Iraqi, Syrian, and Palestinian Refugee Adolescents' Beliefs About Parental Authority Legitimacy and Its Correlates

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This study examined intra- and interindividual variations in parental legitimacy beliefs in a sample of 883 Arab refugee adolescents (M_{age} = 15.01 years, *SD* = 1.60), 277 Iraqis, 275 Syrians, and 331 Palestinians in Amman, Jordan. Confirmatory factor analyses showed distinct latent factors for moral–conventional, prudential, and personal legitimacy items. Older adolescents rated legitimacy lower for personal issues, but higher for prudential issues. Beliefs were associated with socioeconomic status (fathers' education, family size), particularly for personal issues, but were more pervasively associated with displacement-related experiences. Greater war trauma was associated with less prudential legitimacy for all youth and more authority legitimacy over moral–conventional issues for Syrian youth. Greater hopefulness was associated with more authority legitimacy over all but personal issues.

Developmental scientists now agree that children and adolescents are active agents in their socialization and that they evaluate and then act on their beliefs and expectations (Grusec & Davidov, 2010; Kuczynski, Parkin, & Pitman, 2015). Although adolescents draw boundaries and reject parental control over some issues, they believe that parents have the legitimate authority—and indeed, that parents are obligated—to make rules about many areas of youth's lives (Kakihara & Tilton-Weaver, 2009; Smetana, 2000; Smetana & Asquith, 1994). Importantly, these beliefs are associated with behavioral indicators of socialization, including compliance to parental rules (Darling, Cumsille, & Martinez, 2007; Keijsers & Laird, 2014; Kuhn & Laird, 2011), and more broadly, with morality, identity, and autonomy development.

Although similar age trends and domain specificity in legitimacy beliefs have been found in different cultures, individual differences and contextual influences also have been observed (reviewed in Smetana, 2011). The effects of cultural values, economic hardship, neighborhood conditions, and war exposure are complexly intertwined when considering authority beliefs among refugee youth. Large numbers of youth in the Middle East have been displaced due to political and ethnic violence (Barber, 1999, 2014; Dubow, Huesmann, & Boxer, 2009), yet little research has examined these beliefs in such samples and their associations with contextual factors. Parenting has been found to both mediate and moderate the effects of displacement and war-related trauma on Middle Eastern refugee youth's adjustment (Punamäki, Quota, & El Sarraj, 1997). Thus, studying youth's interpretations of and beliefs about parenting could contribute to an understanding of both cross-cultural similarities and variations in parenting beliefs, as well as the factors that contribute to refugee youth's healthy social development. The present study addressed these issues by examining parental authority beliefs

in three samples of war-displaced youth living in Jordan.

Domain-Specific Beliefs About Legitimate Parental Authority in Cultural Contexts

Social domain theory (Nucci, 1996; Smetana, Jambon, & Ball, 2014; Turiel, 1983) provides a framework for examining generational and age differences in beliefs regarding legitimate parental authority. Research has shown that nearly all parents and adolescents agree that parents legitimately may regulate *moral* issues (pertaining to others' welfare, rights, and fairness), *conventional* issues (arbitrary, contextually relative social norms), and *prudential* issues (pertaining to individuals' health and safety, including risky behaviors like smoking). Parents and teens also agree that youth should have some authority over *personal* issues, which involve control over one's body, privacy, and personal preferences and choices (e.g., appearance and leisure activities Nucci, 1996). Parents and teens often disagree about how much autonomy youth should have, however, leading to conflict in their relationships. Conflicts typically involve domain overlaps (referred to as *multifaceted* issues), where teens view issues as personal and parents view them as prudential or conventional (Smetana & Asquith, 1994; Smetana, Crean, & Campione-Barr, 2005).

Along with other theoretical perspectives that view autonomy, agency, and effectance as basic human needs, social domain researchers have claimed that individuals across cultures view a set of issues as personal (Nucci, 1996; Smetana, 2002, 2011; Turiel, 2002), although the boundaries and content of what is treated as under personal control may vary. This assertion has been supported in studies of U.S. youth varying in ethnicity (Fuligni, 1998; Smetana, 2000) and youth in Asia and South America (see Smetana, 2011, for a review). In these studies, adolescents generally endorse parental authority over moral, conventional, and prudential but not personal issues, although some contextual and cultural variations in these evaluations have been observed. For instance, Nucci, Camino, and Sapiro (1996) found that while most Brazilian youth treated prudential issues as legitimately controlled by parents, higher socioeconomic status (SES) was associated with less authority legitimacy over personal issues. Reflecting Japanese culture, where teenagers spend much more time in school studying and less time with peers than in the United States, youth in Japan treated friendship choices as prudential; this finding contrasts with research in the United States, where friendship choices are typically seen as personal (Hasebe, Nucci, & Nucci, 2004).

Furthermore, Iranian mothers of 14-year-olds, varying widely in literacy, modernity, and SES, were found to have domain-differentiated beliefs (Assadi, Smetana, Shahmansouri, & Mohammadi, 2011). Regardless of background, mothers evaluated parents as having more authority over conventional than prudential and personal issues and the least authority over personal issues. As in Japan (Hasebe et al., 2004), mothers treated peer issues (friendships with unsuitable persons; going places with friends; time spent with friends) as prudential matters. More educated mothers endorsed more authority over prudential and friendship issues.

To the best of our knowledge, however, Arab adolescents' parental legitimacy beliefs have not been examined. This would be of particular interest, as Arab families in the Middle East have been described as emphasizing traditional values, seen as stemming from Islamic principles (Oweis, Gharaibeh, Maaitah, Gharaibeh, & Obeisat, 2012). These parenting values have been described as relatively consistent across Islamic sects and Middle Eastern countries and regions (Abudabbeh, 2005; Dwairy et al., 2006; Haboush, 2005). Obedience to authority has deep roots in Arab culture (Dahir, 1987) and Arab parents are strongly authoritarian in parenting and family decision making (Al-Simadi & Atoum, 2000; Dwairy et al., 2006). Arab youth tend to perceive family relations as based on punishment, negative criticism, and restrictive parental control (Dwairy et al., 2006; Joseph, 2005). Loyalty and responsiveness to the extended family, along with conformity, community, and family honor, all are strongly emphasized (Sharifzadeh, 2004). Studying a large sample of middle adolescents in eight Middle Eastern countries, Dwairy et al. (2006) found that, much as reported elsewhere, authoritarian parenting was associated with lower levels of parental education, SES, and urbanization. These effects were small, however; larger effects were found for countries with differences attributed to variations in history and social-political systems. Adolescents from more traditional societies rated parents higher (above the study mean) in authoritarian parenting, whereas youth from more modern countries rated parents not only above the study mean in permissiveness, but also as strongly authoritarian.

