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Threat by association

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Chapter 2

Threat by association:

Do distant intergroup threats carry over into local intolerance?

This chapter is based on Bouman, T., Van Zomeren, M., & Otten, S. (2014). Threat by association: Do distant intergroup threats carry-over into local intolerance? *The British Journal of Social Psychology*, 53, 405–421. doi:10.1111/bjso.12046

In 2011, millions of people in the Arab World protested powerfully against the reigning regimes in their nations. Worldwide, many people watched these protests unfold through media coverage, most of them likely living far away from the actual protests. Although the protests received worldwide (political) support, many felt threatened by this situation and its potential outcomes as well (e.g., the Netherlands; De Beer, 2011; e.g., the U.S.; Pew Research Center, 2012; Telhamy & Kull, 2011)¹. For instance, some felt threatened by the protesters' religious convictions, or by the protests' presumed influence on the world economy (De Beer, 2011). Previous work suggests that in such situations, people become more intolerant of the specific group they perceive as threatening (Riek et al., 2006). However, little is known about whether reactions to *distant* intergroup threats also have the power to transcend this distant situation and influence intergroup relations within observers' *local* environment (e.g., for native Dutch citizens, relations with Arabs in their community such as Moroccan-Dutch citizens). This is an important question because the modern media enables the exposure to distant intergroup threats and because local outgroups are more likely to be encountered than the distant outgroup causing the threat. In this article we propose a *carry-over hypothesis* stating that *distant* intergroup threats — and particularly distant symbolic intergroup threats (e.g., to the ingroup's worldview) — influence outside observers' intolerance of *local* outgroups. We tested this hypothesis in one correlational and two experimental studies.

Do different intergroup threats increase intolerance?

Carry-over effects of distant group threats represent special cases of intergroup threats more generally. Intergroup threat is the perception of one group

¹ It is also important to keep in mind that many people in the Arab world felt threatened by the possible military involvement of Western countries (Pew Research Center, 2011). However, because the studies presented in this paper were conducted in the Netherlands, we use threats to Dutch and Western citizens in our examples.

being threatened by another group (Semyonov et al., 2004; Stephan et al., 2009). According to Blumer's (1958) group position model, threats are one of the basic feelings underlying racial prejudice. Often, these threats concern the feeling that an outgroup threatens the dominant position of the ingroup on a certain dimension (e.g., culture, Blumer, 1958; Bobo, 1999). Threats are particularly likely to cause prejudice when there is a clear and specific outgroup which is defined as a large and abstract entity (e.g., race or religion). In addition, those threats are induced by the remote public arena (e.g., the media) and not by first-hand information (Blumer, 1958). Therefore, threats can be induced by groups in people's immediate environment, but also by groups further away.

The original version of the intergroup threat theory distinguished between four types of threats: symbolic and realistic threats, intergroup anxiety, and negative stereotypes (Stephan & Stephan, 2000; Stephan et al., 1999). However, later research narrowed these four types of threat down to symbolic and realistic threats (Stephan & Renfro, 2002; Stephan et al., 2009).

Symbolic group threats concern threats to the ingroup's worldview, characterized by intergroup differences in for instance religion, values, or ideologies (Stephan & Renfro, 2002; Stephan et al., 1999, 2009). In the case of the Arab protests, for example, observers from the Western world might fear protesters' anti-Western values and their imposition on the region, and, by extension, the world (De Beer, 2011). Such worldview threats can have important psychological consequences. For instance, modern racism theory (McConahay & Hough, 1976) and symbolic racism theory (Kinder & Sears, 1981; Sears, 1988) propose that violations of cherished ingroup values predict racism. Similarly, intergroup value violations and differences relate to prejudice (Biernat et al., 1996; Haidt, Rosenberg, & Holly, 2003; Minescu & Poppe, 2011; Wellman & Tokuno, 2004; Ysseldyk, Matheson, & Anisman, 2010). Symbolic threats thus focus on differences in abstract group values and are likely to cause intolerance toward the threatening group.

By comparison, *realistic group threats* concern the loss of concrete ingroup resources, power, or physical well-being (Esses et al., 1998; Stephan et al., 1999, 2009). For instance, the Arab protests can be considered a realistic threat to Western observers because of their potential economic consequences (e.g., through the possession of and control over oil supplies) or their risks for world safety and risks of warfare. Realistic threats can have important psychological consequences too. Approaches like realistic conflict theory suggest that when groups compete over resources or have competing goals, intergroup conflict is likely (LeVine & Campbell, 1972; Sherif, 1966). Indeed, various studies show that perceived intergroup competition (e.g., concerning jobs, income, status, power, or resources) increases intolerance toward the competing (Citrin, Green, Muste, & Wong, 1997; Esses et al., 2001; King, Knight, & Hebl, 2010; Minescu & Poppe, 2011).

However, most studies on intergroup threats focus on threats from outgroups that are likely to be encountered (e.g., immigrants). By contrast, we focus on threats from groups which are physically distant. In those situations in which the threatening group is far away, a relevant question is whether such *distant* threats also affect intolerance toward *local* outgroups that are more likely to be encountered. Put differently, our focus is on *whether distant intergroup threats can carry over into local intolerance*.

Do different *distant* intergroup threats increase *local* intolerance?

Surprisingly little is known about the causal effects of distant intergroup threats on local intolerance. However, there is correlational data supporting the idea that distant threats might carry over. After the 9/11 terrorist attacks, for instance, prejudice toward local Muslim groups seemed to increase rapidly and worldwide (Allen & Nielsen, 2002; Hitlan et al., 2007; Panagopoulos, 2006; Sheridan, 2006). Despite the situation's extremity and uniqueness, these studies offer some insight in when carry-over effects occur. The finding that people reacted toward Muslims in general could indicate that people attributed the threat to a larger abstract

superordinate group (i.e., Muslims) instead of only the particular group responsible for the attacks (see also Allen & Nielsen, 2002; Sheridan, 2006). Similarly, other researchers indicated that intergroup differences are often over-attributed to broader and abstract encompassing ideologies (e.g., Islam, see: Van Oudenhoven, De Raad, Carmona, Helbig, & Van Der Linden, 2012). Thus, threats might not only be attributed to the group causing the threat but also to groups which are *associated* on a superordinate level with this group.

