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When threats foreign turn domestic: Two ways for distant realistic intergroup threats to carry over into local intolerance

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In times of economic downturn, perceived realistic intergroup threats (e.g., labour competition) often dominate political and media discourse. Although local outgroups (e.g., local immigrants) can be experienced as sources of realistic threats, we propose that such threats can also be perceived to be caused by distant outgroups (e.g., European Union members perceiving Greece to threaten their economies) and that such distant threats can *carry over* into local intolerance (e.g., increasing intolerance towards local immigrant groups). We predicted and found in two studies that perceived distant realistic threats carried over into local intolerance via two different pathways. First, direct reactions towards the distant outgroup can generalize to culturally similar local outgroups (the group-based association pathway). Secondly, Study 2 indicated that when the distant threat was attributed to stereotypical outgroup traits (e.g., being lazy), distant realistic threats activated local realistic threats, which subsequently influenced local intolerance (the threat-based association pathway). Taken together, our studies indicate that perceived realistic threats foreign can turn domestic, but in two different ways.

In times of global economic downturn, realistic intergroup threats (Stephan & Renfro, 2002; Stephan & Stephan, 2000) seem prevalent throughout society and dominate political and media discourse. Although such threats may be perceived to originate from 'local' outgroups (e.g., competition caused by labour immigrants, referred to here as *local* realistic threats), they can also be perceived to emanate from more 'distant' outgroups (e.g., competition with other nations, referred to here as *distant* realistic threats). Indeed, people typically become more prejudiced towards the group that is believed to cause the threat (e.g., Riek, Mania, & Gaertner, 2006). Furthermore, they also become more prejudiced towards *local* outgroups when distant threats *carry over* into local intolerance (Bouman, van Zomeren, & Otten, 2014). The latter is an important insight because it suggests that local intolerance can be due to, so to speak, threats foreign and domestic.

Carry-over effects of distant threats have been found for symbolic threats (e.g., Bouman *et al.*, 2014), which concern the perception that ingroup values and ideologies are threatened by an outgroup. For instance, Bouman *et al.* (2014, Study 2 and 3) found that presenting Dutch students with symbolic threats from Turkey's European Union (EU) candidacy (e.g., differences in religion and culture) resulted in stronger intolerance towards the local Moroccan-Dutch people. Most likely, these carry-over effects occurred because participants perceived both outgroups as 'Muslim' and therefore as supporting

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the same stereotypical values and ideologies. *Distant realistic threats*, however, are about outgroup actions (e.g., competition) and thus cannot psychologically link the distant and local outgroups in this direct manner.

In this paper, we therefore suggest two ways by which distant realistic threats may carry over more *indirectly* into local intolerance. First, the group-based association pathway (GAP; Figure 1, top) describes how *direct* reactions to the distant outgroup posing the threat (e.g., intolerance towards Turks due to perceived negative economic consequences of a Turkish accession to the EU) generalize to local outgroups already perceived as similar to the distant outgroup (e.g., Moroccan-Dutch people). The threat-based association pathway (TAP; Figure 1, bottom) describes how distant realistic threats might alert individuals about other realistic threats from local outgroups (e.g., threats from labour immigrants) and influence intolerance towards these local outgroups. We tested the empirical viability of these pathways in two studies that aimed to answer the questions *whether* and *how* realistic distant threats carry over into local intolerance.

Carry-over effects of realistic intergroup threats

Realistic intergroup threats concern perceived harm to the ingroup's possessions caused by an outgroup (Stephan & Renfro, 2002; Stephan, Ybarra, & Morrison, 2009), such as harm to the ingroup's economic resources or power. Realistic group conflict theory (Sherif, 1966) posits that intergroup competition likely results in negative attitudes

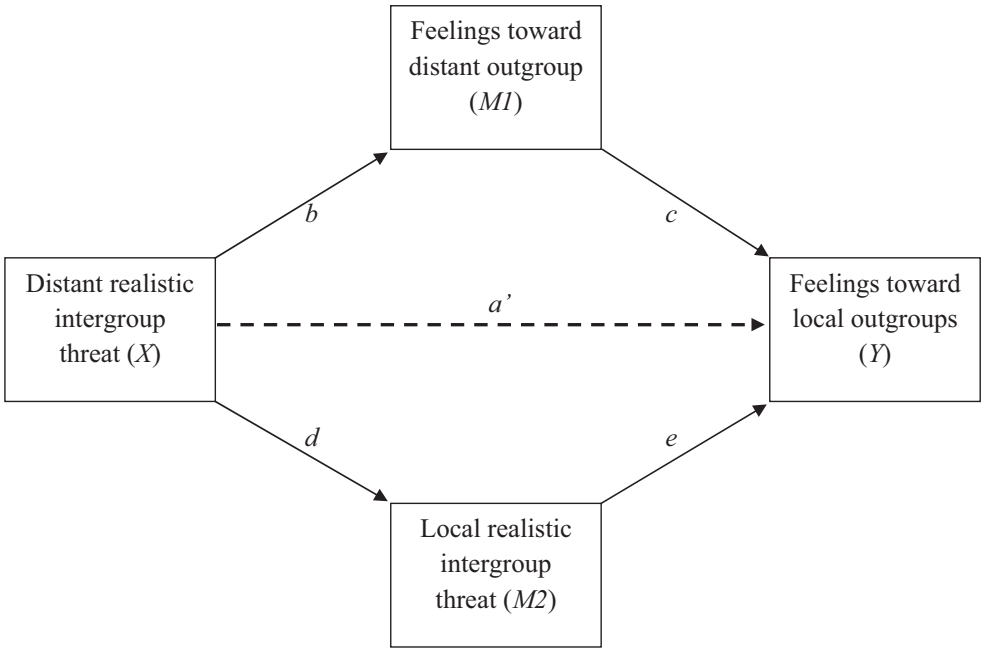

Figure 1. Full model of the effect of distant realistic intergroup threat (*X*) on feelings towards local outgroups (*Y*), with the mediators feelings towards distant outgroup (*M1*, group-based association pathway [GAP]) and local realistic intergroup threats (*M2*, threat-based association pathway [TAP]). Paths *b* and *c* (i.e., group-based association) belong to the GAP, and paths *d* (i.e., threat-based association) and *e* belong to the TAP.

towards the competitor (e.g., Citrin, Green, Muste, & Wong, 1997; Esses, Dovidio, Jackson, & Armstrong, 2001; King, Knight, & Hebl, 2010; Minescu & Poppe, 2011). Similarly, relative deprivation theory (Pettigrew *et al.*, 2008) and the relative group position model (Blumer, 1958; Bobo, 1999) indicate realistic threats' negative influence on individuals' perceptions of the threatening outgroup. In line with these theories, meta-analytic findings suggest that realistic intergroup threats predict intolerance of the outgroup (Riek *et al.*, 2006).

