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The "War on Terror," Mortality Salience, and American Prejudice Before and After the 2013 Boston Marathon Bombings

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THE "WAR ON TERROR," MORTALITY SALIENCE, AND AMERICAN PREJUDICE BEFORE AND AFTER THE 2013 BOSTON MARATHON BOMBINGS

by

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(Under the Direction of Michael Nielsen)

ABSTRACT

The United States' counterterrorism efforts have been framed in various ways in the media and politics, and each framing metaphor varies in its ability to accurately describe counterterrorism (Kruglanski, Crenshaw, Post, & Victoroff, 2007). Each frame also may have effects on the way the public perceives, responds to, and finds acceptable in counterterrorism. One common framing metaphor in American politics is counterterrorism as a "War on Terror." Terror Management Theory (TMT) predicts that reminding people of mortality has predictable effects on their opinions and behavior. This study seeks to test empirically whether framing counterterrorism as a "War on Terror" acts as a mortality salience prime, and causes participants to be more likely to support freedom-restricting policies, including policies that target Arabs and Muslims. The 2013 Boston Marathon bombings occurred in the middle of data collection, allowing us to see whether this terrorist event strengthened mortality salience effects. A sample of 120 undergraduates was surveyed. Results were inconsistent with our hypothesis, leading us to conclude that the "War on Terror" frame did not act as a mortality salience prime in this sample. However, it was found that using the "War on Terror" and law enforcement counterterrorism metaphors significantly decreased participants' support for freedom-restricting policies.

INDEX WORDS: Terrorism, Counterterrorism, Terror Management Theory, Social Psychology, Political Psychology, Mortality Salience, Boston Marathon Bombings

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my beautiful, patient, ever-giving wife Allison. Let's face it: she deserves most of the credit for this.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary Events

Writing after the 2013 Boston Marathon bombings, Keith Wagstaff at *The Week* suggested that the Boston bombings may resurrect the "War on Terror" in American political and media discourse, citing increased references to that effect at the *Wall Street Journal*, *National Review*, *Politico*, and other major news outlets (Wagstaff, 2013). He remarked that the results of such rhetoric may not be confined to the written word, because calling the bombing an act of war may have led to Dzhokhar Tsarnaev to be tried as an enemy combatant. However, such rhetoric has been employed for decades now, and the effects of calling counterterrorism a "War on Terror" may have other long-lasting and unforeseen consequences that might be studied empirically.

A year after the Beirut bombings against Americans in 1983, Ronald Reagan sought to pass legislation that would allow the government to take stronger measures against suspected terrorists, such as freezing their assets. In their attempts to do so, Reagan called their struggle a "war against terrorism" (Silver, 2010). Days after the 9/11 attacks, George Bush was criticized in the European media for his off-hand remarks that the struggle against terrorists was a "crusade." This criticism was due to the perceived links between subsequent Western action in the Middle East and the Crusades between Europe and Islam. In that same remark, Bush used the phrase "War on Terror" for the first time, a phrase that was used throughout the Bush Administration's eight years in office (Ford, 2001). In their analysis of the metaphors used in counterterrorism, Kruglanski, Crenshaw, Post, and Victoroff (2007) provided four possible metaphors used in public and political discourse

and their potential psychological effects. Namely, these frames are 1) counterterrorism as war ("War on Terror"), 2) counterterrorism as law enforcement, 3) counterterrorism as the healing of a social disease, and 4) counterterrorism as a prejudice-reducing mechanism.

The authors suggested that each metaphor has its strengths and weaknesses in terms of how accurately they portray the realities of counterterrorism, and they also point out that, far from being simple analogies that describe decision-making, these metaphors have concrete effects on the way conflicts are framed, and thus limit the range of solutions that are deemed acceptable in public policy. Running parallel to this discussion, there has been a dialogue on how the current state of counterterrorism has been framed in American discourse (Richardson, 2007). Early framing research in psychology (Tversky & Kahneman, 1981) has long shown that the way situations and questions are posed in the mass media, politics, and research can have systematic and predictable effects on public opinion.

Therefore, we should expect to be able to make concrete empirical predictions, consistent with previous research, regarding the ways that framing counterterrorism in the media and public discourse might affect perceptions, cognition, and opinions in those exposed to them. However, since Kruglanski et al. (2007) wrote their review, there has been no psychological research that tests their ideas. This experiment is the first to seek to understand the effect of counterterrorism frames on participants in a psychology laboratory.

In post-9/11 America, an ongoing concern has been how to accurately identify potential terrorists on U.S. soil without violating the human rights of innocent citizens. One outgrowth of this issue has been the disproportionate targeting of Middle Easterners and Muslims by law enforcement and other authorities (Ward, 2001). Therefore, I have

identified freedom-restricting law enforcement policies, such as ethnic and religious profiling, as dependent measures, in order to determine the extent to which frames may affect people's opinions of these controversial activities.

I have also sought to identify conditions under which people might react differently to different frames. For instance, right-wing authoritarianism (RWA) has been linked to more hostile reactions towards immigrants in mortality salience conditions, while low-RWA participants react by embracing immigrants in mortality salience conditions (Weise, Arciszewski, Verlhiac, Pyszczynski, & Greenberg, 2012). Mortality salience is a concept central to Terror Management Theory, which predicts that reminders of death and mortality can cause systematic changes in human cognition and behavior. My hypotheses examines the possibility that framing counterterrorism as a "War on Terror" might activate mortality salience in experimental participants.

If successful, this research could start a new line of studies that could aid policymakers and members of the press as they seek to most effectively frame the counterterrorism discourse. It could also result in a greater optimization of media frames in order to avoid the potential unfair targeting of innocent religious and ethnic minorities in the United States.

Psychological Framing

Various suggestions have been made by psychologists seeking to determine the mechanisms through which framing has an effect. Nelson, Oxley, and Clawson (1997) suggest that framing cannot be considered simply a type of persuasion, as it is understood in communications research, nor can it be subsumed under schema theories. As such, it represents a unique phenomenon that must be studied on its own terms.

Recent research in political science has led to the development of two conceptual categories of media frames. "Equivalency frames" are two different yet equivalent ways of saying the same thing (Druckman, 2004), such as when Kahneman and Tversky (1984) described two ways to combat an Asian disease: one that will save 200 out of 600 people on one hand, or another that will cause 400 out of 600 people to die. In each case, the actual number of deaths is equivalent, but one emphasizes the lives lost and the other emphasizes the lives saved. The much more common type of framing is when the media makes some facts and perspectives more salient than others, out of the many available facts they could possibly present. These are called "issue frames" (Slothuus, 2008).

Slothuus (2008) suggests that different issue frames not only make certain aspects of an issue salient, but also contain evaluative content that defines problematic aspects of the issue, identifies causes and moral judgments, and endorses remedies. Thus, issue framing works through two pathways: making certain aspects of an issue salient, and implying evaluative content in an issue. For a more recent overview of psychological framing research, see de Vreese (2012). The different metaphors used by Kruglanski et al. (2007) are issue frames of the same phenomenon, because each metaphor emphasizes, or makes salient, different aspects of counterterrorism, and also de-emphasizes others, in ways that may shape how people see the problem and the solutions that they would be willing to accept. For instance, framing counterterrorism as a law enforcement mechanism emphasizes the fact that local and Federal law enforcement agencies are brought to identify terrorists, but de-emphasizes the international scale of terrorism.

Freedom-Restricting Policies

Another major concern after 9/11 in the United States and Europe is the extent to

which the public is willing to accept policies that restrict their freedoms in an attempt to make them safe. After the Twin Towers attacks, Arabs, Muslims, and Iranians were targeted disproportionately at airports for higher levels of scrutiny and searches (Ward, 2001). The counterterrorism metaphors described by Kruglanski et al. (2007) may therefore be studied in terms of their effects on people's opinions of freedom-restricting policies in the United States, especially in regards to religious and ethnic profiling.

Public perceptions of racial profiling in the context of law enforcement have been studied empirically. Weitzer and Tuch (2002) found that subjects' race and personal experience strongly predicted attitudes towards racial profiling, such that blacks and those who reported having previous experience with racial profiling were more likely to hold a negative opinion of profiling. Kim (2004) made a series of relevant findings regarding the opinion of profiling. In a study of research data taken just after 9/11, he found that, despite widespread official statements by American religious groups teaching that religious or racial profiling is morally unacceptable, Protestants, Catholics, and Jews were more likely to support racial profiling compared to nonreligious individuals. Kim also found that those who did not know a Muslim personally were significantly more likely to support law enforcement stopping and doing random searches of those who look Arab or Muslim. However, it is not known whether these results from just after 9/11 still apply more than a decade later.

