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Threat by association

Bouman, Thijs

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Chapter 6

General discussion

The main aim of this dissertation was to answer the questions whether, when, and how global observers become more prejudiced toward local outgroups when they perceive a distant outgroup to pose an intergroup threat (i.e., carry-over effects). This question is particularly relevant in the current globalized world in which the media frequently confronts global observers with foreign threats (e.g., for Dutch citizens, the possible radicalization of the Arab world, or the presumed influence of Greece on the global debt crisis). Due to the distance between the global observer (e.g., a native Dutch citizen) and the distant outgroup (e.g., Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood), global observers are generally unable to directly react upon these threats toward the distant outgroup. Instead, however, they may react to such threats in their local environment. This highlights the relevance of studying whether remote threats might impact local intergroup relations. Throughout this dissertation, we indeed found that distant intergroup threats can carry over into local intolerance.

Our findings accentuate the value of studying the influence of foreign threats on local intergroup relations (e.g., with Turkish-Dutch citizens). Nonetheless, to date most research on intergroup threats has focused on *local* threats (e.g., immigrants; Stephan et al., 2005, 1999; Ward & Masgoret, 2006) and direct reactions toward the local outgroup perceived as source of this threat (for a meta-analysis see Riek et al., 2006). Accordingly, not much is known yet about carry-over effects. Therefore, with this dissertation we hope to add new insights in the possible underpinnings of local prejudice by focusing on carry-over effects of distant group threats. We thus added distant intergroup threats as a new dimension to the analysis of local prejudices, suggesting that events far away may affect local intergroup relations.

However, carry-over effects of distant intergroup threat are certainly not a given and little is known about the underlying processes. Within the current dissertation we therefore focused on *when* and *how* perceived threats from a distant outgroup relate to local prejudice. We hypothesized that both symbolic (e.g., threats to the ingroup's worldview) and realistic (e.g., threats to the ingroup's possessions) intergroup threats (Stephan et al., 1999, 2009) might carry over into local prejudice,

and that carry-over effects mainly occur when the global observer perceives an *association* between the distant and local outgroup that could resemble a *superordinate outgroup* (e.g., the group of Muslims as bridging distant Egyptians and local Dutch-Moroccans). Our findings indeed suggest that it is important to differentiate between symbolic and realistic threats as both threats seem to carry over differently, although both threats can carry over and often co-occur.

In the current discussion chapter, we reflect on the empirical chapters (Chapter 2 – 5) in which these research questions were addressed in various ways and across a variety of contexts. For this purpose, we first summarize the main findings of each empirical chapter, and then reflect on the theoretical and practical implications of our findings, discuss potential limitations, and close by providing directions for future research.

Summary of the Main Findings

Because not much is known about carry-over effects of intergroup threats, we started by exploring the concept of carry-over effects and testing whether distant group threats can indeed carry over. Chapter 2 mainly focused on carry-over effects of distant symbolic threats because we regarded these threats to have the strongest carry-over potential. Chapter 3 specifically investigated whether distant realistic threats carry over, and what kind of associations could underlie these carry-over effects. Chapter 4 built on these findings and connected these associations to the concept of superordinate outgroups. Finally, Chapter 5 explored whether carry-over effects may also occur for more positive news about distant outgroups. Below, we discuss the main findings reported in each chapter in turn.

Chapter 2. Chapter 2 reports a first empirical test of the hypothesized carry-over effects of distant group threats; that is, whether *perceived threats* from a *distant outgroup* can induce intolerance toward *associated* local outgroups within observers' nearby environment. We hypothesized that carry-over effects mainly occur toward

local outgroups that are *associated* with the distant outgroup perceived as threatening (e.g., similar cultural background). Moreover, based on the characteristics of symbolic and realistic threats, we hypothesized a stronger carry-over potential of distant symbolic threats because these threats are relatively abstract (e.g., Stephan et al., 2009), easily transcend the specific intergroup context, and might activate an association between the distant and local outgroups that could resemble a *superordinate outgroup* based on a shared identity (Hitlan et al., 2007; Kam & Kinder, 2007; Sheridan, 2006; Sides & Gross, 2013).

These hypotheses were supported in the three studies reported in Chapter 2. Study 2.1 indicated that the stronger symbolic threats native Dutch observers perceived from the Arab uprisings (e.g., from Islamic values; De Beer, 2011), the more negative they felt toward local Moroccan-Dutch citizens and the more they differentiated this local outgroup from native Dutch citizens. By contrast, no such effects were found for perceived realistic threats from the Arab uprisings (e.g., consequences for the Dutch economy; De Beer, 2011). Similar findings were found in experimental Study 2.2 and 2.3: When native Dutch citizens read about symbolic threats from the Turkish accession to the EU, they perceived stronger symbolic threats from Turkey, and became more negative toward the local Turkish- and Moroccan-Dutch citizens. Interestingly, no such carry-over effects occurred toward the local outgroup Polish-Dutch citizens. These findings are in line with our prediction that carry-over effects only occur toward local outgroups *associated* with the distant outgroup perceived as threatening. Moreover, we again did not find support for carry-over effects of perceived distant realistic threats.

