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How Perceptions of Economic Competition Affect Attitudes toward Syrian Refugees

By

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Honours Thesis

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Abstract

In light of the recent refugee crisis, the purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between perceived economic competition (zero-sum beliefs), and people's attitudes towards different approaches to helping Syrian refugees, mediated by people's attitudes and attributions of responsibility towards them. It was hypothesized that people who view relations between Canadians and Syrians in cooperative terms will be more willing to support empowering forms of help. Eighty-four first year psychology students at King's completed four questionnaires in person about their attitudes towards Syrian refugees and programs that support them. Results suggest that those who view relations between Canadians and Syrians in cooperative terms are more inclined to support programs that help Syrians. Particularly, low zero-sum beliefs predicted endorsement of the empowering educational program 'gentle' and this was mediated by attitudes toward Syrian refugees. In addition, low zero-sum beliefs predicted support for free tuition 'western program' and this was mediated by participants who had attributing responsibility for Syrian refugees to solve their problems and solutions

How Perceptions of Economic Competition Affect Attitudes toward Syrian Refugees

Since 2015, Canada had accepted 25,000 Syrian refugees and was estimated to have accepted another 10,000 more in the upcoming year (Canada, 2016). The increasing number of refugees entering Canada was due to the civil war in Syria, which had displaced thousands of Syrians around the world, leaving them without homes or basic necessities (Yazgan, Utku, & Sirkeci, 2015). These refugees had faced many struggles on their journey to safety. Many of these individuals had witnessed traumatic events and experienced multiple losses, including the loss of family members, sentimental possessions, and status (Pottie, Greenaway, Hassan, Hui, & Kirmayer, 2016). Facing unpredictable threats and attacks, the Syrian people were often forced to leave their homes at a moment's notice (Yazgan et al, 2015). Unable to adequately prepare, many families fled to a new land of refuge with little material possessions (Pottie et al., 2016). The journey to a safe haven was also often tumultuous—reaching a place of refuge often involved trekking long distances on foot and boarding dangerous inflatable boats (Yazgan et al, 2015). Due to the risky nature of the journey, many individuals lost family members. Along with a traumatic pre-migration and migration history, these refugees faced many challenges upon entering a new country (Pottie et al., 2016). These challenges included learning a new language, finding work, and learning new customs, among others (Lapshina, 2008).

It is essential to consider the settlement and integration needs of newcomers. As Canada welcomes thousands of Syrian refugees, it is vital to consider the resources and supports necessary for healthy integration in their new environment (Pottie et al., 2016). The challenge of providing public support programs for refugees is the availability of funding. Many settlement organizations and support programs for refugees are government funded and require continuous public support for the allocation of the funds (Ward & Masgoret, 2006). Funding can be

dependent on the host population's attitudes towards refugees. If the refugees are viewed positively, the government may be more likely to allocate funds for social programs to help Syrians, such as language programs, counselling, and work skills development. Such resources can greatly aid in the integration process, providing supports for refugees to become successful in Canada and contribute to society. However, in various academic literature it is found that public views towards immigrants are both positive and negative which leads support for help to be mixed (Esses et al, 2008). Negative attitudes against refugees are often a result of the host population perceiving a competition between them and the immigrants. This perception is counterproductive for the host population as it creates barriers for immigrants to thrive and limits their ability to contribute to society (Ben-Nun Bloom, Arikan, & Lahav, 2015).

Unified Instrumental Model of Group Conflict

The perception of competition by the host population towards immigrants can be explained by the Unified Instrumental Model of Group Conflict (UIMGC). The UIMGC is a model which explains that a public perception of economic competition or threat can lead to prejudice and discrimination towards specific groups of people (Esses, Jackson & Bennett-AbuAyyash, 2010). These people tend to be immigrants, refugees, minority groups or anyone that is saliently different from the majority (Esses, Jackson, & Armstrong, 1998). The UIMGC further explains that the discrimination can lead to people not endorsing helping behaviour for the other groups (Esses et al., 2010). This model can be broken down into two parts; one is how perception of competition affects people's attitudes and the second is how these attitudes affect endorsement of helping behaviour.

Firstly, before the host population perceives economic competition, a few factors must be present. One factor is resource stress, such as when there is a job scarcity due to unequal

distribution of wealth or a low economy (Esses et al., 2010). Another factor known is relevant out-group, which refers to the presence of a group that is visibly different from the host population. Thus, in a society that is under financial stress, visible minority groups are considered rivals for the limited resources (Esses et al., 2010). The extent that immigrants and refugees are likely to stand out as competitors depends on their cultural difference to the host society. The more visible the difference, the more likely the individuals will stand out as a competitor (Abad-Merino, Newheiser, Dovidio, Tabernero & Gonzalez, 2013). A final factor for consideration is the dominant ideology of the host society. Societies having social dominance orientation, or the belief of a necessary hierarchy within society or that some people are better than others, contribute to perceived economic threats from the minority groups (Esses et al., 1998). These three factors—resource stress, relevant out-group, and ideology—lead to the population feeling anxious due to a perception of limited amount of resources which is further strained by migrants who are in need of many of the scarce resources.

