Chapter 4
Basic Postulates of the Looming Vulnerability Model

As we saw, across the entirety of the animal kingdom, dynamic approaching objects evoke defensive behavioral reactions. Birds flutter, crouch, or try to fly away. Monkeys crouch or put their arms up protectively, even barnacles close their shells when they sense objects approaching them. Human adults, too, react defensively to rapidly approaching objects, and young children exhibit stranger anxiety to the rapid approach of an unfamiliar adult. People become more anxious as deadlines approach. It would seem obvious that these different observations are connected to anxiety and threat somehow, but how?

The looming vulnerability model (LVM) emphasizes the continuity of reactions to the approaching movement of threats across the animal kingdom with human fear responses. Perceptions of the dynamism of looming threats and their approach movement are crucial to the threat reactions of humans (as with other animals) because they are relevant to our evolutionary-based strategies for responding to and evading threats.

Our goal in this chapter is to focus on basic postulates of the model regarding potential determinants (or antecedents) and consequences of perceived dynamic growing threat for anxiety.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a broad overview of the looming vulnerability model. More specifically, we will begin to discuss the looming vulnerability model by addressing these basic questions: (1) In what ways do we conceptually and operationally define the perception of looming vulnerability to dynamic growing threat? (2) What types of determinants or inputs contribute to the perception of looming threat? (3) What consequences do these perceptions of looming vulnerability have for how individuals react to and cope with threats? (4) Finally, what points of correspondence or connections does the looming vulnerability model have with other contemporary CT/CBT models?

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Conceptual and Operational Definition of the Perception of Looming Vulnerability

How do we define the perception of looming vulnerability? In simple terms, the perception (or sense) of looming vulnerability refers to one's subjective perception that one may be defenseless to the dynamism of rapidly growing threats unless one can respond in time. This construct implies that individuals become anxious in large part because they perceive rapid dynamic gains occurring in threats that are developing and advancing faster than they can respond. By dynamic gains, we mean that they perceive threat as rapidly increasing and approaching over the previous levels of their proximity, probability, urgency, and intensity or other parameters. Accordingly, a person's anxiety derives in part from a perception of rapidly rising risk and a general feeling of dreaded events moving rapidly toward collision with them.

Why look at these perceptions of looming vulnerability to dynamic growing threat? Why don't appraisals of static parameters or judgments of probability, proximity, and the like, suffice? There are four important reasons to focus on perceptions of looming vulnerability dynamic growing threat and rapid dynamic gains when conceptualizing features of threat. First, the assumed significance of such perceptions connects more closely than current more static models to the abundant demonstrations that humans and other animals respond to the dynamism and patterns of change of rapidly approaching objects (looming stimuli). Second, a focus on perceptions of dynamic growing threat helps to bridge these lines of investigation with theoretical and empirical work on cognitive appraisal and defense systems in anxiety as well as with work on emotions, attention, memory, and other aspects of information processing of threatening material. Third, perceptions of looming vulnerability involve more visual and sensory-motor processing than other constructs related to threat cognition. And, fourth, a focus on perceptions of dynamic gains in growing threat may afford new ways to understand cognitive mechanisms and vulnerabilities in anxiety disorders as well as suggest opportunities for novel treatment strategies. Note also that the emphasis on such perceptions is in closer accord with the fact that the human brain is sensitive to change (Cacioppo & Freberg, 2012).

As we saw, animals in the wild often continue to forage even after they detect predators. There is a tradeoff to committing to flight or defensive behaviors, and so they only take flight or engage in such extremes when they see dynamic gains in threat as the predators move (or prepare to move) closer. Likewise, individuals today don't generally take physical flight automatically when they simply see parked cars in the street; rather, they only do so when they perceive the threats to be rapidly approaching and the cars to be making dynamic gains. It should be obvious no one could function well if they immediately ran away every time they detected a threat. Thus, individuals whether threats are dynamically growing and approaching dynamic growth of threats when estimating the tradeoffs when selecting

among options for responding to the threats. As we will attempt to show, anxiety disorders develop when individuals begin to indiscriminately perceive their feared threats as rapidly growing and looming.

