

## Confrontational and Preventative Policy Responses to Terrorism: Anger Wants a Fight and Fear Wants “Them” to Go Away

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This study used a nationally representative sample ( $N = 550$ ) to test factors that predicted support for a confrontational (an expanded War on Terror) and a defensive public policy (deporting various groups symbolically associated with the attackers) shortly after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Results indicate that anger but not fear predicted support for expanding the war beyond Afghanistan, and fear but not anger predicted support for deporting Arab Americans, Muslims, and first generation immigrants. Political orientation was weakly or not correlated with affective reactions and policy preferences, but right-wing authoritarianism (RWA) was a strong predictor of both. RWA had a direct and an indirect effect through anger on support for war and a direct and an indirect effect through fear on support for deportation. Implications are discussed.

People responded to the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon with a host of emotions. Public opinion polls found that 65% of Americans reported feeling angry, 27% reported feeling worried, and 22% reported feeling ashamed in the weeks following the attacks (T. W. Smith, Rasinski, & Toce, 2001). The emotional reactions people had to the attacks had a number of important psychological consequences. For example, people who responded with greater anger were more optimistic about the future, perceived less risk of events ranging from catching the flu to another terrorist attack, and had few or no plans to take precautionary measures regarding these risks compared with those who were less angry (Lerner, Gonzalez, Small, & Fischhoff, 2003). Anger was also associated with increased out-group derogation and confrontational responses, such as reporting having said, “we should just nuke them,” following the attacks, and anger was indirectly related to reduced political tolerance of Arab Americans and other groups (Skitka, Bauman, & Mullen, 2004). In contrast, those who reported greater fear responded with more pessimism about the future, higher perceived risk of events ranging from catching the flu to another terrorist

attack, and increased plans to take precautionary measures to combat these risks (Lerner et al., 2003).

In summary, anger and fear appeared to lead to different kinds of consequences following the 9/11 attacks. Other research has found similar discrete effects of anger and fear on the propensity to respond to conflict by respectively seeking confrontation versus avoiding it (e.g., Mackie, Devos, & Smith, 2000; E.R. Smith, 1993, 1999). Although political theorists have proposed that a tendency to respond to events with anger or fear might explain things such as authoritarian aggression (e.g., Altemeyer, 1988), little previous research has explored whether differences in anger and fear might account for political or ideological differences in the degree that people support more confrontational or prevention-oriented public policies following a major threat (e.g., support for a military response, deporting potentially threatening out-groups, or both).

The goals of this article therefore are to (a) extend intergroup emotion and appraisal tendency theories to explain support for an increased military response, deportation of various groups, or both in reaction to the 9/11 terrorist attacks; and (b) explore whether differences in anger and fear help to explain why those on the political left and right were relatively divided about whether to respond to the attacks with military confrontation or by bolstering the safety of the home front (e.g., Sadler, Lineberger, Correll, & Park, 2005).

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## INTERGROUP EMOTION THEORY AND APPRAISAL TENDENCY THEORY

Intergroup emotion theory (IET; E. R. Smith, 1993, 1999) predicts that people's appraisals of intergroup conflict lead to discrete reactions of anger and fear that in turn shape their behavioral intentions toward out-groups. More specifically, appraisals of in-group strength lead people to respond to intergroup conflict with anger and confrontation, whereas appraisals of in-group weakness lead people to respond to intergroup conflict with fear and avoidance (E. R. Smith, 1993, 1999). Laboratory studies have supported IET predictions. For example, in one study, anger predicted confrontation, whereas fear predicted avoidance of an insulting out-group member (Mackie et al., 2000)

Although traditional work on emotional appraisal, such as research based on IET, focuses on how people's cognitive appraisals influence their emotions (e.g., C. A. Smith & Ellsworth, 1985), recent research on appraisal tendency theory (ATT) finds that discrete emotions can be both a cause and a consequence of cognitive appraisal (Lerner et al., 2003; Lerner & Keltner, 2000, 2001). For example, anger predicts more optimistic appraisals, whereas fear predicts more pessimistic appraisals of risk (Lerner & Keltner, 2000; Lerner et al., 2003). A now large body of research supports the ATT prediction that discrete emotions color people's subsequent judgments and behaviors across a wide range of contexts (e.g., Bodenhausen, Sheppard, & Kramer, 1994; DeSteno, Petty, Wegener, & Rucker, 2000; Keltner, Ellsworth, & Edwards, 1993; Lerner & Keltner, 2000; Lerner et al., 2003), including policy preferences following the 9/11 terrorist attacks (e.g., Lerner et al., 2003; Sadler et al., 2005; Skitka et al., 2004).

