

## Positive Thinking Elevates Tolerance:

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Positive Thinking Elevates Tolerance: Experimental Effects of Happiness on Adolescents'

Attitudes Towards Asylum Seekers

## Abstract

Inducing emotional reactions toward social groups can influence individuals' political tolerance. This study examines the influence of incidental fear and happiness on adolescents' tolerant attitudes and feelings towards Muslim asylum seekers. In our experiment, 219 adolescents (16- to 21-year-olds) completed measures of prejudicial attitudes. After being induced to feel happiness, fear, or no emotion (control), participants reported their tolerant attitudes and feelings toward asylum-seeking young people. Participants assigned to the happiness condition demonstrated more tolerant attitudes toward asylum-seeking young people than did those assigned to the fear or control conditions. Participants in the control condition did not differ from participants in the fear condition. The participants in the happiness condition also had more positive feelings toward asylum-seeking young people than did participants in the control condition. The findings suggest that one way to increase positive attitudes toward asylum-seeking young people is to improve general emotional state.

Positive Thinking Elevates Tolerance: Experimental Effects of Happiness on Adolescents'  
Attitudes Towards Asylum Seekers

This study examines the influence of incidental fear and happiness on adolescents' tolerant attitudes and emotional reactions towards Muslim asylum seekers. How young people think and feel towards Muslim asylum seekers is a very pressing societal issue. The past decade has given rise to the largest displacement of people, including children, on record (UNHCR, 2015). At the same time, throughout Europe, negative attitudes and stereotypes towards refugees and asylum seekers are common (Capelos & van Troost, 2012). Children appropriate these negative attitudes from a young age. Indeed, children as young as 5 to 11 years view asylum seekers and refugees more negatively than their British peers (Cameron & Rutland, 2008; Cameron, Rutland, Brown, & Douch, 2006). Moreover, attitudes towards the endowment of rights for asylum seekers become more negative with age (Ruck & Tenenbaum, 2014; Tenenbaum & Ruck, 2012). Amidst this climate, young asylum-seekers enter schools with their host country counterparts. Integrating young asylum seekers successfully to their host country will thus need to focus on the reception they receive from peers.

The majority of asylum seekers into Europe come from Muslim backgrounds (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh & Qasmiyeh, 2010), which may be at odds with the cultural practices of majority populations in Europe (Lynch & Cuninghame, 2000). Verkuyten and Slooter (2007, 2008) found that ethnic majority Dutch adolescents showed less tolerance for the political and religious rights of Muslims than those of non-Muslims, such as the Surinamese. Additionally, adolescents held more negative beliefs and showed less tolerance toward Muslim religious practices (e.g., wearing a hijab or head scarf) than practices that did not differ from majority participants' way of life. Moreover, there was less tolerance among older than younger participants (Verkuyten & Slooter, 2007, 2008). Older adolescents (15-18

years) were less willing than younger adolescents (12-14 years) to endorse Muslims' political rights and religious practices. Older adolescents also held more negative attitudes toward Muslims than their younger counterparts. Thus, it seems that 16- to 18-year-olds may not always be predisposed to view Muslim asylum seekers positively.

One factor that may help explain how asylum seekers from Muslim backgrounds are perceived by classroom peers is the emotions experienced by students in schools with asylum seekers. Emotions are multidimensional processes that involve cognitive appraisals (conscious and automatic), affect, and motivation (Frijda, 2004). They constitute short-duration affective phenomena, more complex than positive or negative moods, and are linked to specific primary and secondary cognitive appraisals related to valence, certainty, attention, effort, power, and control (Schwarz, 1990; Smith & Ellsworth, 1985; Frijda, 1993; Izard, 1992; Lazarus, 1991). Basic emotions like joy, fear, anger, hope, disgust, sadness, and social emotions like shame, guilt, envy, and jealousy stimulate physiological and mental readiness and motivation for specific actions (Ekman, 2004; Lazarus, 1993; Frijda, 2004). Studies in political psychology provide ample evidence that discrete emotions have distinct effects on political decision making, demonstrating that how citizens feel and think is interrelated (Capelos & Exadaktylos, 2017; Capelos, 2011). For example, anxious citizens are more likely to navigate the political world in a risk-averse manner compared to citizens who are angry or hopeful (Capelos & Exadaktylos, 2017).

