as Hispanic or Latinx (83%), Mexican (3%), Puerto Rican (7%), Portuguese (3%), or West Indian (3%).

### **Design and Procedures**

In the current study, students were surveyed at one time point. Parental consent and student assent were obtained for the high school students (see Appendices D and E) and consent was obtained for the college students prior to data collection (see Appendix F). The researcher coordinated with teachers to visit classrooms and/or attend parent workshops (for the high school students) to explain the study to potential participants and parents. The survey was administered by the primary investigator and a research assistant during class time and took between 15 to 25 minutes to complete.

### **Measures**

All participating students completed self-report surveys (see Appendix G) where they answered demographic questions, questions about their media exposure to and knowledge of refugees, and completed scales assessing prior contact with refugees, empathy for refugees, social awareness, intergroup attitudes, and intended behaviors toward refugees.

**Age group.** In order to test age as a moderator, participants were grouped into two age groups: college or high school student. As previously noted there were 66 high school students and 69 college students. The mean age for high school students was 16.52 ( $SD = 1.21$ ). The mean age for college students was 21.34 ( $SD = 1.34$ ).

**American identity.** To measure American identity, the researcher developed a question that asked students how they primarily identify their racial or ethnic identity. Students were

given the prompt: “I primarily identify as...” with the response options: *American, White, African American, African, Black, Latino/a, Asian, or Some other way*. Students could select more than one response option. A dummy variable was then created as a marker for American identity using the American response option. American was the referent group, with  $0 = no$  *American identity* and  $1 = American *identity*. Within the sample, 46% of students identified as American.$

**Prior contact with refugees.** Students were asked about their perceived prior contact with refugees. Islam and Hewstone’s (1993) General Intergroup Contact Quantity and Contact Quality scale was used to measure perceived prior contact. Contact quantity was measured using five items. Three of the items asked how much perceived contact students had with refugees at school, in their neighborhood, and as close friends. Response options ranged from  $0 = None$  *at all* to  $6 = A$  *great deal*. Two items asked how frequently they engaged in informal conversations with refugees and visited the homes of refugees. Response options ranged from  $0 = Not$  *at all* to  $6 = Very$  *often*. These items were modified, replacing certain words that either did not apply to the population or were too advanced for this age group. For instance, in the first set of quantity questions, the original measure asked participants to describe how much contact they had with the out-group at college or university. College or university was substituted for school to be more general for both a high school and college audience. The contact quantity scales have shown good prior internal reliability, with alphas ranging between .84 and .90 (Islam & Hewstone, 1993; Paolini et al., 2014). Scale items were summed for a total score ranging from 0 to 26, with a mean of 5.28 ( $SD = 6.69$ ). Internal reliability was good, with an alpha of .88.

To measure quality of perceived prior contact, a five-item scale was used to measure past contact with refugees. The five questions measured the extent to which the perceived past

contact was: equal, voluntary, superficial, pleasant, or cooperative. All items were measured on a 7-point scale specific to the item being measured. Again, some of these items were modified using language that was more appropriate for an adolescent audience. For example, in the original scale, the item measuring the extent to which the prior contact with a refugee was voluntary was measured from 0 to 6, with 0 = *Definitely involuntary* and 6 = *Definitely voluntary*. For the purposes of this research, the scale was modified to 0 = *Not by my choice* and 6 = *By my choice*. The contact quality subscale has also demonstrated good internal reliability, with alphas ranging from .72 to .86 (Islam & Hewstone, 1993; Paolini et al., 2014). Scale items were summed for a total score ranging from 0 to 30, with a mean of 20.09 ( $SD = 7.34$ ). Internal reliability was good, with an alpha of .87.

**Media exposure to refugees.** Students were asked about the extent to which they have been exposed to media focused on refugees. Students were asked, “How much have you heard about refugees or refugee resettlement on TV, social media, or online?” Response options included: 0 = *Not at all*, 1 = *A little*, 2 = *Some* or 3 = *A lot*. Scores ranged from 0 to 4 and the mean score for this item was 2.03 ( $SD = .90$ ).

**Knowledge of refugees.** Students were asked about their knowledge of refugees using three items. Items included: “Do you know what a refugee is?” and “Is a refugee here legally?” with the options: 0 = *No*, 1 = *Not sure*, or 2 = *Yes*. Within the sample, 71% of students reported knowing what a refugee was, 26% were not sure what a refugee was, and 3% of students reported not knowing what a refugee was. 34% of students said refugees were here legally, 16% were not sure, and 50% reported that refugees were not here legally. There was another item asking, “How confident would you be explaining what a refugee is to a friend?” Response options included: 0 = *Not at all confident*, 1 = *A little confident*, 2 = *Confident*, or 3 = *Very*

*confident*. Scores for this item ranged from 0 to 3 and the mean score for this item was 1.17 ( $SD = .93$ ).

**Empathy for refugees.** Empathy was measured using three select items adapted from Caruso and Mayer's (1998) Multi-Dimensional Emotional Empathy Scale. The items included: "TV or news stories about injured or sick refugees greatly upset me," "The suffering of refugees deeply disturbs me," "I get very upset when I hear about refugees being treated meanly," or "I get a warm feeling for someone if I see them helping refugees." Students responded using a five-point scale with 0 = *Strongly Disagree* and 4 = *Strongly Agree*. Other items in the scale were omitted as they could not be adapted to be specifically focused on refugees. Prior studies using the entire scale have demonstrated good reliability, with an alpha (for the entire scale) of .86 (Caruso & Mayer, 1998). Internal reliability was good, with an alpha of .80. Scores ranged from 1.33 to 4 and the mean score was 3.19 ( $SD = .68$ ).

**Social awareness (general).** Social awareness was measured using the Empathetic Perspective Taking subscale of the Scale of Ethnocultural Empathy (SEE; Wang et al., 2003). The subscale included seven items. Response options were on a 6-point scale, from 0 = *Strongly disagree that it describes me* to 5 = *Strongly agree that it describes me*. Students were asked to read the items and select the extent to which they disagreed or agreed that the statement described them. The items were slightly adapted to make the wording more appropriate for adolescents. For instance, an original item stated: "I don't know a lot of information about important social and political events of racial and ethnic groups other than my own." This item was adapted to, "I don't know a lot about events for racial or ethnic groups that I am not a part of." The scale has had good internal reliability; the alphas for the subscales have ranged from .71 to .90 in prior studies with college students (Bhaskar, 2011; Wang et al., 2003). Scale items were

summed for a total score. Scores ranged from 9 to 35, with a mean of 21.68 ( $SD = 5.86$ ), and internal reliability was fair with an alpha of .65.

**Intergroup attitudes toward refugees.** Intergroup attitudes were measured using fourteen adjectives. Ten of the adjectives came from the Preschool Racial Attitudes Measure – II Series A (PRAM II; Williams, Best, Boswell, Mattson, & Graves, 1975) and four of the adjectives came from Cameron and colleagues' (2006) open-ended interviews with a small sample of 7- to 9-year-old children. Although many of the adjectives came from the PRAM II, the adjectives were used differently in the current study<sup>6</sup>. In the current study, an approach similar to Cameron and colleagues (2006) was utilized. Using the response options: 0 = *None*, 1 = *Some*, 2 = *Most*, or 3 = *All*, students were asked to indicate how many refugee youth were: Clean, Friendly, Good, Hardworking, Kind, Nice, Polite, Bad, Not Nice, Dirty, Unkind, Rude, Lazy, and Unfriendly. Prior use of this measure in a structured interview format has demonstrated good reliability, with alphas of .87 and .85 for positive and negative attributes for refugee children (L. Cameron et al., 2006). In the current study, alphas were .90 for the positive attributes and .91 for the negative attributes. Scores were calculated by separately summing the positive attributes and the negative attributes, and then subtracting the sum of the negative

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<sup>6</sup> The original PRAM II procedure involves showing participants a picture of a Black and a White individual, presenting the child with the adjectives, and then asking the child to select the picture that he or she would associate with the adjective. Students are then asked to respond to the same list of adjectives for American youth. In prior studies of extended contact, this measure has been administered as an interview, with researchers asking participants about their feelings toward refugee children and English children (which would be the equivalent of American youth in the current study). In Cameron and colleagues' (2006) study, the order in which the children rated the English and refugee people was counterbalanced. The adjectives were reviewed in turn and the order was randomized for each child. Prior studies of extended contact where researchers have used the interview approach to administer this scale were done with younger children. Because this sample is older, and because of time restrictions, the measure was used in a survey format with the adjectives grouped by American and refugee (rather than counterbalanced); however, the number of items and scale options remained the same.



attributes from the positive attributes. Scores ranged from -8 to 21 and the mean score was 4.87 ( $SD = 4.93$ ).

**Intended behavior toward refugees.** Students' intended behaviors toward refugee youth were measured using an adaptation of the measure used by L. Cameron et al., (2006), taken from Lewis & Lewis's (Lewis & Lewis, 1987) intended behavior measure. Participants read a short prompt about a chance meeting at a park between a child who attended the same school. The prompt described a meeting between an American youth and a refugee youth. Students were then asked the following three questions following each prompt: How much would you like to hang out with X? How much do you like X? How much would you like to have X eat dinner at your house? Students responded using a five-point scale from 0 = *Not at all* to 4 = *Very much so*. In prior studies, the intended behavior measure has been administered as an interview with researchers describing the scenarios to participants and participants responding by selecting one of five smiley faces representing different points on the scale (L. Cameron & Rutland, 2006; L. Cameron et al., 2006; L. Cameron et al., 2011). In the current study, the measure was administered in a survey format; however, past uses of the intended behavior measure as an interview with five to eleven-year olds have had good reliability with alphas ranging between .88 and .90 (L. Cameron et al., 2006; L. Cameron et al., 2011). As with the PRAM II, in prior studies researchers have used an interview approach to administer this scale with younger children. Because this sample is older, and because of time restrictions, the measure was adapted for use in a survey format. The smiley face options were replaced with a 5-point scale ranging from 0 = *Not at all* to 4 = *Very much so*. Scale items were added together and then a mean was calculated. Scores ranged from 0 to 4 and the mean was 2.87 ( $SD = .92$ ). Internal reliability was good, with an alpha of .90.

## Results

All analyses were conducted using SPSS 25 (IBM, Corp., 2017). Descriptive statistics were used to address Research Question 1. As previously reported, 71% of students reported knowing what a refugee was, 26% were not sure what a refugee was, and 3% of students reported not knowing what a refugee was. Additionally, 34% of students said refugees were here legally, 16% were not sure, and 50% believed refugees were not here legally. In response to the item, “How confident would you be explaining what a refugee is to a friend?” (with response options being *0 = Not at all*, *1 = A little confident*, *2 = Confident*, or *3 = Very confident*) the mean score was 1.17 ( $SD = .93$ ).

To address Research Question 1a, a series of independent samples t-tests were run to assess group differences in knowledge of refugees between two groups: high school students and college students. There was a significant difference in the scores for two of the three items used to assess knowledge of refugees. First, there was a significant difference between high school ( $M = 1.77$ ,  $SD = .42$ ) and college students’ ( $M = 1.58$ ,  $SD = .61$ ) scores on the item, “Do you know what a refugee is?”  $t(131) = -2.10$ ,  $p < .05$ . Second, there was a significant difference between high school ( $M = 1.46$ ,  $SD = .99$ ) and college students’ ( $M = .88$ ,  $SD = .78$ ) scores on the item, “How confident would you be explaining what a refugee is to a friend?”  $t(131) = -3.76$ ,  $p < .01$ .

To examine Research Question 2, a series of linear regressions were conducted. Four linear regressions were conducted to investigate whether exposure to media focused on refugees predicted: students’ empathy for refugees, social awareness, intergroup attitudes, and intended behavior toward refugees scores. Media focused on refugees significantly predicted empathy for refugees,  $\beta = .20$ ,  $t(131) = 2.30$ ,  $p < .05$ . Media focused on refugees also explained a significant proportion of variance in empathy for refugees scores,  $R^2 = .04$ ,  $F(1, 131) = 5.30$ ,  $p < .05$ .

Additionally, media focused on refugees also significantly predicted intergroup attitudes toward refugees,  $\beta = .18$ ,  $t(129) = 2.12$ ,  $p < .05$ . Media focused on refugees also explained a significant proportion of variance in intergroup attitudes toward refugees scores,  $R^2 = .03$ ,  $F(1, 129) = 4.47$ ,  $p < .05$ . Social awareness and intended behaviors were not significantly predicted by media focused on refugees (see Table 1.1).

Next, two sets of linear regressions were conducted to investigate Research Questions 2a and 2b. Using PROCESS Model 1 (Hayes, 2012), age group was tested as a moderator of the relationship between exposure to media focused on refugees and empathy for refugees.

American identity was also tested as a moderator of the relationship between exposure to media focused on refugees and intergroup attitudes toward refugees. Neither age group nor American Identity significantly moderated the relationship between exposure to media focused on refugees and empathy for refugees and exposure to media focused on refugees and intergroup attitudes toward refugees (see Tables 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, and 1.5).

Research Question 3 (including 3a and 3b) and Research Question 4 (including 4a and 4b) were addressed following the same analytical plan described for Research Question 2. An initial set of linear regressions were run to assess the predictive relationship between the independent variables: knowledge of refugees (Research Question 3) and prior contact with refugees (Research Question 4) and the dependent variables: empathy for refugees, social awareness, intergroup attitudes, and intended behavior toward refugees. It should be noted that only one of the knowledge of refugees' items was tested: "How confident would you be explaining what a refugee is to a friend?" as this item was rated on a continuous scale, which is necessary for the moderation analysis utilized. Analyses were also run to examine the moderating effect of age group and American identity on the predictive relationships between the

independent variables: knowledge of refugees (Research Question 3) and prior contact with refugees (Research Question 4), and the dependent variables: empathy for refugees, social awareness, intergroup attitudes, and intended behavior toward refugees.

For Research Question 3, knowledge of refugees significantly predicted intergroup attitudes toward refugees scores,  $\beta = .22$ ,  $t(128) = 2.54$ ,  $p < .05$ . Knowledge of refugees also explained a significant proportion of variance in intergroup attitudes toward refugees scores,  $R^2 = .05$ ,  $F(1,128) = 6.46$ ,  $p < .05$ . Empathy, social awareness and intended behaviors were not significantly predicted by knowledge of refugees (see Table 1.6). Age group significantly moderated the relationship between knowledge of refugees and intergroup attitudes toward refugees,  $F(1,126) = 4.71$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $\Delta R^2 = .03$  (see Table 1.7), and American identity significantly moderated the relationship between knowledge of refugees and intergroup attitudes toward refugees  $F(1,126) = 4.66$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $\Delta R^2 = .03$  (see Table 1.8).

For Research Question 4, adolescents' prior contact with refugees was assessed using both quantity and quality of contact as independent variables. Quantity of prior contact with refugees significantly predicted social awareness scores,  $\beta = .25$ ,  $t(132) = 2.95$ ,  $p < .01$ . Quantity of prior contact with refugees also explained a significant proportion of variance in empathy for refugees scores,  $R^2 = .06$ ,  $F(1,132) = 8.70$ ,  $p < .01$ . Empathy, intergroup attitudes, and intended behaviors toward refugees were not significantly predicted by quantity of prior contact with refugees (see Table 1.9).

Quality of prior contact with refugees significantly predicted empathy scores,  $\beta = .38$ ,  $t(121) = 4.55$ ,  $p < .01$ . Quality of prior contact with refugees also explained a significant proportion of variance in empathy for refugees scores,  $R^2 = .15$ ,  $F(1,121) = 20.71$ ,  $p < .01$ . Quality of prior contact with refugees also significantly predicted social awareness scores,  $\beta =$

.29,  $t(120) = 3.37, p < .01$ . Quality of prior contact with refugees also explained a significant proportion of variance in social awareness scores,  $R^2 = .09, F(1,120) = 11.37, p < .01$ . Finally, quality of prior contact with refugees significantly predicted intended behavior toward refugee scores,  $\beta = .47, t(121) = 5.77, p < .01$ . Quality of prior contact with refugees also explained a significant proportion of variance in intended behavior toward refugee scores,  $R^2 = .22, F(1,121) = 33.34, p < .01$ . Quality of prior contact with refugees did not significantly predict intergroup attitudes toward refugees (see Table 1.10).

Age group and American identity were tested as potential moderators of the relationship between prior contact quantity with refugees and social awareness. No significant interactions were observed (see Tables 1.11 and 1.12). Age group and American identity were also tested as potential moderators of the relationship between: (1) prior contact quality with refugees and empathy for refugees, (2) prior contact quality with refugees and social awareness, and (3) prior contact quality with refugees and intergroup attitudes toward refugees. No significant interactions were observed (see Tables 1.13 through 1.18).

### **Discussion**

The current study examined adolescents' knowledge of refugees, and assessed the relationship between prior contact with refugees, media exposure to refugee topics, and knowledge of refugees as predictors of empathy, social awareness, intergroup attitudes, and intended behavior.

In general, participants demonstrated an overall lack of understanding and knowledge surrounding the topic of refugees. Although the majority of the sample indicated they knew what a refugee was, half of the sample indicated that they thought refugees were here illegally and the sample's confidence in their abilities to explain what a refugee was to a friend was relatively

low. Interestingly, the high school students in this sample, in general, knew more about refugees than the college students. Within this sample, this can likely be attributed to the sample of high school students surveyed. These high school students were recruited from an after school college access program, and their involvement with the recruitment site (i.e. the after school program) is indicative of pro-social behavior (Durlak, Weissberg, & Pachan, 2010; Vandell, Reisner, & Pierce, 2007).

Exposure to media focused on refugees significantly predicted empathy and intergroup attitudes toward refugees. Exposure to media focused on refugees did not significantly predict social awareness or intended behavior toward refugees. It may be that these students engage with media content focused on the particular topic of immigration or refugee resettlement, but not other topics that would increase their general social awareness. Furthermore, engaging with media content focused on refugees may have the potential to impact one's ability to empathize and feel more positively about refugees, but may not have the ability to impact behavioral changes.