When individuals encounter possible threats and dangers, they generally want to know whether possible threats are dynamically growing (progressing or escalating) in a given time frame, and, if so, how quickly they are doing so. When threats are static or dissipating in a time scale, they tend to perceive that they are less urgent and assume that they can put off dealing with such threats and their anxiety tends to taper off. Furthermore, the judgments that individuals make about threats aren't just static judgments preserved in amber. Threat is a dynamic experience, They don't just judge the proximity or probability of a threat at a static point-in-time, but also judge how quickly the risk is rising for them in the instant. For example, they judge whether the threat of a health condition, car accident, or being unprepared for a deadline is making dynamic gains because the threats are rapidly bearing down on them.

For these reasons, individuals don't just assess the possible danger of being rejected and hurt by others as a fixed numerical probability during a given time frame. They don't just appraise threats as fixed probabilities or proximities, but also attempt to assess the dynamism of threats and to anticipate and simulate their dynamic growth rates. Thus, they attempt to perceive and simulate whether the risk of a looming threat is rapidly escalating and how quickly a danger can reach them.

Their perceptions of dynamically growing threat can be also assessed with questions that are tailored to be quite fear- or disorder-specific (e.g., OCD, spider phobia, social anxiety). For example, they don't just assess the possible danger from germs and contaminants in terms of the probability of contamination or the distance from them during a time scale but imagine whether the germs and contamination are quickly spreading and can reach them. For another example, the perception of looming vulnerability for spider fears is operationalized by perceptions that spiders are moving and/or rapidly reproducing and approaching.

It is assumed that the parameters of individuals' perceptions of the dynamic nature of possible threats can be likened to those of physical bodies in motion (Riskind, 1997). For example, the greater the perceived velocity of the approach movement and change of a growing threat (i.e., its speed toward the self), the greater the extent would be to which one will experience anxiety and fear. A rapidly changing and fast-moving dynamic threat produces more anxiety for a person than a static or slowly moving threat. Another factor that has impact is the perceived acceleration of the approach movement of a potential threat (i.e., the extent that the velocity itself is perceived as increasing in the moment). Furthermore, a person's perceived looming vulnerability is greater to the extent that the dynamic threat object is perceived to be increasing in intensity or magnitude and gathering momentum to the point it can be difficult to stop or evade.

Perceptions of Looming Vulnerability Are Embodied

It is further proposed that individuals' perceptions of looming vulnerability to threats are embodied (Barsalou, 2002, 2003a; Niedenthal, Barsalou, Winkielman, Krauth-Gruber, & Ric, 2005) in visual and sensory processing as well as imagination. That is, their perceptions of dynamic growing threats cannot be reduced to static "stuck-in-amber" judgments of probability, proximity, or cost. The following example of a cognitive fear script, which Lang (1984) offered when presenting his network formulation of fear structure, provides a useful way to illustrate the embodiment of looming threats in visual and sensory processing and imagination:

> I am in a wooded area when I see a large snake. It appears to be moving toward me. There's a diamond pattern on its back. It could be a dangerous snake. My eyes jump in my head following a quick, sinuous movement. (from Lang, 1984, p. 197).

More generally, perceptions of looming threat are embodied even when threats are not so specific and concrete as in phobic stimuli like spiders. As Lakoff (2015) has stated, "Everyone living on earth" has experienced gravitation, movement of objects toward the self, etc., and these experiences provide the "superstructure for all the conceptual systems we develop thereafter." A similar view has been suggested by the scaffolding theory of Williams, Huang, and Bargh (2009), which assumes that early preverbal sensorimotor experiences with the physical environment provide basic building blocks and conceptual analogies for understanding other aspects of the social and physical world. Thus, ultimately, all our perceptions of looming threat are grounded in past visual and sensory experiences with dynamism and change in the world, even if these have simply provided a "superstructure" of metaphors or conceptual analogies that enable us to comprehend the features of objects and events that cause them to be dangerous.

Perceptions of Approach Movement Occur in a Dynamic and Relative Reference Frame

It is assumed that people perceive the dynamism of threats (and their dynamic gains or losses) in the context of a dynamic relative reference frame. For example, an individual can experience a sense of looming vulnerability to rapidly growing threat regardless of whether it is the threat—such as a spider or deadline—that is approaching or whether the individual is the one approaching the threat—such as the edge of a tall building. Another factor that influences perceptions of dynamic growing threat in this dynamic relative reference frame is the perception of self-efficacy and control. A perception of self-efficacy and control can benefit the individual by attenuating the impact of the approaching threat. At the same time, the benefit that an individual receives from perceiving self-efficacy and control is much lower when threats aren't perceived to be approaching than when they are (Riskind & Maddux, 1993).

