To what extent does the Belief in a Just World Theory offer insight in prevailing positive and negative attitudes toward Islamic and non-Islamic refugees in the Netherlands?

“there is a limit to which even the most saintly among us can tolerate being in the presence of human misery”
Melvin Lerner, 1980
To what extent does the Belief in a Just World Theory offer insight in prevailing attitudes toward Islamic and non-Islamic refugees in the Netherlands?

Index

Abstract ............................................................................................................................................. 2
I. Introduction .................................................................................................................................... 2

The Refugee Crisis in Europe and The Netherlands ........................................................................... 2

II. Theoretical Framework .................................................................................................................. 7

The belief in a just world...................................................................................................................... 7

   Maintaining the Belief that the World is Just .............................................................................. 7

   The Belief in a Just World for Others ......................................................................................... 10

   The Belief in a Just World for in- and outgroup victims .......................................................... 10

The present study .............................................................................................................................. 12

III. Methodology ................................................................................................................................ 14

Research Design ................................................................................................................................. 14

   Participants .................................................................................................................................... 15

   Procedure ....................................................................................................................................... 15

   Design vignettes ............................................................................................................................. 15

Measurements .................................................................................................................................... 18

   Manipulation check ....................................................................................................................... 18

   Belief in a Just World for Others Scale .................................................................................... 18

   Coping strategies .......................................................................................................................... 18

IV. Results ............................................................................................................................................ 21

   Relationship Belief in a Just World & Coping strategies ............................................................ 21

   Islamic and non-Islamic refugees and coping strategies ........................................................... 24

V. Discussion ....................................................................................................................................... 27

VI. References ..................................................................................................................................... 31

Miscellaneous .................................................................................................................................... 34

VII. Appendix ..................................................................................................................................... 35

   A. Vignette non-Islamic refugee ................................................................................................. 35

   B. Questionnaire Islamic refugee ................................................................................................. 36
To what extent does the Belief in a Just World Theory offer insight in prevailing attitudes toward Islamic and non-Islamic refugees in the Netherlands?

Abstract.
This study aims to offer insight in the psychological processes that underlie attitudes towards refugees in the Netherlands, with an emphasis on the differences between Islamic and non-Islamic refugees and with application of the Belief in a Just World Theory (Lerner, 1977). After completing the Lipkus’ questionnaires on the Belief in a just world for others, the participants (N = 104) were randomly split up in two groups. Two vignettes manipulated a threat to the belief that the world is just in the participants, involving a victimized refugee who varied in her religious background. Both groups read one of these similar vignettes about a victimized refugee, with the sole difference that one story presented an Islamic protagonist where the other presented a non-Islamic protagonist. This characteristic variable for the refugee is manipulated in order to elicit normative judgements and monitor the prevalence of certain attitudes towards Islamic and non-Islamic refugees. A questionnaire followed which provided them with the opportunity to compensate, blame and derogate the refugee in the vignette. It was found that the BJW for others correlates with these negative coping strategies. Non-Islamic are blamed and derogated more than Islamic refugees.

I. Introduction

The Refugee Crisis in Europe and The Netherlands

This research wishes to conduct a study in the area of social behavior involving the Belief in a Just World Theory (Lerner, 1980) to offer insight in the prevailing attitudes among Dutch residents toward incoming (Islamic) refugees. Lately, in Europe ‘The Refugee Crisis’ is being referred to frequently. In the Netherlands asylum seekers and refugees are subject to the news on a daily basis. This has become a burdened subject. An increasing amount of people cross the European borders and apply for asylum and most Member States of the European Union cope with similar immigration issues. These immigrants form a challenge to the European Union and its associated policies (Human Rights Watch, 2015). Through time immigrants are almost constantly seen as a threat and they have been given a high priority in politics and policy developments for decades (Castles & Miller, 2003; Lucassen, 2005; De Boom, Snel & Engbersen, 2008). Residents of the hosting countries, like the Netherlands, feel that refugees deserve priority on the social and political agenda (De Boom, Snel & Engbersen, 2008). They have been observing the refugee crisis and the continuous increase of incoming refugees, in which the media and politicians play a key role as a ‘lens’ through which residents form their opinion regarding refugees. Recently some major events caused even more distress among European residents regarding immigrants (Shadid, 2005; Terlouw, 2009; Das et al., 2009; Ferguson & Kamble, 2012). Events like the terrorist attacks in Paris just last year or the Twin Tower attacks in 2001 are of great impact on the perspectives on
To what extent does the Belief in a Just World Theory offer insight in prevailing attitudes toward Islamic and non-Islamic refugees in the Netherlands?

immigrants (Strabac & Listhaug, 2008; Das et al., 2009; for reviews see Baker, 2015; Brouwer, 2002). Especially on the perspectives on immigrants with an Islamic background because the perpetrators of these particular events claimed to be Islamic (Shadid, 2005a; Shadid, 2005b; Strabac & Listhaug, 2008; Das et al., 2009; Terlouw, 2009).

In the Netherlands, the media portrays the symbolic and realistic threats the Islam poses on a daily base when reporting on terrorist attacks as mass shootings and bombings in public spaces. These attacks killed people in the name of the Islam and Allah (Das et al., 2009). Dutch politicians like ministers Rita Verdonk and Pim Fortuyn did not hesitate to associate incoming asylum seekers from Islamic areas with terrorists and other serious threats and neither does the media (Shadid, 2005b; Strabac & Listhaug, 2008; Das et al., 2009). The Islam is presented as a religion that threatens the Dutch national identity, culture and security (Scroggins, 2005 in Velasco González et al., 2008). Along with the increasing number of incoming asylum seekers nowadays, the number of incoming Islamic people increases and so does their part in the media and the political debates. Especially Geert Wilders is still actively fighting this 'Islamisation of the country', even though the Amsterdam Court of Appeal prosecuted him for inciting hatred and discriminating Islamic people back in 2009 (Verkuyten, 2013). He tried to ban the Koran, Islamic schools and the Islamic religious headscarf (jihab) and is still campaigning with hatred inciting slogans as ‘do we want more or less Moroccans’, which his supporters answer with an enthusiastic ‘less, less, less!’ Some prominent politicians, like Geert Wilders, portray all people with Islamic backgrounds, including refugees, deliberately as ‘them’ which turns the remaining non-Islamic people into ‘us’ (Verkuyten, 2013). This clear distinction between members of an in- or outgroup is widely spread among his supporters. This ‘Dutch-Muslim’ cultural war (Scroggins, 2005 in Velasco González et al., 2008) has serious consequences. Research into prejudice towards the Islam indicates that the Dutch indeed tend to socially distance themselves from Islamic people (see Strabac & Listhaug, 2008; Verkuyten, 2013). For example, Velasco González (2008) found that half of the Dutch adolescents have developed negative attitudes towards Islamic people. These attitudes can be a sign of prejudice, which is defined by Strabac & Listhaug as;

“an openly expressed negative attitude toward a social group, or negative attitude toward an individual that is based on that individual’s membership in a social group”, (Strabac & Listhaug, 2008, p.296).

Prejudice against Islamic people is more widespread within Europe than prejudice against other immigrants (Strabac & Listhaug, 2008). Hence, in this study people with an Islamic background are believed to be perceived as outgroup members by the Dutch and at the opposite end, non-Islamic people as in-group members. Velasco González (2008) argues that fear and negative perceptions correlate with prejudice towards outgroups, especially immigrants. Some Dutch residents perceive taking in Islamic refugees as a severe threat, a ‘catastrophe’ even, which can solely be solved by banning the Islam (Tillie, 2013, p. 3). In fact, the refugees form a realistic threat to the European residents, since they challenge the political and economic power of the hosting countries as well as the individual well-being of their residents (Pereira, Vala & Costa-Lopes, 2010). Large groups of immigrants pose symbolic threats to the cultural identity of the in-group as well, because ‘new’ beliefs, morals and standards are introduced (Velasco González et
To what extent does the Belief in a Just World Theory offer insight in prevailing attitudes toward Islamic and non-Islamic refugees in the Netherlands?

Besides the threats refugees pose, some Dutch residents contribute to the turmoil associated with refugees themselves. The negative attitudes towards Islamic refugees have triggered situations that led to aggressive forms of resistance against the arrival of all asylum seekers. Those negative attitudes also constitute a threat to the Dutch society. An example of this took place at the municipality of Steenbergen. News broadcasts reported that during a municipal meeting, hundreds of residents gathered to emphasise that an asylum centre is not welcome in their neighbourhood (ANP, 2015a). The banners they carried presented quotes as ‘Zeg nee tegen Azc!’ which translated means ‘say no against the asylum seekers centre’. The demonstrators argued among other issues that asylum seekers form a realistic threat to the country and that they are expected to be led by more economical motives rather than life threatening motives. Meanwhile the Netherlands themselves cope with the aftermath of an economic crisis and residents fear for their jobs.

Furthermore, the demonstrators state that the safety of the neighbourhood will be threatened by the asylum seekers, which is a more symbolic threat that is due to cultural differences. Since the asylum centres are perceived to be criminal environments, some residents fear these asylum seeker centres to evolve into schools of criminal behavior (De Boom, Snel & Engbersen, 2008).