Refugee Youth in Jordan

The Kingdom of Jordan provides asylum for a very large number of refugees from regional

conflicts and wars in the Middle East (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2014), including recent refugees fleeing the current conflict in Syria, those who fled war in Iraq, and Palestinians who have resided in Jordan as refugees for generations. Despite similarities in cultural and parenting values, they have very different histories in terms of their residence in Jordan, their experience with political conflict and war, and their educational background and SES.

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA; 1995) defines a Palestinian refugee as someone who resided in Palestine for 2 years before the Arab–Israeli conflict in 1948 and who lost home and lands, as well as refugees living in UNRWA camps in the region. Indeed, according to an international agreement, Palestinian refugees in Jordan cannot gain Jordanian citizenship, own their own homes, or be educated in Jordanian schools. Jordan currently has 13 Palestinian refugee camps, and rates of unemployment and poverty are high in all of them, particularly among young males (Arneberg, 1997).

In contrast, the majority of Iraqi refugees in Jordan emigrated to Jordan in two waves, one following the 1991 Gulf War and the other after the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq (Sassoon, 2011). As of March 2013, Jordan is estimated to be hosting approximately 30,000 Iraqi refugees, most of whom are from Baghdad (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2014). Iraqi refugees in Jordan consist mostly of upper-middle-class professionals, government employees, or business people who had the financial resources to immigrate to Jordan (Sassoon, 2011). Iraqi families are concentrated in West Amman in higher SES neighborhoods, and some Iraqi youth attend private schools.

Finally, the vast majority of Syrian refugees arrived within the past few years in response to the recent uprisings in Syria. Syria shares a common border, history, and culture with Jordan. It is estimated that over 600,000 Syrians have fled (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2014), with numbers expected to increase. Although over 120,000 Syrian refugees currently live in the Zaatari refugee camp, the largest of its kind, most live in noncamp settings. About 13% reside in Amman, the capital and the site of our research. Syrian refugee youth tend to be from low-SES families and live in East Amman, in close proximity to the Palestinian refugee camps.

War-displaced and refugee youth have been found to experience a variety of mental health and personality sequelae (Fayyad, Karam, Karam, Tabet, & Ghosn, 2004; Layne et al., 2010; Shaw, 2003). For some youth, these negative effects resolve over time (Shaw, 2003), suggesting the importance of considering the recency of their war exposure. However, negative effects also can be exacerbated by contextual conditions common to refugee families, such as poverty, crowded conditions, and downward mobility (Shaw, 2003). The chaotic contexts displaced families sometimes experience may put the family system at risk and affect normative developmental processes of adolescence (Shaw, 2003). Furthermore, this disruption can have broader social implications, as family socialization is central to the stability of society and the maintenance of social order (Cavalli-Sforza, Feldman, Chen, & Dornbusch, 1982). In turn, successful socialization has been linked with parental legitimacy beliefs (e.g., Darling et al., 2007; Keijsers & Laird, 2014; Kuhn & Laird, 2011).

Indeed, parents' authority beliefs are associated with their parenting styles, with authoritarian parenting associated with greater moralization of conventional issues and greater parental control over personal issues (Smetana, 1995). Among adolescents, greater authority legitimacy is associated with greater rule compliance (Darling et al., 2007; Kuhn, Phan, & Laird, 2014), more disclosure of activities in response to parental monitoring and solicitation (Keijsers & Laird, 2014), less affiliation with deviant peers (Kuhn & Laird, 2011), and more active participation in community and society (Metzger & Smetana, 2009). Diminished beliefs on parental authority in risky contexts could lead to increases in behavioral problems and disruptions in moral judgments, identity, and autonomy development. Thus, studying Arab refugee youth's legitimacy beliefs not only extends past research to the Arab cultural context, but also could provide novel insights into how SES, neighborhood conditions, and traumatic war experiences are associated with these judgments.

The Present Study

The present study examined whether Iraqi, Syrian, and Palestinian refugee youth living in Amman, Jordan distinguished among parents' legitimate authority to regulate conventional, moral, prudential, and personal issues and the correlates of these judgments. Several concerns motivated these issues. First, the description of Arab parents as authoritarian and controlling (Al-Simadi & Atoum, 2000; Dwairy et al., 2006) raises questions about whether Arab youth believe that

parents should have legitimate authority over all areas of their lives or whether their evaluations differ by domain. Consistent with studies in different regions of the world and with Iranian mothers (Assadi et al., 2011), we expected that youth in all three groups would evaluate parents as having more legitimate authority to regulate moral, conventional, and prudential than personal issues. Using culturally appropriate items, we expected that all youth would make similar distinctions, but that, based on past studies (Assadi et al., 2011; Hasebe et al., 2004), some of the issues treated as multifaceted in the United States (particularly regarding friends) may be seen as prudential or even conventional (e.g., reflecting cultural norms about loyalty to family) among Arab refugees. Furthermore, as past research has shown that parental legitimacy beliefs do not differ significantly for moral and conventional issues (Smetana et al., 2005), we hypothesized that they would be treated as a single latent factor here. We also tested for sex differences in the measurement and levels of judgments across domains, but as past research has yielded few sex differences in domain categorization (Smetana & Asquith, 1994), they were not expected here.

We examined the unique role of different contextual factors relevant to Arab refugee youth on their legitimacy judgments, including SES as well as youth's particular situation as refugees. We were interested in intraindividual (e.g., domain) as well as interindividual (e.g., refugee group) variations in judgments. Past research on legitimacy judgments (Nucci et al., 1996) as well as on authoritarian parenting in the Middle East (Dwairy et al., 2006) led us to expect that greater parental education and higher SES would be associated with less parental legitimacy (e.g., greater personal jurisdiction) over personal issues. The number of people living in one's home can be seen as reflecting SES (as lower SES families may have larger families) and more crowded living conditions, where one has less privacy and thus, one's behavior may impinge more on others. Thus, we hypothesized that larger family size may be associated with more parental control over personal issues.

Additionally, past research has shown that neighborhood collective efficacy, or more specifically, cohesion and assistance, including mutual trust, shared values among residents, and a willingness to intervene to support the community, contribute to neighborhood social order and better individual functioning (Leventhal, Dupéré, & Brooks-Gunn, 2009; Sampson, 1997). While these neighborhood factors are positively correlated with SES (with less collective efficacy found in low-SES neighborhoods), we expected that each might have unique effects. We hypothesized that living in more cohesive, high-efficacy neighborhoods would be associated with greater legitimacy regarding moral, conventional, and prudential issues, but not personal issues.

