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Identity Inclusiveness and Centrality: Investigating Identity Correlates of Attitudes towards

Immigrants and Immigration Policies

Adriana Espinosa

Rita Guerra

Samineh Sanatkar

Stefania Paolini

Daniela Damigella

Orazio Licciardello

Samuel L. Gaertner

Author Note

Adriana Espinosa, Department of Psychology, The City College of New York; Rita Guerra, Instituto Universitário de Lisboa ISCTE-IUL, Centro de Investigação e Intervenção Social (CIS-IUL); Samineh Sanatkar and Stefania Paolini, School of Psychology, The University of Newcastle; Daniela Damigella, Department of Educational Sciences, University of Catania; Orazio Licciardello, Department of Educational Sciences, University of Catania; Samuel L. Gaertner, Department of Psychological Brain Sciences, University of Delaware.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to: Adriana Espinosa, 160 Convent Avenue, New York, NY 10031, E-mail: aespinosa@ccny.cuny.edu

Abstract

Social psychology highlights ingroup identity as an important determinant of intergroup attitudes and relations; however, research has demonstrated that its effects can be positive, negative or non-existent depending on how such identity is conceptualized. This research explores how national identity inclusiveness (Study 1) and centrality (Study 2) associate with immigration related attitudes in school and countrywide settings, respectively. Study 1 showed that teachers' inclusive (i.e., overlapping) identities regarding their immigrant students related to positive attitudes toward these students, but not to attitudes about immigrants in general or immigration policy preferences. Study 2 found that national identity centrality was related to negative attitudes toward the social impact of immigrants, and to higher support for policies inhibiting the social inclusion of immigrants in the receiving community. Combined, these studies highlight the importance of considering different conceptualizations of ingroup identity in identifying relations to immigration-based attitudes. Moreover, the studies highlight the value of promoting inclusive identities when aiming to improve attitudes towards immigrants. We conclude by discussing a new approach for promoting inclusive identities by framing immigrants as indispensable to the receiving community.

Keywords: immigrants, immigration policy, ingroup identity, overlapping identities, identity centrality

Identity Inclusiveness and Centrality: Investigating Identity Correlates of Attitudes towards

Immigrants and Immigration Policies

We are currently experiencing extraordinary human mobility, with 244 million international and 750 million domestic migrants living in the world today (International Organization for Migration, 2018). This human mobility, coupled with negative representations of immigrants in multiple settings, has awakened unparalleled anti-immigrant attitudes(Marshall & Shapiro, 2018; Southern Policy Law Center, 2016), as well as support for controversial anti-immigrant policies across the United States (US) and Europe (Meleady, Seger, & Vermue, 2017; Qunnipiac University, 2018). Thus, understanding the factors that influence how immigrants are accepted within local receiving communities, and more broadly across the general public, is key in developing strategies for their social integration, and positive relations with host community members. In this article we examine correlates of attitudes towards immigrants and immigration policies regarding host members' ingroup identification. Specifically, we explore different features of national identity (i.e., inclusiveness and centrality) and their relation to attitudes toward immigrants and preferences for immigration policy.

Ingroup Identity Features and Intergroup Attitudes

The relation between ingroup identification and intergroup attitudes is complex (Brown & Zagefka, 2005). Since Allport's (1954) seminal work on ingroup formation, proposing that ingroup *love* (i.e., a preferential positivity for the ingroup) is compatible with positive attitudes toward outgroups, research shows mixed findings regarding the effect of identifying with one's ingroup. Studies either conclude that there is no relation between ingroup identification and outgroup feelings, supporting Brewer's (1999) proposal that "ingroup love is not a necessary precursor of outgroup hate" (p. 442), or that positive ingroup identification is associated with outgroup negativity (e.g., Hinkle & Brown, 1990). Turner (1999) referred to this link between ingroup identification and intergroup bias as the identification-differentiation hypothesis. According to this

hypothesis, ingroup identification can lead to intergroup differentiation, but only under certain conditions, including a relevant outgroup for comparison and the salience of ingroup identity (Turner, 1999). Recent models have built on these ideas and conceptualized ingroup identification as a multicomponent, hierarchical construct, differentiating two dimensions of group-level self-definition and self-investment (Leach et al., 2008).

Consistent with Turner's proposal, centrality of one's identity (i.e., its chronic salience and subjective importance) leads individuals to be tuned to intergroup threats posed to the ingroup, thus leading to support for actions aimed to defend the group (Leach et al., 2008). Therefore, the chronic salience and importance ascribed to one's ingroup identity can be a detrimental factor when trying to promote positive attitudes towards immigrants. The negative effects of identity centrality, however, cannot be discussed without considering how the ingroup's identity is represented and conceived by ingroup members. It is important to consider not only the degree of individual's national identification, but also the content (e.g., historical representations) of this identity (Smeekes, Verkuyten, & Poppe, 2012).

Regarding national identity content, there is a well-established differentiation in the literature between civic and ethnic representations (Reijerse, Van Acker, Vanbeselaere, Phalet, & Duriez, 2013). Civic representations are based on following societal rules, endorsement of equal political rights, and active participation. Ethnic representations instead are based on blood ties and shared ancestry. The empirical evidence suggests that these representations of national identity are associated with different attitudes toward immigrant groups. Specifically, research shows detrimental effects of national identification on attitudes toward immigrants, but only if the national group is conceived in an exclusionary (essentialized) way (e.g., Reijerse, Vanbeselaere, Duriez, & Fichera, 2015). When the national group is conceived in a civic, more inclusive way, where all individuals who fulfill citizenship obligations and respect civic principles are seen as fellow ingroup

members, national identity is associated with more positive attitudes toward immigrants (e.g.,

Reijerse et al., 2015).

