''My In-group is Superior!'': Susceptibility for Radical Right-wing Attitudes and Behaviors in Dutch Youth

Bertjan Doosje,[1] Kees van den Bos,[2] Annemarie Loseman,[2] Allard R. Feddes,[1] and Liesbeth Mann[1]

1 Department of Social Psychology, University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
2 Department of Social Psychology, Utrecht University, Utrecht, The Netherlands

Correspondence

Bertjan Doosje, Department of Social Psychology, University of Amsterdam, Weesperplein 4, 1081 XA, Amsterdam, The Netherlands;
e-mail: doosje@uva.nl

Abstract

In this study among Dutch youth ($N = 1086$), we focus on the determinants of the susceptibility for adopting radical right-wing attitudes and behaviors. By means of structural equation modeling, we find that (a) perceived injustice, (b) perceived group threat, (c) relative deprivation, and (d) identification with the Dutch are important background determinants of a radical right-wing belief system (e.g., perceived in-group superiority, perceived illegitimacy of Dutch authorities, perceived distance to others, and a feeling of being socially disconnected). Perceived in-group superiority in turn is positively associated with endorsement of right-wing motivated violence, which is a determinant of own violent intentions. Results are discussed in terms of the role of various determinants of the process of susceptibility of extreme right-wing belief system.

In Europe, starting 2008, there has been a political swing to the right. In an increasing number of European countries, right-wing political parties have won the elections and are often in a position of political power in 2012. Given the often-observed relation between right-wing political orientation and prejudice and discrimination against immigrants (e.g., Doosje, Zimmermann, Küpper, Zick, & Meertens, 2010; Jost, Glaser,

Kruglanski, & Sullaway, 2003; Pettigrew & Meertens, 1995), this political change has important consequences. It has resulted in changes in norms and values such that it has become more allowed to openly express negative attitudes toward immigrants and to perceive one's indigenous culture as superior. For example, the popular Dutch right-wing politician Geert Wilders stated that the Christian culture is superior to the Islamic culture and that "Islam is a retarded culture" (http://www.rnw.nl/english/bulletin/wilders-calls-islamic-culture-retarded. Last retrieved April 5, 2012.). In this article, we argue that this perceived in-group superiority can play a vital role in attracting young people not only for a legal right-wing political party, but that this same belief system forms an important cornerstone for people who might be vulnerable to endorse violence by others or to use violence themselves to achieve their goals.

Partly in response to the attacks on 9/11, social and behavioral sciences have focused on examining the reasons for people to become radical and to decide to use violence to achieve their goals (e.g., Bongar, Brown, Beutler, Breckenridge, & Zimbardo, 2006; De Wolf & Doosje, 2010; Hogg, Sherman, Dierselhuis, Maitner, & Moffitt, 2007; Kruglanski & Fishman, 2006; McCauley, 2002; Moghaddam, 2005; Silke, 2008). While this has stimulated a focus on Islamic radicalization (e.g., Doosje, Loseman, & Van Den Bos, in press; Moghaddam, 2005), the research on radical right-wing groups has resulted in a constant, although less well-known, stream of studies as well (e.g., Bjørgo, 1997; Klandermans & Mayer, 2006; Van der Valk & Wagenaar, 2010). Most of these studies have relied on interviews or archival data of a limited number of radical people. In contrast, in the present study, we examine within a large group of *nonradical* youth, how some people might display a readiness to develop favorable attitudes toward a radical right-wing belief system and endorse right-wing violence. We aim to investigate the underlying determinants to become susceptible for adopting a radical right-wing belief system.

Silber and Bhatt (2007, p. 16) define radicalization as "the progression of searching, finding, adopting, nurturing, and developing this extreme belief system to the point where it acts as a catalyst for a terrorist act." Applying this to radical right-wing context, we adopt the conceptualization by Klandermans and Mayer (2006). They distinguish between *identity*, *instrumentality*, and *ideology*. More specifically, they argue that people may opt to join a radical right-wing group owing to identity reasons (related to the need to belong to social groups), while instrumental reasons outline the role of "getting something out of it," for example finding friendship and receiving prestige, both within the group and via inflated in-group perceptions and ideological reasons (one supports the content of the norms and values of the group).

In line with this conceptualization, we propose four components of a radical belief system (see Doosje, Loseman, & Van Den Bos, in press): (a) perceiving the in-group as superior, which is related to both the identity and ideological reasons, (b) perceiving the authorities as illegitimate, which is an important element of the ideological reason, but can be construed as partly instrumental as well (it may serve to legitimize violent actions by in-group), (c) experiencing a distance toward other people and (d) feeling alienated and disconnected from society—these latter two are mostly related to the identity reason related to the need to belong. These elements often can be observed in several radical belief systems—in this article, we apply it to extreme right-wing groups

(in Doosje, Loseman, & Van Den Bos, in press; this radical belief system is applied to extreme Islamic radical groups; De Wolf & Doosje, 2010; Stern, 2003).

