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Blurring Group Boundaries: The Impact of Subgroup Threats on Global Citizenship

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Abstract

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Keywords

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Abstract:

We examined the outcomes of an extinction threat (possible discontinuation of a group's symbolic or actual existence) to one's nation on global citizenship identification and related prosocial values. In Study 1, participants showed a drop in global citizenship identification when America was threatened (vs. absence of threat). In Study 2, participants reported lower global citizenship identification when America was threatened (vs. absence of threat) and the perception that one's normative environment did not support a global citizen identity mediated the relationship between threat and identification. Furthermore, the threat was shown to indirectly predict lower endorsement for prosocial values and behaviors (e.g., intergroup empathy and helping). Together, the results highlight threats to subgroups as a potential barrier to viewing oneself as a global citizen.

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1. Introduction:

Researchers suggest that solving the type of problems that currently emerge in the world requires breaking down or blurring of subgroup (e.g., national) boundaries and strengthening shared superordinate group identities (e.g., Batalha & Reynolds, 2012; Reysen & Katzarska-Miller, 2013a). A superordinate group is a social category that encompasses two or more subgroups. For example, psychologists and sociologists (subgroups) are both social scientists (superordinate group). Although reimagining the historical and legal boundaries between nations may be difficult, research within education suggests that engendering a superordinate identity—global citizen—can lessen the ethnocentric impact of *psychological* national boundaries by motivating students to orient one's actions toward global issues and social problems (see Reysen & Katzarska-Miller, 2013b). However, despite the prosocial attitudes and behaviors associated with viewing the self as a global citizen, identification with this superordinate group can be tenuous. Namely, the cultural contexts in which individuals are embedded may impede identification with this inclusive superordinate category (Katzarska-Miller, Reysen, Kamble, & Vithoji, 2012). In the present paper we examine the impact of an extinction threat (a threat to a group's symbols or actual existence) to one's nation as a barrier to viewing oneself as a global citizen.

2. Social Identity Perspective:

Social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) posits that individuals seek to gain or maintain positive and distinct social identities. Individuals belong to multiple groups and feel differing degrees of psychological connection with each group (i.e., ingroup identification). Tajfel's (1974) original proposition that individuals fall on a continuum with personal identity on one pole and social identity on the opposite pole was later revised in self-categorization theory (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987). Turner and colleagues theorized that different identities become salient based on the interaction between characteristics of the person and situation. Furthermore, the identity that does become cognitively salient falls into one of three levels of abstraction of self-categorization based on levels of inclusiveness of the category: personal, social, and human. Personal identity is based on perceived similarities and differences between oneself and other individuals (e.g., I have red hair and Jane has black hair). Social identities reflect perceived similarities and differences between an ingroup and other groups (e.g., psychologists focus more on individuals than sociologists). Human identity is considered the most inclusive level of self-categorization and reflects the perceived shared

characteristics of humans compared to other forms of life (e.g., humans are smarter than chimpanzees). When an identity is salient, individuals depersonalize and self-stereotype in line with the group's content (e.g., norms, values, beliefs, behaviors) depending on one's degree of identification, or psychological connection, with the group (Hogg & Smith, 2007). Together, social identity and self-categorization theories form a unified approach or perspective to explain intra and intergroup phenomenon (Reicher, Spears, & Haslam, 2010).

As noted by Tajfel and Turner (1979), group members tend to exhibit bias in favor of one's ingroup (for a review see Dovidio & Gaertner, 2010). For example, Levine, Prosser, Evans, and Reicher (2005) asked fans of a popular soccer team to rate their degree of ingroup identification with their favorite team (Study 1) or with soccer in general (Study 2). Thus, the researchers made either a subgroup identity (specific soccer team) or a superordinate group identity (soccer in general that includes fans of all soccer teams) salient. The participants were then asked to walk to another building to purportedly watch a video about soccer. While crossing campus a confederate fell in front of the participants and showed visible signs of pain. The confederate was wearing a shirt with the brand of their favorite soccer team (signaling an ingroup member), the brand of their favorite team's rival (signaling an outgroup member), or an unbranded, plain shirt (i.e., no team symbol). When participants were thinking of themselves as fans of the ingroup soccer team (i.e., the ingroup soccer team was salient) they were much more likely to help the confederate wearing the ingroup symbol shirt (vs. the outgroup rival or plain shirt). However, in the second study, when the salient identity was soccer fans in general, participants helped the confederate wearing the ingroup and rival outgroup shirts (vs. plain shirt). In effect, participants displayed ingroup bias for the salient subgroup (fans of one's favorite soccer team) in Study 1, but fans of soccer in general when the inclusive superordinate group was salient in Study 2. The results show that recategorizing the ingroup and outgroup boundaries (to soccer fans in general) results in prosocial outcomes (i.e., helping) toward previously outgroup members.