Importantly, beyond variations in SES, the youth in our study all had been displaced due to political conflict, although they varied widely in their direct exposure. We considered the effects of three variables indexing war-related experiences: length of residency in Jordan (as a measure of recency of war exposure or displacement), war-related stress and trauma, and feelings of hopefulness. Research has shown that exposure to war and political conflict may lead to disrupted parenting (Punamäki et al., 1997) and serious psychological sequelae, including behavioral and emotional problems (Layne et al., 2010; Shaw, 2003). Consistent with these findings, we hypothesized that more traumatic war-related experience, more recent arrival in Jordan, and less hopefulness would be associated with less moral, conventional, and prudential legitimacy, perhaps because youth come to realize that these issues are not necessarily under parents' control and that parents cannot provide stability in a chaotic and unstable world. However, we hypothesized that in keeping with the universal task of autonomy development, greater hopefulness would be associated with less legitimacy over personal issues.

Finally, past research has shown that the boundaries of parental authority shift during adolescence (Smetana et al., 2005). Although our sample consisted mostly of middle adolescents, the sample ranged in age from 10 to 20 years, and we examined age effects in refugee youth's evaluations. In keeping with past findings, we expected that with age, youth would grant parents less authority over personal issues. Although risky prudential issues are increasingly treated as personal in late adolescence and emerging adulthood, the preponderance of middle adolescents in our sample suggested that we would not find age differences in these judgments.

It was unclear whether nationality would contribute additional variance in authority beliefs above and beyond the effects of the various contextual factors examined here. However, in keeping with previous research (Dwairy et al., 2006), we examined whether Arab youth's authority beliefs and their correlates were moderated by nationality. Moreover, examining differences by nationality in a unique sample of adolescents whose families

sought refuge from political conflict provides an opportunity to better understand these groups. No specific predictions regarding group differences were made.

Method

Sample

Participants were 883 refugee youth (M_{age} = 15.01 years, SD = 1.60), 277 Iraqi, 275 Syrian, and 331 Palestinian youth living in Amman, Jor-

dan. Each group was nearly evenly divided by gender. The demographic characteristics of each group are provided in Table 1. The sample ranged in age from 10 to 20 years, but in each group, the majority of teens were 14 to 16 years old, with 2% of the distribution at 10–11 and 18–20 years of age. There was less age variability among Palestinians than Iraqis or Syrians. Parental education was higher among Iraqi than Palestinian or Syrian youth; Syrian fathers were more likely to be farmers or unskilled laborers than were Iraqi fathers. Iraqi youth lived in smaller families with fewer siblings than Syrian adolescents

Table 1
Demographic Characteristics of Iraqi, Syrian, and Palestinian Participants

	Iraqi (n = 277)	Syrian (n = 275)	Palestinian (n = 331)	Test of significance
Age (in years)	14.53$_a$ (1.99)	14.58$_b$ (1.85)	15.55$_c$ (1.06)	F(2, 882) = 30.33**
10–13	35%	29%	10%	χ^2(4) = 107.99**
14–16	46%	47%	80%	
17–19	19%	25%	10%	
% male	50	50	49	*ns*
% Muslim	94	100	100	
Years residing in Jordan	5.61$_a$ (4.00)	4.58$_b$ (6.82)	15.32$_c$ (1.84)	F(2, 843) = 515.01**
Live with mother figure	96%	97%	94%	*ns*
Live with father figure	76%	79%	73%	*ns*
# people in home	5.72$_a$ (1.91)	7.54$_b$ (3.38)	8.03$_c$ (2.27)	F(2, 792) = 60.20**
# siblings	3.48$_a$ (1.95)	4.02$_b$ (1.78)	5.92$_c$ (2.45)	F(2, 576) = 75.19**
Mothers' education				χ^2(4) = 27.77**
% primary or below	16	17	12	
% completed H.S.	42	60	59	
% college or higher	42	23	29	
Fathers' education				χ^2(4) = 83.30**
% primary or below	8	20	10	
% completed H.S.	35	50	63	
% college or higher	57	30	27	
Mothers' occupation				χ^2(6) = 15.16*/
Current/past				χ^2(7) = 7.00†
Unemployed	90%/76%	91%/84%	87%/na	
Unskilled, clerk	2%/6%	2%/3%	6%/na	
White collar	4%/12%	7%/11%	7%/na	
Professional	4%/6%	1%/3%	1%/na	
Fathers' occupation				χ^2(8) = 88.80**/
Current/past				χ^2(4) = 25.94**
Unemployed	30%/20%	41%/8%	22%/na	
Unskilled, farmer	20%/25%	32%/43%	51%/na	
Policeman, clerk	26%/31%	11%/27%	10%/na	
White collar	14%/10%	8%/8%	12%/na	
Professional	9%/13%	8%/15%	6%/na	
Adjustment				
War trauma	0.45$_b$ (0.26)	0.55$_a$ (0.26)	0.26$_c$ (0.21)	F(2, 868) = 112.76**
Norm breaking	1.61$_a$ (0.84)	1.69$_a$ (0.84)	1.77$_b$ (0.92)	F(2, 868) = 13.92.19**
Internalizing	1.83$_a$ (0.62)	1.91 (0.56)	1.97$_b$ (0.61)	F(2, 866) = 4.02*

Note. Norm breaking, reliably assessed on seven items from Stattin and Kerr (2000), was rated on a 5-point scale, with 5 = *high*. Internalizing symptoms, reliably rated on the 18-item Brief Symptom Inventory (BSI; Derogatis, *2000)*, were rated on a 4-point scale with 4 = *high*. Subscript letters indicate means that differ significantly. H.S. = high school; na = not applicable.
$^\dagger p$ < .10. *p < .05. **p < .01.

and, in turn, Palestinian youth (all differences $p < .01$).

For descriptive purposes, means by nationality for norm breaking, internalizing symptoms, and war trauma are also included in Table 1. As can be seen, Palestinians were higher in norm breaking and lower in war trauma than other youth and higher in internalizing than Iraqi youth. War trauma was highest among Syrian youth.

The Palestinian youth in our sample were fourth-generation Palestinians living in the Baqa'a and Jabal al-Hussein refugee camps in Amman, the capital city of Jordan. The Baqa'a camp was created in 1968 and holds almost 80,100 Palestinians, whereas the Jabal al-Hussein camp, created in 1962, holds 29,000 Palestinian refugees. The camps are self-contained and have paved roads and multistory dwellings, although they are poorly maintained. Reflecting the Iraqi refugee population in Jordan, Iraqi youth in our sample were primarily middle and upper middle class and living in apartments in Amman. Finally, like most Syrian refugees currently residing in Jordan, Syrian youth in our sample lived in noncamp settings.

Data were collected in 2013. Permission to conduct the research was obtained from the Jordanian Ministry of Education as well as the Education program for the Jordan field office for the UNRWA schools. This gave us ready access to schools, which were selected based on their high concentrations of refugee youth. Palestinian adolescents were recruited from six UNRWA schools located in the refugee camps. Iraqi and Syrian teens were recruited from 18 public schools. Schools serving Syrian youth were in session only in the afternoon so that they could work to support their families. Youth completed the surveys in school, and response rates were uniformly high at the different schools.