Anxiety was associated with the perception of economic competition or zero-sum belief. Someone with zero-sums belief views the world as having limited resources and believe that if someone gains then another person must lose out (Esses et al., 2010). Although the perceived competition often revolves around tangible resources such as jobs, it can also involve concerns about threats to cultural values. In relationships between groups, zero-sum beliefs involve the thought that if life for one group improves, life for another group must get worse. Some social contexts, such as influx of refugees, elicit this perception of competition. Cultural and economic threats create situations where people try to reduce feelings of competition by setting up barriers between them and the new group (Esses et al., 1998). Examples of barriers could be employers not accepting immigrants for occupation or not providing language education (Esses et al.,

2010). These barriers tend to be discriminatory against immigrants, as the individuals from the host society aim to remove group competition and the threat of obtaining resources.

One study found that the, “perceived zero-sum threat was associated with dehumanizing beliefs and emotions about immigrants” (Louis, Esses & Lalonde, 2013, p. 156). People had negative attitudes towards immigrants because they perceived immigrants as a threat to their society and economy. People discounted the many ways that immigrants contribute to the economy (e.g., investments, paying taxes, opening businesses). The role of dehumanizing has also affected the perception of refugees, as some individuals from the host society claim that immigrants are cheating the system to access resources and subsequently branding them as immoral (Esses et al, 2008). The view that refugees are a strain on resources that can be better spent on the population leads to greater contempt towards refugees. This opinion is more heavily held in people with a social dominance orientation, so that these people tend to support anti-immigrant sentiments (Lapshina, 2008).

Part of anti-immigration sentiments is related to some media portrayal of the uncertainty in immigration policies (Schweitzer, 2005). Some media outlets exploit this uncertainty to create a crisis mentality in which immigrants and refugees are depicted as “enemies” who are trying to attack Western nations (Esses, Medianu & Lawson, 2013). Researchers reported that, “dehumanizing media depictions of refugees, portraying them as violating appropriate procedures and trying to cheat the system, causes greater contempt and lack of admiration for refugees in general, which in turn lead to less favorable attitudes toward the group and less support for the current refugee policy which welcomes newcomers” (Esses et al, 2008, p.4). This results in the perception that immigrants or refugees are seen as competing with members of the

host society for economic resources, therefore creating negative attitudes towards immigrants (Esses, Brochu & Dickson, 2012).

In contrary, there are situations where immigrants are viewed more positively. A study by Hooghe and Vroome (2015) found that when there are inclusive policies that are positive towards immigrants, the host population is less likely to view immigrants negatively. Research shows that multicultural policies towards immigrants are associated with lower levels of anti-immigrant sentiments (Esses, Veenvliet, Hodson, & Mihic, 2008). Furthermore, efforts to use inclusive language in politics and media leads to a population that is more accepting of immigrants (Hooghe & Vroome, 2015). Moreover, multicultural ideology, such as diversity and acceptance of differences, leads to decreased perceptions of threat and more positive attitudes toward immigrants (Ward & Masgoret, 2006). Efforts are made to show the similarity between the two cultures. In addition, immigrants that are seen as more culturally adaptive are less likely to be viewed as a threat to society (Buhan, 2016). However, the ideology of an individual greatly influences their perceptions of newcomers; therefore, people with high social dominance orientation will view immigrants as a threat regardless of their cultural adaptability (Burham & van Leeuwen, 2016).

Models of Helping Behaviour

The UIMGC more broadly examines outcomes that result from perceptions of competition (Esses et al., 1998). These outcomes can increase and decrease rivalry among migrants and the host population (Esses et al., 2010). It explains that attempts to reduce competitions can take many forms such as prejudices, distance, and helping. The UIMGC examines how attitudes towards immigrants or refugees affect the endorsement of helping behaviours (Esses et al., 2010). People who view immigrants and refugees negatively are less

likely to support any forms of help towards them. A study by Jackson and Esses (2000) verified the model by examining the impact of perceived economic competition on supporting empowered forms of helping for immigrants. Where this model describes attitudes of helping behaviour, it also examines the attribution forms of helping. Attributions are an inherent part of helping because it determines if the person needing the help is responsible for their problems and solutions. Moreover, these models of helping behaviour explain that the giving of aid depends on the extent that the potential recipient is believed to be the cause of their problem as well as the type of aid that is needed. They found that there are three main forms of helping behaviour: empowered help, direct assistance, and group change

Empowered help is identifying that immigrants face systematic barriers as forms of discrimination and trying to remove these barriers (Esses et al., 2010). It involves recognizing that immigrants are not responsible for their problems and involving them in the process of finding solutions. The key is that immigrants should be an active participant in the development of the supports and services they need, and providing them with the tools to overcome challenges.

Another form of help is direct assistance and it is a medical model of helping (Esses et al., 2010). This view sees that immigrants are not responsible for their situation, problems, or solutions. In addition, it involves the views that immigrants need someone to help them solve their problems as they are incapable of helping themselves. This is a passive form of help because it does not look at the whole context of the immigrants. An example of direct assistance is providing housing pro bono; while immediate shelter is essential, it is equally important to not lose sight of sustainable methods of assistance and empowerment, such as providing education opportunities and job skills that would allow the immigrants to become self-sustaining. Direct

assistance creates dependence on the person helping the immigrant which can lead to a lack of progression in the immigrant's life.

The final approach to helping is group change (Esses et al., 2010). Group change is an ideology that negatively views immigrants' need for assistance. Group change is the idea that immigrants are responsible for their problems and solutions. It is a moral model of help where the immigrant is held responsible for finding resources in Canada to support themselves. In addition, group change views that the immigrant needs to change themselves to better assimilate to the host culture. This form of help is obviously not productive nor is it supportive and is more of a belief system that prevents the giving of aid.