Similar to the relationship between exposure to media content focused on refugees and intergroup attitudes toward refugees, knowledge of refugees significantly and positively predicted intergroup attitudes toward refugees. This relationship was moderated by both age group and American identity. Specifically, college students who had less knowledge of refugees also had lower intergroup attitudes. (see Figure 1.1), and American identifying students with low knowledge of refugees also had lower intergroup attitudes toward refugees (see Figure 1.2).

Quantity of prior contact significantly predicted social awareness. In this instance, increased exposure to refugees may be co-occurring with an overall increased exposure to diverse individuals. In addition, quality of prior contact predicted empathy for refugees, social

awareness, and intended behavior. These findings are in line with prior research on direct contact which has demonstrated the positive intergroup relations and attitudes associated with having prior interactions between members of differing social groups (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006; Tropp & Pettigrew, 2005).

### **Conclusion**

The current political climate in the U.S. surrounding refugees and refugee resettlement has become quite contentious. While the refugee resettlement process is stressful and traumatic, the reality is that refugees continue to face discrimination even after they have been granted refuge in the U.S (Ellis et al., 2016; Noh et al., 1999). The current study examined American adolescents' knowledge of, and feelings toward refugees. This was an important area of inquiry for a number of reasons. First, while a tremendous amount of media attention has been paid to the issue of refugee resettlement in America, it is unclear how much Americans actually know about refugees and whether the pervasive discrimination against refugees often highlighted in the media is in line with the attitudes of the general public. Second, it was important to understand if certain factors such as media exposure, knowledge, or prior contact influence one's feelings toward refugees. Finally, through gaining a greater understanding of the status of American adolescents' knowledge and feeling toward refugees, we can begin to make steps to reduce bias against refugees.

Two groups of adolescents were recruited for the current study: high school and college students. The college students (who were older) were more susceptible to holding negative intergroup attitudes toward refugees when coupled with lower knowledge about refugees. These findings suggest that interventions should be targeted at younger adolescents, as negative attitudes may become more enduring as adolescents grow older. These findings also challenge

About's (1988) hypothesis that prejudicial attitudes become less prevalent as individuals age and supports Rutland's (2004) critique that researchers should acknowledge the prejudices that may develop during adolescence and that may continue well into adulthood (Dovidio et al., 2005; Rutland et al., 2005).

Additionally, American identity had a similar interaction with knowledge of refugees. When coupled with lower knowledge, American identity was associated with more negative intergroup attitudes toward refugees. This is in line with prior literature demonstrating the powerful role of in-group favoritism (Greenwald & Pettigrew, 2014; Hoyt & Goldin, 2016). Future interventions may be particularly impactful with groups of individuals with a strong sense of American identity, and future studies should further explore the nuances of American identity, particularly in relation to prejudicial views.

This study examined social awareness and relationship skills through a SEL framework. This was done, in part, to make application to applied settings, such as after school programs or schools, more feasible. For example, although treating out-group members, such as refugees, with respect may be the "right" thing to do, it can be challenging for teachers to integrate such lessons into their classrooms. This task may be especially challenging for practitioners and educators attempting to engage individuals who do not necessarily have a personal stake or care about particular out-groups such as refugees. By viewing this subject through an SEL lens, we can begin to have a broader conversation about how fostering social awareness skills (such as empathy) and relationship skills can result in a myriad of positive outcomes including reductions in criminal behavior and mental health problems and improvements in academic achievement (Durlak et al., 2011). We also teach individuals that the path to true happiness and purpose is



dependent on virtuous behavior which cannot be achieved through passive actions, but must be intentional (Damon, 2004; Peterson & Seligman, 2004).

While children's' perceptions of refugees have been examined outside of the U.S. (L. Cameron et al., 2006), there has been very little research on adolescents' perceptions of refugees in the U.S (Bal & Arzubaga, 2014; Hadley & Patil, 2009). Furthermore, to date, there have been no studies examining how much American adolescents understand about refugees and the refugee resettlement process. This research began to explore these issues within the U.S. at a time when the topic of refugees and refugee resettlement has become particularly divisive.

### **Limitations**

Data collection for the current study took place in an urban community and at an ethnically diverse public university in Northern New Jersey. As a result, many participants in the sample identified as racial or ethnic minorities. This is a strength in terms of broadening the scope of research on intergroup attitudes but does make comparisons to prior studies with homogenous White samples challenging. In addition, this sample had a disproportionate number of females (79%). This was, however, in alignment with the recruitment sites; both of which were majority female (both had demographic breakdowns that were over 60% female).

### **Future Directions**

Very little research, to date, has assessed Americans' attitudes toward refugees. Even less research has examined American adolescents' attitudes toward refugees. This study began to explore some of these trends. In the future, studies should include more comprehensive samples with more geographic diversity. More intentional geographic diversity in sample selection may help further probe some of the effects observed in the current study, particularly the interaction between knowledge of refugees and American identity. Future studies would also benefit from

further exploration of differences in knowledge and attitudes by age. As previously noted, the age group differences in this study could be attributed to the high school sample utilized in the study since many of those students would likely be characterized as high achieving students (Durlak et al., 2010).

Targeting prejudice reduction efforts at younger adolescent populations may be particularly useful in changing attitudes toward refugees. In the current study, older adolescents knew less about refugees, which in turn impacted their intergroup attitudes toward refugees. It may be that, within this particular sample, the older adolescents had more established views on refugees and refugee resettlement, and that the younger adolescents were still formulating their opinions on the topic. Furthermore, from a practical perspective, early intervention may reduce the likelihood that adolescents will carry such biases into adulthood. Thus, intercepting the development of bias or prejudice during a crucial developmental period may help in promoting a more peaceful and civil society.

Although all of the predictor variables in this study (media exposure to refugee topics, knowledge of refugees, and prior perceived contact with refugees) were predictive of at least one of the indicators of relationship skills or social awareness skills (empathy, social awareness, and intended behavior), quality of prior perceived contact with refugees predicted the most indicators: empathy for refugees, social awareness, and intended behavior toward refugees. Future interventions may be particularly impactful if programs are designed around exposing participants to out-group members. While direct contact is one effective method for improving intergroup attitudes (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006; Tropp & Pettigrew, 2005), it is not always feasible. Extended (L. Cameron et al., 2006; L. Cameron et al., 2011; Feddes, Noack, & Rutland, 2009; Wright, Aron, McLaughlin-Volpe, & Ropp, 1997) or imagined contact (Crisp & Turner,

2009) interventions give adolescents the opportunity to observe friendly behaviors and interactions between in-and out-group members. These observations may go on to serve as the basis or frame of reference for changing or developing attitudes toward out-groups.

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**Tables**

Table 1. 1

*Summary of Simple Regression Analyses for Media Focused on Refugees as a Predictor of Empathy for Refugees, Social Awareness, Intergroup Attitudes, and Intended Behavior*

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$	$R^2$	<i>F</i>
Empathy	.15	.06	.20*	.04	5.30*
Social awareness	.42	.58	.06	.00	.52
Intergroup attitudes	1.00	.47	.18 *	.03	4.47*
Intended behavior	.04	.09	.04	.00	.16

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$

Table 1. 2

*Summary of Moderation Analysis for Age Group as a Moderator of the Predictive Relationship Between Media Exposure and Empathy for Refugees*

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Sig</i>	<i>95% confidence interval for B</i>	
					<i>Lower bound</i>	<i>Upper bound</i>
Constant	2.80	.22	12.92	.00**	2.36	3.22
Age group	.17	.29	.59	.55	-.40	.74
Media	.20	.09	2.08	.03*	.01	.38
Age group x Media	-.09	.13	-.73	.46	-.35	.16

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$

Table 1. 3

*Summary of Moderation Analysis for American Identity as a Moderator of the Predictive Relationship Between Media Exposure and Empathy for Refugees*

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Sig</i>	95% confidence interval for <i>B</i>	
					<i>Lower bound</i>	<i>Upper bound</i>
Constant	2.80	.19	14.35	.00**	2.41	3.18
American ID	.20	.29	.69	.49	-.37	.77
Media	.19	.09	2.24	.03*	.02	.36
American ID x Media	-.10	.13	-.80	.43	-.36	.15

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$

Table 1. 4

*Summary of Moderation Analysis for Age Group as a Moderator of the Predictive Relationship Between Media Exposure and Intergroup Attitudes*

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Sig</i>	<i>95% confidence interval for B</i>	
					<i>Lower bound</i>	<i>Upper bound</i>
Constant	4.13	1.60	2.58	.01**	.97	7.29
Age group	-2.18	2.12	-1.03	.31	-6.37	2.02
Media	.73	.69	1.05	.30	-.65	2.10
Age group x Media	.37	.95	.39	.70	1.51	2.24

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$

Table 1. 5

*Summary of Moderation Analysis for American Identity as a Moderator of the Predictive Relationship Between Media Exposure and Intergroup Attitudes*

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Sig</i>	95% confidence interval	
					<i>for B</i>	
					<i>Lower bound</i>	<i>Upper bound</i>
Constant	4.46	1.40	3.19	.00**	1.70	7.22
American ID	-3.47	2.08	-1.66	.10	-7.60	.65
Media	.64	.62	1.04	.30	-.58	1.86
American ID x Media	.73	.94	.77	.44	-1.13	2.58

\**p* < .05. \*\**p* < .01



Table 1. 6

*Summary of Simple Regression Analyses for Knowledge of Refugees as a Predictor of Empathy for Refugees, Social Awareness, Intergroup Attitudes, and Intended Behavior*

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$	$R^2$	<i>F</i>
Empathy	.11	.06	.16	.02	3.22
Social awareness	.92	.55	.15	.02	2.86
Intergroup attitudes	1.16	.46	.22 *	.05	6.46*
Intended behavior	.06	.09	.07	.00	.57

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .

Table 1. 7

*Summary of Moderation Analysis for Age Group as a Moderator of the Predictive Relationship Between Knowledge of Refugees and Intergroup Attitudes*

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Sig</i>	<i>95% confidence interval for B</i>	
					<i>Lower bound</i>	<i>Upper bound</i>
Constant	5.50	1.07	5.14	.00**	3.39	7.62
Age group	-3.45	1.40	-2.46	.02*	-6.22	-.68
Knowledge	.17	.60	.28	.77	-1.03	1.37
Age group x Knowledge	2.10	.97	2.17	.03*	.19	4.02

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$

Table 1. 8

*Summary of Moderation Analysis for American Identity as a Moderator of the Predictive Relationship Between Knowledge of Refugees and Intergroup Attitudes*

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Sig</i>	95% confidence interval for <i>B</i>	
					<i>Lower bound</i>	<i>Upper bound</i>
Constant	5.50	.90	6.09	.00**	3.39	7.62
American ID	-4.26	1.35	-3.17	.00*	-6.22	-.68
Knowledge	.32	.57	.56	.58	-1.03	1.37
American ID x Knowledge	1.96	.91	2.16	.03*	.19	4.02

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$

Table 1. 9

*Summary of Simple Regression Analyses for Quantity of Prior Contact with Refugees as a Predictor of Empathy for Refugees, Social Awareness, Intergroup Attitudes, and Intended Behavior*

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$	$R^2$	<i>F</i>
Empathy	.01	.01	.07	.01	.69
Social awareness	.22	.07	.25**	.06	8.70**
Intergroup attitudes	.08	.06	.11	.01	1.65
Intended behavior	.02	.01	.12	.01	1.81

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .

Table 1. 10

*Summary of Simple Regression Analyses for Quality of Prior Contact with Refugees as a Predictor of Empathy for Refugees, Social Awareness, Intergroup Attitudes, and Intended Behavior*

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$	$R^2$	<i>F</i>
Empathy	.03	.01	.38**	.15	20.71**
Social awareness	.24	.07	.29**	.09	11.37**
Intergroup attitudes	.11	.06	.16	.03	3.16
Intended behavior	.06	.01	.47**	.22	33.34**

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .

Table 1. 11

*Summary of Moderation Analysis for Age Group as a Moderator of the Predictive Relationship Between Quantity of Prior Contact and Social Awareness*

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Sig</i>	95% confidence interval for <i>B</i>	
					<i>Lower bound</i>	<i>Upper bound</i>
Constant	21.39	.92	23.25	.00 <sup>†</sup>	19.57	23.21
Age group	-1.36	1.26	-1.08	.28	-3.85	1.12
Quantity of prior contact	.24	.09	2.57	.01 <sup>†</sup>	.05	.42
Age group x Quantity of prior contact	-.12	.15	-.80	.42	-.43	.18

\**p* < .05. \*\**p* < .01

Table 1. 12

*Summary of Moderation Analysis for American Identity as a Moderator of the Predictive Relationship Between Quantity of Prior Contact and Social Awareness*

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Sig</i>	95% confidence interval <i>for B</i>	
					<i>Lower bound</i>	<i>Upper bound</i>
Constant	22.03	.85	25.86	.00**	10.34	23.71
American ID	-3.19	1.24	-2.58	.01*	-5.64	-.75
Quantity of prior contact	.15	.10	1.46	.15	-.05	.35
American ID x Quantity of prior contact	.14	.14	.99	.33	-.14	.43

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$

Table 1. 13

*Summary of Moderation Analysis for Age Group as a Moderator of the Predictive Relationship Between Quality of Prior Contact and Empathy for Refugees*

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Sig</i>	95% confidence	
					interval for <i>B</i>	
					<i>Lower</i>	<i>Upper</i>
					<i>bound</i>	<i>bound</i>
Constant	2.33	.25	9.47	.00*	1.84	2.81
Age group	.31	.33	.94	.35	-.34	.95
Quality of prior contact	.04	.01	3.77	.00*	.00	.06
Age group x Quality of prior contact	-.01	.02	-.95	.34	.34	.02

\**p* < .05. \*\**p* < .01



Table 1. 14

*Summary of Moderation Analysis American Identity as a Moderator of the Predictive*

*Relationship Between Quality of Prior Contact and Empathy for Refugees*

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Sig</i>	<i>95% confidence interval for B</i>	
					<i>Lower bound</i>	<i>Upper bound</i>
Constant	2.56	.21	12.12	.00**	2.14	2.98
American ID	-.15	.33	-.47	.64	.64	.49
Quality of prior contact	.03	.01	3.25	.00**	.00	.05
American ID x Quality of prior contact	.00	.02	.29	.77	.77	.03

\**p* < .05. \*\**p* < .01

Table 1. 15

*Summary of Moderation Analysis for Age Group as a Moderator of the Predictive Relationship Between Quality of Prior Contact and Social Awareness*

Variable	B	SE B	t	Sig	95% confidence interval for B	
					Lower bound	Upper bound
Constant	18.82	2.41	7.81	.00**	14.05	23.59
Age group	-2.74	3.08	-.89	.37	-8.84	3.36
Quality of prior contact	.21	.11	1.92	.06	-.01	.42
Age group x Quality of prior contact	.01	.14	.09	.93	-.27	.30

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$

Table 1. 16

*Summary of Moderation Analysis for American Identity as a Moderator of the Predictive*

*Relationship Between Quality of Prior Contact and Social Awareness*

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Sig</i>	95% confidence	
					interval for <i>B</i>	
					<i>Lower</i>	<i>Upper</i>
					<i>bound</i>	<i>bound</i>
Constant	20.07	1.97	10.18	.00*	16.17	23.98
American ID	-7.07	2.94	-2.41	.02	-12.89	-1.25
Quality of prior contact	.15	.09	1.67	.10	-.03	.34
American ID x Quality of prior contact	.20	.14	1.44	.15	-.07	.47

\**p* < .05. \*\**p* < .01

Table 1. 17

*Summary of Moderation Analysis for Age Group as a Moderator of the Predictive Relationship Between Quality of Prior Contact and Intended Behavior*

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Sig</i>	95% confidence interval for <i>B</i>	
					<i>Lower bound</i>	<i>Upper bound</i>
Constant	1.27	.33	3.84	.00**	.61	1.92
Age group	.69	.44	1.57	.12	-.18	1.56
Quality of prior contact	.07	.02	4.83	.00**	.04	.10
Age group x Quality of prior contact	-.02	.02	-1.05	.30	-.06	.02

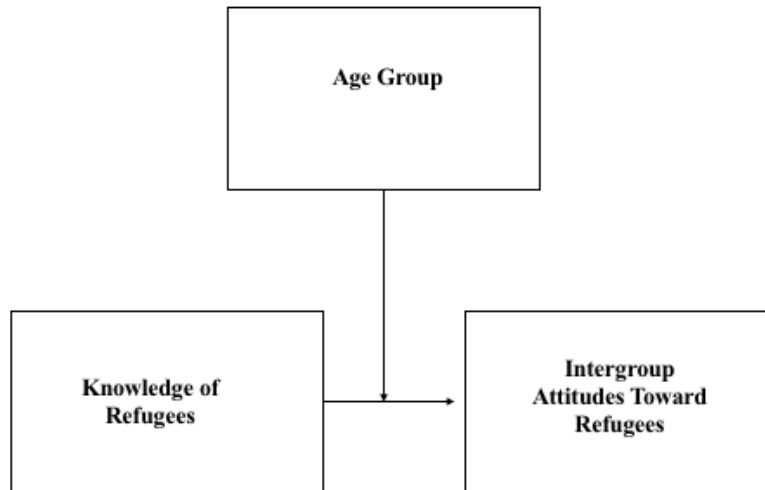
\**p* < .05. \*\**p* < .01

Table 1. 18

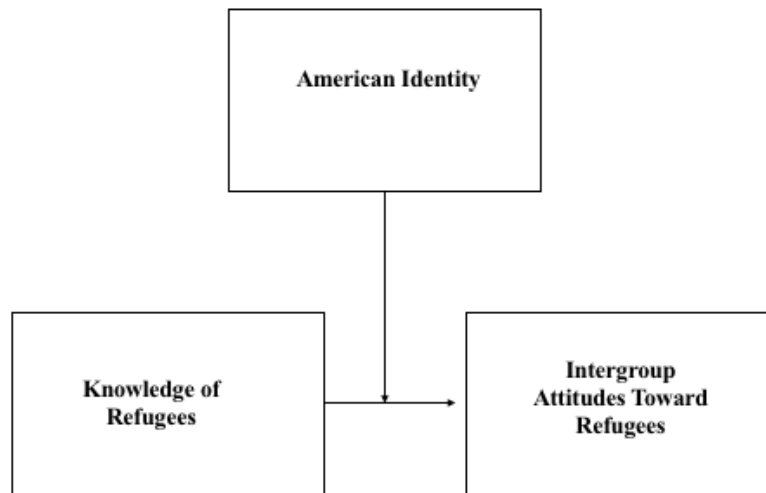
*Summary of Moderation Analysis for American Identity as a Moderator of the Predictive Relationship Between Quality of Prior Contact and Intended Behavior*

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Sig</i>	95% confidence interval for <i>B</i>	
					<i>Lower bound</i>	<i>Upper bound</i>
Constant	1.87	.29	6.51	.00**	1.30	2.44
American ID	-.46	.44	-1.04	.30	-1.34	.42
Quality of prior contact	.05	.01	3.71	.00**	.02	.08
American ID x Quality of prior contact	.02	.02	.98	.32	-.02	.06

\**p* < .05. \*\**p* < .01

**Figures**

**Figure 1. 1.** Model testing age group as a moderator of the relationship between knowledge of refugees and intergroup attitudes toward refugees.