Now that I have discussed how framing can affect how issues are perceived, I will discuss each of the frames in Kruglanski et al. (2007) and their possible psychological effects.

"War on Terror"

According to Kruglanski et al. (2007), framing the counterterrorism effort as a "War on Terror" casts the struggle as a fight between two polarized, entrenched camps that are easily identifiable. A war is totalistic and zero-sum, and there are two outcomes, namely winning and losing. At the end of a war, one side capitulates and fails to reach its objectives, and the other dominates and is able to dictate the terms of the victory. However, this metaphor misses important characteristics of the current struggle against terror. Terrorists do not make up an easily identifiable government or geographical entity that can be pointed out on a map. In fact, terrorist cells are increasingly scattered groups that often find one another online and in social networks across the world (Schmidle, 2010). After the Boston bombings, USA Today commented that the "War on Terror" had moved increasingly to the Internet, where a string of terrorists and would-be terrorists had been radicalized (Dastagir, 2013).

In addition, this war does not have a clearly defined end point or capitulation and will undoubtedly require sustained long-term action. For similar reasons, commentators on the so-called "war on drugs" have noted that counter-insurgency strategies used in previous war engagements are unlike those needed against Colombian cartels and drug lords, calling into question the usage of the word "war" at all (Banks & Sokolowski, 2009). Additionally, according to Franks & Shaw (2012), portraying the post-9/11 conflict as a "War on Terror" provides a convenient, though reductionist, frame for the media, but may result in ignoring more pressing international conflicts. Even the word "terror" is loaded and may not be accurate in describing wartime, because it is derived from an emotion, not any particular organization or strategy. This emotion, fear, is experienced not by the combatants or participants in the "War on Terror," but by the public.

When counterterrorism is framed as a "War on Terror," several effects may take place in consumers of that media. War is characterized by widespread killings, destruction, and death, and therefore using the phrase "War on Terror" might serve as a prime for mortality salience. Terror Management Theory (TMT) may help us gain insight into the effect of this type of political framing.

<div style="text-align:center">Terror Management Theory</div>

The theoretical basis of Terror Management theory stems from humans' ability to plan for and predict future events. With this ability comes an awareness of a person's own mortality, and this awareness causes a sort of existential anxiety (Solomon, Greenberg, & Pyszczynski, 1991). This anxiety can be made especially salient when a person is reminded of death (Greenberg, Pyszczynski, Solomon, Simon, & Breus, 1994). These reminders do not need to be specifically about death, but can also include images or descriptions of disease, bodily functions, or even the expulsion of bodily fluids (Beck, 2011).

In order to cope with this anxiety, humans have two types of cognitive buffer that can reduce the fear of impermanence or mortality (Solomon, Greenberg, & Pyszczynski, 1991). First, they may embrace either literal or ideological structures that will outlive them. For instance, an artist may seek to create a work of art that will outlast them, a parent may seek to raise a child in a way that gives honor to their family name in the future, or a wealthy person may will a large portion of their money to a charity or school. An ideological structure that gives a person a sense of permanence may be a belief in a religion or afterlife that promises future rewards and existence after death, but can also be an ideology, such as a political stance, a philosophical system, or a way of life, that will outlast the person and give meaning to their existence. Secondly, a person may buffer existential

anxiety through bolstering their own self-worth or self-esteem. These buffers, whether they be views of self-worth, philosophies, religions, or ways of life, are so vital to coping with existential anxiety that threats to these things can result in increases in death-related thoughts and therefore more anxiety. For instance, experiments have shown that being exposed to the differing worldviews of groups that live or believe differently can cause death-related anxiety, and may partly explain some hostility towards religious or ethnic minority communities within larger populations that believe differently (Cohen, Jussim, Harber, & Bhasin, 2009).

This means that mortality salience can have a direct effect on political and social opinions, such as increased prejudice against out-groups (Greenberg & Kosloff, 2008). Therefore, how international conflicts are framed may serve to prime mortality-related thoughts, if those frames are either death- or mortality-related, or serve to undermine a person's worldview or beliefs.

Wartime and national threat also represents one of the most extreme of all social situations, and so we may predict that any struggle framed as a war will influence people to favor the most extreme social policies that protect them from worldview threat. Research on public policy surrounding citizen ID cards as a national security measure has shown that framing the issue around immigration or terrorism can generate support for ID cards, while a more balanced discourse dampens support (Bali, 2009). War metaphors also portray the struggle as a fight between two polarized opposites, namely those on "our side" and those on "their side." This is consistent with research that shows that people view members of out-groups as polarized and homogenous (Linville & Jones, 1980).

Therefore, if the current struggle is portrayed as a "War on Terror" and the enemy is

fundamentalist Islam, it is possible that *all* Muslims, and by association, Arabs or even other south or west Asian ethnic and religious groups such as Sikhs may be perceived as members of the enemy out-group. Statistically, 10% of Arabs in the Middle East are Christians, and only 18% of the world's 1.6 billion Muslims are Arabs (MPAC Summits, 2011), making it clear that Arabs and Muslims are hardly synonymous, but it is not clear that this granularity is well-appreciated by the American public. Indeed, it has been suggested that the 2012 Wisconsin Sikh temple shooting may have been perpetrated by a shooter who was under the impression that Sikhs are Muslims, and the first victim of anti-Muslim retaliation in the United States was in fact a Sikh (Costello, 2012), which all could be evidence that some Americans lump all people in the Middle East and even the Indian subcontinent in the same category.

Research in the United States has supported the hypothesis that Arabs are portrayed as supportive of terrorism, violent, and deceptive (Johnson, 1992), and the attacks of 9/11 did not decrease this sentiment, leading some public figures to support profiling against Muslims. For instance, in 2006, conservative host Mike Gallagher on Fox News' show "Dayside" suggested a "Muslims-only" line through airport security (Judy, 2006). Huddy and Feldman (2011) suggest that Terror Management Theory and other psychological factors might be behind America's backlash to 9/11, including the invasion of two countries (Iraq and Afghanistan), spending billions more on airport security, and the passing of the Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism (USA PATRIOT) Act of 2001, which contains significant expansions of the powers of law enforcement to wiretap phone calls, procure the medical, library, and financial records or terrorism suspects, and to detain suspects without legal representation

on suspicion of terrorism. It is not a stretch, therefore, to theorize that framing counterterrorism as a "War on Terror" may influence people to favor more racial and religious profiling against Arab Muslims.

However, there may be other factors at play that determine how a person reacts to mortality salience, particularly in the case of out-groups. For instance, Rosenblatt, Greenberg, Solomon, Pyszczynski, and Lyon (1989) found that mortality salience only provoked harsher sentencing recommendations for prostitutes among those participants who already disapproved of prostitution. Because Terror Management Theory predicts that world-views can buffer existential fear, TMT also predicts that those whose world-views feature less hostility towards one or all out-groups would be less likely to react with hostility towards those groups in a mortality salience condition. Recent research by Weise, Arciszewski, Verlhiac, Pyszczynski, and Greenberg (2012) reveals that those who score high on right-wing authoritarianism who are reminded of their own deaths are significantly more negative when evaluating immigrants, but perhaps surprisingly, those who are low in right-wing authoritarianism and are reminded of their own deaths became more positive in their evaluations of immigrants. It would seem that if one's worldview includes an embracing of out-groups, this is enhanced when that person is reminded of their mortality. Thus, we can expect that those high in right-wing authoritarianism will be more supportive for racial and religious profiling, and that the mortality salience condition will cause high-RWA participants to support profiling significantly more, while low-RWA participants will show the opposite effect.

An even stronger tie between mortality salience and terrorism was found soon after 9/11. In a study of mortality salience and support for President George W. Bush, it was

found that reminding experimental participants of their own mortality increased support for President Bush and his policies to combat terrorism and that exposure to subliminal 9/11-related stimuli had the same effect (Landau, Solomon, Greenberg, Cohen, Pyszczynski, Arndt, Miller, Ogilvie, & Cook, 2004). The authors suggested that participants seek out charismatic and protective authority figures like President Bush to help them relieve their existential concerns in the light of the tragedies of 9/11. However, while this study made a link between mortality salience, terrorism, and a broad support for President Bush and his policies, it did not examine participants' support for specific policies, particularly those that may unfairly target Muslims or Arabs, nor did it examine conscious exposure to "War on Terror" arguments.

To shed more light on right-wing authoritarianism and how it affects social cognition, a discussion of its development is warranted.

