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IMMIGRANT THREAT, PREJUDICE AND THE GROWING REFUGEE CRISIS

by

Nshom E. (in press)

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Immigrant Threat, Prejudice and the Growing Refugee Crisis

by

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“One of the greatest sources of difficulties in intercultural relations is the belief that other cultures pose a threat to one’s own culture. Wars have been fought because of such fears, and, at a lesser level, feelings of threat commonly interfere with diplomatic, business, and interpersonal relations between members of different cultures. These feelings of threat also may prejudice the members of one culture against those of another culture.” (Stephan et al., 2000)

Introduction

For the past decades and even more recently in the face worsening economic conditions; the refugee crisis and increasing migration; intergroup relations and conflict between immigrants and members of the host society has become a major concern in many parts of the world especially in western societies. Europe for example has witnessed a tremendous increase in immigration within the last two decades (Meuleman, Davidov & Billiet, 2009) and Studies focusing on anti- immigrant prejudice, threat perceptions and attitudes in Europe have boomed within recent years and are now relatively widespread (Schneider, 2008). Even though:

many western countries are major aid donors, most are high net recipients of immigrants, and all are signatories to a number of United

Nations charters which repudiate discrimination and persecution and guarantee human rights. Yet, despite this reputation for liberalism, there can be little doubt that, in the past decade or so within Western countries, there is an increasing awareness of, and a hardening of attitudes towards people who are different and, in particular, towards immigrants” (Vani & Mangan, 2009, p. 34).

Recent analysis in the 21st century has shown that negative, xenophobic and even racist attitudes are widespread in Europe (Ervasti, 2004). Lets take the case of the current refugee crisis for instance. In 2015, there was an unprecedent influx of asylum seekers on European shores from countries such as Syria, Afghanistan, Eritrea, Somalia Iraq and countries experiencing conflict, widespread violence and insecurity. By the end of December 2015, about one million refugees had arrived Europe; about thirty four thousand of whom came by land through Turkey and the rest by sea through Greece, Italy, Spain, Bulgaria, Cyprus and Malta (BBC, 2015; UNICEF, 2015). This situation has been received with mixed feelings among members of the host community in different European countries especially as most of these asylum seekers come from muslim countries. In most European countries attitudes towards refugees have hardened. In the UK for example, nearly half of Britons do not think refugees should be welcomed into the country (Mirror.co.uk). Attitudes towards immigrants and immigration in Finland have also become less positive especially amidst the outbreak of the current refugee crises. Besides, Finland made headline news on several international media outlets as anti immigrant protesters went on the streets and threw rocks and fireworks at a bus transporting asylum seekers to a reception center in Lahti, Southern Finland (Reuter, 2015). The influx of refugees into European soil also met with anti-immigration demonstrations and protests in other European countries such as Britain,

Germany, Poland, Hungary, Slovakia and Czech Republic just to name a few (Yle, 2015; Euractive, 2015). Research has shown that with regards to refugees and immigrant minorities, most members of the in-group or host society are often worried about an increase in unemployment, the economic burden these refugees or immigrants would pose to their respective governments and the potential danger they represent to the host culture and society (Pitkänen and Kouki, 2002; Yle, 2013). In fact according to Schneider (2008), prejudice and negative attitudes towards immigrants in Europe can be largely attributed to perceived threat. Within the past two decades, a lot of research has also demonstrated that when members of the in-group or majority believe that an out-group or minority such as immigrants and refugees is a threat to the host society, it could potentially lead to prejudice and conflict between them (Croucher, Galy-Badenas, Routsalainen, 2014; Stephan, Diaz-Looving, & Duran, 2000).

What is prejudice?

