Threat by association

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Chapter 4

From global threats to local intolerance:

The role of superordinate outgroups

This chapter is based on Bouman, T., Van Zomeren, M., & Otten, S. (manuscript submitted for publication). From global threats to local intolerance: The role of superordinate outgroups.

Globalization has made global categories that include multiple large subgroups increasingly visible. Political structures like the European Union (EU) and the Arab league could be considered as examples of these global categories, as well as symbolic structures based on for instance religion (e.g., Muslim or Christian) or culture (e.g., Asian or Arabic culture). Such global categories can include the ingroup, to which we refer as *superordinate ingroups* (e.g., for Europeans, the EU) — but can also only exist of outgroups, to which we refer as *superordinate outgroups* (e.g., for Europeans, the Arab League). Whereas previous research has mainly focused on superordinate ingroups (Dovidio et al., 2007, 2009; Gaertner et al., 1993; Wenzel, Mummendey, & Waldzus, 2007), we explore whether individuals also form and use superordinate outgroups and test whether these superordinate outgroups enable overgeneralizations within this superordinate category.

Thereby, the current paper introduces a novel focus on whether superordinate outgroups can psychologically connect different outgroups with each other and induce overgeneralizations among them. More specifically, we apply this notion to recent research on *carry-over effects* of distant intergroup threats (Bouman, Van Zomeren, & Otten, 2014, 2015a), which suggests that threats from a distant outgroup (e.g., for native Dutch citizens, Islamic State) can carry over into intolerance toward *other* local outgroups (e.g., for native Dutch citizens, Moroccan-Dutch citizens). We believe that these carry-over effects could be explained by the presence of a superordinate outgroup that connects these outgroups with each other and induces overgeneralizations amongst them (e.g., for native Dutch citizens, Muslims).

Accordingly, the current research has two aims. First, we focus on how individuals *form* superordinate outgroups, which is an under-researched topic. Second, we connect the construal of a superordinate outgroup with previous work that identified the occurrence of carry-over effects of distant intergroup threats into local intolerance (Bouman et al., 2014, 2015a). That is, we test whether carry-over effects can be explained by the existence of a *superordinate outgroup* of global others that associates the distant outgroup with the local outgroups. For this purpose, we report

two studies. Study 4.1 investigates whether individuals can construe different types of superordinate outgroups, namely either based on common identity or common fate (e.g., Campbell, 1958; Lewin, 1948), and whether these superordinate outgroups facilitate overgeneralizations toward included subgroups (e.g., Allport, 1954; Blumer, 1958). Study 4.2 builds on these findings and tests whether superordinate outgroups can function as a conduit through which carry-over effects of intergroup threat occur.

Superordinate outgroups

Globalization has increased the visibility and importance of global structures. These global structures include multiple (large) subgroups (e.g., nations, religious movements, or ethnic groups) that share at least one central feature; therefore, these groups could be considered as superordinate groups (Brewer & Gaertner, 2004; Gaertner et al., 1993; Gaertner, Mann, Murrell, & Dovidio, 1989; Gaertner & Dovidio, 2005). For instance, the superordinate group 'Muslims' encompasses multiple religious subgroups (e.g., Suni, Shia, Ahmadiyya), as well as multiple ethnic groups, nations, and institutions. Therefore, although all these groups could be perceived as members of the same superordinate group, there is still much complexity within this larger entity (Dovidio et al., 2007, 2009).

Superordinate groups can include the ingroup (i.e., common ingroup; Dovidio et al., 2007, 2009; Gaertner et al., 1993, 1989), but can also solely exist of outgroups, to which we refer as the *superordinate outgroup*. Research on superordinate groups has mainly focused on common ingroups (e.g., Dovidio et al., 2007, 2009), and tested whether these common ingroups can improve intergroup conflicts between subgroups within the superordinate category (Brewer & Gaertner, 2004; Gaertner et al., 1993; Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000; Sherif et al., 1961; Sherif, 1966). In contrast to this earlier research about common ingroups, we are interested in superordinate groups solely existing of *outgroups*. We believe that these superordinate outgroups

facilitate overgeneralizations toward included outgroups (e.g., the perception that Muslims are threatening makes Moroccan-Dutch citizens threatening too).

Indeed, various psychological and sociological models indicated that large and abstract categories of others are at the base of overgeneralizations and prejudice (e.g., Allport, 1954; Blumer, 1958; Hamilton, Sherman, & Rodgers, 2004). For instance, Allport (1954) describes categories as *large clusters* of objects or groups in which *as much as possible is assimilated*. Moreover, these categories are used to give meaning to new objects or groups, and tend to give everything that is included within the category the same emotional and ideational value. Likewise, Blumer's (1958) group position model posits that in order for prejudice to occur, the targeted outgroup should be defined as an *abstract and vast entity*. Accordingly, large and abstract categories — such as the 'global' superordinate outgroups we focus on here — can connect various outgroups with each other and facilitate the generalization of individuals' feelings about this category to all subgroups included.

So far, surprisingly little is known about superordinate outgroups and how they are construed. Our point of departure was to consider two types of commonalities that might connect outgroups with each other: common identity and common fate. *Common identity*[1] is the perceived commonality in meaning of the groups, for instance in culture and ideologies (e.g., Campbell, 1958). Because superordinate outgroups based on common identity have some form of shared inner essence, we believe that observers perceive those groups as relatively entitative (e.g., Vincent Yzerbyt, Corneille, & Estrada, 2001). Examples of this type of superordinate outgroup are 'Muslims' for 'Christians' (Allen & Nielsen, 2002; Sheridan, 2006) or 'Capitalists' for 'Communists'. *Common fate* is the perceived similarity in the situation and context the outgroups are in, such as shared goals, similar levels of economic wealth, resources, health, geographic proximity, or political context (e.g., Campbell, 1958;

[1] Although common identity relates to common-identity groups as defined by Prentice, Miller, and Lightdale (1994), Prentice and colleagues referred to individuals' attachment to an (in)group's identity whereas we refer to perceived commonalities in various outgroups' identity.

