

**Elucidation in the Asylum Seekers-debate:**  
The Formation of Attitudes towards an Emergency Shelter for Asylum Seekers  
in the Netherlands

---

Wouter van der Zouw

S1143824

15 November 2016

Enschede, The Netherlands

Dr. J. F. Gosselt

Dr. J. J. Van Hoof

University of Twente

Faculty of Behavioral, Management and Social Sciences

Master Thesis Communication Studies

## Abstract

**Purpose:** Because of the great influx of asylum seekers to the Netherlands in recent times, the reception of large numbers of asylum seekers has become an urgent matter. Within the current public debate about the sheltering of asylum seekers, emotions often seem to have the upper hand and it looks like society is getting increasingly polarized. The present study intends to investigate how attitudes towards both asylum seekers, and attitudes towards the advent of an emergency shelter for asylum seekers are established, suggesting that some previously determined key predictors play an important role in this process. Additionally, it is examined whether this attitude formation process differs for nearby residents compared to citizens who do not live in the direct proximity of a target-side for an emergency shelter for asylum seekers.

**Method:** A thorough literature review of previous research led to a proposed model in which the formation process of both attitudes towards asylum seekers and attitudes towards the advent of an emergency shelter for asylum seekers is described. In order to test this model, a survey was conducted among 296 respondent living in a medium-sized municipality in the east part of the Netherlands. The sample consists of both nearby residents of an intended emergency shelter and citizens who do not live in the direct proximity, in order to investigate possible differences between the groups. Regression analysis was conducted in order to determine significant relationships between the attitudes and their proposed predictors.

**Results:** The present study found that attitudes towards asylum seekers are influenced by false beliefs, prejudice, perceived legitimacy, perceived deprivation, perceived threat and socio-demographic variables. Attitudes towards the emergency shelter for asylum seekers are influenced by attitudes towards asylum seekers, perceived threat and perceived out-group size. Moreover, differences were found between the two investigated subgroups.

**Conclusions:** By means of presenting a comprehensive overview, the current study explains how attitudes towards both asylum seekers, and attitudes towards the advent of an emergency shelter for asylum seekers are established. It has become apparent that there is no clear social norm regarding attitudes towards asylum seekers, and that many people possess relatively moderate views regarding this particular subject.

**Keywords:** attitudes, asylum seekers, emergency shelter, perceived threat, out-group, prejudice

## Introduction

In 2015, more than 57.000 people applied for asylum in the Netherlands (Pelgrim, Versteegh, Kuiper & Brummelman, 2016). These numbers of asylum seekers have not been encountered in the Netherlands since the Balkan war in the nineties. Forecasts vary, but the government and its officials predict that this number might increase in 2016, transcending the number of 60.000. The enormous numbers of asylum seekers are not received without any resistance, leading to severe agitation in the entire country. On 16 December 2015 for example, a demonstration during a public consultation meeting regarding the advent of a shelter for asylum seekers in Geldermalsen ended in riots in which police officers were injured and protesters were arrested (RTL, 2015). This occurrence was not an isolated incident, and similar events took place throughout the entire country (NOS, 2016). The turmoil also reached the municipality of Enschede, when it was announced that the city would accommodate the advent of both a long-term and an emergency shelter for asylum seekers. Over the last period, protests were held by proponents and opponents of the shelters, leading to disturbing incidents such as the dumping of pig-heads at a target-side of a shelter and there was even a link to an attack with a terrorist objective (Tubantia, 2016).

In the current public debate about the sheltering of asylum seekers, emotions often seem to have the upper hand and it seems that society is getting increasingly polarized. Dutch research on the formation of attitudes towards asylum seekers is however still lacking, and explanations can be only found in foreign research. The present study is an attempt to explain how attitudes towards asylum seekers and an emergency shelter for asylum seekers are established among the general public of a medium-sized municipality in the Netherlands. This report focuses on explaining factors of attitude formation that have been established in former research, which is mainly conducted in the Australian context. Due to the fact that the asylum policy of both countries, and the context in which attitudes are formed, differ from one another, it is of great value to determine whether previously established relationships will hold in the current location and time. For example, Australia is generally known for its relatively harsh treatment of asylum seekers, while the Dutch government is known for its more lenient policy.

The added value of the present study can be considered as twofold. First of all, the current research can be regarded as an addition to the existing literature about attitudes towards asylum seekers. Due to the fact that former literature is often focused on the Australian asylum seekers-debate of about 10 to 15 years ago, a contextual addition is made by means of studying previously identified relationships in the Dutch context at the present time. It can be seen as particularly interesting to investigate whether previously identified determinants will hold in a context that is different regarding societal characteristics and in a time in which countries have to deal with a completely different influx of asylum seekers. Additionally, previous research on the topic is fragmented, and often focuses on only a limited number

of predictors. By means of the current paper, an attempt is made to give a comprehensive overview of the determinants of attitudes towards asylum seekers. Lastly, this study makes an addition to the literature by presenting a new attitude object. Up to the present day, no research studied the concept of attitudes towards an emergency shelter for asylum seekers, and little is known about how these attitudes are formed. The current paper is the first attempt to explain how this specific form of attitudes is established.

In addition to the theoretical value of this study, the present paper can be regarded as a practical addition as well. Dutch policymakers need to take rapid and far-reaching decisions that affect both local residents and the society as a whole, in order to deal with the enormous inflow of asylum seekers. While discussion about the topic is oftentimes heated and argumentation is mostly fueled by emotions, relatively little scientific foundation can be found in daily discourse. This study is an attempt to contribute to this national debate by means of providing insights and for once let facts predominate instead of unsubstantiated emotions.

### **Structure of this report**

The main research question for the present study is how attitudes towards both asylum seekers, and towards the advent of an emergency shelter for asylum seekers are established, suggesting that some previously determined key predictors play an important role in this process. Additionally, it is examined whether this attitudes formation process differs for nearby residents compared to citizens who do not live in the direct proximity of a target-side for a emergency shelter for asylum seekers. The hypothesis and research questions deriving from the theoretical framework are summarized in a model, that is subsequently tested. The results and discussion lead to valuable conclusions which make their contribution to the current asylum debate. The study ends with some concluding remarks and directions for future research.

## **Theoretical Framework**

The present research intends to explain the formation process of attitudes towards both asylum seekers, and towards the advent of an emergency shelter for asylum seekers in a medium-sized municipality in the Netherlands. Due to the fact that research on this specific topic in the Netherlands at the present time is lacking, an extensive amount of research, predominantly conducted in Australia, was consulted in order to present a comprehensive literature review. The overview of existing research resulted in better understanding of attitudes towards asylum seekers and its key determinants, and it forms the theoretical foundation on which the present paper is based. The theoretical framework starts with the treatment and description of the two forms of attitudes that form the dependent variables within the present study. The independent variables, which are expected to be the main predictors of the two specific forms of attitudes, are subsequently addressed.

### **Attitudes**

As a starting point for the theoretical framework, it is important to get insight in what attitudes are and to understand what is presently known about them. Within social sciences an attitude is described as a psychological inclination in the form of an expression of approval or disapproval towards a particular attitude object (Pedersen, Watt & Hansen, 2006). Examples of attitude objects are things, places, events and social groups. According to Doob (1947), attitudes can be established through a learning process. In contrast to personality, attitudes can change over time by way of experience with attitude objects. When one is regularly exposed to an attitude object, it is expected that one is likely to show more positive attitudes (Zajonc, 1968). Within the present research, two specific attitude objects form a particular subject of interest. These attitude objects are asylum seekers in general, and the emergency shelter for asylum seekers in the municipality of Enschede. Next, both forms of attitudes will be described, as well as the link between the two.

### **ATAS**

Elaborating on the research of Pedersen and colleagues (2006), attitudes towards asylum seekers (ATAS) are described as an expression of (dis)approval towards asylum seekers. At present time, literature about attitudes towards asylum seekers is comprehensive, but not conclusive. A great number of studies was conducted on the topic of attitudes towards asylum seekers in the Australian context (e.g. Pedersen, Walker & Wise, 2005; Pedersen, Griffiths & Watt, 2008). These attitudes can be either positive, negative, and everything in between. In order to provide greater clarity about this specific form of attitudes, it is important to understand the meaning of the word asylum seeker. According to the Cambridge dictionary (2015), an asylum seeker is a person who leaves his home country, for different reasons like war or on political grounds, and applies for asylum in another country, hoping that the government will allow them to live there. The asylum procedure in a country is there to determine whether the claim of the asylum seeker is legitimate and whether the asylum status will be granted. Whether this status is eventually granted or not, will determine whether the asylum seeker will be labeled as refugee or as undesirable alien.

## **ATES**

As previously mentioned, the present research does not merely focus on the establishment of attitudes towards asylum seekers, but attempts to contribute to the literature by investigating specifically how attitudes towards an emergency shelter for asylum seekers are formed as well. In this sense, the main attitude object to be investigated is the advent of an asylum seekers shelter in the municipality of Enschede, which will be denoted as attitudes towards the emergency shelter (ATES). An emergency shelter for asylum seekers can be described best as a reception center in which asylum seekers serve the first part of their asylum procedure. An emergency shelter acts as a stopgap when the influx of asylum seekers is large. Eventually, the residents of an emergency shelter will be relocated to more appropriate shelter locations for the remaining part of their asylum procedure. The specific emergency shelter within the present study, has a capacity of 500 inhabitants for an intended period of a year.

## **Relationship between ATAS and ATES**

Previous research mainly focuses on the formation of attitudes towards asylum seekers (e.g., Pedersen, Atwell & Heveli, 2005; Pedersen & Hartley, 2012). This study, however, focuses on investigating whether both ATAS and its key determinants influence the formation of attitudes towards an emergency shelter for asylum seekers. The first point of interest to investigate, is whether there can be a relationship determined between attitudes towards asylum seekers and attitudes towards the emergency shelter for asylum seekers. It is expected that attitudes towards asylum seeker positively influence attitudes towards an emergency shelter for asylum seekers. When one holds negative attitudes towards asylum seekers, it is expected that the person holds negative attitudes towards an emergency shelter for asylum seekers as well, because the advent of such a shelter implies that there will be a group of people present to whom one holds negative attitudes. Due to the fact that ATES is a new concept within the existing literature, this specific line of reasoning needs further exploration. The first part of this literature review, therefore concludes with the following research question.

*RQ1: Do attitudes towards asylum seekers positively influence attitudes towards the emergency shelter for asylum seekers?*

## **Predictors of ATAS and ATES**

Many determinants of attitudes towards asylum seekers have been validated in the last decade of research. The work of predominantly Australian scholars repeatedly surfaced during the desk research, which led to the adaptation of the corresponding main predictors these researchers determined during their previous inquiries. The comprehensive desk research of these previous studies resulted in better understanding about attitudes towards asylum seekers and their key determinants. The seven most frequently studied determinants were taken from the literature and were supplemented with basic socio-demographic variables. In the selection procedure of the variables, the size of the present study was taken into account, in a sense that the measurement instrument can only to a limited extent be time-consuming. Underlying dimensions of larger themes therefore revolted and only the most dominant predictors remained. In addition to the Australian research, Dutch media coverage regarding the topic was consulted. Frequently mentioned arguments within the Dutch media were added to the theoretical framework as well. Successively, the expected key predictors of ATAS and ATES will be treated in the next section of this theoretical framework.

## **False Beliefs**

According to McKay, Thomas and Kneebone (2012), who studied community perceptions and attitudes toward asylum seekers, people generally possess little correct knowledge about issues regarding asylum seekers. The limited knowledge one does have about these issues, is highly dependent on political rhetoric and news-reports. These sources of information are oftentimes spreading factually incorrect information about the topic (Pedersen, Watt & Hansen, 2006). In past research, the acceptance of information that is factually incorrect, and considering this information as facts, is conceptualized as false beliefs (Pedersen et al., 2006). As stated by Pedersen, Atwell and Heveli (2005), these false beliefs serve as daily currency for everyday discourse. False beliefs are oftentimes used to bolster prejudicial argumentation in the asylum seekers-debate (Croston & Pedersen, 2013), and research indicates that negative attitudes towards asylum seekers, significantly correlate with false beliefs about this particular out-group (Pedersen, Clarke Dudgeon & Griffiths, 2005). This particular relationship between false beliefs and attitudes towards asylum seekers will be re-examined in the present study. It is hypothesized that people high in false beliefs hold more negative attitudes towards asylum seekers. Additionally, the question is being posed whether the same relationship applies to false beliefs and attitudes towards the emergency shelter. In order to investigate these relationships, the following hypothesis and research question will be tested.

*H1: False beliefs negatively influence attitudes towards asylum seekers.*

*RQ2: Do false beliefs negatively influence attitudes towards the emergency shelter for asylum seekers?*

## **Prejudice**

A long time ago, Allport (1958) conceptualized the concept of prejudice as a form of aversion towards a particular out-group, based on generalizations that are false and rigid. Stephan and Stephan (1993) added to the conceptualization that this aversion consists out of reactions based on emotion, and cognitive assessment. According to Pettigrew and Meertens (1995), prejudice is associated with denial of positive emotions, emphasizing and magnifying of differences, and the protection of values and beliefs. Blumer (1958) conceptualized prejudice based on group position, and distinguished four distinct feelings that play a part within the prejudiced dominant group. Compared to the out-group, members of the dominant group possess a sense of superiority, and they think the out-group is essentially different and entrant. Also, they feel that they are entitled to have certain privileges, and they fear that the out-group tries to deprive the dominant group from their privileges. Schweitzer, Perkoulidis, Krome and Ludlow (2005), state that when people hold prejudicial attitudes towards out-group-members, they expect that interaction with these members will be negative. Consequently, people who are highly prejudiced will hold negative attitudes towards the particular out-group as well. Although many scholars (e.g. Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006; Turoy-Smith, Kane & Pedersen, 2013) focus their research on the predictors of prejudice, they do confirm a negative relationship between prejudice and attitudes towards out-groups. It is therefore hypothesized that prejudice towards asylum seekers negatively influences attitudes towards asylum seekers. The emergency shelter is expected to encounter the same negative reactions, due to the fact that it is inhabited by a group of people to whom one might be prejudiced. To examine this relationship, the question is raised whether prejudice towards asylum seekers negatively influences attitudes towards the emergency shelter as well. In order to test these relationships, the following hypothesis and research question will be tested.

