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INHIBITING AND STIMULATING FACTORS FOR THE INTEGRATION OF REFUGEES

INTO THE PORTUGUESE LABOUR MARKET

Portuguese Community Analysis and Importance of Outgroup Support

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Inhibiting and Stimulating Factors for the Integration of Refugees into the Portuguese Labour

Market – Portuguese Community Analysis and Importance of Outgroup Support

Abstract

Employment is considered a fundamental pillar of the overall refugee integration. This research

has identified different factors that can stimulate or inhibit refugees' integration in the labour

market and society. Furthermore, the following study focuses on the analysis of the quality of

outgroup support refugees can expect, during their integration process in Portugal. Using an

online survey, information was gathered on different areas, such as the attitude towards refugees,

the perception of their impact on the labour market and contact established with refugees. Results

obtained showed a general positive attitude both towards the arrival of refugees in the country, as

well as their integration in the labour market. While most participants had not established

previous contact with refugees, media coverage in Portugal seems to have an indirect impact on

the public's image on refugees.

Keywords

Refugee Integration, Labour Market, Acculturation, Social Business, Human Resource

Management, Social Impact, Outgroup Support, Mental Health, Hospitality, Training Program

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List of Abbreviations

ACM	Alto Comissariado para as Migrações (High Comission for Refugees)
ARP	Autorização de Residência Provisória (Temporary Residence Permit)
CPR	Conselho Português para os Refugiados (Portuguese Refugee Council)
EU	European Union
IEFP	Instituto do Emprego e Formação Profissional (Portuguese Institute for Employment and Professional Training)
JRS	Portuguese Jesuit Refugee Services
SEF	Serviço de Estrangeiros e Fronteiras (Portuguese Immigration and Border Service)
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Glossary

Asylum Seeker	An individual seeking international protecting, who has not been granted asylum yet.
Refugee	An individual who meets the eligible criteria to be granted international protection. Thereby, every refugee had been an asylum seeker before.
Migrant	An umbrella term, which is not defined / protected under international law, for individuals leaving their countries either voluntarily or forced. Economic migrants – individuals leaving their country solely for economic reasons – do not fall into the category of asylum seekers / refugees, who may benefit from international protection.

COLLECTIVE PART

1. Introduction

At a scientific level, the goal of this project is to identify inhibiting and stimulating factors for the integration of migrant refugees into the Portuguese labour market. In practical terms, the project is aimed at gathering evidence-based knowledge, which is intended to serve as the basis for the development of a future refugee training program for Mezze, a social business by Associação Pão a Pão based in Lisbon.

The group project is divided into a collective part and four individual parts. The collective part addresses two guiding questions, which precede the final research question, while the individual parts elaborate further on specific key themes related to refugees' labour market integration. These individual deep-dives are presented in separate documents, each authored on an individual basis by one of the four group members.

The two questions guiding the collective part are: 1) *What is the general context and how is the refugee situation in Portugal?* 2) *How does the acculturation journey of refugees look like?* These questions pave the path to finally identify: *What are the stimulating and inhibiting factors for refugees' labour market integration?*

First, the context in which this research project is embedded, is addressed by starting with an overview of the global refugee crisis followed by an insight into the refugee situation, specifically in Portugal. The paper focuses hereby predominantly on Middle Eastern and African refugees. In the next step, a sound understanding of the socialization and acculturation process refugees go through, is required. Thus, one of the fundamental acculturation models (The Berry's acculturation model in Berry 1997; Berry 2006) is discussed in more detail. Finally, concrete factors, influencing the integration into the Portuguese labour market, are identified.

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2. The Context

The first guiding question of this collective part is aimed at understanding the context of this research project, which is the refugee situation worldwide, and more specifically in Portugal. With the civil war in Syria unfolding since 2011, Western countries suddenly faced a vast amount of humanitarian migrants within a relatively short period of time in the past decade. The spontaneous inflow peaked in 2015 and required immediate action on an international level. Portugal, an OECD country seeing relatively low numbers of humanitarian migrants in the past, was now facing tripled numbers of asylum seekers between the years 2014 and 2017. (OECD 2019) Historically, migration inflows in Portugal stemmed mainly from Brazil, former Portuguese colonies on the African continent and Eastern Europe. With the humanitarian situation in Syria and neighbouring countries worsening, Portugal was now required to grant international protection to asylum seekers from Middle Eastern countries. The term *asylum seeker* is defined as "an individual who is seeking international protection" by the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR 2013). Once asylum is granted, the individual is considered a *refugee*.

Integrating refugees into a completely new country, culture, economy, and society with a different language, a different set of beliefs and values, and a different legislation has proven to be an extraordinarily complex task. There are multiple influencing intertwined factors which either contribute to or hinder integration. One of the main challenges in fully integrating refugees lies in the access to the host country's labour market and the quality of employment opportunities available. According to the EU-wide *Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy*, determined in 2004, "Employment is a key part of the integration process and is central to the participation of immigrants, to the contributions immigrants make to the host society, and to making such contributions visible." (Council of the European Union 2004, 19). Without employment, refugees remain dependent on third parties and cannot become financially

independent and economically contributing members of the host society. Non-employment can further affect individuals' motivation, well-being and social inclusion in a negative way, and refugees' talent and skills remain unutilized potential. (ILO 2016)

All over the world, various public, private and non-profit organizations are trying to tackle this exact challenge, one of them being *Associação Pão a Pão*, a non-profit organization in Lisbon, Portugal. With the establishment of its restaurant project *Mezze*, the association strives to facilitate labour market integration of refugees by offering employment opportunities and training, with the latter one being intended to evolve into a more structured and scalable model in the future. The restaurant Mezze, located at Mercado de Arroios, Lisbon, was established in 2017. Born from a conversation with a Syrian student, the idea of creating a Middle Eastern restaurant came as a way of giving refugees in Lisbon the opportunity to have a workplace where they would feel 'at home', using food as a bridge between refugees and the local Portuguese community. Currently, Mezze does not only function as a restaurant, but also hosts different workshops on Mediterranean food to the public and provides catering services. As of 2020, Mezze has already provided 37 beneficiaries[1] with an employment opportunity. The Mezze project has been recognized as an example of success in the integration of refugees by important national figures, such as the Prime Minister António Costa and President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, as well as the former European Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship – Dimitris Avramopoulos. In 2018, Mezze was further honoured as the *Figura do Ano na Gastronomia* by the *Congresso dos Cozinheiros*, one the most important annual events amongst the Portuguese restaurant industry, and won the social entrepreneurship award from both the *Groupe PSA Foundation*, and the Julia Taft Grant under the refugee aid category (Mezze by Associação Pão a

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[1] Despite being offered this opportunity, some beneficiaries only stayed with Mezze for the trial period. This data was provided by the founders of Mezze (November 16, 2020);

Pão 2020). In the future, Mezze is planning to develop and implement a well-founded, structured training program, which is intended to function as a scalable model and best practice example within the hospitality sector, that could be replicated industry-wide to increase the overall social impact.