Lewin, 1948). One example of a superordinate outgroup based on common fate is the 'GIIPS' — a superordinate outgroup consisting of five EU member states (i.e., Greece, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, and Spain) that were considered to have systemic fiscal problems (e.g., Andrikopoulos, Samitas, & Kougepsakis, 2014; Stockhammer & Sotiropoulos, 2014). Other examples of superordinate outgroups based on common fate could be the 'Developing countries', 'Tropical countries', and 'G20'.

Because superordinate outgroups based on common identity concern intrinsic characteristics of the included outgroups, we believe that these groups are typically viewed as more entitative than superordinate outgroups based on common fate, which mainly share contextual commonalities. Earlier research has indicated that within-group generalizations are particularly likely to occur when a group is perceived as entitative. That is, the more observers perceive an outgroup as a coherent entity, the more observers tend to generalize within this category (Campbell, 1958; Denson, Lickel, Curtis, Stenstrom, & Ames, 2006; Lickel, Schmader, & Hamilton, 2003; Stenstrom, Lickel, Denson, & Miller, 2008). For this reason, we believe that superordinate outgroups based on common identity (rather than common fate) are more likely to act like a conduit through which intolerance toward one outgroup becomes generalized toward other outgroups within this superordinate category. Indeed, such construal of a superordinate outgroup may be exactly how we can explain carry-over effects of distant intergroup threats into local intolerance (e.g., Bouman et al., 2014, 2015a).

Explaining carry-over effects of intergroup threat

People experience intergroup threats when they perceive an outgroup to threaten the ingroup (Semyonov et al., 2004; Stephan et al., 2009). According to the intergroup threat theory (Stephan & Renfro, 2002; Stephan et al., 2009), two general types of threat can be differentiated: symbolic and realistic threats. *Symbolic threats* occur when an outgroup is perceived to threaten the ingroup's values, ideologies, or

worldview. *Realistic threats* occur when an outgroup is perceived to threaten the ingroup's resources, welfare, health, or power. Unsurprisingly, both types of intergroup threats induce intolerance toward the outgroup held responsible for the threat (Riek et al., 2006). More conspicuously, however, recent research also indicated that perceived threats from a distant outgroup can carry over into intolerance toward associated local outgroups (Bouman et al., 2014, 2015a).

For example, Bouman and colleagues (2014, Study 2) found that after being presented with potential symbolic threats from the accession of Turkey to the EU (i.e., threats to ingroup's culture, image, values), Dutch participants showed intolerance toward Turkish- and Moroccan-Dutch citizens, which could be considered culturally related to Turkey; but not toward Polish-Dutch citizens, which are generally not perceived as culturally related to Turkey. In another line of research, Bouman and colleagues (2015a) suggested that distant realistic threats can carry over via two types of associations. Firstly, and closely related to the findings for distant symbolic threats, carry-over effects can occur via a *group-based association* in which perceived threats from a distant outgroup affect intolerance toward local outgroups that are perceived as having similar (cultural) values or ideologies as the distant outgroup. At this point in the process, one could expect the construal of a superordinate outgroup based on common identity to facilitate overgeneralization. Secondly, carry-over effects can occur via a *threat-based association,* in which perceived realistic threats from the distant outgroup activate similar threats within the local society. These local threats, in turn, influence intolerance toward the local outgroups that are now perceived as threatening. At this point in the process, one could expect the construal of a superordinate outgroup based on common fate to facilitate overgeneralization.

Overview

We report two studies that test our line of thought. Study 4.1 investigates whether individuals can construe different types of superordinate outgroups (i.e.,

based on common identity and common fate, Campbell, 1958; Lewin, 1948) and examines how entitative these superordinate outgroups are perceived to be. Study 4.2 tests whether superordinate outgroups can function as a conduit through which carry-over effects of intergroup threat occur. Together, this set of studies (a) aims to highlight the under-researched notion of superordinate outgroups and (b) applies this notion to the explanation of how distant intergroup threats carry over into local intolerance through overgeneralizations. Thereby, we underline the importance of a better understanding of global structures, even for local intergroup processes.

Study 4.1

Method

Study 4.1 was designed to test which type of commonality facilitates the construal of an entitative superordinate outgroup. More specifically, we inspected whether individuals can construe superordinate outgroups based on *common identity* and *common fate*. In addition, and in line with previous research suggesting that outgroups perceived as entitative are particularly vulnerable to overgeneralizations (e.g., Denson et al., 2006; Lickel et al., 2003; Stenstrom et al., 2008), we measured these superordinate outgroups' entitativity as an indicator of the superordinate outgroup's potential for overgeneralizations, and thus to be a conduit through which carry-over effects of distant intergroup threats occur (the focus of Study 4.2).