What Are the Antecedent Factors and Conditions That Contribute to the Perception of Looming Vulnerability?

Determinants of Perceptions of Dynamically Growing Threat

Perceptual and Cognitive Factors

Perceptions of looming vulnerability derive from a combination of several types of inputs. They can be constructed in part based on perceptual cues (e.g., from incoming visual or auditory information) and perceived physical properties of threat stimuli. For example, perceptions of objects that are suddenly approaching closer can increase the sense of looming threat. Even minimal or barely noticeable cues of dynamism and movement can also sometimes heighten an individual's sense of looming vulnerability to threat. Imagine, for example, that a person sees that a nearby wasp or stinging insect on a wall seems to be just slightly moving and/or flexing its legs. This minimal cue provides the person with warning signals that a threat is dynamic and growing.

Note that many animal species interpret preparatory but stationary dynamic postures, such as aggressive postures, as "intention movements" that signal impending action by another animal or predator (Hinde, 1970; Krebs & Dawkins, 1984). In short, static or stationary postures (e.g., a coiled cobra that is poised to strike) can sometimes carry significant dynamic information of dynamic growing threat.

Cognitive Biases

Several cognitive biases can contribute to perceptions of looming vulnerability (for more, see Chap. 14). For example, individuals appear to have a "self-centered" cognitive bias to perceive directionally ambiguous movement as approaching them (Lewis & McBeath, 2004). More broadly, they may sometimes perceive any ambiguous dynamic activity or changes in potential threats as growing threats that are making dynamic gains. From an evolutionary perspective, this self-centered bias would seem to make sense under conditions of uncertainty about the possibility of looming danger. That is, human ancestors in a world with potential predators would have had better chances of surviving if they were biased toward overestimating dynamic growing threat ("better safe than sorry") than if they were biased to underestimate it (see "error management" theory; Haselton & Buss, 2000; Haselton & Nettle, & Andrews, 2005). Furthermore, in more extreme instances, this tendency may even occur when threats are receding because their movement can make it more salient to the fearful person that they have dynamism and can approach. Anxiety may only taper off when it is indisputably clear that the receding threats have reached an apparent point of no return (Riskind, Kelly, Harman, Moore, & Gaines, 1992).

As detailed in Chap. 14, a tendency to perceive dynamism and movement in threats can also simply result from focusing on the threats. Focusing on a threat can create an illusion of movement even when it is static. Moreover, this illusory movement can particularly emerge when someone engages in mental simulation of its potential to approach.

Synthesis in Information Processing

The LVM assumes that people process bits and pieces of information from many possible inputs and sources to formulate their perceptions and appraisals of potential dynamic growing threat. We posit that much of this activity occurs automatically and nonreflectively and involves the integration of incoming information with memories, attitudes, beliefs, and cognitive styles.

Cognitive Vulnerability as a Determinant of Perceptions of Looming Vulnerability to Rapid Dynamic Gains in Threat

Some individuals more than others also acquire a distinct and characteristic negative cognitive style—the looming cognitive style—that systematically biases their processing of threat and puts them at greater risk for anxiety (see Chaps. 8, 9, and 10). Someone with this cognitive style is therefore more likely to interpret and simulate ambiguous threats as dynamic, growing, and approaching and rapidly rising in risk (Riskind et al., 2000).

Consequences of Perceived Approach Movement for the Output of Threat Processing and Responses

The looming vulnerability construct posits that perceptions that threats are dynamically growing and advancing are important theoretical features of threat that can profoundly affect anxiety and fear in several ways (Riskind, 1997; Riskind and Williams, 2006; Riskind, Williams, & Joiner, 2006). As just one example, as we will show in Chap. 5, the dynamic features of threat have significant impact on threat appraisal. For another example, as we will show in Chap. 6, perceptions of dynamic movement, and change in potential threat have a significant impact on attentional and memory processes as well as the interpretation and appraisal of threat. As we will see in Chap. 6, looming stimuli have been repeatedly shown to have priority in attentional capture. In addition, moving and looming stimuli and images are better recognized and remembered. Likewise, we will argue in Chap. 6 that individuals are

more readily conditioned to become afraid of dynamic (e.g., moving spiders) than static ones. Perceptions that threats are rapidly approaching (looming) can also produce more intense emotional reactions and physiological responses. The salience of looming threats, as well as their perceived immediacy and urgency, causes individuals to have more intense anxiety and fear and even anger reactions. As we will see, this can also lead them to have greater fear of losing control over their emotions.