Prejudice off course is not a new phenomenon. According to Rus and Madrid (1998), there are different definitions of prejudice (see Ashmore, 1970; Buss, 1961; Devine, 1995; Eagly, 1992; Morales & Moya, 1996; Oskamp, 1991; Simpson & Yinger 1965). However, etymologically, prejudice comes from the Latin word *praejudicium* and according to Allport (1954) the father of prejudice research, the briefest definition of prejudice is “thinking ill of others without sufficient warrant”. In Ashmore’s words, prejudice is: “a negative attitude toward a socially defined group and toward any person perceived to be a member of that group” (Ashmore, 1970, p. 253). Allport (1954) also defines prejudice as:

An aversive or hostile attitude towards a person who belongs to a group, simply because he belongs to that group, and is therefore presumed to have the objectionable qualities ascribed to the group... Ethnic prejudice is an

antipathy based upon a faulty and inflexible generalization. It may be felt or expressed. It may be directed toward a group as a whole, or towards an individual because he is a member of that group (Allport, 1954, pp.7).

As far back as in the 1920s, prejudice and intergroup attitudes has been a major topical concern in the social sciences particularly in the fields of sociology and psychology. Beginning from the 1940s, there has been an emergence of theories on prejudice and intergroup conflict. Many of these theories such as the realistic group conflict theory (Sheriff, 1966), symbolic racism theory (Kinder & Sears, 1981), 'group position' model (Blumer 1958, see Bobo 1999, Quillian 1995, 1996), the power/economic threat approach (Blalock, 1967), ethnic competition theory (Barth 1969; Coenders, 2001) suggest that threat perceptions and fear largely contribute to prejudicial attitudes towards outgroups such as immigrants and refugees (Schlüter, 2007). We all know of several and severe cases of prejudice that have resulted in open conflict between the majority and the minority. For example the cases of the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda and Northern Ireland and Nigeria, just to name a few (Oskamp, 2000). On another level, immigrant minorities in Europe and America are on daily basis victims of prejudice and discrimination.

The integrated threat theory of prejudice (ITT) (Stephan & Stephan, 1993, 1996, 2000) is the most recent theoretical postulation on this subject and provides a useful and integrated framework for understanding prejudice and negative attitudes towards outgroups or minorities (Scheibner & Morrison, 2009). It incorporates several and previous theoretical perspectives on intergroup conflict, prejudice and negative attitudes towards outgroup such as immigrants into a comprehensive explanatory model. In the following paragraphs, we will particularly focus on ITT and its components.

Integrated threat theory

According to ITT, there are four major threats that can explain and predict prejudicial attitudes towards outgroups such as refugees and immigrants. These are realistic threats, symbolic threats, intergroup anxiety and negative stereotypes (Gonzalez, Verkuyten, Weesie & Poppe, 2008; Scheibner & Morrison, 2009; Stephan, Diaz-looving & Duran, 2000; Stephan & Stephan, 1996; Stephan, Ybarra, Martinez, Schwarzwald, Turk-Kaspa, 1998; Schweitzer, Perkoulidis, Shelley, Krome, Sandra, Ludlow., 2005). These threats can also be predicted by factors such as: intergroup conflict, status differences, strength of identification, knowledge of the outgroup and intergroup contact. These factors are said to determine the extent to which an outgroup is perceived by the ingroup as threatening while the different types of threat (realistic threats, symbolic threats, intergroup anxiety and negative stereotypes) are considered to be the different factors explaining or predicting prejudicial attitudes towards outgroups. These different types of threat and their antecedents are discussed in greater detail in the following paragraphs:

Antecedents of Threats

Inter-group conflict

Intergroup conflict refers to real intergroup confrontations over scarce resources or differences in culture, norms and values. This potentially promotes the perception of threat and subsequently leads to negative attitudes or prejudice (Curseu, Stoop & Schalk, 2007). Within the context of the current refugee crisis in Europe, Europeans may have conflict with refugees or immigrants over scarce resources such as jobs, power, and money, just to name a few. This might be a motivating factor for them to perceive refugees or immigrants as a threat (realistic threat). They may also feel that the massive presence of refugees and immigrants may lead to their assimilation and conse-

quently the loss of cultural heritage. This could potentially also lead to the perception of threat from refugees and immigrant minorities.