However, this research does not move beyond studying direct reactions towards the outgroup perceived as threatening (e.g., immigrants, Stephan, Renfro, Esses, Stephan, & Martin, 2005). Little is known yet about whether and how realistic threats from *distant* outgroups carry over into *local* intolerance. This is important because (1) distant threats are frequently presented in the media and (2) the existence of carry-over effects would indicate the relevance of such distant intergroup situations for local intergroup relations (Bouman *et al.*, 2014). Although we believe that both realistic and symbolic intergroup threats can carry over, research has focused on symbolic threats (Bouman *et al.*, 2014). When people perceive distant symbolic threats, they feel threatened by the distant outgroup's values and ideologies, and the exact same values and ideologies could also be perceived as central to local outgroups, making carry-over effects likely.

This reasoning does not apply to realistic threats. Because responses to realistic threats are generally aimed at removing the threat (Esses, Jackson, & Armstrong, 1998), individuals are likely to respond in a threat-oriented way within this specific intergroup context, rather than to other (uninvolved) outgroups. Nonetheless, distant realistic threats might carry over *indirectly* into local intolerance. That is, immediate outcomes of the distant realistic threat might in turn influence intolerance towards local outgroups. Yet, it remains important that somewhere in this indirect process the distant situation becomes psychologically connected to the local outgroups. There are at least two aspects of the threatening situation that could foster such a connection: (1) The distant outgroup responsible for the threat (which relates to the GAP) and (2) the distant threat itself (which relates to the TAP).

Group-based association pathway

As portrayed in Figure 1 (top), individuals' perception of a distant realistic intergroup threat causes intolerance towards the threatening distant outgroup (path *b*). These feelings of intolerance towards the distant outgroup affect how local outgroups are perceived (path *c*, the group-based association). For instance, Western-European media have often blamed Greece and its citizens for the 'Eurozone crisis' (i.e., the debt crisis within the Eurozone; e.g., Antoniades, 2012; Tzogopoulos, 2012) and, accordingly, to pose realistic threats to EU citizens. These perceptions of threat might result in negative views towards Greeks, which may influence feelings towards Mediterranean immigrants living in Western Europe.

Many studies support the effects of realistic threats on intolerance towards the threatening outgroup (Riek *et al.*, 2006). Furthermore, attitudes towards one object can generalize towards other objects (e.g., Walther, 2002), and this process also applies to groups (e.g., Brown & Hewstone, 2005; Pettigrew, 2009; Tausch *et al.*, 2010). For instance, intergroup contact with one outgroup can also affect attitudes towards other uninvolved outgroups (i.e., secondary transfer effect; Pettigrew, 2009). One explanation for these generalizations is that observers perceive both outgroups as similar on for instance culture, stereotype content, or social stigma (e.g., Harwood, Paolini, Joyce,

Rubin, & Arroyo, 2011; Lolliot *et al.*, 2012; Pettigrew, 2009; van Laar, Levin, Sinclair, & Sidanius, 2005).[1] Although such generalizations have mainly been studied within positive intergroup contact (see also: Tausch *et al.*, 2010), we believe that negative generalization towards other outgroups also occur. In fact, Shook, Fazio, and Eiser (2007) found that negative and extreme attitudes towards objects are generalized most strongly. Thus, we predict that one indirect way in which distant realistic threats carry over into local intolerance is via evaluative reactions towards the distant outgroup (i.e., the GAP-hypothesis). That is, the stronger observers react with intolerance towards the distant outgroup as a function of its perceived distant threat, the more intolerant these observers will be towards similarly perceived local outgroups.

Threat-based association pathway

As portrayed in Figure 1 (bottom), individuals may perceive local realistic threats because the distant threat alerts them to such local threats (path *d*, the threat-based association). For instance, in the context of the role of Greece in the Eurozone crisis, Dutch individuals might be alerted about realistic threats from Polish labour migrants because this group might be perceived as representing competition on the local dimension (e.g., Pijpers, 2006). These individuals' perceptions of local threats may result in intolerance towards this local outgroup (path *e*; e.g., towards Polish labour immigrants). However, little is known about the threat-based association itself. One way in which such a threat-based association could occur is due to the activation of a competition mindset (Sassenberg, Moskowitz, Jacoby, & Hansen, 2007). Indeed, a competitive situation might activate a mindset that makes people prone to react towards potential competitors in general. Importantly, whereas Sassenberg and colleagues activated a local threat, we focus on *distant* threats. Thus, the TAP proposes that perceived distant threats alert individuals about potential threats from local outgroups, and these local threats cause intolerance towards the involved local outgroups, constituting a second indirect way in which distant realistic threats may carry over into local intolerance.

Predictions and overview of studies

We analytically distinguished between two psychological pathways. The first pathway – the GAP – proposes that distant threats influence attitudes towards the distant group causing the threat, which in turn influences intolerance towards local outgroups associated with the distant outgroup. In the second pathway – the TAP – distant and local threats are positively associated with each other, and these activated local realistic threats influence intolerance towards the now threatening local outgroup.