Measures

The measures for the present study were translated into Arabic by the second author, with assistance from a team of translators consisting of students who received their bachelor's degree with honors in applied linguistics at the University of Jordan. Two native Arabic speakers who grew up in the United States but had moved back to Jordan as adolescents back-translated the measures.

Demographic Background

As part of the demographic survey, adolescents indicated each parent's highest level of education on a 6-point scale ranging from 1 (*did not attend school*) to 6 (*university or higher*). They also specified their mothers' and fathers' occupations on a 5-point scale ranging from *unemployed* to *professional occupations*. Furthermore, youth indicated how many people lived in their home and how long they had resided in Jordan (in years and months). Palestinian youth responded to the latter question in terms of their age. We obtained data on religious affiliation but did not obtain more detailed data on religious denomination (e.g., Sunni vs. Shi'a) or religiosity.

Neighborhood Cohesion and Assistance

Ten items adapted from Mujahid, Diez Roux, Morenoff, and Raghunathan (2007) were used to assess *neighborhood cohesion* (six items: "People in my neighborhood generally get along with each other, look out for each other, can be trusted") and *assistance* (four items: "In my neighborhood, neighbors could be counted on to 'do something' if a child or teen was threatening someone with a weapon"; "a fight broke out in front of their house"). Items were rated on a 4-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly agree*) to 4 (*strongly disagree*). Cronbach's alphas ranged from .79 to .88 for cohesion and from .72 to .78 for assistance for the three refugee groups. The two scales were moderately correlated, $r(874) = .49$, $p < .001$, and were combined for the analyses.

War Trauma Screening Inventory

We selected 23 items from Layne, Stuvland, Saltzman, Djapo, and Pynoos's (1999) 49-item self-report measure of exposure to different types of war-related trauma and loss (see Layne et al., 2010). Items pertained to witnessing violence or property damage, harm or threat to loved ones, and loss and displacement, but the Jordanian Ministry of Education did not permit us to include items pertaining to life threat. Items were scored as 0 (*did not occur*) or 1 (*occurred*). Mean scores were obtained. Cronbach's alphas ranged from .87 to .89 for the three groups.

Hopefulness Scale

Adolescents rated their feelings of hopefulness versus hopelessness about the future on a 20-item subscale drawn from the Beck Depression Scale (Beck, Weissman, Lester, & Trexler, 1974). Respondents responded *true* or *false* to each item (scored 0

or 1). Items assessing hopelessness were reverse scored, and then the items were summed to obtain a single scale. Alphas ranged from .76 to .81 for youth in the three groups.

Parental Authority Beliefs

The stimuli for the legitimacy assessments were 22 items (see Table 2) drawn from previous research (Smetana, 2000; Smetana & Asquith, 1994). Several items were adapted to be culturally appropriate (e.g., smoking hookah was added as a prudential item; drinking alcohol was omitted, because it violates religious rules and is seen as offensive). Based on past research (Smetana, 2000), participants rated the acceptability of parents making a rule or having a firm expectation for each item on a 3-point scale: 1 = *not ok*, 2 = *sometime*s, and 3 = *ok.* Higher values indicated greater legitimacy.

Analytic Plan

Analyses were conducted with structural equation modeling (SEM) using Mplus version 7.1

Table 2
Multigroup Measurement Model for Adolescents' Legitimacy Beliefs Across Refugee Groups

	Factor loadings	Intercepts	Latent means[a]	
			Syrian	Palestinian
Moral–conventional domain			0.00	−0.144**
Doing the chores	0.490	2.39		
Telling the truth	0.572	2.66(I/P), 2.76(S)		
Keeping promises	0.625	2.51		
How I talk to my parents	0.611	2.73		
Getting along with siblings	0.667	2.48		
Manners	0.635	2.53		
Prudential domain			0.00	−0.186**
Smoking cigarettes	0.732	2.69		
Smoking hookah	0.781	2.55		
Driving recklessly	0.222	2.60(I/S), 2.45(P)		
Having illegal drugs	0.679	2.68(I/P), 2.80(S)		
Personal domain			−0.152**	
Time for getting up	0.579	2.15(I/S), 2.02(P)		
How I wear or style my hair	0.628	2.10		
Who should be friends	0.661	2.33		
What music I listen to	0.663	1.93		
When to clean bedroom	0.606	2.18		
How I spend my free time	0.650	2.07(I), 2.02(S), 2.17(P)		
Choosing my clothes	0.718	2.07		
How I spend my money	0.603	2.16		
How late at night to stay out	0.582	2.26		
What TV programs I watch	0.656	2.27		

Model comparisons	χ^2 (*df*)	$\Delta\chi^2/\Delta df$	*p*
Configural	1,006.12 (498)		
Factor invariant	1,046.85 (532)	40.73 (34)	*ns*
Intercept invariant	1,214.96 (566)	78.11 (34)	< .001
Partially intercept Invariant	1,086.67 (560)	39.82 (28)	*ns*

Note. Standardized factor loadings reported from Iraqi youth (as loadings were found to be factor invariant across groups). All factor loadings and intercepts were significant at $p < .001$. The one low loading for "driving recklessly" appears to be a fluke for the standardized Iraqi model, as the other standardized loadings are much higher as is the unstandardized loading. Multiple intercepts are presented when significant differences were found. I = Iraqi; S = Syrian; P = Palestinian.
[a]Latent factor means are estimated as relative differences from the Iraqi group; thus, Iraqi means in this model are 0 by definition. Syrian and Palestinian latent means were compared by constraining their means to be equal and using chi-square differences tests to assess differences. When one value is reported, this indicates that Syrian and Palestinian group means are constrained to equality. Zeros for the Syrian group means indicate that they were constrained to equal the Iraqi group given lack of significant differences.
**$p < .01$.

(Muthén & Muthén, 1998–2012). Missing data were handled with full information maximum likelihood, an estimation method that uses all available data to reduce bias to parameter estimates (Enders & Bandalos, 2001). There were 221 missing data patterns, but covariance coverage was 83% or higher, with most covariances having 90% or more complete cases. Variances of exogenous variables were estimated so that all cases could be included in analyses through missing data estimation. Standard model fit criteria were used, including chi-square tests, root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), standardized root mean square residual (SRMR), the comparative fit index (CFI), and Tucker–Lewis fit index (TLI). Acceptable model fit values are 0.05 or lower for RMSEA and SRMR and 0.90 or higher for CFI and TLI, with 0.95 and higher preferred (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

Analyses first focused on establishing the best fitting measurement model for legitimacy beliefs. Based on past research indicating that adolescents' judgments of parental authority legitimacy regarding moral and conventional issues typically do not differ (e.g., Smetana, 2000; Smetana & Asquith, 1994), we conducted a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to test a three-factor model that comprised items assessing moral–conventional, prudential, and personal issues (Smetana et al., 2014). According to social domain theory, multifaceted issues are conceptualized as overlaps between two or more domains. In a SEM analytic context, these would be best represented by an item cross loading onto two (or more) social domains.

