How Inclusive Policies Shape Prejudice Versus Acceptance of Refugees: A Portuguese Study

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The recent wave of refugees arriving in Europe has given rise to much social debate. One important issue in this debate regards public opinions about the way political institutions should deal with existing prejudice against refugees. We examined this question in three studies. In Study 1 ($N = 119$), we assessed the relationship between participants' agreement with refugees' inclusion, perceived realistic and symbolic threats, and attitudes toward refugees' acculturation. In Study 2 ($N = 166$), we tested the effects of the existence (vs. nonexistence) of government refugee inclusion policies on participants' prejudice toward refugees. In Study 3 ($N = 112$), we tested the effect of governments' integrative (vs. assimilative vs. uncertainty) policies on prejudice toward refugees. Realistic and symbolic threats predicted agreement with assimilation, but realistic threat also negatively predicted integration. Moreover, the presence of inclusive policies decreased perceived threat of, and negative attitudes toward, refugees. Perceived threat and negative attitudes emerged more strongly when government policies were uncertain than when they were directed at integration or assimilation, and predicted participants' agreement with refugees' assimilation. We discuss the social and theoretical implications of these results.

Public Significance Statement
The major insight of this study is that feeling threatened by the migration of refugees to one's country is at least partially due to a lack of clear governmental policies on how to integrate them. This points to the need of governments, both national and european, to outline clear and transparent decisions on how to integrate these refugees.

Keywords: refugees, inclusive policies, perceived threat, prejudice, acculturation

Christian Europe. Out with all the others. In a Muslim country we have to adapt to the Muslim lifestyle, whereas in Europe we have to adapt Europe to the Muslims! Let them go die far away.
—A reader's comment in reaction to Caritas' claim that Europe should be more welcoming to refugees (Da Fonseca, 2017)

The above quote illustrates the ongoing social debate about allowing refugee populations to enter Europe. Ironically, whereas a Christian NGO calls upon Christian and European values in support of the acceptance of African and Middle Eastern refugee populations (many of them Muslims), there seems to be a body of public opinion in support of closing European borders. This seems to reflect the political and social tensions that currently pervade Europe. Indeed, some politicians and opinion makers advocate measures to control the entry of refugee populations into Europe.

For example, the Hungarian government has adopted measures aimed at preventing the entry of refugees. In line with one of the major arguments in support of Brexit, French presidential candidate Marine Le Pen recently pledged that she would implement strong protective and discriminatory policies against migrants in France, if she were elected. Although Ms. Le Pen lost the election, the popular vote showed that nearly one third of the French electors supported her program. Conversely, other political leaders and sectors of the population view migrants and refugees as an economic and cultural opportunity to tackle the problems associated with the aging population, tax shortfalls, and labor force shortages, and adopt political and social discourses encouraging the integration of refugees into Europe. This opposition illustrates one challenge that the European Union currently faces. Whereas the European agenda has long idealized inclusive European cohesion, the rising anti-immigration discourse of the nationalist right wing seems to be getting the support of growing numbers of European electors.

As a case in point, Portugal is an EU country whose government adopted a pro-refugee position. Portugal has a long history of both emigration and immigration. This fact notwithstanding, Portugal attracts relatively small numbers of asylum seekers in general. Thus, governments' policies regarding the entry of and integration of refugees are still in an embryonic stage (Costa & Sousa, 2017), so much so that that Portuguese citizens are hardly aware of the tendencies of such policies. Because they are put forth by a government nominated commission still defining those policies, this fact might raise uncertainty among the Portuguese regarding the advantages and risks of the entry of refugees. The attitudes of Portuguese citizens toward refugees are still understudied, but the future inclusion of refugees in Portugal would seem to be a certainty. Indeed, the Portuguese government recently increased (to 10,000) the initial number of refugees that it had previously agreed with the European Union would be received in Portugal. Although only a small percentage of that number has effectively entered Portugal, this decision may call for effective political strategies aimed to support the harmonious inclusion of refugees and to prevent threats to social cohesion. This may, however, be difficult to achieve, considering the frequently observed perceptions of immigrants as a threat (e.g., Pereira, Vala, & Leyens, 2009) voiced by some sectors of the public and of the mass media.

In this work, we examine how the existence (or absence) of inclusive institutional policies affects Portuguese citizens' attitudes toward refugees and their inclusion in Portuguese society. We propose that, by adopting pro-inclusion policies, authorities may contribute to decreasing the perceived threat associated with the arrival of refugees, and hence, lead the local population to adopt more pro-inclusive attitudes. Conversely, uncertainty triggered by the absence or lack of visibility of a policy toward refugees should increase the perceived threat associated with these populations and discriminatory behavior toward them.

The Effect of Perceived Threat on Attitudes Toward Refugees

We believe that the entry of immigrants and refugees into European countries may threaten social cohesion insofar as they are perceived as outgroup members who endanger the host country's norms, values, and identity, and who compete for resources perceived as scarce, such as jobs or social security. This process is documented in the literature on the role of perceived threat in predicting hostility toward immigrant populations. For example, integrated threat theory (Stephan & Stephan, 2000; Stephan, Ybarra, & Bachman, 1999), suggests that threatening outgroups can pose either a *realistic* and/or a *symbolic threat*. The former encompasses a more materialized competition for goods, power, and social benefits such as health care and education. The latter refers to outrage against the ingroup's worldview, including its norms, collective goals, and even identity. Both types of perceived threat (especially perceived realistic threat; see Schweitzer, Perkoulidis, Krome, Ludlow, & Ryan, 2005) predict prejudice toward immigrants, because perceiving immigrants as a threat can legitimize other hostile attitudes such as discrimination and prejudice (Pereira et al., 2009; Stephan, Renfro, Esses, Stephan, & Martin, 2005). It follows that if the inclusion of migrant populations is a relevant value for European institutions, the effect of inclusive policies in decreasing the perceived threat associated with those populations should be taken into account.