<div align="center">Right-Wing Authoritarianism</div>

Right-wing authoritarianism as defined by Altemeyer and Hunsberger (1992) is "the covariation of authoritarian submission, authoritarian aggression, and conventionalism" (p. 114). It is an attempt to refine previous scales, specifically the F scale, the Dogmatism scale, and the Conservatism scale, that were intended to measure personality traits that would make people more likely to accept authoritarian governments and leaders (Duckitt, Bizumic, Krauss, & Heled, 2010). According to Altemeyer and Hunsberger (1992), people who score highly on right-wing authoritarianism are more religiously devout than other people, are more hostile to out-groups, more accepting of unjust or illegal acts committed by authority figures, and are more highly punitive in child rearing and sentencing recommendations. The most recent version of the RWA Scale was published by Altemeyer

in an online book (Altemeyer, 2006).

Authoritarianism can rise or fall in social prominence based on major political events. Perrin (2005) found that authoritarian discourse increased in the media in the United States following 9/11. Researchers in Spain found that right-wing authoritarianism and anti-Semite and anti-Arab prejudice increased following the 2004 Madrid bombings (Echebarria-Echabe & Fernandez-Guede, 2006). These findings suggest that authoritarianism in the media may have a symbiotic effect with increased authoritarianism in a population. This may, in turn, affect what politicians are elected and what policies they enforce. Relevant to our subject matter, Crowson (2007) found that high RWA scores predicted higher support for restrictions on civil liberties to combat terrorism.

The RWA scale has not been without clarifications, detractors, and qualifications; for instance, some have suggested that it perhaps describes a cluster of related factors rather than a unidirectional construct. A factor analysis done by Mavor, Louis, and Sibley (2010) found that right-wing authoritarianism consists of a three-factor structure: RWA aggression, which is represented by punitive behaviors against those considered evil, RWA submission, or the belief in submission to legitimate authorities, and RWA conventionalism, which is a belief that there are sacred moral values that must be upheld by society. RWA aggression taken alone has been shown in one study to mediate the relationship between religious fundamentalism and anti-Arab and anti-African-American prejudice (Johnson, Labouff, Rowatt, Patock-Peckham, & Carlisle, 2012).

While much research has been done on authoritarianism, the research has been uninformed by a global "theory of authoritarianism" (Feldman, 2003). It has been proposed that authoritarianism may represent either a desire for social conformity and fear of the

loss of social cohesion (Feldman, 2003), a propensity towards "normative differentiation," or the "evaluation of individual group members on the basis of prototypicality," (Kreindler, 2005).

Notwithstanding the mechanism by which right-wing authoritarianism works, it is sufficient for the purposes of this experiment to note that the RWA scale has been thoroughly shown in previous research to identify a subset of the population that behaves in ways that are predictable in certain conditions, such as mortality salience. This experiment makes use of the results found by Weise, Arciszewski, Verlhiac, Pyszczynski, and Greenberg (2012) to predict how the "War on Terror" counterterrorism frame will affect participants.

<div align="center">Law Enforcement</div>

A second metaphor that Kruglanski et al. (2007) used to characterize counterterrorism was as law enforcement. The law enforcement metaphor addresses some of the shortcomings of the "War on Terror" metaphor, such as by emphasizing the role of local and Federal law enforcement and the fact that terrorism can happen domestically, and thus we could potentially see systematic differences in its effects. Law enforcement is a long-term, established social entity that requires constant commitment and upkeep. It deals with individuals within society, is less prone to indiscriminate strikes that may injure innocent bystanders, and the courts system serves to protect the liberties of the accused. This metaphor may make it more clear that arrests, trials, and convictions will have to be made on a regular basis, and long-term public funding is required to make it possible.

However, Kruglanski et al. (2007) note that this metaphor may not square with some realities of terrorism, especially the fact that terrorists are often seeking to make

international, religious, or political statements and affect the policies of entire

governments. It is also possible that the association between the police and controversies

with racial profiling, police abuses, and a view that the courts system is flawed might

reduce people's agreement that law enforcement should have the power to implement

freedom-restricting policies. For instance, a study of public perceptions of police in the

United States showed that in 2000, 75 percent of the American public described racial

profiling by police as a "problem" (Gallager, Maguire, Mastrofski, & Reisig, 2001). Thus, we

may predict that when framed as a law enforcement action, some people may be less

inclined to support freedom-restricting policies and racial or religious profiling.

Social Epidemic

Third, a metaphor of a social epidemic has been used by certain politicians to

describe terrorism, in which terrorism is described as a social illness or disease that must

be eradicated. While it accurately seems to describe the conditions whereby terrorists are

"incubated," requiring a host, transmission, growth, etc., the authors argue that it de-

emphasizes the active role that military and law enforcement agencies could be taking in

the here and now. Since society has many social illnesses and some of them seem barely

curable, an epidemic metaphor might reduce people's optimism that it could even be fixed

through governmental or law enforcement action.

Prejudice Reduction

Lastly, a metaphor of prejudice reduction can be used, in which counterterrorism is

framed as an effort for two sides to address the social prejudice that fuels the conflict. It

also has the advantage of drawing in many disparate social programs such as media,

education, and diplomacy to help in the effort, and also emphasizes the bilateral nature of

the effort. However, the Kruglanski et al. (2007) suggest that this approach, like the epidemic metaphor, de-emphasizes the active realities of gathering intelligence as well as arresting and imprisoning suspects.

Understanding the usage of metaphors in the public discourse is critical for future governmental, educational, and public policies regarding counterterrorism, if it can be demonstrated that these metaphors have concrete effects on the public. Brewer and Gross (2005) found that when a political frame invoked participants' core values, they focused more deeply on those values but reduced the amount they thought about the issue. Therefore, the use of metaphors must be socially responsible and accurately reflect the nature of the situations in question.

Predictions

I have now explored all four frames in Kruglanski's et al. (2007) article and have generated some possible empirical predictions from the use of two of these frames. While all four frames have important effects on the public discourse, central to the aims of this discussion are the "War on Terror" metaphor, and the "law enforcement" metaphor, because, consistent with the predictions of Terror Management Theory, the "War on Terror" metaphor may cause systematic mortality salience effects in participants exposed to it. By contrast, the "law enforcement" metaphor may cause people to be less trusting of or willing to accept freedom-restricting policies like profiling, and would lack the mortality salience effects of the "War on Terror" metaphor. First, I will analyze whether the "War on Terror" metaphor does prime death-related thoughts. Then, to tease out at least one factor in the prediction of support for profiling, I will seek to build on previous findings that right-wing authoritarianism predicts more opposition to out-groups and that mortality salience

heightens this effect, by analyzing its influence on support for racial and religious profiling.

Coincidentally, as data were being collected during the course of this experiment, a major terrorist event took place: the 2013 Boston Marathon bombings. One potential difference between the present study and previous ones that found strong emotional reactions from "War on Terror" primes may be that in 2013, terrorism is not as salient in the minds of student populations. Because the Boston Marathon bombings occurred in the middle of data collection, this offers a unique opportunity to see whether mortality salience threats, or opinions on security policies, significantly changed as a result of the bombings. It could be that participants were exposed to a greater number of conversations, news articles, and social media mentions of the Boston attacks, and this would heighten the salience of terrorist attacks in their minds. Since the attacks killed 3 people and injured many more, there may also be an association between the "War on Terror" phrase and death in the minds of participants. As Wagstaff (2013) documented, there were a number of mentions of the "War on Terror" in the media following the attacks, and this may suggest that the phrase "War on Terror" was more firmly associated with death following the attacks.

Thus, this study will seek to test three main hypotheses. First, I will use a manipulation check to determine whether framing counterterrorism as a "War on Terror" primes death-related thoughts, causing participants to use more death-related words in a word completion task. This manipulation check will include a test to see if there is a main effect of framing or timing on death-word completions, or if there is an interaction between framing and timing. If "War on Terror" primes death-related thoughts, I can derive two hypotheses from this. **Hypothesis 1**: Characterizing counterterrorism as a "War on Terror"

may cause all participants to significantly favor *non-prejudicial* freedom-restricting social counterterrorism policies, such as national ID cards, random searches by authorities, or increased security at airports, when compared to a law enforcement frame or control. Because the Boston Marathon attacks highlighted the challenges, limitations, and importance of security in public places, as well as possible strengthened morality salience in regards to public security, I predict that this effect should be stronger after the 2013 Boston Marathon bombings than before. **Hypothesis 2**: Because previous research has shown that, when exposed to mortality salience conditions, those people who score high on RWA react with more hostility to out-groups, and those who score low on RWA react by embracing outgroups, I expect the "War on Terror" framing condition to cause increased support for *prejudicial* freedom-restricting policies (specifically, those targeting Arabs and Muslims) in high authoritarians, but decreased support for these policies in low authoritarians. Again, because the Boston Marathon attacks possibly made mortality salience effects stronger, I expect that these effects should be stronger after the attacks than before. **Hypothesis 3**: Finally, unrelated to the mortality salience effects, I expect a positive correlation between RWA score and support for Arab and Muslim profiling.