*H2: Prejudice towards asylum seekers negatively influences attitudes towards asylum seekers.*

*RQ3: Does Prejudice towards asylum seekers negatively influence attitudes towards the emergency shelter for asylum seekers?*

## **Perceived Legitimacy**

Research has been conducted on the perception of asylum seekers having a legitimate claim for asylum, and the influence it has on attitudes towards this out-group (e.g. Louis, Duck, Terry, Schuller & Lalonde, 2006). Although almost every asylum seeker sooner or later received the refugee status (Hartley & Pedersen, 2007), many Australians perceived asylum seekers as illegitimate (Klocker & Dunn, 2003). Asylum seekers are, for example seen as exploiting resources which are not intended for them (Louis et al., 2006). Hartley and Pedersen (2007), studied the effect of perceived legitimacy of asylum seekers' claims for refugee status on the legitimacy of harsh government policy regarding asylum seekers by the Australian government. In Australia, all asylum seekers are directly transferred to solitary detention centers in order to wait for trial on their claims. The scholars found a strong negative relationship between the perceived legitimacy of asylum seekers' claim for refugee status and the perceived legitimacy of the government and its policy. Additionally, Pedersen et al. (2005) found a strong relationship between false beliefs about asylum seekers, and negative attitudes towards this group. One of these false beliefs presented in their study was that asylum seekers were illegitimate, although these asylum seekers did not break any law. Thus, the perception of illegitimacy of asylum seekers predicted negative attitudes towards them. The current study intends to determine this relationship directly and therefore it is hypothesized that the perceived legitimacy of asylum seekers has a positive influence on attitudes towards asylum seekers. Following this line of reasoning, the question is raised whether perceived legitimacy of asylum seekers will have a positive influence on attitudes towards the advent of an emergency shelter for asylum seekers as well. To test these relationships, the following hypothesis and research question will be tested.

*H3: Perceived legitimacy of asylum seekers positively influences attitudes towards asylum seekers.*

*RQ4: Does perceived legitimacy of asylum seekers positively influences attitudes towards the emergency shelter for asylum seekers?*

## **Perceived Consensus**

Within the field of psychology and social sciences, researchers studied the False Consensus Effect (Ross, Greene & House, 1977). This effect is a form of cognitive bias, through which one generally overestimates the extent to which other people share personal beliefs and opinions about any given topic or event. Through FCE, people tend to estimate that they have great community support, which leads to perceived consensus that does not really exist to the extent they estimate. This form of consensus is referred to as false consensus. According to Hartley and Pedersen (2007), there is a relationship between perceived consensus and the preference for harsh government policies directed at asylum seekers. People who misperceive community consensus, are more likely to think that the views they hold can be considered as the right ones (Todorov & Mandisodza, 2004). Additionally, people who think that the majority of the community shares their views, are likely to be more vocal and generally possess lower willingness to change their views (Miller, 1993). Louis et al. (2007) state that the support for tough treatment of asylum seekers is related to the perception that

social norms agreeably embrace the rejection of asylum seekers. Additionally, Hartley and Pedersen (2007) state that the accuracy of predicting community consensus about asylum seekers policy, affects attitudes towards these policies. The researchers found that when perceived consensus about attitudes towards asylum seekers increased, these attitudes became more negative. Based on the research of Hartley and Pedersen (2007), it is therefore hypothesized that perceived consensus negatively influences attitudes towards asylum seekers. In this same line of reasoning, the current study intends to investigate whether this relationship can be extended to attitudes towards the emergency shelter for asylum seekers. In order to do so the following hypothesis and research question will be tested.

H4: *Perceived consensus negatively influences attitudes towards asylum seekers.*

RQ5: *Does perceived consensus negatively influences attitudes towards the emergency shelter for asylum seekers?*

### **Perceived Deprivation**

Pedersen and Walker (1997) examined the effect of perceived deprivation on opposition against out-groups such as Aboriginal Australians. Research suggests that structurally advantaged majority groups perceive that minority groups unfairly exploit government support like funding and hand-outs. Although facts and figures may suggest that the opposite is in reality the case, majority group-members may perceive that their in-group is relatively deprived compared to minority group-members. In communities in which both advantaged and disadvantage groups perceive themselves as subordinated, shared understanding can be hard to find (Tiedens & Leach, 2004). Studies in Western societies like the United States (Leach, Iyer & Pedersen, 2007) and Europe (Pettigrew & Meertens, 1995) show that groups who perceive themselves as deprived, develop anti-out-group-sentiments against groups like immigrants and asylum seekers. Anti-out-group sentiments against asylum seekers can be considered as a negatively operationalized form of attitudes towards asylum seekers, with the disadvantage that it does not include the possibility to score positively. Following the work of Leach and colleagues (2007), it is therefore hypothesized that perceived deprivation negatively influences attitudes towards asylum seekers. Subsequently, the question is raised whether the same effect applies to the formation of attitudes towards the emergency shelter for asylum seekers. Within the present study, the following hypothesis and research question will be tested.

H5: *Perceived deprivation negatively influences attitudes towards asylum seekers.*

RQ6: *Does perceived deprivation negatively influences attitudes towards the emergency shelter for asylum seekers?*

### **National Identification**

Theory about national identification descends from Social Identity Theory (Pedersen, Atwell & Heveli, 2005). A social identity is the self-perspective a person has, based on awareness of being part of a particular social group, or various groups (Turner, Brown & Tajfel, 1979). Social Identity Theory is used to examine intergroup behavior, based on collective understanding and perceived status belonging to the membership of particular groups (e.g., Tajfel & Turner, 1979; 1986). Extending this theory, national identity is referred to as a specific form of identity, based on connectedness and belongingness to a particular country and its citizens (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). In this sense, members of a nation are seen as one coherent group of people, sharing the same language, beliefs, culture and traditions. According to Pedersen et al. (2005), national identification always implies some sort of otherness in the sense of awareness of differences. There has to be a 'they' in order to establish a 'we', because otherwise everyone would belong to the latter group. One example of otherness, or an out-group, are asylum seekers. Additionally there has to be involvement with the in-group, to have consequences for intergroup relationship with the out-group (Pedersen, Atwell & Heveli, 2005). Mummendy, Klink and Brown (2001), studied the effect of national identification on the rejection of out-group members. Their results indicate that national identification is associated with negative out-group assessment and positive in-group assessment. However, this relationship is not fixed, and depends on whether the particular form of nationalism favors out-group-exclusion (Pedersen & Hartley, 2012). Elaborating on these findings, people who identify strongly with the Dutch identity, are expected to show more negative attitudes towards asylum seekers. The current study attempts to investigate whether this same relationship applies to attitudes towards the emergency shelter for asylum seekers. Therefore, the following hypothesis and research question will be tested.

H6: *National identification negatively influences attitudes towards asylum seekers.*

RQ7: *Does national identification negatively influences attitudes towards the emergency shelter for asylum seekers?*

### **Perceived Threat**

Perceived threat has been an ongoing subject of research within intergroup relationship studies (e.g. Stephan et al., 1998; 1999; Schweitzer, Perkoulidis, Krome & Ludlow, 2005; Murray & Marx, 2012). Researchers like Stephan and Stephan (1996) distinguished several types of threat, that were found to be significant predictors of negative attitudes towards particular out-groups. Symbolic threat for example, is based on differences between groups regarding values

and attitudes (Stephan & Stephan, 1996; McKay, Thomas and Kneebone, 2012). Realistic threat is best described as danger regarding resources and general well-being (Bizman & Yinon, 2001). Other forms of threat, according to Stephan and others, are negative stereotypes and general intergroup anxiety. Furthermore, Pedersen, Watt and Griffiths (2007), distinguished the threat for terrorism regarding intergroup relationships with asylum seekers. Although various researchers conceptualize threat in different manners depending on the particular topic of interest, perceived threat seems to be one of the key predictors for attitudes toward asylum seekers. Different forms of perceived threat are oftentimes mentioned within the news-media by local residents living nearby target-sides (Rosman & Van Mersbergen, 2015). Taken together, this leads to the hypothesis that attitudes toward asylum seekers are negatively influenced by perceived threat from asylum seekers. The present study attempts to investigate whether this same relationship is applicable to attitudes towards the emergency shelter for asylum seekers, resulting in the following hypothesis and research question.

H7: *Perceived threat from asylum seekers negatively influences attitudes towards asylum seekers.*

RQ8: *Does perceived threat from asylum seekers negatively influences attitudes towards the emergency shelter for asylum seekers?*

### **Perceived Proximity**

One of the most frequently cited arguments in Dutch media coverage to reject the advent of sheltering of asylum seekers is that the target location is inappropriate (e.g., NOS, 2016). It are oftentimes local residents that show the most resistance to the advent of shelters for asylum seekers (Tubantia, 2015). It seems that citizens become highly rejective to shelters for asylum seekers when target-sides are contemplated in the immediate vicinity of these citizens. This common mechanism can be explained on the basis of the term 'not in my backyard' (Cambridge dictionary, 2015). Not in my backyard (NIMBY) refers to attitudes attributed to people, who protest against the advent of something they see as harmful in their direct proximity, and not show the same objections when the same siting takes place elsewhere. Simply put, people tend to do not want something unpleasant to be built in their direct proximity. Given all the negative attention in the news-media, there is a high probability that citizens evaluate an emergency shelter as something unpleasant rather than pleasant. Taken the negative attention into account, it is expected that people who perceive to live in relatively direct proximity show more negative attitudes towards the emergency shelter. Due to the fact that this relationship has not been determined in previous research, the present study attempts to do so. Therefore, the following research question will be tested.

RQ9: *Does perceived proximity to the emergency shelter for asylum seekers negatively influences attitudes towards the emergency shelter for asylum seekers?*

### **Perceived Out-group Size**

According to Kanne, Klein Kranenburg and Rosema (2015), about 30 percent of the Dutch citizens see the advent of an asylum seekers shelter as acceptable under certain conditions. One of the main conditions to find it acceptable is the size of the shelter and the corresponding number of residents, in the sense that the capacity should rather be small than large. Eenvandaag (2016) confirms these findings, and states that there is relatively high public support for small scale sheltering for asylum seekers. The exact reason for the support of small scale sheltering stays understudied at this moment. One of the possible explanations can be found in the aforementioned NIMBY literature. When there has to be built something unpleasant in the direct vicinity anyway, scale restriction seems to be the only feasible option. Whether this is the explanation remains unclear, but it seems to be the case that a greater size of the group asylum seekers is accompanied by more negative attitudes towards a shelter for asylum seekers. Elaborating on the Dutch news coverage about asylum seekers, it is thought that perceived out-group size negatively influences attitudes towards the emergency shelter for asylum seekers. This study attempts to determine this relationship, by means of the following research question.

RQ10: *Does perceived out-group size negatively influences attitudes towards the emergency shelter for asylum seekers?*

### **Socio-demographics**

Within the present study, age, gender and educational level are taken into account for further analysis. This study intends to determine whether the aforementioned demographic variables play a part in the development of ATAS and ATES. Although many more demographic variables can be taken into account, this study is limited to the most prevalent variables that have emerged in previous research (e.g., Griffiths & Pedersen, 2009; Pedersen & Hartley, 2012).

#### ***Age***

Researchers like Pedersen and Walker (1997) determined that age is of influence in the process of forming attitudes towards asylum seekers. O'Rourke and Sinott (2005) for example, determined that the older people are, the more

negative their sentiments towards immigrants are. Schweitzer and colleagues (2005) confirmed these findings for unfavorable attitudes towards refugees and asylum seekers. Therefore, it is hypothesized that age negatively influences attitudes towards asylum seekers. The present study, attempts to investigate whether the same effect can be determined for attitudes towards the emergency shelter for asylum seekers. Next to a direct effect of age, Murray and Marx (2013) for example, found a moderating effect of age on the relationship between perceived threat and negative attitudes towards out-groups. The research of Murray and Marx, raises the question whether there are more moderating effects to be found within the formation of attitudes towards both asylum seekers and the emergency shelter for asylum seekers. Therefore, the present study attempts to determine whether age has moderating effects in the attitude formation process of all of the hypothesized predictors of both attitudes towards asylum seekers and attitudes towards the emergency shelter for asylum seekers.