Because symbolic threats are by definition abstract and concern ideologies which often transcend the margins of a specific outgroup (Kinder & Sears, 1981; Stephan et al., 1999, 2009), the symbolic threat itself might activate a superordinate category to which the threat is projected (Van Oudenhoven et al., 2012). For example, people could attribute the media portrayal of the Egyptian protesters as extremist, fundamentalist, and supporting violence (e.g., Groen, 2011; Hider, 2011; Van Den Dool, 2011) to Muslims in general and thereby change their attitudes toward local Muslim groups as well (e.g., Turkish-Dutch citizens). Therefore, we believe that symbolic threats are relatively likely to carry over, and accordingly — as the aim of this paper is to *identify* carry-over effects of threats — we specifically focus on symbolic threats.

In contrast to symbolic threats, realistic threats are relatively concrete (Stephan et al., 1999, 2009). This makes it easier to define the specific group responsible for the threat and differentiate this group from other outgroups. In line with this argument, research indicated that responses to realistic threats are mainly directed at the competitor itself (Esses et al., 1998; Maddux et al., 2008). As a consequence, it is doubtful whether realistic threats have a similar carry-over potential as symbolic threats. This is not to say that we believe that realistic threats do *not* carry over. In fact, research focusing on threats unrelated to a specific group showed that activating a competitive mindset carries over into prejudice toward outgroups unrelated to the threat (Sassenberg, Moskowitz, Jacoby, & Hansen, 2007). Moreover, other research indicated that broad economic threats unrelated to a particular

outgroup (i.e., the global economic downturn) increase prejudice and anxiety toward local outgroups which are typically seen as competitors (Becker et al., 2011; Butz & Yogeeswaran, 2011). We therefore explore the carry-over potential of realistic threats as well.

In summary, we hypothesize that distant symbolic (and possibly realistic) intergroup threats carry over into local intolerance. Note that we use intolerance as an umbrella term for attitudes (Study 2.1), feelings (Study 2.2 & 2.3), and acculturation attitudes (Study 2.2 and 2.3), which, according to previous research, are all related to both symbolic and realistic threats (e.g., Butz & Yogeeswaran, 2011; Riek et al., 2006; Sassenberg et al., 2007). We tested our carry-over hypothesis in three studies that employed correlational (Study 2.1) and experimental designs (Study 2.2 and 2.3) together with a broad range of measures of local intolerance (both general and context-specific measures).

Study 2.1

At the time of Study 2.1 (March, 2011), the Arab — and particularly the Egyptian — revolts were covered extensively in the Dutch media. According to a study by the Dutch research organization TNS NIPO, 75% of Dutch participants worried about potential consequences for the Dutch economy (e.g., increasing oil prices); 68% worried about radicalization and threat of terrorism; and 35% worried about trade and business relationships (De Beer, 2011). This is in line with media reports such as, for instance, “Live: fear of Islamist plan to take over Egypt” (Hider, 2011) and later “Muslim fundamentalist Egypt receive 70 percent of the votes” (Van Den Dool, 2011). This suggested to us that the turmoil in the Middle-East could be associated, at least among Dutch citizens, with both symbolic and realistic intergroup threats. Moreover, the Dutch society includes a large minority of Moroccan-Dutch citizens that are geographically and culturally connected to the larger Arab region (CBS, 2014). Accordingly, this situation provided a suitable context to test our carry-

over hypothesis. Specifically, would distant symbolic threats from the Arab world relate positively to intolerance toward Moroccan-Dutch citizens?

Method

Participants. Seventy-four native Dutch undergraduate university students (59% female; $M_{age} = 21$ years) participated in an online study entitled “Turmoil in the Middle-East” for partial fulfillment of course requirements. In the questionnaire² participants first received basic information on the ongoing protests. Thereafter, they were asked to give their opinion on the protests by filling out the questionnaire comprising of a measure of the two *intergroup threats* which could be posed by the Arab world (the two predictors), and two measures of different facets of *local intolerance* toward Moroccan-Dutch citizens (the outcome variables). All measures consisted of statements on which participants responded on a 7-point scale (1 = *totally disagree* and 7 = *totally agree*).

Measures. Our measure of intergroup threats consisted of six items about threats from the Arab world at the time of the protests (adapted from: González et al., 2008). These items were displayed on a single page in a random order. Three items measured *symbolic threats* (i.e., “Religious values ...”, “Norms and values ...”, and “Moral convictions in the Arab world threaten Western societies”; $\alpha = .95$, $M = 3.96$, $SD = 1.50$) and three measured *realistic threats* (“The Arab world is a threat to the Western economy”, “... competes with the Western world”, “Developments in the Arab world might also cause war in the Western world”; $\alpha = .69$, $M = 3.38$, $SD =$

² This experiment originally included a manipulation of the type of group creating the distant threat, which was described as Islamist vs. democratic, plus a third control condition with no information. Other than intended, this manipulation did not significantly influence perceived symbolic threats (means were respectively: 4.04, 3.79, 4.08; $F(2, 71) = .28$, $p = .75$). Moreover, an additional multivariate analysis of variance on the measures of distant symbolic threat, distant realistic threat, local attitudes, and local differences did not reveal a significant effect of the manipulation ($F(8, 138) = 0.87$, $p = .54$). Accordingly, we conducted the correlational analyses as presented in the paper.