*Figure 1. 2.* Model testing American identity as a moderator of the relationship between knowledge of refugees and intergroup attitudes toward refugees.

**CHAPTER IV****Improving adolescents' knowledge of, and attitudes toward, refugees:****Testing the impact of an intervention derived from extended contact**

## Abstract

The current research evaluated the impact of an intervention derived from extended contact on American adolescents' knowledge, perceptions, and feelings toward refugees. Both direct contact and extended contact (vicarious experience) interventions have been shown to be useful in reducing prejudice (L. Cameron, Rutland, Brown, & Douch, 2006; Paolini, Hewstone, & Cairns, 2007), however, direct contact and extended contact are not always possible. In the current study, the use of an intervention derived from extended contact was tested. Seventy-three high school students from a college access program in Northern New Jersey participated in an evaluation of a five-week intervention that included three consecutive weekly meetings, and a follow-up meeting two weeks later. Youth were randomly assigned to a control condition or an extended contact condition. Students in the extended contact condition read stories created following similar guidelines to the dual identity condition used by Cameron, Rutland, Brown, & Douch (2006). Participation in the intervention derived from extended contact significantly predicted improved knowledge of refugees and intergroup attitudes toward refugees. Future research implications, and prejudice reduction and social emotional learning interventions are discussed.



### Literature Review

The world is currently experiencing an unprecedented refugee crisis. In 2017, steps were taken by the U.S. government to halt refugee admissions for individuals and families coming from Muslim-majority countries. This order significantly reduced the cap on refugee admissions and stopped the resettlement of refugees from Muslim-majority countries (“Donald J. Trump, President of the United States, et al. v. International Refugee Assistance Project, et al.,” 2017). While the United States continues to resettle some refugees, these actions are symptomatic of escalating tensions surrounding the topic of refugee resettlement, and more broadly immigration.

Refugee resettlement is typically considered an adult subject matter, or an issue more frequently on the minds of American adults versus American youth. Adults tend to have well formulated opinions that are hard to shift or persuade (Capps et al., 2015), and such opinions may extend to refugees and refugee resettlement. Efforts to reduce bias against refugees with adult populations may be particularly challenging and potentially ineffective. Adolescents, on the other hand, are a promising group to target for prejudice reduction efforts. Adolescents are often at a crossroads when it comes to shaping their opinions and beliefs about their futures and the world around them (Smetana & Villalobos, 2009; Steinberg et al., 2009). Prior to adolescence, youth often accept their parents’ beliefs or opinions, particularly regarding important social issues. During adolescence, however, youth begin to explore their own beliefs and see the world through a multi-dimensional lens, utilizing their developing logic and problem-solving skills (Smetana & Villalobos, 2009).

Refugee resettlement is just one example of an issue that has led to discord among the U.S. population, however, it is in line with a trend of lowering standards of social and civil society. While individuals are certainly entitled to hold their own opinions on refugee

resettlement, those opinions should not impact the way citizens treat immigrants, refugees, or other Americans with opposing viewpoints. Creating a more civil society, particularly when it comes to a divisive topic such as refugees and refugee resettlement, cannot occur without taking intentional steps to become more socially aware.

The opinions of parents, teachers, or peers may be particularly impactful in shaping youths' feelings about topics such as refugees and refugee resettlement (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). Despite this, many adolescents seek increasing autonomy and want to formulate their own opinions and learn about the world around them (Smetana, Ahman, & Wray-Lake, 2016; Smetana & Villalobos, 2009; Steinberg et al., 2009). While historically schools prioritized citizenship and character as tenets of a good education, many schools have had to give precedence to academic content in order to prepare students for standardized testing and college readiness (Dusenbury et al., 2015; Finn, Julian, & Petrilli, 2006). This lack of attention to the development of character can leave youth unsure of what it takes to be a good citizen and how to help create and maintain a just and civil society. Social and emotional learning (SEL) is one framework frequently used in schools to help youth develop character and facilitate good citizenship (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011; Elias, 2014).

While negative perceptions of refugees may be common amongst adult populations, youth are less likely to hold established biases against refugees and other out-groups. Still, even though youths' feelings or attitudes toward refugee populations may not be as well established as adults, there is evidence that prejudicial beliefs begin at a young age (Aboud, 1988; Aboud & Amato, 2001). For instance, studies have shown that children as young as two and three years old already stereotype or fear out-group members (Bar-Tal & Teichman, 2005; J. A. Cameron,

Alvarez, Ruble, & Fuligni, 2001), making the need for interventions aimed at children and adolescents all the more necessary.

### **Contact Interventions**

The direct contact hypothesis proposes that contact between members of different social groups will result in more positive intergroup attitudes. Studies over the past 50 years have demonstrated that, overall, direct contact between in and out-groups reduces prejudice (Allport, 1954; Paolini, Hewstone, & Cairns, 2007). There are four commonly discussed theoretical models of direct contact. The *deategorization model* argues that positive contact effects are more likely to occur if salience of each social group's identity is decreased and the salience of the interpersonal relationship is increased (Brewer & Miller, 1984). Theoretically, this should lead to less categorization in the future. The *intergroup contact model* argues that minimal group salience is necessary to improve the likelihood of positive experiences being generalized to out-group members in the future (Hewstone & Brown, 1986). The *common in-group identity model* focuses on a new, superordinate identity shared by the in- and out-group (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000; Gaertner, Mann, Murrell, & Dovidio, 1989). The common in-group identity model gave way to the *dual identity model* (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000), which proposes that both the in- and out-group should maintain their subgroup identities and also focus on the new superordinate identity shared by each group.

While direct contact has been shown to reduce prejudice (Allport, 1954) there are some limitations. First, there is the issue of proximity and opportunity. Many youth do not live in close proximity to children from different ethnic backgrounds. Additionally, prior research has demonstrated that contact interventions are often made available to majority groups, but are infrequently offered to marginalized groups (Tropp & Pettigrew, 2005). Second, extended

contact allows for group identity to be made salient, making it more likely the youth will apply positive lessons or norms they gained from the extended contact intervention to future interactions with the out-group. Third, extended contact interventions reduce anxiety that both in and out-group members may feel about engaging in face to face contact (Wright et al., 1997). For refugee populations, this is particularly important since many refugees have past experiences of trauma, including discrimination and prejudice.

**Extended contact.** Extended contact is derived from direct contact models (Allport, 1954). Most interventions stemming from direct contact models involve an interaction between majority in-group and out-group members. Extended contact interventions expose in-group members to out-group members through vicarious friendships. Extended contact, also known as indirect cross group friendship, has the potential to reduce bias through vicarious experiences of friendships (L. Cameron, Rutland, Brown, & Douch, 2006; Wright et al., 1997). For example, according to the extended contact effect, if an American, “Sally” has an American friend, “Bob,” who is friends with “Amir,” a refugee, Sally’s bias toward refugees may be reduced through learning about Bob’s friendship with Amir. Many youth do not have opportunities to experience extended contact due to lack of physical proximity to an out-group. Exposure to individuals from out-groups through other means, such as storytelling or imaginary play interventions derived from extended contact, has been shown to provide youth with similar experiences and benefits of vicarious friendships (L. Cameron et al., 2006).

There are a number of approaches to extended contact, however, similar to models of direct contact, most approaches emphasize either individual characteristics or preferences (e.g. they like math or enjoy swimming; Brewer & Miller, 1984); or focus on superordinate identities (e.g. they attend the same school or play on the same sports team (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000).

Cameron and colleagues (2006) developed and tested an intervention, with elementary-aged British children, derived from extended contact using stories about British children and refugee children being friends. They tested a decategorization model (emphasizing individual characteristics and preferences), a common in-group model (emphasizing a superordinate identity), and a dual identity model, which focused on both superordinate identities and subgroup identities. Their findings suggest dual identity models, which include stories that highlight both a superordinate identity (such as attending the same school) and each child's subgroup identity (such as being a "British citizen" or a "refugee"), were the most effective in improving in-group members' attitudes toward out-group attitudes (L. Cameron et al., 2006). Researchers have posited that this method may be particularly effective because it is inclusive, yet still allows groups to maintain their subgroup identities. Thus, youth may be able to connect the positive interactions observed through extended contact to the out-group and also hold the commonalities across the two groups salient (Brown & Hewstone, 2005; L. Cameron et al., 2006).

Researchers testing extended contact interventions with several different populations have produced promising results (Dovidio, Eller, & Hewstone, 2011). As compared to direct contact interventions, extended contact has been shown to be equally effective with both in and out-group populations in improving intergroup attitudes. Additionally, extended contact interventions are effective in improving intergroup attitudes towards marginalized groups such as immigrants and disabled youth (L. Cameron & Rutland, 2006; L. Cameron et al., 2011; Wright et al., 1997). More importantly, for the purpose of this study, extended contact has been effective at improving intergroup attitudes toward refugees (L. Cameron et al., 2006).

***Perceived prior direct contact.*** Prior research has demonstrated that high quality direct contact, such as friendships with out-group members, may contribute to positive intergroup

attitudes toward refugees. Low quality contact, such as having an acquaintance who is a refugee, is less likely to lead to improved intergroup attitudes (Allport, 1954). Cameron and colleagues (2011) also tested an extended contact intervention with White English children, examining their intergroup attitudes toward Indian English children. Children who had less high-quality contact with Indian English children were more impacted by the intervention than those who had a lot of high quality prior contact with Indian English children (L. Cameron et al., 2011).

Examining prior contact might help explain potential ceiling effects that may occur with samples of youth living in diverse areas who have lots of high-quality contact with out-group members. High quality contact is likely to be associated with more meaningful interactions which may influence children to have more positive intergroup attitudes toward an out-group. According to Allport (1954), high quality direct contact will likely supersede any indirect contact. This claim was supported by Feddes, Noack, and Rutland (2009) in their study of German children's intergroup attitudes toward Turkish immigrants. Feddes and colleagues (2009) found that extended contact had little effect on German children's attitudes toward Turkish immigrants. They attributed these findings to German children's frequent interactions with Turkish immigrant children.

***Ethnic identity.*** In addition to prior contact, social identity theorists have posited that group membership is key to the development of self-concept and thus related to the judgments youth may develop toward out-groups (Abrams, Rutland, Cameron, & Marques, 2003). As youth develop their own sense of group identity, they begin making positive associations with their in-group which, as a result, may lead to more negative out-group associations. Thus, it is important to understand how a youth's ethnic or cultural identity may impact his or her feelings toward out-group members.

### **Contribution to the Self and Civil Society**

While both direct and extended contact interventions may offer obvious benefits to out-group members, contact interventions have the potential to benefit in-group members and society at large. By encouraging individuals to coexist in a peaceful manner we promote a more civil society. Positive psychologists embracing frameworks such as Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), aim to enhance and develop social emotional and character skills (Berkowitz & Bier, 2007; Elias, 2014; Park & Peterson, 2008). There are five core SEL competencies: self-awareness, self-management, responsible decision making, relationship skills, and social awareness (CASEL, 2017). One common theme across different models of SEL is the promotion of well-being, whether it be referred to as thriving or human flourishing (CASEL, 2017; Durlak et al., 2011; Peterson & Seligman, 2004). SEL programs have been shown to lead to positive social and emotional skills, fewer behavioral problems, and more positive attitudes towards themselves and others (Durlak et al., 2011). SEL programs specifically focused on educating youth about marginalized groups, such as refugees, with the intent of reducing prejudice could be particularly useful in developing social awareness skills. Social awareness skills include the ability to perspective take and empathize with others, in addition to demonstrating respect for others and an appreciation for diversity (CASEL, 2017).

SEL programs and interventions are intended to help youth acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions (CASEL, 2017). While not typically associated with SEL, extended contact interventions are intended to reduce prejudicial or discriminatory attitudes toward a minority “out-group.” Essentially, through learning about a friendship between

an in-group and out-group member, prejudicial or discriminatory feelings toward the out-group may be reduced (Wright, Aron, McLaughlin-Volpe, & Ropp, 1997). Thus, extended contact, or interventions derived from extended contact, may be an effective tool for integrating SEL into classroom curricula or youth programming.

**Knowledge of refugees.** To date, there has been no research on American youths' knowledge of refugees and refugee resettlement. Knowledge is arguably one of the biggest determinants of human flourishing or well-being (Pinker, 2018). In fact, the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (2017) recommends integrating the promotion of SEL core competencies into core subjects such as reading, math, and history (CASEL, 2017). Continuous application of knowledge and science has been shown to lead to human flourishing in domains such as health, prosperity, safety, peace, and happiness (Pinker, 2018). Within the context of SEL skill development, improving young adolescents' knowledge of refugees will help them be more socially aware and make responsible decisions when interacting with refugees or when discussing refugees in politically charged conversations. By understanding more about refugees and the refugee resettlement process, youth can advocate for fair treatment of refugees and thus contribute to a more just society.

**Social awareness.** Social awareness skills include the ability to perspective take and empathize with others, in addition to demonstrating respect for others and an appreciation for diversity (CASEL, 2017). Social awareness, however, could be developed in a number of ways. For instance, youth could become more socially aware based on their knowledge of a certain issue or their experiences with the issue or topics. Learning about refugees enables youth to become more knowledgeable about the plight of refugees, including the trauma refugees may experience. Additionally, through reading stories about refugee and American youth being



friends, youth may be able to better relate to refugees and recognize the ways in which American and refugee youth are similar. This could be particularly instrumental in the development of empathy as feelings of empathy can be triggered by the ability to relate to others who possess similar world views, values, personality attributes, and physical characteristics (Damon, 2004).

**Intergroup attitudes.** Through the acquisition of knowledge and improved social awareness, youth may be able to apply new information, skills and experiences to effectively understand and manage emotions (CASEL, 2017). An example of improved emotional management would be more positive intergroup attitudes. Positive intergroup attitudes would include feelings such as wanting to be friends with a refugee youth, as opposed to negative intergroup attitudes which would include feelings of prejudice, discrimination, or bias (Allport, 1954; Hewstone & Brown, 1986) toward out-group members.

**Intended behavior.** Strong social and individual competencies can be facilitated through positive communication, social engagement, relationship building, and teamwork with members of out-group communities (CASEL, 2017). Although contact interventions can sometimes be too short to change adolescents' long-term behavior, contact interventions, in general, are intended to reduce prejudice which would improve how in-group members intend to treat out-group members (Allport, 1954; Wright et al., 1997). The broad intention is to promote more positive intergroup attitudes that will lead to prosocial interactions. It should be noted, however, that prior research testing extending contact interventions has demonstrated that the changes in youths' intended behaviors toward an out-group tends to be more limited than potential changes in intergroup attitudes (L. Cameron et al., 2006).

### Current Study

The current research will discuss the effectiveness of an intervention derived from extended contact. To date, no studies have tested extended contact interventions as a mechanism to improve intergroup attitudes toward refugees and promote SEL skills amongst American adolescent populations. The extended contact intervention utilized in the current study was informed by Cameron and colleagues 2006 study testing models of extended contact. It should be noted that due to the short duration of the intervention, this study can only measure aspects or potential precursors of SEL skill areas, including knowledge of refugees, social awareness, intergroup attitudes, and intended behaviors. The following research questions were addressed:

**Research Question 1:** Does participating in an intervention derived from extended contact significantly and positively improve adolescents' knowledge of refugees?

**Hypothesis 1:** Participating in an intervention derived from extended contact will significantly and positively improve adolescents' knowledge of refugees.

**Research Question 2:** Does participating in an intervention derived from extended contact significantly and positively predict adolescents' social awareness, intergroup attitudes toward refugees, and intended behavior toward refugees?

**Hypothesis 2:** Participating in an intervention derived from extended contact will significantly and positively improve adolescents' social awareness and intergroup attitudes, however, participating in an intervention derived from extended contact will not significantly predict intended behavior toward refugees.

**Research Question 3:** Are there specific prior conditions or experiences that impact the strength of the predictive relationship between participating in an intervention derived from extended

contact and adolescents' social awareness, intergroup attitudes toward refugees, and intended behavior toward refugees?

**Research Question 3a:** Does identifying as an immigrant or refugee impact the strength of the predictive relationship between participating in an intervention derived from extended contact on adolescents' social awareness, intergroup attitudes toward refugees, and intended behavior toward refugees?

**Hypothesis 3a:** Identifying as an immigrant or refugee will not significantly moderate the predictive relationship between participating in an intervention derived from extended contact and adolescents' knowledge of refugees, social awareness, intergroup attitudes toward refugees, and intended behavior toward refugees.