Interestingly, whereas some social discourses associate the entry of immigrants/refugees with a threat posed to the host group, and stimulate discriminatory attitudes toward them, other discourses highlight the potential of immigrant and refugee populations for improving the economy, their high level of education, and so forth The latter proved to reliably diminish perceived threat, especially when the refugee's provenance group is not perceived as being threatening (Green, 2009).

The Role of Policy Clarity on Attitudes Toward Refugees

In addition, in spite of the fact that they open their borders to refugees, some countries either seem to have no policies regarding refugees' integration, or the policies they do have are only partially effective. We propose that the absence of effective policies may reinforce uncertainty in the public about institutional views on this issue, generating a sense of social insecurity and social malaise, and jeopardizing one priority goal of the European agenda: the construction of inclusive social cohesion societies. As a result, the lack of a clear institutional position toward refugees may transform an initially neutral or even positive attitude into a perceived threat and anxiety regarding the outgroup (Stephan, Stephan, & Gudykunst, 1999), leading to rejection and latent or open conflict (Esses, Veenvliet, Hodson, & Mihic, 2008) and the polarization of the original ingroup values and norms away from those of the refugee outgroup, as a means to reduce uncertainty (Hogg, 2000, 2001).

In parallel, the lack of consensus between the policies adopted by different European countries led to a general state of collective uncertainty. This has been reinforced by some of the media and some political leaders whose power of influence has generated increasingly negative attitudes and discriminatory behaviors toward refugees (cf. Hier & Greenberg, 2002). As a result of the above process, it could be expected that the absence of a clear institutional position regarding the entry of refugees will reinforce their perceived threat and exacerbate the likelihood of conflict. In contrast, if the entry of immigrant populations is officially approved, authorized immigrants tend not to be targeted as sources of threat and not to generate intergroup anxiety (Bohman, 2015;

Druckman, 2001; Esses, Medianu, & Lawson, 2013; Murray & Marx, 2013). This particular point highlights the determinant role of authorities in shaping common citizens' acceptance of immigrants/refugees.

Inclusive and Exclusive Interactions Between Indigenous and Refugee Populations

It is important to note that the difference between social discourses regarding the acculturation of refugees is not limited to an acceptance versus rejection debate, but also emerges in terms of what kind of acculturation should be sought. As Bourhis, Moise, Perreault, and Senecal (1997) pointed out, individuals' beliefs about how refugees should be acculturated in the ingroup country may strongly depend on the kind of institutional policies adopted by these countries. Indeed, according to Berry (1997), acculturation strategies may vary along two dimensions, one centered on the importance of preserving the immigrants' culture of origin, and the other focused on the importance of adapting to the host culture. The combination of these two dimensions yields four possible acculturation strategies: *assimilation*, that is, immigrants' adoption of the host culture while forsaking their culture of origin; *integration*, that is, immigrants' adaptation to the host culture and commitment to social relations with local population while maintaining their cultural roots; *separation*, that is, immigrants' full preservation of their cultural roots to the detriment of the host culture while avoiding interaction with local individuals; and *marginalization*, that is, immigrants' devaluation of their cultural roots while avoiding interacting with the host culture. Integration and assimilation are the two important inclusive strategies under study in this work, as opposed to the exclusive separation and marginalization strategies.

It is of note that evidence suggests that, in general and not surprisingly, whereas immigrants prefer the integration strategy, local populations prefer the assimilation strategy (e.g., Guimond, De Oliveira, Kamiesjki, & Sidanius, 2010; Ward, & Masgoret, 2006). Indeed, whereas integration denotes the promotion of the original outgroup culture, assimilation signals an intolerance of the manifestation of refugees' original culture, which might suggest a subtle form of social discrimination. In this way, we propose that agreement with the adoption of an assimilation strategy toward immigrant populations may be an indirect discriminatory response to the immigrants' arrival. In this work, we attempt to combine the integrated threat theory (Stephan et al., 1999; Stephan & Stephan, 2000) with Berry's (1997) acculturation model. In this vein, we propose that whereas favorable attitudes toward assimilation should emerge from a perceived threat associated with the entry of refugees, that should not be the case of attitudes favoring integration.

Overview and Hypotheses

We conducted one correlational and two experimental studies, focusing on the effects of the existence (vs. nonexistence) of pro-inclusive policies on the part of Portuguese authorities regarding Syrian refugees on participants' perceived threat caused by their entry into Portugal, and willingness to develop a positive or a negative relation with those refugees. We chose Syrian refugees as the target group for our studies, because they represent the majority of refugees that Portugal was expected to receive directly after our studies were conducted. In addition, for the sake of the psychological realism of our studies, it would not be credible to study the effect of the adoption of exclusive policies by the Portuguese government. Therefore, we only focused on the study of the effect of uncertainty or lack of clarity versus inclusive policies on participants' attitudes toward refugees.

In Study 1, we measured participants' agreement with a figure of authority adopting a pro-refugees attitude of acceptance, as well as participants' perceptions of realistic and symbolic threats associated with refugees' entry into Portugal, and agreement with acculturation strategies for these refugees. In Study 2, we manipulated the existence (vs. nonexistence) of the Portuguese government's inclusive policies, and measured perceived threat and prejudice regarding Syrian refugees. As in Study 2, we manipulated information provided to participants about the Portuguese government's policies in Study 3. However, participants could be included in one of three conditions: integrative policy versus assimilative policy versus uncertain/ambiguous policy. We again measured participants' perceived threat, attitudes of prejudice toward Syrian refugees, and agreement with acculturation strategies. Because we manipulated the type of inclusive strategy (assimilation vs. integration), we also included a measure of positive attitudes toward refugees, as a predictor of which inclusive strategy participants would adopt.