2.1 The Refugee Crisis in Portugal & Europe

During the last decade, at least 100 million people were forced to leave their homes and start over due to violent conflicts, war, and persecution. This forced displacement was triggered by different crises, including the humanitarian crisis in Yemen, the conflict in Ukraine, the outflow of Venezuelans across Latin America and the Caribbean, safety concerns in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, and Somalia, amongst other defining events. The following paper will be focused primarily on the integration of Middle Eastern refugees as a result of the Syrian crisis triggered by the civil war in 2011. (UNHCR 2020).

With attacks increasing every day, families started to flee the country seeking safety and by 2013, over one million people had left Syria. From 2011 to 2019, the number of forcibly displaced Syrians increased to more than double (from 634 000 to 13 230 000). (UNHCR 2020).

2.1.1   Current Situation Worldwide

As of 2019, 80 million people are forcibly displaced worldwide, from which around 26 million are refugees. (UNHCR 2020).

The top five countries from where refugees have fled in 2019 are Syria, reporting 6.6 million people hosted in more than 126 countries worldwide, followed by Venezuela, Afghanistan, South Sudan, and Myanmar. (Figure 1)
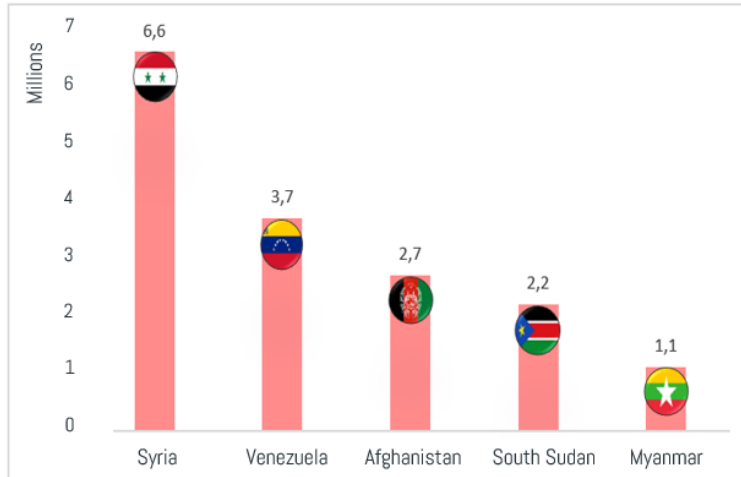
Regarding the countries of destination, Turkey secures the first place, having hosted 3.6 million refugees in 2019, following Colombia, Pakistan, Uganda and finally Germany, with 1.1 million refugees. (UNHCR 2020) France and Sweden occupy the second and third place in the EU top refugee host countries in 2019. (Statista 2020)

Despite not being the main destination among EU state members, Portugal has been experiencing a significant increase in the number of migrants and refugees in the past decade. In 2019, there were 3 430 forcibly displaced people in the country (compared with 610 in 2011), from which 2 375 were refugees and 1055 asylum seekers. Most refugees arrived from Syria (accounting for 22%), followed by Ukraine, Angola, Eritrea, and Iraq. Male refugees accounted for 68% of all refugee population in Portugal. (UNHCR 2020)

2.1.2   Process of Integration in Portugal

Concerning the integration process in Portugal, there are two possible migration journeys: one for spontaneous asylum seekers and refugees and another one, since 2015, for asylum seekers under the EU-schemes. In both systems migrants start by filing a request for international protection with the Portuguese Immigration and Border Service, called *SEF*. While waiting for the decision on the request, which can take up to one month, the Portuguese Refugee Council, *CPR*, is in charge of

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supporting the spontaneous asylum seekers by hosting them in its reception centre (*CAR*) or in private housing. In addition, Portuguese language training as well as professional workshops are provided during this period. Once the waiting period is over, and if the request is admissible, the asylum seeker receives a temporary residence permit (*ARP*). This permit is valid for 6 months and needs to be renewed until *SEF* communicates the final decision on whether refugee status or subsidiary protection is granted, or any kind of protection is denied.

Regarding refugees under the EU-Schemes, a hosting entity is immediately assigned, after submitting the request for asylum. This match is done by the High Commissioner for Migrations (*ACM*) based on the background of each refugee and the hosting entity that oversees the integration program, which typically lasts 18 or 24 months. The main entities to host asylum seekers under the EU-Schemes are the Refugee Support Platform, *PAR*, and *CPR* and are responsible for the integration along five different areas: housing, health, language, education, and work. (OECD 2019)

3. Journey of Acculturation

After defining the context and situation, in which this research is embedded, the second guiding question is explored, by examining the acculturation journey that refugees undergo.

The integration of refugees into the labour market of a host country represents one key pillar of the overall integration. Therefore, in order to evaluate inhibiting and stimulating factors for the labour market integration from a theoretical perspective, the overarching processes that refugees go through during their settlement in a different country have to be studied. Among them, the acculturation process stands out as one of the most glaring and appropriate within this context. However, in order to discuss acculturation, it is important to first understand the general concept of socialization.

3.1 Socialization

According to William Little (Little 2014), socialization is the process through which people are taught to be proficient members of a society. It describes the ways that people come to understand societal norms and expectations, to accept society's beliefs, and to be aware of societal values. Despite this process being very dependent on the norms and traditions that are passed on from an individual's parent/guardian, Maccoby argues that it does not mean that newer generations will not adopt different social structures and social behaviours (Maccoby 2015). Through her work, socialization is defined as "a succession of processes occurring at successive stages of development", with the family, peer groups or schools being identified as the main agents during the process. These studies on socialization are crucial to the project, as they highlight how similar the concepts of acculturation and socialization are. However, there is one main characteristic of the process of socialization that highlights why acculturation should be the focus of the theoretical analysis: Socialization is the transition from the initial stage in the development of an individual to the final stage. The process implies a slower transition from stage to stage, caused mostly as the individual matures and gets older. However, asylum seekers experience a sudden transition when they are forced to travel to a new country. In this situation, the adaptation to a completely different culture with its norms and values is provoked by the involuntary transition, rather than a natural transition. Nevertheless, socialization is an important concept for the following studies. Depending on the stage of socialization and thereby the age of a refugee when entering the receiving country, the acculturation process unfolds differently. In a study on Chinese immigrants in Canada, Cheung et al. found that "people are better able to identify with a host culture the longer their exposure to it, but only if this exposure occurs when they are relatively young" (2011, 147). Berry came to a similar conclusion in regards to migration during the early childhood years. He attributes this

phenomenon to the absence of a manifested primary culture, which reduces the need for extensive cultural shedding and thus avoids **cultural conflict**. (Berry 2006) On the contrary, Fathi et al.'s research suggests that adolescent refugees for example are much more vulnerable to the changes related to acculturation. In this stage, individuals are transitioning from childhood to adulthood, and still building their identity, for which "belonging to a peer group" and "good social relationships" is crucial (Fathi, et al. 2018, 2). Consequently, the **age** of an individual can be both a stimulating but also an inhibiting factor for integration. Whether a refugee enters the acculturation journey during childhood or as an adult, affects the course and nature of both processes – socialization and acculturation. Therefore, socialization and acculturation can be seen as two interconnected processes, taking place simultaneously.