Knowledge of the out-group

According to Stephan and Stephan (2000), the absence of basic or significant information about an outgroup will unavoidably cause the ingroup to perceive the outgroup as threatening. In such situations of ignorance, the ingroup is likely to make some assumptions of the outgroup or because of the fear of the unknown and unfamiliar, they might develop feelings of fear and threat (Stephan & Stephan, 2000). On the other hand, increased and sufficient knowledge about an outgroup can counter stereotypical perceptions previously held about the outgroup and consequently reduce the extent to which the outgroup may be perceived as threatening (Matusitz, 2012).

Intergroup Contact

The quantity and quality of contact also influences the perception of threat from an outgroup and its members. If the ingroup has a more positive contact with the outgroup compared to the amount of negative contact, the outgroup will less likely be perceived as threatening. The tendency here is that those with a previous negative contact with members of an outgroup, usually feel threatened by possibilities of future contact with the same group (Stephan et al., 1999; Stephan & Stephan 2000). Allport (1954) also emphasized that if contact is voluntary, cooperative, equal status, individualized and positive, it will improve intergroup relations. Several studies have found intergroup contact to be related to lesser feelings of threat (Aberson & Gaffney, 2008; Brown & Hewstone, 2005; Stephan & Stephan 1996; Stephan et al., 1998, 2000; Valentova & Alieva, 2010).

Status differences

Whenever there are two groups with different statuses that is, high and low, there is a tendency for the higher to perceive the lower as threatening. This usually occurs because of the fear that members of the low level group might reverse the trend of power relations between them that is dominated by those of high status. The salience of threat posed by the other outgroups increases as the degree of status inequality increases. Threats will be more salient if the ingroup has a very high status or a very low status compared to the outgroup (Stephan & Stephan, 1998, 2000)

Strength of Identification

Identifying strongly with the ingroup has the ability to increase salience in all the four types of threat (Stephan & Stephan 2000). People generally have the tendency and the motivation to develop and maintain a positive sense of their social self (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Gonzalez et al., 2008). In the process of interaction, members of an ingroup who do not strongly identify themselves with the ingroup will not relate with the outgroup from the basis of their membership and consequently, will experience less feelings of threat or not at all. On the other hand, the feeling of threat is often higher with people who strongly identify with their membership when interacting with members of the outgroup. For instance, in-group identification has been found to have a significant effect on realistic and symbolic threat (Riek, Mania & Gaertner, 2006). Individuals in the Netherlands who identified strongly with the Dutch ingroup were found to be more likely to perceive ethnic minorities as threatening to Dutch society and culture (Van Oudenhoven, Prins, & Buunk, 1998).

Types of threats

Realistic Threats

According to González et al. (2008), this fear arises because of competition over scarce resources such as houses and jobs or when the ingroup feels their resources are being

threatened by the outgroup. The desire of the ingroup to protect their resources becomes the motivating factor behind prejudice, negative attitudes and discriminatory behaviour towards members of the outgroup. This often occurs when groups living together in a shared context compete for scarce resources and develop conflicting goals (Curseu et al., 2007). Several studies have found realistic threat to be related to prejudice and negative attitudes towards outgroups (Stephan & Stephan 1996; Stephan et al., 1998, 1999). In Finland for example, politicians and the media have often blamed outgroups such as refugees, Arabs and Russians for rising unemployment and economic difficulties (Finnish National Broadcasting Company, 2011; Jaakola, 2009). In fact, Jaakola (2004) found out that attitudes towards immigrants in Finland grew even harsher in the down turn of the economic recession. In Finland, Finns often worry about an increase in unemployment, the economic burden immigrants would pose to the Finnish government and their social welfare system (Pitkänen & Kouki, 2002). Similarly in other European countries like the UK, France and Germany, immigrants are often blamed for high rates of unemployment among members of the majority in the country. Whenever an outgroup represents an economic or political harm to the ingroup, the ingroup tends to perceive the outgroup as a realistic threat. It is a threat posed to the ingroup by the very existence of the outgroup (Stephan et al., 1998, 2000)