Germane to this study is evidence from past research that emotions influence individuals' political tolerance (Gibson & Bingham, 1982; Skitka, Bauman, & Mullen, 2004). Political tolerance is an attitude associated with specific values (Eisenstein, 2006), support for democratic principles (Sullivan, Piereson & Marcus, 1982), as well as demographic characteristics like education (Quillian, 1995), and psychological tendencies like open-mindedness (Duckitt 1993; Funke, 2005). The tolerance of prejudiced citizens toward

Muslim individuals declines when they are induced to feel fear toward a target compared to citizens who are induced to feel angry (Capelos & Van Troost, 2012). Conversely, reducing negative intergroup emotions leads to an increase in levels of tolerance (Halperin, 2014). The present study focuses on whether young people will hold more favourable attitudes and emotional reactions towards unfamiliar others when induced to feel incidental happiness than incidental fear.

The link between intergroup emotions and evaluations of outgroup members is underscored by work in cognitive and political psychology revealing that affect acts as information and often guides judgements and behaviour (Forgas & George, 2001, Isen & Baron 1991; Lerner & Keltner, 2001; Huddy et al., 2002). Schwarz and Clore (1988) suggest that the valence of our (unconsciously) unrelated feelings informs our judgements, and as a result, we engage in affect misattribution. Feeling anxious can influence an unrelated judgment (Gasper & Clore, 1998).

Studies also suggest that misattribution takes place when the cause of the judgments is complex or affective in nature (Schwarz, 1990). For example, in a demonstration of the link between emotion and trust, people induced to feel happiness were more trusting of familiar co-workers than those induced to feel sadness or anger (Dunn & Schweitzer, 2005).

Happiness seems to broaden the range of possible thoughts and actions one considers (Quoidbach, Mikolajczak, & Gross, 2015). Affective judgements are also good candidates for heuristic processing when individuals are not familiar with the target they are evaluating. Incidental emotions may be likely to influence judgements when the evaluation target is unfamiliar. That is because when people engage in heuristic processing, they are likely to make affect-consistent judgements. However, how incidental happiness and fear judgements influence perception of unfamiliar others has not yet been explored.

The research evidence in political psychology has not yet explored how incidental emotions may influence political groups. Extant experimental and survey studies manipulate or measure target group emotions but do not examine the impact of incidental emotions as non-target related affective experiences. A stronger test of the effect of emotions would be to manipulate emotions unrelated to the target and see whether they affect how young people perceive political groups, such as asylum seekers. Such an approach would address the ever-present problem of inter-related affective and cognitive target appraisals. By examining how incidental emotions unrelated to the target can impact evaluations of this target, we shed light into how the emotional context of citizens' considerations can shape their attitudes and preferences.

A second omission is that most studies in political psychology focus on negative emotions, but leave positive emotionality unexplored. Fear and anxiety are associated with increased vigilance for threat (MacLeod & Matthews, 2012). In contrast, positive emotions are responsible for positive information bias, have a facilitating effect on memory, and broaden an individual's attention and perception (Tugade & Fredrickson, 2004). Happiness, a positive valence emotion, leads to more trust toward people with whom one is acquainted, and hope is identified as an important predictor of physical and psychological outcomes in adults and children (Chang & DeSimone, 2001; Dunn & Schweitzer, 2005; Tamir & Robinson, 2007). And being in an induced positive mood leads to greater prosocial acts than does being in an induced negative or neutral mood (Carlson, Charlin, & Miller, 1988; Guéguen, & De Gail, 2003; Kayser, Greitemeyer, Fischer, & Frey, 2010). We do not know, however, much about how different positive emotions may impact attitudes towards minorities, refugees, or asylum seeking populations. Combining literature from the social psychology of emotion and political psychology, we would expect incidental happiness and fear to lead to positive and negative affect misattribution respectively based on their positive

and negative valence, influencing beliefs and orientations towards others. Thus, we expected misattributed happiness to lead to more favourable evaluations of Muslim asylum seekers, and misattributed fear to lead to less favourable evaluations of this unfamiliar group.