In sum, based on one correlational and two experimental studies, Chapter 2 provides first evidence for the occurrence of carry-over effects of perceived distant group threats in the different real-life contexts we studied. More specifically, perceived symbolic threats from a distant outgroup can result in negative reactions toward local outgroups that are associated with the distant outgroup.

Chapter 3. Whereas Chapter 2 supported the notion that perceived *symbolic* threats from distant outgroups might carry over toward associated local outgroups, we did not find support for carry-over effects of *realistic* threats. For that reason, Chapter 3 was designed to test specifically whether and when realistic threats from a distant outgroup might also carry over. We tested whether perceived realistic threats from the Turkish accession (Study 3.1) and Greece's presumed influence on the eurocrisis (Study 3.2) related to intolerance toward local outgroups via a *group-based association pathway* (GAP; i.e., negative feelings toward the distant outgroup are generalized toward culturally associated local outgroups) or a *threat-based association pathway* (TAP; i.e., perceived threats from the distant outgroup alert observers about threats from local outgroups, which relates to negative feelings toward these, now threatening, local outgroups).

Study 3.1 indicated that making potential realistic threats from Turkey salient caused native Dutch observers to perceive stronger realistic threats from Turkey, become more negative toward the possible Turkish accession to the EU, and become more negative toward Turkish-, Moroccan-, and Polish-Dutch citizens. We interpreted these carry-over effects toward Turkish- and Moroccan-Dutch citizens as support for the GAP as these local outgroups and the distant outgroup are most likely associated with each other based on the Muslim culture (e.g., Van Osch & Breugelmans, 2012). Conversely, carry-over effects toward the Polish-Dutch citizens could be interpreted as support for the TAP as Polish-Dutch citizens are, like the Turkish citizens within the Turkish accession debate, frequently associated with economic threats (e.g., Alonso, 2011; Pijpers, 2006; Van Haastrecht, 2007).

Study 3.2 empirically supported these pathways within the context of Greece's perceived influence on the eurocrisis. Perceived realistic threats from Greece were related to negative reactions toward Greece (i.e., the mediator between distant threats and local prejudice according to the GAP) and perceived threats from local outgroups (i.e., the mediator between distant threats and local prejudice according to the TAP), which in turn were associated with stronger negative feelings toward the

local outgroups Turkish-, Moroccan-, and Polish-Dutch citizens. Importantly and as anticipated, perceived distant realistic threats only alerted observers about local realistic threats when we experimentally attributed the threat to characteristics of the outgroup members (e.g., being lazy) rather than to more situational and macro-level characteristics of Greece (e.g., Greece's demographics). When threats are attributed to the distant group members, these threats are likely to be more similar to, and alert observers about, threats within the local society. Accordingly, the results from Chapter 3 supported our predictions by indicating in real-life contexts that perceived realistic threats from a distant outgroup can indeed carry over into local intolerance via a group-based and a threat-based association.

Chapter 4. Our findings from Chapter 2 and 3 indicated that perceived distant group threats, either symbolic or realistic, can carry over toward local outgroups that are *associated* with the distant outgroup perceived as posing the threat. Chapter 4 built on these findings and focused on whether these associations could be embedded within a perceived *superordinate outgroup membership* (i.e., a superordinate category in which both distant and local outgroups are included, e.g., Muslims for most native Dutch citizens). For this purpose, we first explored in Study 4.1 whether participants could form a superordinate outgroup based on a *common identity* (e.g., culture, related to the group-based association) and *common fate* (e.g., similar levels of wealth; a dimension related to, but broader than, the threat-based association) and experimentally tested in Study 4.2 whether the presentation of a superordinate outgroup could enable carry-over effects.