2.1. Intergroup Bias and Threat:

The common ingroup identity model (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000) posits that recategorization from separate subgroups into an inclusive superordinate group reduces intergroup bias. In other words, when individuals refrain from categorizing groups as "us" versus "them" and instead categorize groups as "we," it can lead to positive intergroup relations. A wealth of research supports the notion that categorizing the self as a member of a more inclusive category group results in reduced

bias, increased empathy, and favorable attitudes toward previous outgroup members (cf. Dovidio, Gaertner, & Saguy, 2007). However, recategorizing with a superordinate identity does not always result in positive outcomes (Crisp, Stone, & Hall, 2006; Hornsey & Hogg, 2000). For example, Hornsey and Hogg (2000) found greater identification with one's subgroup and greater intergroup bias (humanities vs. math-science) when a superordinate identity (university student) was salient than when a subgroup identity was salient (or when both subgroup and superordinate identities were simultaneously salient). Crisp and colleagues (2006) replicated the findings with university department subgroups, as well as when focusing participants on the merging of subgroups (e.g., Britain vs. France) into a superordinate group (e.g., "United States of Europe", p. 234). A core tenet of the social identity perspective is that individuals seek to gain or maintain positive and distinct social identities. The researchers suggest that the threat of diluting the distinctiveness of the subgroup resulted in a desire to strengthen the subgroup's positive and distinct identity. This is especially true for highly identified subgroup members (Crisp et al., 2006) or when the outgroup is promoting the superordinate identity without accompanying endorsement by ingroup members (Gómez, Dovidio, Huici, Gaertner, & Cuadrado, 2008). However, in the above studies the threat is implied (e.g., merging subgroups or simply making single superordinate identity salient when completing a task), not explicit for participants.

In general, group members tend to show more ingroup bias and outgroup prejudice under conditions of intergroup competition (Mullen, Brown, & Smith, 1992) and threat (Aberson & Gaffney, 2008; Riek, Mania, & Gaertner, 2006; Stephan & Stephan, 2000). As suggested by Crisp and colleagues (2006) and Hornsey and Hogg (2000), the saliency of a superordinate category can threaten subgroups' distinctiveness. Other threats to the group, such as a threat to the group's value (see Branscombe, Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 1999) or to the group's symbols or actual existence (Wohl, Branscombe, & Reysen, 2010) may also reduce individuals' likelihood to embrace a superordinate category. For example, Wohl and colleagues (2010) asked Jewish participants to write about the Holocaust (or not) before rating endorsed behaviors to strengthen the Jewish community. The salience of the possible threat of extinction of the group in the Holocaust condition resulted in greater endorsement of ingroup strengthening behaviors. Although this does not directly show a reduction of endorsement for a superordinate category, strengthening the ingroup suggests a focus on the subgroup (which may represent lessened support for a more inclusive group). Although a wealth of research suggests that threats to one's subgroup can hinder identification with a

superordinate category, no research has examined this notion in relation to an extremely inclusive superordinate identity such as global citizen.

2.2. Global Citizenship:

Global citizenship is defined as awareness, caring, embracing cultural diversity, promoting social justice and environmental sustainability, and a sense of responsibility to act for the betterment of the world (Reysen, Larey, & Katzarska-Miller, 2012). In line with the definition, education theorists suggest (for a review see Reysen, Pierce, Spencer, & Katzarska-Miller, in press), and empirical research supports (Reysen & Katzarska-Miller, 2013a, 2013c), the associations between viewing oneself as a global citizen and six categories of prosocial attitudes and behaviors including: intergroup empathy, valuing diversity, social justice, environmental sustainability, intergroup helping, and a felt responsibility to act. Intergroup empathy refers to feeling a connection and concern for individuals outside of one's ingroup. Valuing diversity reflects an appreciation and interest in other cultures. Social justice concerns individuals' belief in equality and human rights. Environmental sustainability reflects a concern for non-human animals and the natural environment. Intergroup helping is a desire to aid people that are not members of one's ingroup. Lastly, a felt responsibility to act refers to individuals' felt obligation to act for the betterment of the world. Following a social identity perspective (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner et al., 1987), when a global citizen identity is salient, greater identification with the category predicts greater endorsement of the prosocial attitudes and behaviors associated with the identity.