Emotions bias judgement because they facilitate the retrieval of congruent information from memory (Bower, 1981), but in addition citizens' emotional reactions may be heightened based on pre-existing impressions towards out-group members in multicultural societies (Kinder, 1998). Support for democratic values and civil liberties is often associated with the acceptance of others, whereas authoritarian and conservative value considerations are linked with preferences to denounce the basic rights of individuals belonging to one's least-liked group in society (Sullivan, Piereson, & Marcus, 1982; Marcus, Sullivan & Theiss-Morse, 1995). Perceptions of threat and intergroup conflict and ethnocentric views are also associated with unsympathetic reactions towards minority groups (Stouffer, 1992; Stephan & Stephan, 2000).

Unlike past research on attitudes towards minorities, our study focuses on young people between the ages of 16 and 19 years for a number of reasons. First, asylum seekers might attend school with these students so we need to assess their attitudes. Second, young adults' civic engagement is predicted by civic engagement in late adolescence (Zaff, Malanchuk, & Eccles, 2008). Third, older (18 years) adolescents report more interest in politics than younger (15 years) adolescents (Stattin, Hussein, Ozdemir, & Russo, 2016) and at the same time, are less likely to endorse the rights of asylum seekers than are young adolescents (Tenenbaum & Ruck, 2012).

The present study examines differences in how adolescents perceive asylum-seekers when induced to feel positively or negatively, in comparison to neutral incidental emotions. Because prejudice, xenophobia, Islamophobia, anti-immigrant attitudes, and negative orientations towards groups in society contain emotional and cognitive elements, in our study



we focused on two evaluation outcomes: tolerant attitudes towards the rights of the target group, and feelings towards the target group. Tolerant attitudes are those that allow the expression of ideas that clash with what one might ordinarily support, and give permission to lifestyles not compatible with one's own (Sullivan et al., 1979; Skitka et al., 2004). They are expressed as the willingness to sit next to someone from a disliked group, allow such person to make a public speech, hold a public rally, teach in schools, or live in one's neighbourhood. These attitudinal indicators are usually driven by considerations of the above actions and their possible consequences. In addition, Kuklinski et al. (1991) note that citizens are likely to evaluate the rights of others on the basis of their overall feelings towards members of social groups, their simplified gut reaction towards such individuals rather than an evaluation of their actions. Brady and Sniderman (1985) show that the 'likeability heuristic' matters for informing citizens' policy preferences. It is thus logical to examine both the attitudinal and affective component of individuals' responses to asylum seekers.

In sum, we had two related hypotheses. First, we expected that after an emotion manipulation task, young people induced to feel incidental happiness would express more positive attitudes toward asylum seekers than those participants induced to feel incidental fear or no emotion. Second, we expected that after the emotion manipulation task, those induced to feel incidental happiness would feel more positive feelings toward asylum seekers than those participants induced to feel incidental fear or no emotion.

## **Method**

### **Participants**

Two hundred nineteen participants (80 boys, 137 girls, and two not stated) ranging in age from 16- to 21-year-olds ( $M = 17.16$ ,  $SD = .68$ ) participated in this study. The students came from eight schools located in Oxfordshire, Surrey, Hampshire, Sussex, London, and Reading, or an outreach programme located in Birmingham. Five of the eight schools came

from the state sector with catchment areas that were economically diverse and served low-income (e.g., social housing residents) to middle-income young people. The other three schools were private. The outreach programme included student participants from 36 different state schools local to the Midlands. The majority (147 students, 67.1%) of students identified as white, thirty-seven (16.9%) as Asian, twenty-four (11%) as Black, eight (3.7%) as mixed ethnicity, and three (1.4%) declined to report ethnicity. Participants were assigned to either the fear ( $N = 61$ ), happy ( $N = 98$ ), or control ( $N = 60$ ) incidental emotion conditions.