This is consistent with the proposal that individuals can experience their ingroup

memberships differently, from a separatist "us" vs. "them" to a more inclusive "we" (Gaertner,

Mann, Murrell, & Dovidio, 1989). The notion that inclusive representations of the ingroup can

ameliorate intergroup negativity is well-established in social psychology. Among others, the

common ingroup identity model (Gaertner, Dovidio, Guerra, Hehman, & Saguy, 2016) proposes

that encouraging members of different groups to recategorize their representations of the ingroup

and outgroup from a separatist "us" versus "them" to a more inclusive "we" (i.e., single group, or

dual-identity) results in more harmonious intergroup relations (Dovidio, Gaertner, Ufkes, Saguy, &

Pearson, 2016). The efficacy of different forms of recategorization in ameliorating intergroup

relations, however, is dependent on groups' status (Dovidio, Gaertner, Niemann, & Snider, 2001;

Guerra et al., 2010), groups' goals (Hehman, et al., 2012; Saguy, Tausch, Dovidio, & Pratto, 2009),

as well as the national context (Esses, Wagner, Wolf, Preiser & Wilbur, 2006).

In line with the findings that inclusive ingroup representations are effective strategies to

promote positive intergroup relations, research shows that people's subjective inclusion of the

outgroup in the self is also related to positive outgroup attitudes (Schubert & Otten, 2002; Turner,

Hewstone, Voci, & Vonofakou, 2008). Indeed, the subjective inclusion of the outgroup in the self is

an important mechanism underlying the positive effects of extended contact on intergroup attitudes

(Turner et al., 2008), and has also been positively related to the endorsement of common inclusive

identities (Vezzali, Drury, Versari & Cadamuro, 2016).

In sum, the extant literature suggests that national ingroup identification is a multifaceted

construct that encompasses different components (Leach et al., 2008), contents (Reijerse et al.,

2015), as well as norms, and beliefs portrayed in the social context (Smeekes et al., 2012). The

impact of different features of national ingroup identity (e.g., its inclusiveness and centrality) on

intergroup attitudes is therefore complex. In this article, we present results from two studies focusing on national identity inclusiveness (Study 1) and national identity centrality (Study 2), and their relation to attitudes toward immigrants and preferences for immigration policy. These studies aim to illustrate some of the complexities of national ingroup identification by highlighting differential relations between its different features (i.e., inclusiveness and centrality) and immigration-related attitudes.

Study 1 is an exploratory study focusing on ingroup identity inclusiveness at the community level. Building on the concept of inclusion of the outgroup in the self from Wright, Aron, and Tropp (2002), we analyzed the role of identity overlap (i.e., inclusion of the outgroup in the self) among primary Sicilian school teachers, who by virtue of being at the forefront of host–immigrants interactions are influential role models of inclusive attitudes and intergroup relations between immigrants and the host community (Silka, 2018). Specifically, in this study we explore the links between identity inclusiveness, and attitudes towards immigrants and immigration policies. Study 2 is a countrywide study that focuses on US voters' national identification centrality, as conceptualized by Leach et al. (2008), and its relations with attitudes toward immigrants and preferences for immigration policies. Focusing on citizens of receiving communities is particularly important given their integral role in shaping policies and programs promoting the social inclusion of immigrants, which have then potential to positively influence immigrant-related attitudes (Huo, Dovidio, Jiménez, & Schildkraut, 2018).

Study 1

Italy has experienced a near tenfold immigration growth since the early 1990s (Caritas, 2013) with Sicily being a desired destination for North African and Middle Eastern immigrants (Licciardello & Damigella, 2011). Accordingly, in Italian schools students without Italian citizenship are highly prevalent. Examining teachers' attitudes about their immigrant students is important as teachers represent institutional authorities that shape their pupils' attitudes and

experiences (Silka, 2018; Ulug, Ozden & Eryilmaz, 2011), and can contribute to successful

interactions between students of different ethno-cultural backgrounds (Allport, 1954) and the social

integration of immigrants (Silka, 2018).

For Study 1, we revisited data that contributed to an earlier publication (Damigella,

Licciardello, & Bisicchia, 2014). Using a questionnaire administered to a small group, we

performed exploratory analyses to examine the degree to which teachers have inclusive views of

their Italian, European, and North African students (i.e., inclusive attitudes—regard national and

immigrant student characteristics as overlapping), the degree to which teachers integrate students

into their own self-concepts (i.e., inclusive identities—regard their own characteristics as

overlapping with those of their national and immigrant students), and how such identity

representations related to immigration attitudes. The integration of group characteristics into ones'

self-concept draws from Tropp and Wright's (2001) notion of inclusion of others in the self. By

looking at self-conceptualizations that are potentially inclusive of others, this study considered

whether specific identity contents correlate with pro- and anti-immigration attitudes and policies.

Method

Participants. Data were collected in Sicily between January and February, 2013.

Participants were primary school teachers ($N = 70$), mostly women (95.7%), aged between 27-64

years ($M_{age} = 48.79$), who varied in teaching experience ($M = 21.53$ years; range 3-39 years) and

subject area (54.8% taught humanistic subjects; 20% taught scientific subjects; and 11.4% taught

both). About a third of the teachers reported having direct contact with immigrant students (32.9%)

and having second generation immigrant students in their classrooms (35.7%). Participants were

informed that the study examined social representations.

Measures. Several key variables were derived out of four semantic differential tools asking

participants to rate their (actual) "self", "Italian students", "North African students", and "European

students" on 35 valenced bipolar traits (e.g., *weak–strong*; *cold–warm*; *passive –active*; *suspicious–*

trustworthy). Likert scaled responses from 1 to 7 were coded so that high values indicated more positive evaluations of the attitude object.

Identity and attitude inclusiveness/overlap. Drawing from Aron, Aron, and Smollan's (1992) and Tropp and Wright's (2001) concepts of inclusion of others in the self, we assessed the perceived overlap between responses to each object pair (e.g., teachers' self-ratings and their ratings of North African students; teachers' ratings of Italian and North African students, etc.) using the following 2-step procedure. First, mean absolute differences across the 35 semantic differentials' traits between each object–pair (e.g., self and North African student ratings on the *weak–strong* trait, *cold–warm* trait, etc.) were computed for each participant. Second, mean absolute differences were reverse-scored so that higher values represented greater overlap or inclusiveness. Accordingly, perceived overlaps were high when the two attitude object pairs were rated similarly, and low when the two attitude objects were rated as distinct on the 35 traits measure. Specifically, the measure ranged between 1 (*maximum discrepancy/polar opposite ratings*), and 7 (*complete overlap/identical ratings*).