Reysen and Katzarska-Miller (2013a) modeled the antecedents and outcomes of global citizenship identification and show that one's normative environment and global awareness predict global citizenship identification. Identification with global citizens, in turn, predicts the six clusters of prosocial outcomes associated with the identity (e.g., social justice, environmental sustainability). The model of antecedents and outcomes of global citizenship identification has since received a wealth of empirical support (Blake & Reysen, in press; Gibson & Reysen, 2013; Gibson, Reysen, & Katzarska-Miller, in press; Katzarska-Miller, Barnsley, & Reysen, 2014; Plante, Roberts, Reysen, & Gerbasi, 2014; Reysen & Katzarska-Miller, 2013c; Reysen, Katzarska-Miller, Gibson, & Hobson, 2013; Reysen et al., in press). One's normative environment includes people one is personally connected with (e.g., friends, family, coworkers), but also a variety of artifacts (e.g., buildings, newspapers, television media, advertisements), cultural patterns, and geographic variables (e.g., weather) that can influence individuals' attitudes and behavior (see

Reysen & Levine, 2013). For example, whether a professor portrays global citizenship in a positive or negative manner subsequently influences students' degree of identification with global citizens (Gibson & Reysen, 2013). In a related vein, perceiving oneself as aware, knowledgeable, and connected to others in the world (i.e., global awareness) predicts greater global citizenship identification. Indeed, when students are informed that they are not globally aware (vs. aware) they report a low degree of global citizenship identification (Reysen et al., 2013). Aspects of one's everyday environment can facilitate (e.g., classroom discussions of global issues) or hinder (e.g., ethnocentric news reports) the degree of global citizenship identification through the normative environment and/or global awareness pathways.

As noted by Karlberg (2008), global citizen is an inclusive (i.e., superordinate) category that includes all subgroup identities (e.g., age, ethnicity, nationality, religious categories). In line with a social identity perspective, identification with this category should result in blurring the boundaries of subgroups and lead to more harmonious intergroup relations. Subgroup categories do not preclude identifying with global citizens assuming that subgroups are not in some manner in conflict with one another. However, threats to subgroups are plentiful in one's everyday environments. For example, at a freshman orientation (attended by the first author) a university administrator referenced Thomas Friedman's (2005) book *The World is Flat*, and warned that the future job market would be more crowded due to globalization. Although the speech was meant to inspire students to work hard in college, the underlying implication was that students are in competition with everyone in the world. When students were presented with this same message in an experiment (vs. a message framing the future job market as full of opportunities to work in diverse places and with culturally diverse people), students' degree of global citizenship identification was significantly lower (Snider, Reysen, & Katzarska-Miller, 2013). Furthermore, students in the competition condition (vs. positively framed condition) reported a lower desire to help people outside one's ingroup, lower desire to protest unethical corporations, and greater endorsement for rejecting outgroups (e.g., reducing interactions with other nations). In other words, Snider and colleagues show that raising the saliency of competition results in lower identification with the superordinate category and increases attitudes related to exclusion in order to, presumably, strengthen the ingroup. However, the threat presented to students was general in nature (the ingroup and outgroup were not specified) and the dependent variables did not include the antecedents and outcomes of global citizenship identification specified by Reysen and Katzarska-Miller (2013a).

3. Overview of Present Research:

The purpose of the present studies is to examine the influence of a threat to one's nation on the antecedents, identification, and outcomes of global citizenship. Based on the social identity perspective (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner et al., 1987), research shows reduced intergroup conflict when members are identifying with a superordinate category. Yet, subgroup members do not always endorse the superordinate identity, and can instead show greater ingroup bias (Crisp et al., 2006; Hornsey & Hogg, 2000). Indeed, intergroup bias is exacerbated when one's group is under threat (Aberson & Gaffney, 2008; Riek et al., 2006; Stephan & Stephan, 2000). Thus, despite the prosocial outcomes related to viewing the self as a global citizen (Reysen & Katzarska-Miller, 2013a, 2013b, 2013c), individuals may not identify with the superordinate category when a subgroup is explicitly threatened.