Symbolic Threats

It is obvious that when outgroups such as immigrants and asylum seekers move into a new society, they experience a lot of cultural change or go through some form of acculturation. On the other hand, members of the ingroup can sometimes be concerned or worried about the potential harm an outgroup with a different culture or way of life represents to their society and its members. According to Stephan and Stephan (1996) symbolic threats are threats that arise as a result of perceived differences in morals, val-

ues, standards, beliefs or attitudes between the ingroup and the outgroup. These are seen as threats to the way of life of the ingroup. Usually outgroups with a different view often threaten the ingroup and are consequently often disliked by the ingroup (Stephan et al., 2000). In the context of contemporary Europe and the current refugee crisis, immigrants with a Muslim background are in most cases perceived differently because of their religion and cultural values. Islam is most often presented as a religion of violence and abuse especially by the media. The outgroup's values and beliefs are often times perceived as a threat to the autonomous population and its members whose values in most cases are considered the right ones (Curseau et al., 2007; Nshom & Croucher, 2014; Stephan et al., 1998). Research has found a relationship between symbolic threat and prejudice. Gonzalez et al. (2008) for example, found symbolic threat to be related to prejudice towards Muslims in the Netherlands. In another study, Croucher (2013) also found symbolic threat to be related to prejudice towards Muslim immigrants in Western Europe. Similarly, in Finland, Muslim immigrants are usually perceived negatively because of differences in their religious and cultural values (Jaakkola, 2009).

Inter-group Anxiety

Intergroup anxiety often occurs in the process of ingroup interaction with outgroup members. This anxiety or feeling arises because of the fear of embarrassment, ridicule, rejection, exploitation etc (Stephan et al., 2000) or when the outgroup and the ingroup both have a history of antagonism and have little prior personal contact, are ethnocentric, are ignorant of one another, and also when they are interacting in for example, unstructured or competitive circumstances where the outgroup has a higher status than the ingroup (Islam & Hewstone, 1993; Stephan et al., 1998). This anxiety experienced in the process of interaction is usually motivated by feelings of threat and in most cases causes the ingroup to dislike the outgroup member (Stephan et al., 2000). Some studies

have found a relationship between intergroup anxiety and negative attitude towards outgroups (Islam & Hewstone, 1993; Stephan et al., 1999; Stephan et al., 2000).

Negative Stereotype

These are threats that arise because of negative stereotypes the ingroup has of the outgroup. For example, if ingroup members believe that immigrants and refugees are aggressive, dishonest, and unintelligent or whatever negative attribute or stereotype you can imagine, they will expect interactions with them to be negative (Gonzalez et al., 2008). In the course of interaction, ingroup members may be afraid that negative consequences will befall them because they have negative expectations of the outgroup (Stephan et al., 1998). This fear can lead to prejudice and negative attitudes. Negative stereotype has been found to be related to negative outgroup attitudes and prejudice (Stephan et al., 2000). The more negative stereotypes an ingroup has of an outgroup, the more feelings of threat and fear they will likely perceive from them. On the other hand, positive stereotypes have been associated to lesser feelings of fear and anger towards outgroups (Verkuyten, 1997; Gonzalez et al., 2008).

Thus originally, realistic threat, symbolic threat, negative stereotype and intergroup anxiety are conceptualized as the different types of threat explaining and predicting negative attitude, prejudice and discriminatory behaviour towards outgroups while intergroup conflict, status differences, strength of identification, knowledge of the outgroup and intergroup contact are conceptualized as antecedents or predictors of threat (Stephan et al., 1996, 1998). (See the figure 1 below):