Three overlap indices implicated ratings of the self and measured the degree to which teachers integrated student groups in their own self-concept; these were our indices of identity inclusiveness (*self–Italian students overlap*; *self–European students overlap*; *self–North African students overlap*). Three overlap indices did not implicate ratings of the self and measured the degree to which teachers regarded national and immigrant student characteristics as overlapping; these were our indices of attitude inclusiveness (*Italian students–European students overlap*; *Italian students–North African students overlap*; *European students–North African students overlap*).

Attitudes towards immigrants and immigration policy. We had three indices measuring teacher's attitudes. The first and simplest index, tapped liking and warmth towards immigrant students; it was computed as the average of the ratings for the North African students attitude object

on the semantic differential scale. This index could vary between 1 and 7 with high values indicating more liking/warmth.

Two other indices measured more complex attitudinal responses (towards immigrants in general and immigration policy) using two modified subscales from Giovannini (2001). The first was a 9-item stereotype and social distance subscale assessing respondents' level of agreement with stereotypical opinions towards immigrants and behavioral distancing from immigrants, particularly from North Africa (e.g., "I think that North African immigrants have contributed to increasing crime" and "The presence of North African immigrants gives the neighborhood an unkempt and poor aspect"). The second was a 6-item *immigration policies* subscale measuring respondents' broader attitudes towards immigration to Italy and exclusionary policies targeting immigrants (e.g., "I think Italy should close the doors to immigration" and "I think that North African immigrants who do not have a regular employment contract should be repatriated").

Respondents indicated their level of agreement to these items on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Higher scores indicated greater stereotypical views, social distance, and agreement with exclusionary policies, respectively. We deleted one item per subscale to achieve acceptable Cronbach's alphas ($\alpha = .70$). The stereotype/social distance and immigration policies subscales were positively correlated ($r = .50$), yet uncorrelated to the index of attitudes towards African students (rs < -.14), suggesting some discontinuity of responses across the three outcome indicators.

Results

Identity and attitude inclusiveness/overlap. Correlations between identity and attitude inclusiveness' and immigration attitudes are presented in Table 1. As shown, mean overlaps between each pair of attitude objects were quite high, suggesting that teachers generally perceived the self's characteristics, and national, European, and African students' characteristics to be overlapping; they had relatively inclusive identities and attitudes. Also, teachers' perceived overlap

between Italian and North African students was highly correlated with teachers' perceived overlap between Italian and European students, suggesting teachers evaluated North African students similarly in content to Italian and European students. Similarly, perceived overlap between European and North African students showed medium to strong correlations with overlap between Italian and European students and with overlap between Italian and North African students.

The results also indicated that teachers' self-construal included national, cross-national dimensions, and immigrant students: Teachers' perceived overlap between their self-ratings and ratings of North African students was highly correlated with perceived overlap between teachers' self-ratings and ratings of European students. Teachers' self-ratings and ratings of Italian students showed medium to strong correlations with overlaps between teachers' self-ratings and ratings of North African students and overlaps between self-ratings and European student ratings. Hence, teachers seemingly integrated North African students in their identity concept to a similar degree as their national and European students.

Attitudes towards immigrants and immigration policy. As indicated in Table 1, teachers expressed relatively positive attitudes on average towards North African students on the measure of liking/warmth. Teachers' exclusionary responses to immigrants / North African immigrants in general and immigration policies were in contrast in the mid ranges. Teachers' perceived overlap between the characteristics associated to the self and North African students showed a significant medium to high positive association with teachers' attitude towards North African students, indicating that greater inclusiveness of North African students in the teachers' self-concept coincided with more liking and more warmth towards North African students. Surprisingly, however, this pattern of covariation involving the self-African students overlap index did not extend to the more complex outcomes regarding exclusionary responses to immigrants and North African immigrants in general (stereotypes/social distance) and immigration-related policies. We explored whether age or years of teaching experience moderated the self –African students overlap —attitude

relationships; however, these moderation analyses yielded no significant results (all ps > .05). No other overlap index correlated with our outcomes (all ps > .05).

Discussion

Results from this study indicate that teachers have inclusive (i.e., overlapping) views of their national and immigrant students characteristics and inclusive representations of the self. Moreover, we found that the degree to which teachers integrated in their self-concept immigrant students was predictive of more liking of these students and as expected, inclusive identities came together with warmer responses to immigrant students. However, contrary to expectations, teacher's inclusive representations were not linked to more complex attitudinal responses towards immigrants and North African immigrants in general, immigration to Italy and policies relevant to North African immigrants. Namely, we detected some dissociation in the psychological correlates of identities inclusive of immigrants: These looked consequential for simpler warmth responses to the immigrant target directly involved in the inclusive representation, but inconsequential at least in this study for more complex and behaviorally imbued responses towards immigrants—such as stereotypical views, social distance, and preferences for immigration policies.

These results suggest that inclusive identities are positively related with attitudes towards the immigration target directly involved in the representation, but such positive relation may not generalize to more distal immigration targets, like North African immigrants or immigrants in general. While unexpected, these dissociations between immigration attitude indicators have some resemblance to documented differences in sensitivity between affective and cognitive indicators of outgroup attitudes reported in the literature (Abeywickrama, Laham, & Crone, 2018; Paolini, Hewstone, & Cairns, 2007; Tropp & Pettigrew, 2005). Also, in a similar vein, Dixon, Durrheim, and Tredoux (2007) found dissociations between personally held attitudes towards ethnic equality and responses to related policy issues. The authors refer to a principle-implementation gap, whereby attitudes towards concrete policy changes to restitute ethnic injustice appear blunted as compared to

simpler warmth responses expressed towards the potential beneficiaries of such policies. It is therefore possible that, while teachers assign themselves and their native and ethnic students similar positive attributes, which generalize to straightforward liking for immigrant students but may not generalize to the support for an overarching political framework ensuring equality and equity across ethnic groups more broadly. Overall, in this sample, inclusive self-concepts were not sufficient to shape larger-scale political and intergroup attitudes.