1.17). Principal axis factoring with Oblimin rotation (allowing factors to be correlated) showed two factors (symbolic and realistic threats), explaining 77.45% of the variance, with items loading most strongly on their respective factor (factor loadings $> .60$). These results support the construct validity of our measures of symbolic and realistic threat.

*Attitudes toward the local outgroup Moroccan-Dutch citizens*³ was the first outcome variable measuring a facet of local intolerance. The scale (adapted from González et al., 2008; Zárate et al., 2004) consisted of four positive items (e.g., “In general, I believe Moroccan-Dutch citizens are friendly”, “honest”, “warm”, “genuine”) and two negative items (e.g., “untrustworthy”, “unpleasant”). Negative items were recoded; thus, higher scores on the scale represented more favorable attitudes, $\alpha = .89$, $M = 4.09$, $SD = 1.08$. Second, *perceived differences* between the participants’ ingroup (i.e., native Dutch citizens) and Moroccan-Dutch citizens were measured on a three-item scale (e.g., “Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch citizens have very different values”). Higher scores indicated more perceived differences, $\alpha = .82$, $M = 5.06$, $SD = 0.97$.

Results & Discussion

Unsurprisingly, realistic and symbolic threats correlated strongly with each other, $r = .53$, $p < .001$. To test our carry-over hypothesis, we computed a multiple regression model, in which both threats were included simultaneously (see Table 2.1). As predicted, distant symbolic threat was uniquely and significantly associated with both indicators of local intolerance (i.e., stronger perceived differences, $\beta^2 = .15$ and more negative attitudes, $\beta^2 = .11$). Distant realistic threats, conversely, did not

³ For explorative reasons, we included more items in the questionnaires than mentioned in text. For instance, we included additional items on overlap between outgroups (all studies), general attitudes (all studies), perceived competence, and political preference (Study 2.2). When scales strongly correlated with each other (e.g., the feeling thermometers and attitudes toward Turkish-Dutch citizens) we choose the most straightforward/concise scale to include in the paper (outcomes and effect sizes on both scales were similar).

uniquely contribute to the prediction of local intolerance (all p 's < .01). This provides first evidence for our idea that distant symbolic threats have strong carry-over potential and, consequently, evoke local intolerance. However, due to the correlational nature of this study, it is important to replicate these findings experimentally to enable inferences about the generalizability and causality of the predicted relationships. Study 2.2 and 2.3 address this shortcoming.

Table 2.1

Regression coefficients of symbolic and realistic threats on dependent measures (Study 2.1)

Dependent Measure	Threat	Beta	Partial r	T
Positive attitudes	Symbolic	-.39	-.33	-2.96**
	Realistic	.07	.07	0.56
Perceived differences	Symbolic	.46	.39	3.61***
	Realistic	-.04	-.04	0.29

Note. $df = 73$

** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Study 2.2

The main goals of Study 2.2 were to gather experimental support for our predictions and to measure intolerance toward different local groups. To meet the first aim, we designed a study containing three experimental conditions: a symbolic threat, realistic threat, and control condition. To meet the second aim, we chose a different context than Study 2.1: the Dutch debate about Turkey's admittance to the EU. We chose this context because, first, Turkey's admittance can be seen as both realistically and symbolically threatening (e.g., Raufaste, Pompanon, & Vautier, 2009). Second, the group perceived as posing the threat (Turkey) is relatively distant and most native

Dutch citizens do not have contact with people living in Turkey. Finally, three large local cultural minorities in the Netherlands (CBS, 2014) are possible targets of carry-over effects by association. The first group is Turkish-Dutch citizens, this group is most closely associated with the distant outgroup Turkey. Because this group has settled in the Netherlands for at least two generations and most of its members were born and raised in the Netherlands, this group is also clearly different from Turks in Turkey. The second group — Moroccan-Dutch citizens — is generally perceived as sharing similar cultural and religious values with Turkey and therefore relate to the symbolic threats from Turkey (e.g., Van Osch & Breugelmanns, 2012). The third group — Polish-Dutch citizens — is often portrayed as competing on the Dutch labor market, increasing crime rates, and using governmental money, and can thus be expected to relate to realistic threats (e.g., Alonso, 2011; Van Haastrecht, 2007). Measuring Dutch citizens' feelings toward each of these three groups thus enabled different tests of our hypothesis.

Method

Participants. One-hundred-and-five native Dutch undergraduate university students (71% female; $M_{age} = 20$ years) took part in a study introduced as “Should Turkey join the European Union?”. Students were compensated for their participation with partial fulfillment of a course requirement. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the three conditions: Realistic threat ($n = 35$) vs. Symbolic threat ($n = 35$) vs. Control ($n = 35$)⁴.

Manipulation of distant threats. In all conditions, participants read a bogus newspaper article about the admittance of Turkey to the EU. The first paragraph

⁴ We also manipulated the perceived likelihood that Turkey would join the EU, which was implemented in the first paragraph of the bogus newspaper article. Because this manipulation did not affect participants' perceptions of the likelihood that Turkey would join the EU (100-point scale: Admittance likely, $M = 47.00$, $SD = 23.25$; Admittance unlikely, $M = 48.23$, $SD = 18.25$; $F < 1$), and did not influence intolerance, we collapsed across these conditions.

introduced the ongoing debate and the second paragraph the threat manipulation. In the *symbolic threat* condition, the second paragraph stated that a recent poll indicated that many Europeans fear the differences in norms and values between Turkey and the EU, and that many believe that Turkey's admittance would result in the "Islamization" of Europe and changes in Europe's image. The *realistic threat condition* consisted of a similar story; however, the symbolic threats were changed in threats regarding economy, competition (e.g., costs of Turkey's admittance, taking Dutch citizens' jobs) and power (Turkey's relatively large influence in the EU when they will be admitted). For both symbolic and realistic threats, it was clear that Turkey induced the threat. At the same time, however, both threats could be associated with similar debates about minority groups in the Netherlands (i.e., competition on the labor market and cultural differences). In the *control* condition, only the introduction of the article, without a particular threat, was presented.

