

When threat to society becomes a threat to oneself: Implications for right-wing attitudes and ethnic prejudice.

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Abstract

The relationships between threat and right-wing attitudes and ethnic prejudice were investigated in a heterogeneous sample ($N = 588$). Specifically, we considered the perception of economic and terroristic threats in terms of their consequences at the societal and personal level. Previous studies revealed that societal consequences of threat, rather than personal consequences, are related to right-wing attitudes (e.g. Dallago & Rocco, 2010; Feldman & Stenner, 1997; Stevens, Bishin, & Barr, 2006). However, the present results challenge these findings. More specifically, three important results emerged. First, items probing into the distinct threat levels loaded on separate dimensions for both economic and terroristic threat, validating the distinction between societal and personal threat consequences. Second, consistent with previous research, this study revealed that perceived societal consequences of threat yield strong and robust relationships with all target variables. However, personal consequences of threat were also associated with higher levels of RWA, SDO, and ethnic prejudice in particular. Third, societal and personal consequences of threat interacted in explaining the target variables. More specifically, feeling personally threatened by terrorism was only related to higher levels of RWA in the presence of low levels of threat to society, whereas experiencing personal economic threat was only related to higher levels of SDO and ethnic prejudice when high societal economic threat was experienced. In sum, although the perception of societal consequences of threat plays a prominent role in explaining right-wing attitudes and ethnic prejudice, the perception of being personally affected by threat is also associated with higher levels of RWA and SDO, and especially ethnic prejudice.

Keywords: personal threat; societal threat; right-wing attitudes; ethnic prejudice

Threat has been hypothesized to be an important basis of right-wing attitudes. This hypothesis has been confirmed in many studies using several types of right-wing attitudes, including authoritarianism (e.g., Duckitt, 2001), conservatism (e.g., Doty, Peterson, & Winter, 1991), and social dominance orientation (SDO; e.g., Pettigrew, Christ, Wagner, & Stellmacher, 2007). Moreover, meta-analyses have corroborated the relationships between threat and right-wing attitudes, racial prejudice and negative outgroup attitudes (Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway, 2003; Onraet, Van Hiel, Dhont, & Pattyn, 2011; Riek, Mania, & Gaertner, 2006).

Studies on these relationships have considered a wide variety of threats as diverse as neurotic anxiety, death anxiety, outgroup threat, economic threat, and terroristic threat. Recently, Onraet et al. (2011) suggested a distinction between internal threat, i.e., threat emanating from within an individual, such as death anxiety, and external threat, i.e., threat emanating from the external world, such as economic and terroristic threat. These authors found that external threat, rather than internal threat, is related to right-wing attitudes. External threat may refer to either actual threatening events (e.g. a terrorist attack like 9/11) or perception of threat (e.g. fear of possible terrorist attacks). Whereas this distinction between internal and external threat is based on the source of threat, perceived external threats may also be distinguished at the level of their consequences. Specifically, a perceived external threat can be considered in terms of its potential consequences for society as a whole, or in terms of personal consequences. For example, economic threat affects society because a bad national economy leads to inflation and rising levels of unemployment. However, economic threat can also have consequences at the individual level, such as personal unemployment and financial problems. It can thus be argued that two types of perceived external threat can be discerned: threats with consequences at the societal level and threats with consequences at the personal level.

External threats with personal and societal consequences: Relationship with right-wing attitudes and ethnic prejudice

The question arises whether the relationships between external threat and right-wing attitudes and ethnic prejudice are exacerbated by the perception of societal and/or personal consequences. In political psychology, generally spoken, there is a tendency to put greater emphasis on the societal than on the personal level. Sears and Funk (1991), for example, argued that personal self-interest has minimal effects on the public's social and political attitudes. Instead, these authors claimed that the presence of societal consequences is of utmost importance. For instance, a president's policy is judged negatively when the general economic situation is bad, irrespective of individual financial hardship, because of the negative societal situation.