**Research Question 3b:** Does identifying as an American impact the strength of the predictive relationship between participating in an intervention derived from extended contact on adolescents' social awareness, intergroup attitudes toward refugees, and intended behavior toward refugees?

**Hypothesis 3b:** Identifying as American will significantly and positively moderate the predictive relationship between participating in an intervention derived from extended contact and adolescents' knowledge of refugees, social awareness, intergroup attitudes toward refugees, and intended behavior toward refugees.

**Research Question 3c:** Does prior perceived contact with refugees impact the strength of the predictive relationship between participating in an intervention derived from extended

contact and adolescents' social awareness, intergroup attitudes toward refugees, and intended behavior toward refugees?

**Hypothesis 3c:** Having lower perceived prior contact with refugees will not moderate the strength of the predictive relationship between participating in an intervention derived from extended contact and adolescents' knowledge of refugees, social awareness, intergroup attitudes toward refugees, and intended behavior toward refugees.

### Methods

The current research evaluated the impact of an intervention derived from extended contact on adolescents' knowledge, perceptions, and feelings toward refugee youth.

#### Participants, Design, and Procedure

Approximately 140 high school students were recruited from a college access program in Northern New Jersey. The intervention and data collection took place in the Winter of 2018. Consent and assent were obtained prior to data collection through coordination with classroom teachers. The final sample consisted of 73 students. For students under the age of 18, both parental consent and assent were obtained (see Appendices D and E). Students over the age of 18 could provide their own consent to participate in the study (see Appendix F). The researcher coordinated with teachers to visit classrooms and/or attend parent nights to explain the study to potential participants and parents. Within each classroom, each student was randomly assigned to participate in either the control group or the intervention group. The intervention group ( $n = 36$ ) received the intervention derived from extended contact. The control group ( $n = 37$ ) received lessons on health and wellness. A pre-test was administered during the first session to both groups (see Appendix H). The intervention and control group activities were delivered over three

consecutive weekly sessions. The first lesson, for both the control and intervention group, lasted approximately 15 minutes. The following two sessions lasted about 30 minutes. Approximately two weeks after the last session a post-test survey (see Appendix I) was administered to both groups. Table 2.1 provides an overview of the procedure.

During the first session, the primary researcher taught a 15-minute lesson on refugees to participants in the intervention group (see Appendix J). This lesson included defining what a refugee is, where refugees come from, and the reasons one may be classified as a refugee (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2016; Roads to Refuge, 2015; U.S. Department of State, 2016, 2017). During the second session, students read short stories about American and refugee youth being friends followed by a short discussion. These stories were crafted following similar guidelines to the dual identity condition used by L. Cameron et al., (2006) but were adapted for an older audience. The stories highlighted both the similarities and the differences between the youth. There was a focus on the youths' common in-group, or superordinate identity, such as a school or a sports team, and their unique subgroup identities, American and refugee. Prior to beginning the stories, the researcher provided verbal character introductions to the students to further establish group salience. The character introductions involved stating the characters' names, their ages, and their American or refugee status, along with a picture of each character, to further validate group membership of each character in the story (see Appendix K). Because the stories were crafted using a dual identity approach, their unique identities were not overemphasized, as that would have overshadowed any superordinate identities or similarities between the youth (see Appendix L). Their unique identities were clear and not in question. For example, it was clear which characters were refugees within the stories and which characters were Americans. The same procedure was repeated in the third session, but with a different story

about American and refugee youth being friends. Although the intervention discussed in this research may seem similar to imagined contact, which is when contact is imagined through “mental simulation of social interaction,” (Crisp, Stathi, Turner, & Husnu, 2008, p. 8) the current intervention pulls more upon the foundations of extended contact as the youth are provided with prompts that make them aware of hypothetical friendships between in and out-group members (Wright et al., 1997), rather than asking the youth to imagine such scenarios.

Students in the control group participated in short lessons on health and wellness (see Appendix M). Lessons included small group activities, games, and group discussions focused on health and wellness, physical activity, and nutrition. The first lesson was 15 minutes long and included a general introduction to health and wellness using a tool called the “wellness wheel” (Northwest Missouri State University, n.d.). The wellness wheel is broken down into six dimensions: emotional, intellectual, occupational, physical, social, and spiritual. The first meeting ended by informing students that the next two meetings would focus on aspects of physical wellness: physical activity and nutrition. The second lesson was 30 minutes long and focused on physical activity, including the daily requirements for physical activity, types of physical activity, a stretching activity, and a short game of fitness bingo (Together Counts, n.d.). The third lesson was also 30 minutes long and focused on nutrition. Students talked about how they make their food choices, food advertising, and the role of food in helping them achieve their goals (Bhana, Koch, Uno, & Contento, 2015).

### **Measures**

Data collection occurred over two Waves. Certain items and scales were administered only at Wave 1. This included demographic items or items that only needed to be collected at baseline. The measures below were administered only at Wave 1.

**Demographics.** Survey items included questions about students' age, gender, and race. Students were ages 15 to 19, with a mean age of 16.52 ( $SD = 1.21$ ) and 60% of the sample identified as female. The racial breakdown was 11% White, 46% Black or African American, 5% Asian, and 38% identified in some other way. Those who identified as "some other way" were prompted to provide more details about their race. Of the 38% of students who identified in "some other way" students described their race as Hispanic or Latinx (81%), Puerto Rican (9%), Portuguese (5%), or West Indian (5%).

**American identity.** To measure in-group American ethnic identity, a dummy coded variable was created. Students were asked how they primarily identify their racial or ethnic identity. Students were given the following prompt: "I primarily identify as..." with the response options: *American, White, African American, African, Black, Latino/a, Asian, or Some other way.* Students were allowed to select more than one option. Using the American option, responses were re-coded into two groups,  $0$  = no American identity and  $1$  = American identity, with 35% of the students identifying as American.

**Immigrant or refugee identity.** Students were asked whether they came to this country as an immigrant or refugee, or if their parent or step-parent came to this country as an immigrant or refugee. Response options included: *Yes, No, or Not sure.* Although this was not the most parsimonious way to ask this question, it gave some insight into participants' personal experiences with immigration without specifically asking about their immigration status or their parents' immigration status. Within the sample, 76% identified as either having come to the U.S. as an immigrant or having a parent or step-parent who came to the U.S. as an immigrant and 8% identified as either having come to the U.S. as a refugee or having a parent or step-parent who came to the U.S. as a refugee.

**Perceived prior contact with refugees.** Students were asked about their perceived prior contact with refugees. Islam and Hewstone's (1993) General Intergroup Contact Quality scale was utilized to measure perceived prior contact. To measure prior contact with refugees, a five-item scale was utilized to measure past experiences of contact with refugees. The five items measured the extent to which the past contact was equal, voluntary, superficial, pleasant, and cooperative. All items were measured on a 7-point scale specific to the item being measured. Again, some of these items were modified using language that was more appropriate for an adolescent audience. For example, in the original scale, the item measuring how voluntary the prior contact with a refugee was would be measured from 0 to 6, with 0 = *Definitely involuntary* and 6 = *Definitely voluntary*. For the purposes of this research, the scale was modified to 0 = *Not by my choice* and 6 = *By my choice*. The contact quality subscale has also demonstrated good internal reliability, with alphas ranging from .72 to .86 (Islam & Hewstone, 1993; Paolini et al., 2014). Scale items were summed for a total score. Scores ranged from 0 to 30, with a mean of 20.90 ( $SD = 7.11$ ). Internal reliability was good, with an alpha of .83.

### **Pre-and Post-Test Measures**

The measures described below were collected at both Wave 1 and Wave 2 of data collection. While many of the measures collected at Wave 1 were appealing to also measure at Wave 2, a concerted effort was made to reduce the participant burden and include only the items and scales needed to address the research questions.

**Knowledge of refugees.** Students were asked about their prior knowledge of refugees using three questions. Items included: "Do you know what a refugee is?" and "Is a refugee here legally?" with the options: 0 = *No*, 1 = *Not sure*, or 2 = *Yes*. There was also an item asking,



“How confident would you be explaining what a refugee is to a friend?” Response options included: *0 = Not at all confident, 1 = A little confident, 2 = Confident, or 3 = Very confident.*

**Social awareness.** Social awareness was measured using the Empathetic Perspective Taking subscale of the Scale of Ethnocultural Empathy (SEE; Wang et al., 2003). The subscale included seven items. Response options were on a 6-point scale, with *0 = Strongly disagree that it describes me* and *5 = Strongly agree that it describes me*. Students were asked to read the items and select the extent to which they disagreed or agreed that the statement described them. The items were slightly adapted to make the wording more appropriate for adolescents. For instance, an original item stated: “I don’t know a lot of information about important social and political events of racial and ethnic groups other than my own.” This item was adapted to, “I don’t know a lot about events for racial or ethnic groups that I am not a part of.” The scale has had good internal reliability; the alphas for the subscales have ranged from .71 to .90 in prior studies with college students (Bhaskar, 2011; Wang et al., 2003). Scale items were summed for a total score.

**Intergroup attitudes.** Intergroup attitudes were measured using the fourteen adjectives. Ten of the adjectives came from the Preschool Racial Attitudes Measure – II Series A (PRAM II; Williams, Best, Boswell, Mattson, & Graves, 1975) and four of the adjectives came from Cameron and colleagues’ (2006) open-ended interviews with a small sample of 7- to 9-year-old children. Although many of the adjectives came from the PRAM II, the adjectives were used

differently in the current study<sup>7</sup>. In the current study, an approach similar to Cameron and colleagues (2006) was utilized. Using the response options: 0 = *None*, 1 = *Some*, 2 = *Most*, or 3 = *All*, students were asked to indicate how many refugee youths were: Clean, Friendly, Good, Hardworking, Kind, Nice, Polite, Bad, Not Nice, Dirty, Unkind, Rude, Lazy, and Unfriendly. Prior use of this measure in a structured interview format has demonstrated good reliability, with alphas of .87 and .85 for positive and negative attributes for refugee children (L. Cameron et al., 2006). In the current study, alphas were .88 for the positive attributes and .87 for the negative attributes at Wave 1 and .86 for the positive attributes and .82 for the negative attributes at Wave 2. Scores were calculated by separately summing the positive attributes and the negative attributes, and then subtracting the sum of the negative attributes from the positive attributes.

**Intended behavior.** Students' intended behaviors toward refugee youth were measured using an adaptation of the measure used by L. Cameron et al., (2006), taken from Lewis & Lewis's (1987) intended behavior measure. Participants read a short prompt that described a meeting between an American youth and a refugee youth. Students were then asked the following three questions: How much would you like to hang out with X? How much do you like X? How much would you like to have X eat dinner at your house? Students responded using a

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<sup>7</sup> The original PRAM II procedure involved showing participants a picture of a Black and a White individual, presenting the child with the adjectives, and then asking the child to select the picture that he or she would associate with the adjective. Students were then asked to respond to the same list of adjectives for American youth. In prior studies of extended contact, this measure has been administered as an interview, with researchers asking participants about their feelings toward refugee children and English children (which would be the equivalent of American youth in the current study). In L. Cameron and colleagues' (2006) study, the order in which the children rated the English and refugee people was counterbalanced. The adjectives were reviewed in turn and the order was randomized for each child. Prior studies of extended contact where researchers have used the interview approach to administer this scale were done with younger children. Because this sample is older, and because of time restrictions, the measure was used in a survey format with the adjectives grouped by American and refugee (rather than counterbalanced); however, the number of items and scale options remained the same.

five-point scale with 0 = *Not at all* and 4 = *Very much so*. In prior studies of extended contact, the intended behavior measure has been administered as an interview with researchers describing the scenarios to participants and participants responding by selecting one of five smiley faces representing different points on the scale (L. Cameron & Rutland, 2006; L. Cameron et al., 2006; L. Cameron et al., 2011). In the current study, the measure was administered in a survey format; however, past uses of the intended behavior measure as an interview have had good reliability with alphas ranging between .88 and .90 with five to eleven-year-old children (L. Cameron et al., 2006; L. Cameron et al., 2011). As with the PRAM II, prior studies of extended contact where researchers have used the interview approach to administer this scale were done with younger children. Because this sample is older, and because of time restrictions, the measure was adapted for use in a survey format. The smiley face options were replaced with a 5-point scale of 0 = *Not at all* to 4 = *Very much so*. Scale items were added together and then a mean was calculated. Internal reliability was good, with an alpha of .91 at Wave 1 and .86 at Wave 2.

### **Results**

All analyses were conducted using SPSS 25 (IBM Corp., 2017). See Table 2.2 for means, standard deviations, and ranges for all scales at Wave 1 and Wave 2, with the exception of two items from the knowledge scale: “Do you know what a refugee is?” and “Are refugees here legally?” At Wave 1, 77% of students reported knowing what a refugee was, and 23% were not sure what a refugee was. At Wave 2, 93% of students reported knowing what a refugee was, and 7% were not sure what a refugee was. At Wave 1, 37% of students said refugees were here legally, 45% were not sure, and 19% reported that refugees were not here legally. At Wave 2, 64% of students said refugees were here legally, 20% were not sure, and 15% reported that refugees were not here legally.

To address Research Question 1, a series of hierarchical linear regressions were conducted to test whether or not participating in an intervention derived from extended contact predicted knowledge of refugees. Specifically, three regressions were run to assess if participation in the intervention, when controlling for corresponding scores at Wave 1 (e.g. Wave 1 scores of knowledge of what a refugee is; knowledge of refugees' legal status; and youths' confidence in their understanding of refugees), predicted (1) knowledge of what a refugee is; (2) knowledge of refugees' legal status; and (3) youths' confidence in their understanding of refugees.

The first regression analysis tested the predictive relationship between participation in the intervention and participants' knowledge of what a refugee is. Results indicated that the intervention, when controlling for Wave 1 scores, explained 28.8% of the variance,  $F(2,70) = 14.15$ ,  $p < .001$  and significantly predicted youths' knowledge of what a refugee is ( $\beta = .28$ ,  $p < .01$ ; see Table 2.3). The second regression analysis tested the predictive relationship between participation in the intervention and participants' knowledge of refugees' legal status. Results indicated that the intervention, when controlling for Wave 1 scores, explained 11.2% of the variance,  $F(2,70) = 4.42$ ,  $p < .05$  and significantly predicted youths' knowledge of refugees' legal status ( $\beta = .30$ ,  $p < .01$ ; See Table 2.4). The third regression analysis tested the predictive relationship between participation in the intervention and participants' confidence in their understanding of refugees. Results indicated that the intervention, when controlling for Wave 1 scores, explained 31% of the variance,  $F(2,70) = 15.74$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and significantly predicted youths' participants' confidence in their understanding of refugees ( $\beta = .24$ ,  $p < .05$ ; See Table 2.5).

To address research question 2, another series of three hierarchical linear regressions were conducted to test whether or not participating in the intervention predicted social awareness, intergroup attitudes, and intended behavior toward refugees. The first linear regression was run to assess whether social awareness was significantly and positively predicted by participation in the intervention when controlling for corresponding scores at Wave 1 (e.g. Wave 1 social awareness scores). A linear regression was also run to assess if intergroup attitudes toward refugees were predicted by participation in the intervention when controlling for corresponding scores at Wave 1 (e.g. Wave 1 intergroup attitudes toward refugees). Finally, a third linear regression was run to assess if intended behavior toward refugees was predicted by participation in the intervention when controlling for corresponding scores at Wave 1 (e.g. Wave 1 intended behavior toward refugees).

The regression analysis testing the predictive relationship between the intervention and participants' intergroup attitudes toward refugees, when controlling for Wave 1 scores, explained 22.7% of the variance,  $F(2, 70) = 10.30, p < .001$ ) and significantly predicted youths' participants' intergroup attitudes toward refugees ( $\beta = .21, p = .05$ ; see Table 2.6). Both social awareness and intended behavior towards refugees were not significantly predicted by participation in the intervention ( $p > .05$ ; see Tables 2.7 and 2.8).

To address Research Question 3, PROCESS Model 1 (Hayes, 2012) was utilized to test the interaction between specific conditions, including immigrant identity, American identity, and perceived prior contact with refugees, and participation in the intervention. The interaction effects were only tested for two outcome variables: knowledge of refugees and intergroup attitudes toward refugees, as those were the only two outcome variables significantly predicted by participation in the intervention. Furthermore, only one of the knowledge of refugees' items

were tested: “How confident would you be explaining what a refugee is to a friend?” as this item was observed to have the strongest predictive relationship with participation in the intervention, and was rated on a continuous scale, which is necessary for the moderation analysis utilized.

None of the prior conditions had a significant interaction effect with the intervention when predicting knowledge of refugees (see Table 2.9) and intergroup attitudes toward refugees (see Table 2.10). Both American identity and quality of prior contact, however, were nearing a significant interaction effect ( $p = .059$ ).

### **Discussion**

The current study tested the impact of an intervention derived from extended contact on youths’ knowledge of and attitudes toward refugees. Support for Hypothesis 1 was found; the intervention derived from extended contact did significantly and positively predict knowledge of refugees. Hypothesis 2 was partially supported. Although participation in the intervention significantly and positively predicted intergroup attitudes toward refugees and did not predict intended behaviors toward refugees, it did not significantly and positively predict social awareness as hypothesized. For the third set of hypotheses, no significant interactions were observable between immigrant identity, American identity, or prior quality of contact and participation in the intervention as predictors of intergroup attitudes. There was, however, some evidence of a potential interaction between participation in the intervention and American identity, and the intervention and perceived prior contact with refugees, as predictors of knowledge of refugees. One important finding was that immigrant identity did not significantly interact with the intervention to impact the effectiveness of the intervention.