In Study 1, we test the notion that a threat to one's nation reduces global citizenship identification. Participants completed a measure of global citizenship identification before and after exposure to an extinction threat (Wohl et al., 2010) potentially harming America (vs. no mention of a threat). We predict that threatening the subgroup will reduce identification with global citizens. In Study 2, we examine the influence of an extinction threat to America on the model of antecedents and outcomes of global citizenship identity (Reysen & Katzarska-Miller, 2013a). We predict that a threat to the subgroup will result in lower identification with global citizens through perceiving reduced support for a global citizen identity. This prediction is based on prior research (see Robbins & Krueger, 2005) showing that ingroup members often project judgments onto other ingroup members. If participants do not support a superordinate identity after a threat, they should expect other ingroup members will also not support the superordinate identity. Furthermore, as shown by Gómez and colleagues (2008), the absence of subgroup-ingroup support for a superordinate identity reduces members' endorsement for a more inclusive category. We expect participants will perceive little support by valued others for a global citizen identity if another nation is threatening America.

3.1. Study 1:

The purpose of Study 1 is to examine whether a threat to a subgroup (i.e., America) reduces individuals' identification with global citizens. Participants' global citizenship identification is expected to decline if exposed to a threat (vs. no threat) to a subgroup.

3.1.1. Methodology: Participants and Procedure

Participants ($N = 47$, 78.7% women, $M_{\text{age}} = 24.51$, $SD = 9.07$) received partial course credit or extra credit toward their college course at Texas A&M University-Commerce. Participants indicated their racial/ethnic category as European American (70.2%), African American (19.1%), Indigenous Peoples (2.1%), Asian/South Pacific Islander (2.1%), and other (6.4%). Only U.S. participants were eligible to participate. Participants completed a measure of global citizenship identification on a prescreen survey at the beginning of the semester. Later in the semester, as part of the present study, participants were randomly assigned to read a speech by the president regarding an extinction threat to America (e.g., “China has now become the world’s most powerful nation. China has demanded our debts be paid. Unfortunately, the current financial crisis has left us unable to pay. China has threatened to take legal action that can give China the majority of American corporations, and possibly the government.”) or a control vignette (e.g., “America today is a nation with great challenges but greater resources. An artist using statistics as a brush could paint a picture of America that is full of blessings such as concerned citizens who care for our country. As Americans we direct the advantages of our time to solve the problems of our people.”) prior to rating their global citizenship identification. Global citizenship identification was assessed with a single item (“I strongly identify with global citizens”) adapted from prior research (Postmes, Haslam, & Jans, 2013; Reysen, Katzarska-Miller, Nesbit, & Pierce, 2013), and rated on a 7-point response scale, from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*.

3.1.2. Results and Discussion:

A repeated measures analysis was conducted with the threat manipulation (control vs. threat) as the independent variable, and pre and post global citizenship identification as the dependent variables. The overall interaction between measurement time and condition was significant, $F(1, 45) = 5.15$, $p = .028$, $\eta_p^2 = .10$. Post hoc analyses show that identification with global citizens ($M_{\text{pre}} = 4.75$, $SD = 1.54$; $M_{\text{post}} = 4.13$, $SD = 1.62$) was significantly lower following the threat to the subgroup, $t(23) = 2.33$, $p = .029$, $d = .47$, while identification did not significantly change ($M_{\text{pre}} = 4.43$, $SD = 1.67$; $M_{\text{post}} = 4.87$, $SD = 1.79$) for participants in the control condition, $t(22) = -1.12$, $p = .273$, $d = -.24$.

The results support the hypothesis that a threat to the subgroup (i.e., America) significantly reduces participants’ degree of identification with a superordinate category (i.e., global citizens). To examine possible mediators between the threat and global citizenship identification, and

examine direct and indirect effects of the threat on the prosocial outcomes of global citizenship identification, we conducted a second study.

3.2. Study 2:

The purpose of Study 2 is to examine the influence of a threat to the subgroup (i.e., America) on the model of antecedents, identification, and outcomes of global citizenship. First, we expect to replicate the finding of lower global citizenship identification when America is threatened (vs. no threat). Second, we predict the influence of the threat on global citizenship identification will be mediated by participants' perception of their normative environment (i.e., friends and family provide an injunctive norm to be a global citizen). An injunctive norm is one's perception of what others think one should do or endorse.

3.2.1. Methodology: Participants and Procedure

Participants ($N = 174$, 79.3% women, $M_{\text{age}} = 18.38$, $SD = 0.84$) received partial course credit or extra credit toward their college course at Texas A&M University in College Station. Participants indicated their racial/ethnic category as European American (67.8%), Hispanic (21.8%), Asian/South Pacific Islander (3.4%), Multiracial (2.9%), African American (1.7%), Indigenous Peoples (1.1%), Central Asian/Indian/Pakistani (0.6%), and other (0.6%). A majority (96.6%) indicated that they were born in the U.S. Participants were randomly assigned to read about a threat (vs. no threat) to America prior to rating measures of antecedents, identification, and outcomes of global citizenship.