The government will benefit from residents who react positively to incoming refugees instead of negative reactions like in cases of the escalated town hall meetings and fear among its residents. It is therefore highly important to explore whether Islamic refugees are more exposed to prejudice than other, non-Islamic, refugees. The way that politicians and the media present refugees to the ‘observing’ Dutch residents, could become a solution to these social problems. This ‘us’ and ‘them’ thinking distinguishes in- and outgroup members as Dutch residents and non-Islamic refugees on the one side and Islamic refugees on the other side. It might make a crucial difference to mention Islamic backgrounds, or not, in the perceiving of refugees and the attitudes that will develop towards them. Stigma, discrimination or prejudice could lead in-group members to judge refugees as responsible for their situation, which influences the likeliness that a helping attitude will show (Tanner & Mechanic, 2007). Refugees that are perceived as ‘deserving’ call for less compassionate attitudes than those perceived as innocent (Tanner & Mechanic, 2007). This distinction between in- and outgroup members might offer insight in the psychological processes that underlie those positive attitudes as well as the negative ones. This insight will serve the government in fighting the social problems concerning refugees. Besides the government, the refugees themselves will gain profit from more understanding and helping attitudes. Once arrived in a hosting country like the Netherlands, their vulnerability is increased by stigma, discrimination and prejudice (Tanner & Mechanic, 2007), which can be described by the overarching term ‘secondary victimization’. This means that besides the primarily experienced victimization, which was the reason they fled their country of origin in the first place, negative attitudes towards the refugees victimize them again (Brickman et al., 1982). Refugees are at serious risk of being secondary victimized by the negative attitudes resulting from this ‘us’ and ‘them’ distinction. Meanwhile they are in need of
To what extent does the Belief in a Just World Theory offer insight in prevailing attitudes toward Islamic and non-Islamic refugees in the Netherlands?

help, in need of shelter and all kinds of support (e.g. medical, psychological, educational) due to their first victimization in their country of origin.

Despite the negative image that seems to prevail among Dutch residents, for example that refugees are deserving of their situation or only here for financial reasons, most refugees can be characterized as victims in one way or another. They mostly fled to Europe because they have been through terrible experiences, were forced to 'run for their lives' and believe to find a better and safe life there. After being deprived, victimized or seriously threatened in their country of origin, an often very long journey to safety begins. Some of them have lost everything and sometimes even everyone they once loved, others come from poverty and try to find a better life in Europe based solely on economical motives. Independent of the motives to head for Europe, the journey in itself proved to be a dangerous challenge in which they are often victimized again. For example, the International Organization for Migration reported more than 3,771 deaths among the migrants who tried to reach for Europe in 2015 by crossing the Mediterranean sea (IOM, 2015). The highly secured Turkish border with Greece also takes its victims (IOM, 2015). There are other cases known were asylum seekers cross the border with use of the expertise of human traffickers, either as smugglers or as exploiters (Human Rights Watch, 2015). Thus some of them became victims of human trafficking somewhere along their journey as well. To start on the right track, the difference between asylum seekers and refugees is important to note (De Boom, Snel & Engbersen, 2010). Notwithstanding the differentiation in the legal definitions, Dutch residents use both terms interchangeably. This thesis is mainly focused on the term 'refugee' which here, in this experiment, refers to people who could be recognised as such by law, but not yet received that status. By law, people who entered the country and applied for asylum are asylum seekers. Those who did receive a positive answer to their application are recognized refugees. This means they are recognized as victims of (a well-founded fear of) persecution based on reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership of a particular social group in their home country. Because this research explores the attitudes of the Dutch towards refugees, it is important to note that the majority of incoming refugees in the Netherlands origin from Islamic countries. Among these application numbers Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan are regularly returning in the top five of countries of origin since 1975 and fulfilled this position again in 2015. Somalia is also a returning top five country since 1975. Starting 2013 Syria also shuffled its way into the top five. These particular countries are important to mention because they all have a majority of Muslim residents, over 80% in most countries (www.europa.nu). Since 2010 the waves of asylum seekers from the former Yugoslavia and the former Sovjet-Union disappeared from the top five, so it is safe to say that since 2011 almost all incoming refugees origin from a predominant Islamic country.

The symbolic and realistic threats refugees form to the Dutch, might be strengthened by the threat they pose to the belief in Dutch residents that the world is a just and orderly place. The extent to which Dutch residents perceive the world as just can be threatened and disturbed by witnessing this increasing amount of refugees. Since intergroup threats correlate with attitudes towards immigrants and racial out-groups (Velasco González et al., 2008), it is assumed that this is also true for refugees. Hence, it also assumed that refugees belonging to an outgroup in the eyes of the Dutch residents, will evoke other attitudes than in-group refugees. Whether this infringement of the belief in
To what extent does the Belief in a Just World Theory offer insight in prevailing attitudes toward Islamic and non-Islamic refugees in the Netherlands?

A just world is related to the developed attitudes concerning these refugees will be investigated by applying the Belief in a Just World Theory (Lerner, 1977). The Belief in a Just World Theory might offer insight in the prevailing attitudes of Dutch residents toward refugees and whether an Islamic background makes a difference for refugees in these appraisals.
II. Theoretical Framework

The belief in a just world

To offer insight in the underlying mechanisms of the Dutch perceiving of Islamic refugees, the Belief in a Just World Theory (Lerner, 1977) is applied in this thesis. Lerner established the Belief in a Just World Theory which describes a situation whereby an observer of injustices will rationalize one way or another that the victim got what he deserved, to answer to the implicit need to restore the observers’ belief in a just world (from here on BJW). To explain this complicated mechanism further, the ‘Social Contract’ of Rousseau (1920) can offer insight. The agreements upon which people base societies and form nations, can be seen as a ‘social contract’ that connects all those living in it (Rousseau, 1920). This ‘social contract’ leads to social rights and duties, a system maintained by the government where we all ‘silently’ agreed upon. This means that we have given up some of our own rights to maintain social order within society. By abiding to the ‘social contract’, people learn to invest in long term goals which reflects Lerner’s basic idea of a ‘personal contract’ - investment in own long term goals while living up to the rules & rights of society (Lerner, 1977). This starts according to Lerner from childhood years, when children learn to develop a sort of ‘emerging contract’ by trying to suspend their immediate impulses to invest in long term goals (1977). For example, when a child is promised an ice-lolly after a meal he does not like, he will probably eat it anyway in order to get awarded with the ice-lolly. The belief that the own goals will be reached is according to Lerner an indicator that individuals have the need to believe that the world is a just and orderly place. Without this view on justice, setting long-term goals for oneself would be pointless, because people will not be certain of being rewarded for behaving in a just manner. This means, in the case of the child and the promised ice-lolly, that when the child is convinced that he will not be rewarded with that ice-lolly after finishing his plate he will not see the point of eating a meal the next day. Lerner (1977) named this ‘The Justice Motive’ which implies the necessity of believing that the world is a just and orderly place because this could partly lead to a more general justice motive. Hafer argues that the function of the belief in a just world is ‘to allow one to invest in long-term goals and to do so according to society’s rules of deservingness’ (Hafer, 2002). So, individuals have the implicit need to believe that good things happen to good people, and bad things happen to bad people, which implies that justice is framed in terms of deservingness.

Maintaining the Belief that the World is Just

Not surprisingly, the world is not always just and individuals do not always get what they deserve – Lerner even refers to the belief in a just world as a fundamental delusion (Lerner, 1980; Lerner, 1988). A ‘fundamental’ belief in the sense that it is essential for most people to maintain their sense of sanity and security (Lerner, 1988; Furnham, 2003). And a ‘delusion’ in the sense that the world is not always just and orderly (Lerner, 1980).

“Since the belief that the world is just serves such an important adaptive function for the individual, people are very reluctant to give up this belief, and they can be greatly troubled if they encounter evidence that suggest that the world is not really just or orderly after all.” (Lerner & Miller, 1978, p. 1031).
When people observe injustices, they tend to defend their belief that the world is just against this contradictory evidence in order to maintain that belief (Lerner & Miller, 1978). These injustices pose a threat to their belief that the world is just, thus they may engage cognitive coping strategies to 'restore justice' for their own comfort - threats to the observer's belief in a just world could be reduced by these coping strategies.

The first to explore coping strategies was Lerner himself in collaboration with Simmons in 1966. By examining the reactions of the research subjects who witnessed an innocent victim who suffered through little fault of its own, they were able to distinguish victims who appeal for the use of coping strategies from victims who did not. The differentiation is to find in the extent of time the suffering continues – at first the injustices were recognized and compassion was felt, however the victims who were expected to continue their suffering evoked usage of coping strategies (Lerner & Simmons, 1966). According to Lerner and Simmons (1966) temporary suffering calls for more compassionate reactions than continued suffering, which forms a bigger infringement of the BJW. Thus, in case of innocent victims who continue suffering on a more severe level, a bigger threat is posed to the BJW than when the suffering is perceived as temporary and less severe or a victim that is perceived as deserving. So, if refugees pose a threat to the BJW of Dutch residents ‘we may reappraise a case so it appears less unjust to us’ (Montada, 1998, p.218; Lerner & Simmons, 1966). The bigger the threat, the more people tend to employ these strategies to maintain the justice motive (Pemberton, 2012). It is argued that these strategies are only necessary for neutralizing bigger threats (Hafer, 2000). ‘Normalized’ events of injustices which can be found in daily-life do not pose a threat to the belief in a just world. Perceiving something as ‘normal’ means people do not consider it as unjust, so their belief in a just world is not in need of these coping strategies (Furnham, 2003). According to Lerner & Miller (1978) this is also true for inconsistencies that are not perceived as threatening due to the distance between the individual and the negative event.

Since refugees are primarily perceived as victims, this study will investigate coping strategies that the deprived situation of refugees call for, which Pemberton (2012) labelled as ‘victim-focused strategies’. In case of refugees these strategies might endorse the prevailing attitudes towards these victims. This could mean that Dutch residents ‘reappraise this refugee crisis so it appears less unjust to them’ by, for example, convincing themselves that refugees are deserving of their situations by attributing them guilt or responsibility. It is important to note that these strategies do not collide with one another and can be applied simultaneously (Haynes & Olson, 2006). These victim-focused strategies are more thoroughly explained in the next section.