Studies on threat are no exception to this general idea, showing that the presence of personal consequences is not a necessary precondition for threat to have an effect on right-wing attitudes. Duckitt (1992), for example, suggested that threats to social cohesion, rather than threats to individuals, induce right-wing attitudes. Feldman and Stenner (1997) reported that national, but not individual-level, economic threat interacts with authoritarian predispositions on authoritarian attitudes and behavior manifestations. Dallago and Roccato (2010) found that societal threat to safety positively influences right-wing authoritarianism (RWA), whereas this relationship was non-significant for threat to safety in one's personal environment. Stevens, Bishin, and Barr (2006) even found that, whereas national economic threat affects levels of authoritarianism, individual economic threat has a weak *negative* relationship with authoritarian aggression. In this case, personal well-being is associated with more, not less, authoritarianism.

These findings are in line with the group cohesion model (Duckitt, 1989), stating that threat to the cohesion and integrity of the ingroup increases authoritarianism. Similarly,

Stenner (2005) argued that normative threat – threat to the oneness and sameness of the group – is the key factor in explaining authoritarianism. Furthermore, the Dual Process Model of social attitudes (DPM; Duckitt, 2001; Duckitt & Sibley, 2009) states that RWA expresses the motivational goal of social control and security, which is especially salient for individuals who experience the world as dangerous, chaotic, and threatening. Similarly, Jugert and Duckitt (2009) argued that collective security motivation, the motivational goal that the collective should be safe and harmonious, increases higher authoritarianism. These views of authoritarianism as a group-related phenomenon naturally lead to the prediction that threats to group integrity, status, cohesion and/or identity are crucial antecedents of authoritarianism, rather than the presence of personal consequences. Stenner (2005) even suggested that the experience of personal threat consequences has an opposite effect on authoritarianism. Specifically, she claimed, “personal trials and tribulations, which distract authoritarians from their problematic concern for the collective, should actually disengage and diminish the impact of those predispositions, buying some temporary “breathing space” for minorities, dissidents, and deviants as authoritarians’ attentions are diverted to their personal traumas” (p. 70). In sum, these studies and theories seem to indicate that the effects of external threat on right-wing attitudes depend, to a large extent, on perceived societal consequences and not whether personal harm was experienced.

The present study

Using a questionnaire study in a heterogeneous voter sample, we aimed to further investigate the role of societal and personal consequences of external threat in explaining right-wing attitudes. Our study had three goals. First, because societal and personal threat consequences are closely related, we investigated whether the societal and personal levels can be identified as distinct dimensions. Second, we compared the magnitude of the relationship of societal and personal threat consequences with right-wing attitudes. Whereas previous

studies exploring threat have mainly focused on Right-Wing Authoritarianism (RWA), some studies also revealed a relationship between threat and Social Dominance Orientation (SDO) (e.g. Pettigrew et al., 2007). Moreover, both RWA and SDO are important social attitudes (e.g. Duckitt, 2001). In the present study, we therefore studied the relationship between societal and personal threat and both RWA and SDO. Moreover, we also examined the relationships of societal and personal threat consequences with ethnic prejudice, since it is widely acknowledged that threat is strongly related with negative outgroup attitudes and prejudice as well (e.g. Riek et al., 2006). Third, we investigated the additive and interaction effects of societal and personal threat consequences on right-wing attitudes and ethnic prejudice. Specifically, the simultaneous presence of societal and personal threat consequences may be associated with disproportionately high levels of right-wing attitudes and ethnic prejudice. Another possibility is that the effects of these two types of consequences accumulate, leading to additional increases in right-wing attitudes and ethnic prejudice.

For this study, we selected economic and terroristic threat as external threats. Previous research revealed that both economic and terroristic threat are strong correlates of several right-wing attitudes (e.g. Onraet et al., 2011). For both economic and terroristic threat, we selected items probing societal and personal consequences. More specifically, societal consequences of economic threat refer to the fear that the society will suffer from a bad national economy, whereas personal consequences refer to the fear that the individual him or herself can become a victim of economic hardship, by personal unemployment and financial problems. Similarly, in the case of terroristic threat, societal consequences refer to the fear that the society will be affected by terrorism, whereas personal consequences refer to the fear that one may personally become a victim of a terrorist attack.