We made three general predictions. First, we expected participants to agree with the figure of authority regarding refugees' entry. Second, we expected the existence of inclusive policies to generate fewer perceived realistic and symbolic threats, less prejudice about refugees, and higher agreement with inclusive (integrative and assimilation) acculturation strategies as compared to nonexistence or uncertain policies. Third, we expected agreement with the assimilation strategy to be predicted by perceived threat (Studies 1 and 3), and agreement with the integration strategy to be predicted by positive attitudes toward refugees (Study 3).

Study 1

In this study, Portuguese participants were presented with a (fictitious) Portuguese figure of authority (an expert on international relations) who was favorable to the entry of refugees into Portugal. This was intended to reflect congruence between the expert's opinion and the government's position on the issue without the need to specify a policy regarding refugees' entry. This expert was not a government member and as such did not hold any power of decision about the refugees' entry. His or her opinion could thus not be directly related to the existence or absence of inclusive policies. Participants reported their agreement with this specialist' opinion, their perception of realistic and symbolic threat associated with the entry of refugees into Portugal, and their agreement with the integration and assimilation strategies, as types of acculturation that indicate acceptance by the host community.

Method

Participants. Participants were 119 (81 females) university undergraduates from various Portuguese universities, between 18 and 57 years old ($M = 23.70$, $SD = 7.48$). Forty-three participants defined themselves as left-wing, 6 as center, and 25 as right-wing.

Forty-five participants indicated that they did not support any political position.[1] Participants were contacted via online platforms (e-mail and social networks).

Procedure. Participants were invited to fill in a survey to assess young Portuguese people's opinion about receiving refugees in Portugal. First, they were asked to read a news item that reported the opinion of a (fictitious) specialist, who was presented as an important academic in economics and international relations, and who defended a position favorable to the reception of refugees (e.g., "It is important to consider these refugees are human beings, and thus we must create conditions for their inclusion. . . . Portugal was right to propose receiving more refugees. . . .") At the end of the questionnaire, participants were debriefed on the fictitious nature of the news item presented, and clarified about the actual purpose of the study.

Measures. Participants stated their opinion regarding the following measures:

Agreement with the expert. Three items (1 = *I totally Disagree* to 7 = *I totally Agree*) were presented regarding the expert's opinion: "Do you agree with this person's opinion?"; "Do you find this person's opinion valid?"; and "Does this person's opinion match your own?" We averaged these items into an Agreement with the Expert measure (Cronbach's alpha = .91).

Perceived threat. Based on Stephan et al.'s (1999) perceived outgroup threat scale, participants then responded to 8 items measuring their perception of realistic threat, and to 7 items measuring their perception of symbolic threat (see Appendix). All items were responded to on a 7-point scale (1 = *I totally Disagree* to 7 = *I totally Agree*). We averaged the scores of the former 8 items to a realistic threat (Cronbach's alpha = .84) and the scores of the latter 7 items to a symbolic threat (Cronbach's alpha = .77) measure.

Acculturation attitudes. Based on the acculturation strategies defined by Berry (1997) and colleagues as well as on their adaptation to the perspectives of the local population by Kwak and Berry (2001), participants responded to two questions, one regarding integration and the other regarding assimilation strategies (1 = *I totally Disagree;* 7 = *I totally Agree*), for each of five dimensions (Cultural Traditions, Cultural Activities, Marriage, Friendship, and Language): "How do you think that Syrian refugees should relate with the Portuguese [e.g. cultural traditions] when they arrive in Portugal?" While the Assimilation items suggested a replacement of the refugees' original culture with the Portuguese (e.g., "I think Syrian refugees should adopt Portuguese cultural traditions and abandon their own"), Integration items reflected the possibility of an adaptation and maintenance of their links to their roots (e.g., "I think Syrian refugees should adapt to Portuguese cultural traditions, but also maintain their own"). We averaged the 5 items regarding the assimilation strategy and those regarding the integration strategy, respectively, to a measure of Assimilation (Cronbach's alpha = .75), and a measure of Integration (Cronbach's alpha = .67) measures.

Results

We conducted Pearson's product-moment correlations between all variables (see Table 1). We found significant negative associations between Agreement with the Expert and Realistic and Symbolic threats, and Assimilation. Assimilation was positively

Table 1

Pearson's Moment-Product Correlations Between Agreement With the Authority, Realistic Threat, Symbolic Threat, Assimilation, and Integration (Study 1)

Dependent measures	M	SD	1	2	3	4
1. Agreement with the authority	5.03	1.63				
2. Realistic threat	2.85	1.11	−.71***			
3. Symbolic threat	3.99	1.04	−.58***	.70***		
4. Assimilation	2.03	.96	−.41***	.50***	.49***	
5. Integration	5.80	.95	.13	−.23*	−.07	−.36***

* $p \leq .050$.   *** $p \leq .001$.

associated with Realistic Threat and Symbolic Threat. Integration was significantly and negatively associated with Realistic Threat.

The above reported associations allowed us to proceed to the regression analyses. We thus conducted two separate multiple regression analyses, one taking Integration and another taking Assimilation as the dependent variable. In both models, Agreement with the Expert, Realistic Threat, and Symbolic Threat were included in the regression equation as predictors.

Assimilation. The joint effect of Agreement with the Expert, Realistic Threat, and Symbolic Threat significantly predicted 29.0% of the total variance of Assimilation, $F(3,115) = 15.64, p < .001$. Realistic Threat ($b = .23, SE = .11, p = .045$) and Symbolic Threat ($b = .24, SE = .10, p = .023$) significantly predicted Assimilation (Agreement with the Expert was nonsignificant: $b = −.05, SE = .07, p = .481$).