To best understand potential refugee group differences in conceptualizations of authority beliefs, we first conducted CFAs separately for Iraqi, Syrian, and Palestinian youth. Models were first estimated with each item loading on the hypothesized domain, and then modification indices were used to identify statistically significant and meaningful variations. Modifications primarily involved cross loading an item onto two separate domains. As all of our theorized multifaceted items included personal components, multifaceted items were first loaded onto the personal domain and then modification indices were used to determine the best fitting cross loadings.

The same two modifications were required across each group. Specifically, the item "going places with friends" loaded onto the moral–conventional, but not personal or prudential, factor across Iraqi, Syrian, and Palestinian youth. The second shared modification, which was consistent and large, was a correlated error between "how I spend my money" and "how late to stay out at night." Although these both loaded onto the personal domain, these two items may have shared additional variance because youth who are staying out late are likely to be spending money on personal activities. Other modifications indicated multifaceted items that were group specific (three for Iraqi, four for Syrian, and two for Palestinian, with some overlap across pairs of groups). In general, care was taken not to overfit models.

The item, "time spent with friends," cross loaded as personal and prudential, as expected, for Iraqi teens, but loaded only onto the moral–conventional latent factor for Palestinian and Syrian youth. Thus, it appeared to have very different meanings in the three groups. We decided to remove the two friendship items from further analyses, given the noncomparability across groups for "going places with friends" and the theoretically inconsistent loadings for both friendship items for all or some youth on the moral–conventional latent factor. (A complete description of group-specific analyses is available from the first author by request.) Despite several group-specific multifaceted loadings, the separate models were largely similar in how items loaded onto domains. Model fit for each group was adequate across fit indices.

Second, after group-specific CFAs were finalized, a three-factor CFA was estimated that retained all theorized and modified measurement paths that were similar across all three refugee groups and removed any measurement paths that were not shared. This pared-down model was necessary for achieving a factor structure for parental authority legitimacy that was comparable across groups and that could be used to test study hypotheses. Measurement invariance across refugee groups was examined in factor loadings and item-level intercepts to ensure that the structure and meaning of the domain-specific authority legitimacy belief factors were similar across refugee groups. At each step, a more restrictive model (i.e., parameters constrained to be equal) was compared to a less restrictive model (i.e., parameters free to vary), with nonsignificant chi-square difference tests indicating measurement invariance.

We also conducted a multigroup analysis with a median split for age across the full sample (younger = 10–14, older = 15 and up) to determine if the model was invariant across age. Factor invariance was achieved, $\Delta\chi^2(17) = 21.95$, ns, but intercept invariance was not, $\Delta\chi^2(17) = 48.41$, $p < .001$. However, partial invariance was achieved after freeing two intercepts: Younger youth had

higher legitimacy beliefs for time for getting up and smoking hookah, compared to older youth. Likewise, invariance was tested across gender. Factor invariance was achieved, $\Delta\chi^2(17) = 18.80$, *ns*, but as before, full intercept invariance was not, $\Delta\chi^2(17) = 84.33$, $p < .001$. Partial intercept invariance was achieved after freeing five item intercepts; in four of five instances, females reported higher authority beliefs than males. Despite small differences in intercepts, these results allowed us to proceed with confidence that the structure of the measures was equivalent across age and gender.

Third, a full measurement model was estimated that included the best fitting structure of legitimacy beliefs along with all contextual and demographic factors and all possible correlations between them. Fourth, structural models included paths from each contextual and demographic factor to each legitimacy belief domain (see Figure 1). These structural models were conducted in a multigroup framework to assess moderation by refugee group (e.g., the extent of differences in paths across Iraqi, Syrian, and Palestinian youth). A model with all paths free to vary across refugee groups was compared to a model with paths constrained to be equal across groups; moderation by refugee group was assessed

using a chi-square difference test. The initial model also included mothers' education and parental occupation, but these variables did not contribute significantly to the overall or moderated model and thus were dropped from final analyses.

Results

Authority Legitimacy Belief CFAs

The legitimacy belief CFA was estimated for the full sample and included theoretically derived loadings of six moral and conventional items, five items in the prudential domain, nine items in the personal domain, and one correlated error among two personal items (see Table 2). Model fit was acceptable, $\chi^2(166) = 504.52$, $p < .001$, RMSEA = 0.048, 90% CI [0.044, 0.053], SRMR = 0.057, CFI = 0.92, TLI = 0.1, standardized factor loadings = 0.38 to 0.75, all ps < .001.

Model fit did not significantly decrease when factor loadings were constrained to be equal across refugee groups, indicating that factor invariance was achieved, $\Delta\chi^2(34) = 40.73$, *ns*. Compared to the factor invariant model, constraining item-level intercepts to be equal resulted in a significant decrease in model fit, $\Delta\chi^2(34) = 78.11$, $p < .001$. Model modi-
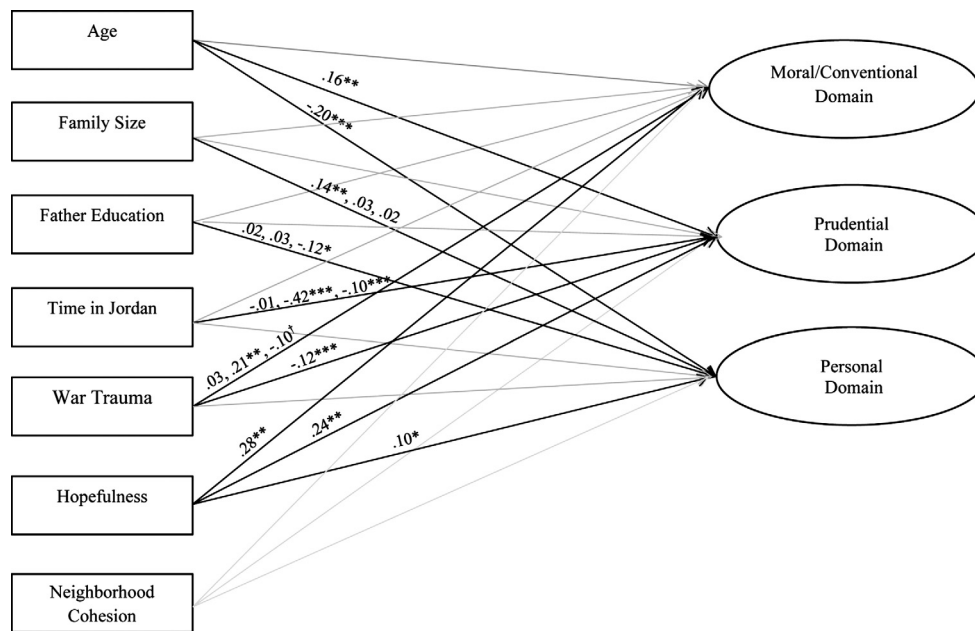

Figure 1. Demographic and contextual factors predicting beliefs about legitimate parental authority in a multiple-group moderation model by refugee group. Multiple paths presented indicate significant moderation by refugee group. In these cases, coefficients are presented for Iraqi, Syrian, and Palestinian adolescents, respectively.
+$p < .10$ *$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

fications, conducted one at a time based on modification indices revealed five intercepts that varied significantly across refugee groups (see Table 2). After these modifications, the intercept invariant model did not differ from the factor invariant model, $\Delta\chi^2(28) = 39.82$, *ns*, indicating that partial intercept invariance was achieved.