Participants and design. Forty-four Dutch psychology students (77% female, M_{age} = 22 years) volunteered to participate in our study. Our participants were shown a list of 15 foreign national groups (i.e., Americans, Brazilians, Chinese, Cubans, Egyptians, Germans, Greeks, Indonesians, Iranians, Japanese, Mexicans, Moroccans, Poles, Russians, and Turks) and were asked to form three superordinate groups each consisting of at least two of the national groups. Within these instructions, we included an experimental manipulation to see whether information

presenting a common identity and/or fate could be used to form a superordinate outgroup. We chose to focus on foreign national groups because (a) these are outgroups to our native Dutch participants and (b) global threats are often discussed as being caused by national outgroups, thereby connecting Study 4.1 to our intergroup threat context. After having categorized various subgroups into a certain superordinate category, we asked participants to describe the superordinate group's shared central features and measured its perceived entitativity, valence, and overlap with the participants' own identity.

For each participant, this complete procedure was repeated three times. Thus, participants formed, in total, three superordinate groups based on the same instructions (either common identity, common fate, or both). We allowed participants to reuse outgroups, and we therefore permitted superordinate outgroups to overlap with each other. Accordingly, at the end of the questionnaire participants had created and filled-out questions for three superordinate groups.

Manipulation. The experimental manipulation was included in the instruction and informed the participants to construe a superordinate outgroup based on (a) common identity (n = 17), (b) common fate (n = 13), or (c) common identity and/or fate (n = 14). We included the combined condition to see whether participants had a preference for one specific type of commonality. Within the common identity condition the instruction read: "Create a group by selecting (at least 2) national groups that closely resemble each other in their *convictions (e.g., norms and values, culture, or religion)*". Within the common fate condition, the last part was replaced by "*living conditions (e.g., resources, wealth, and power)*". Within the combined condition, participants were instructed to create a group based on "*convictions (e.g., norms and values, culture, or religion) or living conditions (e.g., resources, wealth, and power)*" (order was counter-balanced).

Measures. For each superordinate group, we included thirteen self-report questions (for intercorrelations between the measures see Table 4.1). Two open-ended questions were asked to inspect the commonalities between the included groups. These items were: "Provide a matching name for the just created superordinate

group." and: "What is the most important shared characteristic within this superordinate group?". Two independent coders coded the provided answers in ten more general types of commonalities (see Table 4.2, 79.82% inter-rater agreement, all inconsistencies were resolved after discussion), which were thereafter coded as based on common identity and/or common fate (see Table 4.2, 93.94% inter-rater agreement, all inconsistencies were resolved after discussion). In addition, both coders indicated whether the created superordinate outgroup could be, for our native Dutch participants, potentially considered an ingroup (n = 20, e.g., EU members, Western nations), an outgroup (n = 106, e.g., Asian, Muslim), or 'unclear' (n = 6, e.g., 'history makers', pursuit to economic power; 89.39% inter-rater agreement, all inconsistencies resolved after discussion).

Table 4.1

Intercorrelations between the variables of Study 1. The variables "common identity" and "common fate" represent whether the superordinate outgroup created by the participant is based on the respective commonality (0 no and 1 yes).

	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.
1. Common identity	-.76**	.39**	.54**	-.11	.09	-.04	.00
2. Common fate	—	-.17	-.41**	.00	-.04	.04	.06
3. Entitativity		—	.69**	.41**	.15	-.06	-.05
4. Perceived common identity			—	.34**	.15	.00	-.03
5. Perceived common fate				—	-.02	.10	-.25*
6. Valence					—	-.47**	.44**
7. Perceived threats						—	-.32*
8. Perceived similarities							—

*p < .01, two-tailed. **p < .001, two-tailed.

Table 4.2

Classification of the provided answers into common identity and common fate and the underlying commonalities. n_1 represents the first mentioned commonality and n_2 the second mentioned commonality (if any).

Cluster	n_1	n_2	Examples of provided answers
Common identity	**67**	**7**	
Culture	42	6	Culture, collectivism/individualism, Western culture
Religion	20	1	Religion, Islam, Catholic
Political orientation	5	0	Communism, capitalism
Common fate	**62**	**16**	
Resources	26	4	Economic resources, technology, cultural heritage
Geography	12	3	Climate, environment, location, continent
Power	9	1	World power, political power, military power
Context	8	3	High criminality, in war, refugees, immigrants
Political structure	3	1	Dictatorships, political propaganda, EU
Language	2	3	Similar language
Appearance	2	1	Appearance, looks
Miscellaneous	2	0	Vodka
No value	1	109	

Six items were adapted from an existing scale (Castano, Yzerbyt, Paladino, & Sacchi, 2002; Spencer-Rodgers, Hamilton, & Sherman, 2007) to measure the superordinate group's ***entitativity*** on a 7-point scale (1 *not at all* and 7 *completely*), α = .83, M = 4.07, SD = 1.04. The items were: "To what extent do you consider this group to be an entity? How important do you think this group is for its members? Do you believe that people within this group feel connected to the group? To what extent are people within this group similar to each other? To what extent do you believe there is solidarity within this group? To what extent can you judge this group as a whole?". Entitativity was included as our main dependent variable to measure

whether, and to see which of the created superordinate groups were seen as entities that would facilitate overgeneralization.

One item measured ***perceived common identity*** (i.e., "Do you believe people within this group are similar in their convictions?"), M = 4.60, SD = 1.49, and another item ***perceived common fate*** (i.e., "How similar are the living conditions of the people within this group?"), M = 4.72, SD = 1.39, on the same 7-point scale as was used for entitativity. These items were included to see whether participants composed groups based on the experimentally manipulated instructions.

Finally, three items were included for exploratory reasons to measure the superordinate group's ***valence*** (1 *negative* and 7 *positive*; M = 4.58, SD = 1.20), ***perceived threat*** (1 *not threatening* and 7 *very threatening*; M = 3.06, SD = 1.62), and ***similarities*** between the superordinate outgroup and the participants themselves (1 *no similarities* and 7 *many similarities*; M = 3.00, SD = 1.69).