The main aim of this research was to test whether we could identify those assumed pathways in two studies using different contexts. Study 1 tested these ideas in the context of Turkey's potential inclusion in the EU, whereas Study 2 followed up on the Study 1 findings in the context of perceived economic threats from Greece. Both contexts afforded a focus on distant realistic intergroup threats, but differed in how the distant outgroup relates to local outgroups in the Dutch society. The two largest minority groups

[1] *We acknowledge that similarities based on culture/ethnicity could be considered symbolic and thus be confused with symbolic threats. However, within the proposed framework* symbolic characteristics *cause the* association*, whereas* realistic threats *cause the* negative feelings *that are generalized towards groups. Therefore, symbolic similarities are not necessarily threatening or related to the threat.*

in the Netherlands, Turkish- and Moroccan-Dutch people (CBS, 2014), are clearly culturally related to Turkey. Accordingly, the context of Study 1 seems well suited to test the occurrence of carry-over effects via the GAP. For the Greek context, such associations are much weaker. Therefore, Study 2 provides a more neutral context in which to test both pathways in.

STUDY 1

Method

In Study 1, we chose Turkey's potential inclusion in the EU as our research context for three main reasons. Firstly, the same context was successfully employed by Bouman *et al.* to manipulate the salience of realistic and symbolic threats (2014; Study 2 and 3). Secondly, it is likely that a group-based association exists between the distant outgroup held responsible for the threat (i.e., Turks) and the local outgroups Turkish- and Moroccan-Dutch people because many native Dutch people perceive them as sharing religious views, culture, and way of living (e.g., van Osch & Breugelmans, 2012; van Oudenhoven, Prins, & Buunk, 1998). Thirdly, a threat-based association might also be present for Polish-Dutch people. Although Poland became an EU member in 2004, there is still much debate on the influence of Poland and its citizens on the EU economy. For instance, Poland has been portrayed as causing unfair competition due to cheap labour costs and causing economic mass migration to better-off EU members (e.g., Alonso, 2011; Pijpers, 2006; van Haastrecht, 2007). Accordingly, we predicted that realistic threats from the Turkish accession would influence intolerance towards Turkish-, Moroccan-, and Polish-Dutch people, but for different reasons. Whereas intolerance towards Turkish- and Moroccan-Dutch people may be based on a group-based association (GAP-hypothesis), intolerance towards Polish-Dutch people may be based in a threat-based association (TAP-hypothesis).

Participants and design

Ninety-nine native Dutch undergraduate students (77% female; M_{age} = 21 years) participated in the study and were compensated with partial fulfilment of a course requirement. We manipulated the salience of distant realistic and symbolic threats by presenting these threats in a (fictitious) newspaper article, resulting in a two realistic threat (salient vs. not salient) × 2 symbolic threat (salient vs. not salient) experimental design. Note that we included the symbolic threat salience manipulation to isolate realistic threats from symbolic ones, and to see whether we could replicate the earlier findings of Bouman *et al.* (2014) in the current context.

Materials and procedure

The salience of distant realistic and the salience of symbolic threats were manipulated in a newspaper article about whether Turkey should be granted EU membership. We chose this type of manipulation because research indicated its effectiveness in activating the salience of perceived intergroup threats (Bouman *et al.*, 2014; Esses *et al.*, 1998; Jackson & Esses, 2000; Maddux, Galinsky, Cuddy, & Polifroni, 2008). Participants first read that a majority of the EU citizens are opposed to the Turkish accession. Thereafter, a paragraph was shown in which – depending on the experimental condition – the threats were

presented. When *symbolic threats* were salient, this paragraph stated that many EU citizens are opposed to the Turkish accession because they feel threatened by Turkey's values and ideologies and Turkey's influence on the EU image and culture. When *realistic threats* were salient, this paragraph stated that many EU citizens are opposed to the Turkish accession because they feel threatened by Turkey's (presumed) weak economy, the costs of its accession, and the high power Turkey would get within the EU democracy. When both realistic and symbolic threats were salient the article first reported on symbolic and thereafter on realistic threats. In the *control condition*, participants started with the questionnaire on local attitudes, after which they completed the measures about Turkey's accession.

Comprehension check

Immediately after the newspaper article was presented, two open-ended questions checked whether participants had accurately read the article. The first question asked what the main message of the article was about, whereas the second question asked what the participant thought was the most important part of the article. All participants' answers corresponded to the manipulated newspaper article.

Manipulation check

Participants were asked to indicate how strongly (1 *completely disagree* and 7 *completely agree*) they perceived Turkey to be symbolically threatening (three items: Turks have different norms and values than native Dutch people, Turkish people are less attached to the European laws and constitutions, Turkey's accession is at the expense of the EU culture; $\alpha = .76$, $M = 4.46$, $SD = 1.15$) and realistically threatening (three items: Turkey will have too much power in the EU, Turkey will be too dominant in EU politics, Too much money will be spent on Turkey; $\alpha = .69$, $M = 4.07$, $SD = 1.02$). Note that this manipulation check was a conservative one as it was included at the end of the questionnaire to prevent it from influencing any effects of our manipulation.

Feelings towards Turkey and its accession (mediators)

Two feeling thermometers asked participants about their feelings towards Turkey and its citizens (0 *negative* or *cold* and 100 *positive* or *warm*, $r = .66$, $M = 57.90$, $SD = 16.77$). In addition, one item measured participants' feelings towards Turkey's accession (0 *negative* and 100 *positive*; $M = 38.29$, $SD = 17.74$).

Feelings towards local groups (main outcome variables)

Similar feeling thermometers were used to measure feelings towards the local outgroups Turkish-Dutch people, $r = .85$, $M = 53.36$, $SD = 19.35$, Moroccan-Dutch people, $r = .90$, $M = 43.89$, $SD = 21.41$, Polish-Dutch people, $r = .78$, $M = 50.85$, $SD = 18.09$, and the ingroup native Dutch people,[2] $r = .77$, $M = 69.43$, $SD = 12.96$. Based on stereotypes about each of these local outgroups, we expected distant threats to influence

[2] *We included a measure of feelings towards the ingroup because people sometimes respond to threats by rating their ingroup more favourably (e.g., Stephan* et al., *2009). However, results did not indicate such an effect (*Fs < 1*).*

feelings towards Turkish- and Moroccan-Dutch people via the GAP and feelings towards Polish-Dutch people via the TAP.