Effects on Physiological Reactions to Perceptions of Looming Stimuli

It has been shown that perceptions of dynamic growing threat can activate basic neural defense systems. For example, Coker-Appiah et al. (2013) showed participants images that were either threatening or neutral and which were displayed as either approaching (looming) or receding from them. As well, the images were either animate (animals) or inanimate (objects). Using fMRI brain imaging, Coker-Appia et al. showed that the amygdala was responsive to the threatening nature of the images, as well as their animacy, and whether they loomed. The amygdala was particularly responsive to looming threats and looming animate stimuli. They also found that the periaqueductal gray was also sensitive to emotional information and particularly responsive to looming threats. Other studies have found comparable findings with both visual (Mobbs et al., 2007) and auditory (Bach, Neuhoff, Perrig, & Seifritz, 2009) looming stimuli.

Effects on Defensive and Self-Protective Reactions

An individual's perceptions of dynamic growing threat also have significant effects on anxiety by affecting the person's ensuing motivational, and behavioral reactions to threats. We will cover this material in more depth than other topics in this chapter because we don't deal with it as much in later chapters.

Schreij and Olivers (2015) presented evidence on the relationship between looming movement and behavioral urgency. While playing on a computer task, participants performed a visual search task in a computer game that required them to respond to shape changes of a target stimulus on a screen that contained an avatar of themselves. When the target stimulus was a moving object on a collision course with their avatar on the screen, the participants responded more quickly on the visual search task than when the target was moving away from their avatar. In short, perceptions of approaching (looming) threats appeared to increase the participants' feelings of behavioral urgency. As will be seen, further evidence for this assumption about behavioral urgency is presented in Chap. 6 on attentional processes.

An individual's perceptions of dynamic growing threat can also trigger freezing reactions. Freezing represents an initial orienting response that is often exhibited in terms of an immobile posture or postural tension, slowing reaction times, and reduced heart rate (bradycardia). It is thought that when individuals freeze, they can become more hypervigilant for cues that help in assessing the degree of clear and

present danger and in selecting the most useful coping responses (Hagenaars, Oitzl, & Roelofs, 2014; Mobbs, Hagan, Dalgleish, Silston, & Prévost, 2015).

Sagliano, Cappuccio, Trojano, and Conson (2014) recently designed a study to examine whether normal human participants have freezing responses to dynamic, approaching threats. The procedure involved asking participants to make judgments about whether images of animals or other stimuli were "living" or "nonliving." Slower reaction times (RTs) on this lexical decision task for approaching threatening animals (e.g., spiders or crocodiles)—compared to those for receding animals or to nonthreatening animals—are indicative of freeze-like reactions. Sagliano and colleagues found that individuals evinced more freeze-like reactions to the approaching images of dangerous animals than they did to the receding images of the same animals. The approaching images of dangerous animals also elicited faster and more pronounced freeze-like reactions than the neutral animals regardless of whether they were approaching or receding.

Freezing reactions can generally cease to have any significant adaptive benefit for individuals when they become rigid and occur in inappropriate situations (e.g., when it is obvious that no threat exists or that the threat has receded). Indeed, it appears that inappropriate freezing reactions along with other defensive reactions are prominent features of anxiety disorders and other psychopathologies (see Chap. 9). For example, they have been observed in social anxiety (Buss, Davidson, Kalin, & Goldsmith, 2004) and PTSD (Hagenaars, Van Minnen, Holmes, Brewin, & Hoogduin, 2008; Rizvi, Kaysen, Gutner, Griffin, & Resick, 2008). Thus, Sagliano et al.'s study implies that exaggerated perceptions of dynamic growing threat may contribute to freezing reactions in anxiety disorders.

An individual's perceptions of looming threats can have significant effects on defensive responses at the most rudimentary and innate automatic level as well as more complex cognitive-affective responses. As an example of the former, a recent study examined the effects of tactile perceptions of looming stimuli moving toward the face on automatic defensive reactions (Clery, Guipponi, Odouard, Wardak, & Hamed, 2015). The object movement that approached the face (on a collision course or a near miss) seemed to automatically provide participants with predictive cues affecting their expectations about the timing and location of the expected impact of the objects.

