

BACHELOR THESIS in B. Sc. Psychology

Replikation der Studie 4 aus: Madan, S., Basu, S., Rattan, A., & Savani, K. (2019). Support for resettling refugees: The role of fixed versus growth mind- sets. *Psychological Science*, 30, 238-249

at FernUniversität Hagen Faculty of Cultural Studies and Social Science Institute of Psychology
Department of Community Psychology .

Supervisor: Dr. Birte Siem

submitted by: Letizia Sturiale

On 10.10. 2019, Verona

Refugee resettlement is one out of other relevant solutions to the world's refugee crisis, shaping the life outcomes of millions of forcibly displaced individuals every year. A crucial and short-term effective solution to the worldwide refugee crisis is the resettlement of refugees into third countries of asylum (UNHCR, 2019a). One important factor facilitating this process of resettlement, and eventually and gradually the process of complete integration of refugees into new countries of asylum, is the formation of favourable attitudes towards resettlement among host-society members (Esses et al., 2017). Against this background, it is relevant for psychological science to better understand the mechanisms underlying and shaping people's attitudes towards refugee resettlement. Madan et al. (2019) investigated this issue in the U.S., and found that linking lay people's implicit theories about the kind-of-person someone is (i.e., fixed-growth mind- set) to their beliefs about how well refugees can assimilate in society, ultimately influences the extent to which they support refugee resettlement into their country. More explicit a mediation hypothesis was examined in which the relation between implicit theories and support for refugee resettlement was mediated by the belief that refugees can assimilate in society. Madan et al. found that people who believed that personal attributes were malleable over time (i.e., growth mind-set), relative to those who believed that personal attributes were stable (i.e., fixed mind-set), were more likely to believe that refugees can assimilate in society and ultimately showed greater support for refugee resettlement. The aim of the current research project was to replicate this finding in a German context, yet overall, the hypothesized mediation could not be replicated. It was found that, although the hypothesized mediator (i.e., participants' belief that refugees can assimilate) was significantly positively correlated to the dependent variable in focus (i.e., participants' support for resettling refugees), the independent variable (i.e., fixed-growth mind-set condition) was neither significantly correlated to the mediator, nor to the dependent variable. The former finding concerning the significant positive relation between the mediator and the dependent variable, at least partially supported the hypothesized mediation in that it confirmed the assumption that host-nationals who believe that refugees can assimilate. These results emphasize the importance of practice of replication studies in that a single studies cannot account for a definite understanding of the hypothesized effects (Open Science Collaboration, 2015). Instead, it is presumed that theoretical assumptions can only be tested through multiple and diverse investigations that, in sum, reduce the probability of alternative explanations for the hypothesized effects (Open Science Collaboration, 2015). Also, since replication procedures can methodical differ from the original procedures, failed replications do not automatically mean that original procedures are flawed (Open Science Collaboration, 2015). Indeed, the ways in which replication

procedures may differ from original procedures, with respect to particular characteristics of new circumstances (e.g., participants, researchers, examination conditions, cultural and historical environments etc.), are particularly valuable for a deeper understanding of psychological phenomena and its generalizability to other contexts (Gollwitzer & Schmitt, 2019). Apart of some methodological limitations and other alternative explanations, the probably most important aspect which may have influenced the replicability of the original findings, is the context within which the original and current replication study were set. The original study by Madan et al. (2019), was conducted in the United States in January 2017 when Barack Obama's refugee policy was still in place and before any changes in the refugee policy were made under the new presidential administration of Donald Trump. In contrast to the original study, the current replication study was conducted in Germany in 2019. Reforms of German asylum policies, especially in the years between 2013 to 2017, shaped the country's transformation from a self-declared non-immigration country—under the governmental administration of Helmut Kohl (1982-1998)—into a pro-immigration country (Laubenthal, 2019). Although the original methodology was, overall, exactly adopted within the frame of the current study, the measure of the dependent variable (i.e., support for resettling refugees) was adjusted to the German context of refugee resettlement. On the one hand it can be safely assumed that people's entity- incremental implicit theories (i.e., fixed-growth mind-sets) do influence people's attitudes and behaviours in cross-group contacts and ultimately do affect intergroup relational outcomes. Especially people holding growth mind-sets, seem to be more likely to endorse positive attitudes towards outgroup members (e.g., Halperin et al., 2011; Halperin et al., 2012). On the other hand refugee resettlement is a highly context-specific issue in that it is diversely handled between countries, highly correlated to actual regulations and laws imposed by governmental authorities, and differently perceived by host-society members. It seems not negotiable that this needs to be considered when research procedures are developed, and measurement results are interpreted. Research context- specificity does not only influence participants' response behaviours, but also affects the implementation of methodically equivalent replication procedures in different countries. To conclude, resettlement admissions in third host-countries of asylum do shape life circumstances and future perspectives of 70.8 million forcibly displaced people worldwide (UNHCR, 2019a). In this light, the practical relevance of psychological research in examining psychological factors that influence host-countries' attitudes to open their nation to refugees on an individual as well as on a governmental level, is indisputable and requires further investigation.