Regardless of which comes first—cognitive appraisal or affect—the IET and the ATT prediction that anger and fear affect people's judgment and decision making in general, and their political judgment and decision making in particular, has considerable support. For example, anger is associated with approach motivation and a promotion regulatory focus (Amodio, Shah, Sigelman, Brazy, & Harmon-Jones, 2004; Harmon-Jones & Sigelman, 2001) and was a strong predictor of support for a military response to the 9/11 attacks (Sadler et al., 2005). In a related vein, fear and anxiety predicted people's reactions to the 1991 Persian Gulf War and predicted a tendency to flip from support to opposition to the war over time. Those who became more afraid and anxious as the war proceeded were more likely to change their mind and reverse their support for the war than those whose fear remained the same or decreased (Marcus, Neumann, & Mackuen, 2000).

Taken together, anger and fear may have quite different associations with the kinds of policy positions that people adopted in response to the 9/11 attacks. In particular, both IET and ATT suggest that the degree to which people felt that the United States should respond with confrontation (a more promotion and approach-oriented response) should be more

strongly predicted by anger, whereas the degree to which people felt that the United States should respond with efforts to prevent future attacks should be more strongly predicted by fear. Although these are relatively straightforward hypotheses, there are some reasons to believe that the tendency to respond with greater anger or fear and the subsequent effects of anger and fear following a threatening event like a terrorist attack may be differently experienced as a function of the political orientation or ideology of the perceiver.

## IDEOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES IN SUPPORT FOR WAR AND OTHER POLICY RESPONSES

People higher in RWA<sup>1</sup> and on the political right tend to be higher in pro-war sentiment than those low in RWA or on the political left across a number of different contexts and in response to various different threats (e.g., Cohrs & Moschner, 2002; Doty, Winter, Peterson, & Kemmelmeier, 1997; Granberg & Corrigan, 1972; Izzett, 1971). Not surprisingly, people higher in RWA and on the political right more strongly supported a military response following the 9/11 attacks than those lower in RWA or on the political left (Henderson-King, Henderson-King, Bolea, Koches, & Kauffman, 2004; Moore, 2002).

In short, there are clear connections between RWA and political orientation and a tendency to either support or oppose military responses to perceived threats. IET and ATT provide theoretical accounts for why this might be the case. People on the political left and right may be more inclined to respond to threatening situations with different levels of anger and fear, and these affective reactions in turn may shape their policy preferences. Consistent with this idea, evidence suggests that there are close ties between political ideology and tendencies to respond to events with different kinds of affect and related appraisals. For example, consistent with Tomkin's (1965) ideoaffective script theory, people on the political right have a lower threshold for experiencing negative emotion than those on the left (e.g., Van Heil & Kossowska, 2006). Although Van Heil and Kossowska (2006) did not examine discrete forms of negative emotion, they found that people higher in RWA endorsed negative mood items more strongly and exhibited more outward displays of negative emotion than those low in RWA.

In a related vein, higher levels of RWA tend to be associated with increased fears about a world without rules, structure, or order, and these "fears of a dangerous world" mediate the effects of RWA on several dependent measures, including punitiveness and aggression (Altemeyer, 1988). However, it

<sup>1</sup>RWA is a syndrome of ideological attitudes, including a right-leaning or conservative political belief system, a belief in the importance of strong leaders and rules and a tendency to respond aggressively to those who disobey the leaders or the rules and are otherwise deemed to be nonnormative or conventional (e.g., Altemeyer, 1988).

is unclear whether these “fears” really reflect an affective response or a cognitive appraisal of danger and threat. If “fear of a dangerous world” reflects a cognitive appraisal, it might in turn arouse either anger or fear perhaps as a function of perceived in-group strength or weakness (E.R. Smith, 1993, 1999). Given that anger tends to have stronger ties than fear with confrontation and aggression in the face of conflict (e.g., Mackie et al., 2000), it seems quite plausible that anger, in addition to or instead of fear, drives the RWA tendency to respond to conflict with aggression.

Therefore, in addition to exploring whether anger and fear were differentially associated with support for different postattack public policies, a goal of the present research is to examine whether ideological differences in support for the war and for deporting various groups were mediated through anger, fear, or both, as IET would seem to predict. Before turning to the specifics of the study, a final point needs to be addressed. Specifically, there is not theoretical consensus about whether political conservatism and RWA are the same or different constructs.