3.2 Acculturation Process

When cultural aspects, which are learned through the initial socialization process in one's country of origin, encounter the culture of another country, a process called *Acculturation* is initiated. The concept of acculturation dates back to antiquity and was first discussed by the ancient Greek philosopher Plato. (Plato 1969) Nowadays, the most widely used definition of the term originates from Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits: *"Acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups"* (1936, p.149). Although this definition suggests that both groups may be subject to change (bidirectional influence), criticism has arisen in the past due to the interchangeable use of the two terms, *acculturation* and *assimilation.* As assimilation implies that one group is expected to adapt to the other group's standards (unidirectional influence), the acculturation term obtained a negative connotation over time. In order to maintain the neutral nature of the concept, current research

suggests to refrain from using assimilation as a synonym, which is taken into account for the present paper, whenever the term *acculturation* is used. (Berry 1997; Sam and Berry 2006; Teske and Nelson 1974)

According to Berry (1997) the acculturation process, which is initiated through one's exposure to a foreign culture, triggers changes on two distinct levels: on a group level and on an individual level. Thus, acculturation can be divided into *socio-cultural acculturation* (group-level) and *psychological acculturation* (individual level), the latter term being mainly coined by the research of Theodore Graves. (Berry 1997; Searle and Ward 1990; Graves 1969) These processes are further influenced by whether individuals are subject to acculturation by choice (e.g., immigrants) or involuntarily (e.g., asylum seekers, refugees); by whether individuals are shifting physically to encounter a new culture or are confronted with a new culture without changing their location (e.g., indigenous people); and by whether the cultural encounter is temporary (e.g., exchange students, guest workers) or permanent (e.g., immigrants). (J. W. Berry 1997)

3.2.1 Berry's Acculturation Model

When it comes to a transition, such as the one asylum seekers and refugees are exposed to, two major factors are relevant to determine the course and outcome of acculturation, namely *home culture maintenance* and *host culture acquisition*. Both terms stem from Berry's research, originally defined as *cultural maintenance* and *contact and participation*, and are adapted for the present paper, which presents the model from a refugee perspective. *Home culture maintenance* thereby describes the extent to which the preservation of the refugees' original cultural identity is desired, while *host culture acquisition* refers to the extent of their willingness to adapt to the host country's culture and to engage in it. In 1997, Berry developed a bi-dimensional framework along

those two dimensions (Figure 2), which also became the foundation for several of the recent acculturation models and theories. (J. W. Berry 1997)
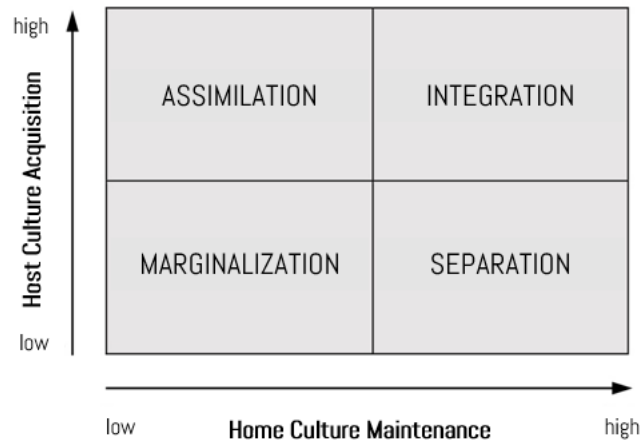
Figure 2*: Berry's Bi-dimensional Acculturation Framework, adapted from Berry (1997)*

The fourfold model distinguishes four different acculturation strategies which individuals and groups pursue during their acculturation process: · *Assimilation* refers to the strategy of adapting to the newly encountered culture, while shedding one's home culture. These two simultaneous processes are also referred to as *culture learning* and *culture shedding* in the literature. (J. W. Berry 1992) · *Separation* represents die opposite strategy, where individuals hold on tightly to cultural habits, values, and norms of their home country, while refraining from cultural learning in respect to the host country. · *Integration* takes place when individuals are adopting cultural aspects of the host country while at the same time maintaining their original cultural identity. · The fourth acculturation strategy is *Marginalization*. In this case, refugees are neither acquiring parts of the host culture nor preserving parts of their home culture. (J. W. Berry 1997)

As previously discussed, acculturation is considered to be a bidirectional process, where both, the dominant (host society) and non-dominant group (incoming refugees) are exerting influence on each other. Therefore, it is important to note that Berry's model can and should also

be utilized to evaluate the dominant group's perspective. This is crucial, as the host culture plays a major role in whether the individual is able to pursue the 'chosen' strategy or not. Berry argues that refugees *"may well be constrained in their choice of strategy, even to the point where there is a very limited role for personal preference"* (J. W. Berry 1997, 12) due to certain **pre-conditions in a country** (e.g., national policies; levels of diversity, racism, etc.). Further, it is important to mention that acculturation is considered to not be static but rather an evolving process. Therefore, the strategy an individual or group pursues may change over time.

In the past, Berry's model also received criticism, mainly regarding its simplistic nature. The four categories are often found to be too generalized, as they do not allow to capture different nuances of acculturation strategies. (Rudmin 2009; Schwartz, et al. 2010) However, the simplistic nature of the model might be what contributed to its popularity within the acculturation research. Nowadays, the four acculturation strategies of Berry serve as a basis for many of the latest, more complex acculturation frameworks. (The MITA in Fathi, et al. 2018; The MIDA in Safdar, et al. 2003; The RAEM in Navas, et al. 2007) In the following work, Berry's model is applied and used to categorize the empirical findings collected form refugees and the civil society of Portugal. The following questions are addressed: Which acculturation strategy are refugees in Portugal predominantly following? and Which position is adopted by the Portuguese society?