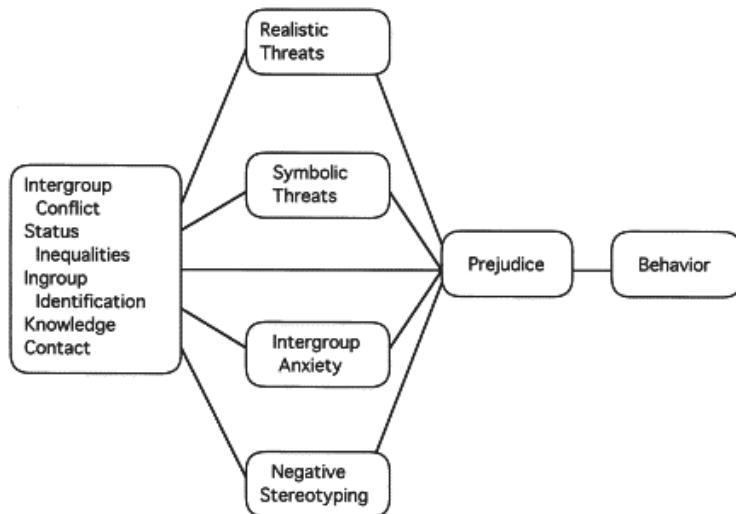


Figure 1: The Integrated Threat Theory (ITT) Model (Stephan, Ybarra & Bachman, 1999)

Application of ITT

Since the inception of ITT, there have been numerous studies that have applied ITT as a framework to explain and predict negative attitudes and prejudice towards different types outgroups in different parts of the world. Most of these studies have received empirical support for ITT and have proven its applicability in several contexts (Curseu et al., 2008; Stephan and Stephan, 1996; Stephan et al., 1998, 1999). For example, Stephan et al. (1998), in a sample of American students found out that threats were responsible for a significant amount of negative attitudes and prejudice towards immigrants from Mexico, Cuba and Asia. In another study carried out by Stephan et al. (1998) on attitudes towards immigrants in Spain and Israel, they found out that all four threats (realistic threats, symbolic threats, intergroup anxiety and negative stereotypes) were useful and significant predictors of prejudice towards immigrant groups. Other studies, such as Curseu et al. (2007), employed ITT of prejudice to predict prejudicial attitudes towards immigrant employees in a sample of Dutch workers. In this particular study, it

was noticed that the variables were interrelated. ITT has also been used to explain negative attitudes towards AIDS and cancer patients (Berrenberg, Finlay, Stephan, & Stephan, 2002), towards refugees in Australia (Schweitzer et al., 2005) and toward Muslims (Croucher et al., 2013; Gonzalez et al., 2008) and ethnic minorities (Nshom & Croucher, 2014, 2015; Riek et al., 2006).

Despite the fact that many studies have obtained considerable support for ITT of prejudice as a suitable theoretical framework for understanding prejudicial attitudes towards outgroups (Curseu et al., 2007; Scheibner & Morrison, 2009; Stephan & Stephan, 2000; Stephan et al., 1998, 2000), ITT has also been criticized. It has been criticized for its restriction to four threats as the sole explanation and cause of prejudice and negative attitudes towards outgroups by ignoring other non-inclusive factors that might also lead to prejudicial attitudes. It is important to state here that even though Stephan et al. (1998, 1999) have demonstrated through a number of studies that these four threats (realistic threats, symbolic threats, negative stereotypes and intergroup anxiety) are important predictors of prejudice towards immigrants, they have also acknowledged the limitation of ITT in understanding and explaining every aspect of prejudice (Laher, 2008).

There have also been some problems with the conceptualization of some threats (negative stereotype and intergroup anxiety) and antecedents (Redmond, 2011; Riek, Mania & Gaertner, 2006). For example in the last decade, there has been research questioning the position of negative stereotype in the ITT model whether as a predictor of outgroup attitudes or as a predictor of threat (Stephan, Boniecki, Ybarra, Bettencourt, Ervin, Jackson, McNatt, & Renfro, 2002). The conceptualization of negative stereotype as a threat is still being debated (Riek et al., 2006). Stephan et al. (2002) in their study conceptualized negative stereotype as a predictor of threat and as a predic-

tor of out-group attitudes in the same study and found out that negative stereotype was more fitted as a predictor of threat rather than negative attitudes. Similarly, Aberson and Gaffney (2008) conceptualized negative stereotypes as an antecedent of threat, rather than a threat itself. Others such as Harrison and Peacock (2010) and Riek et al. (2006) have suggested that negative stereotype and intergroup anxiety be removed from the ITT model as a threat. Because of all these, there have been some major revisions of ITT since its inception (Stephan & Renfro, 2002; Stephan, Ybarra & Rios, 2009, 2015).