### **Materials**

Each survey contained demographic information, pre-existing prejudicial orientations towards out-groups, a mood induction exercise, an emotion manipulation check, vignettes about the rights of Muslim asylum seekers, attitudes toward Muslim asylum seekers, and emotions toward Muslim asylum seekers. Only the pre-existing orientations, mood induction exercise, the emotion manipulation check, tolerance attitudes toward asylum seekers, and emotions toward to asylum seekers are relevant to this study and will be discussed further.

*Incidental emotion induction exercise.* For each of the incidental emotion induction conditions (i.e., fear, happy), we employed an emotion recall manipulation method. Participants were instructed to write about a situation that made them feel the most happy / afraid in their life and describe it such that a person reading the description would feel that emotion just from hearing about the situation. Students in the control condition were asked to describe their journey to school. For each of the conditions, students were provided with a lined sheet of paper to complete the task.

*Incidental emotion induction (manipulation) check.:* To verify that the memory recall manipulation method induced the expected emotions, but to avoid making emotional recall salient in our experimental participants, we conducted an emotion manipulation check with an independent sample of 59 individuals (university students of psychology). Similarly to our

experimental participants, the subjects of the manipulation check were asked to describe in detail one situation that has made them the most happy/afraid they have been in their life, and describe it such that a person reading the description would become happy/afraid just from hearing about the situation. Control subjects were asked to describe their typical trip to the University. All subjects were then instructed to answer on a scale of 1 (not at all) to 5 (a great deal) the degree to which they felt 21 emotions, thinking specifically about the incident they just described. Four of these emotions were related to happiness (i.e., excited, enthusiastic, proud, inspired) and five were relevant to fear (i.e., distressed, upset, scared, nervous, afraid). We found significant differences between subjects in the three conditions in their ratings of being excited  $F(2, 57) = 25.25, p < .0001, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .47$ ; enthusiastic  $F(2, 57) = 32.15, p < .0001, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .53$ ; proud  $F(2, 57) = 33.15, p < .0001, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .54$ ; inspired  $F(2, 57) = 15.47, p < .0001, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .35$ ; distressed  $F(2, 57) = 12.01, p < .0001, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .30$ ; upset  $F(2, 57) = 8.45, p = .001, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .23$ ; scared  $F(2, 57) = 23.28, p < .0001, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .45$ ; nervous  $F(2, 57) = 6.72, p = .002, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .19$ ; and afraid,  $F(2, 57) = 19.20, p < .0001, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .40$ .

The manipulations worked as expected. Follow-up least significant difference tests indicated that subjects assigned to the happiness condition rated themselves at the time of the event feeling significantly (all  $ps < .01$ ) more excited ( $M_{excited} = 3.81, SD = 1.25$ ), enthusiastic ( $M_{enthusiastic} = 3.81, SD = 1.18$ ), proud ( $M_{proud} = 4.14, SD = 1.11$ ) and inspired ( $M_{inspired} = 3.05, SD = 1.53$ ) than those assigned to the fear ( $M_{excited} = 1.88, SD = 1.16$ ;  $M_{enthusiastic} = 1.24, SD = .66$ ;  $M_{proud} = 1.41, SD = .87$ ;  $M_{inspired} = 1.41, SD = .87$ ) or control ( $M_{excited} = 1.59, SD = .85$ ;  $M_{enthusiastic} = 1.91, SD = 1.15$ ;  $M_{proud} = 1.91, SD = 1.31$ ;  $M_{inspired} = 1.32, SD = .78$ ) conditions. Subjects in the fear condition rated themselves feeling at the time of the event significantly (all  $ps < .01$ ) more distressed, upset, scared, nervous and afraid ( $M_{distressed} = 3.06, SD = 1.56$ ;  $M_{upset} = 2.53, SD = 1.51$ ;  $M_{scared} = 3.88, SD = 1.45$ ;  $M_{nervous} = 3.00, SD =$