We further included exploratory measures at the end of the questionnaire on the relationship between Turkish-Dutch people and native Dutch people and asked about details of the local outgroups. However, because both threats had already been discussed when these items were presented (which invalidates our manipulation at this point), we decided to drop these items from the current analyses.

Results

Effectiveness of manipulation

We performed a univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA) including the two experimental factors and their interaction effect as predictors and either perceived realistic or perceived symbolic threat as dependent measure. As expected, participants perceived more realistic threats from Turkey in the conditions in which realistic threats were made salient, $M_{\text{difference}} = 0.82$, $F(1, 95) = 18.61$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .16$; there was neither a significant main nor interaction effect for the manipulation of symbolic threat on perceived realistic threats, Fs < 1. Thus, our key manipulation was effective.

For symbolic threats, there was a slight trend that participants perceived somewhat more symbolic threats from Turkey in the conditions in which symbolic threats were salient, but this difference was not reliable, $M_{\text{difference}} = 0.34$, $F(1, 95) = 2.52$, $p = .116$, $\eta_p^2 = .03$, neither was the main effect of realistic threat salience, $M_{\text{difference}} = 0.27$, $F(1, 95) = 1.50$, $p = .224$, $\eta_p^2 = .02$, and their interaction, $F(1, 95) = 3.09$, $p = .082$, $\eta_p^2 = .03$. Accordingly, our manipulation of distant symbolic threat salience was unsuccessful. Nonetheless, we included the manipulated symbolic threat salience and its interaction with realistic threat salience in all following analyses to control for any possible influence.[3]

Feelings towards Turkey and its accession

A MANOVA on feelings towards Turkey and Turkey's accession indicated a significant multivariate effect of the manipulation of realistic threat salience, $F(2, 94) = 3.08$, $p = .050$, $\eta_p^2 = .06$. Univariate effects showed that participants' attitudes towards Turkey's accession became more negative, $M_{\text{difference}} = -8.58$, $F(1, 95) = 6.16$, $p = .015$, $\eta_p^2 = .06$, but did not reliably affect feelings towards Turkey, $M_{\text{difference}} = -4.69$, $F(1, 95) = 2.09$, $p = .15$, $\eta_p^2 = .02$.

Feelings towards local outgroups

Another MANOVA showed a marginal significant effect of realistic threat salience from the distant outgroup Turkey on feelings towards the local outgroups, $F(3, 93) = 2.434$, $p = .070$, $\eta_p^2 = .07$. Univariate effects indicated that the salience of realistic threats from Turkey caused more negative feelings towards Turkish-Dutch people, $M_{\text{difference}} = -9.15$, $F(1, 95) = -5.67$, $p = .019$, $\eta_p^2 = .06$, and Moroccan-Dutch people, $M_{\text{difference}} = -10.99$,

[3] *The symbolic manipulation and the interaction did not affect any of the dependent measures (multivariate* Fs $<$ *1.00, univariate* Fs $<$ *1.30) and are therefore not reported further (results are available upon request). Nevertheless, in line with earlier findings (Bouman* et al., *2014), the measure of* perceived *symbolic threats correlated significantly with feelings towards Turkish-Dutch people,* r $= -.55$, p $< .001$, *Moroccan-Dutch people,* r $= -.39$, p $< .001$, *and Polish-Dutch people,* r $= -.21$, p $< .038$.

$F(1, 95) = -6.78$, $p = .011$, $\eta_p^2 = .07$; but did not significantly alter feelings towards Polish-Dutch people, $M_{difference} = 4.03$, $F(1, 95) = 1.21$, $p = .275$, $\eta_p^2 = .01$. Accordingly, these effects are in line with the GAP-hypothesis rather than with the TAP-hypothesis.

Analyses on the process behind carry-over effects

We also included a potential GAP-mediator to inspect the process more thoroughly: feelings towards Turks in Turkey. However, the effect of our manipulation on this mediator was not reliable. Nonetheless, the association between feelings towards Turks in Turkey and feelings towards the local outgroups followed the expected pattern. Feelings towards Turks was associated most strongly with Turkish-Dutch people, $r = .61$, $p < .001$, followed by Moroccan-Dutch people, $r = .46$, $p < .001$, and to a lesser extent towards Polish-Dutch people, $r = .32$, $p = .001$. Accordingly, the association between feelings towards Turks in Turkey and similarly perceived local outgroups indicated the possibility of a group-based association.

We reasoned that one potential reason why our realistic threat salience manipulation did not alter mean-level feelings towards the distant outgroup itself was that participants were far removed from the distant outgroup. This remoteness could have resulted in less emotional, more concrete, and threat-oriented reactions; much like the effect on feelings towards the Turkish accession. In fact, exploratory bootstrapping mediation analyses using the SPSS PROCESS macro with 5,000 bootstrapping samples (Hayes, 2013, Model 4) indicated that feelings towards the Turkish accession mediated the relationship between our manipulation and feelings towards the local outgroups (see Table 1). The indirect effect was significant for Turkish-Dutch people, $\rho = -3.79$, 95% CI [−7.95, −1.07], Moroccan-Dutch people, $\rho = -3.02$, 95% CI [−7.31, −0.50], and Polish-Dutch people, $\rho = -2.41$, 95% CI [−5.53, −0.58].

Discussion

Study 1 showed that making realistic threats from a distant outgroup salient led participants to perceive more realistic threats from the distant outgroup, become more unfavourable towards the distant group, and become more intolerant towards local outgroups. Unfortunately, our manipulation of distant symbolic threat salience did not alter perceived symbolic threats, which prohibited us to explicitly compare any effects of realistic and symbolic threat salience. One explanation for this could be found in our focus on real-life situations and the relatively high level of perceived symbolic threats throughout our experimental conditions. As previously suggested by Bouman *et al.* (2014), when people already perceive such threats strongly, making such threats salient might *affirm* their perception rather than *strengthen* it. This may explain why the symbolic threat salience manipulation was not successful – it was already salient across conditions.