In a study exploring Canadian public's view on approaches to helping, empower help received the strongest endorsement (Jackson & Esses, 2000). It was also discovered that people who perceived immigrants as less of a threat to their society's economy were more willing to provide immigrants with empowerment help and were less likely to believe in group change or expect immigrants to solve their own problems. Burham and van Leeuwen (2016) replicated this finding and the results were that most people are in the mindset to support empowered help versus the group change perspective. Interestingly, this study also found that direct assistance is given if people think that immigrants are more culturally adaptive.

Individuals who perceive immigrants in competitive terms will reduce their support of empowerment and set up barriers for the immigrants to deter them from becoming competition. This is a result of the host population wanting to reduce rivalry between themselves and the newcomers. These barriers tend to take form in the support for anti-immigration policies (Jackson & Esses, 2000). Other problematic aspects of people perceiving competition towards immigrants is that they think immigrants are capable enough that they should not receive any

help. Host populations will not only reject empowered forms of help but also direct assistance. This leads immigrants with little or no support systems.

Alternative to attitudes, attribution of responsibility is another factor that influences people's willingness to help. A study found that when individuals who support a multicultural ideology come in contact with immigrants, they are less likely to view them in competitive terms and more likely to view them in a positive manner. In addition, the host population who supports multiculturalism tend to feel that immigrants are not responsible for their problems (Ward & Masgoret, 2006) and as a result, more people are willing to support direct assistance to help immigrants (Burhan & van Leeuwen, 2016).

Not all help is helpful. Direct assistance can be harmful as it can maintain inequality (Nadler 2002). This happens because minorities are provided dependency oriented help, which leads them to become dependent on the support they receive and prevents them from independence. For example, if newcomers are provided with housing but no opportunities to seek education then they are not able to contribute to society. This idea of maintaining dependency is also seen among interactions with males and females. A study found that males are more likely to provide dependency oriented help than autonomy to females in the workplace (Shnabel, Kende, Bar-Anan, Bareket & Lazar, 2015). This indirectly leads to females maintaining the same job without any progression in corporate ladder because they are never given opportunities for higher job positions. This study illustrates that not all helping behaviour is useful and some helping behaviour are better than others. Empowerment help can challenge inequality as it supports newcomers in becoming self-sufficient. As the approaches to help can greatly impact the presence or absence of inequality, it is important to understand the factors that may lead societies in supporting one approach over another.

Limitation of Past Research

A significant amount of past research focuses on immigrants but not many examine refugees in terms of helping behavior. An exploration of this topic is essential as the ongoing conflict in Syria has led to the displacement of millions of Syrians to various parts of the world. The Syrian crisis is a recent event, thus, the literature is at its initial phase regarding the topic of refugees. It is vital to understand Canadians' attitudes towards refugees because these attitudes can directly impact the funding provided for social programs. If the public has negative attitudes, politicians are then less likely to pass bills that fund programs that provide supports, such as English education. Consequently, this lack of support will decrease the likelihood of successful integration of newcomers in Canada.

Another limitation is that most of the present literature focuses on asking participants the likelihood of supporting approaches that help immigrants in broad terms, such as asking if "people should help immigrants overcome the barriers they face in adjusting to life in Canada" (Jackson & Esses, 2000, p.424). These abstract forms of questioning is undependable as it does not explore the concrete supports and strategies that immigrants will need for successful integration, such as language education and counselling services that are funded by the government. This study will examine actual programs that have been funded by the government and ask participants to indicate their support for those programs. For example, asking a participant if they support Albert University in covering the tuition cost for 10 refugees.

Present Study

The present study investigates the relationship between perceptions of economic competition (zero-sum beliefs) and people's willingness to support programs to help Syrian

refugees. Perceived economic competition (zero-sum beliefs) and support towards Syrian refugees is mediated by people's attitudes and attributions of responsibility towards them.

It was hypothesized that people who view relations between Canadians and Syrians in cooperative terms will be more willing to support empowering forms of help. This relation will be mediated by attributions of responsibility for the challenges faced by Syrian refugees and the view that Syrians can themselves be part of the solution. In addition, the type of attitudes and attributions towards Syrians may predict the type of helping assistance the host population is willing to provide. Perceptions of cooperation/competition and attributions of responsibility are expected to be more strongly related to forms of help that empower immigrants (e.g. language education) than other passive forms of help (e.g. supportive housing).

The study used a correlational design. The predictor variable was zero-sum beliefs, and the criterion variable was willingness to endorse helping programs. Mediators were people's attitudes and if they attributed responsibility for problem and solution towards Syrian refugees. Participants completed four questionnaires: evaluation thermometer, attributions about helping scale, zero-sum beliefs scale, and endorsement programs questionnaires.

Methods

Participants

There were 84 participants who were recruited from the introduction Psychology 1000 courses (PSY1000) pool at King's University College. All of the participants were selected based on a volunteer convenience sample through the SONA website set up for students to read about and sign up for studies. There were no restrictions on participation; all students in PSY1000 at King's were welcome to take part in the study. Some participants completed the survey in a large group setting after class, while others were asked to come to the psychology lab at King's

University College to complete the questionnaires. Psychology 1000 students received up to 2.5% bonus marks for completing a related assignment. Participants were free to withdraw at any time and still receive credit for the written assignment. The sample contained 56 females and 28 males ($M=18.8$, $SD=2.49$, range 18-26), and the most common nationality was Canadian (59.5%).