H8: *Age negatively influences attitudes towards asylum seekers.*

RQ11: *Does age negatively influences attitudes towards the emergency shelter for asylum seekers?*

RQ12: *Does age has a moderating effect on the relationships between both ATAS and ATEs, and their predictors?*

### **Educational level**

According to Pedersen, Beven, Walker and Griffiths (2004), educational level positively influences attitudes towards asylum seekers. Hjerm (2009), confirms the finding of educational level being a significant predictor of attitudes towards asylum seekers. According to scholars like Scheepers, Gijsberts and Coenders (2002), and Smith (1981), one of the possible explanations is the liberalizing effect education generally has on people. Irrespective of the reason, previous research determined the positive effect of educational level on attitudes towards asylum seekers. It is therefore hypothesized that educational level positively influences attitudes towards asylum seekers. This research attempts to determine whether this effect can be extended to attitudes towards the emergency shelter for asylum seekers. Next to a direct effect, Griffiths and Pedersen (2009) found a moderating effect of educational level on the relationship between both prejudice and false beliefs on attitudes towards out-groups. Like in the case of age, the question is raised whether educational level has moderating effects in the attitude formation process of all of the hypothesized predictors of both attitudes towards asylum seekers and attitudes towards the emergency shelter for asylum seekers. Therefore the following hypothesis and research questions will be tested in the present study.

H9: *Educational level positively influences attitudes towards asylum seekers.*

RQ13: *Does educational level negatively influences attitudes towards the emergency shelter for asylum seekers?*

RQ14: *Does educational level has a moderating effect on the relationships between both ATAS and ATEs, and their predictors?*

### **Gender**

According to several researchers gender has an influence on attitudes towards asylum seekers, in the sense that males report more negative attitudes than females (e.g., Pedersen, Atwell & Heveli 2005; Schweitzer et al., 2005; O'Rourke & Sinott, 2005; Pedersen & Griffiths, 2010; Pedersen & Hartley, 2012). Most researchers found significant, but weaker effects than that they did for the aforementioned socio-demographic variables. Following their previous findings, it is therefore hypothesized that gender effects attitudes towards asylum seekers, in the sense that males report more negative attitudes compared to females. In the same line of reasoning, the present study attempts to determine whether this effect can be extended to attitudes towards the emergency shelter for asylum seekers. Next to a direct effect, associations between gender and threat scores were found (Griffiths & Pedersen, 2009). Also moderating effects of gender on the relationship between prejudice and attitudes towards asylum seekers were found (Pedersen & Hartley, 2012). It are these associations that raise the question, whether gender has significant moderating effects on the predictors of both attitudes towards asylum seekers and attitudes towards the emergency shelter for asylum seekers. Within the present study, this possibility will be tested, based on the following hypothesis and research questions.

H10: *Gender influences attitudes towards asylum seekers, in the sense that males report more negative attitudes towards asylum seekers compared to females.*

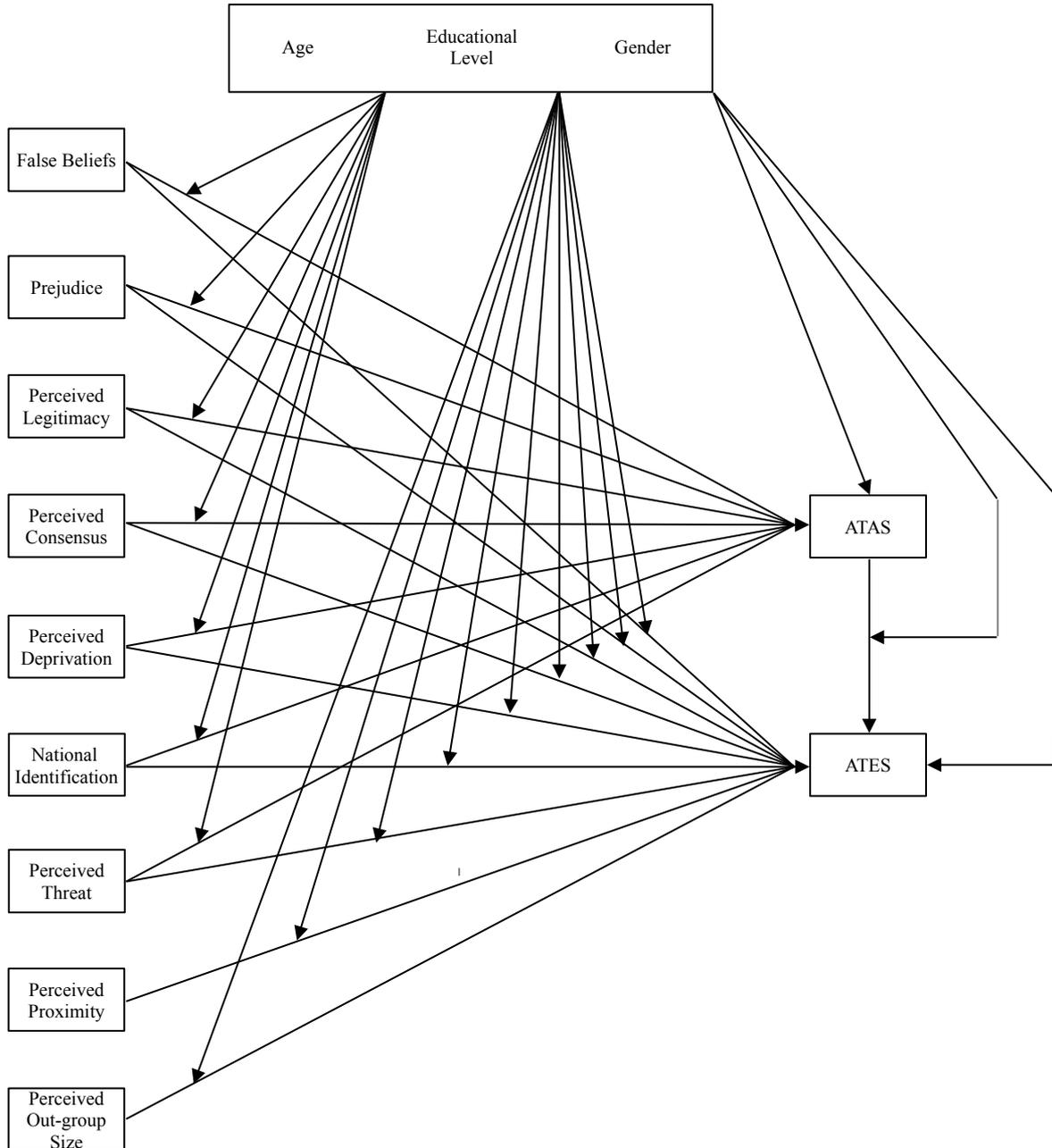
RQ15: *Does Gender influences attitudes towards the emergency shelter for asylum seekers, in the sense that males report more negative attitudes towards the emergency shelter for asylum seekers compared to females?*

RQ16: *Does gender has a moderating effect on the relationships between both ATAS and ATEs, and their predictors?*

## Conceptual model

This extensive literature review of previous research on the topic of the establishment of attitudes towards asylum seekers and the emergency shelter for asylum seekers resulted in 10 hypotheses and 16 research questions. These hypotheses and research questions are merged together into a conceptual model which will be tested in the present paper. The methodology used for this examination is described in the next section of this report.

**Figure 1: Conceptual model of the ATAS and ATEs formation process**



## Method

In order to test the conceptual model resulting from the theoretical framework, the advent of an emergency shelter for asylum seekers in the municipality of Enschede was chosen as context. Enschede is a medium-sized city in the east part of the Netherlands, located near the German border. The city council of Enschede decided to contribute to the inquiry to help in the sheltering of asylum seekers. In a few months time, the abandoned building of the local newspaper was transformed into an emergency shelter for asylum seekers with a capacity of 500 residents. Since the start of the refurbishing, until the time the first residents started to inhabit the shelter in July 2016, the whole event encountered loads of media attention. At the time of finalizing this paper, the emergency shelter is already empty, due to a decreasing influx of asylum seekers to the Netherlands.

In order to test the conceptual model for differences between citizens living nearby a (target)site of an emergency shelter and citizens living distant to the shelter, a between-group design was used. First of all, the nearby residents of the emergency shelter were approached to participate in the study. The homes of the first group were all located in a radius of approximately 500 meters from the shelter. This group of respondents were designated as 'nearby residents'. For the control-group, a location was chosen that is located at a suitable distance from both the emergency shelter and the target site for an intended new longterm asylum seekers center in the municipality of Enschede. The control-group needed to be comparable to the group of nearby residents regarding demographic composition. In consultation with two involved spokespersons of the municipality, the North part of Enschede was chosen to achieve this purpose.

### Procedure

Approximately 300 addresses were approached door to door by the researcher. During the conversations that started, a small overview of the study was given and the potential participants were given the opportunity to participate in the research. After a brief explanation, printed versions of the questionnaires were given to the participants and follow-up appointments were made in order to collect the paperwork. All respondents were approached by the same researcher.

In addition to the time-consuming process of door to door sampling, also letters were spread through mailboxes. A total number of 900 invitations were spread through the letterboxes. In these invitations, a small overview of the study and purpose of the research was given. Additionally, a hyper-link was attached to give potential participants the opportunity to fill in the questionnaire on-line. The on-line survey started with a small overview of the study as well. For the on-line part, surveying- and analysis-tool Qualtrics was used. Next to the residential location of the respondents, the only selection criterium to participate in the study was that participants had to be adults. Nobody was rewarded to participate in the study in any way. After completing the survey, respondents were given the opportunity to give their e-mail addresses in order to be kept informed of the results and to ask any questions about the research. With few exceptions, each person completed the questionnaire in approximately 10 minutes. All questionnaires were filled in without the presence of a researcher.

### Measures

#### *Attitudes towards asylum seekers (ATAS)*

To measure attitudes towards asylum seekers, respondents filled in a 3-item (e.g., *Do you think that the advent of asylum seekers is generally good or bad for the municipality of Enschede?*) semantic differential scale based on the European Social Survey (ESS, 2014). Subsequently, respondents were presented a 6-item 5-point Likert-type scale, based on the Attitudes Toward Asylum Seekers Scale from Pedersen, Atwell and Heveli (2005), and the Attitudes Toward Muslim Australians Scale from Griffiths and Pedersen (2009). Examples of items within this construct are *I sympathize with the situation of asylum seekers* and *Dissatisfied asylum seekers need to be sent back to where they came from*. Response-options for the second part ranged from *completely disagree* to *completely agree*. What resulted was a 9-item scale in which high cohesion was found ( $\alpha=.889$ ). Factor analysis was conducted and all the items loaded on one single factor. The relatively high alpha, in combination with the high number of items and the fact that all items loaded on one single factor, resulted in the decision to merge the two constructs into one general construct measuring attitudes towards asylum seekers.

#### *Attitudes towards the emergency shelter (ATES)*

In order to measure attitudes towards the emergency shelter, an adapted version of the attitudes towards reducing the number of asylum seekers scale from Louis et al. (2007) was used. The original measure consists out of a 3-item semantic differential scale, asking respondents what they think about reducing the number of asylum seekers. Respondents were given the opportunity to choose between the options *bad/good*, *harmful/beneficial* and *foolish/wise*. For the current study, the manner of questioning was adapted to the context of the present research, asking respondents how they perceive the advent of an asylum seekers shelter in the former building of the regional newspaper. The response-options were directly adopted from the aforementioned study, except for the fact that the 7-point scale was

reduced to a 5-point scale. The inter-item correlation for the current construct is high ( $\alpha=.918$ ), and therefore the construct is deemed to be trustworthy.

### ***False beliefs***

The measure of false beliefs is based on research by Pedersen and colleagues (Pedersen, Attwell & Heveli, 2005; Pedersen, Watt & Hansen, 2006; Croston & Pedersen, 2013). Because the papers focus on the Australian context, not all misconceptions used in these studies are applicable to the Dutch context. Therefore, for this study six distinct misconceptions (e.g., *Asylum seekers take our jobs*, *Asylum seekers are illegal*) were used in order to measure the extent to which participants believe in false truths about the topic of asylum seekers. All statements of the six-item construct were presented to the participants, who thereafter had to choose whether the statements were true or false. Next to these options, there was also an option to indicate that the concerned participant did not know the answer. The internal consistency ( $\alpha=.656$ ) for this self-assembled construct did not meet the expected standard of a minimum of at least .7, even when items were deleted. A low alpha oftentimes reflect low reliability, but in this case it is rather expected that the construct shows a high extent of conceptual heterogeneity. According to Lance, Butts and Michels (2006), when a low alpha reflects high conceptual heterogeneity, it is permissible to include such constructs. However, due to the fact that only a low alpha was found, results need to be considered with high degree of diligence.

### ***Prejudice***

Prejudice regarding asylum seekers was measured on a scale partly based on the so called old-fashioned racism scale as described in Simeoni (2005). One question was adopted from the subtle/blatant prejudice scale by Pettigrew and Meertens (1995), as described in the same paper. The scale was subsequently supplemented with three self-assembled items, resulting in a 5-item scale with statements like: *Asylum seekers are less intelligent than native Dutch people* and *Asylum seekers refuse to adapt to Dutch culture*. All five items were measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from *completely disagree* to *completely agree*. The five items together showed an internal consistency of .769, making it sufficiently reliable. However, when the first self-assembled item (*Asylum seekers possess different norms and values than native Dutch people*) was deleted, the Chronbach's alpha of the construct showed a more satisfying value of .800. What remained was a 4-item scale measuring prejudice regarding asylum seekers.

### ***Perceived legitimacy***

Perceived legitimacy was measured by means of a self-assembled scale, inspired by the work of Hartley and Pedersen (2007), who studied the perceived legitimacy of asylum seekers' claim for refugee status. Based on their research, four items were composed (e.g., *The average asylum seeker has no legitimate reason to apply for asylum in the Netherlands*, *The average asylum seeker is coming to our country to flee from an unsafe situation*). The 4-item construct was measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale, with response-options ranging from *completely disagree* to *completely agree*. The internal consistency of the four items was measured, and the scale was found to be sufficiently reliable ( $\alpha=.794$ ).