On a smaller scale however, the current findings suggest that teachers' inclusive self-representations come hand-in-hand with inclusive attitudes about multi-ethnic student groups in multi-ethnic Sicilian classes, which can promote the social integration of these individuals within the host community. While seemingly not related to more complex attitudes towards immigration and immigration policy, we nonetheless expect these inclusive identities and attitudes to play a key role in shaping the integration of students and teaching practices in the classroom. Notwithstanding, it is important to examine national ingroup identification in broad and diverse ways, taking into account the multiple forms of conceptualizing this construct. The next study aims to contribute to this discussion by focusing on national identity centrality as a key ingroup identity dimension, specifically exploring its relation to attitudes about immigrants and preferences for immigration policy within a broader national context.

Study 2

Study 2 focused on centrality of the national identity (i.e., its chronic salience and subjective importance) as a correlate of immigration-related attitudes. Specifically, using a nationally representative sample in the US, this study examined the relation between the importance attributed to being American and public opinion about the impact of immigrants in the US as well as preferences towards immigration policies. As suggested in prior studies, centrality of one's identity is associated with perceptions of intergroup threat (e.g., Leach et al., 2008). Thus, we anticipated

that national identity centrality would relate to negative attitudes toward immigrants and higher

preferences for exclusionary immigration policies.

Method

   Participants and design. The analyses used data provided by the American National

Election Studies (ANES). The ANES are national opinion surveys of the American electorate

conducted during presidential election years. The surveys used for this study were those conducted

during 2012 and 2016, as these included questions gauging preferences toward immigration policy,

as well as public opinion on the impact of immigrants in the US (ANES, 2012, 2016). Data were

collected face-to-face, using geographical clustering sampling methods, and online. There were a

total of 5,914 and 4,271 respondents for the 2012 and 2016 surveys, respectively. Respondents in

both years were on average 49 years old ($SD_{2012} = 16.82$; $SD_{2016} = 17.58$). In both years, the

majority of participants were White (> 61.0%), with less than a Bachelor's degree (> 60.0%) and

with annual household incomes ranging from US \$50,000 to \$69,999 (> 53.0%). Among non-White

respondents, Black respondents constituted 17.3% and 9.3% of the samples in 2012 and 2016,

respectively, whereas, 16.7% in 2012 and 10.5% in 2016 were Hispanic. Individuals in the "Other"

category (5.9% in 2012 and 9.0% in 2016) included Asian, Native Americans and bi-racial

respondents. The samples were balanced in terms of sex.

   Measures.

   Preferences toward immigration policy. Four questions separately assessed preferences

toward different immigration policies. For each question, respondents chose the alternative that best

represented their preference. One question asked individuals to state their preference toward

policies concerning unauthorized immigrants in the US. Options were nominal including: 1. =

"Make felons and send back to their home country"; 2 = "Create a guest worker program"; 3 =

"Allow to stay with certain requirements"*;* and 4 = "Allow to stay without penalties". Another

question asked respondents to state their preferred levels of immigration in the US, and options

ranged from 1 (*Increase a lot*) to 5 (*Decrease a lot*). The last two questions asked respondents to state whether they favor, oppose or neither favor nor oppose policies enforcing status checks for immigrants suspected to be undocumented, and policies providing citizenship toward illegal immigrants who entered the US as children. The first two of these questions were asked during both survey years, whereas the last two questions were asked in 2012 only.

Opinion about the impact of immigrants/immigration in the US. Four questions separately gauged public opinion on the impact of immigrants in the US. The first question, assessed during both survey years, asked respondents to state the extent to which they believed that recent immigration levels take jobs away from natives. Responses were ordinal and ranged from 1 (*Extremely*) to 4 (*Not at all*). In addition, in 2016 respondents were asked to state their level of agreement with three statements regarding the impact of immigrants in the US: "Immigrants are generally good for America's economy", "America's culture is generally harmed by immigrants", and "immigrants increase crime rates in the US". Responses to these statements ranged from 1 (*Agree strongly*) to 5 (*Disagree strongly*).

National identity centrality. Each year, respondents rated the importance of being American for their identity. Responses ranged between 1 (*Extremely important*) to 5 (*Not at all important*), with no neutral response option. Due to very small cells in the highest response categories (i.e., a little and not at all important), we made the variable binary (coded as 1 = "being American is very or extremely important to identity"; 0 = "being American is moderately to not at all important to identity"), as such representation best characterized the distribution of responses. Given the multiple categorical nature of the outcome variables, such approach allows us to gain best interpretability in prediction models[1].

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[1] Analyses using the original linear response format of the identity variable did not yield substantive differences in the findings. Due to space limitations we opted for the simpler representation of this variable.

Analytical methodology. We analyzed the relations between respondents' national identity centrality and public opinion about immigrants and immigration policy using logistic regressions, due to the categorical nature of the dependent variables. For questions with nominal responses multinomial logistic regressions predicted the probability of selecting each option, relative to the most frequently selected response. For questions with ordinal responses ordinal logistic regressions predicted the probability of selecting the highest ordered response (i.e., *Decrease a lot*) relative to all other responses (i.e., *Decrease a little* to *Increase a lot*). To generalize our findings to the American electorate, all analyses used probability-sampling weights. To address within-state homogeneity, analyses clustered standard errors by state. Relative risk (RR) and proportional odds ratios (OR) are reported. All analyses controlled for age, sex, ethnicity, annual income and education of respondents. Missing cases due to nonresponse were less than 1% for all variables except for income, which had 3.4% missing in 2012 and 4.7% in 2016. According to Little's MCAR test, data were missing completely at random in 2012 ($\chi^2(27) = 20.08$, $p = .83$) and in 2016 ($\chi^2(27) = 20.52$, $p = .81$]). We therefore, analyzed all complete cases. Model significance was assessed via Wald Chi-Square tests.