Materials

Evaluation thermometer (Appendix A). Participants were given a picture of a thermometer that asked them to report their attitudes toward Syrian Refugees using a number. The thermometer had been adjusted from attitudes towards immigrants to attitudes towards Syrian Refugees (Jackson & Esses, 2000). On the thermometer, 100° represents extremely favourable attitudes; zero degrees reflected extremely unfavourable attitudes and numbers in between reflected various degrees of favorability or unfavorability. Participants wrote down the number that reflects their attitudes.

Attributions about supporting helping behaviour scale (Appendix B). The Attributions scale examines the attributions underlying people's views about how immigrants should be helped to adjust to life in Canada (Jackson & Esses, 2000). This scale for the purpose of this study was modified by changing general statements regarding immigrants to reflect general statements that are in regard to Syrian refugees specifically. The scale had 23 items and participants expressed their agreeableness to the statements from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7). There were three subscales (empowerment, direct assistance, and group change). Specifically, it measured different approaches to helping immigrants based on attributions of responsibility for both the problem and the solution to that problem. Empowerment measures the

approach to helping Syrian Refugees based on attributions of low responsibility for the problem and high responsibility for the solution. A sample item was, “People should help Syrian refugees to overcome the barriers they face in adjusting to life in Canada.” Direct assistance measured the approach to helping based on attribution of low responsibility for the problem and the solution. A sample item was, “If Syrian refugees have problems adjusting to life in Canada, it isn’t their doing, and they shouldn’t have to be the ones to solve the problem.” The group change measure focused on attribution of high responsibility for their problem and solution. An example of this item was, “Syrian refugees’ way of life causes adjustment problems, so they should look to the Canadian way of life for help with adjusting.” The coefficient alpha in the present study was .854. Items eight through fourteen are negatively worded and will be reversed.

Zero-sum beliefs scale (Appendix C). The zero-sum beliefs scale measured the view that benefits for refugees come at the expense of other Canadians. The scale statements have been adapted from a zero-sum beliefs scale from a previous thesis about Syrian refugees (Partridge, 2016). The zero-sum beliefs scale was six item questionnaire assessing if participants perceived Syrian refugees as a source of economic competition. Participants expressed their agreeableness to zero-sum statements from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7), e.g., “Refugees are taking jobs away from Canadians.” Items one, two and five were negatively worded and were subsequently reversed. In addition, the scores from the item will be averaged. The Coefficient alpha in the present study was .833.

Endorsement of the programs (Appendix D). Participants read a description of six local programs provided for Syrian refugees by the following organizations: the Cross Cultural Learner Centre (CCLC) program, the Gentle program, the Culturally Diverse Organized Activities for Community Health (COACH) program, the Language Instruction for Newcomers

to Canada (LINC) program, the London InterCommunity Health Centre (Health) program and the Western University program. Participants read a summary of the programs and rated their endorsement of the programs from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7). The programs were selected to represent aid that seems consistent with the helping models of empowerment (identifying and removing systemic barriers of discrimination), direct assistance (providing basic necessities), and group change (providing no help) (Esses, Jackson & Bennett-AbuAyyash). An example of an empowering form for helping behaviour was, “Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC), which was a program that helps teach adult Syrian refugees English. LINC offers English classes that are funded by the Canadian government and provide language training and information that Syrian refugees need to know to make Canada their new home. Classes are available at many locations and may be part-time, full-time, in the morning, afternoon or evenings. Some classes offer cultural interpretation, child-minding and transportation assistance. Governments should provide this type of assistance.” The following description provides an example of direct assistance helping behaviour program which was, “London InterCommunity Health Centre provides medical assistance to any Syrians that had urgent medical issues. Upon arrival Syrian refugees were connected with primary care, vaccination, dental checkup and family doctor.”

Procedure

Participants were recruited through the Psychology 1000 pool at King’s. Some participants completed the survey in a large group setting after a class and others were asked to come in person to the psychology lab at King’s to complete the questionnaires. Participants were given an information sheet prior to starting the study. After reading the information form, participants were given a consent form to participate in the study. Once participants signed a

consent form then they completed four questionnaires. Participants first completed the evaluation thermometer, then the attributions about helping scale, zero-sum beliefs scale and endorsement programs questionnaires. Following their completion of the survey, participants were thanked for their participation and given a debrief form.

Results

Descriptive statistics for all variables are shown in Table 1. The first hypothesis was perceptions of competition (zero-sum beliefs) to predict people's willingness to support helping programs that help Syrian refugees ($\beta = -.615$, $t(82) = -7.062$, $p < .001$). This hypothesis was supported by the data, suggesting that those who view relations between Canadians and Syrians in cooperative terms are more inclined to help the Syrians (see table 1). Moreover, the zero-sum beliefs significantly predicted helping programs when all the helping programs were summed together, as well as predicting each program separately. Zero-sum beliefs significantly predicted support for the Cross Cultural learning Centre (CCLC) program, the Gentle program, the Culturally Diverse Organized Activities for Community Health (COACH) program, the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) program, the London InterCommunity Health Centre (Health) program, and the Western program as shown in Table 2. Participants who scored low on the zero-sum belief scale scored high on support for all the previous helping programs.