Latent factor means in multigroup models are estimated as relative mean differences compared to the reference group mean (here, Iraqi), which was fixed at 0. Latent mean differences across groups indicated that Iraqi refugee youth rated parents as having more legitimate authority over personal issues than did either Syrian (*diff* = −0.36, *p* < .001) or Palestinian adolescents (*diff* = −0.34, *p* < .001), but Palestinians and Syrians did not differ. Syrian and Iraqi adolescents did not differ in their beliefs about parents' legitimate authority vis-à-vis moral–conventional or prudential issues, but constraining these means to be equal across the two groups, Palestinian teens reported lower legitimacy beliefs regarding moral–conventional and prudential issues compared to both Iraqis and Syrians ($diff_{\text{moral}}$ = −0.44, $diff_{\text{prud}}$ = −0.34, *ps* < .001).

Structural Models and Moderation by Group

A full measurement model, including legitimacy beliefs and contextual and demographic factors, demonstrated acceptable fit, $\chi^2(285) = 707.91$, *p* < .001, RMSEA = 0.041, 90% CI [0.037, 0.045], SRMR = 0.048, CFI = 0.92, TLI = 0.90. Bivariate correlations from the full measurement model are shown in Table 3. Authority beliefs were moderately positively correlated across domains, and contextual and demographic factors were intercorrelated in mostly expected ways, with little

evidence of large multicollinearity among predictors.

As described previously, structural paths were examined in a multigroup model to test whether refugee group moderated links between authority beliefs and contextual and demographic factors. Comparing a baseline model with all paths freely estimated to a model with all paths constrained to be equal across groups, there was a just significant omnibus test of moderation, $\Delta\chi^2(42) = 58.01$, *p* = .051. In total, four paths were moderated. After freeing these paths across groups, the model fit was not significantly different from the constrained model. When paths were equivalent across groups, a single parameter is reported; when moderation was evident, we report different parameters across the groups.

SES-Related Correlates

Our hypothesis that greater parental education would be associated with less parental jurisdiction over personal issues was supported, but only for Palestinian youth and for fathers' educational background. That is, Palestinian youth who had more educated fathers evaluated parents as having less legitimate authority over personal issues than did offspring of less educated Palestinian fathers. Similar effects were not found for Iraqi or Syrian youth or for mothers' education. Family size was found to be positively associated with legitimacy beliefs regarding personal issues, but only for Iraqi youth. Consistent with hypotheses, Iraqi refugees who lived in larger families granted parents greater jurisdiction over personal issues. Contrary to hypotheses, neighborhood cohesion and assistance were not significantly associated with refugee adolescents' legitimacy beliefs in any domain.

Table 3
Bivariate Correlations Between Domain-Specific Beliefs About Parental Authority and Contextual Factors for the Full Model

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Moral/conventional domain	1								
2. Prudential domain	.57**	1							
3. Personal domain	.64**	.15**	1						
4. Age	−.14**	−.02	−.19**	1					
5. Family size	−.04	−.07†	.001	.06	1				
6. Father education	.05	−.01	.01	.03	−.06†	1			
7. Time in Jordan	−.19**	−.20**	−.07†	.40**	.18**	.05	1		
8. War trauma	.06	.02	.02	−.04	−.05	−.06†	−.52**	1	
9. Hopefulness	.31**	.23**	.11**	−.06†	−.06†	.12**	.04	−.22**	1
10. Neighborhood cohesion/efficacy	.05	−.01	.06	−.001	.06	.06†	.11**	−.12**	.13**

Note. Standardized correlations reported from the full measurement model.
†*p* < .10. **p* < .05. ***p* < .01.

Displacement and War-Related Experiences

The three indices of displacement and stressful war experiences were significantly associated with refugee youth's beliefs about legitimate parental authority, although there were differences across domain and/or refugee group. As hypothesized, adolescents' reports of stressful war experiences were negatively associated with legitimacy beliefs regarding prudential issues. That is, for youth from all three national backgrounds, experiencing a greater number of war-related traumas was associated with less endorsement of parents' authority to regulate prudential issues. In addition, stressful war experiences were positively associated with legitimacy beliefs regarding moral and conventional issues, but only for Syrian youth; stressful war experiences were marginally negatively associated with legitimacy beliefs regarding these issues for Palestinian youth and not associated for Iraqi youth. Thus, Syrian youth who reported more war- and displacement-related trauma endorsed greater parental authority over moral and conventional issues, whereas Palestinian youth endorsed (marginally) less. We did not find significant effects for personal items.

Also consistent with hypotheses, we found that regardless of refugee group, greater hopefulness was associated with a greater belief in parents' authority to regulate moral and conventional, prudential, and personal issues. Furthermore, consistent with hypotheses, length of residence in Jordan was significantly associated with beliefs regarding prudential issues, but refugee group moderated these effects. Specifically, Syrian and Palestinian youth who had lived longer in Jordan evaluated parents as having less authority over prudential issues than did their more recently arrived counterparts. However, length of residency in Jordan was not associated with Syrian or Palestinians' evaluations of parental authority vis-à-vis moral–conventional or personal issues or with Iraqi adolescents' beliefs about any of the types of issues.

Adolescent Age

Finally, adolescent age was significantly associated with legitimacy beliefs, but effects varied by domain. As expected, older youth reported that parents had less authority over personal issues but more authority over prudential issues than did younger youth.

Discussion

The findings of the present study make significant contributions to the literature on adolescents' beliefs about parental authority legitimacy in two ways. They extend previous research on these beliefs to the novel context of Arab refugee youth in the Middle East. They also expand our understanding of the psychological consequences of persistent political and ethnic violence by examining how refugee youth balance the normative developmental tasks of socialization (e.g., respecting parental rules) with the universal need for autonomy, assessed here in terms of adolescents' control over personal issues. Overall, we found that Arab refugee youth in the Middle East distinguished among different domains of parental authority legitimacy but that, increasingly with age, they also identified a set of issues that they—not their parents—should control. These domains were found to be invariant across the three groups we studied, although our findings also differed in interesting ways from past research in terms of the items composing the different domains. Furthermore, our results illuminated how SES and war and displacement experiences are associated with Arab refugee teens' authority beliefs.