CHAPTER 2

METHOD

Participants

I recruited 120 participants (47 male, 73 female) from the Introduction to Psychology pool at Georgia Southern University. Though 122 participants were recruited, due to a computer malfunction mid-way through one session, the data for 2 participants were lost for the last half of the experiment. Weise, Arciszewski, Verlhiac, Pyszczynski, and

Greenberg (2012) were able to find significant effects with 110 participants, so this study sought that number plus an added amount because I am testing several hypotheses with the same group. Participants were recruited through class participation credits, and the test was administered in a school computer lab. The age range for participants was 18-35, with a mean age of 19.58.

Materials

A computer with keyboard and mouse were necessary for this study. The surveys were built using the Qualtrics survey software and displayed in the Chrome browser. The series of pages consisted of a participant rights page (Appendix A), the RWA scale page (Appendix B), a framing page (Appendix C), an essay page (Appendix C), a neutral mood survey with word search (Appendix D), a word-completion task (Appendix E), a policy opinions page (Appendix F), a demographics page (Appendix G), and participant debriefing page (Appendix H).

Measures

The RWA Scale (Appendix B), which measures the willingness of people to submit to authorities, was taken directly from Altemeyer's most recent version of the scale (Altemeyer, 2006). This scale has had very high internal consistency in previous research, has undergone several improvements since it was first developed in 1992, and Altemeyer has demonstrated its validity through extensive research (Fodor, Wick, Hartsen, & Preve, 2008). The framing page (Appendix C) consisted of a brief statement to the effect that certain policies are being considered to combat international extremist groups, along with a picture of either soldiers for the "War on Terror" condition or police officers for the law enforcement condition. The control group did not have a framing page. After the framing

page, there was an essay page where participants are asked to write a brief argument. Those in the "War on Terror" condition were asked to argue why our struggle with international extremist groups could be called a "War on Terror." Those in the law enforcement condition were asked to describe some things that law enforcement could do to help in our struggle with international extremist groups. Those in the control condition were asked to write a brief description of their normal morning routine.

According to previous research, in order for mortality salience effects to take effect after being primed, there needs to be a 5-minute distractor task between the prime and any subsequent measures (Pyszczynski, Greenberg, & Solomon, 1999). The distractor task chosen for this experiment consisted of a neutral mood measure called the PANAS-X and a word search (Appendix D) taken from the Terror Management Theory website (Arndt, n.d.) that has been used in previous TMT research (i.e. Arndt, Greenberg, & Cook, 2002; Greenberg, Arndt, Simon, Pyszczynski, & Solomon, 2000), because it has been shown that mortality salience effects are strongest after a delay task, when mortality-related thoughts are in a person's mind but not directly the focus of their attention (Arndt, Greenberg, Solomon, Pyszczynski, & Simon, 1997). The mortality salience manipulation check is a word completion task (Appendix E) taken from the TMT website (Arndt, n.d.). In this task, participants are given a series of 50 words with either two or three letters omitted, for instance, COFF_ _. In eight of these words, the word can be completed with a death-related word, or an alternate non-death related word. These words, along with a possible non-death related word, were CO_ _ SE (corpse/course), M_R_ER (murder/marker), GRA_ _ (grave/grass), KI_ _ ED (killed/kissed), DE_ _ (dead/deer), BUR_ _ D (buried/burned), COFF_ _ (coffin/coffee), and SK_ _ L (skull/skill). This measure has been used in previous TMT

research (i.e. Greenberg, J., Pyszczynski, T., Solomon, S., Simon, L., & Breus, M., 1994; Hayes, Schimel, Faucher, & Williams, 2008) to assess whether mortality salience has been primed. In order to calculate the scores, one must simply add up the number of death-related word completions.

The eight policy questions (Appendix F) were taken and adapted from two different studies. The non-prejudicial security policies, which deal with support for increased security in public places, critical infrastructure, and random searches in public, are adapted from Joslyn and Haider-Markel (2007), and the last three, which deal with random searches of Muslims and those people suspected of being affiliated with terrorist organizations, are adapted from Schildkraut (2009). Items 6 - 8 have been changed in order to more accurately fit all three conditions, to ensure a more gradual transition between security measures and profiling questions, and to see whether there were differences between material markers such as religious clothing and items, and ethnicity on the other. For instance, in the original study, Josler and Haider-Markel used the phrase, "Allowing police to stop people on the street at random to search their possessions." However, because police are only applicable to the law enforcement condition, the word police will be changed to the broader "authorities." Because the word "terrorist" may itself provoke a mortality salience reaction, the policy questions were revised to use the phrase "international extremist groups" rather than terrorists. The eight policy questions are included at the end of this proposal. The responses were rated using a 1-6 scale, with 1 being strongly disagree, 2 being disagree, 3 being slightly disagree, 4 being slightly agree, 5 being agree, and 6 being strongly agree.

Finally, there was a short demographics survey at the end of the study. These

demographic questions may yield informative data regarding political orientation, age, sex, religious affiliation, church attendance, and relationship to members of the armed services that may have influenced responses

Procedure

Undergraduate students were recruited from the introductory psychology pool to participate in this study, which was described as a "Study on the interaction between reading certain passages and mood." Students signed up for a session to come in and participate in the computer lab. Sessions were done in two computer labs, and the maximum number of students that were run in a session was 15.

At the beginning of each session, students signed in on a sign-in sheet, and selected a computer. The person administering the session read from a script (Appendix I) welcoming them to the study, telling them their responses are anonymous, asking them to take it seriously, and to keep their eyes on their own computers. After reading and agreeing with an informed consent page (Appendix A) that outlined their rights to withdraw at any time, or seek counseling if necessary after the study, all participants clicked "Next" and were taken to the RWA scale (Appendix B) using radio buttons to indicate their opinions. The RWA scale was included first to remove the possibility that the framing condition would influence their answers for the RWA scale. Participants were then randomly placed in either the "War on Terror," Law Enforcement, or Control conditions and were taken to the framing pages and essay pages (Appendix C) connected to those conditions. Subsequent to these, all participants were taken through the same phases of the experiment.

After participants finished the distractor task (Appendix D), they then completed the word completion task (Appendix E). Then participants were asked a series of questions

regarding their support for various security policies (Appendix F). Following this, participants filled out their demographic information (Appendix G). When they were finished with all pages, they read a debriefing statement (Appendix H) and were allowed to leave the room quietly.

CHAPTER 3

RESULTS

Preliminary Results

The preliminary test was a manipulation check in the form of a 2 (Timing: Before vs. After Boston Bombing) x3 (Framing Condition: War on Terror vs. Law Enforcement vs. Control) between-groups ANOVA, with death word completions from a common mortality salience task (Arndt, n.d.) as the dependent variable. There was not a significant interaction between timing and framing condition, $F (2, 120) = .53$, $p = .59$ on mean death word completions, and there were no main effects for timing, $F (1, 120) = 1.06$, $p = .31$ or framing condition $F (2, 120) = 1.73$, $p = .18$ on mean death word completions. Cell means for death word completions are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1

Mean Death Word Completions by Framing Condition and Timing

Framing Condition	Before Attacks	After Attacks	Totals
"War on Terror"	2.67	2.32	2.50
Law enforcement	2.22	1.89	2.07
Control	2.18	2.26	2.22
Totals	2.36	2.16	

Hypothesis 1, which predicted that the "War on Terror" condition would cause an increase in support for non-prejudicial security policies, and that this effect would be stronger after the Boston Marathon bombings, was analyzed with a 2 (Timing) x3 (Framing Condition) between-groups ANOVA with the mean of policy questions 1-6 as the dependent variable. Before conducting analyses, the eight policy questions were examined, using coefficient alpha, to determine that they form an internally consistent scale. There were no items that were removed for limiting alpha.