Study 4.1 indicated that participants can categorize nationalities (e.g., Brazilians, Germans, Moroccans) in superordinate outgroups based on common identity, common fate, or both types of commonalities. Moreover, participants rated superordinate outgroups based on common identity or the combination of both types of commonalities as particularly entitative, which suggests that attitudes are particularly likely assimilated within these superordinate outgroups (Blumer, 1958). In Study 4.2 we therefore used superordinate outgroups based on common identity and

common fate to experimentally test whether carry-over effects depend on the perception that the distant and local outgroup share a superordinate outgroup membership. For this purpose, we presented fictitious threats from Tajikistan and experimentally manipulated Tajikistan as being a member of the superordinate category Asia or Middle-East. Results indicated that when Tajikistan was presented as Asian, perceived threats from Tajikistan related to negative feelings toward Indonesian- and Turkish-Dutch citizens; two groups with Asian origins. When Tajikistan was presented as Middle-Eastern, perceived threats from Tajikistan related to negative feelings toward Moroccan- and Turkish-Dutch citizens; two groups with Middle-Eastern origins. In sum, Chapter 4 findings indicated that observers could psychologically form superordinate outgroups (Study 4.1) and that these superordinate outgroups can underlie carry-over effects of distant-group threats into local intolerance (Study 4.2).

Chapter 5. Within the previous chapters we repeatedly and consistently found support for the hypothesized carry-over effects of distant group threats. Clearly however, more positive news about distant outgroups also reaches global observers (e.g., the Arab Spring). For that reason, Chapter 5 explored whether these more positive messages about distant outgroups can also carry over and, more centrally to the current dissertation, we compared these effects with carry-over effects of distant threats. Based on earlier research that indicated that negative news receives more attention and is more likely to become generalized (Faraon et al., 2014), we hypothesized that negative threatening news is more likely to carry over than distant positive news. We tested this hypothesis in two experimental studies in which we presented, depending on the experimental condition, ‘bad’ or ‘good’ news about the Syrian civil war (Study 5.1) or the Egyptian uprisings (Study 5.2) and measured native Dutch citizens’ perceptions of the distant outgroup itself and feelings toward associated local outgroups (i.e., carry-over effects).

Both studies indicated that negative and positive news reports influence observers’ feelings toward the distant outgroups perceived as threatening in their

respective ways. Importantly, however, in Study 5.2 we also found the predicted positive-negative asymmetry for carry-over effects, such that negative news reports about a distant situation had a much stronger influence on local intolerance than positive information had on local tolerance. Accordingly, Chapter 5 experimentally supported in real-life contexts our idea that whereas ‘bad’ and ‘good’ news about a distant outgroup equally affects global observers’ perceptions of this distant outgroup, distant ‘bad’ news carries over more strongly than distant ‘good’ news.

In sum, the four empirical chapters of this dissertation repeatedly and consistently indicate that perceived distant group threats can result in local intolerance. More specifically, both perceived symbolic (Chapter 2) and realistic threats (Chapter 3) from a distant outgroup can evoke negative feelings toward local outgroups that are associated with the distant outgroup perceived as posing the threat. These associations can be group-based or threat-based (Chapter 3) and are likely embedded within observers’ perception that the distant and local outgroups share a superordinate outgroup membership based on a common identity and/or a common fate (Chapter 4). In addition, most of these processes seem better applicable to negative threatening news than to more positive news (Chapter 5), which accentuates the particularly strong carry-over potential of perceived threats from distant outgroups.

Theoretical Implications

The findings from our four empirical chapters have important theoretical implications. Most importantly, our findings add new insights in, and confirm earlier findings from, the existing literature on intergroup threat and prejudice — two related research fields that could be considered as the foundations of the notion of carry-over effects. Indeed, our research adds a new ‘distant’ dimension to theories of intergroup threat. Moreover, there are clear and interesting links and parallels between our findings and other fields of research, in particular research on categorization and superordinate categories. We will discuss these theoretical implications in detail below.

Intergroup threat, prejudice, and carry-over effects

The main contribution of this dissertation is that it indicates that perceived distant group threats might also affect prejudice toward other, local outgroups than only the distant outgroup that is perceived as causing the threat. More specifically, we found that (a) *distant outgroups* can evoke feelings of intergroup threat, (b) that these feelings of distant group threat relate to *prejudice*, and (c) that these feelings of prejudice are not limited to the distant outgroup perceived as causing the threat but can be directed at *local outgroups* as well. Thereby, we extend and move beyond earlier literature on intergroup threat and prejudice, which mainly focused on *local* intergroup threats and *direct* reactions toward the outgroup perceived as causing the threat (e.g., Riek et al., 2006; Stephan et al., 2005, 2009). Accordingly, our findings indicate the relevance of studying intergroup threats in broader, more global, contexts and accentuate that prejudice is not necessarily the result of (perceived) actions of the targeted outgroup (for a similar argument see Walther, 2002).