Integration. Agreement with the Expert, Realistic Threat, and Symbolic Threat jointly predicted 7.1% of the total variance of Integration, $F(3, 115) = 2.92, p = .037$. However, Realistic Threat ($b = −.32, SE = .13, p = .012$) was the only significant predictor of Integration (Agreement with the Authority: $b = −.02, SE = .08, p = .842$; Symbolic Threat: $b = .17, SE = .12, p = .160$).

Discussion

We expected agreement with the expert (favorability regarding the entry of refugees into Portugal) to predict higher agreement with integration and lower agreement with assimilation. We also expected perceived threat to predict agreement with assimilation but not with integration.

In brief, our results indicate two interrelated phenomena. First, the more participants agreed with the expert the fewer realistic and

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[1] We found that left-wing supporters agreed more with the authority opinion ($M = 5.50, SD = 1.51$), showed less perceived realistic ($M = 2.36, SD = 1.13$) and symbolic ($M = 3.47, SD = 0.96$) threat, agreed less with assimilation strategies ($M = 1.71, SD = 0.80$), and tended to agree more with integrative strategies ($M = 5.84, SD = 0.78$), than right-wing supporters (Agreement With The Authority: $M = 4.48, SD = 1.85, t66 = 2.48, p = .016$; Realistic Threat: $M = 3.39, SD = 1.07, t66 = 3.67, p < .001$; Symbolic threat: $M = 4.59, SD = 1.15, t66 = 4.29, p < .001$; Assimilation: $M = 2.66, SD = 1.18, t37.07 = 3.59, p < .001$; Integration: $M = 5.34, SD = 1.25, t35.01 = 1.82, p = .077$). We did not include Political Tendency in the remaining analysis, because it would be difficult to construct an ordinal measure with such a large percentage of participants (those who showed no political tendency). We did not find any association between participants' age or sex, and any other dependent measure ($r \leq |−.18|$, *ns* and *ts* ≤ 1.24, *ns*, respectively).

symbolic threats they perceived. Second, the lower they perceived these threats to be, the less they agreed with assimilation, and the more they tended to agree with an integration strategy, especially when they perceived a lower realistic threat. Interestingly, this result suggests that the effects of perceived realistic and symbolic threats do not parallel each other: Whereas both forms of threat positively predicted assimilation, only realistic threat predicted participants' agreement with refugees' integration.

On the whole, these results are consistent with our predictions. However, the present study did not provide a direct test of the effect on participants' attitudes of policies regarding the refugees' entry. Specifically, the causal relations between agreement with the entry of refugees and agreement with their integration or assimilation still need to be directly observed. For instance, it could be argued that agreement with the expert simply reflects participants' preexisting beliefs about refugees' entry or are accounted for by participants' preexisting political tendency (see Footnote 1), rather than by the actual influence of the figure of authority.

Study 2

In Study 2, we attempted to address the above limitation and to directly test the effect of existent versus nonexistent inclusive policies regarding the inclusion of Syrian refugees on participants' attitudes toward them. We informed half of participants that the Portuguese government was implementing policies regarding Syrian refugees in Portugal and the other half that no policies were being implemented. As in Study 1, we measured participants' perceived realistic and symbolic threats. However, in this study, instead of measuring participants' agreement with inclusion strategies (integration and assimilation), we measured their agreement with discriminatory attitudes toward refugees (see Pereira et al., 2009), in order to examine how these attitudes were influenced by the presence or absence of inclusive policies.

Method

Participants and design. Participants were 166 (60 females), 17 to 65 years old ($M = 24.67$; $SD = 8.98$), who volunteered to complete a questionnaire. Participants received the questionnaire either via e-mail (e-mails were sent to all the students of three faculties) or via a virtual network (based on a snow-ball procedure). There were no significant differences in participants' sex, χ^2 $(1, N = 166) < 1$, or age, $F(1, 164) < 1$ across conditions.[2] The study has two between-participants conditions: Existent versus Nonexistent policy.

Procedure. Participants were invited to complete a questionnaire on "the opinion of the Portuguese people about the entry of Syrian refugees into Portugal". In both conditions, they were presented with a fictitious piece of news supposedly extracted from a well-known newspaper, in which the main theme was the Portuguese government's action plan regarding the reception of Syrian refugees.

Policy manipulation. In the Existent Policy condition, the news article read that the government had presented an action plan aimed at developing strategies to receive the refugees. Participants also learned that those strategies would focus on three main areas: accommodation, education and employment. The article added no

other information. In the Nonexistent Policy condition, participants read a similar news piece except that it read that at the time, the government had not presented any action plan for the reception of refugees.

Dependent measures. We measured Realistic and Symbolic Threats in the same way as we did in Study 1, by computing Realistic Threat (Cronbach's alpha = .87) and a Symbolic Threat (Cronbach's alpha = .95) measures.

Prejudice. Participants then responded to 5 items adapted from Pereira et al. (2009): "Syrian refugees are more mechanical and cold than the Portuguese"; "Syrian refugees are more irresponsible than the Portuguese are"; "Unlike the Portuguese, Syrian refugees have no respect for human life"; "Syrian refugees do not have the same feelings as the Portuguese have"; "Syrian refugees are not as humane as the Portuguese are" ($1 = I\ strongly\ disagree$; $7 = I\ strongly\ agree$). A principal components factor analysis computed on these items extracted a single factor accounting for 71.09% of the total variance. We averaged these items to a Prejudice measure (Cronbach's alpha = .89).