Table 1: Means and Standard Deviations for all Variables

Zerosum	Ther	Help	CCLC	Gentle	COACH	LINC
2.69(1.12)	78.18(18.23)	4.71(0.73)	5.14(1.47)	6.18(0.87)	5.32(1.30)	6.33(0.90)
Health	Western					
6.46(0.88)	5.36(1.68)					

Note. The numbers in parentheses are standard deviations.

Table 2: Betas for Regressions of Zero-sum Beliefs on Helping Programs

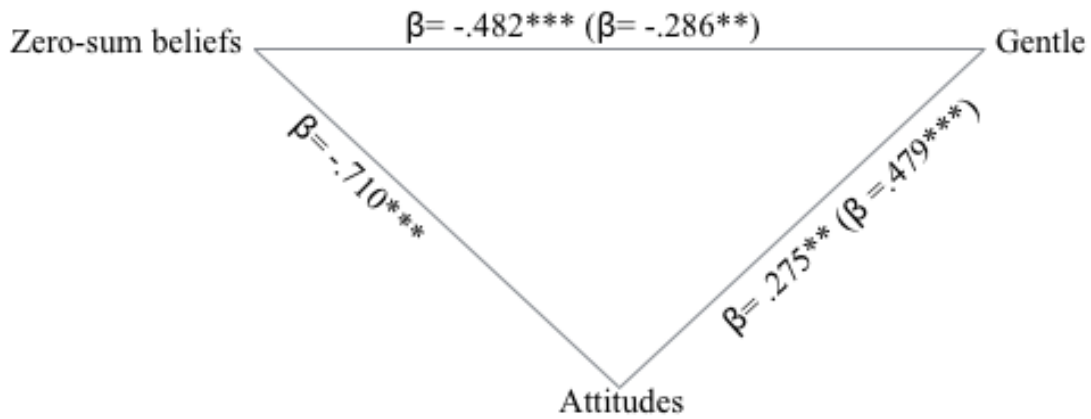
	CCLC	Gentle	COACH	LINC	Health	Western
Zero-sum Beliefs	$\beta = -.482^{***}$	$\beta = -.405^{***}$	$\beta = -.389^{***}$	$\beta = -.522^{**}$	$\beta = -.502^{***}$	$\beta = -.458^{***}$

Note. $^{***} p < .001$

The second hypothesis was that attributions of responsibility and attitudes toward Syrian's mediate the relationship between zero-sum beliefs and support of helping programs. When controlling for mediators variables, zero-sum beliefs remained significant in predicting the sum of all helping programs together. A mediation test was conducted to test each helping program separately. The mediation test was conducted to examine if people with low zero-sum beliefs endorsed helping programs because they have positive attitudes towards Syrians overall. In addition, another mediation model was tested to determine if people with low zero-sum beliefs supported helping programs because they did not view Syrians responsible for their problems or solutions. The mediated models were conducted when the predictor variable (zero-sum beliefs) significantly correlated with the criterion variable (helping programs) and the mediator variables (attitudes and attribution of responsibility). The next steps were to test if the mediators

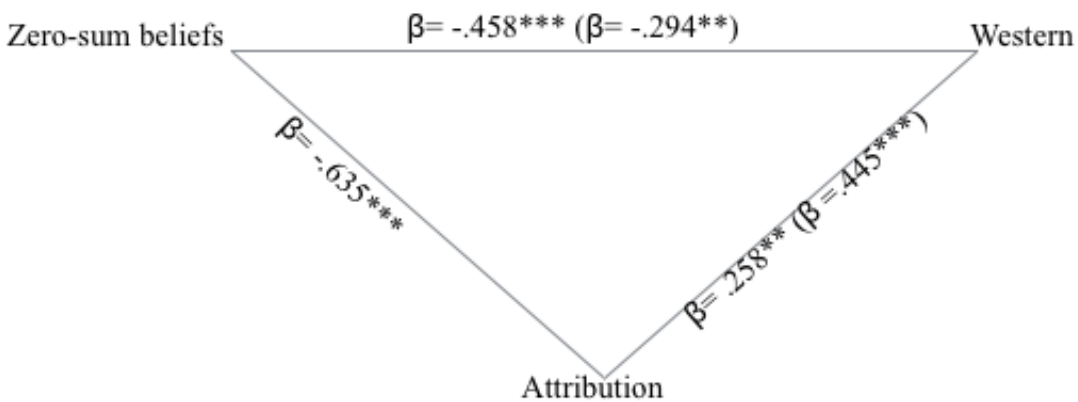
influenced the criterion variable and if association between the predictor variable and criterion variable was decreased to non-significance when the mediators were controlled.

Figure 1: Attitudes Mediating Zero-sum Beliefs and Gentle Program.



Note. $^{**} p < .05$, $^{***} p < .001$, Sobel test, $z = 1.93$, $p = .05$

Figure 2: Attribution of Responsibility Mediating Zero-sum Beliefs and Western Program.



Note. $^{**} p < .05$, $^{***} p < .001$, Sobel test, $z = 2.00$, $p = .045$

The mediation models were partially supported in two cases. The first case was that the relation between zero-sum beliefs and support for the gentle program was partial mediated by attitudes toward Syrians. As shown in Figure 1, zero-sum beliefs predicted both attitudes toward

Syrians and endorsement of gentle, while attitudes toward Syrians predicted support for the Gentle program. Controlling for the relation between attitudes and support for the Gentle program, the relation between zero-sum beliefs and endorsement of gentle was reduced ($\beta = -.286, p < .05$), while the relation between attitudes and gentle remained significant ($\beta = .275, p < .05$), and a Sobel test for mediation was significant ($z = 1.93, p = .05$). It was partial rather than full mediation because the relation between the predictor and criterion remained significant when controlling for the mediator. Nevertheless, because the predictor-criterion relation was reduced, and the sobel test was significant, partial mediation was supported.