Our analyses also confirmed that perceived distant realistic threats indirectly influenced local intolerance. Although the intended GAP-mediator feelings towards Turkey did not reliably mediate the relationship between our manipulation and local feelings, individuals' feelings towards the Turkish accession did. Moreover, based on prior knowledge about the distant and local outgroups, our results suggest that realistic threats can carry over towards local outgroups associated with the distant outgroup itself (i.e., group-based association; Turkish- and Moroccan-Dutch people) or its threat (i.e., threat-based association; Polish-Dutch people). Clearly, however, more evidence is required to examine the GAP and TAP. Study 2 was designed to further test these processes.

Table 1. Model coefficients for the indirect influence of distant realistic threat (*X*) on feelings towards Turkish-Dutch people, Moroccan-Dutch people, and Polish-Dutch people via the mediator feelings towards the Turkish accession (*M1*)

	Feelings towards Turkish-Dutch people			Feelings towards Moroccan-Dutch people			Feelings towards Polish-Dutch people		
	b	*SE*	*p*	*b*	*SE*	*p*	*b*	*SE*	*p*
Distant threat (*X*)	−5.40	3.60	.137	−8.09	4.14	.053	−1.70	3.63	.640
Feelings Turkish accession (*M1*)	0.44	0.10	.001	0.35	0.12	.003	0.28	0.10	.007
	$R^2 = .21$, $F(2, 96) = 12.83$, $p < .001$			$R^2 = .15$, $F(2, 96) = 8.34$, $p < .001$			$R^2 = .09$, $F(2, 96) = 4.44$, $p = .014$		

STUDY 2

Study 2 used an ongoing discussion within the Netherlands about the perceived influence of Greece on the EU economy. The main goal of Study 2 was to test the GAP and TAP. Accordingly, we included feelings towards Greece (i.e., the GAP-mediator) and realistic threats from local outgroups (i.e., the TAP-mediator). In addition, because Study 1 only indicated weak indirect effects for the TAP, we chose to further investigate this pathway. Specifically, we manipulated whether the realistic threats were attributed *internally* to the distant outgroup members, or *externally* to the situation.

We predict the presence of a threat-based association when the threat is attributed *internally* to the distant outgroup members because such internal characteristics could easily be represented within the nearby society and thus alert observers about potential threats from local outgroups. Indeed, observers often blame outgroup members for the threatening actions (Bilewicz & Krzeminski, 2010; Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002; Glick, 2005). In contrast to internally attributed threats, we predict that when the threat is attributed to the situation, the threat becomes very specific. Thereby, the threat gets isolated from other threats, obstructing a threat-based association. Accordingly, we predicted a moderating role of threat attribution on the association between the distant and local threats. When attributed internally (i.e., to the outgroup members), the distant threat is likely associated with local threats; yet when attributed externally (i.e., to the situation), no such threat-based association should occur.

Method

Participants and design

Seventy first-year psychology students participated (79% female, M_{age} = 19 years) in the study entitled 'the Netherlands and the economic crisis' for partial fulfilment of a course requirement. Participants were randomly assigned to one of two experimental conditions in which threats from Greece were either attributed internally to characteristics of Greeks (n = 38) or attributed more externally (n = 32).[4]

Materials and procedure

After agreeing on informed consent, participants received (bogus) information on why Greece poses a threat to the European and Dutch economy. In addition, depending on the experimental condition, they received information on why Greece is specifically responsible for this threat. After reading the information, participants filled out a questionnaire on the economic crisis and Greece (i.e., the distant measures). Afterwards, they were asked to fill out another – ostensibly unrelated – questionnaire on Dutch local outgroups (i.e., the local measures).

Manipulation

We manipulated the attribution of threat in a (bogus) article explaining why the Greek situation negatively influences the European economy. In the *internal attribution*

[4] *Originally, we included a third experimental condition in which we did not specify the threat. However, because we could not tell* how *participants attributed the threat in this condition, we decided to drop this condition from the analyses to make the results section more comprehensible.*

condition, the threats were ascribed to presumed stereotypical attributes of 'the Greeks', such as being lazy, unwilling to change, swindlers, and profiteers (Antoniades, 2012; Tzogopoulos, 2012). In this condition, we specifically expected carry-over effect via the TAP. In the *external attribution condition*, we provided a system explanation for the threats. Here Greece was accused of poor investments and borrowing decisions, having a bad infrastructure, using inefficient production processes, and having a large imbalance in their power and money distribution among its citizens. We expected carry-over effects via the TAP in the internal attribution condition but not in the external attribution condition.

Measures about Greece and the economic crisis

The main purpose of the first questionnaire was to measure perceived threat from Greece (i.e., the predictor, Figure 1, *X*) and attitudes towards Greece (i.e., the mediator according to the GAP, Figure 1, *M1*). Moreover, additional items were included (1) to strengthen the cover story that questionnaire 1 and 2 were separate studies, (2) to strengthen the manipulation by repeating the threat, and (3) for exploratory reasons. Those items concerned: consequences of the economic threat (measured before manipulation), stereotypes towards Greece (stereotype content model, Fiske *et al.*, 2002), and responsibility of Greece for the economic crisis; but were excluded from the current paper to keep the method and results section comprehensible.

Comprehension check. To check whether participants had read the presented information, an open-ended question was administered after the manipulation. Participants were asked to mention what they believed was the most important message of the provided information. All answers were in line with the manipulation.

Feelings towards Greece and its citizens (GAP-mediator). For feelings towards Greece and its citizens, two feeling thermometers were included (0 *negative* or *cold* and 100 *positive* or *warm*). We differentiated between the nation Greece and its citizens as we considered reactions to the nation as more threat oriented. However, all four feeling thermometers were highly interrelated; accordingly, we combined the four items in a single scale, $\alpha = .91$, $M = 56.06$, $SD = 16.57$.

Perceived realistic threats from Greece (main predictor variable). Three items measured perceived realistic threats from Greece on a 7-point scale (1 *not at all* and 7 *completely*). That is, Greece has a negative influence on Europe's economy, Greece poses a threat to the European economy, and Greece poses a threat to the EU, $\alpha = .74$, $M = 4.75$, $SD = 1.06$. This variable was used as the main predictor in our analyses.