Results

Demographic Characteristics and Bivariate Associations

Table 2 presents frequencies of responses for all public opinion questions analyzed, by year assessed. During both years, over half of the sample favored policies aiming to allow unauthorized immigrants to stay in the US with some requirements, and less than 10% favored policies that allowed them to stay without penalties. Close to 20%, favored policies aiming to expel unauthorized immigrants from the US, and a lower proportion of respondents favored policies based on the creation of guest worker programs. During both years, the modal response on legal immigration levels was to maintain the status quo, and over 40% favored decreases on current legal immigration levels. About half of the sample in 2012 preferred policies that would support status

checks on individuals suspected to be undocumented, and 60% favored policies that would provide citizenship to illegal immigrants who entered the US as children. Approximately, 80% of respondents of the 2012 and 2016 surveys stated that immigrants would likely take away jobs from US natives. Between 20 and 30% of respondents in 2016 stated that immigrants would not be good for America's economy, and would increase crime rates. Finally, close to 20% stated that immigrants would hurt America's culture.

Table 3 presents associations between all covariates (i.e., sex, ethnicity, education, income and age) and preferences toward immigration policy, opinion about immigration and centrality of American national identity Relative risk and proportional odds ratios are reported. As shown, differences across year and between groups are evident. In particular, national identity centrality was slightly higher among women (2012 only), older, lower educated and higher income individuals (2012 only) relative to younger, more educated and lower income men. In 2012, women were more likely than men to favor large decreases in current legal immigration levels. However, women were more likely than men to favor inclusionary policies for undocumented immigrants, and had more positive attitudes about the impact of immigrants on crime rates and the American culture. Although, national identity centrality was not statistically different between ethnic groups, across both years White respondents were more in favor of exclusionary policies and had more pessimistic opinions regarding the impact of immigrants, than other ethnic groups. Those with higher education and income were less likely than their lower education and income counterparts to favor exclusionary policies for immigrants and had a more positive outlook about the impact of immigrants in the US.

National Identity Centrality and Preferences toward Immigration Policy

Table 4 presents the results of regression models predicting preferences toward immigration policy. As shown, national identity centrality was related to preferences for exclusionary or punitive immigration policies. In particular, individuals who endorsed high national identity centrality were

more likely than those who did not to favor policies that would expel unauthorized immigrants,

favor large decreases in immigration levels, favor status checks, and oppose citizenship for illegal

immigrants who entered the US as children.

National Identity Centrality and Opinion about the Impact of Immigrants in the US

Table 5 presents the results from regression models predicting opinions about the impact of

immigrants in the US. Similar to the findings above, respondents with high national identity

centrality had more pessimistic views regarding the impact of immigrants in the US, than

respondents with low national identity centrality. Specifically, individuals who endorsed high

national identity centrality were more likely to agree with statements indicating that immigrants

take jobs away from natives, hurt America's culture, increase crime rates, and to disagree with

claims suggesting that immigrants are generally good for the country.

Discussion

Across both electoral years national identity centrality was associated with more

restrictionist preferences towards immigration policy, and views of immigrants as detrimental to

society. These results are consistent with findings within the social identity framework, suggesting

that increased attachment or commitment to the ingroup, defined along a single categorization,

correlates negatively with outgroup attitudes (Hinkle & Brown, 1990). However, identification with

national groups can be conceptualized in different ways and the impact of such different

conceptualizations on attitudes towards immigrants may vary accordingly. In this second study,

there were no additional measures that helped assess the content of national identity or its

inclusiveness. However, we can speculate that those with high national identity centrality thought of

being American in a more ethnic, exclusive way, considering immigrants to be (un)American. Thus,

the negative relation between centrality of one's identity and attitudes towards immigrants found in

this study is likely dependent on individuals' psychological representations of citizenship. This

reasoning is consistent with experimental evidence showing stronger support for punitive law

enforcement actions when immigrants are perceived as not culturally fitting with the national identity (Mukherjee, Adams, & Molina, 2018). Accordingly, the content of national identity can be an important factor in understanding the link between ingroup national identification and attitudes toward immigrants.

General Discussion

The studies presented highlight complexities associated with different existing conceptualizations and features of national identity in relation to attitudes about immigrants and immigration policy. Specifically, Study 1 showed that national identity conceptualized as the inclusion of the outgroup in the self (Wright et al., 2002) was related to positive attitudes towards the immigrant target included in the representation. However, this inclusive representation was not related to more complex immigration-related cognitions, behavioral intentions and immigration policies with implications for North African immigrants and immigrants in general. Such seemingly paradoxical results are in accordance with evidence of differences in measure sensitivity (e.g., Tropp & Pettigrew, 2005) and with a principle-implementation gap (Dixon, Durrheim, & Thomae, 2017) indicating that ingroup members may report idealized preferences for equality and social inclusion (e.g., liking of immigrants), but such preferences need not translate into favoring policies aiming to achieve inclusion. Study 2 showed that high national identity centrality (Leach et al., 2008) was associated with negative views about the social impact of immigrants, and with higher preference toward policies aiming to exclude immigrants from society.

Together these studies suggest that different conceptualizations and features of the national identity may relate differently to attitudes toward immigrants and preferences regarding immigration policies. Specifically, while the degree of national identity centrality linked to both attitudes toward immigrants and preferences toward immigration policy, the content of such identifications (i.e., inclusion of the outgroup in the self) did not. These differences may stem from differences in sensitivity of immigration-related outcomes (i.e., varying in simplicity-complexity,

affective-cognitive basis or behavioral elaboration; e.g., Paolini et al., 2007; Tropp & Pettigrew, 2005), which might reflect an asymmetry in the psychological consequences of identification processes along positive versus negative trajectories. In Study 2 participants chronic salience and subjective importance of national identity was related to both negative immigration attitudes and preference for exclusionary policies; Study 1 instead showed a much more restricted range of influence for positive inclusionary identities on positive immigration attitudes and policy orientations (i.e., effects on perceived immigrant warmth, but not on stereotypes, social distance, policies). Hence, our data might constitute another instance of 'bad is stronger than good' in intergroup relations (e.g., Paolini, Harwood, & Rubin, 2010; Paolini & McIntyre, 2018) but along identification processes. Future research could further examine the potential differential impact of different conceptualizations of national identity on attitudes towards immigrants and immigration policies that are framed in both positive and negative ways, and carefully control for weight of affect, cognitions and behavior. Additionally, future studies could also consider the specific type of migrant (e.g., economic migrant, refugee, asylum seeker) as research shows differences on threat appraisals, emotions and behavioral intentions when those different labels are activated (e.g., Hartley & Pedersen, 2015; Abeywickrama et al., 2018). This could be particularly relevant to better inform policy makers. Efforts to improve policy outcomes for immigrants by promoting inclusive national identities should take into consideration these potential differential relations, as such efforts may or may not have the intended effect.