3.2.2. Materials:

Vignette. The vignette was similar to that presented in Study 1. However, the source of the information was reported to be a "speech given on the evening news" rather than from the president.

Global citizenship. To assess the antecedents, identification, and outcomes of global citizenship, we adopted measures from Reysen and Katzarska-Miller (2013). Four items (e.g., "Most people who are important to me think that being a global citizen is desirable") assessed the perception that others in one's normative environment prescribe being a global citizen ($\alpha = .88$). Four items (e.g., "I believe that I am connected to people in other countries, and my actions can affect them") assessed global awareness ($\alpha = .76$). Two items (e.g., "I strongly identify with global citizens") assessed global citizenship identification ($\alpha = .89$). Two items (e.g., "I am able to empathize with people from other countries") assessed intergroup empathy ($\alpha = .83$). Two items (e.g., "I would like to join groups that emphasize getting to know people from different countries") assessed valuing diversity ($\alpha = .86$). Two items (e.g., "Those countries that are well

off should help people in countries who are less fortunate”) assessed social justice ($\alpha = .77$). Two items (e.g., “People have a responsibility to conserve natural resources to foster a sustainable environment”) assessed environmental sustainability ($\alpha = .77$). Two items (e.g., “If I could, I would dedicate my life to helping others no matter what country they are from”) assessed intergroup helping ($\alpha = .68$). Lastly, two items (e.g., “Being actively involved in global issues is my responsibility”) assessed responsibility to act ($\alpha = .72$).

3.2.3. Results:

To examine mean differences in assessed variables we first conducted a MANOVA with threat manipulation as the independent variable and antecedents, identification, and outcomes of global citizenship as the dependent variables. The omnibus test was significant, Wilks' $\Lambda = .90$, $F(9, 164) = 2.07$, $p = .035$, $\eta_p^2 = .10$. As shown in Table 1, participants exposed to the threat to America indicated a perception of less support for global citizenship in their normative environment, less global citizenship identification, lower endorsement of social justice, and less support for environmental sustainability than participants not exposed to the threat.

Table 1

Means (Standard Deviations) of Antecedents, Identification, and Outcomes of Global Citizenship by Condition

| | No Threat | Threat | <i>F</i> (1, 172) | <i>p</i> -value | η_p^2 |
|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------------|-----------------|------------|
| Norm Environment | 4.63 (1.22) | 3.97 (1.16) | 13.08 | .000 | .071 |
| Global Awareness | 4.55 (1.17) | 4.42 (1.09) | 0.55 | .461 | .003 |
| Global Citizen ID | 4.14 (1.33) | 3.66 (1.09) | 6.80 | .010 | .038 |
| Intergroup Empathy | 4.83 (1.34) | 4.63 (1.35) | 0.99 | .321 | .006 |
| Valuing Diversity | 5.25 (1.29) | 4.98 (1.37) | 1.71 | .192 | .010 |
| Social Justice | 5.89 (1.08) | 5.41 (1.31) | 6.22 | .014 | .035 |
| Environ. Sustainability | 5.76 (1.12) | 5.32 (1.16) | 6.54 | .011 | .037 |
| Intergroup Helping | 5.91 (1.11) | 5.65 (1.09) | 2.26 | .134 | .013 |
| Responsibility to Act | 4.95 (1.14) | 4.78 (1.17) | 0.97 | .327 | .006 |

Note. 7-point Likert-type scale, from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*.

To examine the influence of the threat to the subgroup on antecedents, identification, and outcomes of global citizenship we tested a path model using Amos 19 (bias-corrected bootstrapping, 5,000 iterations, 95% confidence intervals). Due to the related nature of the prosocial values to one another (and the antecedents to one another), the disturbance terms for these sets of variables were allowed to covary. Model fit was evaluated using the normed fit index (NFI) and the comparative fit index (CFI), for which values greater than .90 are acceptable (Hu & Bentler, 1995). Following Browne and Cudeck (1993), we set the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) value of .08 as an acceptable level.