Furthermore, based on the DPM (Duckitt, 2001; Duckitt et al., 2009), we expected terroristic threat to be more closely related to authoritarianism (RWA; see also Van Hiel &

Kossowska, 2007), whereas economic threat should be especially predictive for social dominance orientation (SDO). Indeed, it might be expected that the experience of terroristic threat closely relates to the perception of danger; according to the DPM, the perception of the world as a dangerous place increases RWA. Conversely, the experience of economic threat may be closely related to a competitive worldview, which is assumed by the DPM to increase SDO.

Method

Participants

We gathered a heterogeneous sample of 588 Dutch adults, stratified by age, gender, educational level, and province. A total of 792 individuals were invited by a survey company to complete an online questionnaire. Of this sample, 618 initially agreed to participate, of whom 30 respondents failed to adequately complete the survey (final response rate = 74%). The sample had a mean age of 50.73 years ($SD = 15.11$), included 47% females and 53% males, and was equally distributed according to education level: 35% had a low level of education, 35% had a middle level of education, and 30% had a high level of education.

Measures

All items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). Alpha's, means, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis values of the scales are displayed in Table 1.

Threat measures. Three items measuring perceived *personal consequences of terroristic threat* (based on Cohrs, Kielmann, Maes, & Moschner, 2005) were administered. The items are 'I feel that my everyday life is affected by possible terrorist actions', 'I feel personally threatened by possible terrorist actions', and 'There is a realistic chance that I myself or one of my relatives will become a victim of a terrorist attack'. Based on the measures of personal terroristic threat, three items pertaining to *societal consequences of*

terroristic threat were constructed. The items are ‘Terrorism threatens our society’, ‘There is a good chance that a terrorist attack will happen in our country in the near future’, and ‘I feel that the daily life in our country is affected by possible terrorist actions’. Next, three items measuring *personal consequences of economic threat* (based on Feldman and Stenner, 1997) were administered. The items are ‘I worry that I myself or one of my relatives will lose our job in the near future’, ‘I am scared that I myself or one of my relatives will have financial problems in the near future’, and ‘I am worried that my or my family’s budget for holidays and travels will decrease soon’. Finally, based on the measures of personal economic threat, three items pertaining to *societal consequences of economic threat* were administered. The items are ‘The national economy will worsen in the near future’, ‘A lot of inhabitants of our country will lose their jobs in the near future’, and ‘The financial situation of the inhabitants of our country will significantly worsen’.

Right-wing attitudes. Participants completed six items of Altemeyer’s (1981; translated by Meloen, 1991) *Right-Wing Authoritarianism* scale (RWA) and six items of Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, and Malle’s (1994; translated by Van Hiel & Duriez, 2002) *Social Dominance Orientation* scale (SDO).

Ethnic prejudice. Participants completed seven items of the *blatant racism* scale (Duriez et al., 2002) and eight items of the *subtle racism* scale (Pettigrew and Meertens, 1995; adapted by Van Hiel & Mervielde, 2005).

Results

We used an α level of .05 for tests of significance. Table 1 reports the correlations among the study’s variables. To validate societal and personal threat consequences as distinct dimensions, we performed a Principal Component Analysis with OBLIMIN rotation on the 12 threat items. We extracted four components corresponding to societal and personal consequences of economic and terroristic threat. This resulted in all items loading on the

correct component (all loadings higher than .63), explaining 80.14% of the variance. The component scores were used for further analyses.

Table 1. Alpha's, Means and Standard Deviations, Skewness and Kurtosis values of the used scales

	α	M (SD)	Skewness / Kurtosis	Pers Econ	Soc Terror	Soc Econ	RWA	SDO	Subtle Racism	Blatant Racism
Pers Terror	.85	1.90 (.89)	1.04 / .69	.37***	.61***	.32***	.22***	.29***	.35***	.49***
Pers Econ	.88	3.03 (1.12)	-.10 / -.85	-	.35***	.51***	.09*	.12**	.26***	.37***
Soc Terror	.86	2.81 (1.00)	-.06 / -.55		-	.44***	.35***	.30***	.44***	.57***
Soc Econ	.89	3.10 (.95)	-.15 / -.36			-	.16***	.19***	.30***	.45***
RWA	.71	3.31 (.70)	-.44 / .40				-	.30***	.42***	.42***
SDO	.75	2.27 (.70)	.18 / -.24					-	.50***	.54***
Subtle Racism	.84	3.35 (.73)	.02 / -.10						-	.75***
Blatant Racism	.88	2.55 (.94)	.46 / -.36							-