Manipulation checks and measures of local intolerance. After participants finished reading the newspaper article, they received the questionnaire. Participants responded to different scales measuring different facets of local intolerance toward different minority groups in the Netherlands. Unless otherwise specified, measures consisted of statements on which participants responded on a 7-point scale (1 = *totally disagree* and 7 = *totally agree*).

Manipulation checks. We checked the effectiveness of the manipulation in two ways. First, we checked whether participants had read and understood the newspaper article. This check followed immediately after participants read the manipulation and consisted of an open-ended question asking what participants thought was the most important message of the newspaper article. One respondent from the symbolic and one from realistic condition were removed from analyses because the given answer did not correspond to the manipulation.

Next, six items similar to those used in Study 2.1 measured perceived threats. This enabled us to see whether participants not only read and understood the information regarding threats, but whether they actually experienced them. Three

items measured perceived symbolic threats (e.g., “If Turkey joined the EU, this would threaten the current norms and values in the EU”, $a = .80$, $M = 3.76$, $SD = 1.24$) and another three items measured perceived realistic threats (e.g., “If Turkey joined the EU, this would threaten the EU economy”, $a = .59$, $M = 4.73$, $SD = .88$). To prevent that these items would interfere with our manipulation, we included them at the end of the questionnaire. As a consequence, this measure can be considered conservative as it checks whether the manipulation still has an effect after all other items were measured.

Local intolerance. We operationalized local intolerance in a number of ways to assess the generality of the carry-over effects threats (scales are discussed in chronological order). First, as our main dependent variable we used feeling thermometers (Abelson, Kinder, Peters, & Fiske, 1982; Van Der Noll, Poppe, & Verkuyten, 2010) to measure *feelings toward three minority groups* in the Netherlands: Turkish-Dutch citizens (associated with both threats), Moroccan-Dutch citizens (mainly associated with symbolic threats), and Polish-Dutch citizens (mainly associated with realistic threats). For each subgroup, feelings were measured with two thermometers ranging from 1 (*negative or cold*) to 100 (*positive or warm*). For all three subgroups, the scores on these two thermometers correlated strongly ($r_s > .80$), and were therefore combined to a composite scale per group. Because the items for Turkish- and Moroccan-Dutch citizens were strongly interrelated ($a = .94$) and factor analysis differentiated between one factor consisting of Turkish- and Moroccan-Dutch citizens and another including Polish-Dutch citizens (explained amount of variance = 88.41%, factor loadings $> .85$), we chose to combine the items of Turkish- and Moroccan-Dutch citizens in one scale for multivariate testing (high interrelatedness between dependent variables invalidate multivariate tests; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). To restrict participants’ work load, we decided to limit the length of the questionnaire by presenting the other three indicators (see below) of intolerance only fully for the group closest to the distant threat (Turkish-Dutch citizens).

Second, *perceived fundamental differences* between the participants' ingroup (i.e., native Dutch citizens) and Turkish-Dutch citizens were measured on a four-item scale (e.g., "Native Dutch and Turkish-Dutch citizens fundamentally differ from each other"; $\alpha = .75$, $M = 4.44$, $SD = 1.04$). This measure concerned the perception of fundamental differences (i.e., insurmountable, indispensable differences), and differs from the measure used in Study 2.1 as we believe fundamental differences represent a more extreme form of intolerance.

Third, *native Dutch' citizens dissatisfaction with Turkish-Dutch' citizens acculturation* was measured with ten statements, five concerning Turkish-Dutch citizens' adaptation to the host culture (e.g., "Turkish-Dutch citizens adapt to the Dutch way of living") and five concerning Turkish-Dutch citizens' maintenance of the Turkish culture in the Netherlands (e.g., "Turkish-Dutch citizens keep the Turkish way of living"). On each statement, native Dutch participants were asked to indicate how well the statement corresponded to how they *perceived* and *preferred* Turkish-Dutch citizens to behave in the Netherlands (adapted from Zagefka & Brown, 2002). After the scores for cultural maintenance were reversed, dissatisfaction scores were calculated by subtracting the perceived ($M = 4.42$, $SD = 0.77$) from the corresponding preferred score ($M = 3.38$, $SD = 0.62$). Overall dissatisfaction was calculated by computing the mean of all these dissatisfaction scores ($\alpha = .91$, $M = 1.05$, $SD = 1.22$; higher scores indicated more dissatisfaction).

Lastly, *perceived contact* was measured by two subscales (adapted from Zagefka & Brown, 2002). Three items measured participants' perception of Turkish-Dutch citizens' openness to *contact with Dutch citizens* (e.g., "In general, I believe Turkish-Dutch citizens welcome social activities with native Dutch citizens"; $\alpha = .90$, $M = 4.59$, $SD = 1.12$), and two items measured the degree to which Dutch citizens perceived Turkish-Dutch citizens to have *contact with other Turkish-Dutch citizens* (e.g., "In general, I believe Turkish-Dutch citizens primarily keep contact with other Turkish-Dutch citizens"; $r = .73$, $M = 5.00$, $SD = .99$).

Results and discussion

Manipulation checks. As can be seen in Figure 2.1, participants perceived stronger symbolic threats in the *symbolic threat* condition than in the other two conditions, $F(1, 100) = 7.45, p = .007, \eta p^2 = .07, 95\% CI [0.19; 1.19]$. For realistic threats (Figure 2.1), however, participants in the *realistic threat* condition did not significantly differ from the other two conditions, $F(1, 100) = 1.35, p = .25, \eta p^2 = .01, 95\% CI [-0.15; 0.58]$. This did not mean that realistic threat was absent — in fact, participants generally experienced stronger realistic than symbolic threats, $M_{\text{difference}} = 0.96, SD = 1.26, t(102) = 7.75, p < .001, 95\% CI [0.72, 1.21]$. Thus, the manipulation was successful in increasing perceived symbolic, but seemingly unsuccessful in increasing perceived realistic, threats.