### ***Perceived threat***

As a basis to measure perceived threat, the instrumental threat scale (Louis et al., 2007) was used. The original scale consists of eight items (e.g., *jobs*, *crime*, *national security*). In the study of Louis and colleagues, respondents were originally asked to rate the effects of reducing the number of asylum seekers on these eight dimensions of threat. Three of the original eight items were deleted because they shared insufficient similarities with the present study. These items were replaced by items that correspond better with the present study, and were subsequently complemented with some personal threat items (e.g., *personal safety*, *property value*). What remained was an 11-item scale that measured the threat posed by the advent of asylum seekers. All items were measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale, with response-options ranging from *no threat at all* to *extreme threat*. The internal consistency of the 11 items show a Chronbach's alpha of .939, making it highly internally consistent. Factor analysis revealed that all items loaded on a single component.

### ***Perceived deprivation***

The measure for deprivation perceived by respondents was based on research of Leach, Iyer and Pedersen (2007). In their study, the scholars investigated the influence of perception of inter-group relative deprivation by asking the question: *Do you think non-asylum seekers are advantaged or disadvantaged compared to asylum seekers?*. In order to get a more comprehensive overview, within the present study the original scale was expanded. In addition to the relative deprivation between asylum seekers and the respondents themselves, respondents were asked to indicate the perceived deprivation between asylum seekers and people they know personally. Finally, the respondent were asked how they perceive deprivation between asylum seekers and non-asylum seekers in general. What remained, was a 3-item Likert-type scale on which respondents expressed their perceived deprivation, with response-options ranging from *extremely disadvantaged* to *extremely advantaged*. These three items show very high internal consistency ( $\alpha=.907$ ) and are therefore considered to be an adequate measure for perceived deprivation.

### ***National identification***

Within the present study, national identification is measured by means of the social identification scale of Van Zomeren, Spears, Fischer and Leach (2004). This 3-item Likert-type scale can be used to measure identification with different social groups, depending on which group is subject of research. Within the present study, the questions were: *I view myself as Dutch*, *I feel connected to other Dutch*, and *I am glad to be Dutch*. The three statements were measured by means of a 5-point scale, with response-options ranging from *completely disagree* to *completely agree*. After measuring the internal consistency, the Chronbach's alpha showed a satisfying value of .82. This value corresponded exactly with the study of van Zomeren and colleagues, and the scale was therefore considered to be adapted correctly and usable for further data analysis.

### ***Perceived consensus***

To measure the consensus that respondents perceive regarding their attitudes towards asylum seekers, a scale based on the work of Pedersen, Griffiths and Watt (2008) was used. The study of Pedersen and colleagues builds on the work of Hartley and Pedersen (2007), who asked participants in their study to indicate their attitudes towards asylum seekers first, and later on asked the same respondents to estimate how many people of the entire community would agree or disagree with the views they just shared. Pedersen et al. (2008) added a more specific consensus question to this general form of consensus. Within their approach, also the perceived consensus among the people respondents personally know was measured. This latter approach was adapted for the present study. For the present study, the two items of general consensus and specific consensus were expressed in percentages. General consensus reflected the consensus people experienced regarding all Dutch citizens, while specific consensus reflected the consensus experienced with people the respondents personally know. These two forms of consensus were taken together, and the weighted average of the two was taken to constitute the overall consensus respondents experienced. The two items showed a Chronbach's alpha of .645, which most likely indicate a high extent of conceptual heterogeneity. Due to the fact that this can not be determined with absolute certainty, high degree of diligence in interpreting the results is important.

### ***Perceived proximity***

A self-assembled single-item 5-point Likert-type scale was used in order to measure the perceived proximity between the respondents' home and the emergency shelter. Respondents were presented with the information of the location of the emergency shelter. Thereafter, respondents were asked to indicate how they experienced the distance between their home and the location is perceived on a scale ranging from *very distant*, to *very near*.

### ***Perceived out-group size***

Another self-assembled single-item 5-point Likert-type scale was used to measure the perceived out-group size, in which the total number of asylum seekers stands for the out-group. Respondents were presented with the information that, according to the plans, a maximum of 500 residents would inhabit the emergency shelter. Subsequently, the respondents were asked to indicate how they perceive this number of asylum seekers on a scale ranging from *a little*, to *a lot*.

### ***Sociodemographic information***

Within the present research, some sociodemographic data were requested. This study focuses on the gender, age and level of education of the respondents. On behalf of the municipality of Enschede, respondents were asked to indicate to which ethnic group they thought they belong as well. In addition, respondents were asked to indicate how they perceived the communication from the municipality. These questions were merely presented on behalf of the municipality to give some extra insights for internal discussion. These results are not taken into consideration within the present paper.

### **Overview of the constructs**

An overview of the number of items within the constructs, the sample size per construct, and the corresponding Chronbach's Alphas of the constructs for the total dataset and the two subsamples was given in Table 1. Except for false beliefs and perceived consensus, each construct shows a Chronbach's Alpha of over .7, and is therefore considered sufficiently reliable. Only the construct of false beliefs and perceived consensus show lower internal consistency. Due to the fact that these values can be seen as a sign of conceptual heterogeneity as well as low reliability, plus the fact that they do not drop to extreme low values, both constructs are taken into consideration for further analysis. Both variables are treated with high degrees of caution, when it comes to firm conclusions. In addition to the reliability analysis, factor-analysis was conducted, and no extra underlying dimensions were found.

**Table 1*****Number of Items, Sample Size and Chronbach's Alpha per Construct***

	No. Items	Total dataset		Nearby residents		Control-group	
		N	$\alpha$	N	$\alpha$	N	$\alpha$
ATAS	9	285	.889	152	.904	133	.839
ATES	3	269	.918	142	.918	127	.898
False Beliefs	6	288	.652	156	.700	133	.533
Prejudice	4	293	.800	157	.812	136	.773
Perceived Legitimacy	4	295	.794	159	.782	136	.801
Perceived Threat	11	287	.939	151	.940	136	.933
Perceived Deprivation	3	292	.907	156	.899	136	.914
National Identification	3	291	.821	159	.807	132	.841
Perceived Consensus	2	290	.645	155	.684	135	.601
Perceived Proximity	1	292	-	159	-	133	-
Perceived Out-group Size	1	293	-	160	-	133	-

**Participants**

The total sample consists out of 296 participants living in the municipality of Enschede. Of these 296 participants, 160 people are considered to be nearby residents, while the remaining 136 participants form the control-group. Out of all the respondents, 154 (52,2%) are male and 140 (47,5%) are female. One person did not want to share his or her gender. The mean age of the participants is 42.9 years old, with a standard deviation of 15.3 years. The vast majority (92,8%) of the sample indicated to be Dutch. The remaining group indicated to be either Surinamese, Aramaic, German, Namibian, Indonesian, Syrian, Turkish, (South-)African, European, 'New Dutch' or 'Human'. With a total of 207 (71,1%) participants that completed at least a Bachelor of (applied)science, the sample is considered as highly educated.

The sampling of nearby residents resulted in a subsample of 160 respondents, of whom 82 (51%) participants are male and 78 (49%) participants are female. The mean age of the nearby residents is 42.6 years old with a standard deviation of 14.9 years. Of all nearby residents, 144 (90,6%) persons indicated to be Dutch and the subsample is considered highly educated as well with 66,7% who indicated that they completed at least a Bachelor of applied science.

The sampling of the control-group resulted in 136 participants, of whom 72 (53,3%) indicated to be male and 62 (45,9%) said to be female. Only one person would rather not share his or her gender. The mean age of the control-group is 43.2 years old with a standard deviation of 15.7 years. The greater part (94,1%) of the control-group indicated to be Dutch, and 103 (76,3%) participants completed a Bachelor of (applied)science or even higher forms of education. Taken together all the descriptive demographic information, the two subsamples show many comparisons. However, it must be noted that the control-group is slightly higher educated compared to the nearby residents.

**Analysis**

For the present study, 205 surveys were filled in on paper and 120 surveys were taken on-line. Assuming that approximately 1200 invitations were sent, this sums up to a response-rate of about 27%. Prior to the data-analysis, the dataset was prepared for analysis. As a start, all negatively worded items were recoded, in order to achieve uniformity of the data. Likewise, incomplete surveys with overmuch missing data were deleted from the dataset. Additionally, the dataset was checked for the presence of outliers that screw the data and possess the ability to lead to misleading results. What remained were 296 out of 335 surveys, that were usable for the data-analysis. Only 8,9% of the surveys was found to be unusable.

After the dataset was prepared, the internal consistency of the constructs was analyzed by means of calculating the Chronbach's alpha. After this calculation it was also taken into account whether some of the items needed to be deleted because of deviating values. In order to check for construct-validity, reliability analysis was conducted. The internal consistency of the items within the scales was computed and denominated in Chronbach's alpha. The constructs of *perceived proximity* and *perceived out-group size* were not eligible for reliability analysis, due to the fact that both items consist of only a single item. For an overview of the constructs and the corresponding Chronbach's alphas, Table 1 can be consulted.

Next, factor-analysis was conducted on highly overlapping items, in order to check for underlying variables. Within the first stage of factor-analysis, the R-matrix was consulted, to check for singularity in the data by means of correlation coefficients greater than 0.9. Thereafter, the correlations matrix was consulted to check for multicollinearity in the data. Subsequently, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was determined and it was checked whether the Barlett's test of sphericity was significant. After all assumptions for factor-analysis were met, the component matrix was consulted so see whether the items loaded on any underlying construct. Because only one component was extracted, the solution could not be rotated. No deviations were found, and it was concluded that all items measure their intended construct.

After the internal consistency was set and the data was checked for underlying variables, new items were computed to generate a weighted average of every construct. Subsequently all mean values of the constructs were calculated, and these mean values of the subsamples were compared with one another using independent samples t-tests, in order to check whether the differences were significant. As part of the t-tests, the Levene's test for equality of variances was computed. As a null-hypothesis it was stated that there was no difference between the means comparing the nearby residents with the control-group. The alternative hypotheses were one-tailed formulated, in a sense that the mean value for the construct is higher for one of the subgroups.

In order to determine the relation between the independent variables and the dependent variables, hierarchical multiple linear regression analysis was conducted. Hierarchical regression analysis offers the possibility of getting insight in how much extra added predictors contribute to the regression model. Within the first step of the hierarchical regression, only variables that the respondents have no or only little control over were entered. In the next step the remaining, more topic specific, attitudinal variables were entered. To control for socio-demographic variables, in the first step of the regression, only the variables of age, educational level and gender were entered. In the second stage, the remaining determinants were entered. Within the present study, two series of multiple regression were conducted. During the first multiple regression, all independent variables with a hypothesized effect on ATAS were checked for their influence. By means of the second multiple regression, the influence of all independent variables with a hypothesized effect on ATEs were checked for their effect. Before regression analysis was conducted, the data were checked for the assumptions of multiple regression.

First of all, analysis of standard residuals was conducted, to see whether the data included any outliers. Next, the assumption of collinearity was checked by means of the detection of any tolerance values of less than 0.1 and VIF values of over 10. Also the assumption of independent errors, expressed in the Durbin-Watson statistic was checked for values of around 2. The assumptions of homogeneity of variance and linearity were checked by consulting the histogram of standardized residuals and the normal P-P plot. Lastly, the variables were checked for any variances of zero. When all assumptions were met, multiple regression analysis was conducted.

After multiple regression was conducted, the moderating effects of age, educational level and gender were checked by means of a moderator analysis. In the first step, all independent variables and the moderator variables were centralized. In the next step, new predictors, consisting out of the centralized variables were computed. Finally, regression-analysis of the centralized predictors was conducted to examine possible moderating effects of the socio-demographic variables.

## Results

As the start of the results section, an overview of the mean values per construct and the corresponding standard deviations is presented in Table 2. Independent sample *t*-tests were conducted in order to check for significant differences between the nearby residents and the control-group.

**Table 2**

*Means and Standard Deviations per construct and t-tests for Equality of Means*

	Total dataset		Nearby residents		Control-group		<i>t</i> -test
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	
ATAS	3.38	.72	3.23	.78	3.57	.59	-4.110***
ATES	3.25	1.08	2.92	1.10	3.63	.93	-5.677***
False Beliefs	.16	.22	.19	.24	.13	.18	2.210*
Prejudice	2.34	.71	2.44	.75	2.22	.64	2.762**
Perceived Legitimacy	3.52	.74	3.41	.77	3.64	.67	-2.707**
Perceived Threat	1.95	.84	2.13	.89	1.75	.72	3.913***
Perceived Deprivation	2.54	.90	2.68	.94	2.38	.83	2.919**
National Identification	4.27	.66	4.26	.67	4.28	.65	ns
Perceived Consensus	59.57	14.78	60.13	15.31	58.93	14.18	ns
Perceived Proximity	3.54	1.10	4.28	.75	2.65	.75	18.522***
Perceived Out-group Size	3.74	.82	3.97	.80	3.46	.75	5.675***

Note. \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

Consulting the upper section of Table 2, some interesting observations can be made. The nearby residents score lower on both ATAS and ATES compared to the control-group. It can be noted that the nearby residents display ATES scores that are moderately below the center, while the control-group scores above the middle. Regarding attitudes towards asylum seekers in general, both groups score above the middle. Despite the fact that the attitudinal scores of both groups can be considered as temperate, the differences are significant. Consulting the bottom part of Table 2, it can be observed that only national identification and perceived consensus scores do not significantly differ from one another comparing the two groups. The mean values of all remaining expected predictors of ATAS and ATES differ significantly from each other. Remarkable is that nearby residents score higher on all expected negative predictors and score lower on all expected positive predictors. Furthermore, it appears that respondents generally score relatively low on predictors like perceived threat, while they score relatively high on predictors like national identification.