First, there are negative cognitive coping strategies that focus on the victim. Some observers of injustices refuse to accept their occurrence, and will rationalize one way or another that the victim got what he deserved. This is irrational because a world without injustices is a delusion, Lerner might argue. Lerner and Simmons (1966) found two main negative coping strategies that focused on the victim in their experiment. The first strategy is victim blaming. The term ‘victim blaming’ describes how observers see the victim as responsible for his own suffering as a consequence of his behavior (Correia & Vala, 2003, Brickman et al, 1982; Lerner & Simmons, 1966). The observer attributes the victim's fate to something that he did or lacked to do (Lerner & Miller, 1978), which allows the observer to assign (some) responsibility to the victim. Janoff-Bulman (1982)
To what extent does the Belief in a Just World Theory offer insight in prevailing attitudes toward Islamic and non-Islamic refugees in the Netherlands?

labelled this as attribution of ‘behavioral blame’, which is mostly dependent on situational factors of the victimization instead of the victim. For example, a victim of rape will be blamed earlier by the argument that she dresses provocingly, than when she became victim to a simple robbery. This way the cause of the victimization is reinterpreted (Pemberton, 2012), and the victim is perceived as more behaviorally responsible for his/her victimization (Haynes & Olson, 2006).

The second negative strategy whereby the observer rationalizes that the victim got what he deserved is described by Lerner & Simmons (1966) as derogation of the victim’s character. Observers could reinterpret the character of the victim instead of his behavior, which means that they derogate the victim’s characteristic traits (Lerner & Simmons, 1966; Lerner, 1980). This way blame is attributed to characteristics of the victim, that are relatively unchangeable, uncontrollable personal aspects (Janoff-Bulman, 1982). According to Janoff-Bulman et al., (1985) Just World theorists as Lerner and Miller describe derogation in a way that ‘largely corresponds’ to characterological blame. Characterological blame allows observers to distance themselves from the victim and characteristic traits belonging to the victim, by convincing themselves that they are different than the victim (Janoff-Bulman et al., 1985). For example, those suffering can be perceived as bad persons, or as unworthy characters whose suffering seems to be deserved even when they did not cause the situation by their behavior (see Haynes & Olson, 2006) and therefore are not to blame. The observer rationalizes that these injustices will not occur to him, as long as his own character is ‘good’ (Lerner & Miller, 1966).

Hence, in this experiment the term victim blaming refers to behavioral blame which implies that the observer attributes (some) behavioral responsibility to the victim. Derogation refers to characterological blame which means the observers characterise victims negatively and distance themselves from them. Both negative strategies can lead to secondary victimization because they harm the victim again, after the first suffering through the victimization itself (Correia & Vala, 2003; Brickman et al, 1982).

It is noteworthy that besides reinterpretation of the cause of the victimization (behavioral blaming) or of the victims’ character (characterological blame/derogation) there are other negative coping strategies known that can be evoked to restore the sense of justice (see Lerner’s Ultimate Justice Theory, 1980; Hafer & Bègue, 2005; Pemberton, 2012). These will not be discussed since they are not subjected to this thesis.

On the other side of the coin there are positive coping strategies focused on the victim which also can be evoked to restore the BJW of the observers.

“Where possible, observers minimise the injustices they see happening to others and may do this by actively helping victims, but where not, individual may adopt cognitive strategies such as blame & derogation to minimise the apparent injustice being suffered” (Lerner & Miller, 1987, in Sutton & Douglas, 2005).
To what extent does the Belief in a Just World Theory offer insight in prevailing attitudes toward Islamic and non-Islamic refugees in the Netherlands?

The observer acts upon those injustices by trying to prevent them before they occur or restoring justice afterwards through e.g. offering help, sympathy or (monetary) compensation to the victim (Hafer & Bègue, 2005; Pemberton, 2012). It is suggested that when people can compensate victims for their suffering, they will (Pemberton, 2012).

This thesis focusses on the positive strategy of compensation and on the negative strategies of victim blaming and the derogation of characteristic traits.

The Belief in a Just World for Others

Lerner (1980) emphasized the differences in the world of the victim and the world of the observer, which indicates the importance of the need to distinguish the BJW for self and BJW for others. He explains that the belief that the world is just for oneself and others differ (Lerner & Miller, 1978). The Belief in a Just World Theory is believed to follow a pattern, shaped by social similarity. The living environment wherein the observers function is perceived as ‘their’ world. When people outside ‘their’ world become victimized or are suffering any other injustices, the BJW of the observers will not be threatened much ‘because these events have little relevance for their own fates’ (Lerner & Miller, 1978, p.1031). Through time different researchers dived further into the distinction between the BJW for self and others, and ask themselves how to map these particular beliefs in a just world (see e.g. Rubin & Peplau, 1975; Dalbert, Montada & Schmitt, 1987; Lipkus et al., 1996). In 1975, based on Lerner’s Justice Motive theory, Rubin & Peplau established a just world scale to measure the extent to which people perceive the world as just in general (Rubin & Peplau, 1975; Lipkus et al., 1996). This scale has been modified and further developed by multiple authors into sometimes viable alternatives for the Rubin & Peplau Scale (see e.g. Dalbert, Montada & Schmitt, 1987; Lipkus, 1991; Hafer, 2000). Lipkus, Dalbert & Siegler (1996) explored the differences in the belief that the world is just for oneself and for others in accordance with Lerner’s idea that these worlds differ. They successfully developed a questionnaire to measure the BJW for self and the BJW for others independently. Both the ‘self’ as the ‘other’ scale consist of 8-items. Together these 16 items are closely matched items, for example, for the ‘Self’ scale the question is: “I feel that I get what I deserve” and for the ‘Other’ scale: “I feel people get what they deserve” (Lipkus et al., 1996; Sabbagh & Schmitt, 2016). Lipkus et al. showed that these BJW scales have the ability to predict mental health and social attitudes solely from perceived justice, instead of locus of control, social desirable responding and ‘self’-esteem which other BJW scales use as variables (Sutton & Douglas, 2005). Lipkus et al. (1996) proved the BJW for self to be related to psychological well-being of the observer which is confirmed by Sutton and Douglas (2005). Sabbagh & Schmitt (2016) confirmed that harsh responses to the disadvantaged are related to the BJW for others, which is also in line with Sutton & Douglas (2005) findings that the BJW for others is linked to negative attitudes. The BJW for self will not be investigated since this study does not go into psychological well-being of the observers, but is solely aimed at the perceiving of refugees, clearly other persons than the observer.

The Belief in a Just World for in- and outgroup victims

Beside the sole fact that refugees are other people than the observer, social similarity also plays a key role in the threat ‘the other’ poses to one’s belief that the world is just
To what extent does the Belief in a Just World Theory offer insight in prevailing attitudes toward Islamic and non-Islamic refugees in the Netherlands?

(Lerner & Miller, 1978). In an earlier study, Aguiar et al. (2008) proved their statement that a victim that belongs to the ‘in-group’ in the eyes of the observer is of an higher threat to the BJW than an ‘outgroup victim’. Correia, Vala & Aguiar (2007) researched the influence of social categorization and the threat to the BJW, as well as the role of the victims’ innocence. They mostly agree with Lerner’s idea that in-group victims threaten the BJW more than outgroup victims do (Lerner & Miller, 1978). Their research among Portuguese students concerning differences for a Portuguese child victim (in-group) and a Gypsy child victim (outgroup) indicates that victim’s perceived as ‘our own’ pose a higher threat to the BJW compared to victims that belong to an outgroup. They nuanced this statement with the finding that these ‘outgroup’ victims are more blamed and derogated than the in-group victims(Correia, Vala, Aguiar, 2007). So, outsiders of the social group seem to call for more negative coping strategies which leads to secondary victimization (Correia, Vala, Aguiar, 2007). It should be noted that the research subjects in the study by Correia, Vala and Aguiar (2007) made judgements on the situation of a victimized child, which is a ‘individual entity’. Refugees can not be seen as individual entities but as more ‘collective’ victims, which leads to other reactions than individual entities (see e.g. Montada, 1998; Dalbert & Yamauchi, 1994). For example, Montada’s research into immigrants (the outgroup) found a positive correlation between the BJW and victim blaming (Montada, 1998; in Correia, Vala & Aguir, 2007). Another study into collective entities is done by Dalbert & Yamauchi in 1994 when they investigated judgements on the situation of immigrants in Germany and Hawaii. The participants with a higher BJW considered the immigrant’s situation as more just. Investigated through the extent in which they regard themselves similar to the immigrant, the participants who perceived the immigrant to be an in-group person found the immigrant’s situation to be more just than those who did not regard themselves similar (Dalbert & Yamauchi, 1994).

In this study the Islamic refugee is believed to be perceived as an outgroup member by the Dutch and at the opposite end, the non-Islamic refugee as in-group member. The finding that the BJW for others is related to attitudes toward victims is of considerable value to this thesis. This implies that the BJW others will positively correlate with negative attitudes toward refugees in The Netherlands. Whether there is a difference between the appraisals of Islamic and non-Islamic refugees, is yet to be discovered since no earlier research explored the attitudes towards these refugees on Dutch grounds in the light of the BJW Theory.
The present study

The large amount of refugees in the Netherlands could constitute a threat to the prevailing belief that the world is a just and orderly place, which in turn might explain the negative and positive attitudes of the Dutch residents towards them. By negative attitudes the refugees are ‘secondary victimized’ (Brickman et al, 1982; Correia & Vala, 2003; Lerner & Simmons, 1966). Residents who have developed positive attitudes toward refugees, will show helping reactions, in this case by compensating the suffering of the refugee with access to The Netherlands and monetary means. So, with Dutch residents as observers and refugees as victims, the Belief in a Just World Theory could offer insight in the prevailing positive and negative attitudes toward the refugees in the Netherlands, and what an Islamic background means for refugees in these appraisals. This is exactly what this thesis will focus on, thus my main question is:

“To what extent does the Belief in a Just World Theory offer insight in prevailing negative and positive attitudes toward Islamic and non-Islamic refugees in the Netherlands?”