1.46;  $M_{afraid} = 3.53$ ,  $SD = 1.66$ ) than those in the happy ( $M_{distressed} = 1.43$ ,  $SD = .87$ ;  $M_{upset} = 1.29$ ,  $SD = .72$ ;  $M_{scared} = 1.76$ ,  $SD = 1.37$ ;  $M_{nervous} = 1.86$ ,  $SD = 1.39$ ;  $M_{afraid} = 1.76$ ,  $SD = 1.22$ ) and the control ( $M_{distressed} = 1.50$ ,  $SD = .96$ ;  $M_{upset} = 1.41$ ,  $SD = .73$ ;  $M_{scared} = 1.36$ ,  $SD = .73$ ;  $M_{nervous} = 1.55$ ,  $SD = .96$ ;  $M_{afraid} = 1.23$ ,  $SD = .77$ ) conditions.

*Present Context Emotionality.* The emotions individuals are aware that they experience at the time that they participate in a study can also condition their responses to unrelated affective stimuli. To measure their levels of awareness of present context emotionality, and to ensure that random assignment cancelled out this factor, we asked our experiment participants to provide ratings on the above 21 emotions thinking about how they felt at the present moment. Awareness of feeling excited, enthusiastic, proud, and inspired could boost the happiness condition, while feeling distressed, upset, scared, nervous and afraid could boost the effect of the fear condition.

*Tolerance Attitudes toward asylum seekers' rights.* Tolerance attitudes were assessed using a three-item measure ("Young asylum seekers should be allowed to make a public speech," "It is okay for young asylum seekers to be part of my group of friends," and "I am okay with sitting next to someone like the young asylum seekers.") Participants rated these items on a ten-point scale (-5/strongly disagree to +5/strongly agree). Their responses were combined to create a single attitude score ( $\alpha = .65$ ).

*Feelings towards asylum seekers.* Participants identified their emotional reactions toward asylum seekers using a two-item measure ("On a scale from -5 to +5, where -5 is very (comfortable/relaxed) and +5 is very (afraid/nervous), how do you feel about young asylum seekers?"). Their responses were combined to create an overall feeling score toward asylum seekers ( $\alpha = .74$ ).

## **Procedure**

The University of [blinded] granted the project, “Young People’s Views of the Rights of Minority Groups in our Society” EC/2014/12/FAHS) ethical approval. Letters describing the study were sent to schools and the summer-camp to obtain head teachers’ permission. After students provided written consent, they completed questionnaires described in the materials section. They completed a baseline tolerance measure and then the emotion induction exercise. After the emotion induction exercise, students completed the rest of the questionnaire.

## Results

### Context Emotionality

To assess the level of awareness of present context emotionality in our participants, we examined whether they felt more excited, enthusiastic, proud, inspired in the happiness condition, or more distressed, upset, scared, nervous and afraid in the fear condition. There were no significant differences between participants in the three conditions in their ratings of being enthusiastic,  $F(2, 213) = 1.66, p = .19$ , proud,  $F(2, 214) = .27, p = .76$ , inspired,  $F(2, 128) = 1.58, p = .21$ , distressed,  $F(2, 215) = .07, p = .93$ , upset,  $F(2, 214) = .72, p = .49$ , scared,  $F(2, 215) = .92, p = .40$ , nervous,  $F(2, 215) = 1.68, p = .19$ , and afraid,  $F(2, 214) = .83, p = .40$ . There was a significant difference in ratings of feeling excited across the three conditions,  $F(2, 214) = 4.65, p = .01, partial \eta^2 = .04$ . Follow-up least significant difference tests indicated that participants assigned to the control ( $M = 1.90, SD = .86$ ) condition rated themselves as less excited than those assigned to the fear ( $M = 2.44, SD = 1.04$ ) condition or happy ( $M = 2.29, SD = 1.09$ ) conditions. There was no difference in levels of feeling excited between those in the fear and happy conditions.