Testing the carry-over hypothesis. To test whether symbolic threats carry over, we computed a contrast in which the symbolic threat condition was compared to the other two conditions (i.e., realistic and control condition; the level of perceived threats was similar in these two conditions, see Figure 2.1). Results showed that on all measures of local intolerance participants in the *symbolic threat* condition reported higher scores than in the other two conditions (see Table 2.2). Multivariate test results confirmed the significance of this pattern, $F(6, 95) = 2.54, p = .025, \eta p^2 = .14$.

First, feelings toward local outgroups associated with symbolic threats (i.e., Turkish- and Moroccan-Dutch citizens) were significantly more negative in the *symbolic threat* condition than in the other two conditions ($\eta p^2 = .05$; when groups were treated separately, respectively $\eta p^2 = .05$ and $.04$). Importantly, however, this was not the case for the local outgroup mainly related to realistic threats (i.e., Polish-Dutch citizens). This indicated that carry-over effects are limited to local outgroups with a connection to the distant outgroup's symbolic threat. Second, when symbolically threatened, participants perceived significantly stronger fundamental differences between themselves and Turkish-Dutch citizens ($\eta p^2 = .07$). Third, although in all conditions Dutch participants were dissatisfied with Turkish-Dutch citizens' cultural

acculturation (i.e., the discrepancy between observed and preferred was significant in all conditions, all $F_s(1, 100) > 16$, all $p_s < .001$), dissatisfaction with Turkish-Dutch citizens' acculturation was significantly larger in the *symbolic threat* condition ($\eta p^2 = .04$). Finally, compared to the other conditions, native Dutch participants in the *symbolic threat* condition perceived Turkish-Dutch citizens to have more contact with other Turkish-Dutch citizens ($\eta p^2 = .08$) and less, although insignificant, contact with native Dutch citizens ($\eta p^2 = .02$). Thus, in line with our carry-over hypothesis, our manipulation of distant symbolic threat indeed increased local dissatisfaction with and intolerance toward Turkish- and Moroccan-Dutch citizens. Study 2.2, thereby, experimentally replicated the findings of Study 2.1 regarding the effects of distant symbolic threat on various indicators of local intolerance and provided support for the predicted causal relationship.

Participants in the *realistic threat* condition were not more intolerant than participants in the symbolic and control conditions together and the control condition alone (see Table 2.2; Multivariate $F_s < 1.59$, $p_s > .15$). Because (a) previous studies have shown the effectiveness of the kind of manipulation we used (e.g., Esses et al., 1998; Jackson & Esses, 2000; Maddux et al., 2008), (b) all but one participant correctly responded to the open-ended realistic threat manipulation check, and (c) perceived realistic threat was high across conditions, we believe that our manipulation only confirmed the threat that participants already perceived. Therefore, Study 2.2 did not enable a strong conclusion about the carry-over potential of realistic threats.

In sum, Study 2.2 found that distant symbolic threats lead to local intolerance across different groups; thereby, it experimentally replicates the results from Study 2.1. Specifically, carry-over effects only occurred for those local outgroups which were associated with the distant outgroup and its symbolic threat (i.e., Turkish- and Moroccan-Dutch citizens). Although we found clear support for carry-over effects of symbolic threats, our results for distant realistic threats were inconclusive due to an ineffective manipulation; we will address this issue in Study 2.3.

Table 2.2

Means and standard deviations for the experimental groups of Study 2.2 on various indicators of local intolerance toward minority groups in the Netherlands, the last two columns present the contrast corresponding to the carry-over hypothesis of distant symbolic threats on local minority groups

Variable	Symbolic		Realistic		Control		F ^a	Symbolic vs. other conditions 95% CI
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
Fundamental differences	4.82	1.02	4.34	0.89	4.18	1.11	6.96**	[0.14, 0.98]
Feelings toward ...								
Turkish/Moroccan-D. c.	46.71	17.70	55.53	17.44	54.61	16.53	5.36*	[-15.52, -1.20]
Polish-Dutch citizens	55.09	16.52	59.32	16.24	53.20	16.82	0.12	[-8.05, 5.70]
Acculturation dissatisfaction	1.41	1.26	0.89	1.28	0.85	1.08	4.58*	[-1.04, -0.04]
Perceived contact of Turkish-Dutch citizens with ...								
Dutch citizens	4.38	1.14	4.70	1.08	4.68	1.16	1.66	[-0.77, 0.16]
Turkish-Dutch citizens	5.40	0.96	4.63	0.99	4.96	0.89	9.21**	[0.21, 1.00]

^a df contrast = 100, df error = 1.