Intolerance towards local outgroups

The second questionnaire consisted of items about the local outgroups Turkish-, Moroccan-, and Polish-Dutch people. The purpose of this questionnaire was to measure feelings towards these local outgroups (i.e., response variable, Figure 1, *Y*), and to measure realistic threats from these local outgroups (i.e., the TAP-mediator, Figure 1, *M2*).

Feelings towards local outgroups (main outcome variables). Two feeling thermometers (1 *negative* or *cold* and 100 *positive* or *warm*) were included for Turkish-Dutch people, $r = .90$, $M = 54.46$, $SD = 19.60$, Moroccan-Dutch people, $r = .94$, $M = 47.16$, $SD = 19.38$, and Polish-Dutch people, $r = .91$, $M = 47.81$, $SD = 20.42$.

Realistic threats from the local outgroups (TAP-mediator). For each local outgroup, participants indicated on a 7-point scale (1 *not at all* and 7 *completely*) whether [local outgroup] had a negative influence on the Dutch economy and whether [local outgroup] was a burden to the Dutch economic system; Turkish-Dutch people, $r = .80$, $M = 3.50$, $SD = 1.23$; Moroccan-Dutch people, $r = .89$, $M = 3.91$, $SD = 1.50$; Polish-Dutch people, $r = .84$, $M = 3.83$, $SD = 1.37$. Originally, we included a third item 'compared to Dutch citizens, how efficient do [local outgroup] work?' but in hindsight we were unsure about the face validity of this item (as it may also tap into symbolic threats). Accordingly, we did not use this item in our analyses.

Symbolic similarities with Greece. For each local outgroup, participants indicated on two items whether the group was symbolically similar to Greece. The items were: 'To what extent is the [local outgroup's] culture similar to the cultural norms and values of Greece?' and 'How similar is the [local outgroup's] way of living (e.g., behaviour, mentality, and work ethos) to the way of living in Greece?'; Turkish-Dutch people, $r = .69$, $M = 4.35$, $SD = 1.09$; Moroccan-Dutch people, $r = .63$, $M = 2.86$, $SD = 1.03$; Polish-Dutch people, $r = .76$, $M = 3.95$, $SD = 1.03$. The purpose of this variable was twofold. Firstly, we included these items to explore whether symbolic similarities strengthen the assumed path between feelings towards Greece and feelings towards the local outgroups. Secondly, we ran our analyses with this variable as a covariate. However, in both cases, the effect of this variable was negligible and we therefore decided to not include this variable in our analyses presented below.

Dimension reduction: Local outgroups

Because our hypotheses did not differentiate between the local outgroups, we explored whether factor analysis would discriminate between them. A single factor analysis including the local feeling, realistic threat, and cultural similarity items identified five factors explaining 82.97% of the variance. The first factor consisted of all local feeling items, $R^2 = .40$; factor loadings > .80. The second factor consisted of the realistic threat items for Turkish- and Moroccan-Dutch people, $R^2 = .16$; factor loadings > .72. The third factor contained the cultural similarity items for Turkish- and Moroccan-Dutch people, $R^2 = .12$; factor loadings > .65. The fourth factor consisted of the two cultural similarity items for Polish-Dutch people, $R^2 = .09$; factor loadings > .83. The last factor contained the remaining two realistic threat items for Polish-Dutch people, $R^2 = .06$; factor loadings > .57. As this analysis did not discriminate between Turkish- and Moroccan-Dutch people on the feeling, threat, and similarity items, we decide to combine these two groups in the local group *Turkish- and Moroccan-Dutch people*: feelings: $\alpha = .94$, $M = 51.14$, $SD = 18.86$; realistic threats: $\alpha = .93$, $M = 3.66$, $SD = 1.23$; cultural similarities $\alpha = .82$, $M = 3.99$, $SD = 1.05$.

Results

Analysis of means

We checked whether the internal and external attribution conditions differed from each other on any of the measures. MANOVA did not indicate significant differences, $F(6, 63) = 0.14, p = .990$. This suggests that carry-over effects are equally present or absent in both conditions. Note, however, that we did not expect differences between means as in both conditions carry-over effects could occur. Instead, we expected that within the different experimental conditions different processes would underlie these carry-over effects. The remainder of our analyses will be on these processes.

Testing the processes underlying carry-over effects

We proposed two indirect pathways which could explain why threats from a distant outgroup carry over into local intolerance: the GAP and the TAP. For the GAP (Figure 1, top), the relationship between distant realistic threats (*X*) and negative feelings towards local outgroups (*Y*) is mediated by feelings towards the distant outgroup (*M1*) – for the TAP (Figure 1, bottom), this relationship is mediated by realistic threats from local outgroups (*M2*). In addition, we predicted attribution of the threat (*W1*) to moderate the relationship between distant realistic threats (*X*) and local realistic threats (*M2*). The relationships between each of the variables can be observed in Table 2. Because the mediators were correlated in the internal attribution condition (see Table 2), we choose to control for the other mediator's influence on feelings towards local outgroups.

Testing the GAP

According to this pathway (Figure 1, top), distant realistic threats (*X*) indirectly influence feelings towards local outgroups (*Y*) via the mediator feelings towards Greece (*M1*). We tested the GAP with bootstrapped mediation analyses using the SPSS PROCESS macro with 5,000 bootstrapping samples (Hayes, 2013, Model 4) and controlled for the effect of the TAP-mediator 'local realistic threats' on feelings towards local outgroups. The results are presented in Tables 3 and 4 (columns

Table 2. Correlation coefficients between our measures in Study 2. The correlations presented above the diagonal are for the internal attribution condition, whereas the correlations presented below the diagonal are for the external attribution condition

	Threat Greece	Feeling Greece	Threat Polish-D	Threat T-M-D	Feelings Polish-D	Feelings T-M-D
Threat Greece	–	−.17	.43**	.41*	−.45**	−.27
Feeling Greece	−.32†	–	−.34*	−.31†	.79***	.70***
Threat Polish-Dutch people	−.27	.11	–	.81***	−.51***	−.54***
Threat Turkish- and Moroccan-Dutch people	−.12	−.08	.44*	–	−.35*	−.55***
Feelings Polish-Dutch people	−.03	.48**	−.17	−.11	–	.82***
Feelings Turkish- and Moroccan-Dutch people	−.04	.48**	−.07	−.42**	.67***	–

Note. *$p < .05$; **$p < .01$; ***$p < .001$; †$p < .10$.