Our central argument is that perceived in-group moral superiority plays a crucial role in understanding the right-wing radicalization process. This takes a few steps. First, a young person needs to find a small group of mind-likes (i.e., she/he has to find an in-group). In line with this identity argument, Bjørgo (1997) has observed that ex-members of radical right-wing groups have adopted a radical belief system in an attempt to search for a community of friends. This idea is further supported by interviews by Van der Valk and Wagenaar (2010, p. 72), who conclude that: ''Almost all young people who end up in right-wing extremist movements come in contact with the extreme right in their search for social belonging in the form of friendships and collaboration, and through a related need for social protection.'' Indeed, finding ''soul mates'' or groups is an important motivation not just for potential radical people, but also for all people, because the group can provide its members with structure and meaning in an uncertain world (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

The second step is to find a relevant out-group to pose a contrast with the in-group. We argue members of all radical groups display a very strong tendency to perceive their in-group as superior to all other groups. However, it can be noted that this strong tendency is derived from a more general human tendency: people prefer to belong to groups that they can positively distinguish from other groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Social identity theory argues that people are motivated to perceive their group as superior, because they derive a sense of self-esteem from being a member of a prestigious group. Indeed, there is convincing evidence that people are inclined to perceive the groups to which they belong as more favorable than other groups (e.g., for meta analyses see Aberson, Healy, & Romero, 2000; Bettencourt, Dorr, Charlton, & Hume, 2001; Doosje, B., Van Hemert, D. A., Mateus Figueiredo, A. C., Feddes, A. R., Wirtz, C., Dotsch, T., & Degner, J. [unpublished data]; Mullen, Brown, & Smith, 1992).

The third step is that people in radical groups perceive one's in-group as clearly *morally* superior to other groups. This moral dimension is a crucial element in the radical right-wing belief system, as it is in most other ideologies. Thus, the moral in-group superiority is often related to superiority in terms of norms and values (Leach, Ellemers, & Barreto, 2007). Often, this manifests itself in perceiving one's in-group to be morally superior to various other groups. For example, Van der Valk and Wagenaar (2010) describe the perceived superiority of right-wing people in relation to inter-ethnic conflicts with other immigrant youth, for example Muslims in the Netherlands, but also in relation to Jewish people.

Why do we place a premium on moral superiority? We argue that this moral superiority is crucial determinant of willingness to act on behalf of the in-group and to threaten the out-group. We argue that Hitler's strategic use of the term ''Uebermenschen'' (literally ''above humans'') is related to the goal of preparing in-group members for aggressive actions against the out-group (i.e., ''Untermenschen'' or literally ''below humans''). In line with this argument, research has shown that people are more prepared to engage in collective violence when they perceive the in-group as superior and the out-group as inferior or even as less human (Staub, 1989). For example, labeling the

out-group as "cockroaches" or "rats" makes it easier or even necessary to argue that in-group members need to attack out-group members. In addition, after intergroup violence has occurred, people also experience less group-based guilt about their in-group's violence against an out-group to the extent that they perceive the in-group as more human than the out-group (Zebel, Zimmermann, Viki, & Doosje, 2008).

Interestingly, we argue that this perceived in-group superiority is, perhaps paradoxically, related to perceived out-group threat. Our basic assumption is that it is often possible to construe the radicalization process as the response to a perceived threat from an out-group to the superiority of the in-group. The findings by Bjørgo (1997) support the argument that members of extreme right-wing groups felt they had to protect themselves against perceived enemies or threats. This protection against perceived threats can be directed at "old" targets such as Jews, but they can also be targeted at "new" groups, such as Muslims in a number of European countries. For example, in Germany, Möller and Schuhmacher (2007) examined skinheads and observed that they tend to perceive a strong interethnic group threat—they often have difficulties with immigrant youth. We argue that this is possibly associated with perceived in-group superiority. We expect that, to the extent that people perceive a threat from other groups, they are more likely to perceive their group to be superior to other groups.

Based on previous work (e.g., Buijs, Demant, & Hamdy, 2006), we consider three other elements of a radical belief system that are important in predicting people's orientation toward violence. We expect the first one, *perceiving the authorities as illegitimate and inadequate*, to be related to perceived injustice. Indeed, most theories of radicalization highlight the role of perceived injustice. For example, Moghaddam (2005) describes a staircase metaphor of radicalization. He argues that perceived injustice is an important basic determinant of radicalization. In line with this, we argue that perceived injustice will be associated with radicalization, in particular with the perceived legitimacy of the Dutch authorities.

Another element of a radical belief system is *the feeling that one is not connected to society at large*. One might feel alienated or experience that one's voice not heard. We argue that this sentiment might be determined by feelings of personal uncertainty. Previous research has already demonstrated the importance of uncertainty in creating an attraction for radical groups (Hogg et al., 2007; Van den Bos, 2009; Van den Bos & Lind, 2002). In line with these ideas, we argue that to the extent that people feel uncertain about themselves, they are more likely to embrace a radical belief system. They do so because such a radical system can provide them again with certainty and meaning. In line with this, Möller and Schuhmacher (2007) also indicate personal uncertainty as a cause for entry in radical extreme right-wing groups. Thus, we expect more radical attitudes among people who feel uncertain, in particular a sense of disconnection from society.