Note. Pers Terror = Personal consequences of terroristic threat; Pers Econ = Personal consequences of economic threat; Soc Terror = Societal consequences of terroristic threat; Soc Econ = Societal consequences of economic threat; RWA = Right-Wing Authoritarianism; SDO = Social Dominance Orientation * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

Next, we calculated the relationships between societal and personal threat consequences and the target variables RWA, SDO, subtle racism and blatant racism, controlling for the demographic variables age, sex, and education level. A series of independent hierarchical regression analyses for each of the four threat components were conducted in which the control variables were entered in the first step of the analyses, while the four threat components were each separately included in the second step. Table 2 shows the standardized betas (β), revealing that societal and personal consequences of both economic and terroristic threat were significantly related to SDO and to both measures of ethnic prejudice.

Furthermore, economic threat was only a weak correlate of RWA, reflected by a non-

significant relationship with personal economic threat and only a weak relationship with societal economic threat. In the case of terroristic threat, both personal and societal consequences were significantly related to RWA¹.

Next, we investigated whether each type of threat consequence explained variance in the target variables in addition to the other threat type. We conducted a series of hierarchical analyses, controlling for the demographic variables in the first block and controlling for the corresponding personal/societal consequences in the second block. For example, when looking at the effects of personal economic threat, we controlled for societal economic threat. All tolerance values were greater than .10 and all VIF measures smaller than 10, which indicate that multicollinearity does not pose a substantial problem. The standardized betas are displayed in brackets in Table 2. These subsidiary analyses revealed that societal consequences explained additional variance in RWA, SDO, and ethnic prejudice over and beyond personal consequences, both for terroristic and economic threat. Furthermore, personal consequences explained additional variance in ethnic prejudice on top of societal consequences for both threats and in SDO for terroristic threat.

Table 2. Standardized betas (β) of the relationships between threat and right-wing attitudes and ethnic prejudice

	RWA	SDO	Subtle Racism	Blatant Racism
Personal Terroristic Threat	.16*** (.03)	.30*** (.21***)	.30*** (.14***)	.42*** (.24***)
Personal Economic Threat	.05 (.00)	.10* (.02)	.23*** (.13**)	.31*** (.17***)
Societal Terroristic Threat	.27*** (.25***)	.28*** (.17***)	.40*** (.32***)	.49*** (.37***)
Societal Economic Threat	.09* (.09*)	.18*** (.18***)	.26*** (.19***)	.39*** (.30***)

¹ When including RWA and SDO as predictors in the regression analyses of the relationships between threat and ethnic prejudice, the standardized beta's were somewhat weakened, but still remained significant (all p 's < .001)