Results

Manipulation effects. First, we checked whether participants construed superordinate groups based on both common identity and common fate, and whether these superordinate groups corresponded with our experimental manipulation. As can be observed in Table 4.3, participants generally construed superordinate groups in line with the instructions. When participants were instructed to form superordinate groups around common identities, most participants construed a superordinate group around common identities; when participants were instructed to form superordinate groups around common fate, most participants construed a superordinate group around common fate. Moreover, in the combined condition participants created both types of superordinate outgroups without a clear preference for one type of commonality. These results indicate that both types could be used to construe superordinate groups.

Table 4.3

Cross-tabs representing the correspondence of the created superordinate outgroups with the experimentally manipulated instructions.

		Experimental Condition					
		Common identity		Common fate		Combined	
		Perceived common fate		Perceived common fate		Perceived common fate	
		No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Perceived common identity	No	0	11	0	28	3[1]	15
	Yes	37	3	4	7	20	4

[1]These 3 cases represent the answers coded as miscellaneous or missing (see Table 1).

Repeated measure ANOVAs to control for our mixed design[2] indicated no reliable between-subjects effect of our experimental condition on our measures of entitativity, $F(2, 40) = 0.02$, $p = .981$, perceived common identity, $F(2, 40) = 1.75$, $p = .187$, perceived common fate, $F(2, 40) = 0.09$, $p = .912$, valence, $F(2, 40) = 0.21$, $p = .811$, threat, $F(2, 40) = 071$, $p = .498$, or overlap with self, $F(2, 40) = 0.43$, $p = .652$. Accordingly, although most participants answered in line with our manipulation, the differences between the experimental conditions on our dependent measures were too small to be reliable.

Common identity and common fate superordinate outgroups. We then performed additional ANOVAs in which we used our coded type of commonality as the independent variable[3]. Because the current paper focuses on superordinate outgroups, and because only a few superordinate ingroups ($n = 20$) were created, we decided to only present the analyses for superordinate outgroups ($n = 106$). In Table 4.4, the means for each type of superordinate outgroup are presented and compared with each other. The three types of superordinate outgroups did not reliably differ

[2] Because our hypothesis did not concern within-subject effects, we choose to control for, but not discuss, within-subject effects (also because none of the effects were statistically reliable).
[3] To control for within-subject effects, we ran additional analyses but also included participant number as a factor. Because the outcomes of these analyses were similar to the outcomes presented in text we choose to not report them.

from each other on perceived common fate, $F(2, 100) = 2.27$, $p = .109$, valence, $F(2, 100) = 0.48$, $p = .622$, threat, $F(2, 100) = 0.12$, $p = .889$, and overlap with the participants themselves, $F(2, 100) = 0.36$, $p = .698$.

Importantly however, the types of superordinate outgroups did differ in the hypothesized way on perceived entitativity, $F(2, 100) = 11.41$, $p < .001$, and common identity, $F(2, 99) = 20.43$, $p < .001$. Most important for our hypothesis, superordinate outgroups based on common identity were perceived as more entitative than superordinate outgroups based on common fate, $M_{difference} = 0.71$, $SE = 0.21$, $p = .001$, 95%CI [0.30; 1.12]. Moreover, participants perceived the superordinate outgroup based on common identity as having a stronger common identity, $M_{difference} = 1.70$, $SE = 0.28$, $p < .001$, 95%CI [1.15; 2.25]. Superordinate outgroups construed by participants on *both* common identity and common fate most closely resembled superordinate outgroups construed on common identity, and were perceived as more entitative than the superordinate outgroups based on only one type of commonality, $M_{difference} = 1.07$, $SE = 0.31$, $p < .001$, 95%CI [0.46; 1.69].

Table 4.4

Means on the dependent measures for each type of superordinate outgroup. Different superscripts indicate statistically significant differences between the different types of superordinate outgroups.

	Common identity ($n = 53$)		Common fate ($n = 39$)		Both types ($n = 11$)	
Dependent variable	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Entitativity	4.27[b]	0.89	3.56[a]	1.12	4.98[c]	0.77
Common identity	5.36[b]	0.92	3.66[a]	1.76	5.36[b]	0.92
Common fate	4.64	1.35	4.42	1.56	5.45	1.21
Valence	4.38	1.10	4.21	1.24	4.55	0.93
Threat	3.13	1.58	3.29	1.80	3.27	1.49
Self-overlap	2.45	1.32	2.54	1.19	2.82	1.60

Note. Different superscripts indicate statistical significant between-condition differences.

Discussion

The Study 4.1 findings suggest that both common identity and common fate can be used to connect different groups with each other and to categorize these groups within a superordinate group. Indeed, many of the construed superordinate groups could be considered outgroups to our Dutch participants (e.g., Asians, Muslims), demonstrating that participants construed superordinate *outgroups*. Nevertheless, and as expected, superordinate outgroups based on common identity were typically perceived as more entitative than superordinate outgroups based on common fate. Superordinate outgroups based on both types of commonalities together were perceived as most entitative. A straightforward explanation for this relatively high level of entitativity for superordinate outgroups based on both types of commonalities is that the more characteristics the subgroups have in common, the more similar these subgroups are perceived to be; thereby, making these superordinate outgroups particularly entitative.