My first goal is to assess the coherence between different (individual) levels of the belief that the world is just, especially for others, and the prevailing attitudes in the Netherlands towards the (Islamic as well as the non-Islamic) refugee. This can be investigated by answering the first research question;

To what extent does the belief that the world is just among Dutch residents correlates with attitudes toward (Islamic as well as the non-Islamic) refugees?

If refugees, whether Islamic or not, form a threat to the prevailing Belief in a Just World, Dutch residents will have developed coping strategies in order to maintain their belief that the world is just. So, if refugees call for the use of coping strategies, it is assumed that they do form a threat to the Belief in a Just World. To what extent Dutch residents perceive refugees as responsible (deserving) for their situation will be investigated in negative terms of victim blame and characterological derogation. Whether refugees call for positive helping reactions will be investigated in terms of monetary compensation and by approval of the asylum application. These coping strategies will reflect the prevailing attitudes in the Netherlands regarding Islamic and non-Islamic refugees.

As Sutton and Douglas (2005) showed, the BJW for others is expected to correlate positively with levels of blame and the derogation of Islamic and non-Islamic refugees. Following this line of thoughts, my first principal hypothesis is;

❖ The BJW for others is positively correlated with positive and negative attitudes towards Islamic as well as non-Islamic refugees

Without taking the religious background of the refugees in account, this implies that 1) Dutch residents with a high BJW for others will allocate more blame to refugees in than those with a low BJW for others, and 2) that this also holds for characterological derogating of refugees and 3) simultaneously those with a low BJW for others will compensate refugees on a lesser extent than those with a high BJW for others.
To what extent does the Belief in a Just World Theory offer insight in prevailing attitudes toward Islamic and non-Islamic refugees in the Netherlands?

The second goal is to understand psychological processes that underlie the evaluation of refugees in the Netherlands, with an emphasis on the differences between Islamic and non-Islamic refugees. This goal will be assessed with help of the following research question:

**What coping strategies (of blame, derogation or compensation) do Dutch residents develop regarding (Islamic) refugees in order to maintain their belief that the world is just?**

It has been proved that the in-group victim is of an higher threat to the BJW than the outgroup victim is (see Lerner and Simmons, 1966; Aguiar et al., 2008). However, outsiders of a social group (like refugees) usually call for more negative coping strategies, which means that these outsiders are more secondary victimized (Correia, Vala, Aguiar, 2007). Aguiar et al. (2008) showed this can happen as a consequence of prejudice, their ‘outgroup’ victim was derogated on a higher level than the ‘in-group’ victim. It is possible that the Islamic refugees are seen more as outgroup members, than the non-Islamic refugees, due to their religious background\(^1\). If the (level of) coping strategies used to restore the belief that the world is just, differ significantly per refugee group whereby the Islamic refugee’s situation seems to call for negative evaluations the most, than this could also be a consequence of prejudice toward refugees with an Islamic background.

Following the predominant literature the second principal hypothesis is;

**The Islamic and the non-Islamic refugee call for different prevailing coping strategies;**

This hypothesis is split up into two different ‘sub hypotheses’. It is expected that the Islamic background of the refugee will ‘open the door’ for observers to prejudice, and consequential characterological derogation, on an higher extent than the non-Islamic refugee. This also implies that the Islamic refugee will be attributed behavioral responsibility on a higher degree than the non-Islamic refugee. The next sub hypotheses are composed;

1) **the Islamic refugee will be more characterological derogated than the non-Islamic refugee,**

2) **the Islamic refugee will be more behaviorally blamed for her situation than the non-Islamic refugee,**

Besides negative coping strategies, observers will employ positive strategies regarding the situation of both refugees to restore their BJW as well. Due to perceived social similarity to the non-Islamic refugee it is expected that;

3) **the non-Islamic refugee will be offered more helping reactions and sustenance and reimbursement money than the Islamic refugee.**

These hypotheses are investigated and the outcomes will be discussed in ‘Results’ and ‘Discussion’ chapters.
To what extent does the Belief in a Just World Theory offer insight in prevailing attitudes toward Islamic and non-Islamic refugees in the Netherlands?

III. Methodology

In order to test the abovementioned hypotheses, this research used a vignette to manipulate a threat to the Belief in a Just World involving a victimized refugee who varied in terms of her religious background, in order to elicit normative judgements and monitor the prevalence of certain attitudes. This chapter entails the Research Design, Results and eventually the findings will be clarified in the Discussion.

Research Design

This study included a vignette regarding a victimized refugee in her country of origin, that was subjected to the participants. There were two versions of the vignette, with a sole difference in main character – one refugee was featured by Islamic traditional clothing (an *jihab*) and a typical Islamic name, the other refugee was described with Christian and Western features to resemble Dutch residents. The participants were randomly assigned to the condition where either this Islamic refugee or non-Islamic refugee was protagonist of the vignette.

First the correlation between the BJW in the participants and the coping strategies were investigated with the help of the BJW for others-scale filled in by the participants (Lipkus et al., 1996). Then, in the experimental part, the vignette followed to investigate what the manipulation of the religious background of the refugees in the vignette meant for the judgements made by the participants as well as for the application of positive and negative coping strategies to restore the BJW in the participants.
To what extent does the Belief in a Just World Theory offer insight in prevailing attitudes toward Islamic and non-Islamic refugees in the Netherlands?

Participants

The aim was 120 participants, 60 for each condition, however not all participants completed the questionnaires which excluded some of them. After this exclusion 104 Dutch residents participated in this study (N = 104: 51 male/53 female; age ranged from 15 to 69, M_age = 37 years, SD = 15,05). One group was presented with the vignette on the Islamic refugee only (remaining N = 56), the others solely with the vignette on the non-Islamic refugee (N = 48).

Procedure

Participants were approached online, by an e-mail invitation to participate and the link to the online survey. The e-mail invited the participants to cooperate and to forward the e-mail to their personal contacts. This snowball method was also applied on Social Media (Facebook and Linkedin) whereby my direct contacts were also invited to 'share' the link with their personal Facebook-contacts. After opening the link to the online-survey, participants were informed about their anonymity and that these questionnaires were conducted in order to write this Master Thesis for the Victimology and Criminal Justice department of the University of Tilburg. Furthermore, they were explained that in order to participate in the study, they had to read a story on a refugee and fill in the questionnaire attached to it. It was emphasised that there were no right or wrong answers. Participants who remained with questions after completing the questionnaires, had the opportunity to send an e-mail with their question(s).

Except for the title of the survey, “Refugees in the Netherlands”, no further information was given on the specifics this study aimed to investigate, in order not to bias the participants. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the two experimental conditions. A between subjects design was used to compare both groups.

The expected cohesion between the extent to which the world is perceived as just and the usage of coping strategies when this belief is threatened, was investigated first. In the determination of the suitable scale to get insight in the relationship between the BJW of the participants and the coping strategies, it was important to differentiate between the belief in a just world for self and others (Lerner, 1980; Lipkus et al., 1996; Sutton & Douglas, 2005; Sabbagh & Schmitt, 2016). Before reading the vignette all participants answered the Lipkus’ scales for the BJW for others and for self. The main goal of the use of these BJW scales was to explore interpersonal attitudes, beliefs and judgements on how just the participants perceive the world for other people than themselves. Only the BJW for others is explored profoundly, since the BJW for others is thought to be related to social attitudes (Lipkus, Dalbert, Siegler, 1996; Sutton & Douglas, 2005; Sabbagh & Schmitt, 2016). When the participants would have read the vignette first, their answers (especially those for the BJW for others-items) might have been altered by the situation of the refugee. This way, the participant is not yet introduced to the story of the refugee and thus not biased by her situation in formulating answers to the questions concerning the extent to which the participant believes that the world is just for all others, and not only for refugees.

Design vignettes
The study examined the independent variable of a religious Islamic background. Refugees, especially those with an Islamic background, are shown to be sensitive subjects in the Netherlands. This asked for a method of data collecting that prevented the participants to feel like the researcher was judging or reflecting on them, because the questions could be perceived as threatening and the participant should be able to answer freely (Bryman, 2015, p.261; Finch, 1987). Certain attitudes and behavior are not as accessible and assessable for researchers as others (Soydan & Stål, 1994), so sensitive subjects as attitudes toward (Islamic) refugees called for the applied method of the vignette technique. The vignettes in this study include precise references to what are presumed to be the most important variables in the decision-making/judgement-making processes of Dutch residents (Soydan & Stål, 1994, p. 75). One vignette presented the manipulated variables: participants (N = 56, see Appendix B) in the Islamic condition read a story about a refugee with Islamic features. These features were explicitly mentioned in this vignette, but for the participants in the non-Islamic condition (N = 48, see Appendix A) changed to more Western features. The manipulated variables in the vignette are solely aimed at distinguishing the Islamic refugee from the non-Islamic refugee. In the Islamic condition (see Appendix B), the vignette presented the refugee with an Islamic name, namely Azizah. She presented the outgroup victim in this study. She wore an Islamic religious headpiece (a Jihab) and she was married to ‘Abdul-Khalik’. They lived in Kabul, Afghanistan, a country with a large majority of Islamic residents. Participants in the non-Islamic condition (see Appendix A) read about a refugee with more Western features, the in-group victim. She was named Esmé and married to Laurent, instead of a religious headpiece she had loose hair and came from an (official) francophone country (Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire), where the Roman Catholic, Christian as well as the Islamic religion are practiced. In contrary to the Islamic condition, this vignette mentions that she is a respected member of the Christian community to ensure that the observer is properly informed about the non-Islamic background of the protagonist.