The fourth and final element of a radical belief system is the experience of a great *distance toward other people*, who live differently. This is probably due to the fact that when in-group norms become tight and strong, members often do not allow for alternative voices to be heard. While feeling disconnected is related to how one perceives oneself

to be integrated into society, this distance is more focused on differences between one's in-group in relation to other groups. This experience of distance is expected to be associated with out-group threat, in particular intergroup anxiety. According to Stephan et al. (2002), intergroup anxiety can be defined as the fear that people can experience when they have to interact with a person from another group. This can be differentiated from two other forms of intergroup threat, namely symbolic threat and realistic threat. Symbolic threat refers to the perceived threat to the Dutch culture. Realistic threat refers to threat to the economic status of the Dutch group. Previous research has demonstrated the link from (perceived and manipulated) group threat to negative out-group attitudes (see for a review Riek, Mania, & Gaertner, 2006). In this study, we argue that to the extent that Dutch people feel that their group is being threatened, they are more likely to have radical attitudes. These radical attitudes are expected to translate into a perception of distance to other people, as this is related to negative out-group attitudes.

In sum, we analyze four components of a radical right-wing belief system: (a) perceiving the in-group as superior, (b) the authorities as illegitimate, (c) feeling alienated and disconnected from society at large, and (d) experiencing a distance toward people who live differently. We argue that these components of radicalization are associated with support for right-wing motivated violence. In our study, we distinguish between the general attitude toward right-wing violence by *others* and *own* violent intentions. We expect the four components to be associated with the support for right-wing violence and that this, in turn, will predict people's own tendency to behave violently. We predict a most prominent role for perceived in-group superiority, because previous research in other intergroup domains has shown an important role of perceiving one's own group as morally superior (or the out-group as inferior; Staub, 1989) when explaining intergroup violence.

Background variables. We explore the role of potential background variables to control for concepts that are relevant in this context. Specifically, we use the following background variables: national identification (e.g., Doosje, Spears, & Ellemers, 2002; Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 1997), and individualistic and collective forms of relative deprivation (e.g., Crosby, 1976; Grant & Brown, 1995), a feeling that people may experience when they perceive that they themselves (as individuals and/or as a group member) receive less than they consider to be just and deserved.

Method

Sample

One thousand and 86 young people from the Netherlands participated in this study. Their mean age was 16.64 years ($SD = 2.21$), ranging from 12 to 21. There were 604 males (55.6%) and 482 females (44.4%). Most of them were high school students (73.3%). A smaller amount (26.3%) was student in intermediate vocational or higher education. All participants were native Dutch people and categorized themselves as ''non-Muslim.''

Procedure

Most of the participants were approached via various high schools at different locations in the Netherlands. They were not paid. In addition, to increase the sample size, we paid 5 Euro (approximately 6.53 US Dollars) to other participants. They were all requested to fill in the questionnaire, which was administered online at schools. After completion, the participants were thanked and debriefed.

Predictors and Dependent Variables

Unless specified otherwise, for all items, participants were requested to indicate their agreement with a statement, ranging from 1 "totally disagree" to 5 "totally agree."

Individual Relative Deprivation
This construct was measured using six items. For example: "If I compare myself with other people in the Netherlands, I feel treated unfairly." The six items formed a reliable scale (alpha = .78).

Collective Relative Deprivation
We measured this construct with six items such as: "I think my group is less well off than other groups in the Netherlands." Together, these items formed a highly reliable scale (alpha = .89).

National Identification
Four items were used to measure national identification (from Doosje, Ellemers, & Spears, 1995). An example item is: "Being Dutch is important for me." These four items formed a reliable scale (alpha = .74).

Perceived Procedural Injustice
Eight items from Moorman (1991) scale to measure perceived procedural injustice were used, for example: "I think I am treated fairly most of the time" (reverse coded). The alpha of the scale was high (alpha = .76).

Personal Uncertainty
To measure this construct, Greco and Roger's (2001) scale of emotional personal uncertainty was used. An example item is "I get worried when a situation is uncertain." The 15 items formed a highly reliable scale (alpha = .88).

Perceived Group Threat
Perceived group threat was assessed in terms of the model proposed by Stephan et al. (2002). This model distinguishes three types of threat: symbolic threat, realistic threat, and interpersonal anxiety. *Symbolic threat* was measured with 12 items, such as: "Islamic people consider themselves as better than non-Islamic people in the Netherlands." Together, these 12 items formed a highly reliable scale (alpha = .85). We measured *realistic threat*

with three items, one of them being: "Compared to non-Islamic people, Islamic people receive too much money from the Dutch government" (alpha = .64). The *intergroup anxiety* scale consisted of 10 items. Participants were asked to indicate whether or not they experienced certain emotions when interacting with an Islamic person. Example emotions are anxious, nervous, relaxed (reverse coded), and calm (reverse coded). The 10 items formed a reliable scale of intergroup anxiety (alpha = .70).

Perceived In-group Superiority

Three items were used to assess perceived in-group superiority. For example: "I think that people who are really proud of being Dutch are very special people. They are pre-destined to change things in the world" and "It is better to be proud of the Dutch nationality than of other things." (alpha = .81).

Perceived Illegitimacy of Dutch Authorities

Three items from Tyler's (1990) "respect for authorities" scale were used to measure this construct, for example: "I respect the Dutch government." The items formed a reliable scale (alpha = .70).

Perceived Distance to Other People

This construct was measured with the following item: "I feel a great distance to people who live and think differently than I do."

Social Disconnectedness

Four items of this construct measure connection in terms of the Netherlands. Two other items measure connection with the neighborhood one lives in. One of the six items used was: "I feel at home in the Netherlands." Together, these items formed a reliable scale (alpha = .79).