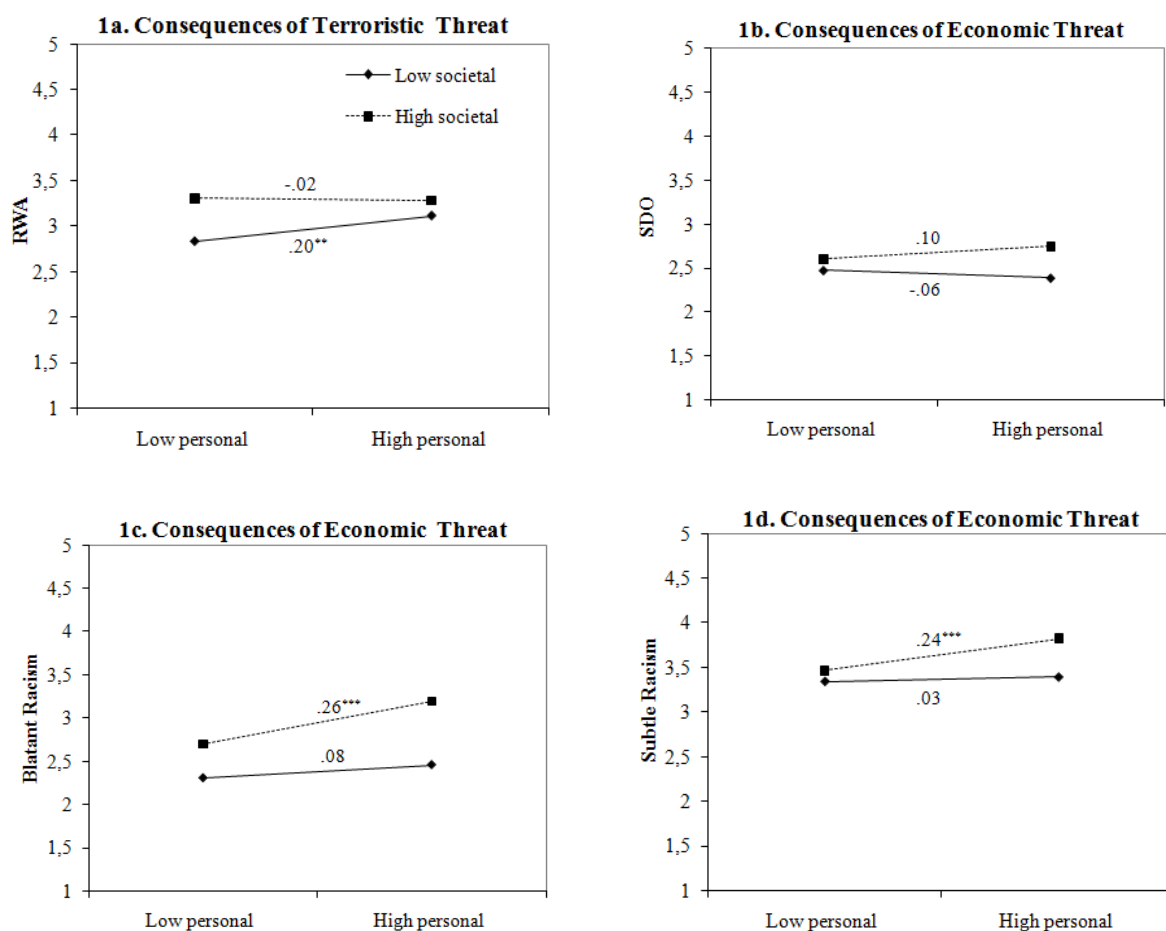
Note. first β = regression coefficient after controlling for age, sex, and education level (Step 1 of the analysis); β between the brackets = regression coefficient after controlling for age, sex, education level (Step 1 of the analysis), and the corresponding personal/societal consequences of threat (Step 2 of the analysis). * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

Finally, we investigated the interaction effects between societal and personal consequences (societal X personal terroristic threat and societal X personal economic threat) on the target variables RWA, SDO, and ethnic prejudice (based on Aiken & West, 1991). We conducted a series of hierarchical regression analyses with the demographic variables entered in Step 1, the centered threat measures entered in Step 2, and the interaction term entered in Step 3. Several interesting effects emerged. Specifically, the interaction between societal and personal consequences of terroristic threat was significant for RWA ($\beta = -.12, p < .01, \Delta R^2 = .01, \Delta F = 8.06$). Figure 1a (the plotted values of the predictors represent one standard deviation above and below the mean) and the simple slope analysis revealed that in the case of high societal consequences, experiencing personal terroristic threat does not further enhance levels of RWA ($\beta = -.02, p = .72$). However, when the level of societal consequences is low, experiencing high personal terroristic threat is associated with higher levels of RWA ($\beta = .20, p < .01$). This interaction effect between societal and personal consequences for terroristic threat was not significant for SDO, blatant racism, or subtle racism ($\beta = -.07, p = .12; \beta = -.03, p = .37; \beta = .02, p = .55$, respectively).

The interaction between societal and personal consequences of economic threat was significant for SDO ($\beta = .09, p < .05, \Delta R^2 = .01, \Delta F = 4.60$), blatant racism ($\beta = .10, p < .01, \Delta R^2 = .01, \Delta F = 7.94$), and subtle racism ($\beta = .11, p < .01, \Delta R^2 = .01, \Delta F = 8.86$). These interaction effects and the results of the simple slope analyses are depicted in Figures 1b, 1c, and 1d. It was revealed that when low societal consequences are experienced, the perception

of personal economic problems is not associated with higher levels of SDO, blatant racism, or subtle racism ($\beta = -.06, p = .31$; $\beta = .08, p = .10$; $\beta = .03, p = .54$, respectively). However, when an individual feels that society is threatened by economic problems, the experience of personal consequences is related to higher levels of blatant and subtle racism ($\beta = .26, p < .001$; $\beta = .24, p < .001$, respectively), and marginally significant higher levels of SDO ($\beta = .10, p = .10$). In other words, the experience of personal economic problems in addition to societal consequences is associated with the highest levels of SDO and ethnic prejudice. This interaction effect was not significant for RWA ($\beta = .02, p = .56$).