The remaining parts of the vignettes were held constant in both stories and were designed to appeal to the imagination of the participants. Some variables were added to increase the likeliness that the refugee’s narrative threatens the participant’s belief that the world is just. Multiple authors (e.g. Lerner & Simmons, 1966; Montada, 1998; Hafer, 2000; Correia, Vala & Aguiar, 2001) emphasised the need of an (undeserving) innocent victim in the vignette to form a threat to the BJW. Howards’ research (1984) into reactions on victims showed that females are believed to be more vulnerable to criminality than males, especially in case of sexual assault or rape. This is why the protagonist in this vignette belonged to the female sex, which also made a more appropriate victim in terms of gender; males are generally perceived more masculine and tough than females, which makes females more easily to be seen as innocent and harmless (Howard, 1984). Lerner & Simmons (1966) predicted that victims who are expected to continue their suffering constitute a greater infringement of the BJW. The protagonist of this story suffered severely back in respectively 2001 and 2002 when these imagined victimizations took place at the starting point of war. To ensure the vignette manipulates a threat to the BJW, the suffering of the refugee continues as the journey to the Netherlands is described as long and harsh, and the protagonist was still waiting for her asylum application to be approved after all these years. Her medical issues due to the victimization, the loss of her children and husband as well the fact that her country of origin was at war, were also described to manipulate a strong threat to
the observer’s BJW. The protagonist could be seen as a qualified refugee, with a well-founded fear of persecution based on reasons of nationality, seen that their home country was at war. However, she was not (yet) legally recognised as such. Her brother joined her to the Netherlands in the vignette, to imitate a ‘real refugee story’ insofar as possible. Her brother was not directly victimized but nevertheless also resident of a country at war who fled and applied for asylum. The victimizers, in this vignette members of an unknown military group, did not speak the same language as the protagonist did. This vague description of the victimizers meant to improve their ‘big & bad’ image. To make it a vivid and readable story, the protagonist sometimes spoke for herself in the vignette. Other variables to ensure the feeling in the observer that the story was real, were the year and place the events took place which vary between the vignettes. Côte d’Ivoire and Afghanistan both found themselves before an outbreak of war in the beginning of respectively 2002 and 2001. The vignette technique is suitable for these kind of sensitive area’s because the manner of questioning permits a certain distance between the questions involving ‘others’ (refugees or specific Islamic refugees) and the participant (Finch, 1987).

The questions following on the vignettes were aimed at unravelling the positive and negative coping strategies used to restore the BJW of the participants. These 14 items all had answer options on bipolar 7-point Likert scales. The specifics of these questions are described under ‘Measurements’. The participants were asked indirect questions into negative coping strategies of behavioral blame and characterological derogation, which they might have employed to assign the blame for the victimization to the innocent refugee. They were also asked questions concerning positive coping strategies which is explained under ‘measurements’.
To what extent does the Belief in a Just World Theory offer insight in prevailing attitudes toward Islamic and non-Islamic refugees in the Netherlands?

**Measurements**

**Manipulation check**

A question into the religious background of the refugee was included in the question in order to check for the experimental manipulation. Participants were asked to answer the question 'What do you think describes X' on a 7-point Likert scale, with the answer possibilities for 'devout religious' ranging from 1 ('not at all') till 7 ('totally'). This question asks for the protagonists religious beliefs and this question reflects to what extent the refugee is perceived to practice her religion. The results showed that the refugees were considered as practicing their religion ($M = 4.35$, $SD = 1.42$) and thus the manipulation was successful.

**Belief in a Just World for Others Scale**

The 8 items to measure the BJW other were statements like 'I feel that the world treats other people fairly' and 'I feel people get what they deserve', see Table 1. The BJW for others-scale yielded relatively high (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .893$). Because this experiment particularly meant to offer insight in the relationship between the level of BJW for others and the evoked coping strategies, the specifics of the items of ‘BJW for others’ scale of Lipkus et al., (1996) are displayed in Table 1 under ‘Results’. These items were converted into one instrument to measure the BJW for others ($M = 2.52$, $SD = .801$).

**Coping strategies**

Second, the items measuring the perceived deservingness of the refugees for their situation (‘Behavioral Blame’ and ‘Characterological Derogation’) as well as positive reactions (‘Approval of Asylum Application’ and ‘Monetary Compensation’) are defined. One should keep in mind that in these particular analyses, participants in both conditions were accounted for. Hence, there was no distinction made (yet) between participants who read about the non-Islamic and Islamic refugees.

**Behavioral Blame**

To map the irrational coping strategy of victim blaming, which is linked to negative attitudes, Correia, Vala and Aquiar’s study into victims of HIV (2001) provided applicable 7-point Likert scale questions. They examined the same coping strategies as were investigated here. The questions were a bit adjusted to measure the perceived deservingness of the protagonists’ situation instead of this sexual transmitted disease. ‘To what degree is X guilty of her situation?’, and the same question on responsibility instead of guiltiness could be answered within the range of 1 which meant ‘not at all guilty/responsible’ and 7 which stood for ‘completely guilty/responsible’. The answers offered insight in the extent to which behavioral responsibility was assigned to the (innocent) protagonist. A Spearman-Brown tested the reliability of these items, which was not strong enough to form a scale (.642). These items concerning guilt ($M = 1.62$, $SD = 1.15$) and responsibility ($M = 1.87$, $SD = 1.49$) assigned to the refugee, were not converted into one instrument but used as two independent instruments for behavioral blame.
To what extent does the Belief in a Just World Theory offer insight in prevailing attitudes toward Islamic and non-Islamic refugees in the Netherlands?

Characterological Derogation

To unravel to what extent characterological derogation occurs, which could also underlie negative attitudes toward the refugees, questions into the judgements on the protagonists characteristics followed. By asking the participants what characteristics they attributed to the protagonist, in positive terms as levels of e.g. politeness, maturity or warmth or negative terms as levels of e.g. stupidity and selfishness on a 7-point Likert scale, possible derogation of certain characteristics could be monitored (Correia, Vala, Aguiar, 2001). The items ‘Stupid’, ‘selfish’, ‘false’ and ‘unconscious’ mapped negative evaluation of the refugees characteristics, where 7 stands for ‘totally agree’ with *item* as a description of the refugee. When following the line of thought that an increase of characterological derogation will lead to a decrease of positive evaluation of the refugees characteristics, the items measuring positive evaluation were investigated here as well. The items ‘polite’, ‘nice’, ‘warm’, ‘responsible’ and ‘nice’ were believed to measure positive evaluation of the protagonists characteristics. After recoding the values of these items so that they became comparable to the items for negative evaluation, the internal reliability for these 9 items together yielded relatively high (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .883$). These items were converted in a new instrument on a 7-point Likert scale that maps the overall characterological derogation of refugees which will be referred to as ‘Characterological Derogation’. Overall, the refugees their characteristics did not seem to be negatively evaluated on a high level, with a mean of 2.61 ($SD = .970$).

Approval of Asylum Application

To measure the positive coping strategy of compensation, the participants were asked if they would approve the asylum application (referred to as ‘AAA’) of the protagonist. This was a simple yes or no question. Approval indicates that the subjects’ BJW was threatened by the protagonists’ suffering, which could call for this particular coping strategy to restore their belief that the world is just, for themselves but also for the protagonist. By granting the refugee access to The Netherland they might have tried to compromise the refugee for her suffering. When this question of AAA was answered positively, they were also asked questions concerning monetary compensation for the refugee. Forty-eight of the participants (82.7% percent) approved the asylum application, 14 disapproved and 4 participants did not answer this particular question.

Monetary Compensation

When the participants approved the asylum application they were asked how much reimbursement and sustenance money they would award the protagonist. When the AAA question was answered negatively the participant was advised answer the next question on sustenance and reimbursement money. This reflects the course of action in real life, because asylum seekers who do not receive a positive reaction to their asylum application are not granted the judicial refugee status and, consequential, not granted any monetary compensation. Because this is an open-ended question, a time frame of weekly awards for the first three months of residence in The Netherland was presented to the participants. This way the individual answers were comparable and generalizable to a certain extent. Those who awarded the refugees reimbursement and sustenance
To what extent does the Belief in a Just World Theory offer insight in prevailing attitudes toward Islamic and non-Islamic refugees in the Netherlands?

money \((N = 77)\) allocated them on average 318.26 euros per week. However, since the answers ranged broadly \((SD = 530.09)\), their specifics are discussed further under ‘Results’.
To what extent does the Belief in a Just World Theory offer insight in prevailing attitudes toward Islamic and non-Islamic refugees in the Netherlands?

IV. Results

This study asked for statistical analyses which were conducted by the use of IBM SPSS Statistics 24. Before these analyses were conducted some missing items were replaced. After excluding participants for not answering any questions following on the vignettes, some missing items still showed on the items measuring characterological derogation, behavioral blame and AAA and compensation (3.8% of the values on these items were missing). Because the missing items remained under 5%, these were replaced by the mean of the values other participants gave to that specific item.

Relationship Belief in a Just World & Coping strategies

The first research question ‘To what extent does the belief that the world is just among Dutch residents correlate with positive and negative attitudes toward (Islamic as well as the non-Islamic) refugees?’ could be answered through correlational analyses. The main hypothesis was that BJW for others was expected to positively correlate with negative and positive attitudes towards Islamic as well as non-Islamic refugees. To explore this coherence the extent to which the participants perceive the world as just for others was investigated first. The descriptive statistics of each item that was used to construct the instrument to mapp the BJW for others with are presented in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I feel that the world treats other people fairly</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that people get what they deserve</td>
<td>2.46</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that people treat each other fairly in life</td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>1.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that other people earn the rewards and punishments they get</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that people treat each other with the respect they deserve</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>.931</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that people get what they are entitled to have</td>
<td>2.49</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that a persons' efforts are noticed and rewarded</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that when people meet misfortune, they have brought it upon themselves</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>1.23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Then correlation analyses for each of the dependent items that represent the strategies of behavioral blame, characterological derogation and the positive reactions of AAA and monetary compensation with the independent item measuring the BJW for others were conducted, to investigate whether the BJW contributes to these coping strategies. The descriptive statistics for each item that was used to construct one of instruments to measure the coping strategies with are displayed in Table 2 below.
To what extent does the Belief in a Just World Theory offer insight in prevailing attitudes toward Islamic and non-Islamic refugees in the Netherlands?