When do distant threats carry over into local prejudice? Throughout our empirical chapters we found that stronger perceptions of distant group threats can relate to stronger prejudiced feelings toward both the distant outgroup perceived as threatening as well as toward local outgroups. These findings are in line with, and extend, earlier research that linked intergroup threat to prejudice toward the outgroup perceived as threatening (Blumer, 1958; Bobo, 1999; Campbell, 1958; Kinder & Sears, 1981; LeVine & Campbell, 1972; McConahay & Hough, 1976; Sears, 1988; Sherif et al., 1961; Sherif, 1966; Stephan et al., 2009). Although it may seem obvious that feelings of threat induce reactions toward the perceived instigator of the threat (Riek et al., 2006; Stephan et al., 2009), it is not so obvious when observers would react toward other, local outgroups as well. Accordingly, one of the central themes of this dissertation was to identify conditions *when* perceived distant group threats carry over.

Although some theories suggest that feelings of threat make observers more prejudiced toward others in general (e.g., terror management theory; Das et al., 2009;

Kam & Kinder, 2007), our results indicate that carry-over effects are more selective. That is, throughout our studies, prejudiced reactions as a function of perceived distant group threats were mainly directed at local outgroups that were *associated* with the distant outgroup perceived as threatening. For instance, in Study 2.2 we found that perceived symbolic threats from Turkey resulted in prejudice toward the culturally associated Turkish- and Moroccan-Dutch citizens, but not toward Polish-Dutch citizens, a group generally not associated with Turkey or its perceived symbolic threat. Similarly, findings from Chapter 3 indicated that perceived distant group threats relate to local prejudice through two distinct associative pathways: the group- and threat-based association pathway. In sum, our findings suggest that perceived distant group threats carry over when a local outgroup could be associated with the distant outgroup perceived as posing the threat.

Carry-over effects of symbolic and realistic threats. The aforementioned types of associations that connect the distant and local outgroups with each other, directly relate to characteristics of symbolic and realistic threats and suggest that each type of threat carries over differently. Because symbolic threats are threats concerning groups' identities (De Dreu, Vries, et al., 1999; Harinck & Ellemers, 2014), they are by definition related to both the threat-based and group-based association pathway. Realistic threats, on the other hand, are more concrete and concern groups' possessions instead of their identities (Esses et al., 2001, 1998; Stephan et al., 2009). For that reason, realistic threats do not necessarily activate both pathways, which might limit their carry-over potential. Hence, whereas symbolic threats relate to both associative pathways simultaneously, realistic threats do not necessarily activate both pathways at once.

These findings further support the relevance of the intergroup threat theory's distinction between symbolic and realistic intergroup threats (Stephan et al., 1999, 2009) and the applicability of classic theories on prejudice in today's globalized society — the realistic group conflict theory (LeVine & Campbell, 1972; Sherif et al., 1961; Sherif, 1966), group position model (Blumer, 1958; Bobo, 1999; Minescu & Poppe,

2011), and symbolic racism theory (Kinder & Sears, 1981; McConahay & Hough, 1976; Sears, 1988). In sum, global observers can experience feelings of symbolic and realistic intergroup threat from remote international events, which each could independently and distinctively carry over into intolerance toward local outgroups associated with the distant outgroup and/or its threat.

Categorization and the superordinate outgroup

As suggested in Chapter 4, the associations through which carry-over effects occur could resemble a psychological categorization of the distant and local outgroups in a *superordinate outgroup*. This superordinate outgroup can be based on global observers' perception that the outgroups have a common identity (e.g., all Muslim) or common fate (e.g., all wealthy). The concept of a superordinate outgroup clearly speaks to, and adds new insights to, the vast body of literature on categorization into superordinate categories. Most importantly, in contrast to previous research that mainly focused on outcomes of superordinate *ingroups* (e.g., common ingroup model; Dovidio et al., 2007, 2009; Gaertner et al., 1993; Stone & Crisp, 2007), we approached superordinate categorization from another angle by focusing on the outcomes of global observers' categorization of outgroups within a superordinate *outgroup*.

Our findings that global observers can psychologically construct superordinate outgroups (Study 4.1) and that the presentation of a superordinate outgroup that connects the distant with local outgroups can activate carry-over effects (Study 4.2) suggest the theoretical and empirical relevance of superordinate outgroups in better understanding carry-over effects. That is, global observers' categorization of associated distant and local outgroups within a perceived superordinate outgroup category may enable distant group threats to negatively influence local intergroup relations. These outcomes further support the classic notion that how individuals categorize themselves and others into different in- and outgroups has a profound

influence on intergroup relations (Allport, 1954; Tajfel, Billing, Bundy, & Flament, 1971; Tajfel, 1981).