Attitude toward Right-wing Violence by Others

Four items were used to measure this construct, one of them being: "I can understand right-wing extremists who use violence against others." The scale was reliable (alpha = .78).

Own Violent Intentions

Own violent intentions were measured with three items such as: "I am prepared to use violence against other people to achieve something I consider very important," and "I am prepared to disturb the orderliness to achieve something I consider very important." The three items formed a reliable scale (alpha = .79).

Results

The means, standard deviations, and inter-correlations of the constructs in this study are presented in Table 1. A model was tested using Structural Equation Modeling in which own violent intentions are predicted by attitudes toward right-wing violence by others.

Table 1
The Means, Standard Deviations, and Inter-correlations of the Constructs

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1 Ind. Rel. Depr.	1.81	0.62	—	.62*	.01	.37*	.21*	.03	.25*	.12*	.20*	.16*	.19*	.12*	.24*	.27*
2 Col. Rel. Depr.	1.81	0.74		—	.00	.33*	.24*	.09*	.28*	.10*	.22*	.19*	.17*	.15*	.25*	.25*
3 Nat. Identification	3.20	0.85			—	-.08*	-.05	.41*	.36*	.22*	.57*	-.04	.18*	-.60*	.34*	.19*
4 Perc. Proc. Inj.	2.32	0.50				—	.16*	.05	.11*	.10*	.04	.22*	.11*	.23*	.06	.09*
5 Pers. Uncertainty	2.63	0.62					—	-.01	.02	.19*	-.03	-.02	.15*	.10*	-.03	.02
6 Symbolic Threat	3.34	0.64						—	.56*	.25*	.40*	.10*	-.23*	-.25*	.32*	.16*
7 Realistic Threat	2.44	0.83							—	.26*	.49*	.20*	.25*	-.17*	.43*	.27*
8 Int. Anxiety	0.30	0.20								—	.34*	.06	.26*	-.11*	.25*	.14*
9 Perc. Ingr. Super.	2.29	0.93									—	.10*	.33*	-.40*	.55*	.40*
10 Perc. Illeg. Auth.	2.56	0.82										—	.07*	.20*	.19*	.24*
11 Perc. Dist. Others	2.41	1.00											—	-.08*	.27*	.20*
12 Social Disconnect.	2.26	0.67												—	-.20*	-.10*
13 Att. RW. Viol.	2.14	0.90													—	.48*
14 Own Violent Int.	2.26	0.92														—

Note. 1 = Individual Relative Deprivation, 2 = Collective Relative Deprivation, 3 = National Identification, 4 = Perceived Procedural Injustice, 5 = Personal Uncertainty, 8 = Intergroup Anxiety, 9 = Perceived In-group Superiority, 10 = Perceived Illegitimacy Authorities, 11 = Perceived Distance to Other People, 12 = Social Disconnect. = Social Disconnectedness, 13 = Attitude toward Right-wing Violence by Others, 14 = Own Violent Intentions; * p < .05.

In turn, it was predicted that the attitude toward right-wing violence by others could be predicted by a radical belief system. This radical belief system consists of four components: perceived in-group superiority, perceived illegitimacy of the Dutch authorities, perceived distance to other people, and social disconnectedness. In turn, it was expected that the radical belief system could be predicted by the following background determinants: individual and collective relative deprivation, identification with the Dutch, perceived procedural injustice, personal uncertainty, symbolic and realistic threat, and intergroup anxiety. Associations within the set of determinants were allowed for.

Model fit is assessed using the chi-square test, the comparative fit index (CFI), the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), and the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR). A reasonable fit is indicated by a nonsignificant chi-square (or in case of large sample sizes, it is allowed to divide chi-square statistic by the degrees of freedom, and the result should be smaller than three to have an acceptable model fit), a CFI value >.95, an RMSEA smaller than .06, and an SRMR smaller than .08 (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Kline, 2005). The hypothesized model had the following indices: chi-square (40) = 153.47, $p < .001$, chi-square/degrees of freedom = 3.84, CFI = .97, RMSEA = .051 with the 90% confidence interval .043–.060, and SRMR = .031. La Grange Multiplier Test suggested including four direct paths: from individual relative deprivation to own violent intentions, from realistic threat to attitude toward right-wing violence by others, and from the variables perceived in-group superiority and perceived illegitimacy of authorities to the outcome variable own violent intentions. Furthermore, the Wald Test suggested dropping 11 paths namely: from social disconnectedness to attitudes toward rightwing violence by others; from individual relative deprivation to social disconnectedness, perceived in-group superiority, and perceived illegitimacy of authorities; from collective relative deprivation to perceived distance to other people; from perceived procedural injustice paths to perceived in-group superiority and perceived distance to other people; from symbolic threat to social disconnectedness, perceived in-group superiority, and perceived illegitimacy of authorities; and from in-group anxiety to perceived illegitimacy of authorities.

Including these changes in the model, the fit became better, namely: chi-square (36) = 63.49, $p < .001$, chi-square/degrees of freedom = 1.76, CFI = .99, RMSEA = .027 with the 90% confidence interval .015–.037, and SRMR = .027. Even though the chi-square test is still significant, the chi-square adjusted for the degrees of freedom and all the other fit-indices indicated a good fit with the data. The final model is presented in Figure 1. With a sample of 1086, even weak relations between variables become significant. However, for purposes of clarity and relevance rather than pure significance, we decided to only include paths with a standardized estimate of at least .10. We discuss the model in steps from left to right.