The predicted model adequately fit the data, $\chi^2(19) = 37.85$, $p = .006$; RMSEA = .076, CI{.039; .111}, NFI = .940, CFI = .968. As shown in Figure 1, the manipulation of threat to the subgroup (-1 = no threat, +1 = threat) predicted normative environment ($\beta = -.27$, $p < .001$, CI = -.394 to -.128), but not global awareness ($\beta = -.06$, $p = .452$, CI = -.205 to .091). Normative environment ($\beta = .61$, $p < .001$, CI = .492 to .707) and global awareness ($\beta = .33$, $p < .001$, CI = .217 to .440) predicted global citizenship identification. Global citizenship identification predicted intergroup empathy ($\beta = .48$, $p = .001$, CI = .342 to .581), valuing diversity ($\beta = .37$, $p = .001$, CI = .203 to .503), social justice ($\beta = .25$, $p = .001$, CI = .109 to .364), environmental sustainability ($\beta = .24$, $p = .002$, CI = .093 to .379),

intergroup helping ($\beta = .19, p = .010, CI = .048 \text{ to } .333$), and felt responsibility to act ($\beta = .32, p = .001, CI = .168 \text{ to } .459$).

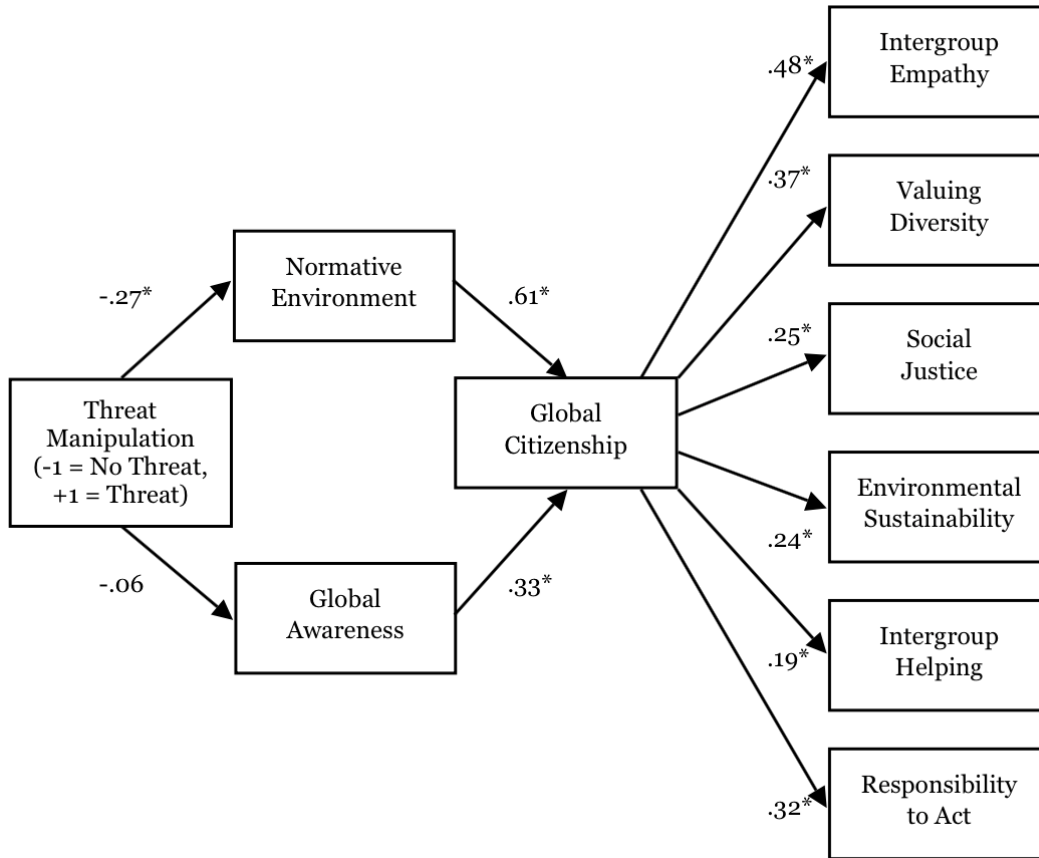


Figure 1. Influence of threat to subgroup on antecedents, identification, and outcomes of global citizenship. * $p < .02$.

The indirect effect of threat manipulation was reliably carried by normative environment and global awareness on participants' identification with global citizens (see Table 2 for standardized betas of indirect effects and 95% bias-corrected confidence intervals; all indirect effects were significant at $p < .01$, two-tailed). The threat manipulation also significantly predicted lower prosocial values through normative environment, global awareness, and global citizenship identification. The influence of normative environment and global awareness on pro-social values (e.g., social justice) was reliably carried by global citizenship identification.