4. Introducing Integration Factors in the Portuguese Labour Market

To achieve complete and successful integration, it is key that refugees are granted full access to the labour market of the host country. According to a 2017 analysis published by the European Commission, there are several factors which contribute to a lower employment rate amongst refugees in the host country, compared to the native-born population. Bearing in mind that this analysis uses data from 2014, before the peak of the refugee crisis in 2015 (see exhibit A), the variables influencing the employment rate of refugees the most, are **the time of residence in the**

host country and the **host country language skills**. **Education** influences this rate as well, yet not to the same extent. (Peschner 2017)

With respect to the Portuguese labour market, the unemployment rate is measured at 6,5% in 2019, not far from the EU-27 average (6,7%). Women displayed a rather high unemployment rate compared to men (7,1% against 5,8%). (Pordata 2020)

Regarding the refugees' access to the labour market, Portugal is amongst the OECD countries with the smaller **waiting period** to receive the ARP, at around 1 month only (see exhibit B). As of November 2018, almost half of all asylum seekers and refugees under the EU-schemes were either employed or in training. (OECD 2019)

Integration in the labour market is, as with the native-born population, more challenging for women than for men, making **gender** also one inhibiting factor for women. Most refugee women arriving in Portugal under the EU schemes claim to have no prior work experience outside their households and the education level tends to be low. Only 5% of both male and female asylum seekers have received tertiary education. (OECD 2019)

In Portugal, several other challenges, which are acting as inhibiting factors in regards the labour market integration, stand out. The first one concerns the **language**. As shown previously, knowing the host country's language is a major advantage for every refugee to be properly integrated into the host society and succeed both personally and professionally. In the Portuguese situation, the language courses offered by *IEFP* sometimes do not open due to lack of students, and the few alternatives available lack time and structure for a refugee to properly learn the language. (OECD 2019) Thus, the language factor can be either stimulating, when successfully learnt and used as a bridge for communication and integration, or inhibiting, in the case that refugees and asylees do not speak the host country's language and never become integrated to the full extent, leading to their marginalization or separation (figure 2: Berry's model).

Following, the **recognition of foreign skills** poses another hurdle. This challenge arises as most refugees do not bring their diplomas to the host country and, without proper documents, their skills and qualifications are not recognized, which inhibits their ability to find a job corresponding to actual capabilities and literacy. (OECD 2019)

Finally, refugees and asylum seekers face several obstacles related to **employers' perception of refugees** combined with **legal issues**, when looking for job opportunities, which also represent inhibiting factors for labour market integration. In Portugal, there are a few initiatives from ACM to facilitate the matching between refugees and employers such as *Mentors for Migrants* or *Refujobs*. However, hiring a refugee is still seen as a risk for several companies, mainly due to the legal procedures required to work in Portugal and the **uncertainty** of not knowing for how long the refugee or asylum seeker will remain in the country. (OECD 2019)

4.1 Entrepreneurial Attitude: Ethnic Entrepreneurship

Another factor stimulating the integration of refugees into the labour market is the **attitude** and the **ability to achieve self-employment**. It can be defined as entrepreneurial character, and because of its relevant outcomes in the labour market, the factor is going to be explained in more detail. Refugees often belong to ethnic minorities, who are more likely to suffer labour discrimination in the host country because of poor language skills, unrecognized education and qualifications, or just by being considered as outsiders with respect to the host community. This combination of "push" factors has made entrepreneurial activities an alternative way to make use of personal resources to get out of unemployment and into better socio-economic integration (Wauters e Lambrecht 2008), that would reflect their true skills, qualification and knowledge. Ethnic entrepreneurship can be defined as the self-employment of people belonging to minorities and having a culture different from that of the host country. (Chad and Ghorbani 2011) Several studies show that

entrepreneurship rates are often higher among foreigners than natives, and that entrepreneurs coming from minority ethnic groups, like refugees, are generally more successful. (Waldinger, Aldrich and Ward 1990) This is probably due to the fact that they are **less risk-averse**, have better opportunity perception, and are more confident about succeeding in a new and unfamiliar environment (Levie 2007), especially since their migration's decision has been involuntarily and influenced by the fear for personal safety. Moreover, because of the **different background**, **knowledge**, and the heterogeneity they bring into the economy, ethnic entrepreneurs may also trigger radical innovations with respect to the host country's standards. (Acs 2006) Despite legal and language challenges, refugee entrepreneurs may also have important competitive advantages, especially in the service industry, more specifically tourism and hospitality, which represents the most attractive area for refugees to venture. It requires less capital, less know-how, and ethnic entrepreneurs can have access to a low-cost co-ethnic labour force. (Portes and Jensen 1989) Nevertheless, one of the main barriers to the entrepreneurial success of refugees is the hostile political environment in many host countries, where local communities blame refugees for depressed wages, lack of jobs, and increased crime rates, hindering the integration process. (Mulvey 2010) But since refugees' chances and willingness, to return to their homelands are very limited, especially in cases like Syria where there is little hope for solutions in the short term, it is in the governments' best interest to facilitate integration into the host society, labour market, and economy. Refugees who do not have access to the labour market are forced to rely on the welfare system of the host country. At the same time, refugees are involuntary migrants who sometimes even come from middle and upper-class backgrounds, being consequently well educated, resourceful, adaptable, and independent. Thus, supporting refugees' entrepreneurial aspirations is important not just to assure their socio-economic advancement, but also because successful entrepreneurs will no longer be dependent on governments' aid, and will enhance the welfare and

economic growth by creating jobs for both locals and refugees. (Alrawadieh, Karayilan e Cetin 2018)

4.2 Social Support and Mental Health

Two further key variables, which affect the outcome of an individual's acculturation process and thereby one's integration into the labour market, are **perceived ingroup social support** and **perceived outgroup social support**. Both variables are worth mentioning, as they are not only included in Berry's acculturation model (figure 2) but also in more recent and complex acculturation frameworks such as the *Multidimensional Individual Difference Acculturation Model* by Safdar et al. (2003) and the *MITA Model* by Fathi et al. (2018), which build onto Berry's acculturation strategies.

Ingroup support hereby refers to the perceived social support from family and friends from the ingroup (e.g. same ethnic minority, country of origin), whereas outgroup support considers the social support originating from the host society.

According to both above-mentioned models and several other studies, these factors can both have a stimulating or inhibiting effect on the refugees' integration in the labour market: the availability of social support can not only significantly lower **acculturative stress**, even when individuals had been exposed to **traumatic events**, but also facilitates the coping with challenges related to a bi-cultural surrounding (Safdar, et al. 2003; Fathi, et al. 2018; Jerusalem et al. 1996). However, the absence of this support can also aggravate the feeling of loneliness and lead to the deterioration of refugees' mental health. Both factors, in-group and out-group social support, have significant effects on a refugee's **mental health**, which again influences the overall integration. Thus, in-group and out-group support play a key role in the acculturation process and therefore also deserve consideration in the context of refugees' inclusion into the labor force.

4.3 Language Socialization and the Language Barrier

Since the **language** barrier is considered one of the main obstacles for the integration of refuges into the labour market, the concept of language socialization has been examined in more depth in this paragraph. Not being able to speak the local language is not just a barrier to accessing the labour market, but it can also be a major factor for preventing proper integration, culturally and socially speaking. Nevertheless, most countries offer language training program upon arrival that permit to obtain social and communicative competence, raising attendees only to the poverty line, and not allowing to achieve technical proficiency, which is necessary to thrive in the upper and middle class. Indeed, competence refers to understanding the use of language in determinate situations, and this is enough to navigate the welfare system and get employed within a blue-collar job. But to access higher positions in the social and work hierarchy, a more complete academic and technical knowledge of the language is needed.