Determinants of the Radical Belief System

Perceived in-group superiority was predicted by collective, but not individual relative deprivation. So the more people felt their group treated unfairly and deprived in comparison with others and other groups, the more superior they perceived their in-group in comparison other groups. As expected, the more people identified with their
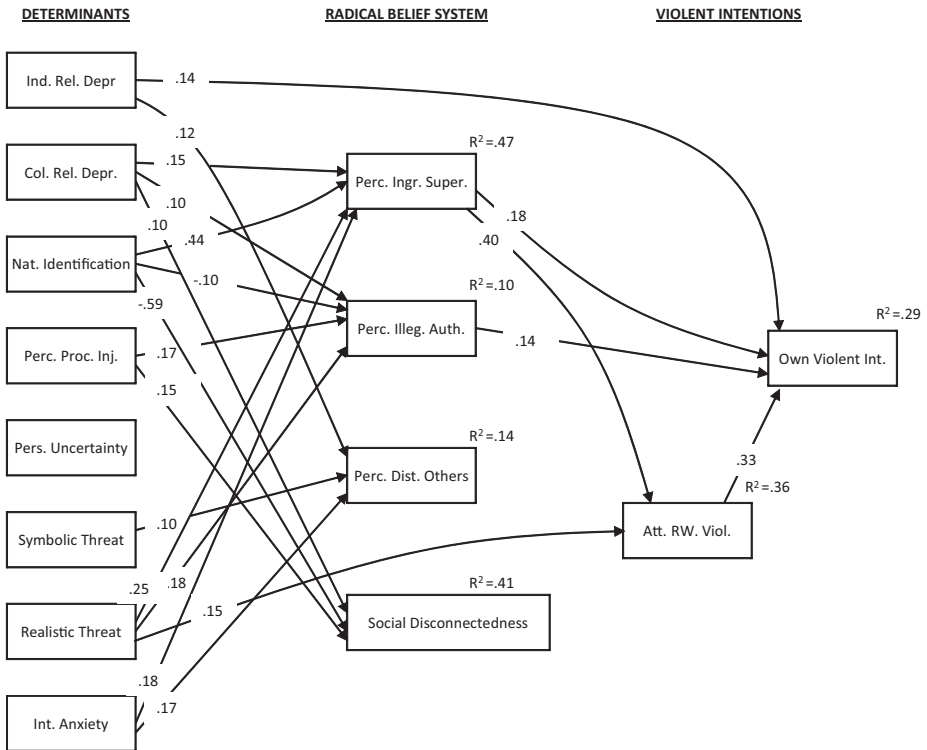
Figure 1. Final Structural Equation Model. All paths are significant. Only significant paths with a standard estimate larger than .10 are depicted.

Note. Ind. Rel. Depr., Individual Relative Deprivation; Col. Rel. Depr., Collective Relative Deprivation; Nat. Identification, National Identification; Perc. Proc. Inj., Perceived Procedural Injustice; Pers. Uncertainty, Personal Uncertainty; Int. Anxiety, Intergroup Anxiety; Perc. Ing. Super., Perceived In-group Superiority; Perc. Illeg. Auth., Perceived Illegal Authorities; Perc. Dist. Others, Perceived Distance to Other People; Social Disconnect., Social Disconnectedness; Att. RW. Viol., Attitude toward Right-wing Violence by Others; Own Violent Int., Own Violent Intentions; R^2 = % variance explained.

in-group, the more superior they perceived their group. Furthermore, all realistic threat and intergroup anxiety were predictors. That is, the more group threat participants perceived, the more they perceived their in-group to be superior in comparison with other groups. However, symbolic threat did not predict perceived in-group superiority.

Perceived illegitimacy of the authorities was positively predicted by collective, but not individual, deprivation. So the more people felt their group to be unfairly treated, the more illegitimate they perceived authorities to be. As expected, it was found that the more people identified with being Dutch, the more legitimate they perceived the authorities. In addition, the more people perceived procedural injustice, the more illegitimate authorities were perceived to be. Perceived illegitimacy of Dutch authorities was also

positively predicted by realistic, but not symbolic, threat. This implies that the more people perceived realistic threat, the less legitimate they perceived Dutch authorities.

Perceived distance to other people was predicted by three variables. First, the more people felt individually deprived compared to others, the more they perceived a distance to people who think differently than themselves. Also, perceived distance to others was positively predicted by symbolic threat and by intergroup anxiety. So the more people felt threatened, the more distance they felt to people, who think differently than themselves. No association was found between realistic threat and perceived distance to others.

Finally, regarding social disconnectedness there were three predictors. First, the more people felt collectively deprived, the more they reported social disconnectedness. As expected, the more people identified with their Dutch in-group, the less they felt disconnected from their environment. This association was found to be relatively strong (beta = −.59). In addition, the more participants' perceived procedural injustice, the more social disconnectedness was reported.

Determinants of Attitude toward Right-wing Extremist Violence by Others and Own Violent Intentions

Attitude toward right-wing violence by others was directly predicted by perceived in-group superiority as well as by realistic threat. The more people perceived the Dutch nation to be superior over other nations and the more people felt that their resources are threatened by Muslims, the more positive their attitude toward right-wing violence.