Results

We expected participants to report higher Realistic and Symbolic Threats, and Prejudice in the Nonexistent than in the Existent policy condition. Results were consistent with our predictions. Realistic Threat tended to be higher in the Nonexistent than in the Existent condition (respectively, $M = 2.57$; $SD = 1.78$, and $M = 2.16$; $SD = 1.27$), $F(1, 164) = 2.90$, $p = .090$, $\eta_p^2 = .017$. Symbolic Threat was higher in the Nonexistent than in the Existent condition (respectively, $M = 2.55$; $SD = 1.80$, and $M = 2.04$; $SD = 1.31$), $F(1, 164) = 4.50$, $p = .035$, $\eta_p^2 = .027$. Prejudice was also higher in the Nonexistent than in the Existent policy condition (respectively, $M = 2.41$; $SD = 1.59$, and $M = 1.95$; $SD = 1.18$), $F(1, 164) = 4.52$, $p = .035$, $\eta_p^2 = .027$.

We also expected Policy, Realistic Threat, and Symbolic Threat to predict Prejudice. We conducted a multiple regression analysis, taking Policy, Realistic Threat and Symbolic Threat as predictors, and Prejudice as the dependent measure. The results partially support our predictions. The total model significantly accounted for 55.3% of the variance of Prejudice, $F(3, 162) = 66.80$, $p < .001$. Realistic Threat ($b = -.18$, $SE = .10$, $p = .069$) and, especially, Symbolic Threat ($b = .85$, $SE = .10$, $p < .001$) predicted Prejudice. Policy was not significant ($b = .10$, $SE = .15$, $p = .492$).

Since Policy had significant effects on Prejudice regarding difference of means, but lost its predicted value in the regression, the most plausible explanation for this apparent contradiction is the existence of a mediation in which (Symbolic and/or Realistic) Threat might emerge as a mediator of the association between policy and Prejudice. Although we did not predict this hypothesis, we decided to test it by conducting a mediation analysis (Hayes, 2013, Model 4 with 10,000 bootstraps). In this analysis, we con-

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[2] This study was planned and conducted before Study 1's data analysis. We did not include Political Tendency in the survey. Unfortunately, we were thus not able to control for Political Tendency by condition. We addressed this limitation in the discussion of Study 2. We did not find any association between participants' age or sex, and any other dependent measure ($r \leq |-.11|$, ns and $ts \leq 1.51$, ns, respectively).

sidered Policy (-0.5 = Existent and 0.5 = Nonexistent) as the predictor, Prejudice as the dependent variable, and Realistic Threat and Symbolic Threat as parallel mediators. Not surprisingly, results show a significant indirect effect only for Symbolic Threat (ab = .32, SE = .15, 95%IC = 0.10 to 0.69; for Realistic Threat, ab = .03, SE = .06, 95%IC = -0.02 to 0.24). These results suggest that the nonexistence of integrative policies is associated to higher levels of perceived symbolic threat, which, in turn, is associated to a higher level of prejudice.

Discussion

When a policy for refugees' inclusion did not exist, participants perceived higher threat (both realistic and symbolic) and expressed stronger prejudice about refugees than when an inclusive policy existed. Although this emerged in an indirect way, as shown by the regression results, an existing pro-inclusion policy (as opposed to the absence of an inclusive policy) seems to have decreased participants' negative attitude toward refugees.

The present study shows the positive effect of explicitly reporting an inclusive policy to the public. This may help to decrease prejudice and increase the public's agreement with the inclusion of refugee populations. However, the present study still does not account for what type of inclusion (integration vs. assimilation) individuals would be more likely to accept. Indeed, the two types of inclusion seem to have important implications for the kind of relations established between the local and the incoming populations. Whereas agreement with integration is associated with an open, egalitarian relation between the two populations, agreement with assimilation would convey an inclusive, yet discriminatory, position of the local population toward the refugee population. We conducted a third study to address this issue.

Study 3

In Study 3, we directly examined the effect of the type of inclusive policy proposed by institutional actors on participants' expressed prejudice, agreement with integration and assimilation strategies of acculturation, and positive attitudes toward refugees, a variable that, we thought, should help to clearly differentiate between integration and assimilation attitudes toward refugees. We thus measured the effects of participants' beliefs that the government was adopting either an integrative or an assimilative policy, or no policy, regarding the entry of refugees into Portugal on those variables.

Method

Participants and design. Participants were 112 (81 female) Portuguese respondents who volunteered to respond to a questionnaire, sent either via e-mail (e-mails were sent to all the students at three faculties) or via virtual network message (based on a snow-ball procedure) asking them to participate in research about "the opinion of the Portuguese people regarding the entry of refugees into Portugal." Their age ranged from 18 to 37 years old (M = 22.11; SD = 3.96). Thirty-six participants declared themselves to be politically left-wing, 13 center, and 20 right-wing; one declared "other political position," and 42 declared that they had no political position.[3] There were no significant differences in

participants' sex, $\chi^2(2, N = 112) = 2.33$, $p = .313$, age, $F(2,109) < 1$, and political tendency $\chi^2(10, N = 112) = 4.74$, $p = .908$, between experimental conditions. The study included three between-participants conditions: Integrative Policy versus Assimilative Policy versus Nonexistent Policy.

Procedure.

Policy manipulation. As was the case in Study 2, participants first read a news item. This was intended to manipulate information about the type of policy that the Portuguese government was to implement regarding the refugees that would shortly be arriving in Portugal. In the Integrative condition, participants could read that a fraction of the national budget was to be allocated to the implementation of several measures that assured refugees the basic living conditions and legal rights (e.g., housing, job vacancies, and education vacancies). It was specified that the government was concerned with ensuring that the refugees could maintain their cultural inheritance and ties with their country of origin (participants could also read, for instance, that regarding education, the government was planning to make the existing education programs more flexible, e.g., "by including Syrian History and Language subjects"). In the Assimilative condition, participants read about the same general measures, but it was specified that the government was concerned with the effective and rapid adaptation of refugees to Portuguese culture (e.g., as regards education, participants were informed that the governments' main concern was to ensure a quick and easy acquaintance of young refugees with Portuguese culture, but that no initiatives would be taken that would make them maintain any ties with their cultural roots). In the Nonexistent condition, participants read that the government was not considering any measures relative to refugee's accommodation, employment, education, or housing, and that such measures would be implemented on a case-by-case basis depending on the local resources where the refugees would be accommodated.