There was not a significant interaction between timing and framing condition, F (2, 119) = .97, p = .38 on support for non-prejudicial policies, and there were no significant main effects for timing, F (1,119) = 1.595, p = .209, or framing condition, F (2,119) = .04, p = .96 on support for non-prejudicial policies. The data failed to support Hypothesis 1. Cell means for support for non-prejudicial policies are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2

Mean Support for Non-Prejudicial Policies by Framing Condition and Timing

Framing Condition	Before Attacks	After Attacks	Totals
"War on Terror"	3.16	3.66	3.40
Law enforcement	3.40	3.38	3.40
Control	3.39	3.50	3.44
Totals	3.32	3.51	

       Hypothesis 2 was that high- and low-authoritarian participants will react in opposite ways to the "War on Terror" condition on the mean of policy questions 7 and 8, both of which dealt specifically with targeting Muslims and/or Arabs based on their names, religious affiliations, clothing, or other religious items. To analyze this, a multiple regression was conducted by entering the main effects of Timing, RWA score, and Framing Condition, and then the possible interactions, on the mean of policy questions 7 and 8.

       In Step 1, Timing and RWA score were entered; in Step 2, the "War on Terror" and Law Enforcement conditions were entered separately in order to compare the effect of each; then in Step 3 the 2-way interaction of Timing x RWA score was entered; then in Step 4 the 2-way interactions of Timing x "War on Terror" and Timing x Law Enforcement were entered. Steps 3 and 4 were separated in order to separately examine the effects of RWA score and Framing Condition on the overall model. Then in Step 5 the 2-way interactions of "War on Terror" x RWA score and Law Enforcement x RWA score were entered; then in Step 6, the 3-way interactions of Timing x RWA score x "War on Terror" and Timing x RWA score x Law Enforcement.

The results showed that the most significant predictors of support for prejudicial policies were RWA score and Framing Condition, such that higher RWA scores were associated with higher support for prejudicial security policies, and the "War on Terror" frame was associated with lower support for prejudicial policies. The effect of Framing Condition on support for prejudicial policies will be analyzed with an ANOVA below.

The 3-way interaction for Timing x RWA score x "War on Terror" condition did not significantly predict support for prejudicial policies, $b = .038$, $t (108) = .703$, $p = .711$, and the 3-way interaction for Timing x RWA score x Law Enforcement condition did not significantly predict support for prejudicial policies $b = .077$, $t (108) = .703$, $p = .484$. The individual results for factors are included in Table 3. Effect coding (Edwards, 1984) was used in order to examine the effect of Framing Condition, such that interaction terms were created for the "War on Terror" and Law Enforcement levels, with each participant coded with either -1, 0, or 1 depending on the level on which they were assigned. Results of this analysis showed no significant interactions, and Hypothesis 2 was not supported.

Table 3

Support for Prejudicial Policies, as Predicted by Enter Multiple Regression Analysis of Timing, RWA score, and Framing Condition

Variable	Step 1			Step 2			Step 3			Step 4			Step 5			Step 6		
	B	SE B	*b*	B	SE B	*b*	B	SE B	*b*	B	SE B	*b*	B	SE B	*b*	B	SE B	*b*
Timing	0.15	0.19	0.07	0.15	0.19	0.07	0.16	0.19	0.07	0.16	0.19	0.07	0.17	0.19	0.07	0.17	0.19	0.07
RWA score	0.02	0.00	.43**	0.02	0.00	0.44**	0.02	0.00	.44**	0.02	0.00	.44**	0.02	0.00	0.44**	0.02	0.00	.46**
"War on Terror"				-0.25	0.13	-0.18	-0.27	0.13	-0.19	-0.28	0.13	-.20*	-0.28	0.13	-0.20*	-0.30	0.13	-.21*
Law enforcement				-0.19	0.13	-0.13	-0.15	0.13	-0.11	-0.15	0.13	-0.11	-0.15	0.14	-0.11	-0.13	0.14	-0.09
Timing x RWA score							0.01	0.00	0.12	0.01	0.00	0.11	0.01	0.00	0.11	0.01	0.00	0.13
Timing x "War on Terror"										-0.10	0.13	-0.07	-0.09	0.13	-0.06	-0.08	0.13	-0.06
Timing x Law enforcement										0.01	0.13	0.01	0.01	0.14	0.01	0.02	0.14	0.01
"War on Terror" x RWA score													0.00	0.01	-0.08	-0.01	0.01	-0.10
Law enforcement x RWA score													0.00	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.02
Timing x RWA score x "War on Terror"																0.00	0.01	0.04
Timing x RWA score x Law enforcement																0.00	0.01	0.08
F =	$(2, 119) = 13.68**$			$(4, 119) = 10.18**$			$(5, 119) = 8.62**$			$(7, 119) = 6.18**$			$(9, 119) = 4.86**$			$(11, 119) = 4.09**$		
R² =	.19			.26			.27			.28			.29			.29		

* indicates p < .05, ** indicates p < .01

The effect found in the regression model that Framing Condition had a significant effect on support for prejudicial policies was analyzed by using a 2 (Timing: Before vs. After the Boston Marathon bombings) x 3 (Framing Condition: "War on Terror," Law Enforcement, and Control) ANOVA, with support for the prejudicial policies (the mean of policies 7 and 8) as the dependent variable. The results showed a significant main effect for Framing Condition, F (2, 119) = 4.28, p = .016. LSD post-hoc analyses showed that participants in the control condition (M = 2.23, SEM = .18) supported prejudicial policies significantly more than those in the "War on Terror" condition (M = 1.53, SEM = .18) and the law enforcement condition (M = 1.67, SEM = .18), but that "War on Terror" and law enforcement did not significantly differ from one another. These results are summarized in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Main Effect of Framing Condition on Support for Prejudicial Policies
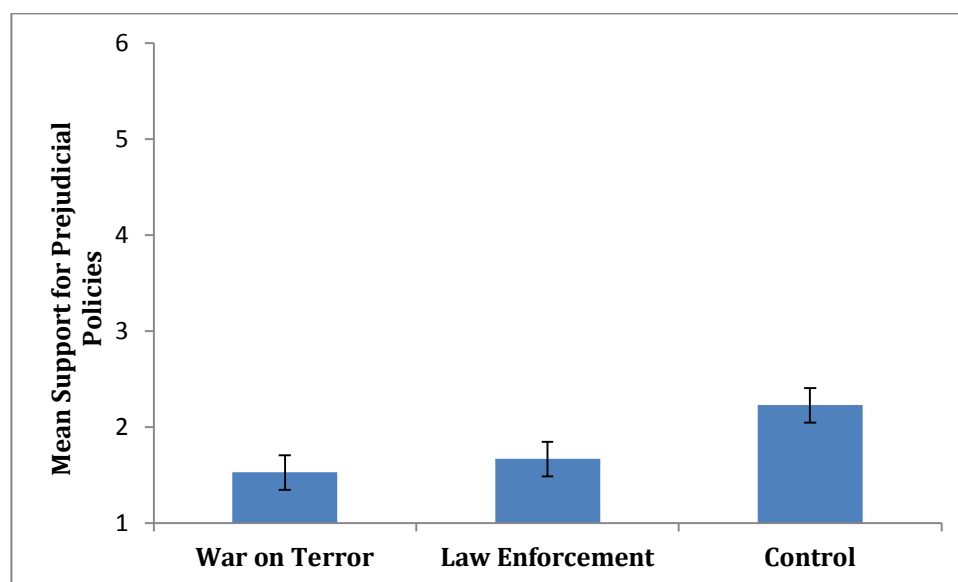
Note: Error bars represent std. error.

For Hypothesis 3, that RWA would be associated with support for prejudicial security

policies, a bivariate Pearson's Correlation was performed between total RWA score and the mean of questions 7 and 8. Results showed that the two variables were strongly positively correlated, r (118) = .43, p < .001, such that higher RWA scores were significantly associated with higher support for prejudicial policies.

Secondary Analyses

Previously, my hypotheses rested on the idea that the policy questions would generally fall into two factors, namely, non-prejudicial and prejudicial freedom-restricting security policies. However, after my primary hypotheses were tested, an exploratory principal components analysis was performed on the policies to see whether this division was justified. The analysis extracted two components with eigenvalues > 1.0. The components were rotated via the Varimax method with Kaiser Normalization. This analysis revealed two different factors: one corresponding to the first two policy questions (dealing with increased security in public places and critical infrastructure facilities), and one corresponding to the last six policy questions (dealing with national ID cards, random searches, and random searches based on suspected terrorist affiliation, Middle Eastern ethnicity, and Muslim name, items, or clothing). The component matrix and rotated component matrix are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4

Factor Loadings for Security Policy Questions

Question	Component Matrix		Rotated Component Matrix	
	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 1	Factor 2
Increased security in public places	0.37	0.70	0.10	**0.78**
Increased security at critical infrastructure facilities	0.10	0.77	-0.18	**0.75**
Banning carry-on luggage	0.59	0.18	**0.49**	0.38
National ID card to present to authorities on request	0.74	0.30	**0.58**	0.54
Random searches by authorities on street	0.67	-0.04	**0.64**	0.20
Random searches based on suspected terrorist affiliation	0.68	0.21	**0.56**	0.44
Random searches based on Middle Eastern ethnicity	0.78	-0.50	**0.90**	-0.19
Random searches based on Muslim name, items, or clothing	0.77	-0.51	**0.90**	-0.20

Analysis operates on the assumption that values greater than .5 are considered strong

Based on this analysis, I revised my previous hypotheses by separating my policy

questions in a different way. The first two questions deal with increasing security in public

places and infrastructure facilities. For the purposes of analysis, I will label these

"infrastructure security." The remaining six policies seem to all deal with civil liberties of

some sort. I will label these "civil liberties." As such, I decided to re-run my analyses based

on the new factors as new dependent variables. Based on research using Terror

Management Theory and Right Wing Authoritarianism, I expect the following outcomes:

Hypothesis 4: The "War on Terror" condition will cause all participants to

significantly support infrastructure security more than participants in the other conditions,

and this effect will be stronger after the 2013 Boston Marathon bombings.