More specifically, our findings indicate that superordinate outgroups consisting of multiple outgroups enable negative generalizations within this superordinate category. These findings are in line with previous research indicating that individuals assimilate as much as possible within outgroup categories (Allport, 1954; Blumer, 1958). Moreover, they connect the concept of superordinate categorization, which was originally studied as a way to resolve prejudice (Brewer & Gaertner, 2004; Dovidio et al., 2009; Gaertner et al., 1993), to the occurrence of prejudice. That is, whereas previous research focused on how the perception of a superordinate *ingroup* might result in more harmony between the included groups, we focused on how the perception of a superordinate *outgroup* might result in more discord between the (not included) ingroup and included local outgroups.

In addition, our differentiation between types of commonalities and associations, on which superordinate categories could be based, sheds light on the content around which (superordinate) outgroups are psychologically constructed. Importantly, like symbolic and realistic threats (Stephan et al., 2009), superordinate outgroups can be construed around a more abstract common identity (related to a group-based association), a more concrete common fate, or both. These findings relate to previous research on group formation and entitativity (Campbell, 1958; Lewin, 1948; Prentice, Miller, & Lightdale, 1994; Vincent Yzerbyt et al., 2001) and show that both types of commonalities can also psychologically connect outgroups with each other and, thereby, enable the occurrence of carry-over effects.

In sum, our work highlights the theoretical relevance of looking at distant intergroup threats as these threats can affect local prejudice. More specifically, these carry-over effects of distant group threats on local prejudice could be explained by an association between the distant and local outgroups that resembles a perceived superordinate outgroup in which these outgroups are included. The findings in this research not only relate to different theories on intergroup threats, prejudice and

superordinate categorization, but also connect these theories with each other, and add new insights to them by focusing on the concept of carry-over effects of intergroup threats through a psychological association based on a perceived superordinate outgroup.

Practical Implications

The central theme of this dissertation is largely constructed around the idea that perceived foreign threats that are frequently presented in the media have a broad and *practically* relevant impact on local intergroup relations. That is, instead of focusing on the impact of perceived distant group threats on prejudice toward the distant outgroup itself, we focused on whether these perceived distant group threats also negatively impact global observers' perceptions of local outgroups — outgroups that are more likely encountered and influenced by these reactions. Moreover, within our studies we often focused on ongoing situations which were heavily discussed within the media and politics, which kept our results close to the practice of everyday life. In other words, this dissertation was aimed at looking at the more practically relevant outcomes of distant group threats presented in the media.

Indeed, our findings demonstrate that local intergroup relations can be affected by perceived distant group threats; thereby, our findings illustrate the potential applied value of looking at distant group threats. More specifically, throughout our studies we showed that how threatening distant events are framed (e.g., as realistically versus symbolically threatening, as concrete versus abstract, with a focus on group members versus the nation) can increase or decrease the salience of — often already existing — associations between the distant and local outgroups, and by this means strengthen or weaken carry-over effects.

These findings have important practical implications as they demonstrate how carry-over effects could be promoted or prevented. Because carry-over effects of distant group threats relate to local prejudice, we regard it as having negative

implications for social harmony. For this reason, we choose to discuss how carry-over effects could be prevented rather than promoted. Note that this focus differs to some extent from our studies as those were mainly directed at investigating when carry-over effects *do* occur; therefore, some of our suggestions are to some degree speculative.

Preventing a group-based association. Findings from Chapter 2, 3 and 4 suggest that one way by which the distant and local outgroups could be associated with each other, is through a group-based association that is based on a shared cultural identity. Accordingly, preventing that observers perceive the distant and local outgroups to share a superordinate identity might inhibit carry-over effects. In situations that involve a relatively unknown outgroup (e.g., Tajikistan in Study 4.2), this could be comparatively easy to achieve by solely referring to the distant outgroup (e.g., Tajikistan) and not mentioning the broader cultural and geographical context (e.g., Asians or Middle-Easterners). Accordingly, in those situations, decreasing the salience of a potential superordinate outgroup might diminish the likelihood of carry-over effects.

However, in cases where global observers already know something about the distant outgroup, it might be more difficult or even impossible to prevent the activation of superordinate category that links the distant to local outgroups. For instance, probably most of the Dutch observers already knew before the Egyptian uprisings that the Islam is the main religion in Egypt and that Egypt is part of the Middle-East, two superordinate categories that could link Egypt with Turkish- and Moroccan-Dutch citizens. In addition, some distant outgroup names already include a superordinate outgroup membership themselves (e.g., *Islamic State* or *Muslim Brotherhood*), which makes it also difficult to prevent a superordinate outgroup from being activated. Nonetheless, even in those instances one might lower the information's carry-over potential by not placing emphasis on, or by refraining from repeatedly using group names that easily activate, this superordinate outgroup category (e.g., using "IS" instead of "Islamic State").