This is where language socialization plays a crucial role, defined as a lifelong process that takes place when a person seeks some level of proficiency in a language other than their mother tongue in order to engage in social and community practices by Duff (2012). This process can be facilitated through specific programs, like for example reception and placement classes offered by Catholic Charities in the US, which teach individual norms, customs, and cultural habits of the host country exclusively in English. The reason why language socialization is a fundamental factor for integration is that it permits to go beyond the basic language skills for survival and self-sufficiency and allows to increase social mobility in the host community and job market, since language proficiency is a core asset that increases employability. (O'Connor 2014) Nevertheless, it must be pointed out that the second language and the second culture, referring to the host country's ones, are inextricably linked. The culture and the habits of a community influence the accent and the way

a dialogue develops, and this is why language socialization processes should include also cultural teachings to allow new learners to fully integrate with the host community. (Kelley 2014)

5. Summary of Integration Factors and Introduction of Individual Deep-Dives

Examining the leading question about the *inhibiting and stimulating factors for the integration of refugees into the society and labour market*, the following factors were identified so far:

Stimulating Factors for Integration	Inhibiting Factors for Integration
Younger Age (at Arrival)	Older Age (at Arrival)
Favourable Conditions in the Host Country	Hostile Conditions in the Host Country
Access to Good Language Courses	Poor Language Skills
Time of Residence in the Host Country	Long Waiting Period to access Labour Market
Education	Gender Inequalities
Recognition of Foreign Skills	Employer's Negative Perception of Refugees
Entrepreneurial Mindset	Legal Issues
Ingroup and Outgroup Support	Future Uncertainty
Mental Stability	Acculturative Stress & Trauma
Different Knowledge	Cultural Conflict

Table 1*: Stimulating and Inhibiting Factors for the Integration of Refugees into the Society and Labour Market*

According to these findings and taking into consideration the group member's individual areas of interest, four key themes related to refugees' labour market integration were identified, which will be explored further within the individual parts:

- Associação Pão a Pão and Mezze's role in fostering the integration of refugees in the Portuguese labour market and how they plan to strengthen their operations.

- Out-group social support: The Portuguese context and the role of the Portuguese community.

- The psychological perspective: The role of refugees' mental health in the labour market integration. What are the psychological challenges and is Mezze tackling them?

- Global best practice examples: Which practices are implemented and which of them can be adopted by Mezze?

INDIVIDUAL PART

1. Introduction

As previously mentioned, during the transition to a new country, refugees experience not only ingroup support within their communities/workplaces (Mezze's case, for example), but they also deal with the reaction of the local community: the outgroup support. Indeed, the outgroup support is one of the main stimulating and inhibiting factors for the integration of refugees in the labor market. Since the community's attitude towards refugees will be a major factor for the quality of the outgroup support, it seemed essential to answer the question: "Does the Portuguese Community show a positive attitude towards refugees?".

To draw meaningful and specific conclusions for the Portuguese case, an empirical research on the Portuguese community was conducted: Firstly, we evaluated the overall opinion on the refugee crisis in Portugal, followed by the assessment on the participants attitude towards refugees themselves and established what is the preconceived opinion on the refugees coming into the country and into the labour market.

Through a literature review on the work of different authors, a study of two defined hypothesis will be conducted: the first regards the possibility that previous contact established with refugees has a positive shift on the personal attitude towards them, while the second hypothesis states that said attitude will have an impact on the perceived impact refugees have on a country's economy.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Outgroup Support

As previously analysed throughout the collective part, the outgroup support considers the social support originating from the host society. This factor plays an important role in lowering acculturative stress and coping with the different challenges of integration in a different country (Safdar, Lay, and Struthers 2003; Fathi et al. 2018; Jerusalem, Hahn, and Schwarzer 1996). Outgroup Support plays a key role during the acculturation process and is one of the main stimulating/inhibiting factors for the integration of refugees in the labour market.

2.2. Prejudice and Discrimination

The concept of prejudice can be defined as a hostile attitude or feeling towards a person, solely because he or she belongs to a group to which one has assigned objectionable qualities (Allport 1958). Prejudice has been constantly present throughout generations, but it is often confused with discrimination, as the two concepts are closely connected. However, prejudice is not the same thing as discrimination, the difference lies in the fact that discrimination puts prejudice into concrete actions. In his book, *The Nature of Prejudice*, Allport (1954) explains this distinction with a concrete example, where he considers two different persons with the same level of prejudice towards Jewish people, but one decides to employ workers that are Jewish, while the other refuses to hire them. As a rule, discrimination has more immediate and serious social consequences than has prejudice (Allport 1954). Prejudice concerns the attitude, whereas discrimination is a set of behaviours that make the attitude more visible and impactful.

2.3. Intergroup Contact Theories

The first reports on intergroup contact suggested intergroup hostility and conflict to be natural and inevitable outcomes of contact (Sumner 1906), a view supported by authors 70 and 80 years later in their papers (Pettigrew, LeVine, and Campbell 1973). However, there were theorists such as Allport (1954) that suggested, even during the same period, that this might not be precise. His studies laid the foundation for most following authors to base their future research on prejudice-reducing theories. The assumption of the contact theory is that individuals can develop more positive/negative ideas about an outgroup that will extend beyond the immediate contact with some individuals and impact the attitude towards the entire outgroup. Pettigrew and Tropp (2011) state that in his book, *The Nature of Prejudice*, Allport (1954) noted that the contrasting effects of intergroup contact usually reduce, but sometimes exacerbate prejudice. Reduction of prejudice comes with the condition that the contact between the two groups is positive (Allport 1954). Optimal contact, according to Allport (1954), is characterized by four key factors: it implies cooperation between both groups, people engaged in contact are working towards common goals, it is supported by the authorities and people engaged in contact have equal status. Decreasing the level of uncertainty that exists between different groups of people is an important mechanism to improve relationship between exposure and liking (Pettigrew et al. 2011). However, optimal contact is not always a necessary condition to argue in favour of contact reducing prejudice. In their work, Christ and Kauff (2019) stated that "even when the optimal conditions were not explicitly incorporated, contact still had a prejudice-reducing effect"(Christ and Kauff 2019).

2.4. Refugee's Impact on the Labour Market

Another impactful factor that stirs the public opinion on refugees ever since the beginning of the period of refugee crisis is the impact refugees have on the job market. As early as 2016, refugees are grouped together with other immigrants in the UK as the recipients of four in five jobs in Britain (Moore and Ramsay 2017), during that year. Media coverage in the UK has been using undermining terms to describe their contribution to the labour market, referring to them as "unskilled migrants", eluding the arrival of migrants as "flocking", "swarming" or "invading" and drawing unclear lines between legal and illegal migration (Moore and Ramsay 2017). This is not an isolated case within the European Union. In a 2016 study, an analysis on the public opinion in ten European countries showed that the majority of the interviewed sample agreed that "refugees are a burden on the country because they take people's jobs and social benefits" (Wike et al. 2016). The main argument that explains these negative views on refugees' states that migrants compete with the local population for jobs, which drives down wages and pushes unemployment for the local community (Tetlow 2016).