### Testing the conceptual model

In order to test the conceptual model resulting from the theoretical framework, regression analysis was conducted utilizing the data of the complete dataset. In succession, hierarchical multiple regression for ATAS and its predictors was conducted, as well as for ATES and its predictors. Subsequently, moderation analysis was conducted in order to determine possible moderating effects of the demographic variables in the attitude formation process. Prior to the regression analyses, the data were checked for the relevant assumptions for multiple regression. Analysis of standard residuals was conducted to see whether the data included any outliers. The standard residuals were found to be within the correct limits, so the data did not include any outliers. Next, the assumption of collinearity was checked and no tolerance values less than 0.1 and no VIF values of over 10 were found. Multicollinearity was therefore found to be not the case. Also, the assumption of independent errors, expressed in the Durbin-Watson statistic was checked for a value of around 2. The data showed independent errors. Looking at the histogram of standardized residuals and the normal P-P plot, the data showed roughly normally distributed errors. Also the scatter-plot of standardized residuals was consulted, and no association was found. Therefore, the assumptions of homogeneity of variance and linearity were met. Lastly, the variables were checked for any variances of zero, and none were found.

### *Hierarchical Multiple Regression for ATAS*

After the data were approved for regression analysis, a two staged hierarchical multiple regression was conducted, with attitudes towards asylum seekers as the dependent variable. In the first stage, age, educational level and gender were entered, in order to control for demographic information. In the second stage, false beliefs, prejudice, perceived

legitimacy, perceived consensus, perceived deprivation, national identification and perceived threat were entered. An overview of the regression analysis is reported in Table 3.

**Table 3**

***Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis of ATAS, showing the Significant Predictors***

Predictor/Step	Step 1		Step 2	
	$\beta$	t	$\beta$	t
Educational level	.289	4.625***		
Age			.088	2.606*
False Beliefs			-.099	-2.252*
Prejudice			-.279	-6.192***
Perceived Legitimacy			.176	4.103***
Perceived Deprivation			-.091	-2.302*
Perceived Threat			-.392	-7.640***
R	.282		.873	
R <sup>2</sup>	.080		.762	
$\Delta R^2$	.069		.752	

Note. \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

Data of the hierarchical multiple regression analysis shows that in the first stage, only educational level contributes significantly to the regression model ( $F(3, 256) = 7.39, p < .0005$ ). Educational level explains 8% of the variation in attitudes towards asylum seekers. When all independent variables were included in step 2, the total explained variance increased to 76.2%. This total explained variance is considered to be significant ( $F(10, 249) = 79.65, p < .0005$ ). After all independent variables were included, the regression summary shows that educational level is no longer a significant predictor for ATAS. By contrast, age, false beliefs, prejudice, perceived legitimacy, perceived deprivation and perceived threat contribute significantly to the regression model. Other variables that did not significantly contribute to the regression model are perceived consensus, national identification and gender.

***Hierarchical Multiple Regression for ATEES***

Next, a two staged hierarchical regression analysis was conducted, with ATEES as the dependent variable. In the first stage, age, educational level and gender were entered in order to control for demographic information. In the second stage, false beliefs, prejudice, perceived legitimacy, perceived consensus, perceived deprivation, national identification, perceived threat, perceived proximity and perceived out-group size were entered. An overview of the regression analysis is reported in Table 4.

**Table 4**

***Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis of ATEES, showing the Significant Predictors***

Predictor/Step	Step 1		Step 2	
	$\beta$	t	$\beta$	t
Educational level	.203	3.116**		
ATAS			.618	7.828***
Perceived Threat			-.298	-4.198***
Perceived Out-group-Size			-.098	-1.988***
R	.200		.821	
R <sup>2</sup>	.040		.673	
$\Delta R^2$	.028		.655	

Note. \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

In the first stage of the hierarchical multiple regression analysis, only educational level contributes significantly to the regression model ( $F(3, 240) = 3.33, p = .02$ ). Educational level explained 4% of the variation in attitudes towards the emergency shelter for asylum seekers. After all independent variables were included in step 2, the explained variance increased to 67.3%. This new regression model is considered to be significant ( $F(13, 230) = 36.45, p < .0005$ ). In the second step of the regression analysis, only attitudes towards asylum seekers, perceived threat and perceived out-group size contribute significantly to the regression model. The remaining variables were found to be no significant predictors of ATES.

### ***Moderation Analysis***

Subsequent to the multiple regression analyses, moderation analyses were conducted, in order to investigate possible moderating effect of age, gender and educational level on the relationships between the significant predictors and the dependent variables. In order to do so, individual multiple regression analyses were run with the dependent variable and the centralized values of the independent and moderator variables, together with an interaction variable of the latter two. An overview of the moderation analyses is reported in Table 5.

**Table 5**  
***Summary of Regression Analysis for moderating effects of age, educational level and gender, showing the significant effects***

Variables	$\beta$	t
Age * Perceived Out-group Size <sup>a</sup>	-.110	-1.977*
Educational Level * Perceived Legitimacy <sup>b</sup>	-.099	-2.175*
Educational Level * Perceived Deprivation <sup>b</sup>	.144	2.736**
Educational Level * Perceived Out-group size <sup>a</sup>	.121	2.182*

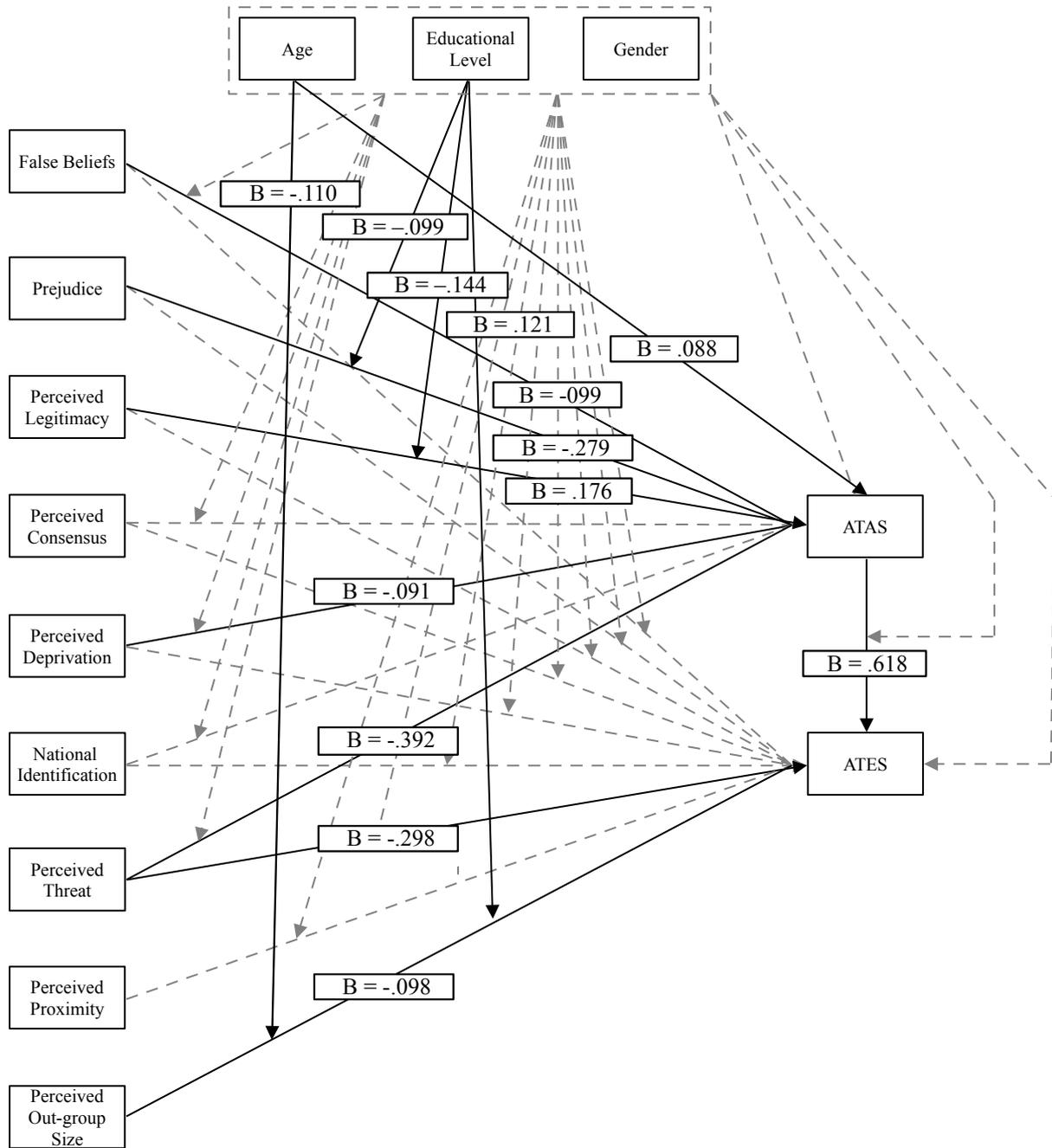
Note. \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ ; <sup>a</sup> Dependent variable: ATES, <sup>b</sup> Dependent variable: ATAS

For gender, no significant moderating effects were found. Age showed only a moderating effect for the relationship between perceived out-group size and ATES. For educational level three significant moderating effects were found. Educational level shows to significantly moderate the effect of both perceived legitimacy and perceived deprivation on ATAS. Subsequently, educational level moderates the relationship between perceived out-group size and ATES.

### **Conceptual model of the ATAS and ATES formation process**

After all analyses were conducted, a conceptual model was composed based on the hypothesized model deriving from the theoretical framework and the results of the data-analyses. The numbers displayed in the conceptual model are statistically significant path coefficients, and non-significant relationships are represented by dashed lines. For an overview of the conceptual model, Figure 2 can be consulted.

**Figure 2: Conceptual model of the ATAS and ATEs formation process for the total dataset**



### Testing the conceptual model for the nearby residents

Next, the same analyses were run using only the data of the nearby residents. Prior to the analysis, the data were checked for the relevant assumptions for multiple regression. No deviating particularities were found in the dataset, and the data were approved for regression analysis. The variables were entered in the two staged hierarchical regression analysis in the same manner as was done for the total dataset. A summary of the regression analysis, with attitudes towards asylum seekers as the dependent variable, is reported in Table 6.

**Table 6**

*Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis of ATAS, showing the Significant Predictors*

Predictor/Step	Step 1		Step 2	
	$\beta$	t	$\beta$	t
Educational level	.285	3.246**		
Prejudice			-.348	-5.106***
Perceived Legitimacy			.196	3.314**
Perceived Threat			-.306	-4.041***
R	.273		.887	
R <sup>2</sup>	.074		.787	
$\Delta R^2$	.054		.771	

Note. \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

In the first stage of the analysis, only educational level contributes significantly to the regression model ( $F(3, 134) = 3.59, p = .016$ ). Educational level explains 7.4% of the variance of attitudes towards asylum seekers. In the second step, all independent variables were entered into the regression model. Prejudice, perceived legitimacy and perceived threat account for 78.7% of the variance, and this variance is considered to be significant ( $F(10, 127) = 47.05, p < .0005$ ).

Next, a two staged hierarchical regression was conducted, with attitudes towards the emergency shelter for asylum seekers as the dependent variable. The variables were entered in the same manner as was done for the total dataset. A summary of the regression analysis is reported in Table 7.

**Table 7**

*Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis of ATEs, showing the Significant Predictors*

Predictor/Step	Step 1		Step 2	
	$\beta$	t	$\beta$	t
Educational level	.193	2.109*		
ATAS			.557	4.534***
Perceived Threat			-.280	-2.596*
Perceived Out-group-Size			-.177	-2.484*
R	.227		.826	
R <sup>2</sup>	.052		.683	
$\Delta R^2$	.029		.647	

Note. \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

In the first stage of the analysis, educational level contributes to the regression model. This regression model is however found to be not significant ( $F(3, 125) = 2.27, p = .083$ ). Within the second stage of the regression, ATAS, perceived threat and perceived out-group size account for 68.3% of the variance in ATEs, this contribution is determined to be significant ( $F(13, 115) = 19.04, p < .0005$ ).

Lastly, moderation analyses were conducted, for the moderating effect of age, gender and educational level on the relationships between the significant predictors and the dependent variables. All three sociodemographic variables show a significant moderating effect on the relationship between perceived out-group size and attitudes towards the emergency shelter for asylum seekers. An overview of the moderation analyses is reported in table 8.