Building on these findings, we designed Study 4.2 to apply the notion of a superordinate outgroup as an explanation of carry-over effects of distant intergroup threat (Bouman et al., 2014, 2015a). Based on the Study 4.1 findings that superordinate outgroups can be construed around both common identity and common fate, and that superordinate outgroups based on a combination of these commonalities are most entitative, we assumed that such broadly defined superordinate outgroups have the strongest carry-over potential in a context of distant intergroup threat. For that reason, we operationalized this type of superordinate outgroup in Study 4.2 to test whether a superordinate outgroup can function as a conduit through which distant intergroup threats carry over into local intolerance — a clear instance of overgeneralization.

Study 4.2

The main goal of Study 4.2 was to experimentally test whether overgeneralizations of distant intergroup threats can be explained by a superordinate outgroup that connects the distant outgroup causing the threat to outgroups within perceivers' local environment. Thereby, Study 4.2 illustrates the impact superordinate outgroups might have on intergroup relations in the specific context of carry-over effects of distant intergroup threats (Bouman et al., 2014, 2015a). More specifically, we manipulated the salience of different superordinate outgroups (i.e., Asians versus Middle-Easterners) to see whether this influenced which local outgroups are targeted by carry-over effects.

To be able to manipulate the salience of a superordinate outgroup, we needed a distant outgroup that was relatively unfamiliar to our participants. In this way, we could present different superordinate outgroups without interfering with participants' own beliefs. For this reason, we choose the nation of *Tajikistan* as our distant outgroup. The geographic location of the nation made it possible for us to manipulate its superordinate outgroup membership as being either part of Asia, or the (Greater) Middle-East[4]. These two superordinate categories could be considered superordinate outgroups for native Dutch participants. Moreover, the broadness of these categories enabled us to make commonalities based on common identity and fate salient within each superordinate category (which was done in the information containing the threat, see below).

Importantly, three large Dutch minority groups could be included in one or both of these superordinate groups and are therefore, according to our hypothesis, potential targets of carry-over effects. These local minority groups are: Indonesian-Dutch citizens (considered as Asian in the Netherlands), Moroccan-Dutch citizens

[4] This superordinate categorization is—objectively—not completely accurate. However, because the participants were unfamiliar with the nation, we were confident that they would believe the information we provided to them.

(considered as Middle-Eastern in the Netherlands), and Turkish-Dutch citizens (generally considered as Middle-Eastern, but also geographically seen as Asian). We thus predicted that when Tajikistan was presented as a member of the superordinate group 'Asians', distant threats from Tajikistan would be associated with negative feelings toward Indonesian- and Turkish-Dutch citizens. Conversely, when Tajikistan was presented as part of the superordinate outgroup 'Middle-Easterners', distant threats would be associated with negative feelings toward Moroccan- and Turkish-Dutch citizens. Note that Indonesian- and Moroccan-Dutch citizens are only included in the superordinate outgroup 'Asians' or 'Middle-Easterners' respectively, whereas Turkish-Dutch citizens are expected to be included in both superordinate outgroups. Thus, we expected that the 'Asians' or 'Middle-Easterners' superordinate outgroup would guide carry-over effects of intergroup threats from a distant outgroup into intolerance toward different local outgroups.

Method

Participants. Fifty-five native Dutch undergraduate university students (71% female; M_{age} = 19 years) participated in a study entitled "Current affairs" for partial fulfilment of course requirements. The questionnaire was presented as consisting of two unrelated parts. First, the part about Tajikistan (including the manipulation) and second the part about minority groups within the Dutch society (consisting of the dependent variables). In order to make the potential link between the questionnaires less explicit, we included several filler items in the first part about Tajikistan (questions were about their previous knowledge about the nation and their opinion of the nation and the situation) and the local Dutch society (e.g., overlap with native Dutch).

Manipulation. Participants read a bogus newspaper article describing the distant nation Tajikistan as threatening. Tajikistan was said to continuously violate human rights and to be a breeding ground for anti-Western extremist organizations. Depending on the experimental condition, we activated the salience of the

superordinate outgroup Asians (n = 27) versus Middle-Easterners (n = 28). This was done by adding the phrase "the Asian [versus the Middle-Eastern] nation" before Tajikistan in the text. Moreover, participants received a map in which the Tajikistan was presented as either part of Asia (Tajikistan was presented at the left-hand border and Indonesia at the right-hand border of the map) or the Middle-East (Tajikistan was presented at the right-hand border and Morocco at the left-hand border of the map).

Knowledge about Tajikistan. To check whether participants were relatively unfamiliar with Tajikistan, we asked participants how much they knew about Tajikistan before any other information was presented (1 *Nothing at all* and 7 *A lot*). As expected, the knowledge level was extremely low, M = 1.31, SD = 0.66.

Feelings of threat from Tajikistan. After participants read the information on Tajikistan, we measured their feelings of threat from Tajikistan with one item "Do you feel threatened by the current situation in Tajikistan?", 1 *Not at all* and 7 *Completely*; M = 2.73, SD = 1.53. This item was used as the predictor variable in our analyses.

Feelings of threat from the superordinate outgroup. The item for perceived threats from the superordinate outgroup was similar to the item for Tajikistan, but now we replaced "Tajikistan" by either "Asians", N = 27, M = 2.30, SD = 1.41, or "Middle-Easterners", N = 30, M = 3.11, SD = 1.40, depending on the experimental condition. This item was included to directly compare the superordinate outgroups with each other.

Perceived threats to the world. For exploratory reasons we also measured the extent to which participants perceived Tajikistan as a threat to the 'world' (rather than the self) with 3 items on the same 7-point scale as was used for feelings of threat. The items were: "To what extent do you think the beliefs in Tajikistan pose a threat to the world?", "The current situation in Tajikistan threatens the norms and values in the world.", and "The current situation in Tajikistan threatens global human rights.", a = .81, M = 4.54, SD = 1.33.