Another way to reduce the likelihood of carry-over effects through a group-based association is by lowering the distant outgroup's *prototypicality* for the superordinate outgroup category. One way to do this is by explicating that the values and ideologies of a particular outgroup do not resemble the broader superordinate community. For instance, after the 9/11 terrorist attacks many political representatives explicitly differentiated between the ideals of Al Qaeda and the broader Muslim community (see: Allen & Nielsen, 2002). Nonetheless, repetitively discussing both groups together might unwantedly induce an implicit psychological association between these groups and thereby enable carry-over effects. Therefore, another and possibly more promising way to lower the distant outgroup's prototypicality for the superordinate category is by giving more, and more specific, information about the distant outgroup (e.g., Study 2.3, the combined threat condition). More specific details about the distant outgroup could make this group more unique and less representative for the superordinate category, which could disable generalizations, and, thus carry-over effects from occurring.

Preventing a threat-based association. Whereas carry-over effects through a group-based association rely on the generalization of negative feelings within the superordinate outgroup category, carry-over effects via a threat-based association mainly occur because local outgroups are perceived to pose threats similar to those perceived from the distant outgroup (see also Sassenberg et al., 2007). For instance, in Study 3.1 we found that perceived realistic threats from the accession of Turkey carry over into prejudice toward Polish-Dutch citizens; that is, two groups that could be seen as economically competing with the Dutch observers but are generally not perceived as sharing an entitative superordinate group membership. Similarly, Sassenberg and colleagues (2007) found that being in competition with one outgroup member related to prejudice toward members of unrelated competitive outgroups as well. Accordingly, carry-over effects could occur because the perceived distant group

threat activates a “competitive mindset” (Sassenberg et al., 2007)¹ that alerts global observers about associated threats within the observers’ local society.

Our findings from Chapter 3 may indicate a specific way in which a threat-based association could be prevented. More specifically, in Study 3.2 we found that carry-over effects only occurred through a threat-based association when the perceived threat was attributed to characteristics of the distant outgroup members (e.g., being lazy). This suggests that a competitive mindset is particularly likely activated when observers hold the group members personally responsible for the threats. Accordingly, one might prevent carry-over effects of perceived distant group threats by presenting them as concrete (e.g., failing of big banks) and situational (e.g., within the global downturn) instead of personal (e.g., lazy and incautious Greeks), thereby disabling a competitive mindset and a threat-based association.

Keeping the threat remote. In addition to the aforementioned strategies that directly focused on the prevention of an association between the distant situation and local outgroups, another way to prevent carry-over effects from occurring is by keeping the international event remote. Threats are most likely to cause carry-over effects when global observers themselves have the feeling that they or their fellow ingroup members are impacted (Brader, Valentino, & Suhay, 2004). That is, particularly when a report induces feelings of intergroup threat, observers will become more prejudiced (e.g., Study 3.1, Study 5.1). Accordingly, discussing the distant situation objectively and concretely, and focusing on the national level (e.g., influence on the Netherlands) rather than the individual level (e.g., influence on “typical Joe” or “Henk and Ingrid”; Groshek & Engelbert, 2012) might prevent feelings of more personal involvement and thus carry-over effects from occurring.

¹ Although the term “competitive mindset” (Sassenberg et al., 2007) originally referred to economic competition, we believe it might also apply to symbolic intergroup threats originating from the perception that values or ideologies of the outgroup compete with those of the ingroup.

In sum, within the previous sections we highlighted how our findings on when and how distant group threats carry over could be used to prevent carry-over effects from occurring. Most importantly, in order to prevent distant group threats from influencing local intergroup relations, one should be cautious about presenting information that could strengthen an association between the distant and local outgroups. More specifically, detailed, concrete and group-specific information that isolates the distant outgroup and its threat from other contexts, are most likely to keep the distant threat remote.

Societal implications

Moving beyond the specific theoretical and practical implications, our findings could also be relevant on a broader societal level. In this dissertation we show that perceived distant group threats relate to prejudice within observers' local society. Importantly, as suggested above, most distant group threats are communicated through media coverage or by political representatives, which highlights the specific relevance of our findings for media and politics. In addition, our findings illustrate the complex process of globalization in which societies are increasingly aware of, and affected by, other societies around the world. We will discuss these broader societal implications below.

Carry-over effects in media and politics. Global observers' impressions of distant situations often rely on what the media and politics present to them, which is also why we used (bogus) media and political reports on current issues as our experimental manipulations. As such, most of our findings directly illustrate the impact such communications might have on local intergroup relations. For instance, presenting perceived threats from the accession of Turkey to the EU in a (bogus) Dutch news report, strengthened feelings of intergroup threat from Turkey and prejudice toward the local Turkish-, Moroccan- (Study 2.2, 2.3 and 3.1) and Polish-Dutch citizens (Study 3.1). Accordingly, this dissertation indicates the specific power

of the media and politics in shaping images about distant situations and, thereby, influencing local intergroup relations.