#### RWA AND POLITICAL ORIENTATION: THE SAME THING?

There is some evidence that suggests that RWA and political conservatism may stem from the same latent construct (Forsyth, 1980; Raden, 1999; Saucier, 2000; Skitka, Mullen, Griffin, Hutchinson, & Chamberlin, 2002; Skitka & Tetlock, 1992, 1993). However, finding single-factor solutions of political orientation and RWA measures does not preclude the possibility of left-wing authoritarianism but may instead reflect the widespread reliance on college student samples, drawn from North American samples, and from a narrow band of time (the late 20th and early 21st century).

Other research that has used mostly Eastern European samples, for example, has indicated that political conservatism and RWA may be distinct rather than completely overlapping constructs. For example, extremists on both the left and the right have relatively similar psychological profiles that are different from those with more moderate political orientations or ideologies. Extremists on both the right and the left tend to (a) be more cognitively inflexible, rigid, and see issues in black and white rather than shades of gray; (b) have a greater investment in the status quo; and (c) be more prejudicial in their treatment of political opponents than are those whose beliefs are less extreme (e.g., Crowson, Thoma, & Hastevoold, 2005; Eysenck & Coulter, 1972; Krauss, 2002; Larsen, Groberg, & Simmons, 1993; McClosky & Chong, 1985; McFarland, Ageyev, & Abalakina-Paap, 1992). In summary, (a) evidence on the question of whether RWA and conservatism are essentially the same or different constructs is relatively mixed; (b) little research has explored whether political orientation and RWA have similar or different patterns of association with affective reactions to events such as

the 9/11 terrorist attacks; and (c) to the extent that there are politically patterned affective profiles, whether these differences in affective reactions can explain differences in policy preferences in ways predicted by IET and ATT.

One reason why there may be discrepancies between research conducted in the United States and in Canada and research conducted in Europe may be the greater tendency of researchers in the former context to rely on college student instead of community samples. Given that college students are less likely to have crystallized attitudes and do not have the same personal investment in the political system as do older adults (e.g., few college students pay much in the way of taxes), they may not be the best sample for testing hypotheses about political beliefs and attitudes (Sears, 1986). Therefore, one final goal of our study was to test our hypotheses with a nationally representative sample in the United States.

In summary, IET and ATT led to the hypotheses that (a) anger and fear would represent distinct reactions to the 9/11 attacks; (b) anger, but not fear, should predict people's support for expanding the war on terror beyond Afghanistan; and (c) fear, but not anger, should predict people's support for deporting groups that might be thought to pose a danger at home.

#### METHOD

##### Participants

The study sample was drawn from a panel of respondents maintained by Knowledge Networks (KN). KN recruits panel members by using random digit-dialing telephone selection methods, and the characteristics of the panel closely match those of the U. S. Census (see <http://www.knowledgenetworks.com/ganp/> for comparisons of the panel with current Census figures). Once panel members agree to participate, they are given a free interactive device to access the World Wide Web (e.g., a Web TV) and free Internet access in exchange for participation in regular surveys. About 50% of the panelists had no prior access to the Web before becoming KN members, so the KN panel is the only Web-enabled household panel that is truly representative of the American public.

##### Procedure

A random sample of panel members received a password-protected e-mail to alert them that they had a survey to complete that included a hyperlink that allowed them to initiate the survey with a mouse click. Participants could access each survey only once, and the survey was protected from nonpanel member access.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup>This survey was conducted as one part of a broader longitudinal panel design (see Skitka, Bauman, & Mullen, 2003, for additional details).

Participants were contacted on December 28, 2001 and were given until January 14, 2002 to respond. Of the participants, 550 responded with complete data, reflecting an 80% within-panel cooperation rate.

## Measures

**Anger.** Anger was assessed by asking respondents the degree to which they currently felt anger, outrage, and hatred in response to the terrorist attacks on 5-point radio button scales with the point labels of *not at all*, *slightly*, *moderately*, *much*, and *very much* that were scored from 1 to 5. Scores on these items were averaged, and high scores on this measure reflected greater anger ( $\alpha = .84$ ).

**Fear.** Fear was assessed by asking respondents the degree that they currently felt frightened, vulnerable, and confused in response to the terrorist attacks on 5-point radio button scales with the point labels of *not at all*, *slightly*, *moderately*, *much*, and *very much* that were scored from 1 to 5. Scores on these items were averaged, and high scores on this measure reflected greater anger ( $\alpha = .86$ ).