On a different front, when individuals see no immediate way in which they can avoid threatening objects or stimuli, we saw in Chap. 2 that they sometimes use covert mental "cut-off" strategies (see Chap. 2) to modulate the impact of threats. In this vein, there is considerable evidence that the looming cognitive style has significant impact on whether individuals engage in defenses such as thought suppression, worry, experiential avoidance, and affect avoidance.

In short, a central tenet of the LVM is that perceptions and simulations of looming threat affect a range of core processes involved in the evaluation and emotional, physiological and behavioral response to threat. The LVM is unique from other models in its focus on the role that perceptions of dynamic growing and approaching threat play as a core mechanism in anxiety.

What Points of Correspondence Are There Between the Looming Vulnerability and Other Contemporary CT/CBT Models?

As we will now see, despite the differences between the looming vulnerability model and other CT/CBT models, the looming vulnerability model also has points of correspondence with several other models of anxiety. Moreover, as already described in Chap. 3, the looming vulnerability model also connects with cognitive models and research in the more general emotions literature that share the idea that emotion is a response to appraisals of dynamic changes in stimuli, not merely their mere presence (Baumeister and Bratslavsky, 1999; Lazarus, 1991; Ortony, Clore, & Collins, 1990).

What models in the clinical literature on anxiety does the looming vulnerability model connect with? First, it connects with the recent affective contrast theory of generalized anxiety disorder (GAD) that has been proposed by Llera and Newman (Llera and Newman, 2014; Neuman and Llera, 2011; Newman, Llera, Erickson, & Przeworski, 2014). The central premise of their model is that individuals with GAD are more threatened by the experience of negative affect shifts—or, in our terms, dynamic gains in negative affect—than they are by the experience of negative states themselves. This, in turn, paradoxically motivates individuals with GAD to engage in a worry state that buffers them from feeling sudden, acute increases in negative affect (negative affect shifts).

More generally, we presently expect that somewhat analogous "affective contrast" mechanisms also operate in anxiety disorders. For example, we have observed that OCD patients appear to have inflated fears of negative affect shifts that could lead to rapid loss of emotional control. Some patients are even afraid of experiencing positive affect shifts. As one patient put it, he believed that "the higher the rise I get in feeling a positive mood, the harder my fall will be." In effect, his fears of dynamic shifts in both positive and negative affect were associated with perceptions of looming vulnerability to negative affect shifts that could lead to uncontrollable anxiety and depression.

Despite some of their similarities and emphasis on the role of dynamic increases in negative states, the affective contrast model and looming vulnerability model differ in at least one salient respect. That is, the affective contrast model primarily focuses on *internal* cues that threat negative affect shifts, whereas the looming vulnerability model focuses on both internal and external cues more broadly. Individuals have a sense of looming vulnerability to threats such as automobile accidents, cancers, and social rejections, but also have a sense of looming vulnerability to panic attacks, obsessional thinking, or a loss of control over negative affect states.

Next, the looming vulnerability model can also be related to Gross's emotion process model (Gross, 1998a, 1998b) and several other emotion regulation or related models including Borkovec's model of worry (Borkovec, Alcaine, & Behar 2004, Borkovec, Ray, & Stoeber, 1998), Roemer & Orsillo's model of experiential avoidance (Roemer & Orsillo, 2007; Roemer, Salters, Raffa, & Orsillo, 2005), and

Mennin and Fresco's emotion regulation model of GAD (Mennin & Fresco, 2013; Mennin et al., 2018). In his model, Gross distinguishes between *antecedent* emotion regulation processes that are involved in generating emotional responses (e.g., events and cognitive appraisals) and *response-focused* processes that are involved in strategies such as emotion suppression that target the output. As noted above, perceptions of looming vulnerability (an antecedent process) are thought to lead more intense emotional responses. As such, perceptions of looming vulnerability can influence the subsequent response-focused self-regulation processes. A study by Riskind and Kleiman (2012) found that the looming cognitive style had significant positive relationships to experiential avoidance and fears of loss of emotional control. Riskind and Kleiman (2012) suggested that antecedent perceptions of rapid dynamic gains in threatening events can evoke intense emotion and fears of loss of emotional control. These exaggerated fears, in turn, can cause individuals to select more response-focused emotion regulation strategies such as suppression, worry, and experiential avoidance that are important in many emotion regulation models. For example, Mennin and Fresco's model states that individuals with GAD have exaggerated fears of intense emotions and of losing control over their emotions (Mennin & Fresco, 2013; Mennin et al., 2018).