This observation might contribute to the current debate on the responsibilities of the media in truthfully informing observers (e.g., Broersma, 2010; Davies, 2008; Luyendijk, 2010; Wijnberg, 2013). This debate is centered on the critique that the media tends to present a distorted representation of the truth due to its current routines and demands (e.g., news should be actual, short, and easy to understand; Davies, 2008; Luyendijk 2010; Wijnberg, 2013) and this debate developed in a way that discusses the media's ability and responsibility to accurately reflect on the truth (e.g., Broersma, 2010; Wijnberg, 2013). Although we are not in the position to judge whether the media accurately represents the truth, our finding that media reports on distant situations can (unwantedly) influence observers' perceptions of local outgroups is something journalists should be aware of and, arguably, brings certain responsibilities with it. That is, when the goal of the journalist is to inform observers about a distant situation without affecting local intergroup relationships, reports should be written in a way that prevents unwanted carry-over effects from occurring.

Based on our reasoning when discussing practical implications, there are at least two concrete ways to lower the likelihood of carry-over effects. Firstly, because carry-over effects often occur through a perceived association between the distant and local outgroup, one could be cautious about presenting information (e.g., culture/continent; Study 4.2) that links the distant situation (e.g., Tajikistan) with local outgroups (e.g., Turkish-Dutch citizens). Secondly, another way to prevent carry-over effects is by presenting more specific and detailed information on the distant event and the involved distant outgroup. Whereas this was often impossible in the past (e.g., due to limited space within newspapers), the current digitalization of the media has made this option much more realizable (e.g., due to lower costs and the direct accessibility of background information through internet links; Luyendijk, 2010, Wijnberg, 2013). In sum, our work demonstrates that media and political reports on

distant events might influence local intergroup relations and suggests that unwanted carry-over effects could be prevented by providing specific information on the distant situation that detaches the distant situation from local outgroups.

Carry-over effects as an illustration of globalization. The increasing focus of the media and politics on international events has often been linked to the process of globalization in which groups around the world are increasingly connected with each other (Giddens, 1990; Rantanen, 2005; Thompson, 1995; Waters, 2001) and international events have become globally visible (Rantanen, 2005) and locally relevant (Giddens, 1990). Although this process is complex and impacts societies in many ways, our findings could be used to illustrate all of the aforementioned elements of globalization. That is, our work illustrates that the presentation of intergroup threats from a distant outgroup (i.e., visibility of international events) could connect the distant outgroup with local outgroups (i.e., connects groups around the world) and negatively influence local intergroup relations (i.e., make international events locally relevant). In this way, our work provides a comprehensible illustration of the complex process of globalization.

Strengths, limitations and future directions

The main contribution of the current dissertation is that it demonstrates that perceived distant group threats can carry over into prejudice toward associated local outgroups. Our studies reveal the strength and relevance of this relationship within different contexts and for different types of threats. The implemented experimental manipulation concerned (fictitious) news reports on various actual and ongoing international events that were at the time of our studies discussed within the media and politics. Accordingly, our findings could be considered to have high ecological (i.e., we used natural and ongoing contexts) and internal validity (i.e., we used controlled experimental designs). Hence, based on multiple studies that incorporated various research designs and referred to multiple ongoing international events, we can

conclude that carry-over effects of distant group threats occur. Notwithstanding this clear conclusion however, there are still some potential limitations that were not addressed within the current dissertation and should be addressed by future research. These limitations and future directions will be discussed below.

Firstly, in our studies we measured prejudice relatively quickly after our manipulations to prevent our effects from being confounded by external factors (e.g., other news reports). Therefore, our conclusions mainly pertain to *immediate* reactions toward local outgroups instead of longer lasting reactions of prejudice, which might have limited the external validity. Not having measured long-term effects does not mean, however, that we assume that long-term effects do not occur. In fact, earlier observations after acts of terrorism suggest that prejudice toward different yet associated outgroups do exist for a longer period of time (e.g., 10 months; Gautier, Siegmann, & Van Vuuren, 2009). In addition, when international events reach global media, these events are often already perceived as big and impactful (e.g., Wu, 2000). Accordingly, the chances are high that global observers are repetitively confronted with threatening news messages about this event, which could strengthen an association with, and carry-over effects toward, local outgroups. On the other hand, however, repetitive exposure might also increase observers' specific knowledge on the distant event and thereby detach it from local outgroups. Accordingly, it would be interesting to test (e.g., through long-term media database studies) whether perceived distant intergroup threats have long-term carry-over effects, and how these effects develop over time.