The second case was that the relation between zero-sum beliefs and support for the Western program was mediated by attribution of responsibility toward Syrians. As shown in Figure 2, zero-sum beliefs predicted both attributions of responsibility toward Syrians and endorsement of the Western program and attribution of responsibility toward Syrians predicted support for western. Controlling for attribution of responsibility, the relation between zero-sum beliefs and endorsement of the Western program was reduced ($\beta = -.294, p < .01$), while the relation between attitudes and gentle remained significant ($\beta = .258, p < .05$), and a Sobel test for mediation was significant ($z = 2.00, p = .045$). It was partial rather than full mediation because the relation between the predictor and criterion remained significant when controlling for the mediator. Nevertheless, because the predictor-criterion relation was reduced, and the sobel test was significant, partial mediation was supported.

Discussion

Given the present data, there was support for the first hypothesis of how zero-sum beliefs predicted people's willingness to support helping programs for Syrian refugees. In the study, zero-sum beliefs predicted support for all helping programs; the Cross Cultural learning Centre

program (CCLC), the Gentle program, Culturally Diverse Organized Activities for Community Health (COACH) program, the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) program, the London InterCommunity Health Centre (Health) program, and the Western program. Participants with low zero-sum beliefs were more likely to support programs that helped Syrian refugees. This showed that people who perceived the relations between Canadians and Syrian refugees in cooperative terms were more likely to endorse helping programs to better the lives of refugees. It was found that on average, participants of this study had favourable attitudes towards Syrians and had low zero-sum beliefs as shown above in Table 1. Moreover, participants supported all the programs mentioned in the study, suggesting that participants viewed these programs to be essential for integration of Syrians in Canada.

The second hypothesis examined the mediators in the relationship between zero-sum beliefs and helping behaviours. When summing all the helping programs together, zero-sum belief remained significant in predicting helping programs, but the mediation variables (attitudes and attribution of responsibility) did not significantly explain the relationship. However, the mediators included attitudes and attribution of responsibility towards Syrians which were partial mediation in two cases when examining zero-sum beliefs and specific programs. The mediators were important in explaining how zero-sum beliefs predicted endorsement for helping programs. Participants' attitudes toward Syrians were considered to determine if general attitudes can explain why low zero-sum beliefs predicted endorsement to helping programs to reflect low on the scale. In the first case, the relationship between zero-sum beliefs and support for the Gentle program was partial mediated by attitudes towards Syrians. This result suggested that low zero-sum beliefs predicted support towards the Gentle program because low zero-sum beliefs were

associated with positive attitudes towards Syrians. Moreover, attitudes towards Syrians were found to be a key predictor of endorsement of the Gentle program.

In the second case, the relation between zero-sum beliefs and the Western program was mediated by attribution of responsibility. Participants who viewed Syrians as not responsible for their problems and solutions highlighted the relationship between zero-sum beliefs and support for the Western program. The Western program was an example of empowered help because it provided free tuition in order to support educational endeavors that would hopefully translate to better occupations and better social status in the future. This is noteworthy because support of the Western program is a more empowering form of helping behaviour compared to other programs. The Western program provided free tuition to Syrians, which means that participants were supporting programs that broke the financial barriers for Syrians in the field of education in hopes of facilitating a better life; higher education could lead to better occupations and subsequently promote better integration into Canadian society.

Participants who viewed Syrians as intrinsically responsible for their situation and context showed less support for helping programs. This is because these participants believed that Syrians themselves are the cause of the Syrian crisis and therefore responsible for solving their own problems. The existing literature supports the idea that helping behaviour that is offered depends on the extent that the potential recipient is believed to be the cause of the problem as well as the type of aid that is needed (Burhan & van Leeuwen, 2016). In addition, attribution of responsibility also predicted support for different models of helping behaviour. There were two types of models of helping behaviour for the present study, including direct assistance and empowered help (Jackson & Esses, 2000). These participants viewed Syrians to not be responsible for their problems but still important actors in solving their own challenges.

The results of this study can be explained by the Unified Instrumental Model of Group Conflict (UIMGC), which states that perceptions of economic competition can evoke certain efforts to reduce competition (Jackson & Esses, 2000). A study by Jackson and Esses (2000) examined ways in which people try to reduce competition and suggest that efforts to reduce competition can be seen in the style of helping endorsed. According to the UIMGC model, perceiving competition should predict less support for empowerment whereas perceiving cooperation should predict more support for this type of help. Therefore, the perceptions of competition by the host population is essential to consider as it can lead to less support towards programs for newcomers (Jackson & Esses, 2000). In addition, attributions of responsibility towards newcomers correlated with the different types of helping behaviours. Those who perceive newcomers to be not responsible for their problems or solutions tend to support a direct assistance for of helping which provides people's basic needs. With regards to this study, an example of this form of help was seen in the health program that provided Syrians with direct medical assistance. While direct assistance is important in the initial phase of settlement, it does not sustain the long-term integration of Syrian newcomers. A helping model that provides the necessary long-term development and integration supports is empowered help. This model examined ways to break down barriers that hinder integration in the life of Syrians. An example of this was the Western program which provided free tuition to Syrians students. The present study supports UIMGC because perceptions of economic competitions predicted people's endorsement of helping programs.