The effects of promoting inclusive common identities are complex, depending on group status and goals (e.g., Guerra et al., 2010, Hehman et al., 2012), or the national context (Esses et al., 2006). The findings of the two studies presented here suggest that centrality and content of identity may be additional features of common identities that can impact their positive effects. When examining the benefits of promoting inclusive, overlapping identities among immigrants and host communities, it is important to take into account the multiplicity of social psychological factors

(e.g., degree of identification, content) that can hinder or foster the full benefits of these identities. A novel theoretical approach proposes that these inclusive common identities, involving host communities and immigrants, can be promoted through groups' perceived indispensability. Immigrants, or other ethnic minorities, may be seen (and see themselves) as offering important social and economic contributions, that in turn influence attitudinal outcomes (Guerra, Gaertner, António, & Deegan, 2015; Guerra, Rodrigues, Gaertner, Deegan & António, 2016).

Specifically, Guerra and colleagues proposed two dimensions on which groups can claim indispensability: Functional indispensability, by which groups are perceived as contributing some benefit (e.g., economic) to the host society (Guerra, et al., 2015, 2016), and identity indispensability, by which groups are perceived as contributing to a host society's identity (Ng Tseung-Wong & Verkuyten, 2010). Studies conducted in the US and Portugal showed that perceiving immigrants as either offering important social and economic contributions or being important to define the common national group were related to positive intergroup outcomes (e.g., reduced social distance, increased perceived warmth and competence). Importantly, these positive effects occurred via increased inclusive identity representations (one-group, dual-identity) depending on the group status and the national context (Guerra et al., 2015, 2016).

Recent studies further indicate that groups' perceived indispensability also impacts majority groups' integration attitudes and support for favorable immigration policies. Exposing White Americans to messages stating that immigrants are not indispensable (vs. are indispensable) to the functioning of society decreased support for positive immigration policies and their endorsement of integration attitudes, and increased their preferred social distance from immigrants (Guerra, Rodrigues, Deegan, & Gaertner, 2018). This line of research has practical implications regarding intergroup relations between host community members and immigrants. Increasing awareness of the indispensability of immigrants to foster inclusive common identities can be used as a strategic tool to promote better attitudes within the host community, for example in campaigns to reduce

common stereotypes of immigrants as a drain or a threat to society. Instead, immigration can be viewed as providing opportunities to be sought and encouraged (e.g., Paolini, Wright, Dys-Steenbergen, & Favara, 2016), in so much as to gain host country citizens' respect and willingness to be inclusive.

Limitations

A few limitations are worth mentioning. In Study 1, we looked at relations between different self-other representations. However, the data were not specifically designed to test for these relations, and overlap indices were created post hoc. Consequently, we did not have direct indicators of the mechanisms responsible for those perceived overlaps and we did not have suitable proxies for teaching practices or students' processes. In addition, some relations considered in Study 1 had small effects, and accordingly may have been statistically unidentified at the 95% confidence level given the small sample considered. While increasing the sample size is no guarantee of reaching significance, future studies could include a larger sample size. In addition, while the data in Study 2 are representative of the American electorate, thus having direct connection to policy, there were no variables that allowed us to explore the potential impact of the content of national identity (e.g., identity exclusiveness). Future studies could include a measure identifying exclusionary versus inclusionary conceptualizations of the national identity. Also, in both studies the data are cross sectional, which present limitations for causal claims. Future studies could consider experimental designs that allow for the manipulation of identity centrality, and inclusiveness/overlap or longitudinal designs. Notwithstanding, these studies highlight the importance of considering national identity centrality and content of national identity as important factors when fostering inclusive common identities between host-country and immigrant groups, as a way to promote positive attitudes towards immigrants.

Conclusion

In this article we demonstrate that ingroup identity, in particular national identity, relates to attitudes towards immigrants and immigration policy. Yet, the direction and significance of this relation depends on how such national identity is conceptualized. Specifically, we show that inclusive representations of the national identity at the community level related to positive attitudes towards immigrant students, but this effect did not generalize to immigrants in general or to immigration policy preferences. Moreover, conceptualizations of national identity in terms of identity centrality related to negative attitudes about the social impact of immigrants, and preferences towards exclusionary immigration policy at the countrywide level. Together, these studies highlight the importance of considering these differential features of national identity in the development of policies or programs that aim to encourage the reception of immigrants in host communities by way of promoting inclusive national identities.

Table 1 *Descriptive statistics and Pearson correlations for measures of identity inclusiveness and attitudes towards immigration*

	Mean	SD	Min	Max	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Self-Italian Students Overlap	5.20	.55	3.26	6.43	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2. Self-European Students Overlap	5.42	.52	3.71	6.26	.48**	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
3. Self-North African Students Overlap	5.41	.51	4.11	6.46	.56**	.64**	—	—	—	—	—	—
4. Italian Students-European Students Overlap	5.61	.70	2.37	6.91	.46**	.34**	.40**	—	—	—	—	—
5. Italian Students-North African Students Overlap	5.64	.60	3.40	6.89	.35**	.10	.30*	.75**	—	—	—	—
6. European-North African Students Overlap	5.87	.56	4.57	7.00	.21	.39**	.40**	.62**	.55**	—	—	—
7. Attitudes towards North African Students	4.26	.56	2.12	5.53	-.00	.16	.45**	-.08	-.18	.05	—	—
8. Stereotype and Social Distance	2.95	.91	1.13	5.50	.20	.12	-.04	-.03	-.04	-.00	-.13	—
9. Immigration Policy	3.61	1.23	1.00	5.80	.14	.02	.01	.03	.00	-.01	-.03	.50**

Note. The theoretical range of these variables is between 1 and 7, with high values indicating larger overlap between ratings of the two attitude objects (variables numbered 1 to 6), more positive attitudes/liking towards North African students (variable 7), or greater agreement with stereotypical and exclusionary views of Italian immigrants (variables numbered 8 & 9). Two-tailed correlations * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, $N = 70$.