Tajikistan's typicality for the superordinate outgroup. We included two items to measure Tajikistan's typicality for the superordinate outgroup Asians or

Middle-Easterners (depending on the experimental condition). The items were "How prototypical is Tajikistan for the [Asian or Middle-Eastern] world" and "To what extent is Tajikistan similar to other nations in the [Asian or Middle-Eastern] world" (Asians: $n = 27$, $r = .54$, $p < .001$, $M = 3.06$, $SD = 1.12$; Middle-Easterners: $n = 28$, $r = .63$, $p < .001$, $M = 4.20$, $SD = 1.26$). Like our measure of feelings of threat from the superordinate outgroup, this measure was included to directly compare the superordinate outgroups with each other.

Feelings toward local minority groups. For each minority group, three feeling-thermometers (0 *cold, unfriendly*, *negative* and 100 *warm, friendly, positive*) were included and combined to measure participants' feelings toward these groups; Moroccan-Dutch citizens, $a = .92$, $M = 49.17$, $SD = 20.36$, Turkish-Dutch citizens, $a = .96$, $M = 52.57$, $SD = 21.37$, and Indonesian-Dutch citizens, $a = .92$, $M = 72.15$, $SD = 15.69$[5]. This variable was our dependent measure and was thus considered the outcome of carry-over effects. Intercorrelations between our measures are presented in Table 4.5.

Results

Mean-level effects of manipulation. Since the same threats were presented in both conditions, we did not have specific expectations about, and did not find reliable differences between, the two experimental conditions on feelings of threat from Tajikistan, $t(53) = -0.12$, $p = .776$, and perceived threats to the world from Tajikistan, $t(53) = -0.02$, $p = .963$. Similarly, the manipulation did not affect feelings toward the local outgroups Indonesian-Dutch citizens, $t(53) = -1.03$, $p = .308$, and Moroccan-Dutch citizens $t(53) = -1.46$, $p = .150$. Generally, Turkish-Dutch citizens

[5] Originally, we also included questions about Chinese- and Surinamese-Dutch citizens. However, due to a programming error these questions were not presented to all our participants. For the 42 participants who filled-out these questions, we did not find any effects. Therefore, we decided to not report these findings within the current chapter.

were perceived more negatively in the Asians condition than in the Middle-Easterners condition, $M_{Difference}$ = -11.35, t(53), = -2.03, p = .048, 95%CI [-22.59; -0.11]. In addition, participants perceived more threats from the superordinate outgroup Middle-Easterners than from the superordinate outgroup Asians, $M_{Difference}$ = -0.81, t(53), = -2.14, p = .037, 95%CI [-1.57; -0.05], and perceived Tajikistan to be more prototypical for the superordinate outgroup Middle-Easterners than for the superordinate outgroup Asians, $M_{Difference}$ = -1.14, t(53), = -3.55, p < .001, 95%CI [-1.79; -0.50].

Table 4.5

Intercorrelations between the measures of Study 2 separated by condition. Intercorrelations for the Asian condition are presented above the diagonal; intercorrelations for the Middle-Eastern condition are presented below the diagonal.

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.
1. Threat from Tajikistan	—	.28	.46*	.11	-.35†	-.21	-.48*
2. Threat to world from Tajikistan	.32†	—	-.17	-.23	-.26	-.27	-.22
3. Threat from superordinate outgroup	.75**	.53**	—	.55	-.28	-.21	-.27
4. Prototypicality	.38*	-.01	.36†	—	.07	-.04	-.02
5. Feelings toward Turkish-Dutch citizens	-.36†	-.05	-.52**	-.29	—	.78**	.60**
6. Feelings toward Moroccan-Dutch citizens	-.35†	.00	-.48**	-.31	.94**	—	.54**
7. Feelings toward Indonesian-Dutch citizens	-.28	.10	-.29	-.36†	.66**	.63**	—

†p < .05, one-tailed. *p < .05, two-tailed. **p < .01, two-tailed.

Carry-over effects of distant threats. Although feelings of threats from Tajikistan were relatively low, moderated regression analyses using Hayes (2013) PROCESS macro for SPSP (model 1) confirmed the predicted pattern of associations between threats and feelings toward local minority groups (see Table 4.6). When Tajikistan was presented as an Asian nation, perceived threats from Tajikistan were

predictive of more negative feelings toward Indonesian- and Turkish-Dutch citizens, who can both be categorized as members of the superordinate outgroup 'Asians'. When Tajikistan was presented as a Middle-Eastern nation, perceived threats from Tajikistan were predictive of more negative feelings toward Moroccan- and Turkish-Dutch citizens, who can both be categorized as members of the superordinate outgroup 'Middle-Easterners'. Despite this clear pattern, none of the interaction-effects between the manipulation and the perceived threat on attitudes toward each of the local minorities was significant; Indonesian-Dutch citizens, $F(1, 51) = 1.59$, $p = .213$, $\Delta R^2 = .03$, Moroccan-Dutch citizens, $F(1, 51) = 0.12$, $p = .726$, $\Delta R^2 < .01$, and Turkish-Dutch citizens, $F(1, 51) = 0.01$, $p = .912$, $\Delta R^2 < .01$. Note that our predictions are at the level of the simple or conditioned effects; not at the (omnibus) level of the interaction itself, which can be considered overly conservative in the case of interaction patterns that predict a significant simple effect at one level of a variable, but no effect at the other (Jaccard & Turrisi, 2003).