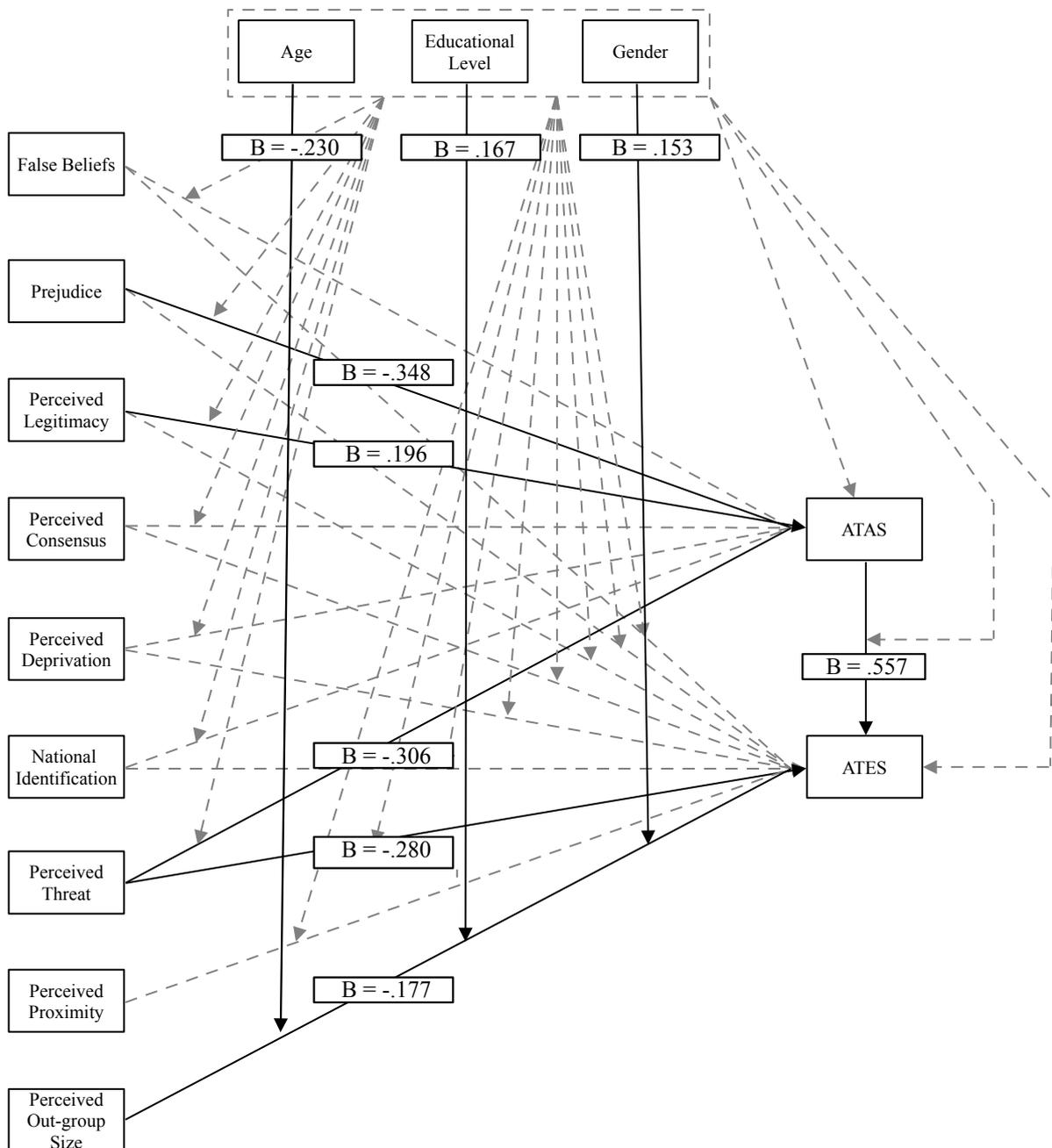
**Table 8**  
**Summary of Regression Analysis for moderating effects of age, educational level and gender, showing the significant effects**

Variables	$\beta$	t
Age * Perceived Out-group Size <sup>a</sup>	-.230	-3.055**
Educational Level * Perceived Out-group Size <sup>a</sup>	.167	2.322*
Gender * Perceived Out-group Size <sup>a</sup>	.153	2.196*

Note. \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ ; <sup>a</sup> Dependent variable: ATES

After all analyses were conducted, a conceptual model for the nearby residents was composed based on the hypothesized model deriving from the theoretical framework and the results of the data-analyses. The numbers displayed in the conceptual model are statistically significant path coefficients, and non-significant relationships are represented by dashed lines. For an overview of the conceptual model, Figure 3 can be consulted.

**Figure 3: Conceptual model of the ATAS and ATES formation process for the nearby residents**



### Testing the conceptual model for the control-group

Lastly, the same analyses as for the total dataset and nearby residents were conducted for the control-group. After the assumptions for regression were met, a two staged hierarchical regression analysis using the data of the control group was conducted, with ATAS as the dependent variable. The variables were entered in the same manner as in the previous analyses. A summary of the hierarchical multiple regression analysis is displayed in Table 9.

**Table 9**

***Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis of ATAS, showing the Significant Predictors***

Predictor/Step	Step 1		Step 2	
	$\beta$	t	$\beta$	t
Educational level	.235	2.562*		
Age	.188	2.038*	.157	2.689**
Prejudice			-.237	-3.741***
Perceived Legitimacy			.145	2.140*
Perceived Deprivation			-.147	-2.316*
Perceived Threat			-.435	-5.917***
R	.272		.847	
R <sup>2</sup>	.074		.717	
$\Delta R^2$	.051		.692	

Note. \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

In the first stage of the regression analysis, educational level contributes significantly to the regression model ( $F(3, 118) = 3.15, p = .028$ ), and accounts for 7.4% of the variance in ATAS. In the second stage of the analysis, age, prejudice, perceived legitimacy, perceived deprivation and perceived threat contribute significantly to the regression model ( $F(10, 111) = 28.15, p < .0005$ ). These predictors together account for 71.7% of the variance in ATAS. Next, a two staged hierarchical regression was conducted, with ATEs as the dependent variable. A summary of the regression analysis is reported in Table 10.

**Table 10**

***Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis of ATEs, showing the Significant Predictors***

Predictor/Step	Step 1		Step 2	
	$\beta$	t	$\beta$	t
ATAS			.641	5.518***
Perceived Threat			-.308	-2.973**
R	.155		.785	
R <sup>2</sup>	.024		.616	
$\Delta R^2$	-.002		.567	

Note. \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

Within the first stage of the hierarchical multiple regression analysis, no significant predictors of ATEs were found. Within the second stage of the analysis, ATAS and perceived threat were found to be significant predictors of ATEs ( $F(13, 101) = 12.46, p < .0005$ ). ATAS and perceived threat accounted for 61.6% of the variance in ATEs.

Finally, moderation analyses were conducted, for the possible moderating effects of age, gender and educational level on the relationships between the dependent variables and their significant predictors. No moderating effects of age and gender were found. Only educational level showed significant moderating effects on the relationships between both perceived legitimacy and perceived deprivation on attitudes towards asylum seekers. An overview of the regression analyses is reported in Table 11.

**Table 11**

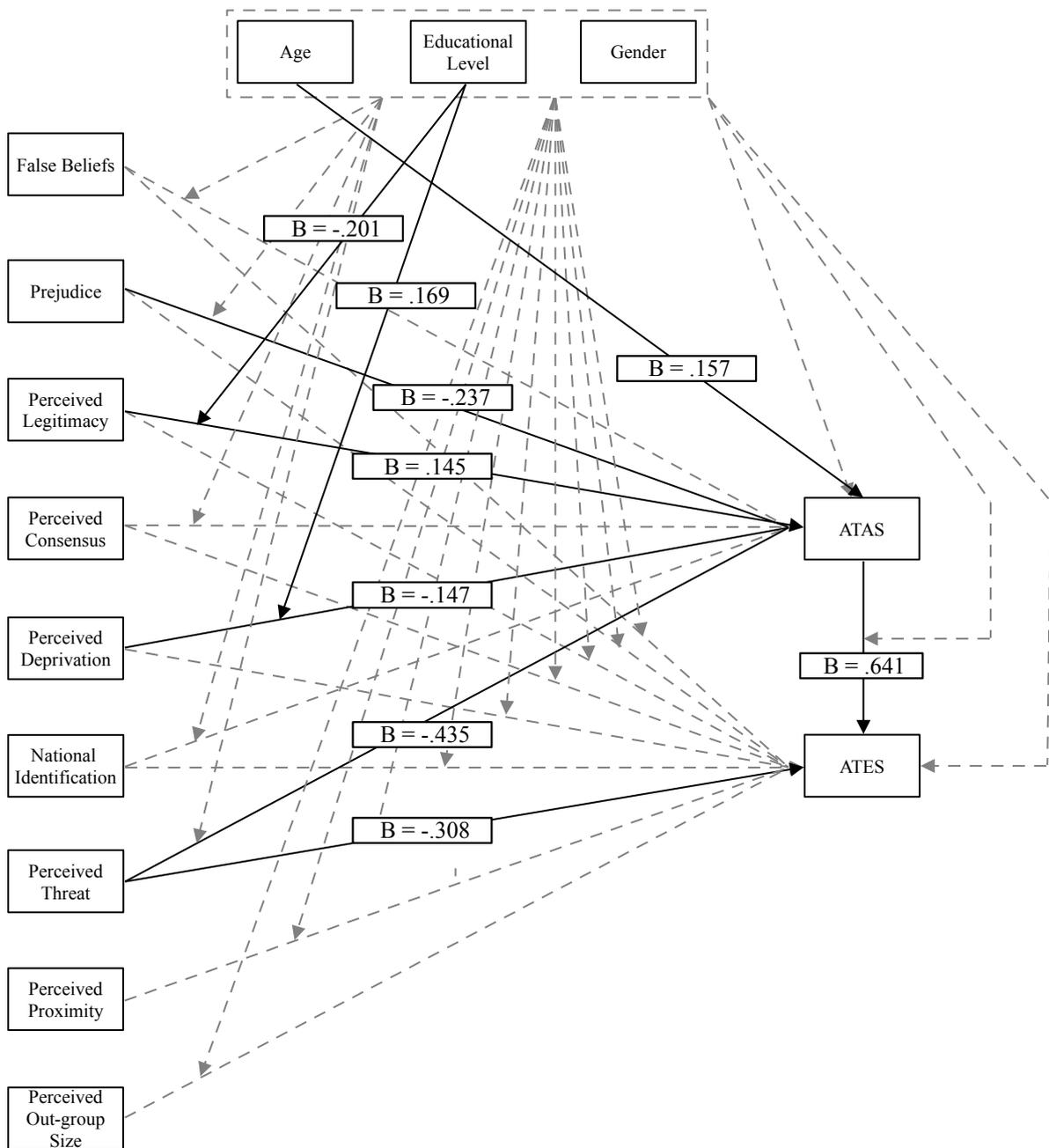
**Summary of Regression Analysis for moderating effects of age, educational level and gender, showing the significant effects**

Variables	$\beta$	t
Educational Level * Perceived Legitimacy <sup>a</sup>	-.201	-2.876**
Educational Level * Perceived Deprivation <sup>a</sup>	.169	2.099*

Note. \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ ; <sup>a</sup> Dependent variable: ATAS

After all analyses were conducted, a conceptual model of the ATAS and ATES formation process for the control-group was composed based on the hypothesized model deriving from the theoretical framework and the results of the data-analyses. The numbers displayed in the conceptual model are statistically significant path coefficients, and non-significant relationships are represented by dashed lines. For an overview of the conceptual model, Figure 3 can be consulted.

**Figure 3: Conceptual model of the ATAS and ATES formation process for the control-group**



## Overview of the hypotheses

Given all the analyses and models, an overview of the hypotheses which derived from the theoretical framework were consulted. It was checked whether the hypotheses could be rejected or confirmed. For this overview of these hypotheses and whether they are confirmed, Table 12 can be consulted.

**Table 12**

### *Hypotheses*

		<u>Total dataset</u>	<u>Nearby residents</u>	<u>Control-group</u>
H1	False beliefs negatively influence attitudes towards asylum seekers.	Confirmed	Rejected	Rejected
H2	Prejudice towards asylum seekers negatively influences attitudes towards asylum seekers.	Confirmed	Confirmed	Confirmed
H3	Perceived legitimacy of asylum seekers positively influences attitudes towards asylum seekers.	Confirmed	Confirmed	Confirmed
H4	Perceived consensus negatively influences attitudes towards asylum seekers.	Rejected	Rejected	Rejected
H5	Perceived deprivation negatively influences attitudes towards asylum seekers.	Confirmed	Rejected	Confirmed
H6	National identification negatively influences attitudes towards asylum seekers.	Rejected	Rejected	Rejected
H7	Perceived threat from asylum seekers negatively influences attitudes towards asylum seekers.	Confirmed	Confirmed	Confirmed
H8	Age negatively influences attitudes towards asylum seekers.	Rejected	Rejected	Rejected
H9	Educational level positively influences attitudes towards asylum seekers.	Rejected	Rejected	Rejected
H10	Gender influences attitudes towards asylum seekers, in the sense that males report more negative attitudes towards asylum seekers compared to females.	Rejected	Rejected	Rejete

## Overview of the research questions

As with the hypotheses, an overview of the research questions and the answers to them was given. This overview is displayed in Table 13. The answers in Table 13 apply to both the total dataset, as well as to the two subsamples. Due to the fact that perceived out-group size only influences ATES for the nearby residents, the relationship within research question 10 is only partly determined. Moderation effects of the demographic variables were found, but only for a limited number of relationships. These moderating effects additionally differ for the various groups studied. The relationships within research questions 12, 14 and 16 are therefore only partly determined.