To conclude with the last outcome variable, own violent intentions were directly predicted by one background determinant, individual relative deprivation: the more people felt themselves to be treated unfairly compared to other people in the Netherlands, the more violent intentions they had. Two variables from the radical belief system predicted own violent intentions. The more participants perceived their Dutch in-group to be superior, the more violent intentions they reported. In addition, the more illegitimate they perceived Dutch authorities, the more violent intentions were reported. As expected, own violent intentions were positively predicted by attitudes toward right-wing violence.

Finally, it is important to note that the variables in this model explain 36% of attitudes toward right-wing violence, and 29% of the variance of own violent intentions.

Discussion

In this study, we have investigated determinants of young people's attitudes toward right-wing extremism. In line with the predictions, we have shown how in-group superiority plays a crucial role. It is associated with determinants such as collective deprivation, national identification, realistic and symbolic group threat, and intergroup anxiety. In addition, in-group superiority is related to outcome variables such as attitudes toward violence *by others* and *own* intention to display violence. We argue that superiority in terms of morality is a crucial element in the right-wing framework, as it has been shown in other domains (e.g., Haidt, 2007; Leach et al., 2007).

A second conclusion from this study is that group processes play an important part in the susceptibility of right-wing extremism. This is in line with the identity ideas by Klandermans and Mayer (2006) and Van der Valk and Wagenaar (2010). For example, national identification is related to three components of a radical belief system (perceived legitimacy of authorities, in-group superiority, and social connection). In addition, perceived realistic and symbolic group threats are associated with a perceived legitimacy of authorities and in-group superiority, as well as directly with attitudes toward right-wing extremism and right-wing violence for symbolic threat.

Thirdly, interestingly, in this study, we find support for relations between two components of a radical belief system, namely in-group superiority and perceived legitimacy of authorities, and outcome variables, but failed to find support for the role of two other components. Specifically, both social disconnectedness and perceived distance to other people were not related to violence-related outcome variables. This forms an interesting contrast with earlier findings among nonradical Muslim youth in the Netherlands: for them, both social disconnectedness and perceived distance to other people were significant predictors of support for Islam-motivated violence and own violent intentions (Doosje, Loseman, & Van Den Bos, in press). We argue that for members of this Islamic minority group in the Netherlands, social disconnectedness and perceiving distance to other people may be more relevant variables in their lives than for members of a majority group (that was studied here). Being part of a dominant group makes people often feel more connected to society as a whole (even though right-wing extremist people may criticize the authorities for not taking good care of the dominant culture).

While we have shown the role of group threat, in terms of economy and culture, we have not investigated group threat in terms of actual experienced violent threats to the group. Van der Valk and Wagenaar (2010) have indicated that right-wing radicalization processes may intensify when out-groups (e.g., other ethnic groups or left-wing radical groups) display violence toward the right-wing in-group. As we have focused on the *susceptibility* for radical right-wing attitudes among nonradical youth in this study, it was not our aim to investigate the processes that can occur once people actually belong to a radical right-wing group. In such groups, it is highly likely that actual past experience with intergroup violence is a good predictor of future violent intentions, as is the case for other groups (e.g., Staub, 1989).

It is informative to link these findings with the literature on collective action. For example, Simon and Klandermans (2001) use the notion of ''shared grievances'' as a determinant of collective action. In our model, we specify several ''shared grievances,'' namely collective relative deprivation, and symbolic and realistic group threat. Similarly, in their model of collective action, Van Zomeren, Spears, Fischer, and Leach (2004) distinguish between an ''anger route'' and a ''perceived efficacy'' route to collective action. Anger is fueled by the ''shared grievances'' components in our model, while it is perhaps more difficult to translate the efficacy notion in our model. Interestingly, Tausch et al. (2011) point to the role of contempt in explaining non-normative collective action. Future research might examine how different types of emotions, in combination with efficacy ideas, can play a role in attraction of extreme right-wing groups. People might feel attracted to such groups when they believe they can achieve

a certain goal with the help of the group, or that the group can provide them with a sense of belongingness.

It is important to note that in our model, we were able to explain a large part of the variance in attitudes toward right-wing violence (36%) and own violent intentions (29%). This means that the four variables of the radical belief system, sometimes in combination with background determinants, are highly relevant in the present context of attitudes toward right-wing violence, and associated own violent intentions.

While our study has resulted in some clear patterns, we do have to acknowledge some limitations. First, in terms of perceived distance to others, we have used only one item, rendering it impossible to establish an indication of reliability. Secondly, while we have attempted to create a representative sample of Dutch youth, our method of sampling via schools has not resulted in a full representative sample, even though we have included people from all provinces and regions of the Netherlands. Still, even if we wish to generalize these findings to all non-Islamic youth in the Netherlands, we are not in a position to apply our findings to other (European) countries. Future research should examine whether the observed patterns can be replicated among people from other countries.

Another limitation is that we have tested our model on the susceptibility of one group only, the right-wing extreme group. It is clear that for other groups, other models may apply (Doosje, Loseman, & Van Den Bos, in press). While some processes may be similar, other processes may be quite group-specific. For example, the decision whether or not to engage in violent behavior is related to salient group norms. Some radical groups may opt to engage in nonviolent actions only, as their group norms prevent them from displaying violent behavior.