Table 4.6

Unstandardized regression coefficients of perceived threats of Tajikistan on attitudes toward Turkish-, Moroccan- and Indonesian-Dutch citizens, separated for the experimental conditions based on presented superordinate outgroup Middle-Eastern *(n = 28) and Asian (n = 27).*

Attitudes toward	Condition	*B*	*SE*	95% CI
Indonesian-Dutch citizens	Middle-Eastern	-2.38	1.73	[-5.86; 1.10]
	Asian	-5.66**	1.95	[-9.57; -1.76]
Turkish-Dutch citizens	Middle-Eastern	-4.93*	2.36	[-9.66; -0.20]
	Asian	-4.53†	2.65	[-9.85; 0.78]
Moroccan-Dutch citizens	Middle-Eastern	-4.20†	2.34	[-8.91; 0.50]
	Asian	-2.96	2.63	[-8.25; 2.32]

†$p < .05$, one-tailed. *$p < .05$, two-tailed. **$p < .01$, two-tailed.

Discussion

The results of Study 4.2 suggest that carry-over effects of distant intergroup threat into local intolerance can be explained by the construal of a superordinate outgroup. Only when there was a psychological association available that individuals could put to use, we found the predicted relationships with threat from a distant outgroup and intolerance toward local outgroups. Specifically, when Tajikistan was presented as Asian, threats from Tajikistan carried over into less tolerant feelings toward Indonesian- and Turkish-Dutch citizens (but not toward Moroccan-Dutch citizens); when Tajikistan was presented as Middle-Eastern, threats from Tajikistan carried over into less tolerant feelings toward Moroccan- and Turkish-Dutch citizens (but not toward Indonesian-Dutch citizens).

However, admittedly, one limitation of Study 4.2 is that the effects on feelings toward Turkish-Dutch citizens in the Asian condition, and Moroccan-Dutch citizens in the Middle-Eastern condition, were only statistically significant when tested one-sided. Possibly, because participants were in general more negative toward Turkish- and Moroccan-Dutch citizens than toward Indonesian-Dutch citizens, there was less room for distant threats to exert influence on participants' perceptions of these local outgroups. Moreover, Turkish-Dutch citizens are generally perceived to have more in common with Middle-Easterners than with Asians, which could explain the weaker effect in the Asian condition (e.g., Van Osch & Breugelmans, 2012). Alternatively, due to recent events within the Middle-East, the presented threats might have activated another superordinate outgroup (e.g., Muslim, terrorist) that connects Tajikistan with Turkish- and Moroccan-Dutch citizens, even in the Asian condition. This explanation would also suggest a more clear-cut distinction between the conditions on feelings toward Indonesian-Dutch citizens because Indonesian-Dutch citizens are not typically associated with the presented threats, which is exactly what we found. Therefore, and despite the aforementioned limitations, the pattern of findings corresponds with our

predictions and fits previous findings about carry-over effects (Bouman et al., 2014, 2015a).

General Discussion

The results of two empirical studies by and large support the idea that individuals can construe superordinate outgroups (Study 4.1), which can serve as a conduit through which carry-over effects of distant intergroup threats occur (Study 4.2). Study 4.1 indicated that individuals are able to categorize multiple outgroups into a superordinate outgroup based on common identity (e.g., all Muslims) or common fate (e.g., all wealthy countries). Superordinate outgroups based on common identity were perceived as slightly more entitative than superordinate outgroups based on common fate; moreover, superordinate outgroups based on both types of commonalities were perceived as most entitative, which make these superordinate outgroups particularly likely to facilitate overgeneralizations and thus carry-over effects (e.g., Denson et al., 2006; Lickel et al., 2003; Stenstrom et al., 2008). Study 4.2 specifically looked at these broadly-defined superordinate outgroups and supported the idea that such superordinate outgroups can function as a conduit through which carry-over effects of distant intergroup threats occur. The findings showed that, depending on the presence of a superordinate outgroup (i.e., Asians versus Middle-Easterners), the distant outgroup (i.e., Tajikistan) was linked to different local outgroups (i.e., Indonesian- and Turkish-Dutch citizens versus Moroccan- and Turkish-Dutch citizens, respectively) and through this conduit facilitated intolerance toward them.

Our findings have novel theoretical implications and more generally broaden the scope in which superordinate groups can be studied. Whereas previous research mainly focused on superordinate groups that include the *ingroup* (e.g., Dovidio et al., 2007, 2009; Gaertner et al., 1993, 1989; Wenzel et al., 2007), we show that superordinate groups solely containing of outgroups are important and relevant as

well. That is, whereas previous research mainly focused on how superordinate group formation can resolve intergroup conflicts, our findings indicated that superordinate groups could also be a channel through which overgeneralizations of intolerance occur. Thereby, our findings provide a new link between research on superordinate groups (e.g., Brewer & Gaertner, 2004; Dovidio et al., 2007, 2009; Gaertner et al., 1993, 1989; Wenzel et al., 2007) and classical theories on prejudice (e.g., Allport, 1954; Blumer, 1958). In addition, our finding that observers' can construe superordinate outgroups based on a perceived common identity (e.g., religion) and/or fate (e.g., wealth) offers important insights in how superordinate outgroups are formed, which might apply to the formation of superordinate ingroups as well.