However, Nickell and Saleheen (2017) conducted an economic study on the actual impact on wage fluctuations and job availability and concluded that, while a 10-percentage increase in immigration will tend to lower average wages by between 0.2-0.8 percentage points, the impact noted on nominal pay was very small and that empirical results reveal that the origin of immigrants – from the EU or non-EU – did not have a differential impact on wages (Nickell and Saleheen 2017).

3. Research Hypotheses

Following the study of the previous literary work, there are a number of hypothesis that can be formulated. However, this research will focus on giving an answer to two main ones.

First, taking into consideration the different perspectives of the importance of contact in the reduction of prejudice and improvement of intergroup relationship, we inspected whether having had contact with refugees was a factor explaining the attitude towards them. Hence, we expect that:

Hypothesis 1 (H1): Previous contact with refugees is associated with a more positive attitude towards refugees, so that individuals that have had prior contacts with refugees hold more positive attitudes towards this outgroup.

Furthermore, from the theoretical analysis on different media outlets in the UK and different countries' community take on refugees, the need to study "how welcomed refugees were in the Portuguese Labour market" became glaring. Thus, we expect that the community's perception of the impact of refugees on the labour market will have an impact on the attitude towards the outgroup.

Hypothesis 2 (H2): The perception of the impact of refugees on the labour market is associated with the attitude towards refugees, so that when individuals hold more negative attitudes towards this outgroup, they will believe that refugees will occupy jobs that should belong to Portuguese workers, they will refuse to go to restaurants that employ refugees and will find mandatory for refugees to speak Portuguese when working in Portugal.

4. Methodology

4.1. Participants and Data Processing

In order to collect data for the community study that is being addressed in this paper, a small survey was created through Google Forms, which required the participants to be Portuguese adults (>18 years old) and currently living in Portugal. This stemmed from the need to conduct an empirical research with data that translated the sample's view on refugees, considering the difficult economic

situation and fear that the Covid-19 pandemic brought upon the world. The survey was distributed with a link via WhatsApp, Facebook or through Email. We followed a snow-ball sampling strategy, which is a non-probability sampling technique. We started with a convenience sample (reached through personal contacts in the social media networks) and asked them to recruit further participants to the study.

During the distribution process of the survey, there was the need to gather a sample that was as heterogenous as possible, so as to obtain data that could appropriately represent the general population of Portugal. For the purposes of this study, 275 participants answered the survey. The most dominant age range for the participants was from 18 to 24 years old, which amounted to 47.3% of the sample, followed by 40-54 and 25-39-years old, accounting for 21.5% and 19.6%, respectively. As for the gender distribution, the sample was split evenly between 146 female participants and 129 males. With regards to the living place of the participants, the large majority reported that were living in a city (n=221), while the remaining (n=54) lived outside of a city. Regarding the occupational status for the different individuals in this sample, 149 participants stated that they were currently working a full-time job, while 106 were still students at either a university or in high school; only 20 participants were either unemployed or already retired.

For the purpose of gathering answers to the survey, that were a correct representation of the participants' attitudes and not a reflection of exhaustion, the approach taken was to create a small survey with only binary options (Yes/No, in this specific case) or select one from a list of options. Once the threshold of 275 options was reached, SPSS was the program chosen to perform different contingency analysis for the chi-square tests, in order to evaluate the possible correlations for the different questions.

4.2. Measures

Attitude towards refugees: Two questions from the survey inquire the participants on whether or not Portugal is accepting too many refugees and if they believe that Portugal should accept more refugees than the ones the country is currently intaking. The analysis of the community's attitude towards refugees will be assessed through the distribution of responses in these two questions, and also by testing whether it is contingent on the *gender, place of residence, age, and employment status.*

Contact with refugees: Participants were directly asked if they had established direct contact with a refugee before.

Impact on the the Portuguese Labour Market: Participants were inquired a) If they could see themselves going to a restaurant where refugees were employed, as the context of the research centers itself on Mezze; b) Whether they believed refugees were occupying jobs that should belong to Portuguese workers, similarly to the previous studies conducted in different European countries; and c) Whether it should be made mandatory for refugees to speak Portuguese in order to be able to work in the country, as the impact of the language barrier in their integration on the Labour Market is extremely important.

5. Results

5.1. Attitude towards refugees

When questioned whether or not participants believed Portugal was currently accepting too many refugees, 77% of the sample answered "No", as opposed to the 23% that believed too many refugees were coming into the country. However, when asked if Portugal should accept more refugees in the future, only roughly 66% of the participants thought that it should. The results

argued in favour of a general positive attitude towards refugee presence in the country. We further explored whether this factor was contingent on demographic characteristics such as *gender*, *age group*, *current place of living* and *employment status*.

Starting with possible gender differences, after conducting the chi-square analysis, we found that there were no significant differences between the gender and the participants' belief that Portugal is currently accepting too many refugees [$\chi2$ (1,275) = 0.50, p = 0.48] or if Portugal should accept more refugees [$\chi2$ (1,275) = 0.03, p = 0.87]. This way, we can conclude that male and female participants hold a similar attitude towards refugees.

We further inspected if age was related to participants' attitudes towards refugees, and again we found no significant effects of age when asked if they believed Portugal was currently accepting too many refugees, [$\chi2$ (5,275) = 3.92, p = 0.56] or if Portugal should accept more refugees [$\chi2$ (5,275) = 5.89, p = 0.32]. Taking into consideration these results, we conclude that participants' attitude towards refugees is not dependent on their age.

Regarding the relation between participants' place of living and attitude, we found no significant effects. Indeed, regardless of living in a city or not, participants hold similar beliefs on whether Portugal was currently accepting too many refugees [$\chi2$ (2,275) = 0.49, p =0.78], or if Portugal should accept more refugees [$\chi2$ (2,275) = 1.14, p = 0.56]. So, it can be concluded that participants that live in different places within the country have similar general attitudes towards refugees.

Finally, we tested if there were significant differences between the participants' attitude and their employment status. For the first question, whether or not Portugal is accepting too many refugees, there were no significant differences to be noted [$\chi2$ (3,275) = 2.88, p =0.41]. However, in what concerns the participants' opinion on whether Portugal should accept more refugees, we found a significant higher proportion of negative opinions among the retired and the working groups,

compared to the unemployed and the student groups [χ2 (3, N=275) = 12.33, p =0.01]. Therefore, the employment status is related to the general attitude that participants hold towards refugees.

Upon the assessment of the relation between the demographic information of the sample and participants' attitude towards refugees, we can conclude that the community's response towards refugees in this specific sample and, consequently, the outgroup support is overall positive and mostly stable across demographics.