Arab Refugee Adolescents' Parental Legitimacy Beliefs

We modeled Arab refugee youth's beliefs about legitimate parental authority using CFA within SEM. For the most part, results were consistent with other cross-cultural research (reviewed in Smetana, 2011). Distinctions consistent with different social knowledge domains emerged, and factor invariance was achieved across the three groups. A great deal of research has shown that individuals view moral regulation as necessary to protect others' rights, prevent injustice, and ensure others' well-being, whereas conventional regulation is viewed as necessary to maintain social order, social systems, and social identity. Although the basis for these two types of regulations differ, past research has consistently shown that both moral and conventional issues are seen as legitimately regulated by parents (Smetana et al., 2005). Thus, we examined the hypothesized moral and conventional items in terms of a single latent factor in our models.

Somewhat unexpectedly, "going places with friends" loaded significantly on the moral and conventional factor for youth in all three groups, as

did "time spent with friends" for Syrians and Palestinians. These findings differ from past cross-cultural research, where some friendship items have been treated as prudential (Assadi et al., 2011; Hasebe et al., 2004). Our findings can be seen as consistent with Arab conventional norms, where spending time with—and loyalty to—family rather than friends is strongly emphasized and where friends can be seen as negative influences (raising moral concerns with others' welfare). However, we assessed categorizations of authority legitimacy and thus can only speculate on the items' domain-related meaning. We omitted these two friendship items from further analyses to maintain theoretical consistency, but further research is needed to better understand how Arab youth conceptualize friendship issues.

Issues pertaining to illegal drug use, smoking cigarettes and hookah, and reckless driving all loaded together in a separate latent prudential factor. These results are also consistent with past research on adolescents' judgments regarding risky behaviors, although the distinctiveness of these judgments from moral and conventional ones has only rarely been tested using CFA. Adolescents (and particularly parents) typically view "how late to stay out at night" as having both personal and prudential (safety) components and thus as multifaceted (as found in past research in the United States for "going places with friends" and among Iraqi youth in the present study). We had expected that in the more restrictive environment of the Middle East (Al-Simadi & Atoum, 2000; Dwairy et al., 2006), these items, as well as some of the personal ones, would be treated as at least partially prudential (or partially conventional, for other personal items) and thus cross load on different latent factors in the CFA.

It is worth noting that multifaceted events, defined according to social domain theory as issues that overlap more than one domain, do not accord well with the measurement requirements of CFA, where constructs are expected to load on a single latent structure and where cross loadings are considered model misspecifications. In keeping with the requirements of CFA, we initially modeled both personal and multifaceted items on a single personal latent factor but expected that some items would cross load with prudential items. Instead, we found that "staying out late"— and all of the hypothesized personal items—loaded significantly and uniquely on the latent personal factor with no cross loadings. These findings demonstrate that Arab adolescents robustly distin-

guished these items from items loading on other domains, with little evidence of domain overlap. However, our understanding of the personal domain in Arab culture would be enhanced by further research assessing how youth conceptualized these issues.

Furthermore, as the personal domain has been found to enlarge with age toward greater inclusion of multifaceted items, we tested but did not find age differences in our measurement model. This is most likely because, although there was age variability in our samples, the majority of youth were 14–16 years old. Nevertheless, consistent with past research (Smetana & Asquith, 1994; Smetana et al., 2005), we found that older age was associated with lower legitimacy judgments for personal issues but unexpectedly, more authority over prudential issues. In Western contexts, prudential legitimacy has been found to decline with age, although not until late adolescence and emerging adulthood. Given that our sample was younger, our findings may reflect an increasing awareness of both the riskiness of the prudential issues sampled here and the recognition that parental regulation is warranted.

We also found some latent mean differences across the refugee groups. These findings are interesting, as they inform our understanding of how these latent constructs operate in the three refugee groups we studied. Thus, for instance, we found that youth from different national backgrounds varied in how much authority over different issues they believed parents ought to have, with mean levels of legitimacy to regulate all types of issues lower among Palestinian than among Iraqi and Syrian adolescents. Thus, compared to other youth, Palestinian adolescents were more negative across the board in their evaluations of parental authority legitimacy. These findings may be due to the rigid and relatively disengaged parental interactions found among Palestinian parents in Jordanian refugee camps (Al-Simadi & Atoum, 2000) and thus reflect a broad disaffection with parental authority. This interpretation accords well with the higher levels of problem behavior (shown here in Table 1) among Palestinians as compared to Iraqi and Syrian youth, as well as in other Palestinian refugee samples living in Jordan (Ahmad, Smetana, & Klimstra, 2015). Palestinian adolescents also rated personal issues as lower in authority legitimacy (e.g., more under their personal control) than did Iraqis or Syrians. This leads us to believe that this pattern reflects premature autonomy, which is associated with trajectories of antisocial behavior (Dishion, Nelson, & Bullock, 2004), rather than healthy autonomy development.

Contextual Correlates of Refugee Adolescents' Authority Beliefs

We also examined contextual correlates of Arab refugee youth's domain-specific evaluations of authority legitimacy, including different indicators of SES and displacement- and war-related experiences. Although the variables considered here are interrelated, a significant strength of our analyses is that these factors demonstrated unique effects on teens' evaluations.

Although the Arab adolescents from the three national groups studied here varied widely in SES, we obtained relatively few significant associations between our different measures of SES and legitimacy judgments. We found significant effects for fathers' education and family size but not for mothers' education, parents' occupation, or neighborhood cohesion and assistance (which is not reducible to SES but is typically correlated with it). The findings for fathers' education are consistent with past research in Brazil (Nucci et al., 1996) and elsewhere showing that higher SES status is associated with less parental control over personal issues, although here, effects were found only for Palestinian teens. We cannot discount the possibility that these findings reflect unhealthy rather than healthy development (e.g., greater paternal disengagement resulting in premature autonomy). However, this interpretation does not address the domain-specific nature of the findings or the association with education. It seems likely that, as in past research elsewhere, better education is associated with fathers' willingness to "loosen the reins" and allow adolescents a modicum of control, but only around a limited set of issues.

Likewise, among Iraqi youth, smaller family size (which typically reflects higher SES) was associated with the belief that parents should have less authority over personal issues. This finding may reflect the reality of living in large families, where privacy and personal freedoms may be curtailed, as well as the fact that larger families are typically found among Iraqi Bedouins, who, although wealthy, often have multiple wives, many children, and are more traditional in their beliefs. Thus, even though Iraqis have smaller families overall, variability in family size was found to be important for their beliefs about personal issues.