### Post-test Measures of Tolerance Attitudes

It was predicted that students who were assigned to the incidental happiness condition would show more positive tolerance attitudes toward asylum seekers than would those

assigned to the incidental fear or control conditions. Two students assigned to the happy condition did not answer all three questions and were dropped from this analysis. We conducted a between-subjects ANOVA with condition as an IV and tolerance attitudes as a DV. The ANOVA indicated a significant difference across conditions,  $F(2, 214) = 5.34, p = .005, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .05$ . Follow-up least significant difference tests indicated that students assigned to the happiness condition ( $M = 4.42, SD = .85$ ) displayed more positive tolerance attitudes than did students assigned to the fear ( $M = 3.81, SD = 1.57$ ),  $t(85) = -2.80, p = .006$ , or control ( $M = 3.94, SD = 1.41$ ),  $t(86) = -2.40, p = .02$  conditions. Students assigned to the fear and control conditions did not differ significantly from either other. We tested for effect of school type (state vs. private) and gender. There were no significant main or interaction effects of school type or gender.

### **Feelings toward Asylum Seekers**

To examine feelings toward asylum-seekers, a between-subjects ANOVA with condition as an IV and feelings as a DV was conducted. One student assigned to the control and one assigned to the happy condition did not answer both questions and were dropped from the analysis. The ANOVA indicated a significant difference across conditions,  $F(2, 214) = 3.92, p = .04, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .03$ . Follow-up least significant difference tests indicated that students assigned to the happy ( $M = 3.29, SD = 1.90$ ) condition displayed more positive feelings than did students assigned to the control condition ( $M = 2.51, SD = 2.10$ ),  $t(103) = -2.44, p = .02$ . Students in the happy and fear ( $M = 2.89, SD = 2.03$ ) conditions did not differ from each other. Again, we examined whether school type (state vs. private) or gender had significant effects. There were no significant main or interaction effects of school type or gender.

### **Discussion**

This study found that young people induced to feel incidental happiness were more likely to have tolerant attitudes toward Muslim asylum-seeking young people than were young people induced to feel incidental fear or no emotion, which supported the first hypothesis. Partially supporting the second hypothesis, participants in the happiness condition reported more positive feelings toward Muslim asylum-seeking young people than did those in the control condition, but not more than those in the fear condition. The findings from this study extend our understanding of the relationship between incidental emotions and complex affective judgements like attitudes toward political groups that can lead to outgroup derogation (Brewer, 1979), discrimination (Schatz & Staub, 1997), delegitimization (Bar-Tal, 1989), moral exclusion (Staub, 1989), as well as altruism, cooperation, and other pro-social orientations (Eisenberg et al., 2006; Wispe, 1972).

Our analysis also confirms and extends research on affective biases (Dunn & Schweitzer, 2005) by providing additional evidence of significant levels of misattribution on the basis of valence. Emotions underlie decision-making in political as well as interpersonal contexts (Capelos, 2011; Dunn & Schweitzer, 2005). From a theoretical perspective, these findings contribute to our knowledge of the impact of emotional reactions to demonstrate that not only do incidental emotions invoked in an unrelated situation colour our tolerance judgements of familiar others (Dunn & Schweitzer, 2005), but that emotional reactions also influence how we perceive outgroup target members. We found that participants who felt incidental happiness were overall more comfortable and relaxed in their emotion attributions toward asylum seekers, a group frequently viewed with a political lens, than participants who were in the control condition.

Our finding that incidental happiness increases tolerant attitudes has important consequences for considering the value of contact between asylum-seeking youth and their mainstream peers. Contact with unfamiliar others can lead to heightened anxiety (Stephan &

Stephan, 1985), which then leads to more general negative outgroup biases. In our study, simply being induced to be happy had the desired effect of students demonstrating increased tolerance compared to being induced to feel fear or no emotion. When Allport's (1954) conditions are not met, contact is less effective as a means for reducing prejudice (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). Our findings suggest that in addition to situational constraints related to the interaction (e.g., intergroup cooperation), other factors, such as an individual's general emotional state, need to be considered, in the effectiveness of contact to reduce outgroup biases. One explanation may be that happiness increases openness to ideas and actions (Quoidbach et al., 2015; Sowden & Dawson, 2011).