**Table 13**

### *Research Questions*

RQ1	Do attitudes towards asylum seekers positively influence attitudes towards the emergency shelter for asylum seekers?	Yes
RQ2	Do false beliefs negatively influence attitudes towards the emergency shelter for asylum seekers?	No
RQ3	Does Prejudice towards asylum seekers negatively influence attitudes towards the emergency shelter forNo asylum seekers?	No
RQ4	Does perceived legitimacy of asylum seekers positively influences attitudes towards the emergencyNo shelter for asylum seekers?	No
RQ5	Does perceived consensus negatively influences attitudes towards the emergency shelter for asylumNo seekers?	No
RQ6	Does perceived deprivation negatively influences attitudes towards the emergency shelter for asylumNo seekers?	No
RQ7	Does National identification negatively influences attitudes towards the emergency shelter for asylumNo seekers?	No
RQ8	Does perceived threat from asylum seekers negatively influences attitudes towards the emergency shelterYes for asylum seekers?	Yes
RQ9	Does perceived proximity to the emergency shelter for asylum seekers negatively influences attitudesNo towards the emergency shelter for asylum seekers?	No
RQ10	Does perceived out-group size negatively influences attitudes towards the emergency shelter for asylumPartly seekers?	Partly
RQ11	Does age negatively influences attitudes towards the emergency shelter for asylum seekers?	No
RQ12	Does age has a moderating effect on the relationships between both ATAS and ATES, and theirPartly predictors?	Partly
RQ13	Does educational level negatively influences attitudes towards the emergency shelter for asylum seekers?No	No
RQ14	Does educational level has a moderating effect on the relationships between the predictors of bothPartly attitudes towards asylum seekers and attitudes towards the emergency shelter for asylum seekers?	Partly
RQ15	Does Gender influence attitudes towards asylum seekers, in the sense that males report more negativeNo attitudes towards the emergency shelter for asylum seekers compared to females?	No
RQ16	Does gender has a moderating effect on the relationships between both ATAS and ATES, and their Partly predictors?	Partly

## Discussion

The main goal for the present study was to investigate how attitudes towards both asylum seekers and the advent of an emergency shelter for asylum seekers are established. Subsequently, it was asked whether this attitude formation process differs for nearby residents compared to citizens not living in the direct proximity of an intended shelter. Using regression analyses, a set of main predictors were investigated for their effects on both attitudes towards asylum seekers and attitudes towards an emergency shelter for asylum seekers in the municipality of Enschede. In line with previous research, some important key predictors within the attitude formation process were determined. However, the set of predictors for both forms of attitudes differ from one another, the same applies to the two investigated groups.

Attitudes towards the emergency shelter for asylum seekers, are considerably different established than attitudes towards asylum seekers. Only ATAS, perceived threat and perceived out-group size seem to have direct effects on attitudes towards the emergency shelter. Although this study is the first to investigate these particular forms of attitudes, it can be stated that many of the predictors of attitudes towards asylum seekers, not follow the same pattern with regard to their influence on attitudes towards the emergency shelter. Merely ATAS, perceived threat and perceived out-group size were determined to be significant predictors of ATES. Although perceived out-group size is a significant predictor of ATES, its predictive capability is relatively small. Mainly through the strong effects of ATAS and perceived threat, 67.3% of the variance in attitudes towards the emergency shelter for asylum seekers can be explained by the presented model.

In order to investigate the formation of attitudes towards asylum seekers, a set of previous identified predictors was used. The reinvestigation of the negative effect of prejudice (Schweitzer et al., 2005) and perceived threat (Stephan et al., 1998; Pedersen et al., 2007; McKay et al., 2012) on attitudes towards asylum seekers, led to results in line with the existing literature, as well as the positive effects of perceived legitimacy (Pedersen et al., 2005; Hartley & Pedersen, 2007). The negative effects of false beliefs (Pedersen et al., 2005) and perceived deprivation (Pettigrew & Meertens, 1995; Leach et al., 2007), were confirmed for the complete dataset as well. Together these predictors accounted for 76.2% of the variance in attitudes towards asylum seekers. It must be taken into account that variables like age, false beliefs and perceived deprivation have only limited predictive power, while perceived legitimacy shows greater predictive strength. Prejudice and perceived threat are particularly strong negative predictors of ATAS. While their predictive value is particularly strong, mean scores of respondents on both predictors are generally low.

While many previous determined predictors of ATAS are verified by the present study, this is not the case for every predictor. One of the relationships that could not be confirmed by the current research is the proposed negative effect of national identification on ATAS. For national identification, no significant effects on both ATAS and ATES were found. The data of the present investigation show that people who score low on ATAS, score significantly higher on national identification compared to people who score high on ATAS. Notable observation regarding this construct is the fact that all participants score remarkably high on national identification. Several scholars studied the effects of national identification, and showed that there is a relationship between national identification and negative out-group assessment (Mummendy et al., 2001), under the condition that the form of national identification favors out-group-exclusion (Pettigrew & Meertens, 1995). Results of the present study seem to indicate that the Dutch national identity does not necessarily favors out-group exclusion. Therefore, it can be assumed that it is rather the fact whether a national identity favors out-group-exclusion that predicts ATAS, instead of the national identification by itself.

Another relationship that can not be confirmed within the present paper, is the effect of perceived consensus on ATAS. According to Hartley and Pedersen (2007), there should be a negative relationship between perceived consensus and attitudes towards asylum seekers. Within the present study however, there were no significant effects found for perceived consensus within the attitudes formation process. According to the data of the present paper, people who score negatively on ATAS, score significantly higher on perceived consensus compared to people who score positively on ATAS. Despite the significant difference, both groups generally think that more than half of the community share their views. According to Louis et al. (2007), attitudes towards asylum seekers are related to the prevailing social norm about the topic. In a society in which, regardless of their views, everybody thinks that the majority agrees with them, their seems to be no clear social norm. Due to the fact that a clear social norm that either favors positive or negative attitudes towards asylum seekers is apparently lacking, perceived consensus loses its predictive value. The fact that there was no significant difference found in ATAS scores between people who generally think that the majority disagrees with them, compared to people who generally think that the majority agrees with them, contributes to this line of reasoning. Therefore, it can be assumed that it is rather the predictive value of the prevailing social norm, than the perception of consensus that predicts ATAS.

As in the case of the more topic specific attitudinal predictors, direct main effects were predicted for demographic variables as well. Research suggests for example that educational level significantly positively influences ATAS (e.g. Pedersen et al., 2004). However, within the current study, no direct main effects of educational level on ATAS were

found. Within the present investigation, a highly educated samples was used, which moreover displays relatively positive ATAS scores. Additionally, the highest educated part of the sample scores significantly higher on ATAS, compared to the lowest educated part of the sample. Hjerm (2009), who did find a significant relationship between educational level and ATAS, argues that this relationship can be explained by the fact that highly educated people feel less threatened by asylum seekers, compared to lower educated people. Within the present study, lower educated people report significantly higher threat scores, compared to higher educated people. So despite the fact that no significant direct effects of educational level were found in the present study, there are still indications for a certain relationship between the two variables. A proposed direction for future research would therefore be to take a closer look at this possible relationship.

As in the case of educational level, a significant direct main effect of gender on ATAS was expected (e.g., Pedersen et al., 2005), but no effect was found. Scholars like Pedersen and Griffiths (2010), found a weak, but significant effect of gender on ATAS, in the sense that males report more negative attitudes, compared to females. A possible explanation that no effect was found in the current study, may lie in the context in which the present investigation was conducted. According to the World Economic Forum (2015), gender equality in the Netherlands is considered as generally high. The research on which the proposed effect of gender is based, was conducted in Australia, a country that scores considerably lower on gender equality. In a situation in which there are no differences between males and females whatsoever, there is no reason to believe that there are differences in ATAS scores between genders. It is likely that an already small effect of gender can be eliminated by high degrees of gender equality. The question whether this is the case, or that there are other explanations for the lack of a direct effect of gender to be found, provides a fertile ground for future research.

For age, a significant effect on attitudes towards asylum seekers was found. In contrast to the findings of O'Rourke and Sinott (2005) and Schweitzer and colleagues (2005), who found a negative effect of age on attitudes towards asylum seekers, the current study found a moderate positive effect of age. The assumption that older people are more likely to show negative attitudes towards asylum seekers should therefore be reconsidered. Comparing the oldest part of the sample to the youngest part of the sample, no significant differences regarding the predictors were found. It may be the case that explanations can be found in factors that lay outside of the scope of the present study. For example, it may be that the older part of the sample consults different news sources on this particular subject, or that they have a particular political preference which favors the sheltering of asylum seekers. It could furthermore be that the elderly have experienced large influxes of asylum seekers in the past. Zajonc (1968), for example states that when one is regularly exposed to an attitude object, it is expected that one is likely to show more positive attitudes towards this particular attitude object. This so called mere-exposure effect, could be a possible explanation for the positive effect of age on attitudes towards asylum seekers. Additionally, Doob (1947) states that attitudes can be established through a learning process. Throughout the years, older people may have had more time to be exposed to asylum seekers and also had more time to learn about the topic. A conclusive explanation of the relationship between age and ATAS can not be found in the data of the current study, and is moreover beyond the scope of the present paper. However, it does provide an excellent opportunity for future research.

In addition to the direct effects, and to the absence of some of these effects, some interesting moderating effects of socio-demographics were found. Next to the direct effect of age for example, a moderating effect on the already mild relationship between perceived out-group size and ATES was found. The data of the present study, therefore suggests that the older people are, the less negative impact perceived out-group size has on ATES. Additionally, educational level positively moderates this effect between perceived out-group size and ATES. The data of the present study, therefore seem to suggest that higher educated people show preference for small-scale sheltering of asylum seekers, while for the elderly size is less important. Educational level furthermore, reduces the negative effect of prejudice and positive effect of perceived legitimacy on ATAS. The data therefore suggest that higher educated people attach less importance to the legitimate claim of asylum seekers to evaluate their opinion about this group. Also prejudice plays a less important role in the attitude formation process of higher educated persons. It can be the case that higher educated people base their judgment on a more rational evaluation of the situation, instead of an emotional one. Unfortunately, this study does not offer the possibility to find out the exact explanations of these moderating roles. However, it does offer a foundation for researchers on which to base their future research.

The present study demonstrates that respondents who live in the direct proximity of the emergency shelter score lower regarding both ATAS and ATES, compared to the control-group. Actual proximity therefore does matter in terms of both attitudes towards asylum seekers and attitudes towards the emergency shelter for asylum seekers. Not only do the nearby residents score lower on both ATAS and ATES, the manner in which these attitudes are formed differ from the control-group. For example, perceived out-group size is a significant predictor of ATES when it comes to nearby residents, while it is no predictor of ATES for the control-group. The opposite is the case for perceived deprivation. While perceived deprivation shows significant predictive value of ATAS for the control-group, it is no significant predictor of ATAS regarding the nearby residents.

Perceived out-group size for example, is one of the variables that only has significant influence on the formation of ATES within the group of nearby residents. A possible explanation can be found in the scale on which respondents evaluate the advent of 500 new residents. For nearby residents, 500 new neighbors can be experienced as quite a lot, while this same number of asylum seekers can be evaluated as relatively small to respondents who assess this number as a percentage of all inhabitants of the entire municipality. In order to be sure of the underlying reasons and relationships, follow-up research needs to be conducted.

Like the work of Leach and colleagues (2007) indicates, there was a significant negative relationship found between perceived deprivation and attitudes towards asylum seekers. Like aforementioned within the present study, this relationship was only found within the control-group. The data of the present study suggests that nearby residents feel significantly more deprived compared to the control-group. It is notable however, that both groups feel rather privileged than deprived. It could be the case that the effect of perceived deprivation emerges within the control-group due to the absence of other predictors, or that the effect fails to come forth among the nearby residents due to the presence of other predictors. However, it may as well be the case that underlying relationships play a role, or that variables that lay beyond the scope of this paper offer an explanation. Unfortunately, a clear explanation for why this particular effect only emerges among members of the control-group remains off. Therefore, future research should be conducted that focuses on perceived deprivation and its role within the formation process of attitudes towards asylum seekers.

Regarding socio-demographic variables within the group of nearby residents, only moderating effects on the relationship between perceived out-group size and ATES were found. In contrast to the data of the total dataset, educational level strengthens the effect perceived out-group size has on ATES. Also gender emerges as a moderator, in a sense that being male strengthens the effect of perceived out-group size on ATES. The moderating effects of educational level on prejudice and perceived legitimacy however fail to emerge in this particular group. Within the control-group on the other hand, only moderating effects of educational level on the relationships between both perceived legitimacy and perceived deprivation were found. Due to the fact that the role of socio-demographic variables are so different with regard to the subgroups, the effects found should be treated with care. Data suggests that it can be assumed that demographic variables are of influence in the attitude formation process, but that there is still a long way to go in order to come to definite conclusions regarding their role. Despite that the current research fails to deliver data for firm conclusions regarding the influence of socio-demographic variables in the attitude formation process, the study does provide a starting point for future research. It is therefore recommended to future researchers to take these demographic variables under scrutiny, in order to come up with solid data about their influence within the attitude formation process of ATAS and ATES.

## **Limitations**

Although this study was conducted with high levels of care and preparation, it still has its weaknesses and limitations. Due to the fact that previous research oftentimes focused on negative predictors of ATAS, many of these determinants were adapted for the present investigation. By some respondents, the current survey was therefore experienced as a very negative approach. Several respondents even raised questions about the independence of the study and regarded it as prejudiced. Some participants indicated that they could not identify themselves in the questions asked and regret that there was no room for further explanation on the topic. These drawbacks resulted in people terminating their participation. It is quite possible that the data of these participants would provide particular interesting information which is currently lacking in the present paper.

Another disadvantage lies in one of the major strengths of the present investigation. Due to the fact that so many determinants were investigated, the present study has been given a major retrospective regarding attitudes towards asylum seekers. The drawback of such a great overview lies in the lacking possibility to really go in depth regarding the different determinants. Several respondents indicated for example that they found it hard to make an assessment about asylum seekers in general, because they would actually see them as a very heterogeneous group. As continuation research, it is therefore suggested that scholars once more zoom in on the predictors of the present research, to more thoroughly investigate underlying dimensions and relationships. Furthermore, future research should take a closer look at how to handle such a big and diverse group of asylum seekers as a research object. Things like the background of asylum seekers, their country of origin, age, gender and other grouping variables should be taken into consideration, to then look at attitudes towards these more specified groups.