The revised version of ITT

In the latest revision labelled intergroup threat, the original four threats (realistic threats, symbolic threats, negative stereotypes and intergroup anxiety) have been revised and reduced to two basic threats that are: realistic and symbolic threats (Stephan & Renfro, 2002; Stephan, Ybarra & Morrison, 2009; Stephan, Ybarra & Rios, 2015). According to Stephan et al. (2015), negative stereotype is considered a subset of realistic threat and symbolic threat. It is considered a realistic threat when the negative stereotype is one that implies a potential harm to the ingroup (e.g. violent, materialistic) and on the other hand a symbolic threat when the negative stereotype has the potential to undermine the values, norms, culture or worldview of the ingroup (e.g. Disrespectful, immoral). Intergroup anxiety has also been categorized as a subset of realistic threat because it deals with apprehensions about interacting with outgroups members. So in essence, realistic and symbolic threats are the only threats that have been retained as the basic threats predicting or explaining prejudicial attitudes towards outgroups. However, they have also made a distinction between group threats and individual threats, group threats being threats to an ingroup as a whole and individual threats being threats to individuals because of their membership in a particular group. Thus in the revised edition, there are

four types of threats: realistic group threats, symbolic group threats, realistic individual threats, and symbolic individual threats (Stephan & Renfro, 2002; Stephan et al., 2009; Stephan et al., 2015). (See figure 2 below):

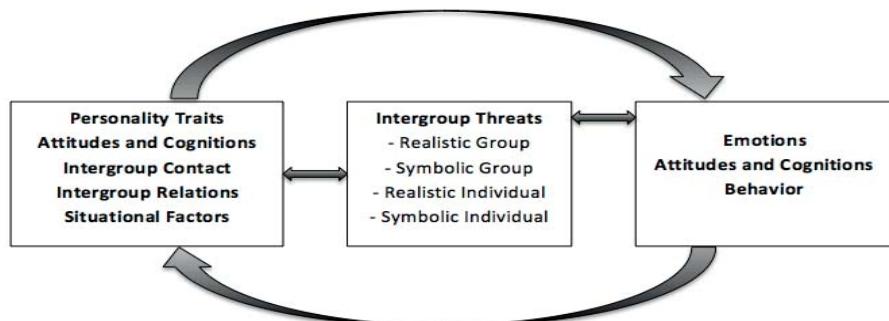


Figure 2: Theoretical Model of Integrated Threat Theory: Revised version (Stephan et al., 2015)

The perception of threat could have serious consequences. Stephan et al. (2015) explains that whenever the ingroup perceives an outgroup as threatening; it affects them cognitively, emotionally and behaviourally. Cognitively, it affects their mental perception of the outgroup and its members which may consequently lead to the perception of negative stereotypes, ethnocentrism, intolerance, hatred and dehumanization of the outgroup. On another level, this may also lead to the opposition of any policies, benefits and privileges that favour outgroups. Emotionally, ingroup members may experience negative emotions such as anger, fear, anxiety and resentment, contempt, disgust, vulnerability, collective guilt, rage, hatred, humiliation, dread, helplessness, despair, righteous indignation and panic. Perceived threats could also undermine emotional empathy for members of the outgroup and increase empathy towards members of the ingroup. These mental and emotional experiences often leads to behavioural responses such as discrimination, withdrawal, prejudice, violence, aggression, lying, cheating, harassment,

sabotage, protests, strikes, warfare, genocides and other forms of intergroup conflict depending on the type of threat against members of the outgroup (Stephan et al., 2015).

Perceived threat can have a lot of practical implications on the peaceful coexistence between members of the ingroup and outgroup in different contexts and at different levels of society. The consequences of threat perception, discrimination and prejudice cannot be underestimated in our world today, be it on a personal or even larger level if not checked or reduced. The current refugee crisis in Europe has led to a lot of violence, demonstrations and aggression towards refugees in particular and immigrants in general. This attitude is predominantly motivated by the perception that they are a threat to the host society (Schneider, 2008).