Often, studies of prejudice or bias examine the prejudicial beliefs of White populations. There is evidence, however, that members of minority groups also hold biases against

marginalized groups. For instance, prior research has demonstrated African Americans frequently hold biases against the LGBTQ community (Ward, 2005). This study began to explore the intergroup biases that may exist across out-groups. The sample consisted of a very high number of youth who identified as non-White and as children of immigrants or immigrant themselves. Still, this factor did not seem to limit the youths' ability to garner new knowledge about refugees and improve their intergroup attitudes toward refugees. Moderation tests also suggested that it may be American identity, rather than immigrant identity, that is more influential in the beliefs that youth may hold toward out-groups. This is in line with prior research that indicates a strong sense of patriotism or alliance to one's country can have important implications for intergroup relations, such as stronger oppositions toward ethnic-minority Americans (Hoyt & Goldin, 2016).

Social awareness and intended behavior toward refugees were not predicted by participation in the intervention. While the intervention's lack of impact as a predictor of social awareness was somewhat surprising, it may be due to the specific nature of the intervention. The intervention focused on improving knowledge toward refugees, and due to the limited scope and time of the intervention, the knowledge gained through participation in the program may not be able to be applied more broadly to general social awareness. It was not surprising, however, that intended behavior was not significantly improved as a result of participation in the intervention, given L. Cameron and colleagues' (2006) prior findings that changes to intended behaviors from participation in an intervention derived from extended contact were uncertain. Furthermore, the current intervention was likely too short to change behaviors.

### **Future Directions**

The intervention significantly and positively predicted youths' knowledge of refugees and intergroup attitudes toward refugees. Although some of the longer-term outcomes were not significantly predicted by the intervention, researchers and practitioners continually advocate for the crucial role that knowledge can play in promoting a just and civil society through improved relationships, behaviors, and civic engagement (Banks, 2004; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004).

The current intervention aligned with, and may contribute to the development of, SEL social awareness competencies (CASEL, 2017), however, these competencies require a long-term commitment to social and emotional learning and cannot be developed solely through an intervention derived from extended contact. While extended contact interventions may not be capable of fully developing these SEL competencies, future interventions derived from extended contact have the potential to develop social awareness skills including perspective taking, empathy, appreciation for diversity and respect for others (CASEL, 2017). By exposing adolescents to refugees through educational activities and stories modeling contact between American youth and refugee youth, adolescents may be better able to take the perspective of refugee youth and empathize with refugees or others from different backgrounds than themselves. Furthermore, by exposing adolescents to stories that model American and refugee youth interacting in positive ways, youth may be more likely to model such behavior in their own interactions, therefore increasing the likelihood that American youth will treat others with respect and appreciate diversity.

Based on the findings of this study, future interventions should be of longer duration and make connections to broader social issues which may facilitate easier application. This allows for



the impacts of the intervention to span beyond improved intergroup attitudes toward refugees and potentially improve behaviors toward refugees and other minority groups.

Another limitation of the present study is that the data come from a small sample of high achieving high school students. These students, as a result, may have been more susceptible to the intervention based on their self-selection to engage in additional academic content outside of a traditional school setting. One asset of the study, the ethnically diverse sample, also makes generalizability to other adolescents across the U.S. difficult. Also making generalizability difficult is the fact that interventions derived from extended contact are not infrequently tested in the U.S. (Cameron et al., 2006; 2011). Thus these findings cannot necessarily be generalized to prior testing of extended contact interventions abroad. Furthermore, studies looking at extended contact interventions or interventions derived from extended contact have not been examined as facilitators of social emotional learning skills or character development. The potential for such interventions to inform SEL or character development programming strongly influenced the line of inquiry used to develop the current intervention and study. While a new approach, the context under which this research was executed differs from that of other studies examining contact interventions.

In the future, efforts should be made to examine extended contact as a process for improving social emotional learning skills. Interventions derived from, or inspired by, extended contact serve as a creative way to engage students on a variety of serious or sensitive issues. While such interventions are typically touted for the potential improvements in out-group attitudes, there is significant potential in the utilization of contact methods such as extended or imagined contact to benefit out-groups, the self, and civil society.

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## Tables

Table 2. 1

*Procedure Timetable*

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Time Commitment</b>
Pre-Meetings	<b>Disseminate Parent Consent Forms</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Visit classrooms</li> <li>➤ Attend Back to School Nights</li> <li>➤ Work with teacher to disseminate forms</li> </ul>	
Meeting 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Pre-Survey</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 30 minutes</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ <b>Intervention Group: Lesson on Refugees</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 15 minutes</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ <b>Control Group: Introduction to Health &amp; Wellness</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 15 minutes</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	45 minutes
Meeting 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Intervention Group: Reading Activity &amp; Discussion</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 30 minutes</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ <b>Control Group: Reading &amp; Activity on Physical Fitness</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 30 minutes</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	30 minutes
Meeting 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Intervention Group: Reading Activity &amp; Discussion</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 30 minutes</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ <b>Control Group: Reading &amp; Activity on Nutrition</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 30 minutes</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	30 minutes
Meeting 4	Post-Survey	30 Minutes
<b>Total Time Commitment</b>		<b>2 hours and 25 minutes</b>

Table 2. 2

*Descriptive Statistics for Entire Youth Sample at Wave 1 and Wave 2*

Variable	Wave 1				Wave 2			
	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Knowledge	.00	3.00	1.46	.99	1.00	3.00	2.07	.74
Social Awareness	11.00	33.00	22.92	5.19	12.00	31.00	22.67	4.97
Intergroup Attitudes	-.8.00	21.00	5.66	5.11	-5.00	19.00	5.63	4.43
Intended Behavior	.00	4.00	2.77	.97	.00	4.00	2.82	.93

Note: This table only included the knowledge item “How confident would you be explaining what a refugee is to a friend?” Percentages are reported for the other two items within the text.

Table 2. 3

*Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for the Intervention Predicting Knowledge Item 1*

Variable	Model 1			Model 2		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$
W1 Knowledge Item 1	.26	.06	.46**	.27	.06	.48**
Intervention				.13	.05	.28**
$R^2$		.21			.29	
<i>F</i> for change in $R^2$		18.84**			14.15**	

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$

Note: Knowledge Item 1 was the question, "Do you know what a refugee is?"



Table 2. 4

*Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for the Intervention Predicting Knowledge Item 2*

Variable	Model 1			Model 2		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$
W1 Knowledge Item 2	.15	.12	.15	.19	.11	.19
Intervention				.40	.15	.30*
$R^2$		.02			.11	
<i>F</i> for change in $R^2$		1.71			4.42*	

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$

Note: Knowledge Item 2 was the question, "Are refugees here legally?"

Table 2. 5

*Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for the Intervention Predicting Knowledge Item 3*

Variable	Model 1			Model 2		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$
W1 Knowledge Item 3	.36	.07	.50**	.37	.07	.52**
Intervention				.32	.13	.24*
$R^2$		.25			.31	
<i>F</i> for change in $R^2$		23.82**			15.74**	

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$

Note: Knowledge Item 3 was the question, “How confident would you be explaining what a refugee is to a friend?”

Table 2. 6

*Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for the Intervention Predicting Intergroup Attitudes*

Variable	Model 1			Model 2		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$
W1 Intergroup Attitudes	.35	.09	.43**	.34	.09	.641**
Intervention				1.62	.82	.21*
$R^2$		.18			.23	
$F$ for change in $R^2$		16.06**			10.30**	

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$

Table 2. 7

*Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for the Intervention Predicting Social Awareness*

Variable	Model 1			Model 2		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$
W1 Social Awareness	.58	.09	.63**	.59	.08	.64**
Intervention				1.28	.82	.14
$R^2$		.39			.42	
<i>F</i> for change in $R^2$		46.26**			24.81**	

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$

Table 2. 8

*Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for the Intervention Predicting Intended Behavior*

Variable	Model 1			Model 2		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$
W1 Intended Behavior	.47	.08	.53**	.43	.08	.53**
Intervention				.26	.15	.17
$R^2$		.34			.37	
<i>F</i> for change in $R^2$		36.79**			20.37**	

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$

Table 2. 9  
 Summary of Moderation Analysis for Immigrant Identity, American Identity, and Prior Contact with Refugees as  
 Moderators of the Predictive Relationship Between the Intervention and Knowledge of Refugees

Variable	B	SE B	t	Sig	95% confidence interval for B	
					Lower bound	Upper bound
Constant	1.57	.32	4.81	.00**	.91	2.23
Immigrant ID	.35	.363	1.06	.29	-.32	1.02
Intervention	.43	.44	.98	.33	-.45	1.31
Immigrant ID x Intervention	-.02	.47	-.04	.97	-.97	.93
Constant	2.06	.17	12.43	.00**	1.72	2.39
American ID	-.63	.31	-2.01	.05**	-1.26	.00
Intervention	.13	.24	.55	.59	-.35	.62
American ID x Intervention	.80	.42	1.93	.06	-.03	1.64
Constant	2.08	.20	10.28	.00**	1.67	2.49
Prior Contact	-.45	.29	-1.52	.13	-1.04	.14
Intervention	-.08	.32	-.26	.80	-.73	.56
Prior Contact x Intervention	.82	.42	1.95	.06	-.03	1.67

\*p < .05. \*\*p < .01

Table 2. 10  
 Summary of Moderation Analysis for Immigrant Identity, American Identity, and Prior Contact with Refugees as  
 Moderators of the Predictive Relationship Between the Intervention and Intergroup Attitudes

Variable	B	SE B	t	Sig	95% confidence interval for B	
					Lower bound	Upper bound
Constant	5.80	2.01	2.89	.01**	1.77	9.83
Immigrant ID	-1.70	2.24	-.76	.45	-6.21	2.81
Intervention	.37	2.72	.14	.89	-5.09	5.83
Immigrant ID x Intervention	2.49	3.05	.82	.42	-3.64	8.62
Constant	5.11	1.05	4.88	.00**	3.01	7.21
American ID	-2.40	1.98	-1.21	.23	-6.37	1.58
Intervention	2.01	1.53	1.32	.19	-1.05	5.08
American ID x Intervention	1.61	2.61	.62	.54	-3.63	6.84
Constant	4.17	1.36	3.07	.00**	1.43	6.90
Prior Contact	.65	1.96	.33	.74	-3.30	4.60
Intervention	2.83	2.14	1.32	.19	-1.49	7.15
Prior Contact x Intervention	-.95	2.81	-.34	.74	-6.61	4.72

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$

## CHAPTER V

### Conclusion

In 2018, the U.S. resettled 22,491 refugees. This number was half the allotted ceiling (45,000) for refugee arrivals determined by the President Trump (Human Rights First, 2018). Both the low number of arrivals, and a historically low ceiling determined by the President, reveal the United States' recent disengagement with refugee resettlement and placement efforts (Amos, 2018). As noted in the introduction, this research began while the U.S. resettlement program was still very active. This dissertation started as an exploration into refugee resettlement. Soon after qualitative interviews with resettlement workers were conducted, policy changes that significantly limited refugee resettlement within the U.S. became the catalyst to transition this dissertation to an exploration of Americans' attitudes and perceptions of refugees.

The intent of this dissertation was to examine attitudes and perceptions of refugees and to explore potential processes for changing intergroup attitudes and reducing prejudice against refugees. Specifically, the following overarching research questions were examined:

**Overarching Research Question 1:** According to refugee resettlement workers, what are the facilitators and barriers to successful refugee resettlement in the U.S.?

**Overarching Research Question 2:** What are adolescents' perceptions of, and feelings toward, refugees?

**Overarching Research Question 3:** Are interventions derived from extended contact an effective mechanism for improving adolescents' perceptions of, and feelings toward, refugees?

These questions were addressed in three distinct papers. The first paper explored resettlement workers' beliefs about facilitators and barriers to successful resettlement using an Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (Smith, Jarman, & Osborn, 1999). Through a Relational



Developmental Systems Meta-theoretical (Overton, 2015) and a social cognitive lens (Bandura, 1991), interviews with resettlement workers were analyzed to explore resettlement workers' beliefs about the contextual elements that promote positive resettlement. Findings suggested, not surprisingly, that mental health was a crucial concern (Kira, Lewandowski, Chiodo, & Ibrahim, 2014; Schweitzer, Wyk, & Murray, 2015). Additionally, resettlement workers noted the importance of providing refugees access to a variety of services, such as financial education and access to immigration legal services and providing a robust Cultural Orientation program to ease the transition into American life. While the resettlement workers in paper one provided pragmatic insights into barriers and facilitators of successful resettlement, each worker also referenced changes in attitudes toward refugee resettlement and increased instances of hostility toward their work and refugee resettlement within their community.

The second paper examined adolescents' perceptions of, and feelings toward refugees. Looking to existing theories on intergroup attitudes (Allport, 1954; Dovidio, Glick, & Rudman, 2005) and prior research on social emotional and character development (Park & Peterson, 2008; CASEL, 2017), this study assessed adolescents' knowledge of refugees and the relationship between prior contact with refugees, media exposure to refugee topics, and knowledge of refugees as predictors of indicators of two Social Emotional Learning (SEL) competencies: social awareness and relationship skills. Social awareness was assessed using a measure of empathy for refugees and a measure of general social awareness. Relationship skills were assessed using a measure of intergroup attitudes and a measure of intended behaviors toward refugees. All three of the independent variables, knowledge of refugees, media exposure, and prior contact with refugees, predicted at least one of the dependent variables. Additionally, age and American identity moderated the relationship between knowledge of refugees and intergroup

attitudes. Results highlighted the need for improved access to knowledge about refugees and suggests that increased exposure to refugee communities may be particularly impactful with young adolescent populations.

Finally, the third paper explored the impact of a prejudice reduction intervention derived from extended contact (Cameron, Rutland, Brown, & Douch, 2006; Wright, Aron, McLaughlin-Volpe, & Ropp, 1997). Specifically, the study tested the extended contact intervention as a mechanism to improve intergroup attitudes toward refugees and promote SEL skills with a sample of American adolescents from Northern New Jersey. The extended contact intervention utilized in paper three was informed by Cameron and colleagues' 2006 study testing models of extended contact. In the current study, participants in the intervention derived from extended contact demonstrated improved knowledge of refugees and intergroup attitudes toward refugees as compared to a control group. Social awareness and intended behavior toward refugees were not predicted by participation in the intervention. The intervention's lack of impact as a predictor of social awareness may have been due to the nature of the intervention. The intervention focused specifically on refugees, and due to the limited content covered and time of the intervention, the knowledge gained through participation in the program may have been challenging to apply more broadly to general social awareness by the program participants. Similarly, intended behavior was likely an unrealistic outcome to be expected from such a time limited intervention. Improved knowledge and intergroup attitudes may, in fact, serve as precursors to changes in intended behaviors, however, that is difficult to determine given the small sample size and scope of the intervention. These findings should be used to inform future evaluations and tests of programs derived from extended contact and may be used as guide for linking extended contact to SEL programs.

### **Policy Implications**

Prior to 2017, refugee resettlement had been a bipartisan initiative within the U.S. In fact, the Refugee Act of 1980 was passed with overwhelming bipartisan support (Kennedy, 1981) and the 2012 Republican National Platform included the line, “To those who stand in the darkness of tyranny, America has always been a beacon of hope, and so it must remain (Republican National Platform, 2012).” Even though more refugees have been resettled under Republican administrations, recent policy changes (Amos, 2018; "Donald J. Trump, President of the United States, et al. v. International Refugee Assistance Project, et al.," 2017) do not impart feelings of bipartisanship or civic responsibility. This is unfortunate as refugee protection and national security are not conflicting goals (Kerwin, 2016). For instance, through effective resettlement policies, the UNHCR and U.S. government can thoroughly screen and resettle refugees, therefore discouraging individuals from taking matters into their own hands and coming across borders or into the country without documentation. Through active refugee resettlement programs, the United States’ economy, diplomatic standing, and civic values can be increased (Kerwin, 2016).

### **Program Implications**

Findings from this research have program implications for both resettlement and youth programs. Broadly, the resettlement workers in the first paper believed that Cultural Orientation and access to multiple services increased refugees’ success post-resettlement. Due to low resettlement numbers within the U.S., resettlement programs should focus on providing a diverse array of services for already resettled refugees with a focus on providing access to mental health services. Furthermore, given the resettlement workers’ concerns about increased bias against refugees, and the adolescents’ low knowledge of refugees, resettlement service providers may want to consider developing or resuming programs that teach communities about refugee

resettlement and bring together refugee and American communities. Furthermore, programmatic funders should consider refugee resettlement organizations as potential grantees, especially given refugees' current increased risk for trauma due to discrimination post resettlement (Ellis et al., 2016; Hadley & Patil, 2009; Piwowarczyk et al., 2016).

For youth programs, there is a general need to promote social awareness and relationship skills. Although this research specifically focused on refugees and refugee resettlement, general SEL or character development programs offer youth continued opportunities to develop positive social and emotional skills and reduce behavioral problems (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011). Due to the adolescents seemingly limited knowledge of refugees, it is recommended that exposure to out-groups, such as refugees, be integrated into SEL curriculums across the U.S. The adolescents in the current study were from Northern New Jersey, an ethnically diverse and left leaning community (Department of State New Jersey Division of Elections, 2018), making their low understanding of refugee resettlement somewhat surprising. These findings suggest that other communities, perhaps with more persistent negative beliefs toward out-groups, less diversity, and potentially less resourced, may be at a particularly high risk of being uninformed or under informed about topics such as refugee resettlement.

### **Future Directions**

Additional data was collected for all three studies outlined in this dissertation. For instance, additional resettlement workers were interviewed, however, those individuals were excluded from the study described in the first paper due to their limited experience in the field of refugee resettlement. Future work will explore the responses of those resettlement workers who were either employed at less active resettlement agencies or who possessed very few years of experience. In addition, data on intergroup attitudes and intended behaviors toward Americans

were also collected from the sample of adolescents utilized in papers two and three. In future studies, the intergroup attitudes and intended behaviors toward Americans will be compared to the intergroup attitudes and intended behaviors toward refugees. Open response data was also collected from the sample surveyed in papers two and three. This open response data focused on adolescents' knowledge of refugees and in future studies will be compared alongside the quantitative responses in a mixed methods analysis. Finally, qualitative data was collected from a very small sub-set of participants surveyed in paper three (see Appendix N). A limited number of participants provided consent to audio record and therefore there was limited data to analyze. Going forward, recordings will be analyzed to make improvements to the intervention derived from extended contact prior to any further testing of the intervention.