War- and displacement-related trauma was significantly associated with legitimacy beliefs above and beyond the effects of economic hardship, which also may ensue as a consequence of displacement. Effects pertained to legitimacy judgments regarding prudential as well as moral–conventional issues, although the results varied as to whether they generalized across national groups. Across all three national groups, greater war-related trauma (including greater exposure to unpredictable violence, harm, property destruction, and displacement) was associated with the belief that parents have less authority over risky (prudential) behavior. Although parents are expected to protect adolescents and keep them safe, refugee youth experiencing more war trauma may—perhaps realistically in this context—view parents as having limited control over their health and safety. Unfortunately, these judgments may not necessarily be adaptive when it comes to decisions to engage in drug use, smoking, and reckless driving. These findings are consistent with Punamäki et al. (1997), who found that Palestinian teens in the Gaza Strip reporting more war trauma had more negative perceptions of parenting.

In addition, we found that for Syrian youth, and independent of the recency of their arrival in Jordan, greater war trauma was associated with viewing parents as having more authority to regulate moral and conventional issues (whereas this effect was marginally negative for Palestinians and nonsignificant for Iraqis). Syrian youth also reported higher levels of war trauma than adolescents in the other two national groups, and Syrian parents experienced a greater disparity between their SES prior to and after displacement. Thus, Syrian adolescents may be struggling more than teens in other groups with family stress as a result of changes in SES and life circumstances. This hypothesis requires further examination, but in support, it has been estimated that whereas 90% of Syrians attended school before the war, far fewer 6- to 14-year-olds do so in Jordan (Rudoren, 2013), and typically, only in the afternoons so that they can work and contribute to the family income. Thus, Syrian adolescents are being thrust prematurely into adult roles. As the political situation in Syria has worsened and their situation as refugees remains unresolved, teens experiencing more war trauma may want the significant figures in their lives to protect their well-being and provide stability and social order in an environment that may feel chaotic and uncontrolled. This may be a less obvious consequence of war trauma than depression, anxiety, and conduct problems, but would be important to better understand, as beliefs in the moral and social order are central for societal functioning.

Among youth in all three national groups, we found that greater hopefulness was associated with

a stronger belief in parents' authority to regulate moral, conventional, and prudential issues. These findings are interesting and potentially important, both in understanding the social development of youth growing up in challenging environments and in terms of intervention. Finding ways to foster hope among refugee youth could help strengthen families, thereby supporting greater societal stability and potentially lessening psychosocial difficulties.

Finally, we also examined length of residence in Jordan. Controlling for the other factors in the model, Syrians and Palestinians who reported living longer in Jordan believed that parents had less legitimate authority to regulate prudential issues. We initially conceptualized this variable as a proxy for recency of war exposure or displacement (Shaw, 2003). Although most Palestinian youth had spent their lives in Jordanian refugee camps (and this group was unique from the other two in that their families have been refugees for generations), it is important to note that displacement is a highly salient part of Palestinian youth's collective identity and is discussed and reenacted in schools. Thus, the findings appear to be meaningful for Palestinian youth and suggest that as they grow older, the negative effects of their displacement accumulate (in that their belief in parents' right to control their risky behavior is increasingly diminished).

As greater war trauma was significantly associated with Syrian youth's stronger legitimacy judgments for moral and conventional issues, it is unclear why the findings for recency were in the opposite direction for prudential issues. It is possible that those who left Syria longer ago did so during a period of more intense fighting than those who left more recently, resulting in greater exposure to traumatic war experiences. However, this explanation seems unlikely, as the uprisings in Syria are ongoing and, if anything, increasing in intensity. These findings also do not appear to be due to developmental factors. Older children are more vulnerable to psychological problems as a consequence of their war experiences than are younger children (Shaw, 2003). However, because most Syrian youth in our study were early adolescents when they fled Syria, they were old enough to reflect on their situation, which is critical in understanding the effects of political conflict on youth (Barber, 2014). It could be that Syrian youth experiencing greater war trauma cope with these experiences by holding strongly to their moral and cultural values, which may be reflected in greater endorsement of parental authority over moral and conventional issues. Further research is needed to understand these findings, particularly in relation to the greater legitimacy, relative to other groups, that Syrian teenagers granted parents over moral and conventional issues.

Study Limitations and Future Directions

Although this study made several unique contributions to the literature, the study also has some limitations. First, in studying Arab refugee youth, we were not able to tease out the effects of cultural background from nationality or refugee status. Although research suggests that parenting beliefs and practices reflect Arab cultural values (Abudabbeh, 2005; Haboush, 2005; Jalali, 2005; Oweis et al., 2012), Arab parenting values were not examined here and should be assessed in future research. Research comparing refugee and nonrefugee youth of similar national backgrounds could further clarify these issues. Likewise, although authoritarian parenting, which is seen as central to Arab parenting, is described as having its roots in Islam (Oweis et al., 2012), the Jordanian Ministry of Education did not permit us to obtain more detailed data on religiosity or religious affiliation. Thus, although Palestinians and Syrians are largely Sunni, whereas Iraqis may be either Sunni or Shi'a, it is possible that differences in legitimacy beliefs are due to such variations. Given the political conflict sweeping the region, it would be important to examine whether these factors influence parenting and parenting beliefs above and beyond the effects of the variables examined here.

Furthermore, although we measured war trauma, we were also not permitted to ask questions about life threat (e.g., having loved ones die as a consequence of political violence). Therefore, we most likely underestimated the effects of war trauma in our three sample. In addition, as not all Syrian refugee youth in Jordan are attending school, it must be acknowledged that our results only generalize to Syrian refugee youth who do. Studying Syrian youth in school increased the comparability of our three national groups but does not fully represent the Syrian refugee experience, which is becoming ever more dire as the conflict in Syria has worsened.

In addition, consistent with past research, our assessment of legitimacy beliefs focused on evaluations of "parents" rather mothers versus fathers. Given the length of the legitimacy assessment (and other study measures), this would have added significantly to the burden on participants. However, as Arab cultures are hierarchical, with fathers having a great deal of authority and mothers having

very little (Dwairy et al., 2006), it would be worthwhile to examine beliefs regarding mothers' versus fathers' legitimate authority regarding different types of acts. It also would be worthwhile to compare teens' and parents' legitimacy beliefs, as has been done in past research (e.g., Smetana, 1988; Smetana & Asquith, 1994). This might further our understanding of generational differences and parent–adolescent conflict in Arab families.

Finally, our cross-sectional design was appropriate for an initial investigation in a novel context, but further longitudinal research will be needed to examine causal directions and transactional processes. Future research should examine the developmental trajectory of Arab refugee adolescents' legitimacy beliefs into young adulthood and whether these beliefs are associated with later psychosocial functioning, beliefs about societal functioning, and refugee youth's participation and integration into society. More generally, it would be important to determine the long-term impact of political violence on adolescents' beliefs and how Arab family systems adapt to the persistent political violence engulfing the region.

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