[†] $p < .10$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

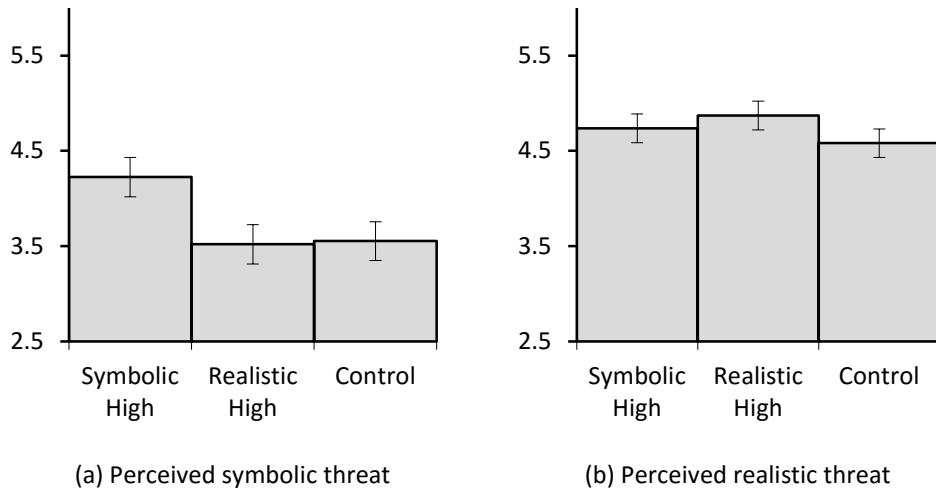


Figure 2.1. Bar graphs displaying the mean and standard error on the manipulation check for (a) symbolic and (b) realistic threat for the three experimental conditions of Study 2.2 (i.e., *Symbolic high*, *Realistic high*, and *Control*).

Study 2.3

Study 2.3 was designed to replicate our findings from Study 2.1 and 2.2, and address the shortcomings of the previous studies. To test the carry-over effect of distant symbolic threats we again included the *symbolic threat* and *control* condition (similar to Study 2.2). In addition, we included two conditions in which information about both symbolic *and* realistic threats were given. In one condition, it was stated that distant symbolic and realistic threats were high (i.e., *symbolic plus realistic high* condition), whereas in the other it was stated that distant symbolic threats were high but realistic threats were low (i.e., *symbolic high, realistic low* condition). We included these two conditions to test whether carry-over effects occur for realistic threats when symbolic threat was constant.

Moreover, these conditions afforded the exploration of the effects of combined and mixed threat messages. Previous research indicated that the unique effects of both threats add up and result in even more negative images of the group inflicting the threat (Riek et al., 2006; Stephan et al., 2005). However, results from the literature (Esses et al., 1998; Maddux et al., 2008), together with our results of Study 2.1 and 2.2, indicate that the carry-over potential differs for both threats. This makes it unlikely that such an additive effect occurs for carry-over effects. Contrarily, our argument that carry-over effects of (abstract) symbolic threats are caused by the activation of a superordinate category suggests that the addition of more concrete realistic threats would inhibit carry-over effects. That is, providing information more specific to the distant outgroup likely *hinders* the creation of a superordinate category and thereby suppresses carry-over effects (e.g., Becker et al., 2011).

Thus, Study 2.3 aimed to (a) replicate the results of Study 2.1 and 2.2 concerning the carry-over hypothesis and (b) provide insight in the potential for carry-over effects of realistic and combined threat messages.

Method

Participants and design. Ninety Dutch undergraduate university students (64% female; $M_{age} = 20.41$ years) participated for partial fulfillment of a course requirement. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the four experimental conditions. Seven participants were removed from the data because they indicated they did not fill out the questionnaire seriously. Accordingly, the data of 83 participants was analyzed (pure symbolic: $n = 20$; symbolic plus realistic high: $n = 20$; symbolic high, realistic low: $n = 22$; control: $n = 21$).

Manipulation of distant intergroup threats. Similar to Study 2.2, threat was manipulated with a bogus newspaper article about the possible admittance of Turkey to the EU. Compared to the threats presented in Study 2.2 (e.g., by competition on labor market and Islamization in EU), the threats in Study 2.3 were

even more distant and focused on threats specific to Turkey (e.g., Turkey's weak economy and Turkey's different values). As such, this manipulation arguably represents a cleaner manipulation of the two types of threat. In the *pure symbolic threat* condition, a paragraph was presented solely containing statements about EU citizens perceiving the possible admittance of Turkey as threatening because of Turkey's diverging religion, norms, and values. The *symbolic plus realistic high* and *symbolic high, realistic low* condition contained this same paragraph about symbolic threats. Additionally, in these two conditions a paragraph about realistic threats was added which stated that authorities and experts believe that Turkey's *weak and instable [versus healthy and steadily growing]* economy and market *threaten [versus do not threaten]* the EU economy. The fourth condition, which was the *control* condition, did not contain a newspaper article.

Manipulation checks and measures of local intolerance. For the manipulation checks we used comparable items as in Study 2.2: (a) open-ended questions, and (b) two scales at the end of the questionnaire to measure perceived distant realistic (3 items, $a = .80$, $M = 4.14$, $SD = 1.33$; we changed Study 2.2's item "the admittance of Turkey will cost the EU a lot of money" into "the admittance of Turkey will negatively influence the EU economy") and symbolic threats (3 items, $a = .88$, $M = 4.52$, $SD = 1.46$). As in the previous studies, the dependent variables concerned overlap and local intolerance, including measures of feelings, perceived differences, and acculturation attitudes. The following measures from Study 2.2 were used without making any changes: Perceived fundamental differences ($a = .74$, $M = 4.74$, $SD = 0.96$), dissatisfaction with Turkish-Dutch citizens' acculturation (perceived: $M = 4.50$, $SD = 0.84$; preferred: $M = 3.30$, $SD = 0.73$; dissatisfaction: $a = .92$, $M = 1.20$, $SD = 1.30$), the subscales for perceived contact (with Dutch citizens: $a = .93$, $M = 4.54$, $SD = 1.33$; with Turkish-Dutch citizens: $r = .67$, $M = 5.08$, $SD = 1.02$). The two feeling-thermometers for feelings toward Turkish-Dutch citizens were included in

Study 2.3 with minor changes to the scale⁵ (both standardized and centralized around the neutral midpoint of scale, $r = .86$, $M = -.11$, $SD = 0.96$).