In general, there needs to be more research done on the topic of refugee resettlement within the U.S. Other countries with resettlement programs have explored refugee resettlement in greater depth (Al-Roubaiy, Owen-Pugh, & Wheeler, 2013; Fisher, 2013; Major, Wilkinson, Langat, & Santoro, 2013), yet historically the U.S. has had the most active resettlement program. Much of the research conducted on the topic of refugee resettlement within the U.S. tends to focus on mental health needs or employment (Lincoln, Lazarevic, White, & Ellis, 2015; Sienkiewicz, Mauceri, Howell, & Bibeau, 2013). While mental health and employment are arguably two of the biggest barriers refugees face post resettlement, discrimination is also a significant barrier (Hadley & Patil, 2009). Yet, the exact predictors of refugee discrimination remain unclear. Given the findings from these studies, it seems logical that future studies on refugee resettlement should focus on providing detailed insight into the refugee resettlement process within the U.S., and explore the ways that refugees contribute to our society.

Furthermore, the findings outlined in this dissertation suggest a general need for prejudice reduction interventions. Although the current research tested an intervention derived from extended contact, there are likely other methods for reducing prejudice that could be integrated into classroom settings. Future studies should explore additional mechanisms or methods for integrating prejudice reduction into learning environments.

### **Conclusion**

This research explored resettlement workers and adolescents' perceptions and attitudes toward refugees and refugee resettlement and tested an intervention derived from extended contact as a mechanism to improve SEL skills. This dissertation began with a qualitative study that revealed resettlement workers' beliefs about facilitators and barriers to successful resettlement. In general, the workers' felt that resettlement services must adequately address mental health needs, offer varied services, and provide a thorough Cultural Orientation. Their interviews also give insight into the growing discrimination against refugees that was emerging in 2016. The second paper in this dissertation explored American adolescents' knowledge and attitudes toward refugees and revealed that knowledge about refugees and refugee resettlement was relatively limited amongst the sample. Knowledge about refugees, media exposure to refugee topics, and prior contact with refugees all predicted at least one indicator of SEL skills related to perceptions of, and attitudes toward refugees. Finally, the third paper tested a prejudice reduction intervention derived from extended contact. Participants in the intervention demonstrated significantly improved knowledge of refugees and intergroup attitudes toward refugees. The findings from all three papers should be used to further explore refugee resettlement in the U.S. and inform prejudice reduction efforts.

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**Appendix A: CHAPTER II Interview Invitation and Consent Form**

Dear Participant,

You are invited to take part in the study: *Perceptions of Refugee Resettlement Workers*.

**Why is this study being done?** This study is exploring the experiences of refugee resettlement workers. We are interested in learning about what facilitates and/or hinders successful resettlement services from the perspective of those working at refugee resettlement agencies.

**What will happen while you are in the study?** If you choose to be in this study and give us permission, we will ask you to complete a short online survey that will ask you for some basic information and will prompt you to schedule a telephone interview. These phone interviews will be recorded, and we will keep these recordings in a password protected computer file. We will also listen to the interviews and “transcribe” them, or write down everything that was said, so we can look carefully at everyone’s answers and compare them to each other. These interview transcriptions will be kept in a password protected computer file. Interview questions will be focused on your experiences and feelings about working in refugee resettlement.

**Time Commitment:** This study will take about 30-60 minutes total to complete. It should take you approximately 5-10 minutes to complete the brief survey, and about 30-45 minutes to participate in the telephone interview.

**What are the benefits?** You may benefit from this study because you will have the opportunity to talk about your experiences working with refugees and share your insights and/or struggles. Others may also benefit from this study. For instance, practitioners working with refugees will be better informed about the types of services that promote well-being and self-sufficiency for newly arrived refugees. Additionally, researchers studying refugees and refugee resettlement programs can learn more about the resettlement process and be better informed of the barriers to providing resettlement services

**Are there any risks?** You may feel uncomfortable discussing some of the questions about the challenges of working in refugee resettlement. Additionally, some of the questions may bring up negative memories of working at your job. If you are feeling uncomfortable at any time, you can stop. Survey data will be collected using the Internet. There are no guarantees on the security of data sent on the Internet. Confidentiality will be kept to the degree permitted by the technology used. We strongly advise that you do not use an employer’s electronic device, laptop or phone to respond to this survey.

**Compensation:** To compensate you for the time you spend in this study, you will receive \$10. You will receive this compensation even if you do not finish the interview.

**Who will know that you are in this study?** You will not be linked to any presentations. We will keep your identity confidential. We will not be sharing any of your survey or interview

responses with your employer. Any presentations about this research will not identify you by name. If we report the comments of any one individual, we will use a pseudonym.

**Do you have to be in the study?** It is okay if you want to stop at any time and not be in the study. You can skip or not answer any questions you do not want to answer. Nothing will happen to you. You will still get the things that you were promised. Your payment will not be affected.

Please feel free to ask questions regarding this study. You may contact me or my faculty advisor, Dr. Jennifer Brown Urban at:

Marisa MacDonnell  
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Department of Family and Child Studies College of Education and Human Services Montclair State University  
Montclair, NJ 07043, USA  
Phone: 617-755-5834 macdonnellm1@montclair.edu

Dr. Jennifer Brown Urban  
Associate Professor  
Department of Family and Child Studies College of Education and Human Services Montclair State University  
Montclair, NJ 07043, USA  
Phone: 973-655-6884 urbanj@mail.montclair.edu

**Do you have any questions about your rights as a research participant?**

Phone or email the IRB Chair, Dr. Katrina Bulkley, at 973-655-5189 or reviewboard@mail.montclair.edu.

**Future Studies**

**It is okay to use my data in other studies:**

Yes

No

**Audiotape**

**As part of this study, it is okay to audiotape me:**

Yes

No

**I have read this form and decided that I will participate in the project described above. Its general purposes, the particulars of involvement, and possible risks and inconveniences have been explained to my satisfaction. I understand that I can withdraw at any time. By clicking the button below, I confirm that I have read this form and will participate in the project described.**

I agree to participate

I decline

Please feel free to print a copy of this consent.

The study has been approved by the Montclair State University Institutional Review Board.

**Appendix B: CHAPTER II Interview Pre-Survey****Demographic Questions: Survey Monkey**

1. First Name:

2. Last Name:

3. Address:

Note: As a thank you for your participation we will be sending you \$10. Please provide the best address to mail you the \$10.

4. Age:

5. Gender: Options –Male/Female/Other

6. Race: Options -- White, Black or African American, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, Some Other Race

7. Did you come to this country as an immigrant or refugee?

a. [If yes] What country did you immigrate from?

b. [If yes] Did you come to the U.S. with refugee status? Options—Yes/No

8. Is English your native/first language?

a. [If no] What is your native language?

9. Highest Level of Education: Options –

a. High school (grades 9-12, no degree)

b. High school graduate (or equivalent)

c. Some college (1-4 years, no degree)

d. Associate's degree (including occupational or academic degrees)

e. Bachelor's degree (BA, BS, AB, etc)

f. Master's degree (MA, MS, MENG, MSW, etc)

g. Professional school degree (MD, DDC, JD, etc)

h. Doctorate degree (PhD, EdD, etc)

10. Current Employer:

11. Current Title:

12. How many years have you worked in refugee resettlement?

**Appendix C: CHAPTER II Interview Protocol****Interview Questions:**

1. Tell me about your role or job here at \_\_\_\_\_ (insert resettlement agency).  
*Probes:*  
*Can you tell me a little more about \_\_\_?*  
*What do you mean by \_\_\_?*
2. How do you see yourself fitting into the resettlement process?  
*Follow-up:*
  - a. How much interaction do you have with newly arrived refugees?
3. What factors/things do you feel best contribute or add to successful resettlement?  
*Probe:*  
*Can you explain what you mean by that?*
4. [If participant identified as coming to the U.S. as refugee or immigrant in survey]  
I noticed in the survey you indicated that you came to this country as an immigrant or refugee. Can you tell me a little more about this?
  - a. In what ways has this experience had an impact on your work?
5. What types of services do you believe best support newly arrived refugees?  
*Follow-up:*
  - a. Are these services provided by the agency you work for?
  - b. [If no] Are these services accessible within the community? How so/why not?
6. What are some of the barriers you encounter/face when serving refugees?  
*Follow-up:*
  - a. Why do you believe you encounter/face these barriers?
  - b. What do you think could be done to overcome these challenges?
7. How have recent events, such as the terror attacks in Bangladesh, Baghdad, San Bernardino, Istanbul, Orlando, Paris, or Belgium, impacted your work?  
*Follow-up:*
  - a. How do you feel about these events in regards to your work?
8. Is there anything else you would like to share?

**Appendix D: CHAPTER III and IV Youth Consent Form**  
**PARENT/GUARDIAN SURVEY CONSENT FORM**

**PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM AND RETURN IT TO SCHOOL IF YOU WOULD  
LIKE YOUR CHILD TO BE ELIGIBLE TO PARTICIPATE IN SURVEY DATA  
COLLECTION.**

Please read the following carefully. You can ask questions at any time, now or later. You can talk to other people before you fill in this form.

**Study's Title:** Refugee & Wellness Friendship Study

**Why is this study being done?** The current research will explore young adolescents' knowledge of refugees and evaluate the impact of a reading intervention on young adolescent's perceptions and feelings toward refugee youth. This study will also explore your child's exercise and eating habits. Your child will be assigned to a group where they will learn about refugees **OR** a group where they will learn about health and wellness.

**What will happen while your child is in the study?** In this study, your child will participate in an educational intervention focused on health and wellness **OR** an educational intervention focused on refugees living in America. Students will be randomly assigned to **one** of the two interventions. Students in the health and wellness group will learn about healthy eating and physical activity over three lessons. The three lessons will include group discussions, games, and short reading activities. Students in the refugee group will receive short lessons on refugees and a reading activity followed by group discussions. All students will be asked to complete a survey at the beginning of the intervention and again at the end of the intervention. Participation in the study involves **four total meetings**: three consecutive weekly meetings and a follow-up meeting approximately two weeks after the third meeting. Additionally, group conversations following any readings or classroom activities will be audio recorded and transcribed. Once these recordings are transcribed the audio will be destroyed. These activities are occurring in your child's classroom and your child will participate, but you can decide whether or not your child's input from surveys or group discussions will be included with the research data.



**Time:** The total time commitment for the study is about 2 hours and 25 minutes. The intervention and all corresponding data collection will occur during class time.

**Benefits:** Your child may benefit from this study if he or she participates because he or she will get to learn about refugees **OR** health and wellness. Researchers who study classroom interventions can learn more about the effectiveness of the interventions.

**Risks:** Some of these questions may make your child uncomfortable, especially if he or she is an immigrant, refugee, or embarrassed by his or her exercise or eating habits. If your child feels upset, he or she should speak to the school guidance counselor and/or call 2NDFLOOR, a free confidential and anonymous helpline for New Jersey's youth and young adults, at 888-222-2228. Also, your child may feel bored during the intervention or survey. However, he or she can stop the survey(s) at any time.

**Compensation:** All children will receive a Montclair State University water bottle, even if they do not complete the surveys or participate in the group discussions.

**Who will know that your child is in this study?** Your child will not be linked to any presentations. We will keep your child's identity confidential. Any presentations about this research will not identify any of the participants by name. If we report the comments of any one individual child, we will use a pseudonym.

**Does your child have to be in the study?** Your child does not have to be in this study. She or he is a volunteer! It is okay if she or he wants to stop at any time and not be in the study. She or he does not have to answer any questions that she or he does not want to answer. Nothing will happen to your child. She or he will still get the things that were promised. Her or his compensation will not change.

**Do you have any questions about this study?** You can contact us anytime by phone or e-mail. Our contact information is here so you can ask any questions you may have. In addition, copies of all study materials will be made available for your reference at the main office of your child's school.

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Dr. Jennifer Brown Urban  
Professor  
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College of Education and Human Services  
Montclair State University  
Montclair, NJ 07043, USA  
Phone: 973-655-6884  
urbanj@montclair.edu

**Do you have any questions about your rights as a research participant?** Phone or email the

IRB Chair, Dr. Katrina Bulkley, at 973-655-5189 or [reviewboard@mail.montclair.edu](mailto:reviewboard@mail.montclair.edu).

**Future Studies**

We would like to make the final data collected through this study available to other researchers.

The data will not have any personal identifying information. Nobody will be able to identify who has taken part.

I agree that the data my child provides can be used in future research studies, as long as it is no longer linked to my child.

Please initial:        \_\_\_\_\_ Yes                      \_\_\_\_\_ No

**Study Summary**

I would like to get a summary of this study:

Please initial:        \_\_\_\_\_ Yes                      \_\_\_\_\_ No

It is okay to audiotape my child while in this study:

Please initial:        \_\_\_\_\_ Yes                      \_\_\_\_\_ No

One copy of this consent form is for you to keep.

**Statement of Consent**

I have read this form and decided that I agree to my child's participation in the project described above. Its general purposes, the particulars of involvement, and possible risks and inconveniences have been explained to my satisfaction. I understand that my child can withdraw at any time. My signature also indicates that I have received a copy of this consent form.

If you choose to have your child or dependent in this study, please fill in the lines below.

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Parent/Guardian	Signature	Date

<u>Marisa MacDonnell</u>		
Name of Principal Investigator	Signature	Date

<u>Jennifer Brown Urban</u>		
Name of Faculty Sponsor	Signature	Date

**Appendix E: CHAPTER III and IV Youth Assent Form****YOUTH ASSENT FORM**

Please read below carefully. You can ask questions at any time. You can talk to other people before you fill in this form.

**Study's Title:** Refugee Friendship & Wellness Study

**Who am I?** I am Marisa MacDonnell. I am a student at Montclair State University in the Family Science and Human Development department.

**Why is this study being done?** We want to learn about your feelings toward refugees, and your exercise and eating habits. We also want to teach you about refugees **OR** about health and wellness.

**What will happen while you are in the study?** In this study, you will take part in activities focused on health and wellness **OR** activities focused on refugees. You will be randomly assigned to **one** of the two groups. You will be asked to complete a survey at our first meeting. You will be asked to complete a survey again at our last meeting. Participation in the study involves **four total meetings**. Over three meetings you will learn about health and wellness **OR** refugees. There will be a follow-up meeting about two weeks after the third meeting. Group discussions may be recorded and typed up. Once any recordings are typed up, the recording will be deleted. These activities are occurring in your classroom, but you can decide whether or not your input from the surveys or group discussions will be used by the Montclair State University researchers.

**Time:** This study will take about 2 hours 25 minutes total. We will meet in your class four times. Each meeting will take about 30 - 45 minutes.

**Risks:** Some of these questions may make you uncomfortable, especially if you are an immigrant, refugee, or embarrassed by your exercise or eating habits. If you feel upset, you should speak to a school guidance counselor and/or call 2NDFLOOR, a free confidential and anonymous helpline for New Jersey's youth and young adults, at 888-222-2228.

You may also feel bored during the lesson, stories, and/or survey. You can stop the surveys at any time. If you are bored during the lesson or stories please be respectful of your classmates.

**Benefits:** You may benefit from this study by learning more about refugees or health and wellness.

Teachers or researchers may benefit from this study by learning how these types of activities help students learn. This study will also help researchers understand how students feel about refugees.

**Compensation:** To thank you for being in the study, you will get a Montclair State University water bottle. You will still get the water bottle even if you only complete one of the surveys. You will still get the water bottle if you do not answer all the questions.

**Do you have any questions about your rights as a research participant?** Phone or email the IRB Chair, Dr. Katrina Bulkley, at 973-655-5189 or [reviewboard@mail.montclair.edu](mailto:reviewboard@mail.montclair.edu).

It is okay to use my data in other studies:

Please initial: \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

It is okay to use my audiotaped, data in the research.

Please initial: \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

_____	_____	_____
Name of Research Participant	Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____
Name of Witness	Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____
<u>Marisa MacDonnell</u>	_____	_____
Name of Principal Investigator	Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____
<u>Jennifer Brown Urban</u>	_____	_____
Name of Faculty Sponsor	Signature	Date

**Appendix F: CHAPTER III Adult Consent Form****Adult Consent Form**

Please read below carefully. You can ask questions at any time. You can talk to other people before you fill in this form.

**Study's Title:** Refugee Friendship & Wellness Study

**Who am I?** I am Marisa MacDonnell. I am a student at Montclair State University in the Family Science & Human Development department.

**Why is this study being done?** We want to learn about your knowledge and feelings toward refugees.

**What will happen while you are in the study?** You will be asked to complete a survey that includes questions about your feelings toward refugees and your knowledge of refugees.

**Time:** This study will take about 30 minutes total.

**Risks:** Some of these questions may make you uncomfortable, especially if you are an immigrant or refugee. If you feel upset, you should speak to a school counselor at Montclair State University Counseling and Psychological Services at 973-655-5211 and/or call 2NDFLOOR, a free confidential and anonymous helpline for New Jersey's youth and young adults, at 888-222-2228.

**Benefits:** You may benefit from this study by thinking critically about refugees. This study will also help researchers understand how students feel about refugees.

**Compensation:** To thank you for being in the study, you will be entered into a raffle to win a \$50 Amazon gift card.

**Who will know that you might be in this study?** Your teacher will know that you are in this study. Myself and the Montclair State University researchers visiting your class will also know you are in the study, but we will not tell anyone. Although your name will be written on the cover page of the survey packet, that cover page will be destroyed and replaced with an identification number. Your name will not be linked to any data and responses will not be coded until the cover sheet with your name has been removed.