General conclusions

In summary, perceptions of economic competition (zero-sum beliefs) predicted people's willingness to support helping programs for Syrian refugees. Participants with low zero-sum

beliefs were more likely to support programs that help Syrians. Zero-sum beliefs predicted support for all helping programs. Support for the second hypothesis, which examined attitudes and attribution of responsibility towards Syrians, was partial mediated in two cases. In the first case, the relationship between zero-sum beliefs and support for the Gentle program was partial mediated by attitudes toward Syrians. In the second case, the relationship between zero-sum beliefs and the Western program was partial mediated by attribution of responsibility. The results suggested that people who view relations between Canadians and Syrians in cooperative terms are more willing to support these empowering forms of help. Perceptions of cooperation and attributions of responsibility are linked to more strongly related to forms of help that empower Syrians (e.g., free tuition).

Study's limitations

A limitation in the present study was its correlational design, meaning causation cannot be assumed. However, previous studies used experiments to show causation between zero-sum beliefs and endorsement of helping models (Jackson & Esses, 2000). Another possible limitation is the sample size which is not a good representative of the general population. The sample was composed of first year psychology students at King's University, which is a liberal art school that promotes social awareness of inequality and holds supportive attitudes towards helping others. These results may differ if the sample was collected from the general public.

Practical implications

Zero-sum beliefs can greatly influence the support programs offered to newcomers, which is essential at this time as Canada welcomes thousands of Syrian refugees. If people understand that helping Syrians benefits everyone, they are more likely to support constructive measures. This study found an overall positive and supportive attitude for programs that support

newcomers. These findings can be used in engaging with politicians to influence policy decisions that fund social programs to help Syrians. The positive support of helping programs by Canadian students can be used as a catalyst that can be presented as evidence for the government to provide funding for social programs to support the newly arrived refugees.

Future research

For future research, examining implicit attitudes and their impact on endorsement of helping programs is recommended. The present study examined explicit measures which may not show the true sentiment of people as compared to implicit attitudes towards out-groups. Moreover, adding the group change model of helping, a helping behaviour that insists that others help themselves without any outside assistance, should be included in order to provide an option for participants who may feel that the Syrian refugees should not receive any external assistance. This addition could lead to an experimental design that examines zero-sum beliefs and support for helping programs in a way that provides a causation state for this topic. Furthermore, including assessments of implicit attitudes towards Syrians could be used to reinforcing the correlation between the explicit attitudes and endorsement of helping programs.

In summation, participants with low perceptions of economic competition (zero-sum beliefs) are more likely to support programs that help Syrian refugees. Particularly, this relationship is explained by participants' attitude towards Syrians and if they view Syrians being responsible for their problems and solutions. These results suggest that people who view relations between Canadians and Syrians in cooperative terms rather than competitive terms will be more willing to support these forms of help. Perceptions of cooperation and attributions of responsibility are expected to be more strongly related to forms of help that empower Syrians (e.g., free tuition).

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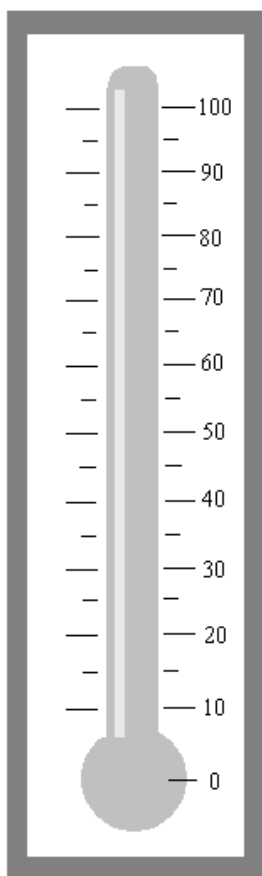
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Appendix A: Warmth Thermometer

We are interested in how people feel about Syrian refugees in Canada. Below you will see a picture of a thermometer. Use it to report your attitude toward Syrian refugees. On the thermometer, 100° represent extremely favourable attitudes, zero degrees reflects extremely unfavourable attitudes, and the numbers in between reflect various degrees of favourability or unfavourability. Using this rating scale, write a number between zero and 100° (you may use any number) to reflect your attitude. Please be honest. There are no right or wrong answers, and remember that this survey is anonymous.



Extremely Favourable 100

Neither Favourable or unfavourable 50

Extremely Unfavourable 0

My attitude toward Syrian refugees is _____°

Appendix B: Helping scale

Below are a series of statements regarding Syrian Refugees. You will probably agree with some and disagree with others. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement by writing in a number from 1 to 7 on the line to the left of each statement. The rating scale is shown below.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree

___ 1) People should help Syrian refugees overcome the barriers they face in adjusting to life in Canada.

___ 2) Syrian refugees need the cooperation of others to compensate for the obstacles imposed upon them in adjusting to life in Canada

___ 3) People should help Syrian refugees to help themselves adjust to Canada.

___ 4) People should educate the public about the difficulties of adjusting to Canada faced by Syrian refugees in order to help improve their situation.

___ 5) People should help Syrian refugees overcome the limitations imposed on them by society so that they can better adjust to life in Canada.

___ 6) Although Syrian refugees face barriers to adjusting to life in Canada, they can learn to adjust with the cooperation of Canadians.