Table 2 *Frequencies of responses to questions about opinion regarding immigration in 2012 (N = 5,914) and 2016 (N = 4,271)*

Policy Preferences Variables	2012	2016	Opinion on Immigrants	2012	2016
Policy for unauthorized immigrants	%	%	*Recent immigration levels will take away jobs[a,b]*	%	%
Make felons / send back	17.1	16.5	Extremely likely	18.6	15.2
Create guest worker program	16.4	15.1	Very likely	19.2	20.2
Allow to stay with certain requirements	57.4	57.3	Somewhat likely	41.9	40.6
Allow to stay without penalties	8.4	9.8	Not at all likely	19.2	23.6
Immigration levels should be [a,b]			*Are generally good for America's economy[a]*		
Increased a lot	4.4	5.6	Agree strongly		16.5
Increased a little	9.6	10.5	Agree somewhat		36.7
Left same as now	42.1	39.6	Neither agree nor disagree		25.6
Decreased a little	20.0	18.9	Disagree somewhat		14.2
Decreased a lot	21.7	24.8	Disagree strongly		6.1
Status checks for suspected to be undocumented			*Culture is generally harmed by immigrants[a]*		
Favor	48.5		Agree strongly		4.7
Oppose	29.6		Agree somewhat		13.9
Neither favor nor oppose	20.8		Neither agree nor disagree		23.6
Citizenship to illegals who entered as children			Disagree somewhat		28.7
Favor	59.6		Disagree strongly		28.4
Oppose	17.9		*Immigrants increase crime rates[a]*		
Neither favor nor oppose	25.6		Agree strongly		5.9
			Agree somewhat		21.4
Identity Centrality			Neither agree nor disagree		28.5
How important is being American to identity?			Disagree somewhat		21.3
Extremely or Very important	77.8	72.9	Disagree strongly		22.1

Note. [a] Question was assessed from 5,510 respondents in 2012. [b] Question was assessed from 3,649 respondents in 2016.

Table 3 *Demographic differences in preferences toward immigration policy, opinion about immigration and national identity centrality*

| | Women | | Black | | Hispanic | | Other | | Education | | Income | | Age | |
Year assessed	2012	2016	2012	2016	2012	2016	2012	2016	2012	2016	2012	2016	2012	2016
Unauthorized immigrants														
Make felons /send back	**0.72**	**0.74**	**0.38**	**0.39**	**0.29**	**0.17**	1.09	**0.58**	**0.71**	**0.86**	**0.98**	**0.98**	0.99	0.99
Guest worker program	**0.81**	**0.66**	0.71	0.60	**0.53**	**0.56**	1.24	1.15	1.06	0.96	0.99	1.00	1.00	1.00
Stay without penalties	1.07	**0.71**	1.12	1.15	**2.29**	**1.64**	1.01	1.09	**1.22**	1.04	**0.97**	0.99	**1.01**	1.00
Immigration levels														
Decreased a lot	**1.17**	1.05	**0.61**	**0.53**	**0.39**	**0.49**	0.94	**0.64**	**0.74**	**0.89**	**0.99**	0.99	1.00	**1.01**
Status checks														
Oppose	1.16		**3.55**		**7.2**		1.30		**1.43**		0.99		**0.99**	
Neither	1.08		**2.53**		**3.73**		1.38		**1.09**		0.99		1.00	
Citizenship														
Oppose	**0.73**		**0.42**		**0.27**		**1.54**		**0.75**		0.99		1.00	
Neither	0.92		1.03		**0.59**		0.94		**0.69**		0.99		1.00	
Immigration will take away jobs														
Extremely likely	1.03	1.07	**0.72**	**0.66**	**0.4**	**0.39**	0.98	**0.74**	**0.68**	**0.90**	0.99	**0.97**	**0.99**	1.00
Good for economy														
Disagree strongly		1.16		**0.7**		**0.35**		0.79		**0.85**		**0.98**		1.00
Harm culture														
Agree strongly		**0.81**		0.86		**0.47**		0.85		**0.84**		**0.97**		1.00
Increase crime rates														
Agree strongly		**0.79**		**0.47**		**0.4**		0.85		**0.85**		**0.98**		1.00
Identity extremely or very important	**1.17**	0.97	0.93	1.38	0.99	0.84	0.75	0.74	**0.91**	**0.95**	**1.02**	1.01	**1.04**	**1.03**

Note. Proportional odds ratios and relative risk ratios for ordinal and multinomial logistic regressions of policy preferences, opinion about immigrants and national identity centrality are reported. Men, Whites, and low national identity centrality individuals are the referent groups. Significant estimates (*p* < .05) are in bold. Analyses adjusted for probability sampling weights, and standard errors were clustered within state.