**RWA.** We used four items from Altemeyer's (1996) RWA scale as a short form measure of RWA. People were asked to indicate the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with the following items on 5-point scales with the point labels of *strongly agree*, *agree*, *neutral*, *disagree*, and *strongly disagree*: "Our country desperately needs a mighty leader who will do what has to be done to destroy the radical new ways and sinfulness that are ruining us;" "Our country will be great if we honor the way of our forefathers, do what authorities tell us, and get rid of the 'rotten apples' who are ruining everything;" "Our country will be destroyed someday if we do not smash the perversions eating away at our moral fiber and traditional beliefs;" "and "The way our country can get through future crises is to get back to our traditional values, put tough leaders in power, and silence trouble makers spreading bad ideas." Participants responded to these items on 5-point scales with the point labels *strongly agree*, *moderately agree*, *neutral*, *moderately disagree*, and *strongly disagree*. These items were reversed scored so that higher scores on this measure reflected higher levels of RWA, and they were averaged to create a single index of RWA ( $\alpha = .89$ ).

**Political orientation.** We measured political orientation with the item, "To what extent do you generally consider

yourself to be liberal or conservative?" Participants responded on a 7-point scale with the point labels of *very liberal*, *moderately liberal*, *slightly liberal*, *neither liberal nor conservative*, *slightly conservative*, *moderately conservative*, and *very conservative*.<sup>3</sup>

**Support for war.** A single item measure assessed support for expanding the War on Terrorism beyond Afghanistan (the Iraq War was looming but had not yet occurred when we collected these data). Specifically, participants were asked the degree that they agreed or disagreed with the following statement: "The War on Terrorism should be expanded to Iraq and any other country suspected of harboring or supporting terrorists" on a 5-point scale with the point labels of *strongly agree*, *agree*, *neutral*, *disagree*, and *strongly disagree*. This item was reverse scored so that higher values represented stronger support for expanding the War on Terrorism.

**Support for deporting Arab Americans, Muslims, or first generation immigrants.** Participants were also asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the idea that certain groups (Arab Americans, Muslims, or first generation immigrants) should be deported. One-third of the sample was randomly assigned to consider this question with reference to each of these groups and responded on a 5-point scale with the point labels *strongly agree*, *moderately agree*, *neutral*, *moderately disagree*, and *strongly disagree*. This item was reversed scored so that higher scores reflected stronger support for deportation. No differences in relative support for deportation emerged as a function of target group,  $F(1, 547) < 1$ , despite more than ample statistical power to detect even a small effect. Similarly, no effects involving this variable were found with the study variables reported here. In the interests of brevity, we therefore report results collapsing across group condition.

**Profile information.** In addition to the measures included on our surveys, KN also conducts a standard background profile of each of its respondents when they agree to become members of the panel; that is, KN collects information about each respondent's age, education, income, and so on. This background information was therefore available to allow us to explore the generalizability of our findings across different demographic groups and as control variables to allow for a clearer picture of the relationships between variables of greater theoretical interest.

## RESULTS

The results section is organized as follows: (a) tests of whether anger and fear were discrete emotional responses to the attacks, (b) descriptions of bivariate correlations, (c)

<sup>3</sup>KN collects political orientation as part of a public affairs profile on a rolling basis with new panelists. Almost half of our participants, however, had not yet completed the public affairs profile survey as of our fielding date. Because of the large amount of missing data on the profile variable, we used our second survey measure instead.

more controlled tests of hypotheses that use (d) standardized multiple regression, and tests of our mediational hypotheses. Results support the hypotheses that anger would be more predictive of support for war than would fear and that fear would be a stronger predictor of support for deportation than was anger post-9/11. Other results support the conclusion that political orientation and RWA appear to be more different than similar constructs and that the effects of RWA were stronger and more consistent than were effects of political orientation on support for war and deportation. The effects of RWA (but not political orientation) were partially mediated through anger and fear. Specifically, RWA had direct and indirect effects on support for war, with a portion of the effects mediated through anger but not through fear. RWA also had direct and indirect effects on support for deportation, but in this case the indirect effect was mediated through fear but not through anger. More specific detail is provided in the following paragraphs.

### Discrete Emotional Reactions to the Attacks

Of first interest was whether participants had discrete emotional reactions to the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Results indicate that anger and fear were distinguishable reactions to the attacks. A principal axis factor analysis with a varimax rotation conducted on the anger and fear items yielded a two factor solution (eigenvalues of 4.47 and 2.43, respectively), with the fear items loading on the first factor and the anger items loading on the second. All factor loadings were above .70. Therefore, consistent with theories of affective appraisal (e.g., Frijda, 1986), anger and fear emerged as discernible reactions to the terrorist attacks rather than as generalized negative affect. Factor scores calculated with the regression method were used as operationalizations of anger and fear to ensure maximum independence of these variables.