Results and discussion

Manipulation checks and threat perception. All participants answered the open-ended questions correctly. Moreover, perceived symbolic threats were higher in the *pure symbolic threat* condition when compared to the control condition alone, $F(1, 79) = 8.56$, $p = .004$, $\eta^2 = .10$, 95% CI [0.41; 2.16]; and all other conditions combined, $F(1, 79) = 8.76$, $p = .004$, $\eta^2 = .10$, 95% CI [0.35; 1.78] (see Figure 2.2a). The three other conditions did not significantly differ from each other (p s > .44). Perceived realistic threats (see Figure 2.2b) were highest in the condition, in which realistic threats were presented as high (i.e., *symbolic plus realistic high* vs. all other conditions), $F(1, 79) = 9.02$, $p = .004$, $\eta^2 = .10$, 95% CI [0.31; 1.52]; as intended, this was mainly driven by the condition in which realistic threats were said to be absent, $F(1, 79) = 21.10$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .21$, 95% CI [0.95; 2.41].

Carry-over effects for distant symbolic threats. In line with our prediction, the overall multivariate pattern showed that participants in the *pure symbolic* condition were more intolerant than participants in the control condition, $F(5, 75) = 4.50$, $p = .001$, $\eta^2 = .23$. Again as predicted — and in line with participants' level of perceived symbolic threats — participants in the *symbolic high*, *realistic low* and *symbolic plus realistic high* condition were *not* more intolerant than in the control condition. Surprisingly and unexpectedly, participants in the *symbolic high*, *realistic low* ($F(5, 75) = 4.54$, $p = .001$, $\eta^2 = .23$) and the *symbolic plus realistic high* conditions ($F(5, 75) = 5.41$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .27$)

⁵ During the study, we had to change the survey software package to keep it compatible with multiple web browsers; however, the new software package did not allow a 100-point scale. Therefore, we changed the thermometers in 20-point scales. The distribution of the 20- ($n = 50$, $M = 10.10$, $SD = 3.69$) and 100-point scales ($n = 33$, $M = 47.94$, $SD = 19.00$) was comparable. Accordingly, we standardized them separately, combined them, and centralized the scale around the standardized value belonging to the midpoint of the original scale (50).

were generally *more* tolerant than in the control condition. As these multivariate outcomes support our prediction that only in the *pure symbolic condition* threats carry over to local intolerance, we contrasted the *pure symbolic* condition with the other three conditions (multivariate $F(5, 75) = 2.81, p = .022, \eta^2 = .16$, see Table 2.3 for univariate comparisons). Compared to the other three conditions, participants in the *pure symbolic* condition perceived Turkish-Dutch citizens to differ more fundamentally from Dutch citizens ($\eta^2 = .07$), had more negative feelings toward Turkish-Dutch citizens ($\eta^2 = .09$), were more dissatisfied with Turkish-Dutch citizens' acculturation ($\eta^2 = .15$), and perceived Turkish-Dutch citizens to keep more contact with other Turkish-Dutch citizens ($\eta^2 = .07$) and to have less contact with native Dutch citizens ($\eta^2 = .08$).

Carry-over effects for realistic threats? The most straightforward way to test whether realistic threats also cause carry-over effects, is to contrast the condition in which realistic threats were said to be high (i.e., *symbolic plus realistic high* condition, the condition in which realistic threats were highest) with the condition in which realistic threats were explicitly said to be absent (i.e., *symbolic high, realistic low* condition, the condition in which the realistic threats were lowest). As in Study 2.2, results showed no significant carry-over effects for distant realistic threats (multivariate comparison: $F(5, 75) = 1.40, p = .15$; see also Table 2.3).

Thus, Study 2.3 corroborated the idea that distant symbolic threats cause local intolerance. For distant realistic threats, we again did not find evidence of carry-over effects, despite a cleaner and this time successful manipulation. Moving beyond previous studies, Study 2.3 showed that the addition of information about distant realistic threats to symbolic threats decreased (rather than increased) perceived symbolic threats and local intolerance.

Table 2.3

Means and standard deviations for the experimental groups of Study 2.3 on various indicators of local intolerance toward Turkish-Dutch citizens, the last two columns present the contrast corresponding to the carry-over hypothesis of distant symbolic threats on local minority groups

Variable	Pure Symbolic		Symbolic + Realistic		Symbolic, no Realistic		Control		Pure Symbolic vs. other conditions	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	F ^a	95% CI
Fundamental Differences	5.17	1.01	4.76	0.83	4.27	1.16	4.80	0.57	5.69*	[0.09, 1.04]
Feelings	-0.60	0.92	0.08	0.79	0.20	1.08	-0.14	0.89	7.36**	[-1.12, -0.17]
Acculturation dissatisfaction	2.09	1.47	1.15	1.14	1.06	1.16	0.57	0.99	14.21**	[0.55, 1.77]
Perceived contact of Turkish-Dutch citizens with ...										
Dutch citizens	3.88	1.53	5.18	1.02	4.77	1.32	4.30	1.11	7.21**	[-1.51, -0.23]
Turkish-Dutch c.	5.52	0.88	4.93	0.92	4.52	1.01	5.40	1.00	5.50*	[0.09, 1.06]

^a df contrast = 79, df error = 1.