A final limitation lies in the specific construct used within the present research. The constructs of false beliefs and perceived consensus possibly suffered from relatively low internal consistency. Like mentioned in the method section, it can be the case that the low Chronbach's alphas reflect high extends of conceptual heterogeneity instead of low reliability, but this can not be determined explicitly. It is therefore recommended that future studies specifically focus on these two constructs and possibly come to a better operationalization, in order to study the effects on both attitudes towards asylum seekers and the advent of an emergency shelter for asylum seekers.

## **General conclusion**

Research on the topic of asylum seekers in general and specifically on the sheltering of asylum seekers is up to the present day still limited. By means of the present article, an attempt is made to contribute to this complex theme, by investigating how attitudes about asylum seekers in general and attitudes towards the advent of an emergency shelter are formed. It is thought that the present paper and the presented models make their contribution to the theory, by giving a comprehensive overview of this specific attitudes formation process within the Dutch context at the present moment. The great predictive characteristic of the presented regression models indicate that a large part of establishment of attitudes towards the two investigated attitude objects are explained within the present study. By examining previously identified relationships in a new context, new insights and interpretations are presented. By means of the present study, it is now known that attitudes towards the advent of an emergency shelter for asylum seekers are established in a considerable different manner than attitudes towards asylums seekers in general. It can be concluded that ATES is based on much more than simply on general attitudes towards asylum seekers. The re-testing of previously determined predictors of these general attitudes towards asylum seekers resulted in more insight into this attitude formation process. As it turns out, a large part of the previously determined relationships between ATAS and its predictors maintain in the present time and context. However, not all determinants are verified in the current situation. The presented model in the current study shows which predictors are particularly strong and additional data show how Dutch citizens score regarding these predictors in the present day at this moment of time. Newly gained knowledge about these important predictors provides for example considerations and focus points for future communication government institutions towards their citizens. Furthermore, insight about the attitude formation process, provides the possibility to achieve greater mutual understanding and tolerance among citizens. Since it is now known that there is no clear social norm about the topic of asylum seekers, and that many people possess relatively moderate views, better understanding of each other's position offers the opportunity to come closer to each other as a society.

## References

- Allport, G. W. (1958). *The Nature of Prejudice*. Doubleday and Company: New York
- Bizman, A., & Yinon, Y. (2001). Intergroup and interpersonal threats as determinants of prejudice: The moderating role of in-group identification. *Basic and Applied Social Psychology, 23*(3), 191-196.
- Blumer, H. (1958). Race Prejudice as a Sense of Group Position. *The Pacific Sociological Review, 1*(1), 3-7.
- Croston, J., & Pedersen, A. (2013). 'Tell me what I want to hear': Motivated recall and attributions in media regarding asylum seekers. *Australian Journal of Psychology, 65*(2), 124-133.
- Doob, L. W. (1947). The behavior of attitudes. *Psychological Review, 54*(3), 135-156.
- European Social Survey, (2014). *ESS Round 7 Source Questionnaire*. London: ESS ERIC Headquarters, Centre for Comparative Social Surveys, City University London.
- EenVandaag (2016). Veel draagvlak voor kleinschalige opvanglocaties. Retrieved on October 2, 2016, from [http://opiniepanel.eenvandaag.nl/uitslagen/65235/\\_veel\\_draagvlak\\_voor\\_kleinschalige\\_opvanglocaties](http://opiniepanel.eenvandaag.nl/uitslagen/65235/_veel_draagvlak_voor_kleinschalige_opvanglocaties)
- Griffiths, B. & Pedersen, A. (2009). Prejudice and the function of attitudes relating to Muslim Australians and Indigenous Australians. *Australian Journal of Psychology, 61*(4), 228-238.
- Hartley, L. K., & Pedersen, A. (2007). Asylum seekers: How attributions and emotion affect Australians' views on mandatory detention of "the other". *Australian Journal of Psychology, 59*(3), 119-131.
- Hjerm, M. (2009). Anti-Immigrant Attitudes and Cross-Municipal Variation in the Proportion of Immigrants. *Acta Sociologica, 52*(1), 47-62.
- Kanne, P., Klein Kranenburg, L., & Rosema, M. (2015) Rapport: Opvang van Asielzoekers. Retrieved on 18 March, 2016, from <http://www.ioresearch.nl/Portals/0/Onderzoek%20asielzoekers%20en%20azc's%20versie%20DEF.pdf>
- Klocker, N., & Dunn, K. (2003). Who's driving the asylum debate? Newspaper and government representations of asylum seekers. *Media International Australia, 109*, 71-92.
- Lance, C. E., Butts, M. M., & Michels, L. C. (2006). The sources of four commonly reported cutoff criteria: What did they really say?. *Organizational Research Methods, 9*(2), 20-200.
- Leach, C. W., Iyer, A., & Pedersen, A. (2007). Angry opposition to government redress: When the structurally advantaged perceive themselves as relatively deprived. *British Journal of Social Psychology, 46*, 191-204.
- Louis, W. R., Duck, J. M., Terry, D. J., Schuller, R. A., & Lalonde, R. N. (2007). Why do citizens want to keep refugees out? Threats, fairness and hostile norms in the treatment of asylum seekers. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 37*, 53-73.
- McKay, F. H., Thomas, S. L., & Kneebone, S. (2012). 'It would be okay if they came through the proper channels': community perceptions and attitudes toward asylum seekers in Australia. *Journal of Refugee Studies, 25*(1), 113-133.
- Miller, D. (1993). Majority and minority perceptions of consensus and recommendations for resolving conflicts about land use reform. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 19*, 389-398.
- Mummendey, A., Klink, A., & Brown, R. (2001). Nationalism and patriotism: National identification and out-group rejection. *British Journal of Social Psychology, 40*, 159-172.
- Murray, K. E., & Marx, D. M. (2012). Attitudes Toward Unauthorized Immigrants, Authorized Immigrants, and Refugees. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology, 19*(3), 332-341.
- Nimby. (2016). In [dictionary.cambridge.org](http://dictionary.cambridge.org). Retrieved from <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/nimby? a=british>
- NIMBY. (2016). In [dictionary.cambridge.org](http://dictionary.cambridge.org). Retrieved from <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/nimby? a=british>
- NOS. (2016). De AZC inloopavonden, waar ging het mis?. Retrieved on October 31, 2016, from <http://nos.nl/artikel/2081450-de-azc-inloopavonden-waar-ging-het-mis.html>
- NOS. (2016). Rotterdam: laaien spanningen weer op als het azc opent?. Retrieved on October 2, 2016, from <http://nos.nl/nieuwsuur/artikel/2121791-rotterdam-laaien-spanningen-weer-op-als-het-azc-opent.html>

- O'Rourke, K. H., & Sinnott, R. (2005). The determinants of individual attitudes towards immigration. *European Journal of Political Economy*, 22, 838-861.
- Pedersen, A., Atwell, J., & Heveli, D. (2005). Prediction of negative attitudes toward Australian asylum seekers: False beliefs, nationalism, and self-esteem. *Australian Journal of Psychology*, 57(3), 148-160.
- Pedersen, A., Beven, J. P., Walker, I., & Griffiths, B. (2004). Attitudes toward Indigenous Australians: The role of empathy and guilt. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, 14(4), 233-249.
- Pedersen, A., Clarke, S., Dudgeon, P., & Griffiths, B. (2005). Attitudes toward Indigenous Australians and asylum seekers: The role of false beliefs and other social-psychological variables. *Australian Psychologist*, 40(3), 170-178.
- Pedersen, A., Griffiths, B., & Watt, S. (2008). Attitudes toward out-groups and the perception of consensus: All feet do not wear one shoe. *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology*, 18(6), 543-557.
- Pedersen, A., & Hartley, L. K. (2012). Prejudice against Muslim Australians: The role of values, gender and consensus. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, 22(3), 239-255.
- Pedersen, A., & Walker, I. (1997). Prejudice against Australian Aborigines: Old fashioned and modern forms. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 27, 561-587.
- Pedersen, A., Walker, I., & Wise, M. (2005). Talk does not cook rice: Beyond anti-racism rhetoric to strategies for social action. *The Australian Psychologist*, 40, 20-30.
- Pedersen, A., Watt, S. E., & Griffiths, B. (2007). Prejudice against asylum seekers and the fear of terrorism: The importance of context. *Centre for Social and Community Research*, 1, 38-55.
- Pedersen, A., Watt, S., & Hansen, S. (2006). The role of false beliefs in the community's and the federal government's attitudes toward Australian asylum seekers. *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, 41, 105-124.
- Pelgrim, C., Versteegh, K., Kuiper, M., & Brummelman, W. (2016). De draad kwijt in het asieldebat? Dit zijn de feiten. Retrieved on May 30, 2016, from <http://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2016/02/02/dit-zijn-de-feiten-over-asielzoekers-in-nederland#vraag1>.
- Pettigrew, T. F., & Meertens, R. (1995). Subtle and blatant prejudice in western Europe. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 25, 57-75.
- Rosman, C., & Van Mersbergen, S. (2015). Vluchtelingenvrees, maar waar zijn we bang voor?. Retrieved on April 6, 2016, from <http://www.ad.nl/ad/nl/1012/Nederland/article/detail/4149584/2015/09/25/Vluchtelingenvrees-maar-waar-zijn-we-bang-voor.dhtml>.
- Ross, L., Greene, D., & House, P. (1977). The "False Consensus Effect": An egocentric bias in social perception and attribution processes. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 13, 279-301.
- RTL. (2015). Chaos Geldermalsen: agenten gewond bij rellen om komst AZC. Retrieved on October 31, 2016, from <http://www.rtlnieuws.nl/nieuws/chaos-geldermalsen-agenten-gewond-bij-rellen-om-komst-azc>.
- Scheepers, P., Gijsbert, M., & Coenders, M. (2002). Ethnic Exclusionism in European Countries. Public Opposition to Civil Rights for Legal Migrants as a Response to Perceived Ethnic Threat. *European Sociological Review*, 18, 17-34.
- Schweitzer, R., Perkoulidis, S. A., Krome, S. L., & Ludlow, C. N. (2005). Attitudes towards Refugees: The Dark Side of Prejudice in Australia. *Australian Journal of Psychology*, 57(3), 170-179.
- Simeoni, B. Z. (2005). Testing Tests: Determination of the Efficacy of Prejudice Measures. *Electronic Theses & Dissertations*. Paper 434
- Smith, A. W. (1981). Racial Tolerance as a Function of Group Position. *American Sociological Review*, 46, 558-573.
- Stephan, W. G., & Stephan, C. (1993). Cognition and affect in stereotyping: Parallel interactive networks. In D. M. Mackie and D. L. Hamilton (Eds.), *Affect, Cognition and Stereotyping: Interactive Processes in Group Perception*, 111-136. Orlando, FL: Academic Press.
- Stephan, W. G., & Stephan, C. (1996). Predicting prejudice. *International Journal of Inter-cultural Relations*, 20, 1-12.
- Stephan, W. G., Ybarra, O., & Bachman, G. (1999). Prejudice Toward Immigrants. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 29(11), 2221-2237.

- Stephan, W. G., Ybarra, O., Martínez, C. M., Schwarzwald, J., & Tur-Kaspa, M. (1998). Prejudice toward immigrants to Spain and Israel: An integrated threat theory analysis. *Journal of Cross-cultural Psychology*, 29(4), 559-576.
- Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1979). An integrative theory of intergroup conflict. In W. G. Austin & S. Worchel. *The social psychology of intergroup relations*. Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole. 33-47.
- Tajfel, H. & Turner, J. C. (1986). The social identity theory of intergroup behaviour. In S. Worchel & W. G. Austin. *Psychology of Intergroup Relations*. Chicago, IL: Nelson-Hall, 7-24.
- Tiedens, L. Z., & Leach, C. W. (2004). *The Social Life of Emotions*. Retrieved on 16 March, 2016, from <http://catdir.loc.gov/catdir/samples/cam051/2003063546.pdf>.
- Todorov, A., & Mandisodza, A. (2004). Public opinion on foreign policy: the multilateral public that perceives itself as unilateral. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 68, 323-348.
- Tubantia. (2015). Verzet tegen azc Enschede op komst. Retrieved on May 3, 2016, from <http://www.tubantia.nl/regio/enschede-en-omgeving/enschede/verzet-tegen-azc-enschede-op-komst-1.5217909>.
- Tubantia. (2016). Lange celstraffen voor terroristische aanslag moskee enschede. Retrieved on October 31, 2016, from <http://www.tubantia.nl/regio/enschede-en-omgeving/enschede/lange-celstraffen-voor-terroristische-aanslag-moskee-enschede-1.6578717>.
- Turner, J. C., Brown, R. J., & Tajfel, H. (1979). Social comparison and group interest in ingroup favouritism. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 9, 187-204.
- Van Zomeren, M., Spears, R., Fischer, A. H., & Leach, C. W. (2004). Put Your Money Where Your Mouth Is! Explaining Collective Action Tendencies Through Group-Based Anger and Group Efficacy. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 87(5), 649-664.
- World Economic Forum. (2015). Global gender gap report 2015. Retrieved on 8 November, 2016, from <http://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2015/rankings/>
- Zajonc, R. B. (1968). Attitudinal effects of mere exposure. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 9(2), 1-27.