### General Results

As can be seen in Table 1, various background variables were associated with the variables of core interest to this study. For example, females were higher in fear than were males; greater age was associated with greater political conservatism, anger, and fear in response to the attacks as well as weaker support for deportation; lower levels of education were associated with higher levels of RWA, anger, fear, support for the war, and support for deportation. Lower levels of income were associated with higher levels of RWA, greater fear (but not anger), and stronger support of the war, but income was not related to support for deportation.

### Results Controlling for Background Variables

To test the hypotheses to get a clearer picture of the relationships between the variables of greatest theoretical interest, we conducted standardized multiple regressions that entered gender, age, education, income, political orientation, RWA, anger, and fear to predict support for the war and deportation. As can be seen in Table 2, when controlling for other background variables, RWA, anger, and to a much lesser extent political orientation, explained significant unique variance in support for the war. As RWA, anger, and political conservatism increased, so too did support for the war. Only RWA and fear explained significant unique variance in support for deportation. Higher levels of RWA and fear were associated with stronger support for deporting Arab Americans, Muslims, and first generation immigrants. In summary, these results provide strong support for the IET and ATT hypotheses that anger would be a stronger predictor of war than would fear and that fear would be a stronger predictor of deportation than would anger. Results also support the conclusion that the effects of RWA and political orientation were different

TABLE 1  
Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations of Study Variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<i>M</i>	1.52	46.92	4.16	10.66	4.17	3.31	0.00	0.00	4.05	2.17
<i>SD</i>	0.50	15.33	1.53	3.59	1.61	1.10	0.91	0.92	1.04	1.08
1. Gender	—									
2. Age	.13**	—								
3. Education	-.02	-.03	—							
4. Income	-.05	.08	.29**	—						
5. Political orientation	-.03	.09*	-.01	.09*	—					
6. RWA	.04	.07	-.29**	-.12**	.17**	—				
7. Anger	-.02	.21**	-.08*	-.16**	.19**	.08	—			
8. Fear	.23**	.06*	-.15**	-.08*	-.16**	.19**	.08	—		
9. Support for war	-.08	.02	-.17**	-.02	.19**	.37**	.34**	.02	—	
10. Support for deportation	.05	-.12**	-.34**	-.16**	.01	.44**	.10*	.19**	.24**	—

Note. *N* = 550. Gender was measured 1 = male, 2 = female; education was measured in 9 categories, and a score of 4 reflected “some college” but no degree; household income was measured with 17 intervals, and a mean of 10 equated to \$35,000–\$39,000 annual household income. Higher values of political orientation reflected greater conservatism. Anger and fear were factor scores. RWA = right-wing authoritarianism.

\**p* < .05. \*\**p* < .01.

TABLE 2  
Standard Multiple Regressions and Standardized Betas Predicting Support for War and Deportation

Characteristic	Support for War	Support for Deportation
Gender	-.12**	.04
Age	-.05	-.16**
Education	-.12**	-.21**
Income	.02	-.03
RWA	.20**	.37**
Political orientation	.07*	.04
Anger	.55**	.04
Fear	.04	.08*
R <sup>2</sup>	.46**	.28**

Note. RWA = right-wing authoritarianism.  
\**p* < .05. \*\**p* < .01.

and that the effects of the former were stronger than the latter in the context studied here. We turn next to exploring whether affect mediated the effects of political orientation and RWA on support for the war, deportation, or both.

### Testing Mediation Hypotheses

Evidence in support of mediation exists when four conditions are satisfied: (a) the predictor (e. g., support for war or deportation), (b) the predictor is also correlated with the proposed mediator, (c) the proposed mediator is correlated with the outcome variable, and finally, (d) the effect of the predictor on the outcome variable is reduced if not eliminated when controlling for the proposed mediator (Baron & Kenny, 1986).

Correlational analyses indicated that two viable mediation models satisfied conditions (a), (b), and (c), that is, that anger might mediate the effects of RWA on support for expanding the war, and that fear might mediate the effects of RWA on support for deportation.

Path analyses were conducted to test the two potentially viable mediational models discussed above, and to explore whether the potentially viable mediators met the remaining requirement of (d), that is, that the direct effects of RWA would be reduced or eliminated when controlling for anger when predicting support for deportation. These path analyses were conducted controlling for the effects of gender, age, education, income, and political orientation.