Table 4 *Multinomial and ordinal logistic regressions of national identity centrality as predictor of immigration policy preferences*

Policy Preferences Variables	Effect of national identity centrality Adj. RR / OR (95% CI)		Referent response category
	2012	2016	
Policy for unauthorized immigrants			
Make felons and send back to home country	1.47 (1.19, 1.83)***	2.21 (1.67, 2.93)***	Allow to stay with certain requirements
Create guest worker program	1.17 (0.91, 1.52)	0.95 (0.72, 1.26)	Allow to stay with certain requirements
Allow to stay without penalties	0.52 (0.38, 0.71)***	0.42 (0.33, 0.53)***	
Immigration levels should be			
Decreased a lot	1.81 (1.52, 2.16)***	2.27 (1.77, 2.90)***	Increased a lot to Decreased a little
Status checks for suspected to be undocumented			
Oppose	0.40 (0.31, 0.52)***		Favor
Neither favor nor oppose	0.45 (0.34, 0.59)***		
Citizenship to illegals who entered as children			
Oppose	1.56 (1.19, 2.04)**		Favor
Neither favor nor oppose	1.13 (0.93, 1.39)		

Note. Relative risk ratios (RR) for multinomial logistic regressions, and proportional odds ratio (OR) for ordinal logistic regressions with 95% confidence intervals (CI) reported. Analyses adjust for ethnicity, sex, education, income and age of respondent. Analyses also adjusted for probability sampling weights, and standard errors were clustered within state. All model chi-square statistics were significant (i.e., $p < .001$).
** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Table 5 *Ordinal logistic regressions of national identity centrality as predictor of opinion about the impact of immigrants/immigration in the US*

Opinion about immigration	Effect of national identity centrality Adj. RR / OR (95% CI)		Referent response category
	2012	2016	
How likely will immigration take away jobs?			
Extremely	1.96 (1.63, 2.36)***	2.10 (1.79, 2.47)***	Very to Not at all
Immigrants are generally good for America's economy			
Disagree strongly		1.60 (1.03, 2.49)***	Agree strongly to disagree somewhat
America's culture is generally harmed by immigrants			
Agree strongly		1.84 (1.55, 2.17)***	Agree somewhat to disagree strongly
Immigrants increase crime rates in the U.S.			
Agree strongly		1.98 (1.65, 2.39)***	Agree somewhat to disagree strongly

Note. Proportional odds ratio for ordinal logistic regressions with 95% confidence intervals (CI) reported. Analyses adjust for ethnicity, sex, education, income and age of respondent. Analyses also adjusted for probability sampling weights, and standard errors were clustered within state. All model chi-square statistics were significant (i.e., $p < .001$). *** $p < .001$.

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Author Bios

Adriana Espinosa is currently Tenure-Track Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychology at the City College of New York (CCNY) and scholar in residence of the MPA program at CCNY. Her research conceptualizes the strengths and weaknesses of marginalized groups to promote social inclusion, and reduce social inequality. Her most recent work considers the salient features of an individual's identity as protective against factors that disproportionally affect marginalized groups (e.g., trauma, discrimination, stress).

Rita Guerra is a research associate at Centre for Research and Social Intervention (CIS-IUL). She completed a PhD in social psychology at ISCTE-IUL in 2007 and was a Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Delaware (2009/2010). She is interested in intergroup relations among ethnic majority and minority groups, contact-based interventions to reduce prejudice, acculturation dynamics and its impact on well-being and school achievement, and more recently, on the dynamics of collective narcissism and hostility. Her research has been supported by several competitive grants from the Portuguese Science Foundation (FCT) and the European Commission (European Fund for the Integration of non-EU immigrants, EIF).

Samineh Sanatkar completed her PhD in psychology at the University of Newcastle, Australia in 2016. In her dissertation thesis, she investigated the interactive effects of personality and problem-solving style and examined the psychometric properties of a newly derived problem-solving measure. During and following her psychology studies, Samineh assisted in various social psychological research projects in the areas of social cognition, intergroup contact and self-expansion. Samineh is currently a full-time research assistant at Sydney's Black Dog Institute, where she is working in the area of e-mental health.

Stefania Paolini is a social psychologist with expertise in intergroup relations. Stefania trained in Italy and the UK and is currently associate professor at the University of Newcastle, Australia. Broadly, her research investigates 'when' and 'why' experiences with some members of stigmatized groups affect (for the better or for the worse) responses to whole stigmatized groups or new group members. For instance, Stefania has investigated the impact on attitudes of having intergroup friends across the sectarian divider in Northern Ireland. Stefania's most recent work has compared the psychological consequences of positive and negative intergroup contact, as well as investigated person and situational determinants of people's interest (vs. disinterest) in engaging with diversity. Her research aims to contribute to the understanding of intergroup friction towards increased social cohesion and social justice.

Daniela Damigella holds a Ph.D. in Social Psychology from the University of Catania where she teaches Psychology of Social Groups as Contract Professor. Between 2007 and 2010, she was a Fellow Researcher for the EU Project: *Searching For Neighbours (SeFoNe) Dynamics of Physical and Mental Borders in New Europe*. She was also a researcher at the University of Messina, Department of Human and Social Sciences, where she taught Social Psychology and Developmental Psychology. Her research interests and publications include: social identity and intergroup relationships; immigration processes, second generation and contact hypothesis; biculturalism and bilingualism; action research. Daniela's research aims to combine Social Psychology theory and models with social issues in order to contribute to the reduction of prejudices and stereotypes and to improve social integration of people with different cultural backgrounds.

Orazio Licciardello is Full Professor of Social Psychology at the University of Catania where he currently teaches. He is also Past-Dean of the Interfaculty School of Psychology, University of Catania, Deputy-President A.I.P. (Association Italian Psychology), Full Member of EASP (European Association of Social Psychology) and Member of the Board of SIPCO (Italian Society of Community Psychology) and of the Community Psychology Journal. His research and publications address subjects such as social identity and intergroup relationships, immigration, contact hypothesis and second generation with a specific focus on Sicilian reality. Moreover, his research embraces action research, psychosocial research methods, possible selves and human resources. The aim of his studies is to understand the dynamics correlates with intergroup relationships and to contribute to test models of real social integration.

Samuel L. Gaertner is Trustees Distinguished Professor Emeritus, Department of Psychological & Brain Sciences at the University of Delaware, USA. His research interests have focused on understanding and addressing prejudice, discrimination and racism. He has served on the editorial boards of the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, and *Group Processes and Intergroup Relations.* Professor Gaertner's research has been supported by grants from the Office of Naval Research, the National Institutes of Mental Health and the National Science Foundation. He was awarded the 1985 and 1998 Gordon Allport Intergroup Relations Prize and the 2004 Kurt Lewin Memorial Award (a career award) from the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues, Division 9 of the American Psychological Association, and the 2012 Career Contribution Award from the Society for Personality and Social Psychology.