Table 2

Indirect Effects of Threat Manipulation, Normative Environment, and Global Awareness

| Variable | Threat Manipulation | | | Normative Environment | | | Global Awareness | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| | Indirect | CI _{Lower} | CI _{Upper} | Indirect | CI _{Lower} | CI _{Upper} | Indirect | CI _{Lower} | CI _{Upper} |
| Global Citizenship ID | -.18 | -.291 | -.066 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Intergroup Empathy | -.09 | -.155 | -.034 | .29 | .204 | .380 | .16 | .091 | .228 |
| Valuing Diversity | -.07 | -.121 | -.026 | .23 | .129 | .322 | .12 | .061 | .196 |
| Social Justice | -.05 | -.092 | -.013 | .15 | .067 | .237 | .08 | .038 | .133 |
| Environmentalism | -.04 | -.096 | -.012 | .15 | .057 | .238 | .08 | .030 | .144 |
| Intergroup Helping | -.04 | -.077 | -.008 | .12 | .032 | .207 | .06 | .017 | .125 |
| Responsibility to Act | -.06 | -.110 | -.022 | .20 | .109 | .287 | .11 | .049 | .178 |

Note. Standardized betas and 95% confidence intervals, bias-corrected bootstrapping with 5,000 iterations, all indirect effects are significant at $p < .01$.

4. Discussion:

The purpose of Study 2 was to examine the influence of a threat to the subgroup on antecedents, identification, and outcomes of global citizenship. Replicating Study 1, global citizenship identification was significantly lower when a threat was salient (vs. no threat). Supporting the second hypothesis, the path model suggested that when America was threatened (vs. no threat), participants reported less global citizenship identification because they perceived valued others as not prescribing the identity. The manipulation of threat showed a direct effect on participants' endorsement for social justice and environmental sustainability. Although the other prosocial outcomes of global citizenship identification were lower in the threat condition, the difference between the conditions on the other outcomes was not significant. However, the threat manipulation was found to indirectly influence all of the prosocial values and behaviors (through normative environment, global awareness, and global citizenship identification). In effect, the results suggest that the threat to America leads to reduced perception of one's normative environment leading to less identification with global citizens and subsequent decreases in prosocial values.

4.1. General Discussion:

We examined the influence of a threat to one's nation on antecedents, identification, and outcomes of global citizenship. As predicted, in Study 1, participants exposed to an extinction threat to a subgroup showed a significant drop in global citizenship identification. Expanding upon this result in Study 2, we assessed antecedents and outcomes of global citizenship identification. Supporting our first hypothesis, participants exposed to the extinction threat to the nation reported lower global citizenship identification. In support of our second hypothesis, the results suggest that participants exposed to the threat (vs. no threat) reported lower global citizenship identification because they perceived valued others as not supporting identification with the superordinate category. Furthermore, the results of Study 2 showed the threat to the subgroup indirectly predicted lower endorsement for prosocial values and behaviors related to global citizenship. Together, the results show that threats to one's subgroup can hinder identification with global citizens and have downstream indirect effects on prosocial values and behaviors.

4.2. Threat to Global Citizenship:

Supporting prior suggestions from education theorists (see Reysen & Katzarska-Miller, 2013b), and a growing body of empirical research (Reysen & Katzarska-Miller, 2013a, 2013c), viewing the self as a global citizen is related to prosocial attitudes and behaviors. Given the prosocial outcomes associated with viewing the self as a global citizen, educational institutions (Sperandio, Grudzinski-Hall, & Stewart-Gambino, 2010) and business organizations (Waddock & Smith, 2000) strive to engender the identity. Supporting prior research following a social identity perspective, identification with a superordinate identity loosens the boundaries between subgroups (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000; Levine et al., 2005). This is evidenced by global citizenship identification predicting endorsement of values such as intergroup empathy and helping. However, supporting prior research on the failure of superordinate identities to reduce intergroup bias (Crisp et al., 2006; Hornsey & Hogg, 2000), the results of the present research show that a threat to a subgroup reduces identification with the superordinate, global, category.

As previously discussed, prior explanations of the reduction in superordinate identification focused on the threat to subgroup distinctiveness (Crisp et al., 2006; Hornsey & Hogg, 2000). The results of Study 2, suggest an additional mediator—normative environment. Injunctive norms have a strong influence on promotion of pro-environmental behaviors (de Groot, Abrahamse, & Jones, 2013). For

example, Göckeritz and colleagues (2010) show that injunctive norms mediate the relationship between what others do (i.e., descriptive norm) and energy conservation behaviors. Jacobson, Mortensen, and Cialdini (2011) suggest that injunctive norms lead individuals to focus self-awareness on interpersonal obligations to others. In the present research, participants' perception that others would not prescribe a global citizen identity (when America was threatened vs. no threat) mediated the relationship between the threat and global citizenship identification. We suspect that ingroup members projected their belief onto others in the group (Robbins & Krueger, 2005). Thus, under threat, participants assumed that the other ingroup members (i.e., Americans) would not support the superordinate identity. Without support provided by other ingroup members to endorse the superordinate identity (Gómez et al., 2008), participants expressed less global citizenship identification.