Dependent measures. Participants responded to the same six sets of measures as those used in the preceding studies: Realistic Threat (Cronbach's alpha = .91), Symbolic Threat (Cronbach's alpha = .96), Prejudice (Cronbach's alpha = .87), Assimilation (Cronbach's alpha = .79), and Integration (Cronbach's alpha = .73).

Positive Attitudes Toward Refugees. In addition, we asked participants to respond to 9 items indicating their opinions about the promotion of the refugees' culture: (1 = *I totally disagree*; 7 = *I totally agree*): "We should value refugees"; "We should respect and value refugees' traditions"; "The refugees' culture might be a positive influence on Portugal"; "We can be sure that refugees will positively contribute to the country"; "We should try to cooperate with refugees"; "We should work together with refugees"; "We can trust high level work-positions to refugees"; "We should claim the same rights for refugees as to the Portuguese"; "Refugees

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[3] Because in Study 1, Political Tendency was found to be a potential predictor of Attitudes Toward Refugees, in Study 3 we controlled Political Tendency by condition. This allowed us to effectively test the impact of policies on attitudes toward refugees, without the interference of participants' political tendency. Consistent with our purpose, one-way ANOVAs of Political Tendency on the dependent measures did not yield any significant differences between those tendencies (all $F(5,106) < 1$). We did not find any association between participants' age or sex, and any other dependent measure ($r \leq |-.20|$, ns and $ts \leq 1.57$, ns, respectively).

should be able to hold senior positions in Portuguese society." We averaged these items into a Positive Attitudes Toward Refugees measure (Cronbach's alpha = .95).

Results

Realistic and symbolic threats. In line with the results of the two previous studies, we expected Realistic Threat and Symbolic Threat to be the highest in the Nonexistent condition and the lowest in the Integrative condition. We conducted two ANOVAs, respectively, on Realistic Threat and on Symbolic Threat. Both ANOVAs yielded significant results, $F(2, 109) = 4.85$, $p = .010$, $\eta_p^2 = .082$ for Realistic Threat and $F(2, 109) = 3.62$, $p = .030$, $\eta_p^2 = .062$ for Symbolic Threat. Regarding Realistic Threat, a Duncan multicomparison analysis highlights significant differences between the Nonexistent and the remaining conditions (both $p \leq .015$). Nevertheless, there were no significant differences in Realistic Threat between the Integrative and the Assimilative conditions ($p = .789$). Regarding Symbolic Threat, the post hoc analysis showed significant differences between the Nonexistent and the remaining conditions (both $p \leq .042$), but not between the Integrative and the Assimilative condition ($p = .709$).

In brief, these results partially support our hypotheses. Participants in the Nonexistent condition expressed higher perceived realistic and symbolic threat than participants in the remaining conditions. Contrary to our prediction, we did not find higher perceived threat in the Assimilative than in the Integrative condition.

Prejudice and Positive Attitudes Toward Refugees. We predicted that Prejudice would be the highest and the lowest in the Nonexistent and in the Integrative condition, respectively. Concomitantly, we predicted that Positive Attitudes toward Refugees would be the highest and the lowest, respectively, in the Integrative and in the Nonexistent conditions. We thus conducted two separate one-way Policy ANOVAs, one on the Prejudice measure and the other on the Positive Attitudes Toward Refugees measure (see Table 2).

The effect of Policy on Prejudice was marginally significant, $F(2, 109) = 2.52$, $p = .085$, $\eta_p^2 = .044$. A Duncan multicomparison test showed a significant difference between the Nonexistent and Assimilative conditions ($p = .044$) and a marginally significant difference between the Nonexistent and Integrative conditions ($p = .069$). The Integrative condition was not different from the Assimilative condition ($p = .910$).

The effect of Policy on Positive Attitudes Toward Refugees was also marginally significant, $F(2, 109) = 2.71$, $p = .071$, $\eta_p^2 = .047$. A Duncan multicomparison test showed a significant difference between the Nonexistent and Assimilative conditions ($p = .039$) and a marginally significant difference between the Nonexistent and Integrative conditions ($p = .056$). The Integrative condition was not significantly different from the Assimilative condition ($p = .949$).

In brief, participants in the Nonexistent condition tended to show higher prejudice regarding the Syrian refugees than did participants in the Assimilative and Integrative conditions, and lower positive attitudes toward the refugees than did participants in the Integrative and Assimilative conditions.

Agreement with acculturation strategies. We predicted Integration would be the highest and the lowest in the Integrative and in the Nonexistent condition, respectively. We also predicted that Assimilation would be the highest and the lowest in the Nonexistent and Integrative conditions, respectively. In order to test these hypotheses, we conducted two separate one-way Policy ANOVAs, one on Integration and another on Assimilation (see Table 3).

The effect of Policy on Integration was marginally significant, $F(2, 109) = 2.62$, $p = .077$, $\eta_p^2 = .046$. A Duncan multicomparison test showed a significant difference between the Nonexistent and Assimilative conditions ($p = .033$) and a marginally significant difference between the Nonexistent and Integrative conditions ($p = .084$). The Integrative condition was not significantly different from the Assimilative condition ($p = .748$).

Policy did not significantly affect Assimilation, $F(2, 109) < 1$ (Overall $M = 1.46$; $SD = 0.78$).