'Feelings toward Greece' and 'Feelings toward Turkish- and Moroccan-Dutch people/ Polish-Dutch people'). Similar to Study 1, the relationship between feelings towards Greece and the local outgroups was significant, but the relationship between distant threat and feelings towards Greece was only marginally significant. This resulted in a marginally significant indirect effect for Turkish- and Moroccan-Dutch people, $\rho = -2.05$, 95% CI [−4.75, 0.09], and Polish-Dutch people, $\rho = -2.38$, 95% CI [−5.71, 0.17], suggesting that distant realistic threats can indeed indirectly affect local intolerance via feelings towards the distant outgroup.

Testing the TAP

According to this pathway (Figure 1, bottom), distant realistic threats (*X*) indirectly influence feelings towards local outgroups (*Y*) via the mediator local realistic threats (*M2*). Accordingly, we predicted that the distant and local outgroups are connected to each other based on a threat-based association (path *d*). Importantly, we hypothesized that this threat-based association would specifically occur when the threat was attributed internally to characteristics of the distant outgroup's members (experimentally manipulated moderator *W1*, dummy-coded: 0 = external attribution condition, 1 = internal attribution condition). We tested the TAP with the SPSS PROCESS macro with 5,000 bootstrapping samples (Hayes, 2013; Model 7) and controlled for the effect of the GAP-mediator 'feelings toward Greece' on feelings towards local outgroups. We will describe these analyses step-by-step below.

Our prediction that the effect of distant threats (*X*) on local threats (*M2*) would be moderated by attribution (*W*) was supported by the significant interaction effect (see Tables 3 and 4, column 'local threat'). Also in line with our predictions, local threats were strongly related to feelings towards the corresponding local outgroup (see Tables 3 and 4, column 'Feelings toward Turkish- and Moroccan-Dutch people/Polish-Dutch people'). Bootstrapped moderated mediation analyses further supported our conditional TAP-hypothesis for Turkish- and Moroccan-Dutch people and Polish-Dutch people. When distant threats were attributed to the distant outgroup members, the conditional indirect effect was significant for Turkish- and Moroccan-Dutch people, $\rho = -2.67$, 95% CI [−5.97, −0.65], and Polish-Dutch people, $\rho = -2.02$, 95% CI [−5.11, −0.34], indicating that distant threats indirectly caused local intolerance. When threats were attributed to the system, the indirect effect was positive but unreliable for Turkish- and Moroccan-Dutch people, $\rho = 0.89$, 95% CI [−0.89, 3.50], and Polish-Dutch people, $\rho = 1.32$, 95% CI [−0.02, 3.84].

Discussion

In line with our TAP-hypothesis, Study 2 supported a threat-based association when the distant threat was internally attributed to the threatening outgroup's members: Stronger perceived distant threat was related to stronger perceived local threat, and these local threats were negatively related to feelings towards local outgroups. In addition, though weaker, the data from Study 2 also supported our GAP-hypothesis and earlier findings from Study 1. Similar to Study 1, the relatively weak relationship between the distant threat and feelings towards distant outgroup members could be explained by an emotional detachment from the outgroup members due to the outgroup's geographical distance. Conceivably, we would have found stronger support for the GAP if we had

Table 3. Hierarchical analyses of our model. The first column represents the effects on mediator 1 feelings towards Greece, the second column the effects on mediator 2 local threat, and the last column effects on our outcome variable feelings towards Turkish- and Moroccan-Dutch people

	Feelings towards Greece (*M1*)			Local threat (*M2*)			Feelings towards Turkish- and Moroccan-Dutch people (*Y*)		
	b	*SE*	*p*	*b*	*SE*	*p*	*b*	*SE*	*p*
Distant threat (*X*)	−3.32	1.89	.078	−0.15	0.25	.542	0.02	1.56	.990
Attribution (*W*)	–	–	–	−2.90	1.44	.048	–	–	–
Threat × Attribution	–	–	–	0.61	0.30	.044	–	–	–
Feelings Greece (*M1*)	–	–	–	–	–	–	0.62	0.10	.001
Local threat (*M2*)	–	–	–	–	–	–	−5.87	1.35	.001
	$R^2 = .04$, $F(3, 66) = 3.19$, $p = .078$			$R^2 = .11$, $F(3, 66) = 2.73$, $p = .051$			$R^2 = .53$, $F(3, 66) = 25.19$, $p < .001$		

Table 4. Hierarchical analyses of our model. The first column represents the effects on mediator 1 feelings towards Greece, the second column the effects on mediator 2 local threat, and the last column effects on our outcome variable feelings towards Polish-Dutch people

	Feelings towards Greece (*M1*)			Local threat (*M2*)			Feelings towards Polish-Dutch people (*Y*)		
	b	*SE*	*p*	*b*	*SE*	*p*	*b*	*SE*	*p*
Distant threat (*X*)	−3.32	1.89	.078	−0.40	0.29	.179	−2.50	1.54	.110
Attribution (*W*)	–	–	–	−4.94	1.71	.005	–	–	–
Threat × Attribution	–	–	–	1.00	0.35	.006	–	–	–
Feelings Greece (*M1*)	–	–	–	–	–	–	0.72	0.10	.001
Local threat (*M2*)	–	–	–	–	–	–	−3.33	1.08	.003
	$R^2 = .04$, $F(3, 66) = 3.19$, $p = .078$			$R^2 = .15$, $F(3, 66) = 4.00$, $p = .011$			$R^2 = .57$, $F(3, 66) = 29.23$, $p < .001$		

measured reactions directed at removing the threat (e.g., removing Greece from the EU) instead of negativity towards the distant outgroup members.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