A third potential limitation of the present study is the fact that we have used items to tap the own inclination to engage in violence in general terms rather than in terms of right-wing causes. We have used these general items to be able to (use and) compare them with other radical groups, such as radical Islamic group (Doosje, Loseman, & Van Den Bos, in press). However, it might be argued that these items do not directly measure own inclination to display violence related to right-wing causes.

This study has shown the importance of perceived in-group superiority in the attraction of extreme right-wing attitudes and behavior. In terms of antecedents, we have shown that to the extent that people perceive out-group threat, feel identified with their group, and experience collective relative deprivation, they are more likely to perceive their in-group as superior. In terms of consequences, we have demonstrated that this perceived superiority is associated with a more favorable attitude toward right-wing extremism, endorsement of right-wing violence, and own display of violence. As such, perceived in-group superiority forms a crucial link between background determinants and attitudinal and behavioral consequences of right-wing extremism.

References

Aberson, C. L., Healy, M., & Romero, V. (2000). In-group bias and self-esteem: A meta-analysis. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 4, 157–173.

Arkin, R. M., Oleson, K. C., & Carroll, P. J. (2009). (Eds.) *Handbook of the uncertain self*. New York: Psychology Press.

Baumeister, R. F., & Leary, M. R. (1995). The need to belong: Desire for interpersonal attachments as a fundamental human motivation. *Psychological Bulletin*, *117*, 497–529.

Bettencourt, B. A., Dorr, N., Charlton, K., & Hume, D. L. (2001). Status differences and in-group bias: A meta-analytic examination of the effects of status stability, status legitimacy, and group permeability. *Psychological Bulletin*, *127*, 520–542.

Bjørgo, T. (1997). *Racist and right-wing violence in Scandinavia: Patterns, perpetrators, and responses*. Oslo: Aschehoug.

Bongar, B., Brown, L. M., Beutler, L. E., Breckenridge, J. N., & Zimbardo, P. G. (2006). *Psychology of terrorism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Buijs, F. J., Demant, F., & Hamdy, A. (2006). *Strijders van eigen bodem: Radicale en democratische moslims in Nederland*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Crosby, F. J. (1976). A model of egoistical relative deprivation. *Psychological Review*, *83*, 85–112.

De Wolf, A., & Doosje, B. (2010). *Aanpak van radicalisme: A psychological analysis [Dealing with radicalization: A psychological analysis]*. Amsterdam: SWP.

Doosje, B., Ellemers, N., & Spears, R. (1995). Perceived variability as a function of group status and identification. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *31*, 410–436.

Doosje, B., Loseman, A., & Van Den Bos, K. (in press). Determinants of the radicalization process of Islamic youth in the Netherlands: Personal uncertainty, perceived injustice and perceived group threat. *Journal of Social Issues*.

Doosje, B., Spears, R., & Ellemers, N. (2002). The dynamic and determining role of in-group identification: Responses to anticipated and actual changes in the intergroup status hierarchy. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, *41*, 57–76.

Doosje, B., Zimmermann, A., Küpper, B., Zick, A., & Meertens, R. (2010). Terrorist threat and perceived Islamic support for terrorist attacks as predictors of personal and institutional out-group discrimination and support for anti-immigration policies: Evidence from 9 European countries. *International Review of Social Psychology*, *22*, 203–233.

Ellemers, N., Spears, R., & Doosje, B. (1997). Sticking together or falling apart: In-group identification as a psychological determinant of group commitment versus individual mobility. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *72*, 617–626.

Grant, P. R., & Brown, R. (1995). From ethnocentrism to collective protest: Responses to relative deprivation and threat to social identity. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, *58*, 195–211.

Greco, V., & Roger, D. (2001). Coping with uncertainty: The construction and validation of a new measure. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *3*, 519–534.

Haidt, J. (2007). The new synthesis in moral psychology. *Science*, *316*, 998–1002. DOI: 10.1126/science.1137651

Hogg, M. A. (2007). Uncertainty-identity theory. In M. P. Zanna (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. *39*, pp. 70–126). San Diego, CA: Academic Press.

Hogg, M. A., Sherman, D. K., Dierselhuis, J., Maitner, A. T., & Moffitt, G. (2007). Uncertainty, entitativity, and group identification. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *43*, 135–142.

Hu, L.-T., & Bentler, P. M. (1999). Cut-off criteria for fit indexes in covariance structure analysis: Conventional criteria versus new alternatives. *Structural Equation Modeling*, *6*, 1–55.

Jost, J. T., Glaser, J., Kruglanski, A. W., & Sullaway, F. J. (2003). Political conservatism as motivated social cognition. *Psychological Bulletin*, *129*, 339–375.

Klandermans, B., & Mayer, N. (Eds.) (2006). *Extreme right activists in Europe: Through the magnifying glass.* London/New York: Routledge.

Kline, R. B. (2005). *Principles and practice of structural equation modeling* (2nd ed.). New York: Guilford.

Kruglanski, A. W., & Fishman, S. (2006). The psychology of terrorism: "Syndrome" versus "tool" perspectives. *Terrorism and Political Violence*, *18*, 193–215.

Kruglanski, A. W., Pierro, A., Mannetti, L., & De Grada, E. (2006). Groups as epistemic providers: Need for closure and the unfolding of group-centrism. *Psychological Review*, *113*, 84–100.