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics Items into Coping Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Derogation</td>
<td>Stupid</td>
<td>1,89</td>
<td>1,11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Selfish</td>
<td>1,95</td>
<td>1,19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>False</td>
<td>1,85</td>
<td>1,13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unconscious</td>
<td>2,31</td>
<td>1,43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Polite</td>
<td>4,89</td>
<td>1,32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Responsible</td>
<td>4,72</td>
<td>1,63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mature</td>
<td>5,13</td>
<td>1,33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Warm</td>
<td>4,8</td>
<td>1,39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nice</td>
<td>4,79</td>
<td>1,43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral Blame</td>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>1,87</td>
<td>1,49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Guiltiness</td>
<td>1,62</td>
<td>1,15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compensation</td>
<td>Monetary</td>
<td>318,26</td>
<td>530,09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AAA</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Behavioral Blame

Correlational analyses were conducted for the BJW for others and the coping strategies. First behavioral blame, which was split up in the degree to which the refugee was assigned guilt on the one hand and held responsible on the other hand, was investigated. It was expected that Dutch residents with a high BJW for others will allocate more blame to refugees in than those with a low BJW for others. Some coherence showed with the BJW for others. The relationship between the extent to which the participants perceived the refugee as guilty of her situation and the BJW for others was weak ($r = .220$) but significant ($p = .025$). Not surprisingly, the findings on the relationship between the BJW for others and attributed responsibility (the other instrument to measure behavioral blame) are quite similar ($r = .240, p = .014$).

Characterological Derogation

The coherence between the BJW for others and characterological also appeared to be significant ($p < .001$). This relationship is a bit stronger than the coherence between behavioral blame and the BJW for others ($r = .349$). Hence, when the level of BJW for others is relatively high, more characterological derogation of the refugees characteristics can be expected than in observers with a relatively low BJW for others. This is in line with the hypothesis concerning characterological derogation; it was
To what extent does the Belief in a Just World Theory offer insight into prevailing attitudes towards Islamic and non-Islamic refugees in the Netherlands?

It was expected that Dutch residents with a high BJW for others will derogate refugees more than those with a low BJW for others.

Approval of Asylum Application

Positive reactions were mapped through the questions where the participants were asked to imagine working for the government and whether or not they would approve the asylum application of the refugee they read about. Through the results of a logistic regression analysis it was found that the BJW for Others does not predict approval or non-approval (Chi square =0.5>0.05). The correlation coefficient that the BJW for Others shares with approval or non-approval of the asylum application is really weak (r = .051). Except for the fact that there is no noteworthy correlation between the two (since a value of zero tells us that there is no relationship), this correlation between AAA and BJW for Others is also not significant (p = .612). Thus, the BJW for Others showed not to be of significant effect on approval of the asylum application. The majority of participants approved the asylum application (82.7%).

Monetary Compensation

The participants who granted the refugees access, also had the opportunity to express how much money they would award the refugee per week to settle down in The Netherlands. Even among those who answered the approval question positively, a lot of missing values appeared on this question of monetary compensation and so only 77 participants awarded the refugees some amount of money. That, as well as the fact that these numbers varied broadly, made it hard to generalise these numbers. Some numbers were attached with comments as 'the same as the living standard the Dutch receive' (twice) or 'if that is enough to feed them'. The living standard in The Netherlands (for someone over age 23) is 52.67 euros a weekday, hence, after a simple calculation (52.67 x 5 days), it is assumed that those referring to living standards would award the refugees 263.4 per week to fill in some of the 'missing values'. The percentages of the awarded sustenance and reimbursement money (N = 77) are shown in Table 3 to offer some more insight in the findings of this survey. There was no significant coherence between the BJW for others and Compensation (r = -.041, p = .721). This finding combined with the lack of coherence with AAA contradicted the hypothesis concerning compensation; it was expected that Dutch residents with a low BJW for others will compensate refugees on a lesser extent than those with a high BJW for others.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3 Monetary compensation, expressed in euros</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$N = 77$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-100</td>
<td>36.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101-200</td>
<td>29.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>201-300</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>301-400</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>401-500</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>501-1000</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1001-4000</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To what extent does the Belief in a Just World Theory offer insight in prevailing attitudes toward Islamic and non-Islamic refugees in the Netherlands?

Eventually it was checked whether these negative and positive coping strategies collide with one another or can be applied simultaneously. Characterological derogation is significantly correlated with the degree of guilt (r = .466, p<.000) in a positive way, but not with the degree of responsibility (r = .473, p = .183) attributed to the refugees. The positive coping strategy of compensation did not show any significant relationships with the other negative coping strategies thus they do not depend on each other.

Islamic and non-Islamic refugees and coping strategies

The effect of an Islamic religious background for refugees in The Netherlands on attitudes of the Dutch towards them was investigated in terms of the earlier described positive and negative coping strategies. In this experimental part of the study, participants were split up in either the Islamic condition (N = 55) or the non-Islamic condition (N = 47). As explained before, the alleged outgroup victim was presented by the manipulated Islamic protagonist. In this experiment the differences between in and outgroups in the refugees and observers plays a key role. Therefore, two of the participants were excluded, because they belong to the Islamic religion. They were probably not susceptible for this manipulation if they considered the refugee to be socially similar to themselves. The other way around, they could have considered the non-Islamic refugee as an outgroup, since they are Islamic and she is not, which could have affected the findings since the non-Islamic refugee is presumed to be an in-group member.

The second principal hypothesis ‘The Islamic and the non-Islamic refugee call for different prevailing coping strategies’ asked for independent T-tests (between-samples). Through these tests the differences in variances and means of applied coping strategies between the two conditions were explored.

Characterological Derogation

The means of characterological derogation in the Islamic condition (M = 2.4, SD = .912) and the non-Islamic condition (M = 2.8, SD = .999) differed significantly, t(100) = -2.357, p = .020, CI [-.821, -.071]. The significance of an Islamic background, with the positive correlation coefficient (r = .349, p = .05) taken into account, appeared to be medium (Cohen’s d = .462) on the extent to which refugees were derogated. This implies that there is a medium growth in the extent to which the refugee is derogated when this is a non-Islamic refugee compared to an Islamic refugee. As Table 4 shows, 10.2% of the participants in the Islamic condition did not derogate that refugee at all, where only 2.1% in the non-Islamic condition saw ‘their’ refugee as flawless. The hypothesis that the Islamic refugee will be more characterologically derogated than the non-Islamic refugee is contradicted.

Behavioral Blame

Behavioral blame, mapped by the two independent instruments for ‘guiltiness’ and ‘responsibility’, asked for independent t-tests. The participants in the non-Islamic condition (M = 1.95, SD = 1.46) scored relatively low on this 7-point Likert-scale which represents the extent to which they assigned guilt to this particular refugee. The Islamic refugee is assigned significantly less guilt (M = 1.32, SD = .685) than the non-Islamic refugee, t(63.05) = -2.691, p = .009, CI [-1.088, -.161] with a medium effect size (Cohen’s
To what extent does the Belief in a Just World Theory offer insight in prevailing attitudes toward Islamic and non-Islamic refugees in the Netherlands?

d=.55). This finding is reflected in the percentages of participants in both condition that did not attributed any guilt at all; 73.2% in the Islamic condition and only 58.3% in the non-Islamic condition (see Table 4). The extent to which the participants assigned ‘responsibility’ to the refugee in the Islamic condition (M = 1.9, SD= 1.713, Cohen’s d = .047) did not differ significantly, t(100)=.252, p = .802, CI [-.515, .666] from participants in the non-Islamic condition (M = 1.83, SD = 1.203). Thus, the hypothesis that the Islamic refugee will be more behaviorally blamed for her situation than the non-Islamic refugee remains unsupported.

Approval of Asylum Application (AAA)

Compensation, as a positive coping strategy, was investigated in terms of approval of the asylum application and, when participants did approve that they were asked about the amount of money they would award the refugee per week for the first three months of residence in The Netherlands. Concerning both forms of compensation, it was expected that the non-Islamic refugee will be offered more helping reactions and sustenance and reimbursement money than the Islamic refugee. Since the question into asylum applications was only answerable by a simple yes or no, a T-test, like the other dependent coping strategies asked for, was not possible here. A non-parametric test following on the information the chi square brings us, offers another possibility to see if Islamic refugees and non-Islamic refugees differ significantly in the extent to which they are granted access to The Netherlands. By a chi-square test for independence the observed frequencies that occur in each of the categories (yes/no) are compared with the values that would be expected if there was no association measured between the approval/non-approval and Islamic/ non-Islamic refugees. The expected minimum showed to be 6.58 thus did not violate the nul-hypothesis. The continuity correction points out that there is no significant difference in the Islamic and non-Islamic group in granting access to The Netherlands. The effect size (.024) is really low, and the chi-square test for independence indicated no significant association between Islamic/non-Islamic refugees and asylum approvals (p>.999 , phi=.024). Thus, there are no significant differences for Islamic or non-Islamic refugees in granting access to The Netherlands. It is noteworthy that whether refugees have an Islamic background or not, does not make a difference in deciding whether to approve their asylum applications: almost 83 percent of all applications is approved, regardless of the religious background belonging to the refugees.