As can be seen in Figure 1, anger partially mediated the effects of RWA on support for expanding the war. RWA was associated with greater postattack anger that was in turn associated with greater support for expanding the war on terror beyond Afghanistan. Controlling for anger significantly reduced, but did not fully eliminate, the direct effect of RWA on support for war (Sobel test = 3.80, *p* < .001). This result means that a proportion of the effect of RWA on support for the war was direct, but a significant proportion of the effect was mediated through anger.

As can also be seen in Figure 1, fear partially mediated the effects of RWA on support for deporting various groups. RWA was associated with greater postattack fear that was in turn associated with greater support for deporting groups such as Arab Americans or Muslims. Controlling for fear significantly reduced, but did not fully eliminate, the direct effect of RWA on support for deporting these groups (Sobel test = 2.13, *p* < .05). This result means that a proportion of the effect of RWA on support for deportation was direct, but a significant proportion of the effect was mediated through fear.

In summary, anger, but not fear, partially mediated the effects of RWA on a more approach and confrontational response to the 9/11 attacks, specifically in support for expanding the War on Terror to include targets besides Afghanistan. Fear, but not anger, partially mediated the effects of RWA on a more prevention oriented response to the 9/11 terrorist attacks, that is support for deporting various groups that may be thought to pose a threat, such as Arab Americans.

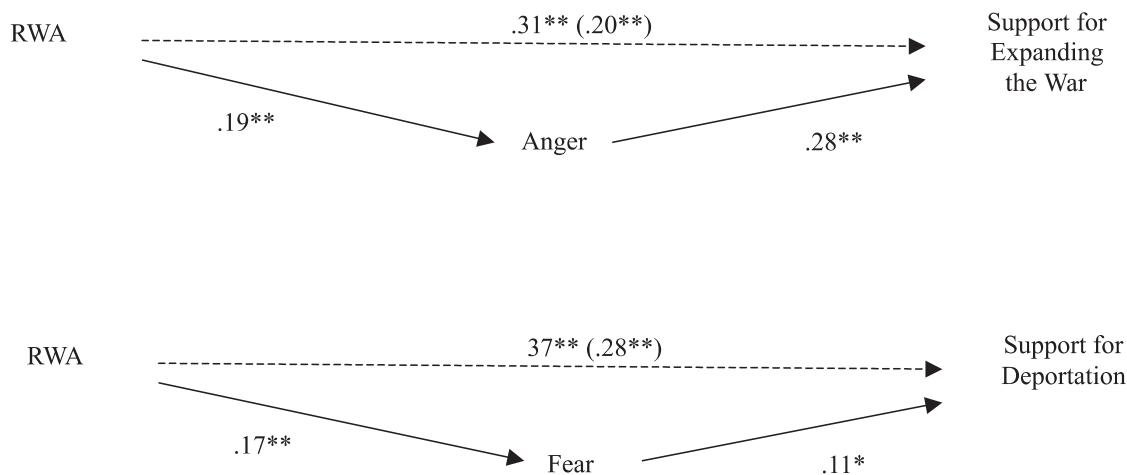


FIGURE 1 Path models of the effects of RWA on support for expanding the War on Terror and deportation through fear. All effects were calculated controlling for political orientation, gender, education, income, and age. Path coefficients are standardized regression weights.

## DISCUSSION

The goal of the research presented here was to further explore the role of discrete emotion in predicting people's intergroup attitudes as reflected by their policy preferences. In particular, we were interested in whether anger and fear were discrete emotional reactions to the 9/11 terrorist attacks and whether these emotional reactions had implications for how people wanted the United States to respond. Through the use of IET and ATT, we predicted that because anger leads people to be more tolerant of risk (Lerner et al., 2003) and eager to confront sources of threat (Mackie et al., 2000) that anger would be more strongly related to support for war than support for deporting various groups symbolically associated with the attacks. Furthermore, we predicted that because fear leads people to be risk averse (Lerner et al., 2003) and eager to avoid sources of threat (Mackie et al., 2000) that fear would be more strongly related to support for deporting various groups than support for war. The results support these hypotheses.