Hypothesis 5: High- and low-authoritarian participants will react in opposite ways to

the "War on Terror" condition on the mean of policy questions 3-8, with high authoritarians

reacting with more support, and low authoritarians reacting with lower support. This

operates on the assumption that, because right-wing authoritarianism measures

willingness to submit to authorities, a core value for high RWA participants is a willingness to give up civil liberties for security, and the opposite is true for low RWA participants.

Hypothesis 6: There will be a positive correlation between RWA score and support for civil liberty-restricting policies. The analysis was conducted via Pearson's correlation between RWA score and the mean of policy questions 3-8.

Results of Secondary Analyses

For Hypothesis 4, which predicted that the "War on Terror" condition would cause an increase in support for infrastructure security policies, and that this effect would be stronger after the Boston Marathon bombings a 2x3 between-subjects ANOVA was performed with timing and framing condition as the independent variables and mean support for infrastructure security policies (policy questions 1 and 2) as the dependent variable. There was not a significant interaction between timing and framing condition, F (2, 119) = .70, p = .50 on support for non-prejudicial policies, and there were no significant main effects for timing, F (1,119) = 1.98, p = .16, or framing condition, F (2,119) = 1.75, p = .18 on support for infrastructure policies. Cell means for support for infrastructure policies are summarized in Table 5.

Table 5

Mean Support for Infrastructure Policies by Framing Condition and Timing

Framing Condition	Before Attacks	After Attacks	Totals
"War on Terror"	2.06	2.52	2.29
Law enforcement	2.30	2.26	2.28
Control	2.48	2.78	2.63
Totals	2.21	2.52	

To test Hypothesis 5, that high- and low-authoritarians would react in opposite ways to the "War on Terror" condition, and that this effect would be stronger after the Boston Marathon attacks, a multiple regression analysis was used to test if the interaction between Timing (Before vs. After the Boston Marathon attacks), RWA score, and Framing Condition ("War on Terror," vs. Law Enforcement) explained a significant amount of the variance in the mean of questions 3-8. To analyze this, a multiple regression was conducted by entering the main effects of Timing, RWA score, and Framing Condition, and then the possible interactions, on the mean of policy questions 3-8.

In Step 1, Timing and RWA score were entered; in Step 2, the "War on Terror" and Law Enforcement conditions were entered separately in order to compare the effect of each; then in Step 3 the 2-way interaction of Timing x RWA score was entered; then in Step 4 the 2-way interactions of Timing x "War on Terror" and Timing x Law Enforcement were entered. Steps 3 and 4 were separated in order to separately examine the effects of RWA score and Framing Condition on the overall model. Then in Step 5 the 2-way interactions of "War on Terror" x RWA score and Law Enforcement x RWA score were entered; then in Step

6, the 3-way interactions of Timing x RWA score x "War on Terror" and Timing x RWA score x Law Enforcement.

The 3-way interaction for Timing x RWA score x "War on Terror" condition did not significantly predict support for prejudicial policies, b = -.006, t (108) = .158, p = .158, and the 3-way interaction for Timing x RWA score x Law Enforcement condition did not significantly predict support for prejudicial policies b = .003, t (108) = .646, p = .519. The individual results for factors are included in Table 6.

Table 6

Support for Civil Liberty-Restricting Policies, as Predicted by Enter Multiple Regression Analysis of Timing, RWA score, and Framing Condition

Variable	Step 1			Step 2			Step 3			Step 4			Step 5			Step 6		
	B	SE B	*b*	B	SE B	*b*	B	SE B	*b*	B	SE B	*b*	B	SE B	*b*	B	SE B	*b*
Timing	.29	.15	.15	.29	.15	.15	.29	.15	.15	.29	.15	.15	.28	.16	.15	.28	.16	.15
RWA score	.02	.000	.47**	.02	.00	.48**	.02	.00	.48**	.02	.00	.47**	.02	.00	.46**	.02	.00	.47**
"War on Terror"				-.09	.11	-.08	-.10	.11	-.09	-.11	.11	-.09	-.11	.11	-.09	-.10	.11	-.09
Law enforcement				-.15	.11	-.13	-.14	.11	-.12	-.14	.11	-.12	-.14	.11	-.12	-.12	.11	-.12
Timing x RWA score							.00	.00	.08	.00	.00	.08	.00	.00	.07	.00	.00	.09
Timing x "War on Terror"										.05	.11	.04	.06	.11	.05	.05	.11	.04
Timing x Law enforcement										-.03	.11	-.03	-.04	.11	-.04	-.04	.11	-.03
"War on Terror" x RWA score													-.00	.00	-.08	-.00	.00	-.08
Law enforcement x RWA score													-.00	.00	-.03	.00	.01	-.01
Timing x RWA score x "War on Terror"																-.00	.00	-.15
Timing x RWA score x Law enforcement																.00	.01	.07
$F =$	$(2, 119) = 18.03**$			$(4, 119) = 10.64**$			$(5, 119) = 8.71**$			$(7, 119) = 6.15**$			$(9, 119) = 4.90**$			$(11, 119) = 4.20**$		
$R^2 =$	.24			.27			.28			.28			.29			.30		

* indicates p < .05, ** indicates p < .01

For Hypothesis 6, which predicted that there will be a positive correlation between RWA score and support for civil liberty-restricting policies a bivariate Pearson's Correlation was performed between total RWA score and support for civil liberty-restricting policies. The two variables were strongly positively correlated, r (119) = .46, p < .001, such that higher RWA scores were associated with higher support for civil liberty-restricting policies.

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION

Conclusions

The data generally failed to support the hypotheses generated from Terror Management Theory, first that the "War on Terror" condition would act as a mortality salience prime, causing participants to fill in more death-related words in the word completion task; and second, that this effect would have measurable outcomes on the support for prejudicial and civil-liberty restricting policies. While there was a significant effect of Framing Condition on various policy measures, they were not consistent with my predictions.

In considering possible reasons for this lack of effect, one explanation concerns the failure of the framing condition to generate mortality salience in the War on Terror condition. As noted in the results, the manipulation check indicated that the "War on Terror" frame failed to cause mortality salience effects. While the scores seemed to be in the direction predicted, the difference did not reach statistical significance, suggesting either no real effect or insufficient statistical power. As they stand, these results lend support to the idea that, for our participants, using the phrase "War on Terror" did not result in thinking about death, and thus the subsequent analyses should be viewed in that light, with

Hypotheses 1, 2, 4, and 5 not supported. This means that in our sample, the "War on Terror" frame did not cause participants to support non-prejudicial or infrastructure policies, it did not cause high authoritarians to more strongly support prejudicial or civil liberty-restricting policies, and it did not cause low authoritarians to less strongly support prejudicial or civil liberty-restricting policies. Additionally, the 2013 Boston Marathon bombings did not seem to have a significant effect on results.

These results were not consistent with previous research that indicated that terrorism-related primes caused mortality salience effects in participants, and yielded greater support for freedom-restricting policies (Landau, Solomon, Greenberg, Cohen, Pyszczynski, Arndt, Miller, Ogilvie, & Cook, 2004). However, there are a number of differences between the present study and other research on the subject. First, the present sample was limited to undergraduate students with a mean age of 19.58. This means that most of these students were in elementary school at the time of 9/11 and may not have a clear memory of the "War on Terror" rhetoric that existed in the years following. This may mean that whatever mortality salience effects were once associated with 9/11 in undergraduates has worn off more than a decade later in the current cohort. This would suggest, however, that older participants who have stronger memories of 9/11 may show mortality salience effects.