Figure 1. Interaction effects between societal and personal consequences of terroristic threat on RWA (Figure 1a) and between societal and personal consequences of economic threat on SDO (Figure 1b), Blatant Racism (Figure 1c), and Subtle Racism (Figure 1d).



Note. The numbers above the regression lines are the β 's from the simple slope analyses
 * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Discussion

The present study addressed three major goals. First, we wanted to test the hypothesis that societal and personal consequences of threat posed by terrorism and economics can be discerned as separate dimensions. Notwithstanding strong correlations between these scales, societal and personal consequences of threats posed by terrorism and economics can indeed be considered distinct constructs. Our second goal was to investigate the relationships of societal and personal threat consequences with right-wing attitudes and ethnic prejudice. Our results revealed that both types of threat consequences are associated with higher levels of RWA, SDO, and ethnic prejudice, with the exception of a non-significant relationship between personal economic threat and RWA.

Our third goal was to simultaneously examine the effects of both types of threat consequences. Statistical control for personal threat consequences hardly weakened the relationships between societal threat consequences and right-wing attitudes and ethnic prejudice. Controlling for societal threat consequences, however, seriously curbed the relationships between personal threat consequences and RWA and SDO. However, the relationships between personal threat consequences and ethnic prejudice remained significant. Furthermore, societal and personal consequences of threat interacted in explaining the target variables. These interaction effects, however, were different. Specifically, feeling personally threatened by terrorism is only related to higher levels of RWA in the presence of low levels of threat to society, whereas experiencing personal economic threat is only related to higher levels of SDO and ethnic prejudice when high societal economic threat is experienced. The finding that these interaction patterns differ might be indicative of different psychological processes underlying terroristic and economic threat.

A relevant question is whether these results can be considered corroborative evidence for the Dual Process Model of social attitudes (Duckitt, 2001; Duckitt et al., 2009), on basis of which we expected that terroristic threat is especially predictive for RWA, whereas economic threat is especially predictive for SDO. Both terroristic and economic threat were overall more strongly related with SDO than with RWA, yielding relationships of comparable strength with both RWA and SDO. These findings thus are not entirely as we initially expected on the basis of DPM. However, in accordance with DPM, the interaction effects for terroristic threat emerged for RWA, while the interaction effects for economic threat emerged for SDO. Additionally, it should be noted that terroristic threat may harbor elements that are related to SDO, while economic threat may appeal the motivations underlying RWA. Indeed, threat from terrorism may also increase perceptions of intergroup competition and conflict, while economic threat may also lead to a perception of the world as a dangerous and unpredictable place.

Another noteworthy finding was that the experience of personal consequences of threat is more strongly related to ethnic prejudice than to right-wing attitudes. The importance of personal threat consequences in explaining ethnic prejudice, rather than right-wing attitudes, might be explained by the fact that ethnic prejudice is more affectively driven, whereas right-wing attitudes, such as RWA and SDO, have a more cognitive outlook (e.g., Onraet, Van Hiel, Roets, & Cornelis, 2011). It may be expected that the experience of potential personal problems may evoke strong negative emotions, such as fear and anxiety, leading to higher levels of ethnic prejudice (see Kossowska, Bukowski, & Van Hiel, 2008).

In the remainder of the discussion, we first elaborate upon the finding that the experience of both societal and personal consequences strongly relates to right-wing attitudes and ethnic prejudice. Second, we further discuss the processes that might explain the

relationships between the personal level of threat and right-wing attitudes and ethnic prejudice.