**Do you have to be in the study?**

You do not have to be in this study. We won't get mad if you say no. It is okay if you change your mind and leave the study. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer. Nothing will happen to you. You will still get entered into the gift card raffle.

**Do you have any questions about this study?** Phone or email Marisa MacDonnell or Jennifer

Brown Urban:

Marisa MacDonnell  
Doctoral Candidate  
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Montclair State University  
Montclair, NJ 07043, USA  
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Professor  
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College of Education and Human Services  
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Montclair, NJ 07043, USA  
Phone: 973-655-6884  
urbanj@montclair.edu



**Do you have any questions about your rights as a research participant?** Phone or email the IRB Chair, Dr. Katrina Bulkley, at 973-655-5189 or [reviewboard@mail.montclair.edu](mailto:reviewboard@mail.montclair.edu).

It is okay to use my data in other studies:

Please initial: \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

**One copy of this consent form is for you to keep.**

### **Statement of Consent**

I have read this form and decided that I will participate in the project described above. Its general purposes, the particulars of involvement, and possible risks and inconveniences have been explained to my satisfaction. I understand that I can withdraw at any time. My signature also indicates that I am 18 years of age or older and have received a copy of this consent form.

_____	_____	_____
Name of Research Participant	Signature	Date

<u>Marisa MacDonnell</u>	_____	_____
Name of Principal Investigator	Signature	Date

Jennifer Brown Urban

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Name of Faculty Sponsor

Signature

Date

**Appendix G: CHAPTER III Survey Instrument****Refugee Friendship & Wellness Study –Survey**

Thank you for participating in the Refugee Friendship & Wellness Study!

The questions in this packet will ask you about yourself, and your knowledge and feelings about refugees.

Please try to answer all of the questions. Read everything carefully and take your time to answer each question honestly. There are no right or wrong answers.

Your teacher will not look at your answers. You do not have to tell your answers to anyone.

There are questions on the front and back of each page (except for this cover page).

If you don't understand what you have to do, or if you have any questions, please ask your teacher or the Montclair State University Researcher in your classroom.

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Part 1: Background Information**

1. What is your birthday? Month: \_\_\_\_\_ Year: \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. What high school do/did you attend?  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
3. How do you identify your gender?
  - a. Female
  - b. Male
  - c. Some other way*If you selected some other way, please write in here:* \_\_\_\_\_
  
4. What is your race?
  - a. White
  - b. Black or African American
  - c. American Indian or Alaska Native
  - d. Asian
  - e. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - f. Other*If you selected other, please write in here:* \_\_\_\_\_
  
5. Are you Hispanic or Latino/a?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. Not sure
  
6. Please finish the following statement: ***I primarily*** identify as...  
***Select ALL that apply.***
  - a. American
  - b. White
  - c. African American
  - d. African
  - e. Black
  - f. Latino/a
  - g. Asian
  - h. Some other way*If you selected some other way, please write in here:* \_\_\_\_\_

7. *In your own words, please describe your race and/or ethnicity.*

---

---

---

8. Did you or your parent (or step-parent) come here as an immigrant?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Not sure

9. Did you or your parent (or step-parent) come here as a refugee?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Not sure

10. How much have you heard about refugees or refugee resettlement on TV, social media, or online?

- a. A lot
- b. Some
- c. A little
- d. Not at all

11. Please describe **where** you heard about refugees and refugee resettlement below:

---

---

---

12. Please describe **what** you heard about refugees and refugee resettlement below:

---

---

---

**Part 2: Knowledge of Refugees**

13. Do you know what a refugee is?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Not sure

14. Are refugees here legally?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Not sure

15. How confident would you be explaining what a refugee is to a friend?

- a. Very confident
- b. Confident
- c. A little confident
- d. Not at all confident

16. Please describe what you believe a refugee is below:

---

---

---

<b>Part 3: Feelings About Refugees</b>
--

17. Check the word that best describes how you feel about AMERICAN young adults.

PLEASE CHECK ✓ ONE BOX ONLY

How many AMERICAN young adults are...

	1 None	2 Some	3 Most	4 All
Clean	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bad	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kind	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not Nice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hardworking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dirty	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Friendly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Good	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lazy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rude	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unfriendly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Polite	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unkind	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

18. Check the word the best describes how you feel about **REFUGEE** young adults.

PLEASE CHECK ✓ ONE BOX ONLY

How many **REFUGEE** young adults are...

	1 None	2 Some	3 Most	4 All
Clean	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bad	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kind	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not Nice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hardworking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dirty	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Friendly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Good	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lazy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rude	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unfriendly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Polite	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unkind	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



19. On a Saturday afternoon, you are with your friends at the park. You bump into Alex, a ***refugee*** student you know from school. Alex is very excited to see you and immediately comes up and says hello.

Please answer the following questions about Alex by checking: Not at all, No strong opinion, Very much or somewhere in between.

PLEASE CHECK ✓ ONE BOX ONLY

	<b>1 Not at all</b>	<b>2 Slightly</b>	<b>3 No strong opinion</b>	<b>4 Somewhat</b>	<b>5 Very much</b>
How much would you like to hang out with Alex?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How much would you like Alex?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How much would you like to eat dinner with Alex?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

20. On a Saturday afternoon, you are with your friends at the park. You bump into Sam, an ***American*** student you know from school. Sam is very excited to see you and immediately comes up and says hello.

Please answer the following questions about Sam by checking: Not at all, No strong opinion, Very much or somewhere in between.

PLEASE CHECK ✓ ONE BOX ONLY

	<b>1 Not at all</b>	<b>2 Slightly</b>	<b>3 No strong opinion</b>	<b>4 Somewhat</b>	<b>5 Very much</b>
How much would you like to hang out with Sam?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How much would you like Sam?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How much would you like to eat dinner with Sam?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>







Thank you so much for taking the time to complete this survey! Once you are finished, please take a moment to look over your answers and then you can return your survey to the Montclair State University researcher in your classroom.

**Appendix H: CHAPTER IV Pre-Survey Instrument****Refugee Friendship & Wellness Study – Pre-Survey**

Thank you for participating in the Refugee Friendship & Wellness Study!

The questions in this packet will ask you about yourself, your knowledge and feelings about refugees, and your exercise and eating habits.

Please try to answer all of the questions. Read everything carefully and take your time to answer each question honestly. There are no right or wrong answers.

Your teacher will not look at your answers. You do not have to tell your answers to anyone.

There are questions on the front and back of each page.

If you don't understand what you have to do, or if you have any questions, please ask your teacher or the Montclair State University Researcher in your classroom.

***\*\*\*Please DO NOT write your name on this survey.***

# ID \_\_\_\_\_

**Part 1: Background Information**

1. What is your birthday? Month: \_\_\_\_\_ Year: \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. What high school do/did you attend?  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
3. How do you identify your gender?
  - a. Female
  - b. Male
  - c. Some other way*If you selected some other way, please write in here: \_\_\_\_\_*
  
4. What is your race?
  - a. White
  - b. Black or African American
  - c. American Indian or Alaska Native
  - d. Asian
  - e. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - f. Other*If you selected other, please write in here: \_\_\_\_\_*
  
5. Are you Hispanic or Latino/a?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. Not sure
  
6. Please finish the following statement: ***I primarily*** identify as...  
***Select ALL that apply.***
  - a. American
  - b. White
  - c. African American
  - d. African
  - e. Black
  - f. Latino/a
  - g. Asian
  - h. Some other way*If you selected some other way, please write in here: \_\_\_\_\_*

*In your own words, please describe your race and/or ethnicity.*

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7. Did you or your parent (or step-parent) come here as an immigrant?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Not sure

8. Did you or your parent (or step-parent) come here as a refugee?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Not sure

9. How much have you heard about refugees or refugee resettlement on TV, social media, or online?

- a. A lot
- b. Some
- c. A little
- d. Not at all

10. Please describe **where** you heard about refugees and refugee resettlement below:

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11. Please describe **what** you heard about refugees and refugee resettlement below:

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**Part 2: Knowledge of Refugees**

12. Do you know what a refugee is?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Not sure

13. Are refugees here legally?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Not sure

14. How confident would you be explaining what a refugee is to a friend?

- a. Very confident
- b. Confident
- c. A little confident
- d. Not at all confident

15. Please describe what you believe a refugee is below:

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**Part 3: Exercise and Eating Habits**

Please respond to the following questions in the spaces provided.

16. How many days a week do you exercise?

\_\_\_\_\_ days a week

17. Please list some of the exercise activities you are involved in:

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18. Please list **THREE** of your favorite foods:

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19. Please list **THREE** foods you dislike.

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20. How many times a day do you eat fruits or vegetables?

\_\_\_\_\_ times a day

<b>Part 4: Feelings About Refugees</b>
--

21. Check the word that best describes how you feel about AMERICAN young adults.

PLEASE CHECK ✓ ONE BOX ONLY

How many AMERICAN young adults are...

	1 None	2 Some	3 Most	4 All
Clean	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bad	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kind	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not Nice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hardworking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dirty	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Friendly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Good	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lazy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rude	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unfriendly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Polite	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unkind	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Check the word the best describes how you feel about **REFUGEE** young adults.

PLEASE CHECK ✓ ONE BOX ONLY

How many **REFUGEE** young adults are...

	1 None	2 Some	3 Most	4 All
Clean	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bad	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kind	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not Nice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hardworking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dirty	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Friendly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Good	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lazy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rude	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unfriendly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Polite	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unkind	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

22. On a Saturday afternoon, you are with your friends at the park. You bump into Alex, a refugee student you know from school. Alex is very excited to see you and immediately comes up and says hello.

Please answer the following questions about Alex by checking: Not at all, No strong opinion, Very much or somewhere in between.

PLEASE CHECK ✓ ONE BOX ONLY

	<b>1 Not at all</b>	<b>2 Slightly</b>	<b>3 No strong opinion</b>	<b>4 Somewhat</b>	<b>5 Very much</b>
How much would you like to hang out with Alex?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How much would you like Alex?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How much would you like to eat dinner with Alex?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

23. On a Saturday afternoon, you are with your friends at the park. You bump into Sam, an American student you know from school. Sam is very excited to see you and immediately comes up and says hello.

Please answer the following questions about Sam by checking: Not at all, No strong opinion,

Very much or somewhere in between.

PLEASE CHECK ✓ ONE BOX ONLY

	<b>1 Not at all</b>	<b>2 Slightly</b>	<b>3 No strong opinion</b>	<b>4 Somewhat</b>	<b>5 Very much</b>
How much would you like to hang out with Sam?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How much would you like Sam?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How much would you like to eat dinner with Sam?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>









Thank you so much for taking the time to complete this survey! Once you are finished, please take a moment to look over your answers and then you can return your survey to the Montclair State University researcher in your classroom.

**Appendix I : CHAPTER IV Post Survey Instrument****Refugee Friendship & Wellness Study – Post-Survey**

Thank you for participating in the Refugee Friendship & Wellness Study!

The questions in this packet will ask you about yourself, your knowledge and feelings about refugees, and your exercise and eating habits.

Please try to answer all of the questions. Read everything carefully and take your time to answer each question honestly. There are no right or wrong answers.

Your teacher will not look at your answers. You do not have to tell your answers to anyone.

There are questions on the front and back of each page.

If you don't understand what you have to do, or if you have any questions, please ask your teacher or the Montclair State University Researcher in your classroom.

***\*\*\*Please DO NOT write your name on this survey.***

# ID \_\_\_\_\_

**Part 1: Knowledge of Refugees**

1. Do you know what a refugee is?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. Not sure
  
2. Are refugees here legally?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. Not sure
  
3. How confident would you be explaining what a refugee is to a friend?
  - a. Very confident
  - b. Confident
  - c. A little confident
  - d. Not at all confident
  
4. *Please describe what you believe a refugee is below:*

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**Part 2: Exercise and Eating Habits**

Please respond to the following questions in the spaces provided.

5. How many days a week do you exercise?

\_\_\_\_\_ days a week

6. *Please list some of the exercise activities you are involved in:*

---

---

7. *Please list **THREE** of your favorite foods:*

---

---

8. *Please list **THREE** foods you dislike.*

---

---

9. How many times a day do you eat fruits or vegetables?

\_\_\_\_\_ times a day

<b>Part 3: Feelings About Refugees</b>
--

10. Check the word that best describes how you feel about AMERICAN young adults.

PLEASE CHECK ✓ ONE BOX ONLY

How many AMERICAN young adults are...

	1 None	2 Some	3 Most	4 All
Clean	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bad	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kind	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not Nice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hardworking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dirty	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Friendly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Good	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lazy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rude	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unfriendly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Polite	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unkind	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

11. Check the word the best describes how you feel about ***REFUGEE*** young adults.

PLEASE CHECK ✓ ONE BOX ONLY

How many ***REFUGEE*** young adults are...

	1 None	2 Some	3 Most	4 All
Clean	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bad	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kind	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not Nice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hardworking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dirty	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Friendly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Good	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lazy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rude	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unfriendly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Polite	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unkind	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

12. On a Saturday afternoon, you are with your friends at the park. You bump into Alex, a *refugee* student you know from school. Alex is very excited to see you and immediately comes up and says hello.

Please answer the following questions about Alex by checking: Not at all, No strong opinion, Very much or somewhere in between.

PLEASE CHECK ✓ ONE BOX ONLY

	1 Not at all	2 Slightly	3 No strong opinion	4 Somewhat	5 Very much
How much would you like to hang out with Alex?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How much would you like Alex?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How much would you like to eat dinner with Alex?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

13. On a Saturday afternoon, you are with your friends at the park. You bump into Sam, an *American* student you know from school. Sam is very excited to see you and immediately comes up and says hello.

Please answer the following questions about Sam by checking: Not at all, No strong opinion, Very much or somewhere in between.

PLEASE CHECK ✓ ONE BOX ONLY

	1 Not at all	2 Slightly	3 No strong opinion	4 Somewhat	5 Very much
How much would you like to hang out with Sam?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How much would you like Sam?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How much would you like to eat dinner with Sam?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>





	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Slightly disagree	4 Slightly agree	5 Agree	6 Strongly agree
I can easily understand what it would feel like to be a person of another race or ethnicity.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
It is difficult for me to put myself in the shoes of someone who is a different race or ethnicity.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel uncomfortable when I am around a lot of people who are a different race or ethnicity than me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
It is difficult for me to relate to stories where people talk about day-to-day racial or ethnic discrimination.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

16. How have your feelings about exercise and food changed since our first meeting?

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17. How have your feelings about refugees changed since our first meeting?

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Thank you so much for taking the time to complete this survey! Once you are finished, please take a moment to look over your answers and then you can return your survey to the Montclair State University researcher in your classroom and get your MSU water bottle!

**Appendix J: CHAPTER IV Intervention Group Lesson Plans****Refugees in America: Meeting 1 (15 minutes total)**

*This lesson will include defining what a refugee is, where refugees come from, and the reasons one may be classified as a refugee.*

**Refugees: Who, what, where, and why?****Sources:****CDC**

<https://www.cdc.gov/ncezid/dgmq/feature-stories/one-refugees-experience.html>

**Roads to Refuge:**

<http://www.roads-to-refuge.com.au/>

**U.S. Department of State:**

<https://www.state.gov/j/prm/ra/>

- Show PowerPoint
- **Primer: (2 minutes)**
  - Do you know someone who wasn't born in the United States?
  - If yes, think about why he/she came here.
  - Do you know where he/she is from?
  
- **Why immigrants come to the United States (3 minutes)**
  - Many people come to the United States every year. The United States is a nation that has a history of new people arriving. Unless you are Native American, there is a very good chance that you can trace your ancestors back to another country.
  - Many people come the United States for economic opportunity.
    - Better jobs, job training, more potential for growth, better housing, home ownership
  - Others come because friends and family have already moved and settled here
  
- **Define what a refugee is: (2-3 minutes)**
  - Some people come to the United States because their homes have become unsafe. These groups of people are invited by the United States Government and are called refugees. Refugees come to the United States in order to escape war or natural disaster.

- Can anyone think of any examples?
  - Where are there wars?
  - Where have there been natural disasters, like floods, or earthquakes?
- Refugees have to make a long journey to the United States. The journey can be particularly dangerous and often involves learning a new culture and language. Not all refugees end up in the US, only about 60,000 per year. However, there are many more refugees around the world. In fact, less than 1% move to America
- **Where do refugees come from? (2-3 minutes)**
  - First start with students identifying where WE live on the map
  - Then, do a general overview of the world map (point out continents to help orient students)
  - Show students where MOST refugees come from
  - Show zoomed in map of Middle East. Make sure to point out that refugees also come from many other areas, however, as of right now, this is where most refugees are coming from or escaping.
- **Introduce Amina, Mohamed, and Sundes (3 minutes)**
  - Talk about their plight as refugees
  - Make clear how long it took to get to America
  - Make clear the goals Mohamed and Sundes have for life in America
- **Talk about plans for next week (stories & discussion)**

### **Stories Derived from Extended Contact and Group Discussion: Meetings 2 & 3**

**(30 minutes total)**

- **Activity 1 (10-15 minutes)**
  - Disseminate name tags to everyone in the group
  - Disseminate short stories to group
  - Read character introductions
  - Ask for volunteers to help read the story out loud (facilitator will likely have to read too)
  - Pace the story. Check in with the group to make sure everyone is keeping up and understanding what is happening in the story. If there is any confusion, ask for a volunteer to bring everyone up to speed.
  - When the story is finished, students will move in to small groups of 8 to 10 students.

- Groups will be predetermined based on parental consent to audio recorded.
- A group of 8-10 students randomly selected from the pool of students with consent to be audio recorded will be facilitated by Marisa (PI) and will be audio recorded.
- The other group(s) will NOT be recorded and will be facilitated by a research assistant.
- Discussion questions include:
  - What was this story about?
  - What did you all think of this story?
  - What can you tell me about the girls/boys in this story?
  - How were these girls/boys similar? What did they have in common?
  - How were these girls/boys different?
  - What are some lessons you would take away from this story?
- Collect papers with discussion questions and responses. Ask students to put their names on the papers.