We also had reasons to believe that people on the political right and left might be differentially inclined to respond to the terrorist attacks with anger and fear and that differences in affective reactions might explain why those on the right and the left were divided in their support for policies such as whether to expand the war on terror or to deport various groups post-9/11. Considerable theory and research suggests that people on the political right have lower thresholds for experiencing negative affect compared with those on the left. Moreover, authoritarian aggression has close ties to perceptions of threat and also, presumably, to anger and fear. Of additional interest is whether political orientation and RWA were functionally the same or different constructs, with the same or different patterns of association with anger, fear, and post-9/11 policy preferences. Our results revealed that, at least in the context and with the sample and measures studied here, political orientation and RWA are relatively uncorrelated and are therefore distinct. Moreover, political orientation and RWA had different ties to both emotion and policy preferences. Greater political conservatism explained unique variance in increased support for the war, but it was unrelated to support for deportation when controlling for background characteristics such as age, gender, education, and income. Political orientation was uncorrelated with post-9/11 anger, and interestingly, negatively correlated with fear. Greater political liberalism, not conservatism, was associated with responding to the attacks with greater fear. Fear, however, did not mediate the effect of political orientation on support for expanding the War on Terror.

The effects of RWA were stronger and more consistent than the effects of political orientation. Higher levels of RWA were associated with greater post-9/11 anger, fear, and support for war and deporting various groups. Other results indicate that RWA had a direct and an indirect effect mediated through anger (but not fear) on support for war and a direct

and an indirect effect mediated through fear (but not anger) on support for deportation.

In summary, our results are consistent with the IET and ATT hypotheses that anger would be associated with more confrontational policy preferences and fear would be associated with more defensive and prevention-oriented policy preferences following the 9/11 attacks. Moreover, anger and fear partially accounted for the relationship between RWA and post-9/11 support for war and deporting groups symbolically associated with the attacks. These results represent an important extension of current theorizing about the role of emotion in interpersonal and intergroup relations by testing hypotheses in the context of a real-world threat with a national sample and with policy issues of considerable importance. Moreover, the present study extends IET and ATT to make predictions about politically patterned individual differences in support for more confrontational versus defensive public policies that we hypothesized could also be explained by differences in the tendency to respond to threats with anger or with fear. Future research should further explore the degree that discrete emotion, in addition to cognition, can sometimes explain left-right ideological differences in policy positions.

The pattern of results observed as a function of RWA deserves further comment. People higher in RWA responded with higher levels of both anger and fear. Moreover, the strength of these reactions predicted stronger endorsement of confrontational and defensive responses to the attacks, respectively. In other words, people higher in RWA did not appear to prefer one policy response to the attacks more than another, but, instead, they were equally invested in expanding the War on Terror and bolstering the security of the home front by deporting groups that might be perceived as posing a threat of future attacks.

The finding that those higher in RWA responded with what appears to be stronger confrontational and defensive responses to the 9/11 attacks is consistent with value protection theories that posit that people are intuitive prosecutors who respond to moral transgressions with a strong sense of motivated arousal and distress (Skitka & Mullen, 2002; Tetlock, 2002; Tetlock, Kirtel, Elson, Green, & Lerner, 2000). According to these models, aversive arousal or distress prompts responses designed to both punish norm violators and to bolster the moral perimeter against future threat. When a threat to people's sense of moral order is sufficiently severe, people—especially those who are already prone to the prosecutorial mindset, such as those high in RWA—are likely to use seemingly redundant strategies to alleviate their distress (what Tetlock et al., 2000 termed an *overkill response*). In other words, they engage in both offensive and defensive reactions to severe threats rather than using only one strategy or another to alleviate their distress.

Our results are consistent with value protection theories, but they also suggest that it is not just a generalized sense of aversive arousal that motivates confrontation versus shoring

up one's defensive perimeter. Instead, it is the combination of discrete feelings of both anger and fear that prompt overkill reactions to threats to people's worldviews. When a threat arouses high levels of both of these emotions, people take a multipronged punitive and defensive prosecutorial approach to alleviate their distress, especially if they are high in RWA.