Supporting prior research examining extinction threats (see Wohl et al., 2010), the results suggest that under threat subgroup members strive to strengthen the ingroup. Snider and colleagues (2013) showed that highlighting global competition (vs. an inclusive and diverse future job market) resulted in lower global citizenship identification and greater endorsement of values related to outgroup rejection. The results of Study 2 add to the literature by showing a threat to the subgroup directly resulted in lower endorsement for social justice and environmental sustainability, and indirectly predicted lower endorsement for the other prosocial values (e.g., intergroup helping, responsibility to act for the betterment of the world). The reduced endorsement for the prosocial values suggests endorsement for outgroup rejection (e.g., lower support for helping people in other countries) and may reflect a desire to strengthen the ingroup (e.g., by reducing restrictions on issues such as worker rights and environmental regulations on U.S. companies in order to compete with China). However, further research is needed to directly examine whether these motivations behind the reported lower endorsement for prosocial values observed in Study 2 is because of a desire to compete with China.

Prior research (Katzarska-Miller et al., 2012) shows that participants in India and Bulgaria report a higher degree of global citizenship identification than participants sampled in the U.S. The researchers suggest that the cultural context (e.g., media) in which participants are embedded prime and condition individuals to view themselves as part of the global community. Although war and armed conflict is a constant in the world (Harbom & Wallensteen, 2010), how the media covers (or does not cover) international conflicts, or global issues in general, may have a strong influence on how individuals view the world and their place in the world. American news is generally ethnocentric (see

Allen, 2005) and framed in terms of conflict. For example, during peacetime, less than half of American news media's coverage focuses on foreign news, while during wartime the majority of the coverage is foreign (see Allen, 2005). This suggests that U.S. news media highlights conflict with the ingroup. Furthermore, U.S. news media are increasingly framing national and international events as problematic, threatening, and resonating with fear (Altheide, 1997). Furthermore, even if the media attempt to portray an event in a neutral manner, viewers who hold a prior attitude may view the media coverage as biased against the viewer's position (see Hansen & Kim, 2011). Intergroup conflict can become chronically salient in cultures where the conflict becomes institutionalized through daily conversations and mass media (Bar-Tal, 2007). Perhaps this chronic salience of ethnocentric media coverage and programming focused on competition and threat primes individuals in the U.S. to feel a consistent sense of threat, which may explain lower global citizenship identification for participants sampled in the U.S. (vs. other countries). As shown in the present studies, a threat to the subgroup reduces global citizenship identification. Further research examining the possible link between the unique framing of U.S. media compared to media in other nations on global citizenship identification is needed.

5. Limitations and Future Directions:

The present research limits the generalizability of the results. First, although we sampled participants at two different universities, the participants consisted of undergraduate college students in the U.S. Thus, the results may not be generalizable to other populations (see Henrich, Heine, & Norenzayan, 2010). Second, the present research only examined one type of threat to the subgroup (i.e., extinction threat). Research examining extinction threat is relatively recent. Participants may have reacted to the threat because America's distinctiveness would be diminished, the value of the group would be lessened (see Branscombe et al., 1999), or the historical continuity of the group would be broken (see Jetten & Hutchison, 2011). Further research is needed to disentangle why extinction threats lead to outgroup (and superordinate group) rejection and ingroup strengthening. Third, the source of the threat in the present study was a single outgroup nation (i.e., China). Research examining other sources of the threat may influence participants' reactions to the threat (e.g., environmental changes, individuals not tied to any one nation, from the ingroup). Fourth, the present research only threatened one subgroup (i.e., America). Future research may examine threats to other subgroups (e.g., individuals, school, ethnicity) to examine whether a threat to any subgroup reduces identification with superordinate categories.

6. Conclusion:

The present studies show that threatening one's subgroup constitutes a barrier to viewing oneself as a global citizen and the positive prosocial attitudes associated with that identification. Threats to the subgroup predict lower global citizenship identification through the perception that one's normative environment is not supportive of a global identity and indirectly predicts lower endorsement for prosocial values and behaviors. Global citizenship can be a tool to blur the psychological boundaries that distance groups, but threats to one's nation can quickly shift an individual's focus toward strengthening those boundaries.

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