Table 4: Comparison of applied coping strategies in both conditions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coping strategy</th>
<th>Islamic condition (n=56)</th>
<th>Non-Islamic condition (n=47)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Characterological derogation*</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>&quot;Not at all&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guilt*</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>64.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAA – No appr. Monetary compensation*</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monetary compensation*</td>
<td>30.4%</td>
<td>20.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*sign. difference between groups
Monetary Compensation

The amount of sustenance and reimbursement money awarded to the refugees was only known for participants who answered the AAA question positively and actually answered this question as well (Islamic condition, \( N = 38 \), non-Islamic condition, \( N = 37 \)). Since these groups are approximately the same size, another independent t-test was conducted to investigate if the means of awarded monetary compensation differed significantly for each condition. This appeared to be so, \( t(39.279) = 2.061, p = .046 \), CI [6.679, 489.58]. The non-Islamic refugee (\( M = 196, SD = 126.14 \)) received significantly less money than the Islamic refugee (\( M = 443.16, SD = 727.93 \)). An Islamic background had a small to medium effect on the amount of money awarded to refugees (Cohen’s \( d = .473 \)). This major standard deviation led to the exclusion of some outliers, since it might be possible that some of the participants misread the question. This might explain why these relatively high numbers appeared. When these outliers (scores above 1000) were excluded, this differences between groups appeared not to be significant after all. It is noteworthy that 30.4% awarded no money at all to the Islamic refugee, where only 20.8% in the non-Islamic condition was reluctant to award reimbursement and sustenance money.
To what extent does the Belief in a Just World Theory offer insight in prevailing attitudes toward Islamic and non-Islamic refugees in the Netherlands?

V. Discussion

“To what extent does the Belief in a Just World Theory offer insight in prevailing negative and positive attitudes toward Islamic refugees in the Netherlands?”

This experiment sought to examine attitudes towards refugees in The Netherlands in light of the Belief in a Just World Theory (Lerner & Simmons, 1966), with an emphasis on the differences in evoked coping strategies by refugees with an Islamic and non-Islamic background. It focused on the negative coping strategies of behavioral blame and characterological derogation on the one hand and on the other hand the positive strategy of compensation. Compensation is translated through approval of the asylum application and monetary compensation. The Belief in a Just World Theory offers some, however not full, insight in attitudes towards Islamic and non-Islamic refugees, since the BJW for others is only of influence on the negative strategies of victim blaming and derogation. The BJW for others cannot offer insight the extent in which Dutch residents grant refugees access to The Netherlands since there is no significant relation found between the both. This is also true for monetary compensation granted to the refugees in The Netherlands, which is not related to the BJW for others. Non-Islamic refugees are derogated on a higher level and attributed more guilt than the Islamic (outgroup) refugees. It appears that the Islamic refugee is granted significantly more monetary compensation than the non-Islamic refugee.

It should be noted that there are some limitations in this study. The English questionnaires limited the participants to those who can read and understand English. This might have excluded perfectly suitable Dutch participants. The underline this statement, the question ‘To what degree do you find X unconscious’ could have confused participants since ‘unconscious’ is interpretable in two ways. It was meant as ‘unknowing’ or ‘ignorant’ but also readable as ‘out of consciousness’. Due to time limitations and a relatively high internal reliability for all the items constructing the instrument for ‘Characterological derogation’, is was decided to leave it this way. The study would have benefited from more participants, because a larger sample size would have ensured a representative distribution of the Dutch population.

The previous findings should be elaborated more. The coherence between the BJW and coping strategies is discussed first. Earlier similar research focused on, for example, immigrants and poor residents of the third world (see e.g. Montada, 1998; Dalbert & Yamauchi, 2006). Although these outcomes are based on social groups quite similar to refugees, other research into the coping strategies of behavioral blame, characterological derogation and compensation related to other of victims also formed a basis to the hypotheses (see e.g. Lerner & Simmons, 1966; Correia, Vala & Aguiar, 2001; Haynes & Olson, 2006; Correia, Vala & Aguiar, 2007). To explore whether or not the belief in just world has a positive relationship with the attitudes Dutch residents have developed towards refugees, which was the first hypothesis, correlations between the BJW for others and the coping strategies were examined. Numerous authors showed that the stronger one’s BJW is, the more likely one is to engage in coping strategies to restore that BJW (see Hafer and Bègue, 2005, Lerner and Miller, 1978 and Montada, 1998). Prominent authors like Lerner himself, suggested the distinction between the belief that the world is just for the self and others (see e.g. Lerner, 1980; Furnham & Proctor, 1989 in Lipkus, Dalbert, Siegler, 1996; Sutton & Douglas, 2005) and since the
BJW for others is related to social attitudes it was chosen to work with the BJW for others only (Lipkus, Dalbert & Siegler, 1996; Sutton & Douglas, 2005; Sabbagh & Schmitt, 2016). The most important finding is that the BJW for others is related to the negative coping strategies of behavioral blaming and characterological derogation. Concerning behavioral blame, weak positive relations with between the BJW for others showed that Dutch residents with a high BJW for others are more likely to assign responsibility and guilt (on a higher extent) to the innocent refugee for her situation compared to those with a low BJW for others. This is also true for characterological derogating refugees’ characteristics whereby not behavioral but characterological blame is assigned to the victims. Thus, the stronger the belief in a just world for others in Dutch residents, the more likely it is that Dutch residents will secondary victimize refugees, which is a less likely occurrence in weak believers. Weak correlations between the belief in a just world for others and negative attitudes are not surprising since earlier findings of other authors (Sabbagh & Schmitt, 2016) who also found small negative correlations. The coherence between the BJW for others and behavioral blaming and derogating refugees confirms the idea that the BJW for others is related to harsh social attitudes (Lipkus, Dalbert & Siegler, 1996; Sutton & Douglas, 2005). These findings partly confirm the first hypothesis that a positive correlation between BJW for others and positive as well as negative strategies. In contradiction to this hypothesis, it is found that the BJW for others is of no significant value in determining whether Dutch residents will or will not compensate the refugees, neither by granting them access to the Netherlands, nor in monetary terms. Thus the hypothesis that Dutch residents with a low BJW for others will compensate refugees on a lesser extent than those with a high BJW for others remains unsupported. Contrary to other researchers that state that observers who blame or derogate the victim do not show helping reactions (Mohiyeda & Montada, 1988, in Furnham, 2003), the participants that approved the asylum application of the refugees prove that these negative and positive coping strategies are not mutually exclusive. Despite the lack of a significant relationship between the positive and negative coping strategies in this study, some Dutch residents tend to secondary victimize refugees while a majority (82.7%) grants them access to The Netherlands. Haynes & Olson (2006) also argue that positive and negative coping strategies can be applied simultaneously. This overlap of negative and positive attitudes can be explained by the fact that there is lack of significant coherence between the BJW for others and the examined positive coping strategies translated through AAA and monetary compensation. This implicates that the BJW for others has no significant influence on AAA or monetary compensation, thus these actions might not be used as strategies to restore the belief that the world is just for others.

To understand the processes that underlie the negative and positive attitudes, differences in evoked coping strategies by Islamic and non-Islamic refugees are investigated in the light of social similarity theories involving the Belief in a Just World. The question ‘what coping strategies (of blame, derogation or compensation) do Dutch residents develop regarding (Islamic) refugees in order to maintain their belief that the world is just’ guided this experiment. Earlier research concerning the BJW and in- and outgroups, predicted that in-group victims that are perceived as socially similar to the observer, threaten the BJW in observers more than outgroup victims (see Lerner & Miller, 1978; Dalbert & Yamauchi, 1994; Correia, Vala & Aguiar, 2007; Aguiar et al., 2008). Despite that threat, recent research showed outgroup victims to be more secondary victimized than in-group victims (see Correia, Vala & Aguiar, 2007; Aguiar et
To what extent does the Belief in a Just World Theory offer insight in prevailing attitudes toward Islamic and non-Islamic refugees in the Netherlands?

It is argued before that negative perceptions correlate with prejudice towards outgroup persons as immigrants like Islamic refugees (Strabac & Listhaug, 2008; Velasco González, 2008). Hence, when Aguiar et al., (2008) found their ‘outgroup’ victim to be more secondary victimized they cautiously attributed this phenomena to prejudice towards the outgroup victims. Thus, despite the larger threat that in-group refugees pose, it was found in earlier research that outgroup victims like Islamic refugees call for more negative attitudes than in-group victims.

Through independent between-samples T-tests, with on the one side participants in the (manipulated) Islamic condition and on the other side the non-Islamic condition, it was tested whether the non-Islamic refugee was significantly more secondary victimized than the Islamic refugee. This appeared to be so. This entails both behavioral blame and characterological derogation. Concerning behavioral blame, it is noteworthy that a significant difference was found between the conditions for ‘guilt’ but not for ‘responsibility’. The differences found in evoked coping strategies by Islamic and non-Islamic refugees are surprising since it was assumed that especially Islamic refugees would call for negative coping strategies, more than non-Islamic refugees due to prejudice spread in the ‘Dutch-Muslim’ cultural war (Scroggins, 2005 in Velasco González et al., 2008). With prominent politicians as Geert Wilders and the media as leading factors, it was expected that prejudice towards the Islam would lead the Dutch to socially distance themselves from Islamic refugees (Strabac & Listhaug, 2008; Verkuyten, 2013). The findings however, suggest it is the other way around; first, the participants in the non-Islamic condition attributed significantly more guilt to the refugee for her situation than those in the Islamic condition did. Second, it is also found that non-Islamic refugees are derogated on a higher extent than Islamic refugees. More than 70% of the participants in the ‘Islamic’ condition did not attribute any guilt to the Islamic refugee at all and over 10% did not derogate this refugee, which implies that this part of the group perceives the Islamic refugee as totally innocent and undeserving of this situation. These percentages decreased in the non-Islamic condition to respectively 2,1% (for guilt) and 58,3% (for derogation). Thus non-Islamic refugees are more secondary victimized than Islamic refugees. This might be due to the social similarity non-Islamic refugees share with Dutch residents (Lerner & Miller, 1978). Because of the perceived social similarity with the Dutch the situation of the non-Islamic refugees asked for more extensive negative strategies to restore that belief. Hence the Dutch seem to have developed negative attitudes that entail characterological derogation and/or behavioral blaming, which they ‘use’ to convince themselves that the non-Islamic refugee is deserving of her situation, even more than the Islamic refugee. This way their belief that the world is just can be restored. So, the idea that the BJW in observers who regard themselves quite similar to refugees is more threatened, is affirmed (Lerner & Simmons, 1966; Aguiar et al., 2008).