5.2. Contact Theory

In order to evaluate the hypothesis that a positive or negative attitude towards refugees is dependent on whether the participants had any type of contact with a refugee beforehand (H1), a crosstab analysis was created for the different questions that evaluated overall attitude towards refugees. After conducting the chi-square analysis, we found that there was no relation between these factors. The participants belief that Portugal is currently accepting too many refugees is in fact independent from having had previous presential contact with a refugee, [χ2 (2,275) = 2.07, p = 0.36]. Similarly, there is no relation between previous contact with refugees and the belief that Portugal should accept more refugees [χ2 (2,275) = 1.13, p = 0.57]. These results lead us to conclude that, despite being theorized that establishing personal contact with refugees can influence the community's opinion on refugee integration, the chi-square tests ran on the sample participants showed that this conclusion cannot be drawn within the scope of this project. Therefore, results do not support H1. Post-hoc analysis further showed that there was no difference between participants reporting having had previous contact with refugees and their gender [χ2 (2, 275) = 0.56, p = 0.76]; age [χ2 (10, 275) = 13.99, p = 0.17]; place of living [χ2 (4, 275) = 2.35, p = 0.67], or employment status [χ2 (6, 275) = 9.41, p = 0.15].

5.3. Labour Market

When participants were questioned if they were willing to go to a restaurant that employed refugees, only a minuscule fraction of people answered negatively, amount to a measly 1% of the sample (3 people), while the remaining 99% answered "Yes". However, these percentages dropped considerably when participants were asked whether they believed that it should be mandatory for refugees to speak Portuguese in order to work in Portugal, as only 64.4% answered "No", while the remaining 35.6% believed it should. Finally, respondents were asked if they believed refugees were occupying job positions that should belong to Portuguese workers, to which the large majority of 88.7% of people answered "No", while the remaining 11.3% believed they were in fact hindering the job offer for Portuguese workers. Overall, results showed that participants generally felt in favour of the integration of refugees into the labour market. Considering these results, a further assessment on whether this opinion was contingent on demographic characteristics was conducted. In order to properly study the perception people have on the refugee impact on the labour market, the different survey questions were analysed, taking into consideration the different demographic factors. For this, a crosstab analysis was conducted, which wielded the following results:

Firstly, there were no significant differences between the participants' willingness to go to a restaurant that employed refugees and their gender [χ^2 (1, 275) = 3.43, p = 0.64]; age [χ^2 (5, 275) = 7.11, p = 0.21]; and place of living [χ^2 (2, 275) = 3.79, p = 0.15]. However, the willingness to go to a restaurant that employed refugees was in fact dependent on the participants employment status [χ^2 (3, 275) = 12.70, p = 0.005].

As for the belief that refugees are occupying job positions that should belong to Portuguese workers, there were no significant differences regarding the gender [χ^2 (1, 275) = 1.75, p = 0.19];

age [$\chi2$ (5, 275) = 1.23, p = 0.94]; place of living [$\chi2$ (2, 275) = 0.002, p = 0.99]; or the employment

status [$\chi2$ (3, 275) = 2.68, p = 0.44].

Finally, the last crosstab analysis showed again no significant differences between the participants

belief that refugees should have to speak Portuguese in order to work in Portugal and their gender

[$\chi2$ (1, 275) = 0.25, p = 0.62]; age [$\chi2$ (5, 275) = 10.11, p = 0.07]; or the place of living [$\chi2$ (2, 275)

= 3.96, p = 0.14]. However, regarding the belief that refugees should have to speak Portuguese in

order to work in Portugal, the employment status of the participants had an influence on their

answers, as the number of students that answered "No" was disproportionately higher than

participants within the unemployed and retired groups [$\chi2$ (3, 275) = 7.78, p = 0.05]. Therefore,

the employment status is related to the belief that refugees should have to speak Portuguese in order

to work in Portugal.

In order to evaluate the last hypothesis regarding the relation between perception of the impact of

refugees have in the economy and the attitude towards the refugees (H2), a crosstab analysis was

once again used, where the labour market perception answers were studied, in order to see if they

were dependent on the participants attitude towards refugees.

When assessing the relation between participants' willingness to go to a restaurant that employed

refugees and their attitude towards refugees, results from the chi-square test showed that the

participants answers where dependent on their attitude towards refugees, as the only respondents

that were unwilling to go to a restaurant that employed refugees all had a negative attitude towards

refugees, both in the question that assessed the belief that Portugal is currently accepting too many

refugees [$\chi2$ (1, 275) = 10.21, p = 0.001]; and the belief that Portugal should accept more refugees

[$\chi2$ (1, 275) = 5.94, p = 0.02];

Similarly, while analysing the participants belief that refugees are taking jobs that should be

assigned to Portuguese workers, the large majority of respondents that believed refugees were not,

in fact, having a negative impact on the Portuguese Labour market had already showcased a positive attitude towards refugees, be it in their belief that Portugal is not currently accepting too many refugees [χ^2 (1, 275) = 52.03, p = 0.00]; or in the belief that Portugal should accept more refugees in the country [χ^2 (1, 275) = 34.23, p = 0.00]. So, the once again, results from the chi-square analysis proved a significant relation between the two factors.

Finally, and following the same trend, the belief that it should be mandatory for refugees working in Portugal to speak Portuguese was also contingent on the respondent's attitude towards the refugees, which could be seen as the majority of the positive answers to the attitude questions, reflected into an opinion that it should not be mandatory for the refugees to speak Portuguese, be it when asked if the respondents believed that Portugal is currently accepting too many refugees [χ^2 (1, 275) = 6.56, p = 0.01]; or when asked if they believed Portugal should accept more refugees in the country [χ^2 (1, 275) = 5.56, p = 0.02].

Altogether, results demonstrate that the perception on the refugee's impact on a country's labour market is contingent on the attitude towards refugees. Therefore, we concluded that results support H2.

6. Discussion

The purpose of this study lies in the evaluation of the quality of outgroup support through an examination of participants' general attitude towards refugees. While the findings of this project can give an important outlook on the topic, results should be interpreted with care, seeing as the sample size might be too small and not representative to extrapolate the results to make conclusions on the country's overall population, as well as the problem with a skewness of the data gathered during this project.

6.1. Attitude towards refugees

Taking into consideration the survey answers, the attitude that this sample exhibited was mostly positive, considering that the vast majority of the respondents either believed that Portugal did not accept too many refugees into the country or argued that Portugal should accept more refugees in the future. The fact that these answers are not dependent on any of the demographic factors of this community allows for the processing of this data and to argue in favour of a largely positive attitude evidenced towards refugees. This is an important first result, as the outgroup support depends largely on communities' attitude towards refugees, and a positive outgroup support is one of the main factors influencing the integration of refugees in the labour market (Safdar, Lay, and Struthers 2003). This positive attitude can be reflected on a small amount of prejudice from the community members. However, the topic of the refugee crisis is also a sensitive one and media coverage in Portugal is mostly positive. So, the results being generally positive might be the resulting factor of the feeling of social desirability, that is, answering what other people expect to hear, instead of an expression of the respondent's real opinion. Nonetheless, a positive attitude towards refugees helps in reducing the acculturative stress and consequently eases the integration in the labour market.