Focusing on perceived threats from the out-group will definitely not be a bad idea at all in an attempt to improving intergroup relations for the achievement of a better society where there is peaceful coexistence, a better appreciation of diversity, love and unity. ITT research can help to redefine our focus, effort and investment in an attempt to improve intergroup relations and reduce discrimination and prejudice towards outgroups or minorities such as refugees and immigrants. This is because it shows us specific and important variables to the attitudes of ingroups towards a particular outgroup. The usefulness or importance of ITT research to stakeholders such as governments, policy makers, teachers, trainers, social workers, NGOs, associations, just to name a few, cannot therefore be underestimated. According to Stephan and Stephan (1996, p. 423):

A consideration of the role of threats as causes of prejudice has important implications for changing prejudice. In order to reduce prejudice between specific groups, it may be useful to know which types of threats are the strongest determinants of prejudice between these

groups. This type of knowledge would be valuable in deciding on the particular techniques that are most likely to improve relations between the groups...

Unfortunately, very little research has focused on how the different types of perceived threat can be reduced or counteracted so that relations between the ingroup and outgroup can be improved. Nevertheless, one of the ways in which this can be done is by providing ingroups with accurate information that counteracts the type of threat. This is based on the assumption that threat and negative attitude towards outgroups can be due to ignorance and with the right information, such fears can be reduced. There are several ways to do this; for example diversity training, multicultural education, cooperative learning programs, intergroup dialog, intergroup workshops, intercultural relations training, conflict resolution training, peace education, problem solving intergroup workshops, campaigns (Stephan & Stephan, 2000).

Moreover, according to Stephan et al. (2015), group level threats are often targeted from a public space while individual level threats are often targeted from an individual space. On an individual level, there should be an effort to maintain daily security by establishing laws and rules that promote peace and unity and prohibit violence, prejudice and discrimination towards outgroups or minorities. Opportunities for intergroup contact should also be created, enhanced or maximized. Researchers particularly emphasize the importance of intimate situations that have the potential to offer ingroup members personalized understanding of members of the outgroup or situations and events that may provide ingroup members a chance to create friendships with outgroup members. Research has shown that more positive contact between both groups can lead to lesser feelings of threat and lesser feelings of prejudice (e.g. Abberson & Gaffney, 2008; Jaakkola, 2000; Stephan & Stephan 1996; Stephan et al., 1998, 2000;

Valentova & Alieva, 2010). On a group level, policies ought to be formulated and implemented that will help to eradicate the perception of threat. Public campaigns that stress the importance of cultural diversity, global citizenship, peace and unity are an asset in an effort to eradicate or reduce perceived threat. The media can also play a very useful and important role in this process. These among others are some of the ways in which threats can be reduced.

Even though ITT has proven to be a useful tool in understanding and explaining intergroup conflict and prejudice towards racial, gender, national, ethnic and immigrant groups (Riek et al., 2006). There is however a lot still to be learned and many questions to be answered. In the following list below, some questions that warrant more attention in the study of integrated threat issues are presented. Some of these questions come from my experience of researching integrated threat issues while others are questions I consider very important from Stephan et al. (2015). The questions are as follows:

- 1) How does threat change as people move from one stage of human development to another and what are the factors that affect it?
- 2) What are the different dimensions and factors that predispose an antecedent of threat to be a more significant predictor of threat while another is not in the same geographical, economic and social context?
- 3) If outgroups perceive themselves as a threat to the ingroup, what are the possible implications to intergroup relations?
- 4) What are the factors and conditions that facilitate the translation of a threat from a cognitive and emotional level into actual behavioral manifestation?
- 5) When does the experience of threat escalate, and what causes it to do so?
- 6) Does the perception of threat typically decrease over time as people adapt to it?

- 7) To what degree are threats consciously appraised, and to what degree do they affect people in the absence of conscious awareness?
- 8) What actions on the part of outgroups cause the greatest perceptions of threat?
- 9) Do the responses to threat vary as a function of whether the threat is posed by a single outgroup member or the outgroup as a whole?

I hope that different stakeholders will pay attention to Integrated threat research especially amidst worsening attitudes towards refugees and immigrants in western countries in an attempt to improve intergroup relations with these groups. The rapid change in the demographical composition of western societies also means more attention should be given to relations between minorities and majorities.

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