**Appendix K: CHAPTER IV Intervention Group Character Introductions**

In this story, you will meet: Jackie, Susan, Mina, and Jill.

All four of these girls go to school together.

**Jackie**

Jackie's family is from New Jersey.

Likes: Arts and crafts, science, gummy candy



**Susan**

Susan's family is from New Jersey.

Likes: Basketball, music, potato chips



**Mina**

Mina and her family were all born in Iraq.

Likes: Basketball, science, pasta



**Jill**

Jill is from from New Jersey.

Likes: Science, math, drawing, Cheez Its



In this story, you will meet Sam, Jamie, Ali, and Alex.

All four of these boys will play on the same soccer team.

### **Sam**

Sam's family is from New Jersey.

Likes: Soccer, cooking, peanut M & Ms



### **Jamie**

Jamie's family is from New Jersey.

Likes: Soccer, Pop Rocks, music



**Ali**

Ali along with his family were all born in Somalia.

Likes: Soccer, science, ice cream



**Alex**

Alex's family is from New Jersey.

Likes: Soccer, reading, Skittles





**Appendix L: CHAPTER IV Intervention Group Stories Derived from Extended Contact**

## STORY # 1

Jackie has always wanted to be a doctor. She studies hard and does well in school. She has tight curls and always wears her purple hoodie and Converse. She is friends with all of the kids in her grade and she is well-liked by the teachers in her school. Jackie has an “A” in biology and is at the top of her class.

Susan also wants to be a doctor; however, she isn’t so great in school and is never on time. She often finds herself explaining her tardiness to teachers after class. Susan mostly keeps to herself and always has her headphones in. Although Susan sometimes struggles in school, she is the best player on the basketball team. Susan has a “B” in biology. She has been trying her hardest, but plays it cool like she is not that worried about her grades.

Mina wants to be a doctor too. She has long black hair and always dresses on trend. She told her friends she learned a lot about fashion while she was living in Europe. Mina came to the U.S. as a refugee. Lots of people like Mina and she plays with Susan on the basketball team. Lots of refugees are like Mina. Mina has an “A-” in biology. She loves biology, but it isn’t her strongest subject.

Jill and Mina are best friends. They always hang out together and text message each other all night long. They have over 100 Instagram pictures together! Jill loves school but she isn’t sure if she wants to be a doctor like her best friend. Jill, like Susan, has a “B” in biology, but she is not all that concerned with her grades.

Jackie, Susan, Mina, and Jill all go to school together and are in the same biology class. One day in class their science teacher told them about a special program for students who want to be doctors. Students must complete a project for the science fair to even be considered for acceptance into the program. The girls can’t believe their luck! Jackie exclaims, “we should all do it!”

The teacher tells them that it is a very difficult program and only the best students will get accepted to the program. Mina says, “we can work together in the study lounge!” All her friends were excited and they agreed to work on their projects after school.

The girls were all working hard on their project, especially Mina and Jackie. While they were working, the teacher came into the room with the principal. The principal said, “the program is sending some doctors to our school on Friday to judge the projects. The best students will get accepted to the program.” The girls were shocked and a little nervous. The principal said, “I believe in you!” and then she and the teacher left the room.

The girls, who had been working hard, started to get worried. Not one of them was finished. Each was only part way done with their own project! Susan felt as though they should give up. She said, “why bother working on this? I’m going to head to basketball practice.”

As Susan was leaving the room to go practice, Mina spoke up with an idea. She said, “why don’t we combine our projects into one big project?” The girls seemed a little confused. Wasn’t it a contest? Mina explained that each of them had been working on different projects but they could be combined to showcase what they had learned in biology class. Not only could they showcase their individual talents and knowledge, but they could show the judges how well they worked as a team. All four girls loved this idea. This increased the chance they would all be able to attend the program together. Rumor had it that only the top five projects would be accepted to the program. As long as their project was in the top five they would all be able to go.

The next day after school, the girls met back in the study lounge. With two days of working separately behind them, the girls began to work together. Jackie was popular, but wasn’t used to working on a team. She liked to work alone and didn’t entirely trust her new partners. Mina calmed everyone’s nerves by bringing snacks from her home: hummus, pita, and chicken kebabs. After the girls ate they got right to work!

The project was coming together on Thursday afternoon and the girls were starting to become more confident. Jill said, “I’m glad I stuck it out with you guys! This was fun and I’m excited about the program!”

The day of the science fair, all the other students from the school brought their projects into the gym. The girls looked around anxiously. The smartest and hardest working students in the school were in the room. Susan said, “alright everyone huddle up! This is just like a basketball game. If we work as a team during our presentation we’ll do great!”

When the doctors from the program came around, the girls all took turns explaining their project. Susan began by explaining that the human body is a combination of different systems. She named some of them while pointing to the illustration: “Here are the circulatory, respiratory, endocrine, and nervous systems.”

Jill continued, “the human body, and each system, is made of cells.” Jill pointed to her drawings of white and red blood cells as she explained what each did.

Jackie said, “cells are part of our bodies, and our cells are made of DNA. DNA helps determine who we grow up to be.”

Mina finished, “and while DNA is important, it doesn’t determine who we are, or who we get to be friends with!”

The doctors left and the girls all high fived. The hard part was over, they just had to wait for the end of the fair to see if they made it!

When the doctors took the stage, the girls could hardly contain their excitement. Mina said, “no matter what happens, I had a great time working on this with everyone.”

Jackie agreed, “sometimes it is better to work with a team.”

The doctors announced that the top five projects would be invited to the special program. The doctors began by announcing what project had won fifth place. Steve, from their biology class, won for his yam growing project. The girls applauded knowing that Steve had worked hard on his project. The doctors continued with fourth place...third place...then second place. When the girls weren't called for the first four places they began to get discouraged. Susan said, “keep your heads up, we did a great job.”

Before announcing first place the doctors huddled together. The girls all held hands with their eyes fixed on the stage. The doctor at the microphone opened his mouth and announced: “Jackie, Jill, Mina, and Susan win first place for their human anatomy project.” The girls jumped for joy and squealed! They could not believe that they would all be spending even more time together learning what it is like to be a doctor.

Mina said, “now that the hard part is over we can start to have fun!”

## STORY # 2

Sam, Alex, and Jamie all play on the same traveling soccer team. They attend different high schools in the area, but they all knew each other from middle school. It is their second year on the team and they are having a great season.

Sam is shorter and a bit smaller than the other boys on the team. Quick and fast, Sam is happiest when he is trying to score goals on the field. Sam is always late to practice, but often shows up bringing snacks for everyone. Sam attends a special STEM high school. His mom drives him to and from school and soccer practice each day and they often hit traffic on their drive (which is why he is frequently late for practice). Sam can be a bit of a ball hog and only passes the ball to those he trusts.

Jamie is the friendliest person on the team. Jamie is so well-liked that he usually makes friends with members of the opposing team! Jamie plays midfield and is a long-distance runner. Jamie is always running laps when Sam and Alex arrive at practice. He lives right next to the soccer field, which is why he is able to get to practice early.

Alex is the tallest one of the group. Calm, cool, and collected, Alex is the team's leading defender. Alex is often seen with a soda in hand and his hood pulled up over his head. Alex is quiet, and usually takes a while to make new friends. He loves a good book. That works out well since he spends a lot of time on the bus commuting to and from his home to school and soccer practice.

One day Alex and Sam are walking up to the soccer field when they hear Jamie shouting. "Bet you can't get past me!" Sam and Alex are confused. This was just supposed to be their practice time. The rest of the team wouldn't arrive for another half an hour. Alex and Sam came around the corner and saw Jamie playing with someone they didn't recognize.

The new player dribbled past Jamie and scored a goal from midfield. After Jamie brought the ball back to midfield, Jamie and the new player high fived. Sam and Alex were surprised. Who could this be? Sam shouted, "Jamie, who's the newbie?"

Jamie walked over and introduced the new player as Ali. Jamie said, "Ali is new at my school and is a going to join our team."

Ali said, "I used to play soccer in my home country. I came to this country as a refugee." Sam and Alex didn't know anything about refugees, but they have heard the term used on the news. Sam asked, "what does it mean to be a refugee?" Ali answered, "as a refugee I came to the United States with my family to be safe and start a new life." Ali spoke clearly, almost like he had a British accent. He was tall, not quite as tall as Alex, but taller than many of the other boys their age.

Sam didn't totally understand the answer, but Alex chimed in, "Anyone who can get past Jamie and shoot like that is welcome on our team!"

After practicing with the team for a few days it was time for Ali's first game with the team. The whole team was worried because the game was against their biggest rival. They needed to win or draw this game to make the play-offs.

Ali didn't start the game, but Sam, Alex and Jamie did. Ali was content to cheer the team on from the sidelines for the first half. After 45 minutes, the opposing team was up 1 – 0. However, early in the second half, disaster struck. Jamie was coming toward the goal and slipped. On the way down Jamie let out a cry of pain. The referee blew the whistle. Jamie tried to stand up, but his ankle could not support his weight and he immediately fell down. The referee called the coach over. Jamie said, "I think I have to come out coach, it hurts!" Alex and Ali helped Jamie limp off the field.

Sam said, "There is no way we can win without Jamie in the game! We're finished man. Game over, Game over." Alex said, "What about Ali? After what we saw in practice this week, I think Ali can make sure we win." Sam was reluctant. Sam still didn't know enough about Ali. Sam was worried that there wouldn't be the same chemistry between the midfield and the attack, and their opponents had excellent chemistry.

Jamie voiced support for Ali, saying, "I know that Ali can do it! We've become such fast friends. Besides, soccer is the same all over the world."

Coach agreed and put Ali in the game. Sam was still unsure, but desperately wanted to win. When play resumed, Sam got the ball and dribbled straight to the goal. He saw Ali was open, but tried to score the goal on his own. Big mistake. The opposing team quickly stole the ball. At the next stoppage, Ali told him, "Next time lob it to me."

Right after the whistle, Ali was able to steal the ball, pass it up to Sam, and Ali continued to streak toward the goal. Sam saw Ali heading toward the goal, and this time, Sam lobbed it up for Ali. Ali headed the ball into the goal, and tied the score, 1 – 1. Sam ran over and hugged Ali! They had great chemistry after all!

The game finished as a draw, and the team gathered around the bench right after. Sam gave the game ball to Ali saying, "I am so glad I was able to meet you, Ali. A refugee is welcome on my team anytime! Let's show them what we are made of in the play-offs!"

Appendix M: CHAPTER IV Control Group PowerPoint Slides



HEALTH  
&  
WELLNESS

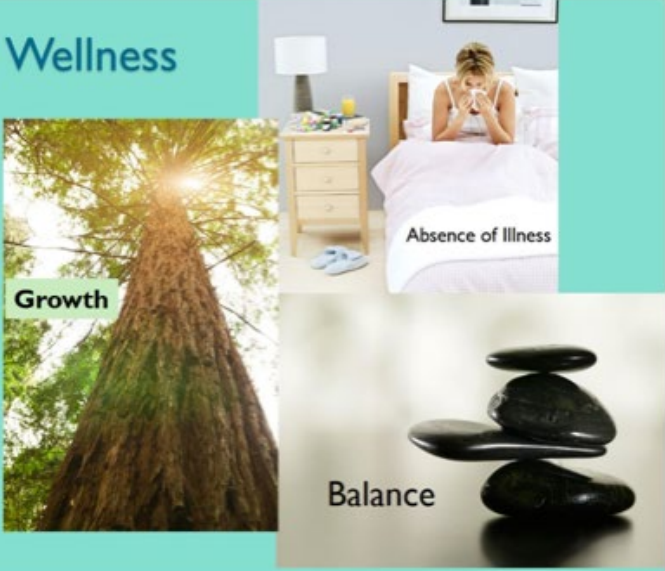
How do you define:

- Health?
- Wellness?



HEALTH  
&  
WELLNESS

**Wellness**



**Growth**


Absence of Illness

**Balance**

SOME PEOPLE  
DEFINE  
WELLNESS AS...

**Aspects of who we are**

- Social
- Emotional
- Intellectual
- Physical
- Spiritual
- Occupational



OUR  
WELLNESS  
WHEEL

## Dimension One

- **Social Wellness**
- Relationships, respect, community interaction.
- This dimension considers how we relate to others.
- How we connect, communicate and get along with the people we are surrounded by.



SOCIAL  
WELLNESS

## Dimension Two

- **Spiritual Wellness**
- Meaning, values.
- This dimension helps to establish peace and harmony in our lives.
- It is the ability to discover meaning and purpose in life.



SPIRITUAL  
WELLNESS



## Dimension Three



- **Emotional Wellness**
- Feelings, emotions, reactions, cognition.
- This is the dimension where you are in touch with your feelings and emotions of sorrow, joy, love, etc.
- This dimension helps us to cope with the emotional challenges of life.

EMOTIONAL  
WELLNESS

## Dimension Four

- **Occupational Wellness**
- Skills, finances, balance, satisfaction.
- This dimension involves finding fulfillment in your job and knowing that it has meaning.
- It is also the ability to establish balance between work and leisure time.



OCCUPATIONAL  
WELLNESS

## Dimension Five



- **Intellectual Wellness**
- Critical thinking, creativity, curiosity.
- This dimension considers the desire to be a lifelong learner.
- It's the ability to be open to new experiences and ideas in order to continue growing.

## INTELLECTUAL WELLNESS

## Dimension Six

- **Physical Wellness**
- Body, nutrition, healthy habits.
- This dimension considers overall health and what you need to do to maintain a healthy quality of life.
- It is the ability to take charge of your health by making conscious decisions to be healthy.



## PHYSICAL WELLNESS

The image features a vibrant background with vertical stripes in shades of pink, blue, red, orange, and yellow. In the foreground, there are black silhouettes of several people in mid-air, appearing to be jumping or dancing joyfully. The bottom edge of the image shows a silhouette of grass. A dark green rectangular box is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing white text and a bulleted list.

**NEXT MEETING...**

- Our focus for the next two classes will be on **Physical Wellness**.
- Next week, we will focus on physical activity and exercise.
- Have a great week!



PHYSICAL ACTIVITY  
&  
EXERCISE

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY & EXERCISE

**How much exercise should you get per day?**

## THREE MAJOR TYPES OF EXERCISE

Aerobic

Muscle Strengthening

Bone Strengthening

## INTENSITY

- Intensity of physical activity also matters
- The majority of your 60 minutes of physical activity should be moderate to vigorous intensity
  - What does that mean?

- Intensity

- Low
- Moderate
- Vigorous







## LET'S TRY IT OUT

**5 Minute Exercise:**  
*Deep breathing and stretching to calm our mind and body*

## HOW WILL YOU GET YOUR 60 MINUTES OF EXERCISE EACH DAY?

- **Make a list of the ways you will get 60 minutes of exercise each day**
- **Remember, this can include:**
  - Your walk to and from school or the bus
  - Sports you play
  - Gym class
  - Activities you participate in, such as: dance, gymnastics, karate, or yoga

## BINGO!

- **Cross off all of the boxes for the activities you have participated in since the weekend**
- **Once you have crossed off all the activities you have participated in, turn to a friend and get their signature in the boxes of the activities they have participated in since the weekend.**
- **Once you have a row of 5 (Xs or signatures), you get BINGO!**

## NEXT WEEK...

- **Next week we will talk about nutrition and how food choices affect our wellness**
- **Have a great week!**



- **How many of you help your parents grocery shop?**
- **How much say do you have in what you buy or eat?**
- **How do you select what you want to buy or eat?**





## Tricky Technique #1

**Celebrities:** Familiar faces like celebrities, cartoon characters, movie or TV characters/actors and athletes are often prominently placed on food packages. These celebrities get paid a lot of money to be featured on the product, which they may not consume regularly or at all.

**Claims:** Tell you about the contents of a product (e.g., contains fiber, made from real fruit). They often tout the health benefits (e.g., lower blood cholesterol, prevent heart disease). Claims can also describe the quality of the product (e.g., tasty, popular, naturally made). Some of these claims that sound important, such as “natural,” have no agreed-upon or FDA-approved meaning so food companies can use them on any product they like.



## Tricky Technique #2



## Tricky Technique #3

**Incentive/Promotions:** Many food packages feature prizes, contests, points, premiums, sweepstakes, and clubs to entice you to like and buy the product over and over. For instance, a package might advertise a unique limited time edition, the inclusion of games on the back of a cereal box, or a chance to win an Xbox.



**Branding:** Companies spend a lot of time developing their logo and brand to make you think their brand is fun, healthy, cool, etc. The company logo is almost always on the package. A package may also contain logos of partner organizations (e.g., sponsor of the Olympics with the Olympics rings), to get the added impact of that brand. Branding is one of the most important aspects of food marketing; companies spend a lot of effort and money not only to ensure that consumers can quickly identify their product, but also to get them to think a certain way about all their products.

## Tricky Technique #4

## Tricky Technique #5

**Special Design Features:** These include colors, images, and editing techniques. The choice of color in designing a product package is very important. Colors are used to help consumers identify brands quickly and consistently. Color influences moods and feelings (positive or negative), and therefore can create a certain attitude towards a product. For example, Pepsi's brand colors appear on this can, but are also carried out on the image. Pink lips on Beyoncé are meant to get your attention and look feminine.



Guess the tricky technique(s)!

Celebrities

Claims

Incentives/  
Promotions

Branding

Special  
Design

**Thank you! See you in two weeks!**

**Appendix N: CHAPTER IV Intervention Group Discussion Questions**

ID # \_\_\_\_\_

## Discussion Questions:

1. What was this story about?
  
2. What did you all think of this story?
  
3. What can you tell me about the girls in this story?
  
4. How were these girls similar? What did they have in common?
  
5. How were these girls different?
  
6. What are some lessons you would take away from this story?

ID # \_\_\_\_\_

Discussion Questions:

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