Predictive values of realistic and Symbolic Threats, Prejudice, and Positive Attitudes Toward Refugees on Integration and Assimilation. Consistent with the results of the previous studies, we expected Policy and Positive Attitudes Toward Refugees to predict Integration positively, and Realistic and Symbolic Threats to predict Integration negatively. Conversely, we expected Realistic Threat and Symbolic Threat, and Prejudice, to predict Assimilation positively, and Cultural Promotion to predict Assimilation negatively.

Before testing these hypotheses, we conducted Pearson's product-moment correlations between Realistic Threat, Symbolic Threat, Prejudice, Cultural Promotion, Policy. (coded Integrative = −1, Assimilative = 0, Uncertainty = +1)[4], Integration, and Assimilation (see Table 4). The results were partially consistent with our expectations. Integration is positively and significantly correlated with Positive Attitudes Toward Refugees and marginally significantly associated with Policy and Symbolic Threat. This indicates that high levels of agreement with integration strategies and the promotion of the refugee culture are associated with the Integrative condition, whereas low levels of agreement with integration strategies and the promotion of the refugee culture are associated with the Nonexistent condition. Results also indicated that the more participants agree with integration strategies, the less they perceive refugees to pose a symbolic threat. However, Realistic Threat was not associated with Integration. Assimilation, in turn, was positively related to Realistic Threat, Symbolic Threat, and Prejudice, and negatively correlated with Positive Attitudes Toward Refugees: The more participants agreed with assimilation strategies, the more they perceived the refugees to be threatening, the more they discriminated against them, and the less they showed positive attitudes toward refugees.

In order to test our hypotheses, we conducted two multiple linear regression analyses using Realistic Threat, Symbolic Threat, Prejudice, Cultural Promotion, and Policy as predictors, and Integration or Assimilation as the dependent measures.

The analysis involving Integration showed that, overall, the model explains 13.6% of this measure's variance, $F(5, 106) =$

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[4] We ascribed the lowest value to the Integration condition and the highest value to the Nonexistent condition because the Integration condition should correspond to the lowest perceived realistic and symbolic threat, lowest prejudice, highest cultural promotion, highest agreement with integration, and lowest agreement with assimilation, whereas the Nonexistent condition is expected to enact the opposite pattern of responses.

Table 2
Mean and Standard Deviation of Realistic Threat, Symbolic Threat, Prejudice, Positive Attitudes, Assimilation, and Integration by Policy (Study 3)

Dependent measures	ANOVA			Integrative		Policy assimilative		Nonexistent	
	F	p	η_p^2	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Realistic threat	3.18	.05	.05	2.11	.70	2.05	1.08	2.73	1.23
Symbolic threat	2.20	.11	.04	1.65	.61	1.56	.74	2.13	1.43
Prejudice	1.36	.26	.02	1.76	.62	1.74	.776	2.12	1.05
Positive attitudes	2.15	.12	.05	5.65	1.00	5.69	1.07	5.09	1.54
Assimilation	.83	.44	.01	1.38	.74	1.42	.74	1.57	.85
Integration	3.25	.04	.05	6.21	.80	6.27	.78	5.83	1.10

3.33, $p = .008$. As can be seen in Table 4, Positive Attitudes Toward Refudees is the single predictor of Integration.

Assimilation. The regression model explained 32.4% of the total variance of Assimilation, $F(5, 106) = 10.17$, $p < .001$. Assimilation was positively predicted by Symbolic Threat and negatively predicted by Positive Attitudes Toward Refugees (see Table 4). This indicates that when participants viewed refugees as a source of threat to their norms and values, they preferred the refugees' culture to be suppressed by the Portuguese culture, through an assimilation process. Conversely, when participants considered that the refugee's culture should be valued, they considered that the two cultures should coexist as components of one same social context.

Discussion

The present findings were not entirely consistent with our predictions. Contrary to what we expected, the imagined institutional policy did not affect Realistic Threat and Symbolic Threat. However, they were consistent with our predictions and previous findings as regards the effects of the absence of a clearly reported policy about refugees on Prejudice and Positive Attitudes Toward Refugees, and they provide an important indication regarding the effects of refugee-related policies. The fact that we found no differences in these variables as a function of the kind of clearly adopted policy (assimilative or integrative) seems to suggest that either the manipulation was not clear enough to trigger differences, or that the very fact that a policy of acceptance has been established is more important than whether it implies assimilation or integration.

Moreover, the correlational and regression findings suggest the existence of a distinction between the factors that lead individuals to support an integration policy and the processes that lead them to support an assimilation policy. Consistent with literature and also with our predictions, whereas positive attitudes toward refugees' culture seems to predict that individuals will accept refugees as a new cultural component of society (and stand for pro-integration), the perceived threat of refugees, in terms both of their cultural norms and values and of their competition for resources, seems to lead individuals to prefer them to abandon their culture of origin.

General Discussion and Conclusions

The Importance of a Clear Policy Statement

On the whole, our studies provide interesting highlights about the factors involved in, and the likely consequences of, the relations between refugee and Portuguese populations. In Study 1, we found that, the more participants agreed with the opinions of a specialist who held an inclusive view regarding the entry of refugees into Portugal, the lower realistic and symbolic threats they associated with the refugee population, and this led them to agree less with an assimilation strategy, and more with an integration strategy toward this population. In Study 2, we found that the nonexistence of a clear policy statement led participants to see the refugee population as more threatening, and that this threat generated stronger prejudice toward refugees than when a policy statement existed.