Given the positive benefits of happiness in reducing bias, we need a better understanding of emotion regulation strategies in facilitating positive mood. A recent review suggests that happiness can be improved through five emotion regulation strategies including selecting a situation, changing a situation, attentional deployment, cognitive appraisal, and modulation of emotion (Quoidbach et al., 2015). From this framework, young people could be educated about which situations induce happiness. For example, mood management activities like listening to music, talking to people, participation in enjoyable activities, and acts of kindness increase happiness (Thayer, Newman, & McClain, 1994). Students could also be coached to interpret and respond to life events to change their negative appraisals of situations. Similarly, students could also learn about the role of cultivating optimism and savouring the moment in inducing happiness (Warner & Vroman, 2011). And the positive benefits of modulating their responses to display more positive affect in everyday interactions could be emphasised. All of these strategies could support students' in regulating their emotions to increase happiness.

An additional simple way to make students happy is to improve the general school climate. Not surprisingly, when school climates are positive and students are happier, they are



also less likely to engage in bullying behaviours (Low & Van Ryzin, 2014), supporting our focus on school climate and the general well-being of students. Focussing on school climate in this age group is particularly important given findings that this age group tends to be less supportive of the rights of asylum-seeking young people (Tenenbaum & Ruck, 2012; Ruck & Tenenbaum, 2014). Older adolescents also have a stronger understanding of group norms and are increasingly concerned with the smooth functioning of their social groups compared to younger individuals (Killen et al., 2002; Killen & Rutland, 2011). As a result, older adolescents are more concerned with protecting their own group and see different groups more at odds with their group than do younger adolescents, which may contribute to rejection of outgroup members. That incidental happiness seemed to overcome a bias suggests this avenue of intervention might support inclusion of young people from a variety of backgrounds.

Despite its strengths, this study had certain limitations. First, we examined how incidental emotions which vary on their valence appraisal (positive for happiness, negative for fear) can shape evaluations of unfamiliar others. Future research should examine other emotions (sadness, anger, surprise, disgust, hope) and their variations along appraisal dimensions of certainty, power, control, attention, and effort (Frijda, 1987). For example, it would be interesting to identify the influence of negative valence emotions with other-person control appraisals, such as anger, versus emotions with appraisals of personal control, such as guilt, on tolerance judgements towards unfamiliar others.

Another limitation is that we did not disentangle attitudes toward asylum seekers and Muslim young people. We chose not to because the majority of asylum seekers into the UK are of a Muslim background (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh & Qasmiyeh, 2010). However, Islam has emerged as the focus of immigration and diversity debates in Europe (Verkuyten & Slooter,

2007). Nonetheless, it is an empirical question whether asylum seekers with non-Muslim backgrounds might be perceived differently.

Future research should also test whether evaluations of Muslim asylum-seekers' rights varies with induced incidental emotions. Young British people are less likely to extend secular self-determination (e.g., choosing where to live) than secular nurturance rights (e.g., being given money to pay for clothing) to asylum-seeking young people (Tenenbaum & Ruck, 2012). Research using this paradigm could uncover to what extent emotions may influence young people's perceptions and whether positive emotions have the power to shift reasoning about differently endorsed emotions. In increasingly multi-cultural as well as religiously diverse societies, the UN Convention on the Rights of Children (The United Nations, 1989, art. 15) argues that children from all backgrounds must be guaranteed equal rights regardless of country of origin. This work could help to fulfil the rights of young people from asylum backgrounds.

Despite the above qualifications, our conclusion is that incidental emotions are a significant part of political decision making and behaviour, and understanding their role in informing judgements towards ethnic minority peers among the young has important policy implications. If, as we have shown here, incidental emotions can change the way citizens orient themselves towards others, then efforts to promote favourable attitudes and positive feelings towards minorities can be more fruitful after priming positive valence emotions, even when they are unrelated to the evaluative target. In short, given growing concern in societies around the world around perceptions of minority groups (ethnic, religious or cultural), examining tolerance from a political psychology as well as developmental perspective (Vogt, 1997) may help us to find ways of supporting the acceptance of young people from a variety of backgrounds.

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