___ 7) Syrian refugees don't create their problems with adjustment, but they are ultimately responsible for solving them.

___ 8) Syrian refugees should follow the advice of Canadians to solve the problems of adjustment that they have created for themselves.

___ 9) Syrian refugees should work harder to adjust.

___ 10) Syrian refugees create their own problems of adjustment, so they should follow Canadian culture to adjust.

___ 11) Syrian refugees' way of life causes their adjustment problems, so they should look to the Canadian way of life for help with adjusting.

___ 12) Syrian refugees simply need to be more motivate to solve their problem of adjusting to Canada.

___ 13) The best help for Syrian refugees would be to remind them that they are responsible for their own fate.

___ 14) If adjusting to life in Canada is hard for Syrian refugees, they should admit that they have created a problem for themselves, and look for help from Canadians.

___ 15) Syrian refugees can adjust to Canada. They just have to be willing to work at it.

___ 16) Syrian refugees are responsible for their adjustment problems, but they need other people to help them.

___ 17) Because the adjustment problems faced by Syrian refugees are not the responsibility of immigrants themselves, experts are needed to solve these problems.

___ 18) If Syrian refugees have problems adjusting to life in Canada, it isn't their doing, and they shouldn't have to be the ones to solve the problem.

___ 19) The adjustment problems faced by Syrian refugees are the fault of Canadian society, so Canadian society should help to solve the problems.

___ 20) Canadians should provide social programs to help Syrian refugees cope with problems caused by Canadian Society.

___ 21) Canadians make it hard for Syrian refugees to adjust to Canada, so they should do what they can to make it easier for i Syrian refugees.

___ 22) Syrian refugees face problems of adjustment that aren't their fault, so the Canadian government should provide programs to help them adjust.

___ 23) It should be made easier for Syrian refugees to adjust to Canada, because their adjustment problems are the responsibility of Canadian society.

Appendix C: Zero-sum Scale

Below are a series of statements regarding Syrian Refugees. You will probably agree with some and disagree with others. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement by writing in a number from 1 to 7 on the line to the left of each statement. The Rating scale is shown below.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree

- ___ 1) The more power Canada gives to refugees, the less power Canadians will have.
- ___ 2) Refugees are taking jobs away from Canadians.
- ___ 3) Things that help Syrian refugees ultimately help other Canadians as well.
- ___ 4) Refugees are taking resources that could be better used for Canadians.
- ___ 5) Money spent on refugees is money taken away from other Canadians.
- ___ 6) By helping Syrian refugees now, we help make a stronger country for everyone down the road.

Appendix D: Programs

Below are descriptions of six programs geared toward helping Syrian Refugees adjust to life in Canada. Please indicate your opinion about each program by writing in a number from 1 to 7 on the line to the left of each statement that follows the program description. The Rating scale is shown below.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree

Gentle Programme. TVDSB was a specific programme created to support the Syrian students and their families integrate more smoothly into the schooling system. Guided entry to new teaching and learning experiences (GENTLE) involves a reception, assessment and school readiness program for all Syrian newcomer students. Families are greeted with ESL teacher, social worker and interpreter. They are invited to share their journey to Canada. Children are provided with backpacks and Arabic English dictionary and experience literacy and numeracy activities. Children also explore classroom setting with teachers.

___ 1) This help should be provided.

___ 2) Government should provide funding for this program.

Cross Cultural Learner Centre (CCLC) developed specific programmes to support Syrian newcomers. The Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) was the first program involved with Syrian Refugees. It involved settling refugees into hotels until they could be placed in residence area. In addition, Life Skill Workers have also provided extensive orientation for Syrians, during their short stay at hotels, to better use the hotel facilities and to help them to enjoy and successfully integrate their way of living in a hotel environment.

___ 1) This help should be provided.

___ 2) Government should provide funding for this program.

The COACH program uses trained and certified 11 Physical Activity Leaders (PALs) in Soccer, Volleyball and Fitness. PALs will be completing their ‘placement’ segment of the program in which they are running group sessions for newcomers focused on physical literacy and activity. PALs are high school students who will act as PAL’s as part of their volunteer requirement for their diploma. The COACH program hosted a volleyball mini-camp at H.B. Beal Secondary School to introduce the sport to our Syrian newcomer youth and provide access for other newcomers within our community. The week was filled with sport and recreation and educational sessions on physical literacy.

___ 1) This help should be provided.

___ 2) Government should provide funding for this program.

Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) is a program that helps teach adults Syrian refugees English. LINC offers English classes that are funded by the Canadian government and provide language training and information that Syrian refugees need to know to make Canada their new home. Classes are available at many locations and may be part-time, full-time, in the morning, afternoon or evenings. Some classes offer cultural interpretation, child-minding and transportation assistance.

___ 1) This help should be provided.

___ 2) Government should provide funding for this program.

London InterCommunity Health Centre provides medical assistance to any Syrians that had urgent medical issues. Upon arrival Syrian refugees were connected with primary care, vaccination, dental checkup and family doctor.

___ 1) This help should be provided.

___ 2) Government should provide funding for this program.

Western University plans to establish student awards for 10 Syrian refugees that will cover tuition and living expenses. It is also working with a community-based organization in London, Ontario to privately sponsor a refugee family. In addition, University of Alberta created the President's Award for Refugees and Displaced Persons that will cover the tuition and living costs for up to 10 Syrian refugees starting in January 2016.

___ 1) This help should be provided.

___ 2) Government should provide funding for this program.