† $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

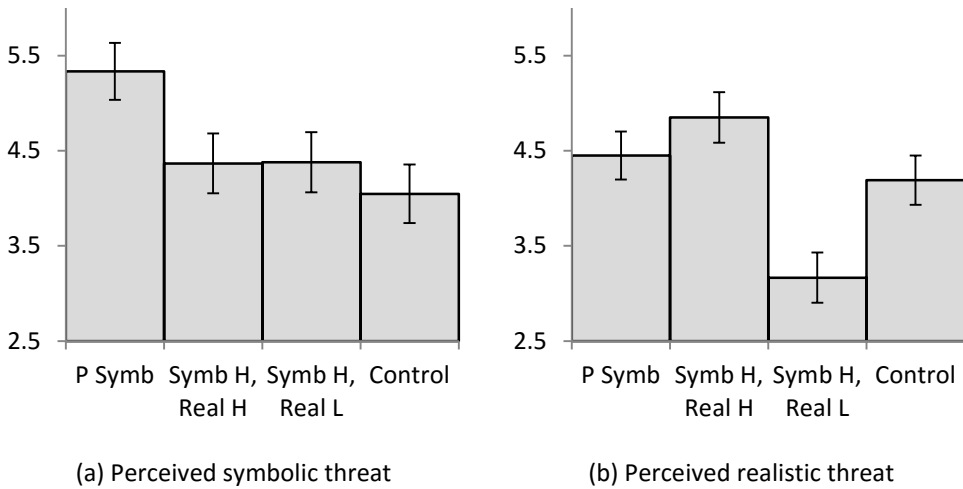


Figure 2.2. Bar graphs displaying the mean and standard error on the manipulation check for (a) symbolic and (b) realistic threat for the four experimental conditions of Study 2.3: *Pure Symbolic* (P Symb), *Symbolic high and Realistic high* (Symb H, Real H), *Symbolic high and Realistic low* (Symb H, Real L), and *Control*.

General Discussion

Three studies documented clear evidence for the hypothesis that distant symbolic threats increase intolerance toward local outgroups that are associated with the threatening distant outgroup. We did not find such convincing support for carry-over effects of distant realistic threats. Moreover, results from Study 2.3 indicated that adding realistic threats to a symbolic threat message even *weakened* the perception of symbolic threats and local intolerance. All these findings point toward the relevance of symbolic threats as an important source of carry-over effects. Our findings have a number of important implications.

First, our findings extend and broaden the domain in which the intergroup threat theory is typically applied. This theory predominantly focused on the

relationship between the threatened group and the specific group causing the threat (e.g., Riek et al., 2006; Stephan et al., 1999, 2009). Our focus on distant and local outgroups broadens the scope of the theory. Our findings also support the idea that symbolic and realistic threats should indeed be differentiated.

Second, our findings are consistent with theorizing about the importance of cultural worldviews and extends this work by showing its carry-over potential. Indeed, the appearance of an outgroup as being different from the ingroup on religion, norms, values, culture, and morality (Biernat et al., 1996; Sears, 1988) was related to intolerance toward other (local) outgroups associated with these worldviews.

Third, our findings may appear to point to an absence of carry-over effects of distant realistic threats. Although the explanation of null effects should always be treated with caution, this absence could be explained by the idea that reactions to competition are often initiated to remove the source of competition (Esses et al., 1998; Maddux et al., 2008); thus, the distant outgroup responsible for the threat should be targeted rather than local minorities. Nonetheless, in the current studies distant realistic threats were mainly included for explorative reasons and hence future research should focus more systematically on their carry-over potential (see Chapter 3).

We believe that the different findings for symbolic and realistic threat can be explained by symbolic threat's potential to be attributed to a superordinate group or category (e.g., religion, culture). Even though one group causes the threat, this might be attributed more generally and influence how a superordinate group is perceived. As a result, local outgroups which are associated with the superordinate group become targets of intolerance as well. However, because our studies were designed to identify carry-over effects and did not focus specifically on the underlying processes, further research is needed to test this suggestion (see Chapter 4).

In addition, more research is needed to explore potential motivational underpinnings of carry-over effects and to integrate them with an associative explanation. For instance, Blumer's group position model proposes that ingroup

reactions to outgroup threat are directed at restoring the ingroup's perceived dominant position (Blumer, 1958; Bobo, 1999; Minescu & Poppe, 2011). Accordingly, when there is fear of outgroup encroachment, people might be motivated to react toward outgroups in general to reaffirm their overall position. Such motivational explanations specifically make sense when these groups are associated with dimensions on which the ingroup's position is threatened (Becker et al., 2011; Butz & Yogeeswaran, 2011; Glick, 2005), yet they are not necessary for carry-over effects to occur. Future research should therefore investigate the interesting interplay between motivation and association in explaining carry-over effects.

Furthermore, one can consider which specific characteristics of the distant group and threat make carry-over effects stronger or weaker. We believe that the abstractness and generality (e.g., Becker et al., 2011) of threats and social categories are likely to promote the size of carry-over effects because, in those instances, threats are most easily attributed to multiple groups. Indeed, we hypothesized and found a strong carry-over potential for symbolic threats which could be considered abstract (Kinder & Sears, 1981; Stephan et al., 1999, 2009) and often concern social categories broader than the outgroup posing the threat (e.g., ideologies or religion; Sheridan, 2006; Van Oudenhoven et al., 2012). However, this does not mean that only symbolic threats can carry over into local intolerance — in fact, realistic threats may carry-over when they are broader and applicable to multiple groups (e.g., macroeconomic downturn; Becker et al., 2011; Butz & Yogeeswaran, 2011) or when they are more extreme (e.g., direct attacks to one's country).

Finally, we note that replication is needed with respect to our finding from Study 2.3 that adding realistic to symbolic threat information might weaken carry-over effects. This finding intriguingly suggests that making threats specific to one group by adding group specific information to the message conveying the threat may lower its carry-over potential, but more evidence is necessary to evaluate this interpretation. Similarly, the current set of studies has general limitations such as that we used real present-day events and convenience samples. Although both choices may limit the

external validity of our results, they can also be seen as producing conservative tests of our hypotheses (e.g., Hainmueller & Hiscox, 2007). Nevertheless, future research should use more minimal methods and different samples to replicate our findings.

In conclusion, three studies consistently identified carry-over effects of distant symbolic intergroup threats into local intolerance. Little support was found for similar carry-over effects of distant realistic threats. These findings are especially important keeping in mind that many intergroup threats emanate from distant groups that individuals are unlikely to encounter except through the media. In this sense, even when the media report covers a threat from far away, this threat — at least when symbolic — can influence intolerance toward groups nearby.