More specifically, our findings shed new light on research on carry-over effects of intergroup threats. Study 4.2 indicated that superordinate outgroups could provide an explanation for why perceived threats from a distant outgroup induce intolerance toward local outgroups (Bouman et al., 2014, 2015a). In addition, our outcomes relate to earlier findings on the processes underlying carry-over effects (Bouman et al., 2015a). Bouman and colleagues (2015a) suggested that observers generalize their attitudes about the distant outgroup toward local outgroups (i.e., group-based association pathway), as well as perceived threats from the distant outgroup (i.e., threat-based association pathway). An interesting implication of this might be that superordinate outgroups based on common identity and common fate might differ in what gets generalized: group attitudes or group threats. Moreover, different types of intergroup threats (i.e., symbolic versus realistic) might activate different types of superordinate outgroups (i.e., common identity versus fate). For instance, observers might be most likely to generalize perceived realistic threats (e.g., from Greece to the Dutch economy) to local outgroups (e.g., alert Dutch about potential threats from immigrants) by activating a superordinate outgroup based on common fate (e.g., 'economically weak and dependent'). This suggests dependence between the type of threat, type of superordinate outgroup, and type of generalization. Further research is needed to test these suggestions.

The present findings are particularly relevant in the light of globalization for two main reasons. Firstly, globalization may increase both the objective and psychological presence and visibility of *global structures* such as the superordinate outgroups we focus on. Accordingly, globalization enables and encourages psychological processes such as carry-over effects of distant intergroup threats. Secondly, globalization may broaden the objective and psychological visibility of distant and global *events* (e.g., through media coverage, for a similar argument see Bouman et al., 2014); thereby, globalization may increase the scope of events that could carry over into local intolerance. For these reasons, globalization appears to be an important enabler and amplifier of carry-over effects of distant intergroup threats through the construal of superordinate outgroups.

Our findings also have potential applied value. For instance, our results indicate that the occurrence and specific targets of carry-over effects may depend on whether (and if so which) superordinate outgroup is construed by individuals. Avoiding the explicit use of superordinate outgroups within for instance policy and news reports could therefore help to prevent carry-over effects from occurring. Of course, even in the absence of information on superordinate outgroups in reports, observers might construe superordinate outgroups themselves (although in fact little is known about this; admittedly, in Study 4.1, we instructed individuals to construe superordinate outgroups). Alternatively, one could try to prevent carry-over effects by categorizing the outgroup perceived as threatening in an exclusive and quite select superordinate outgroup (see also Bouman et al., 2015a); thereby, limiting the number of outgroups to which carry-over effects could occur.

Our studies also have at least three potential limitations. Firstly, because of the under-researched status of superordinate outgroups, we chose to first identify what types of superordinate outgroups can be formed (Study 4.1), where after we applied these findings to the case of carry-over effects of intergroup threats (Study 4.2). Whereas this strategy enabled us to answer our main research questions and illustrate the relevance of superordinate outgroups, our approach did limit the external

validity of our findings as our studies were not designed to replicate our findings across studies and contexts. Accordingly, future research should try to replicate the outcomes of our studies and, ideally, combine both research designs within a single study. Nevertheless, we do not believe that this limitation is problematic for the current paper's purpose. In our view, our findings show that superordinate outgroups are psychologically relevant and, given their under-researched status, deserving of further and more systematic study.

Secondly, it is true that although we differentiated between superordinate outgroups based on common identity and common fate, this distinction is sometimes difficult to maintain in practice. As the results of Study 4.1 already indicated, superordinate outgroups might also have a mixed nature of both common identity and common fate. For instance, the superordinate outgroup GIIPS, which was seen as having structural fiscal problems (e.g., Andrikopoulos et al., 2014; Stockhammer & Sotiropoulos, 2014), is also often portrayed as the PIGGS (e.g., O'Flynn, Monaghan, & Power, 2014) — a name with a negative connotation that is linked to stereotypes of the included outgroups (e.g., lazy). However, because both types of commonalities appeared to be conducive to the construal of superordinate outgroups and thus carry-over effects, and because each type of commonality might result in different generalizations (e.g., generalizations of threats versus feelings), we believe the analytical distinction between superordinate outgroups based on common identity and common fate remains relevant.

Finally, our focus in Study 4.2 on the process of carry-over effects of distant intergroup threats might give the impression that superordinate outgroups are mainly delivery channels of negative intergroup relationships. Possibly, however, superordinate outgroups can also serve as channels for positive overgeneralizations. For instance, positive experiences with one outgroup may generalize to other outgroups when these outgroups share a superordinate outgroup membership. Indeed, research on secondary transfer effects of more direct forms of intergroup contact suggests that such positive generalizations might occur (e.g., Brown &

Hewstone, 2005; Pettigrew, 2009; Tausch et al., 2010). Future research can test whether such effects could also be explained by the existence of superordinate outgroups; thus, whether superordinate outgroups can also have positive consequences rather than negative ones (see Chapter 5 for a first empirical test of this idea).

Conclusion

Our findings suggest that individuals can construe and put to use superordinate outgroups within which attitudes and threats could be assimilated, leading to overgeneralizations to outgroups within this larger entity. These superordinate outgroups can be based on perceived commonalities between outgroups' identities (e.g., religion) and fate (e.g., wealth). Moreover, superordinate outgroups are often global structures that include multiple outgroups at different levels of the society (e.g., distant and local outgroups). Thereby, superordinate outgroups can psychologically connect different outgroups with each other and provide a conduit through which distant situations can impact people's perception of more nearby outgroups. In this way, 'global' superordinate outgroups can make distant intergroup situations relevant at the 'local' level. Indeed, in times of globalization, a better understanding of whether and how individuals construe and use superordinate outgroups seems not only theoretically, but also societally relevant.