Third, the looming vulnerability model can also be related to an analysis by Mineka and Kihlstrom (1978) several decades ago of experimental neurosis in discrimination learning. Like the looming vulnerability model, Mineka and Kihlstrom spotlighted the importance of perceptions of dynamic gains and losses. Contrary to the common psychological assumption that experimental neurosis resulted from lack of predictability and control, they stated that experimental neurosis results from a *loss* of predictability and control by someone that once had these.

The looming vulnerability model can also be related to the cognitive formulation of anxiety that Beck and his collaborators (e.g., Beck, 1976; Beck, Emery, & Greenberg, 1985; Clark & Beck, 2010) have proposed and revised. For example, in the first stage of Clark and Beck's reformulated cognitive model, the stimulus activates an innate early warning detection system (or "Orienting Mode") for threat. Simultaneously with the orienting mode, a "Primal Threat Mode" is activated that is associated with a variety of threat schemas. The perception of looming vulnerability would be expected to trigger this step of Clark and Beck's model because, as we saw, perceptions of physical approach movement are an ecologically fundamental warning signal that has been repeatedly demonstrated on a species-wide basis in humans and other animals (see Chap. 2).

Consequently, perceptions of the dynamism of approaching, growing threats would be expected to activate the primal threat mode and all its attendant threat schemas. More specifically, such perceptions would activate danger schemas that would lead individuals to experience increases in (1) threatening automatic thoughts and images, and (2) cognitive processing errors that exaggerate the imminence, probability, and severity of potential threats. Likewise, taking the theoretical logic of Clark and Beck's (2011) model into account, perceptions of dynamic growing threat would also activate the person's self-protective responses such as fight or

flight, freezing, or fainting, as well as ineffective defensive responses such as worry and thought suppression.

Notably, a meta-analysis that was conducted by Robert Beck and Perkins (2001) failed to support Beck's core cognitive specificity formulation. Contrary to the cognitive specificity formulation, their analysis indicated that threat cognitions were no more linked to anxiety than depression. As will be seen later (Chaps. 5 and 9), incorporating dynamic components to threat might help to enhance cognitive specificity to anxiety as well as improve knowledge of cognitive vulnerability. In addition, while Clark and Beck emphasized the role of fixed (static) beliefs about threat in enduring danger schemas, incorporating cognitions relating to perceptions of the dynamism and rapid dynamic gains of threats may help to pinpoint significant facets of cognitive vulnerability not captured by other cognitive constructs.

Finally, the looming vulnerability model also has points of correspondence with Gray's bio-behavioral model (Gray, 1982, 1987; Gray and McNaughton, 2000). Grey stated that lower anxiety occurs when individuals have stable "working models" of their expectations about the environment. Anxiety results when it is difficult to maintain these stable working models. The main idea is that in a dynamic environment where stimuli are changing, it is harder to maintain stable models of expectations than in one where stimuli are static. Furthermore, Gray's model states that novel stimuli, which are unfamiliar and unpredictable, activate the behavioral inhibition system in anxiety. Because rapid dynamic gains and movement make it harder for a person to maintain stable working models of expectations, such factors should increase the perceived novelty and unpredictability of the environment. Within the internal logic of Gray's model, we could expect that this would make habituation to threatening stimuli more difficult (see also Riskind, 1997).

Summary and Conclusions

As we have shown, the looming vulnerability model postulates that perceptions and simulations of the dynamism of rapidly growing threat play a prime role in the core processes in anxiety. These core processes include threat processing in attention, memory, and appraisal, as well as in neural defense systems and physiological responses, emotional response, and defensive behavioral reactions to threat.

In the next chapter, we will look much more closely at the implications of this new perspective for understanding the threat appraisal process.

We further suggest that the perception or expectation that threat is dynamically growing and advancing is a key factor determining its consequent repercussions. If a potentially emergent threat is perceived as unchanging, unmoving and static, and unlikely to further advance, it becomes less relevant. Thus, it becomes less likely to be prioritized in information processing, less likely to produce intense physiological and emotional response and less likely to set off defensive behaviors.

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