The lack of significant effects after the Boston Marathon bombings is surprising. However, it is possible that because the Boston Marathon bombings killed fewer people and occurred on a smaller scale than 9/11, they failed to seem relevant to students at a school in southern Georgia, 1000 miles away from the bombings. In addition, results may have been moderated by how much attention participants pay to national and international

news. A question assessing how closely participants follow the news would have ideally

been included, were it possible to anticipate the unfortunate event.

Perhaps the most surprising finding of all from this study is that the "War on Terror"

and Law Enforcement conditions resulted in significantly *decreased* support for the

prejudicial policies in comparison to the Control. This finding strongly ran counter to my

hypothesis. This curious finding requires future theoretical attention. It would seem that

talking about any sort of government security or intervention strategies caused our

participants to react with mistrust towards these authorities, whether they were police or

the armed forces. Therefore, future research should investigate the possible cohort values

or characteristics that would cause college students to react this way to talk of the "War on

Terror" or even police. Additionally, TMT predicts that mortality salience results in an

unconscious strengthening of a person's core values. If mortality salience effects were

present and our manipulation check did not have enough power to detect them, the results

could be explained by positing a currently unknown value that is being strengthened in

participants in the "War on Terror" and law enforcement conditions, but not in the control

condition. The present participants were undergraduate students, who may have particular

core values that might explain this effect. For example, undergraduates may hold a strong

distrust of government or authorities, or embrace diversity or out-groups.

Although the Terror Management Theory hypotheses failed to find support, the data

did confirm hypotheses predicting a positive correlation between Right Wing

Authoritarianism and support for prejudicial and civil-liberty limiting policies to combat

international extremist groups. This is consistent with previous research that suggests that

RWA is positively correlated with support for limiting civil liberties to combat terrorism

(Crowson, 2007). The implications of this finding are that the high authoritarians in our sample reported similar dispositions to those in previous research. It also shows that this particular attribute of RWA still exists in a time and place far removed from 9/11.

Limitations

Two limitations of this study that are highly relevant to the outcome are the age and location of the participants. Future research could include a wider age range and participants in other locations in the country, such as Boston or New York City, as older participants and those in bigger cities might show more mortality salience to issues of terrorism in general. Another limitation seemed to be a floor effect with support for policies, with the mean score for all policies at 3 (out of 8), but the means for the random search policies (policy questions 5-8) were 1.63, 3.18, 1.79, and 1.82 respectively. This would suggest that in general, students are not supportive of policies regarding random searches or restrictions on civil liberties at all. Another possible interpretation could be that there were social desirability effects in play. Though students were informed that their results were anonymous, it is possible that they rated their support for prejudicial policies lower in order to appear less prejudiced.

In regards to the mortality salience conditions, previous research suggested that the distractor task must be 5 minutes long in order for mortality salience effects to be fully activated. This study did not have a mechanism to ensure that the distractor task lasted the correct duration of time. Additionally, I did not have enough participants to include a more classic mortality salience condition, to compare the War on Terror with a picture or essay that caused participants to reflect on their own deaths. Ideally, this would have been included in order to see whether we were able to provoke mortality salience effects at all. If

not, we could have concluded that our mortality salience manipulation, using computer entry as opposed to pencil-and-paper, was ineffective. It is possible that the fact that participants were in a somewhat crowded computer lab caused distraction during the course of the experiment, and it wasn't too difficult to see other participants' computer screens despite our instructions not to do so. Future research should be conducted in such a way as to ensure that these potential problems are addressed.

Implications for Policy

These results support the idea that, although the "War on Terror" metaphor may still be inaccurate to fully describe our struggle with counterterrorism as Kruglanski et al. suggest (2007), it may not now result in mortality salience effects in an undergraduate population even when there has been a terrorist attack in the news media. This has implications for public discourse because it shows that the phrase "War on Terror" may not cause higher support for prejudicial or freedom-restricting security policies at all, depending on how well our sample generalizes to the population. Future political science or psychology research could see whether this is true among other populations.

While it may have been first employed to garner public support for certain policies, and indeed it was shown that after 9/11, even priming participants with 9/11-related cues caused them to support Bush Administration policies more, it would seem that a decade later the opposite effect has taken place among college-age adults. Participants reacted with more distrust towards authorities when the study reminded them of the "War on Terror," extremist groups, terrorists, soldiers, and police officers. Therefore, media figures and politicians should take care when using the phrase "War on Terror," depending on what effect they are hoping to achieve. It also suggests that there is a different zeitgeist, at least

among undergraduate students, regarding government security. For politicians who are seeking to shape their messages to young adults, these results suggest that "War" rhetoric not only is ineffective at increasing support for stronger policies, it may have the opposite response.

Future Directions for Research

As has been mentioned, future research could investigate just what is going on to cause participants to react with distrust towards authorities in the "War on Terror" or law enforcement conditions. Such research could examine whether these effects were mediated or moderated by various personality factors or political orientations, including party affiliation, age, education level, or Big Five personality types. Future studies could seek to improve on the limitations on this study, such as generalizing to more populations, age groups, or subcultures and ethnic groups. It is impossible to predict whether an opportunity to view the effects of a major terrorist attack like the 2013 Boston Marathon bombings will be forthcoming, however, if enough studies are done, and there are terrorist attacks in the future, the opportunity may present itself again.

Similarly, research could be done that analyzes the effect of "War" rhetoric on other issues, such as the so-called "War on Drugs," "War on Poverty," etc. It is possible that the unique personality profiles of young adults at this time in history causes them to react with distrust to any employment of "War" rhetoric by government authorities or the media.

Finally, there is still a possibility that "War" rhetoric causes mortality salience in participants, and my method of using a computer-based word completion task was not well-suited to detecting this effect. Future research could seek to replicate the present study with mortality salience primes that were taken from previous research, or with a

different entry method such as the more "classic" paper-and-pencil method.

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APPENDIX A

IRB INFORMED CONSENT

Dear Participant,

My name is Arthur Hatton and I am a graduate student in the psychology department of Georgia Southern University. I am doing this experiment as a pilot study for an eventual thesis project. The purpose of this research is to see how people respond to a short reading, followed by a mood survey and a word completion task. It will require you to complete a scale about your opinions, possibly read a page of information about a current event, then do a task that asks you to describe your recent emotions, and then complete a word completion task, which is a task that asks you to fill in blanks in incomplete words. Finally you will complete a demographics questionnaire.

The task will only take, at most, 1 hour to complete, and consists of reading, following instructions, writing, answering questions about your opinions, describing your recent emotions, and filling in blanks of letters. Our procedures are taken from previous research that did not result in emotional or physical harm to participants. However, if for any reason you feel emotional discomfort in the course of the experiment, you should contact the Georgia Southern University counseling center at **(912) 478-5541.**

I believe this research will benefit participants by giving them first-hand experience regarding how psychological research is done. It is also a study that will benefit society through helping us understand how certain moods and ways of thinking interact with opinions.

Your responses will be anonymous and confidential. Your name will not be attached

to the data, and data will only be available to me and my advisor. Data will be maintained in a secure location for a minimum of 3 years following completion of the study. You have the right to ask questions and have those questions answered regarding the study. If you have questions about this study, please contact me or my faculty advisor, whose contact information is located at the end of the informed consent. For questions concerning your rights as a research participant, contact Georgia Southern University Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs at **(912) 478-0843**.

You will receive class credit for this assignment according to the prior arrangements you have with your psychology instructor. It will not cost you any money to participate in the research. Your participation is completely voluntary and you may end your participation at any time by closing your browser. There is no penalty for withdrawing prior to the completion of the experiment. You do not have to answer any question you do not want to answer. If you choose to withdraw prematurely, you will still receive course credit. If you have any other questions regarding your class credit, speak to your professor.

You must be 18 years of age or older to consent to participate in this research study. If you consent to participate in this research study and to the terms above, please sign your name and indicate the date below. You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep for your records. This project has been reviewed and approved by the GSU Institutional Review Board under tracking number H_13167_____.

Title of Project: Reading, Mood, and Word Completion

Principal Investigator: Arthur Hatton, Department of Psychology, PO Box 8041,

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Faculty Advisor: Michael Nielsen, Department of Psychology, PO Box 8041,

Statesboro

(912) 478-5539

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By completing the surveys, the participant agrees to the informed consent.

I, the undersigned, verify that the above informed consent procedure has been followed.

 Arthur Hatton_____   __1/14/13_____

Investigator Signature   Date

APPENDIX B

RWA SCALE

This survey is part of an investigation of general public opinion concerning a variety of social issues. You will probably find that you agree with some of the statements, and disagree with others, to varying extents. Please indicate your reaction to each statement on the line to the left of each item according to the following scale:

Write down a -4 if you very strongly disagree with the statement.