Results of Studies 1 and 2 are thus consistent with the idea that authorities do play a relevant role in shaping citizens' acceptance

Table 3
Pearson's Moment-Product Coefficients Between Realistic Threat, Symbolic Threat, Prejudice, Positive Attitudes, Assimilation, Integration, and Policy (Study 3)

Dependent measures	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Realistic threat	2.36	1.14						
2. Symbolic threat	1.90	.11	.61***					
3. Prejudice	1.96	.89	.47***	.67***				
4. Positive attitudes	5.44	.12	−.41***	−.57***	−.34***			
5. Assimilation	1.45	.75	.26**	.53***	.40***	−.43***		
6. Integration	6.15	.08	−.12	−.18†	−.13	.34***	−.20*	
7. Policy			.23**	.20*	.18†	−.18†	.10	−.17†

† $p \leq .100$.   * $p \leq .050$.   ** $p \leq .010$.   *** $p \leq .001$.

Table 4

Betas and Significance of the Predictive Effect of Realistic Threat, Symbolic Threat, Prejudice, Positive Attitudes, and Policy on Assimilation and Integration (Study 3)

	Attitudes					
	Assimilation			Integration		
Dependent measures	b	SE	p	b	SE	p
Realistic threat	−.09	.07	.214	.05	.10	.632
Symbolic threat	**.32**	**.10**	**.002**	.04	.13	.763
Prejudice	.11	.10	.278	−.05	.13	.718
Positive attitudes	**−.14**	**.06**	**.028**	**.25**	**.08**	**.003**
Policy	−.04	.08	.579	−.17	.10	.112

Note: The values in bold are the ones that are < 0.05.

of immigrants/refugees (Bohman, 2015; Druckman, 2001; Murray & Marx, 2013; see also Esses et al., 2013). Our results show that, in addition, the lack of a clear-cut policy statement on the part of authorities about how they plan to deal with refugees' inclusion may foster perceived threat and consequently hinder individuals' willingness to get to know and to value the refugees culture, thereby nourishing prejudice and increasing the potential for intergroup conflict. Nevertheless, we do acknowledge the importance of including more specific policies to manipulate integrative and assimilative conditions, and to check for a clear perception (on the part of participants) that such policies may represent the two intended types of acculturation strategies.

The Role of Prejudice Versus Positive Attitudes Toward Refugees

Finally, in Study 3, we found that positive attitudes toward Syrian refugees' culture may be a key factor in determining the kind of policy that individuals will support toward the refugees. When attitudes toward their culture are positive, refugees are not viewed as a threatening group, and the preferred policy is one of integration. However, when few or no positive attitudes are held toward them, refugees are viewed as a threat both regarding the local values and the access to resources, thus supporting an assimilation strategy.

The above conclusion could be questioned. Indeed, it is worthy of note that we provided our participants with no possibility of advocating a strategy of exclusion. Had we done so, many might have advocated this strategy as the best alternative. This seems plausible in light of the current political discourses evoking progroup protection motives (motives that are consistent with those found in the intergroup conflict and in-group protection literature; cf. Dovidio, Gaertner, & Kawakami, 2003; Hewstone, 1990). It should be noted, however, that our findings indirectly discard such a possibility. Indeed, our results show that participants who expressed lower agreement with integration were also those who expressed relatively strong prejudice against (i.e., overt rejection of) refugees. However, although agreement with assimilation and prejudice can both be discriminatory views, prejudice did not predict agreement with assimilation (cf. Study 3), suggesting that the negative attitude evoked by, and the measures advocated toward, refugees are either unrelated to each other or, perhaps, mediated by other variable(s).

Future Research Prospects

In conclusion, we hope that the present work represents a further step toward a better understanding of, and an increased ability to intervene in the processes involved in, the current migratory refugee movements.

European countries are currently working on policies regarding refugees. As a case in point, Portugal has designated a commission to devise a strategy to include the 10,000 expected refugees, and to establish policies to promote their integration. Considering that citizens still lack information about this commission and its deliveries, and that Europe has still been unable to send clear guidelines regarding refugees' inclusion in member-state countries, European citizens seem to be placed in an uncertain situation that might potentiate perceived threat and discriminary attitudes toward refugees. It goes without saying that we cannot generalize our results to the Portuguese (even less to the European) population, but the consistency of results found across the three studies is a clear indication that the lack of strong inclusive policies is a serious obstacle in the path of the European agenda.

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Appendix

Perceived Threat Measures

Realistic Threat	"Syrian refugees will get more from this country than they contribute"
	"Immigration of Syrian refugees will increase the tax burden on the Portuguese"
	"Syrian refugees will overburden social services and make them less able to support the Portuguese population."
	"The children of Syrian refugees should have the same right to attend public schools in Portugal as the Portuguese do (reversed)"
	"Immigration of Syrian refugees will not displace the Portuguese from their jobs (reversed)"
	"Syrian refugees should be eligible for the same health-care benefits as the Portuguese (reversed)"
	"The quality of social services available to the Portuguese will remain the same, despite the immigration of Syrian refugees (reversed)"
	"Syrian refugees are as entitled to subsidized housing or subsidized utilities (water, sanitation, electricity) as poor Portuguese citizens are (reversed)"
Symbolic Threat	"Syrian refugees should learn to conform to the rules and norms of Portuguese society after they arrive"
	"Immigration by Syrian refugees will undermine Portuguese culture"
	"The values and beliefs of Syrian refugees regarding moral and religious issues are not compatible with the values and beliefs of the Portuguese"
	"The values and beliefs of Syrian refugees regarding family issues and socializing children are basically quite similar to those of the Portuguese"
	"The values and beliefs of Syrian refugees regarding work are basically quite similar to those of the Portuguese (reversed)"
	"The values and beliefs of Syrian refugees regarding family issues and socializing children are basically quite similar to those of the Portuguese (reversed)"
	"Syrian refugees should not have to accept the Portuguese ways (reversed)"