In addition, although our results were consistent with previous laboratory research that tested the effects of anger and fear in intergroup settings, there are also some interesting differences worth noting. For example, Mackie et al. (2000) found that fear led to avoidance of an insulting out-group member. Our finding that fear predicted support for deporting potentially threatening out-groups can be easily interpreted as avoidance, but it seems to be quite different in scale and perhaps even substance from avoiding a personal encounter with an out-group member. Even though supporting the idea of deporting various out-groups seems to be much more extreme than simply avoiding personal contact with an insulting out-group member (e.g., the former suggests a willingness to make what would be potentially hundreds of thousands of Type I errors), both reactions may still be motivated by the same underlying emotion or motives. In short, our results are suggestive that passive avoidance may be only one intergroup strategy people use when an out-group threat arouses fear. It may be useful to incorporate broader predictions into IET, such as the ATT connections between fear and risk aversion and subsequent increases in risk prevention, in future IET-inspired research. Another difference is that the out-groups studied in the lab tend to have very defined boundaries. One potentially disturbing aspect of the current study was that our results suggest that Americans had (and may still have) very broad definitions of the term *out-group* when thinking about appropriate policy responses to the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Although average levels of support for deporting various groups was relatively low (on average, participants moderately disagreed with the idea), people higher in fear nonetheless equally endorsed the idea of deporting Arab Americans, Muslims, and first generation immigrants. Similarly, average levels of support for war were relatively high, despite that by the time our data were collected, news reports had made it quite plain that Iraq was not involved in the attacks. In short, our results suggest that people used very broad conceptions of who was the out-group when responding after the 9/11 attacks. The effects of anger and fear appear to spill over to affect not only a specific threatening out-group but also other groups that are at best only symbolically associated with the source of threat or conflict. One goal for future research would therefore be to systematically explore whether intergroup conflict, anger, and fear, lead people to expand their conception of out-group boundaries and therefore who they might target for potential confrontational wrath (e.g., war) or defensive maneuvers (e.g., deportation).

Taken together, our findings point to a number of areas for future research. People's current and shifting positions on the Iraq War, voting intentions in the looming midterm elections,

feelings about a constitutional amendment that could ban gay marriage, and a host of other issues are ripe for testing (a) further implications of IET and ATT, (b) the generalizability of the pattern of results we observed in the present study across other issues, (c) new hypotheses that integrate our growing knowledge about the full range of effects of anger and fear, and, finally, (d) the degree that responses to conflict and threat from one group source spillover to affect people's responses to other groups only symbolically associated with the initial source of threat. In summary, research that tests the intergroup and interpersonal consequences of anger, fear, and other forms of discrete emotion represent exciting areas for future research.

## CAVEATS

Although our findings are provocative and interesting, we of course acknowledge that our interpretation of the present results requires making some assumptions. For example, one could reasonably argue that support for war might be motivated by defensive and preventative concerns as much as it is by confrontational or punitive desires. Similarly, a desire to deport various groups could be motivated by a wish to collectively punish norm violators (e.g., because the terrorists were Muslim, punish all Muslims). We did not test the degree that our participants perceived support for war, for example, as a more confrontational and punitive response than a defensive and protective one. However, on the basis of the correlations of support for war and for deporting various groups not only with anger and with fear but also with other variables in our broader data set, such as general levels of punitiveness (e.g., self-reports of having said something like "we should just nuke them," after the attacks) or concerns about safety and prevention of risk (e.g., people's degree of concern about personal safety in tall buildings) suggests that our characterization is reasonably accurate.

Our approach also assumes that differences in affective reactions shape policy preferences, rather than the converse, and that individual differences in RWA, for example, "cause" people to have different affective reactions rather than differences in affective reactions causing people's endorsement of authoritarian attitudes. Because our study was a correlational field study, we cannot determine which variables in fact cause which. Regardless of which comes first, we think the pattern of associations between affect, RWA, and policy preferences are interesting and important. Moreover, even though field studies have some limitations, they also have some strengths. For example, field studies demonstrate the usefulness of social psychological theorizing to help make sense of people's reactions to real-world events and provide important tests of both the validity and generalizability of theories developed and initially tested in more controlled and artificial settings. The establishment of multimethod convergence of results across both lab and field studies, and across more ho-



mogeneous and heterogeneous samples, provides the strongest tests of theories and the greatest advances in knowledge.

### CONCLUSION

Although tragic, the 9/11 terrorist attacks provided an important opportunity to study social psychological phenomena and to test and extend current theories. One major lesson that has come out of social psychological research conducted around the 9/11 attacks is that affect matters. The results of the research presented here, for example, found that anger and fear have important and discrete ties to confrontational versus defensive public policy positions. Similarly, other research found that immediate postattack anger and fear were associated with a host of social psychological processes (e.g., value affirmation, in-group enhancement, out-group derogation) that subsequently predicted people's political tolerance months later (Skitka et al., 2004). In summary, events like the 9/11 terrorist attacks put strong emotions into play, and these emotions had wide-ranging and important implications (see also Lerner, Small, & Lowenstein, 2004; Sadler et al., 2005). Exploring the role of discrete emotion sheds important new light into understanding people's thought processes and choices in general, their reactions to terrorism and policy preferences in particular, as well as some of the similarities and differences between political orientation and RWA.

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