The importance of both societal and personal consequences of threat in explaining right-wing attitudes and ethnic prejudice

Our results confirmed that the experience of societal consequences of economic and terroristic threat accompanies elevated levels of right-wing attitudes and ethnic prejudice, even after controlling for personal consequences of threat. Based on the present results, it can be concluded that the societal consequences of threat are an important condition for threat to affect right-wing attitudes and ethnic prejudice. These findings are in line with theories and studies that consider right-wing attitudes as group-related phenomena and stress the importance of the societal level in explaining right-wing attitudes (Dallago et al., 2010; Duckitt, 1989; Jugert et al., 2009; Stenner, 2005; Stevens et al., 2006).

While it should be acknowledged that the level of societal consequences is important, our results also show that personal consequences of threat are relevant in explaining right-wing attitudes and ethnic prejudice. Even more importantly, the significant interaction effects with personal threat consequences indicate that the effects of the societal and personal level are interdependent and that their effects should therefore be interpreted in conjunction.

The finding that relationships for the personal and societal level do not generate similar results for terroristic and economic threat, alerts us to the fact that different processes and explanations might be involved in these distinct threats. Different types of threats may yield different patterns of results, suggesting other explanations of how these threats relate to right-wing attitudes and ethnic prejudice.

Explaining the effects of personal consequences of terroristic and economic threat on right-wing attitudes and ethnic prejudice

To our knowledge, no theories emphasize the importance of personal consequences of threat in explaining right-wing attitudes. Terror Management Theory (TMT; Greenberg, Pyszczynski, & Solomon, 1986), however, is an exception. This theory assumes that people cope with threat originating from the awareness of their own death by adhering to the dominant norms and values of their society and culture. Indeed, studies have revealed that mortality salience increases right-wing attitudes (Cohen, Ogilvie, Solomon, Greenberg, & Pyszczynski, 2005) and negative outgroup attitudes (e.g., Solomon, Greenberg, Pyszczynski, 1991). Feeling personally threatened by terrorism clearly relates to mortality salience; the fear to be a victim of terrorist attacks implies that one fears for one's own life. Hence, TMT can be used as a framework to explain the relationships of personal consequences of terroristic threat with right-wing attitudes. Moreover, if one assumes that death anxiety underlies the effects of personal terroristic threat, it is quite understandable that threat at the personal level significantly increases RWA, even when individuals perceive low threat to society. On the other hand, when terrorism is perceived as a threat to society as a whole, the self is inevitably included. Indeed, if one fears that terrorism might destroy public places like train stations and shopping malls, the individual then risks becoming a victim him or herself, as it is almost impossible to avoid such public places. In that case, feeling personally threatened by terrorism might not be associated with even higher levels of RWA, since the effects of societal terroristic threat on right-wing attitudes already imply a high level of personal threat.

The idea that death anxiety explains the relationships between personal economic problems and right-wing beliefs is less than obvious. Hence, other processes may play a role in explaining this relationship. Some recent studies have shown that materialism should be considered a basis of right-wing beliefs and prejudice (Roets, Van Hiel, & Cornelis, 2006). Liberating individuals from the stress of fulfilling their materialistic needs predisposes them to take a more progressive stand, whereas frustration drives people to conservatism (see

Inglehart, 1990). The shape of the present interaction effect concerning economic threat is consistent with these findings. Previous studies have shown that societal consequences of economic threat have a large impact on voters (e.g., Feldman et al., 1997; Stevens et al., 2006), but the present study revealed that personal economic hardship can have an additional effect as well. Quite understandably, personal consequences only increase SDO and ethnic prejudice when the national economic situation is bad. In particular, if a person loses his or her job in prosperous times, it is illogical to attribute this failure to the system and to change ideology or to blame out-groups. Conversely, if the economic system is doing badly, a person's loss of a job or reduction of wages can be attributed to the collective, increasing levels of SDO and ethnic prejudice. These ideas, of course, attest to the complexity of processes associated with threat and demand further investigation.

Conclusion

The present study aimed to investigate the role of experiences of societal and personal consequences of threat in explaining right-wing attitudes and ethnic prejudice. Previous research has considered personal consequences of threat a minor contributor and has stressed the importance of societal consequences. Although our results attest to the importance of the societal level, these results also demonstrate that the experience of personal consequences contributes to higher levels of right-wing attitudes and especially to ethnic prejudice.

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