Besides negative attitudes, both refugees also evoked positive reactions, in this study shaped by to forms of compensation for their situation. The first opportunity given in real life to refugees that arrive in The Netherlands, and likewise in this study, is legal access to the country by an residency permit. A major part granted the refugees access (almost 83%) by approving the asylum application which did not differ significantly between the conditions. When the Dutch granted them access, they had the opportunity to award the refugee an amount of money out of a government fund, on a weekly basis, during the first three months of residence. These numbers didn’t vary significantly
To what extent does the Belief in a Just World Theory offer insight in prevailing attitudes toward Islamic and non-Islamic refugees in the Netherlands?

between the groups. This is another contradiction to the hypotheses; Islamic refugees received significantly more monetary compensation than non-Islamic refugees.

To conclude on the differences in developed attitudes towards non-Islamic and Islamic refugees, the statement made earlier that the repelling attitudes towards Islamic refugees could be a consequences of prejudice remains unsupported by the current findings. The findings imply that possible prejudice toward refugees with an Islamic background does not outweigh the threat a non-Islamic refugee, as an in-group victim, poses to the BJW which results in these attitudes towards refugees. If this is the case, the way media and politicians present refugees, is crucial in the extent to which they call for negative or positive attitudes. Since it is found that Dutch residents developed negative attitudes towards non-Islamic refugees more than towards Islamic ones, one could conclude that Islamic refugees are better received in the Netherlands than non-Islamic refugees and their religious background should be promoted by the media and politicians. This also suggests that the ‘extremes’ as escalated town hall meetings or riots are most likely due to a damaged belief that the world is a just and orderly place instead of incoming Islamic refugees. However, these findings are not consistent with the reality. As other authors showed (see Strabac & Listhaug, 2008; Scroggins, 2005 in Velasco González et al., 2008; Das et al., 2009) the Dutch have developed negative, prejudiced attitudes towards Islamic refugees. An explanation for the finding that non-Islamic refugees call for more negative attitudes could be the growing media attention for Islamic refugees; Dutch residents are confronted with their suffering on a daily base, which might evoke more compassionate reactions than for non-Islamic ones which suffering is relatively unknown. It might also be due to the symbolic threat the Islam poses to the Netherlands, which is emphasised by politicians and news broadcasts on Islamic terrorist attacks. Besides that, the realistic threat all refugees pose to Dutch residents might be even stronger for refugees that are perceived as socially similar to the residents; they might ‘steal’ the jobs of the Dutch, which is less likely when someone that is perceived as ‘lower’ in social standings. This implies that the weight attached to this realistic threat can be related to the BJW for self, since it is a more personal threat to the (psychological) well-being of Dutch residents.
To what extent does the Belief in a Just World Theory offer insight in prevailing attitudes toward Islamic and non-Islamic refugees in the Netherlands?

VI. References


To what extent does the Belief in a Just World Theory offer insight in prevailing attitudes toward Islamic and non-Islamic refugees in the Netherlands?


To what extent does the Belief in a Just World Theory offer insight in prevailing attitudes toward Islamic and non-Islamic refugees in the Netherlands?


To what extent does the Belief in a Just World Theory offer insight in prevailing attitudes toward Islamic and non-Islamic refugees in the Netherlands?


### Miscellaneous


To what extent does the Belief in a Just World Theory offer insight in prevailing attitudes toward Islamic and non-Islamic refugees in the Netherlands?

VII. Appendix

A. Vignette non-Islamic refugee

The story of a refugee
Abidjan – Côte d’Ivoire - 2002

Esmé (32) was married to an elementary school teacher named Laurent. This is her story: “I lived in Abidjan with my husband, brother and two young children, which were under my care and my husband provided for us. We were respected members of the Christian religious community. One night, after I had just put my children in bed, I was doing laundry when I heard a stumbling sound coming from downstairs but I knew my brother was out for the evening. The situation in the country had been unstable over the last few weeks and with a war expected in the future I felt a little anxious. I hesitated for a second, fiddled a little with my hair but eventually decided to check if it was Laurent who returned from his meeting with the school board. When I came down, I was relieved to see that it was indeed my husband who opened the door but that changed quickly when I realized that a man stepped through the door behind Laurent, while aiming a machine gun at his back. He was wearing an unknown military uniform and he yelled something in a language I did not understand. A few more men in the same uniforms started searching the house, while Laurent kept telling me that ‘everything was going to be okay’. Though, two gunshots coming from the children’s bedroom made it clear to me that it would not be okay. The man pointing the machine gun at Laurent instructed him to tie me up. He threw him a rope and waved the machine gun from one hand to the other while screaming in that foreign language. Meanwhile the men upstairs had gathered everything of value and returned downstairs, their bags filled with our possessions. They left the house, but the man threatening Laurent hit me right in the face with his machine gun. I passed out, and when I woke up… It was too late, my husband was already shot dead and there was blood everywhere.”

Esmé, who lost her family in the attack fled the country immediately accompanied by her brother. She lost her left eye due to nerve damage incurred by the smack on her eyebrow. Côte D’Ivoire, their country of origin, was declared in a state of war. Esmé and her brother applied for asylum in the Netherlands a few months later after a long and harsh journey. They are waiting since 2002 for their asylum application to be approved.

* For the vignette on the Islamic refugee, see Questionnaires (see Chapter G.II., question 6).
To what extent does the Belief in a Just World Theory offer insight in prevailing attitudes toward Islamic and non-Islamic refugees in the Netherlands?

B. Questionnaire Islamic refugee

Survey

Dear reader,

I would like to invite you to answer some questions and to read a short story on refugees who are now residing in an asylum centre here in The Netherlands.

Before you start, I should emphasise your anonymity in this study. Besides the demographics, no other personal information will be exposed in my thesis on your identity.

Please answer all 10 questions as honest as possible, there are no right or wrong answers.

Thank you for your help!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Answer Options</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 What is your age, expressed in years?</td>
<td>Open ended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you belong to the male or female sex?</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 What is your religion?</td>
<td>No religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Christian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Islam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Any other religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 How well do the following statements apply to you and only you?</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that the world treats me fairly</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that I get what I deserve</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that I get what I am entitled to have</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that I earn the rewards and punishments I get</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that people treat me with the respect that I deserve</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that when I meet misfortune, I have brought it upon myself</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To what extent does the Belief in a Just World Theory offer insight in prevailing attitudes toward Islamic and non-Islamic refugees in the Netherlands?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5</th>
<th>How well do the following statements apply to only other people than you?</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I feel that the world treats others fairly</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that people get what they deserve</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that people treat each other fairly in life</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that other people earn the rewards and punishments they get</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that people treat me with the respect that I deserve</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that people get what they are entitled to have</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that a person’s efforts are noticed and rewarded</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that when people meet misfortune, they have brought it upon themselves</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Continue to next page*
The story of a refugee
Kabul, Afghanistan – 2001

Azizah (32) was married to an elementary school teacher named Abdul-Khaliq. This is her story: “I lived in Kabul with my husband, brother and two young children, which were under my care and my husband provided for us. We were respected members of the Islamic religious community.

One night, after I had just put my children in bed, I was doing laundry when I heard a stumbling sound coming from downstairs but I knew my brother was out for the evening. The situation in the country had been unstable over the last few weeks and with a war expected in the future I felt a little anxious. I hesitated for a second, fiddled a little with my jihab (headscarf) but eventually decided to check if it was Abdul who returned from his meeting with the school board. When I came down, I was relieved to see that it was indeed my husband who opened the door but that changed quickly when I realized that a man stepped through the door behind Abdul-Khaliq, while aiming a machine gun at his back. He was wearing an unknown military uniform and he yelled something in a language I did not understand. A few more men in the same uniforms started searching the house, while Abdul-Khaliq kept telling me that ‘everything was going to be okay’. Though, two gunshots coming from the children’s bedroom made it clear to me that it would not be okay. The man pointing the machine gun at Abdul-Khaliq instructed him to tie me up. He threw him a rope and waved the machine gun from one hand to the other while screaming in that foreign language. Meanwhile the men upstairs had gathered everything of value and returned downstairs, their bags filled with our possessions. They left the house, but the man threatening Abdul hit me right in the face with his machine gun. I passed out, and when I woke up… It was too late, my husband was already shot dead and there was blood everywhere”.

Azizah, who lost her family in the attack fled the country immediately accompanied by her brother. She lost her left eye due to nerve damage incurred by the smack on her eyebrow. Afghanistan, their country of origin, was declared in a state of war. Azizah and her brother applied for asylum in the Netherlands a few months later after a long and harsh journey. They are waiting since 2002 for their asylum application to be approved.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6</th>
<th>What do you think describes Azizah?</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Totally</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Polite</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsible</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mature</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warm</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nice</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deeply/Devout religious</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>7</th>
<th>To what degree do you find Azizah responsible for her situation?</th>
<th>Not at all responsible</th>
<th>Totally responsible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>8</th>
<th>What do you think describes Azizah?</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Totally</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
To what extent does the Belief in a Just World Theory offer insight in prevailing attitudes toward Islamic and non-Islamic refugees in the Netherlands?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0</th>
<th>0</th>
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<th>0</th>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stupid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selfish</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>False</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unconscious</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

To what degree do you find Azizah guilty of her situation?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th></th>
<th>Totally</th>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>responsible</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Imagine that you work for the government, would you approve Azizah’s asylum application?

| Yes   | o |
| No    | 0 |

Imagine that you work for a Social Support Office and you are the distributor of reimbursement and sustenance money for refugees in The Netherlands, how much money would you award Azizah per week for her first three months of residence?

Open ended

Thank you for your time.
The story you just read does not refer to a real person, but is written to resemble the story of a real refugee.
If you have any questions please contact: …@tilburguniversity.edu