6.2. Contact Theory

Taking a closer look at the results of the impact of contact in the attitude towards refugees, we could not support the assumption that previous contact with refugees could be an influencing factor to a positive attitude towards them. Despite the fact that plenty of theoretic work from different authors state that it is in fact an influencing factor, in neither of the questions that regarded the attitude of the respondent towards refugees we could find a level of dependency with the

establishment of previous contact. However, these results can be explained through a number of specific situations that were faced during the elaboration of this research. Firstly, there was a significant number of people (100 out of 275 people) that stated they did not know for sure if they had established previous contact before answering the survey. This detail might prove important in future studies, as on different representative samples, contact might actually play a role in influencing the community's attitude towards refugees. While not knowing can be closely equated to not having established contact, the reality can be quite different if we consider the media coverage of the refugee crisis in Portugal. Considering that most of the stories portray refugees in a positive light, there is some degree of emphatic impact on the population that has not had the opportunity to establish contact with the refugees. This can also be a factor that helps explain why the previous contact with refugees does not influence the (already positive) attitude towards refugees from the respondents in this sample, since even without contact, people are more inclined to feel good about accepting refugees in the country and into the labour market.

6.3. Labour market

As for the perception of the impact refugees have on the economic state of the country, survey results show that it was mostly positive and supportive of the integration of refugees in the economy, as almost all of the sample was willing to go to a restaurant that employed refugees, they did not believed that the job offers they were taking should have been assigned to Portuguese workers, nor that it should be mandatory for refugees to speak Portuguese in order to work in the country, which corresponds to one of the biggest barriers to the integration of refugees in a host country. Aligned with the fact that these answers were not dependent on the majority of demographic characteristics, for this sample we can consider that perception on the impact of

refugees in the country's economy is mostly positive. The second hypothesis (H2) was then studied and promptly validated, as all of the questions that inquired the impact perceived that refugees would have on the labour market was vastly dependent on the prior attitude shown towards refugees. These results are intuitive and expected, in the sense that if a person believes that refugees are a burden to a country or their intentions in coming to a different country are to take advantage of the resources offered by governments (such as social security benefits, housing, among others), they are also more likely to assume that the impact refugees will have on the economy is going to be negative, rather than positive. However, the majority of the respondents showed signs of being very receptive to include refugees in the labour market, which can be explained if we take into consideration the effect that attitude has on the opinion towards their impact on the labour market, which in turn is also largely positive, for this sample. Unlike countries such as the United Kingdom, Portuguese people seem to not look at refugees as a threat to the available job positions. This might happen due to the fact that Portugal is not one of the main countries chosen by refugees to settle in (Jurriaans 2017) and therefore has not reached their maximum capacity of refugee intakes (Euractiv 2016), which can be attributed to the lack of job availability within the country or policies that difficult the refugees' stay in the country. Furthermore, as previously mentioned, media coverage has a great impact on shifting the attitude towards refugees (Danilova 2014), as it is the main source of information for the majority of the population. In the Portuguese case, these reports are mostly positive (Amaral 2019), which in turn can have an impact on why the sample shares such a supportive feeling towards refugees.

7. Recommendations

As an organization that works directly with refugees, Mezze is dealing first-hand with refugees during their daily operations at the restaurant. However, the sample analysed throughout this paper shows that only roughly 1/3 of the people surveyed has had the same opportunity. This is a relevant factor when assessing whether or not contact has an impact in shifting the public's attitude towards refugees. Regarded as one of the most important prejudice-reducing factors by many theorists (Allport 1954; Pettigrew & Tropp 2011; Christ & Kauff 2019), taking advantage of the lack of contact people have with refugees in the Portuguese community can prove beneficial to the organization, as this gives the opportunity for Portuguese people to experience and get to know for themselves who are these refugees: people just like themselves who have run into a very precarious situation that they are trying to fight and surpass together, as any human-being would. So, using Mezze as a platform for storytelling, workshops with the community or just giving the refugees an opportunity to interact with Portuguese people can serve as a way to raise awareness to the restaurant, as well as working actively on improving the public's perception of the refugees, which would in turn aid the integration of the refugees in the labour market, outside Mezze.

Furthermore, the analysis showed that the community exhibited an overwhelming positive support towards the arrival of refugees in the country, as well as their integration in the labour market. These results present themselves as an opportunity that Mezze can take advantage of, since both the acculturation process and the labour market integration of refugees are eased by these factors (Berry 1992). Indeed, this overwhelmingly positive outgroup support showcased by the community should be made aware, as right now the bridges of communication between refugees and the locals are being hindered by factors such as the language barrier, lack of contact and platforms to enable that contact, as well as lack of awareness on the details of the refugee crisis. However, taking these overall study results into consideration, Mezze can find ways of communicating this positive

attitude towards refugees shown by the community to the refugees themselves, as a way of enabling their integration in the community and reducing the acculturative stress. Considering that there is not a well-established refugee community in Lisbon, positive interaction with the Portuguese community can be an extremely beneficial factor for the refugees working with Mezze, as it would give them a source of knowledge on the overall country and the community practices and habits that locals follow.

8. Challenges and Limitations

During the development of this project, there were several noteworthy limitations that occurred and should be considered when reading. First, despite the many efforts to make the data sample as diverse as possible of the entire population, there are still some factors that skewed the final results. From the sample gathered, the age group covering the large majority of the sample is the 18-24 years old group. This can be explained through the way data was collected, as direct contacts were used to gather participants for this paper, and social media platforms are mostly frequented by young adults.

When analysing the impact of contact theories, it is important to note that more than 1/3 of the participants was not aware whether or not they had been in contact with a refugee before or not. This can have an impact on the validity of the final results, as it represents a significant number of answers within this sample and not being aware of whether or not contact was established cannot be considered exactly the same as knowing for certain that contact was not established.

Finally, the quality of contact has not been assessed for the purpose of this study. Despite the fact that some authors deem it mandatory for this quality assessment to be present, it proved an excessively time consuming and specific during the establishment of the survey and latter analysis

of the data. For those reasons and aligned with the fact that reports from previous authors claim that contact, even when not optimal, has still proven to have prejudice-reducing impact on intergroup interactions, the focus was solely on the existence of contact, rather than the quality.

9. Conclusion

Refugee integration has been a difficult task to fulfil by any organization, especially in countries where refugees cannot count on the support from the community to enable their integration. However, hopeful results have been encountered during this study, as the community seems to portray an overall positive attitude towards refugees and their integration in the community. This positive attitude in turn has an impact on the overall perception locals have on the economic impact refugees might have in the countries' economic environment, which aids their integration in the labour market. *Associação Pão a Pão* can take advantage of these findings in order to further expand their community reach and potentiate contact between the refugees and the locals, as it not only improves or consolidates the community's already positive attitude towards refugees, but also may boost the amount of customers Mezze serves and create an environment of communication and understanding between their employees and the Portuguese community, aiding the process of integration and potentiating a future integration in the labour market for the refugees.

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