



"What makes Americans act on behalf of refugees?"

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ERC Conference Room 115



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Claire Adida is Associate Professor of Political Science at UCSD and Co-Director of the Center for Comparative Immigration Studies. She uses quantitative methods to research how countries deal with existing and new forms of diversity. She is the author of two books, [Immigrant Exclusion and Insecurity in Africa](#) (Cambridge University Press, 2014) and [Why Muslim Integration Fails in Christian-Heritage Societies](#) (Harvard University Press, 2016, co-authored with David Laitin and Marie-Anne Valfort).

We investigate whether American citizens can be persuaded to adopt more inclusionary behavior toward refugees by using a minimally invasive online perspective-taking exercise frequently used by refugee advocates in the real world. Through the use of a randomized survey experiment on a representative sample of American citizens, we find that this short and interactive perspective-taking exercise can promote, in the short term, Americans' willingness to act on behalf of Syrian refugees, by writing anonymous letters of support to the White House. This effect, while driven primarily by self-identified Democrats, is also apparent among self-identified Republicans.