Secondly, more research is needed to test and detect the underlying processes of carry-over effects and investigate how these processes relate to specific types of intergroup threats. More specifically, our investigation of different types of threats was relatively fragmented, with Chapter 2 mainly focusing on symbolic threats and Chapter 3 mainly focusing on realistic threats. It would therefore be interesting to test the occurrence and processes underlying carry-over effects for both types of threats within a single study. Moreover, further research is needed to test potential

moderators and mediators underlying carry-over effects (e.g., perceived prototypicality of distant outgroup for the superordinate outgroup category). Particularly useful in this respect would be (a) experimental studies in which moderators and mediators are manipulated, (b) field studies that test these processes in actual ongoing situations, and (c) studies that rely on larger, more representative samples.

Thirdly, a particularly interesting avenue for future research would be to investigate whether carry-over effects are *motivated/deliberate* or occur more *implicitly/reactional*. Most closely related to our concept of a superordinate outgroup (Chapter 4) and threat-based association (Chapter 3), previous research has indicated that when observers perceive an association between groups, they are also likely to perceive those groups as similar on the (threatening) topic of interest (Pryor, Reeder, & Monroe, 2012; Stenstrom et al., 2008). For instance, when Dutch observers associate the Muslim Brotherhood with Turkish-Dutch citizens through the superordinate Muslim category, they are also likely to perceive those groups to pose similar threats. Accordingly, global observers are motivated to react toward local outgroups because they perceive them as threatening, too. These generalizations are particularly likely to occur within groups that are perceived as entitative (Pryor et al., 2012; Stenstrom et al., 2008) and could psychologically justify local prejudice.

In addition to this more motivated generalization, observers could also deliberately use threatening distant events to legitimize their already lingering prejudice toward a local outgroup (e.g., Allen & Nielsen, 2002; Crandall & Eshleman, 2003; Echebarria-Echabe & Fernández-Guede, 2006; Sheridan, 2006). Furthermore, because the distant outgroup is typically out of reach for global observers, global observers might be motivated to search for associated local outgroups to attribute the threat on and react upon (e.g., Butz & Yogeeswaran, 2011; Marcus-Newhall, Pedersen, Carlson, & Miller, 2000; Sheridan, 2006).

Most of the abovementioned motivated processes rely on the assumptions that (a) the distant and local outgroups are perceived as similar on the threatening dimension, (b) the global observer is already prejudiced to some extent, and/or (c) the

local outgroup is negatively perceived. However, these assumptions do not always match the data and methods of our studies. This might suggest a less motivated process based on a mere association between the outgroups (Pryor et al., 2012; Stenstrom et al., 2008), which affects observers' attitudes about outgroups within the activated superordinate outgroup category outside their conscious awareness. Clearly, further research is needed to investigate when and for whom carry-over effects occur through motivated/deliberate or more implicit/reactional processes.

Finally, it would be interesting to investigate the concept of carry-over effects in other contexts, with other types of information, and with other samples, and thereby further increase the external validity of our findings. Amongst others, following up on our Chapter 5, it would be interesting to further test whether and which carry-over processes apply to more positive news about distant events. Research on secondary transfer effects of positive contact (Lolliot et al., 2012; Pettigrew, 1998, 2009; Tausch et al., 2010) already indicated that more direct forms of contact might enable positive carry-over effects. It would therefore be interesting to test ways in which mediated positive information can induce similar carry-over effects. For instance, making observers aware that they might benefit from distant positive developments could increase their personal involvement, and might make them more likely to generalize positive reactions toward local outgroups. Another interesting topic to study is how cultural minorities (e.g., Moroccan-Dutch citizens) react toward presented threats from a distant outgroup (e.g., Muslim Brotherhood) with which they could be associated. Do those situations influence their perception of the distant outgroup, the local cultural majority, other cultural minorities, and their ingroup?

Conclusion

The focus of this dissertation was on whether, when and how perceived threats from distant outgroups influence local intergroup relationships. Within multiple studies, which employed various methods and were implemented within

different ongoing international contexts, we showed that perceived threats from a distant outgroup can indeed enhance prejudice toward local outgroups. More specifically, our findings indicate that both *symbolic* and *realistic* group threats can carry over, that carry-over effects generally occur toward local outgroups that are *associated* with the distant outgroup, and that this association can resemble a *superordinate outgroup* category. By focusing on *distant* intergroup threats and how they can *carry over* into local intolerance we added a new dimension to the analysis of intergroup threats and prejudice. These findings are particularly relevant in the current globalized world in which the media increasingly confronts individuals with potential threats from distant outgroups. When distant and local outgroups are associated with each other in the mind of the global observer, negative distant events can indeed negatively influence local intergroup relationships.