The results of two empirical studies are in line with the idea that perceived distant realistic intergroup threats can carry over into local intolerance via two different indirect pathways. Thus, when a distant outgroup (e.g., Turkey or Greece) poses an economic threat, this intergroup situation may negatively affect distant observers' (e.g., Dutch university students) perception of local outgroups within their local environment (e.g., Turkish-Dutch people). Furthermore, the results support the analytical differentiation of our two hypothesized pathways. Firstly, in accordance with our *GAP-hypothesis*, distant realistic threats can influence local intolerance via a *group*-based association. That is, reactions towards perceived threats from a distant outgroup (e.g., Turkey) are generalized towards local outgroups which are associated with the distant outgroup (e.g., Turkish- and Moroccan-Dutch people). Importantly, as illustrated in Study 1, this group-based association is based on characteristics of the distant and local outgroups and does not necessarily include a realistic threat. Secondly, distant realistic threats can also carry over via a *threat*-based association, supporting our *TAP-hypothesis*. When stereotypical characteristics of the distant outgroup members are perceived to cause the distant realistic threat (e.g., laziness of Greeks), this distant threat alerts observers about realistic intergroup threats within observers' local environment (e.g., competition on the labour market by immigrants), and these local threats are associated with intolerance towards involved local outgroups.

These findings are important because they nuance earlier theorizing that realistic threats are unlikely to carry over due to being too concrete and situation-specific (Bouman *et al.*, 2014). Our findings suggest that these characteristics of distant realistic threats make them less likely to *directly* affect local intolerance; however, *indirect* carry-over effects of distant realistic threats on local intolerance seem more likely to occur. Thereby, our findings extend earlier literature on carry-over effects that focused on *symbolic* intergroup threats (Bouman *et al.*, 2014), *local* realistic threats (e.g., Sassenberg *et al.*, 2007), and general threats *unspecific* to a particular group (e.g., general economic crisis; Becker, Wagner, & Christ, 2011; Butz & Yogeeswaran, 2011).

Furthermore, the current findings broaden the scope in which the intergroup threat theory can be applied (Stephan & Renfro, 2002; Stephan *et al.*, 2009). Our findings suggest that distant threats may elicit intolerance towards local outgroups that are uninvolved in the distant threatening situation. In addition, our results provide important information about realistic threats' direct effects on the outgroup perceived as threatening. In line with previous findings (Esses *et al.*, 1998, 2001; Riek *et al.*, 2006; Stephan *et al.*, 2009), Study 2 confirms that realistic threats from a *local* outgroup relate to negative views of this outgroup's members. However, when a *distant* outgroup is perceived as realistically threatening, observers react by targeting the threat (e.g., not allowing Turkey to join the EU) rather than the distant outgroup's members. Possibly, the remoteness of the distant outgroup objectifies the situation more, makes observers less involved, and less inclined to react towards outgroup members that are unlikely to be encountered. Clearly however, further research is required to test these suggestions.

Our findings also have potential applied value. Firstly, our results concur with the idea that global situations (e.g., a global economic downturn) might affect local intergroup

relationships (see also Becker *et al.*, 2011; Butz & Yogeeswaran, 2011). Whereas individuals and policymakers often focus on perceived negative actions of local outgroups (e.g., Polish-Dutch people 'stealing' local jobs) to explain and contest local intolerance, our results indicate that a much broader context should be taken into account. Therefore, to improve the image of a specific local outgroup, it may be advisable to not only focus on the portrayal of this particular outgroup in for instance the media, but to also look at (seemingly unrelated) global situations occurring at the same time (e.g., the perceived role of Greece within the Eurozone crisis). Secondly, our results also point to the possibility that a threat-based association can be *obstructed* when the threat is attributed externally (e.g., bad loans). Accordingly, governmental reports on foreign issues might take advantage of these findings by focusing on external attributes, thereby preventing any reinforcement of local intolerance. Moreover, such external attributions might make observers more inclined to react to the context, rather than to the distant outgroup, which may also inhibit carry-over effects via the GAP (see also Bouman *et al.*, 2014).

Our set of studies has at least three limitations. Firstly, because our mediators were measured rather than manipulated, we have to be cautious about claims of causality (i.e., internal validity). While testing causality is certainly a relevant endeavour for future research, the aim of the present paper was more modest, namely, to analytically and empirically identify two distinct pathways to carry-over effects of distant realistic threat. Because we successfully manipulated the salience of realistic threat in Study 1, we can conclude that perceived distant realistic threats caused local intolerance in that study. Nevertheless, there would certainly be added value in experimentally manipulating the mediator variables.

A second limitation is that we focused specifically on economic threats in our studies, whereas our findings may also apply to other intergroup threats. Although future research is required to increase the external validity of our findings, we are relatively confident that other realistic threats (e.g., to the ingroup's well-being, power, or safety; Stephan *et al.*, 2009) can similarly carry over. As with economic threats, these threats could be considered relatively concrete and group specific, making indirect carry-over effects most likely. Future research can test such a broader operationalization of distant realistic threats.

Third, because our symbolic threat salience manipulation in Study 1 was unsuccessful, we were unable to test whether similar GAP and TAP processes underlie carry-over effects due to symbolic threat salience. Although characteristics of symbolic threats suggest more direct carry-over effects (Bouman *et al.*, 2014), future research is required to see whether symbolic and realistic threats do indeed carry over in different ways. We think that the larger question is how both pathways to carry over relate to each other. For instance, are they separate processes or can they also interact? Further research, which is likely to be of an experimental or longitudinal nature, with larger sample sizes is required to answer such interesting questions.

Conclusion

Our findings suggest that there are at least two ways by which perceived distant realistic threats can carry over into local intolerance. The GAP relies on a group-based association and implies that reactions to distant outgroups are generalized to similar local outgroups. The TAP relies on a threat-based association and implies that distant threats alert observers about local threats, which can lead to intolerance towards local outgroups. In this sense, foreign realistic threats can indeed turn domestic, but in two different ways.

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