Leach, C. W., Ellemers, N., & Barreto, M. (2007). Group virtue: The importance of morality (vs. competence and sociability) in the positive evaluation of in-groups. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *93*, 234–249.

McCauley, C. (2002). Psychological issues in understanding terrorism and the response to terrorism. In C. E. Stout (Ed.), *The psychology of terrorism: Theoretical understandings and perspectives (psychological dimension to war and peace)*, (VoI. III, pp. 3–29). Connecticut: Praeger.

Moghaddam, F. M. (2005). The staircase to terrorism: A psychological exploration. *American Psychologist*, *60*, 161–169.

Möller, K., & Schuhmacher, N. (2007). *Rechte glatzen: Rechtsextreme orientierungs- und szenezusammenhänge - einstiegs-, verbleibs- und ausstiegsprozesse von Skinheads.* Wiesbaden: VS Verlag.

Moorman, R. H. (1991). Relationship between organizational justice and organizational citizenship behaviors: Do fairness perceptions influence employee citizenship? *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *76*, 845–855.

Mullen, B., Brown, R. J., & Smith, C. (1992). In-group bias as a function of salience, relevance, and status: An integration. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, *22*, 103–122.

Pettigrew, T. F., & Meertens, R. W. (1995). Subtle and blatant prejudice in Western Europe. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, *25*, 57–75.

Riek, B. M., Mania, E. W., & Gaertner, S. L. (2006). Intergroup threat and out-group attitudes: A meta-analytic review. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, *10*, 336–353.

Silber, M. D., & Bhatt, A. (2007). *Radicalization in the West: The homegrown threat.* New York: New York Police Department.

Silke, A. (2008). Holy warriors: Exploring the psychological processes of Jihadi radicalization. *European Journal of Criminology*, *5*, 99–123.

Simon, B., & Klandermans, B. (2001). Politicized collective identity—A social psychological analysis. *American Psychologist*, *56*, 319–331.

Staub, E. (1989). *The roots of evil: The origins of genocide and other group violence.* Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press.

Stephan, W. G., Boniecki, K. A., Ybarra, O., Bettencourt, A., Ervin, K. S., Jackson, L. A., et al. (2002). The role of threats in the racial attitudes of Blacks and Whites. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *28*, 1242–1254.

Stern, J. (2003). *Terror in the name of god: Why militants kill.* New York: Ecco.

Stillman, T. F., & Baumeister, R. F. (2009). Uncertainty, belongingness, and four needs for meaning. *Psychological Inquiry*, *20*, 249–251.

Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1986). The social identity theory of intergroup conflict. In S. Worchel & W. G. Austin (Eds.), *Psychology of intergroup relations* (pp. 7–24). Chicago, IL: Nelson-Hall.

Tausch, N., Becker, J. C., Spears, R., Christ, O., Saab, R., Singh, P., et al. (2011). Explaining radical group behaviour: Developing emotion and efficacy routes to normative and non-normative collective action. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *101*, 129–148.

Tyler, T. R. (1990). *Why do people obey the law? Procedural justice, legitimacy, and compliance*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Van den Bos, K. (2009). Making sense of life: The existential self trying to deal with personal uncertainty. *Psychological Inquiry*, *20*, 197–217.

Van den Bos, K., & Lind, E. A. (2002). Uncertainty management by means of fairness judgments. In M. P. Zanna (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. *34*, pp. 1–60). San Diego, CA: Academic Press.

Van der Valk, I., & Wagenaar, W. (2010). *The extreme right: Entry and exit*. Amsterdam: Anne Frank House.

Van Zomeren, M., Spears, R., Fischer, A. H., & Leach, C. W. (2004). Put your money where your mouth is! Explaining collective action tendencies through group-based anger and group efficacy. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *87*, 649–664.

Zebel, S., Zimmermann, A., Viki, G. T., & Doosje, B. (2008). Dehumanization and guilt as related but distinct predictors of support for reparation policies. *Political Psychology*, *29*, 193–219.

Kees van den Bos is a Professor of Social Psychology at Utrecht University and senior associate editor of Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin. His main research interests focus on fair and unfair treatment, morality, cultural worldviews, behavioral disinhibition, radical behavior, and terrorism. He examines these issues in both basic research studies and projects for government agencies. He received his PhD from Leiden University.

Bertjan Doosje is a Professor of Radicalization Studies (FORUM Frank Buijs Chair) at the Political Science Department and Social Psychology Department at the University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands. His research interests include radicalization, group-based emotions, and terror management theory. He is an associate editor of Group Processes and Intergroup Relations.

Allard R. Feddes is a postdoctoral researcher at the Department of Social Psychology at the University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands. He received his PhD from the International Graduate College "Conflict and Cooperation between Social Groups" at the Friedrich Schiller University in Jena, Germany, in 2007. As a postdoctoral researcher, he studied development of prejudice in childhood at Lisbon University Institute, Portugal, and is currently investigating processes of radicalization.

Annemarie Loseman received her PhD from the Utrecht University in The Netherlands. Her research mainly focused on processes of fairness reactions and radicalization. Currently she works as a researcher on the national healthcare insurance in the Netherlands.

Liesbeth Mann received a master both in Social Psychology and in Holocaust and Genocide Studies at the University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands. Currently she works on her PhD project focused on interpersonal and group-based feelings of humiliation. She is also involved in an EU-study aimed at investigating processes of (de-)radicalization.