Write down a -3 if you strongly disagree with the statement.

Write down a -2 if you moderately disagree with the statement.

Write down a -1 if you slightly disagree with the statement.

Write down a +1 if you slightly agree with the statement.

Write down a +2 if you moderately agree with the statement.

Write down a +3 if you strongly agree with the statement.

Write down a +4 if you very strongly agree with the statement.

If you feel exactly and precisely neutral about an item, write down a "0."

Important: You may find that you sometimes have different reactions to different parts of a statement. For example, you might very strongly disagree ("-4") with one idea in a statement, but slightly agree ("+1") with another idea in the same item. When this happens, please combine your reactions, and write down how you feel on balance (a "-3" in this case).

___ 1. The established authorities generally turn out to be right about things, while the radicals and protestors are usually just "loud mouths" showing off their ignorance.

___ 2. Women should have to promise to obey their husbands when they get married.

___ 3. 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.

___ 4. Gays and lesbians are just as healthy and moral as anybody else.

___ 5. It is always better to trust the judgment of the proper authorities in government and religion than to listen to the noisy rabble-rousers in our society who are trying to create doubt in people's minds

___ 6. Atheists and others who have rebelled against the established religions are no doubt every bit as good and virtuous as those who attend church regularly.

___ 7. The only way our country can get through the crisis ahead is to get back to our traditional values, put some tough leaders in power, and silence the troublemakers spreading bad ideas.

___ 8. There is absolutely nothing wrong with nudist camps.

___ 9. Our country needs free thinkers who have the courage to defy traditional ways, even if this upsets many people.

___ 10. Our country will be destroyed someday if we do not smash the perversions eating away at our moral fiber and traditional beliefs.

___ 11. Everyone should have their own lifestyle, religious beliefs, and sexual preferences, even if it makes them different from everyone else.

___ 12. The "old-fashioned ways" and the "old-fashioned values" still show the best way to

live.

___ 13. You have to admire those who challenged the law and the majority's view by protesting for women's abortion rights, for animal rights, or to abolish school prayer.

___ 14. What our country really needs is a strong, determined leader who will crush evil, and take us back to our true path.

___ 15. Some of the best people in our country are those who are challenging our government, criticizing religion, and ignoring the "normal way things are supposed to be done."

___ 16. God's laws about abortion, pornography and marriage must be strictly followed before it is too late, and those who break them must be strongly punished.

___ 17. There are many radical, immoral people in our country today, who are trying to ruin it for their own godless purposes, whom the authorities should put out of action.

___ 18. A "woman's place" should be wherever she wants to be. The days when women are submissive to their husbands and social conventions belong strictly in the past.

___ 19. Our country will be great if we honor the ways of our forefathers, do what the authorities tell us to do, and get rid of the "rotten apples" who are ruining everything.

___ 20. There is no "ONE right way" to live life; everybody has to create their own way.

___ 21. Homosexuals and feminists should be praised for being brave enough to defy "traditional family values.

___ 22. This country would work a lot better if certain groups of troublemakers would just shut up and accept their group's traditional place in society.

APPENDIX C

FRAMING AND ESSAY PAGES

"War on Terror" Condition, Framing Page:

The War on Terror

Due to recent events, some policymakers have

suggested that new policies should be

implemented that may help authorities fight the

War on Terror.

Click next to continue.

"War on Terror" Condition, Essay Page:

The War on Terror

Please write a brief paragraph explaining some reasons why our struggle against international extremist groups could be called a "War on Terror."

Click next when you are finished.

"Law Enforcement" Condition, Framing Page:

The Police and International Extremist Groups

Due to recent events, some policymakers have suggested that new policies should be implemented that may help the police counter the threat of international extremist groups in our country.

Click next to continue.

The Police and International Extremist Groups

Please write a brief paragraph explaining ways that the police could counter the influence of international extremist groups in our country.

Click next when you are finished.

"Control" Condition, Essay Page:

Please write a brief paragraph detailing your normal morning routine during the week.

Click next when you are finished.

APPENDIX D

PANAS-X AND WORD SEARCH

The scale consists of a number of words and phrases that describe different feelings and emotions. Read each item and then mark the appropriate answer in the space next to that word. Indicate <u>to what extent you have felt this way during the past few weeks.</u> Use the following scale to record your answers:

1 very slightly

2 a little

3 moderately

4 quite a bit

5 extremely

 6 not at all

cheerful

disgusted

attentive

bashful

sluggish

daring

surprised

strong

scornful

relaxed

irritable

delighted

inspired

fearless

disgusted with self

sad

calm

afraid

tired

amazed

shaky

happy

timid

alone

alert

upset

angry

bold

blue

shy

active

guilty

joyful

nervous

lonely

sleepy

excited

hostile

proud

jittery

lively

ashamed

at ease

scared

drowsy

Please complete the word search below. When you find a word, please indicate where in the puzzle the first letter is located using the letters A - J on the top row and the number 1 - 10 on the left row (for instance, the top-left letter S is located at A1).

```
     A  B  C  D  E  F  G  H  I  J

 1   S  R  E  T  U  P  M  O  C  O

 2   W  P  H  O  N  E  R  E  E  B

 3   A  M  U  S  I  C  P  Z  S  N

 4   B  T  N  R  O  T  C  A  S  K

 5   B  M  R  K  S  E  D  E  A  O

 6   R  F  O  A  G  O  L  B  R  O

 7   E  L  G  V  I  Z  B  O  G  B

 8   P  A  N  U  I  N  E  L  W  Q

 9   A  G  T  A  B  E  T  G  D  O

10   P  S  C  H  O  O  L  N  I  T
```

Book

Desk

Movie

Paper

Grass

Music

Computer

Phone

Train

School

Beer

Actor

APPENDIX E

WORD COMPLETION TASK

Please complete the following by filling letters in the blanks to create words. Please fill in the blanks with the first word that comes to mind. Write one letter per blank. Some words may be plural. Thank you.

1. TEA _ _

2. CO _ _ SE

3. D _ _ R

4. SP _ _ D

5. BR _ _ K

6. SH _ _

7. FRA _ _

8. TH _ _

9. FO _ _

10. CAR _ _ T

11. M _ R _ ER

12. TR _ _

13. C _ T

14. HO _ S _

15. R _ D _ O

16. H _ _ T

17. DI _ _ S

18. BU _ LD _ NG

19. FO _ _ ER

20. GRA _ _

21. PENC _ _

22. LA _ _ R

23. _ _ UND

24. KI _ _ ED

25. B _ _ K

26. CO _ _ S

27. PLA _ _

28. _ _ CH

29. WAT _ _

39. CHA _ _

40. CL _ _ K

41. COFF _ _

42. LA _ _ _

30. FO _ _

31. DE _ _

32. _ _ NG

33. B _ T _ LE

34. S _ RE

35. P _ _ TURE

36. FL _ W _ R

37. BUR _ _ D

38. K _ _ GS

43. SPR _ _ _

44. _ _ DE

45. SK _ _ L

46. P _ P _ R

47. MOV _ _

48. TR _ _

49. POST _ _

50. M _ _ N

APPENDIX F

POLICY QUESTIONS

Please indicate how much you agree with the following national policies according to the

following scale:

1 – strongly disagree

2 – disagree

3 – slightly disagree

4 – slightly agree

5 – agree

6 – strongly agree

1. Increasing security in public places, such as shopping malls and government buildings.

2. Increasing security at critical infrastructure facilities, such as commercial nuclear power

plants.

3. Banning airline passengers from carrying on board any luggage, including purses,

computers, and briefcases.

4. Requiring everyone to carry a national ID card and show it to authorities on request.

5. Allowing authorities to stop people on the street at random to search their possessions.

6. Allowing authorities to stop people on the street at random to search their possessions,

based on suspected affiliation with terrorist organizations.

7. Allowing authorities to stop people on the street at random to search their possessions,

based on Middle Eastern ethnicity.

8. Allowing authorities to stop people on the street at random to search their possessions, based on having a Muslim name, Muslim religious items, or Muslim religious clothing.

APPENDIX G

DEMOGRAPHICS

Do you consider yourself to be conservative or liberal? Circle a number:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

1 Very Liberal

2 Liberal

3 Slightly Liberal

4 Moderate

5 Slightly Conservative

6 Conservative

7 Very Conservative

What is your sex? ___M ___F

What is your age (years)? ___

What is your religious affiliation (if any)? _____

How often do you attend church services? ___ every week or nearly every week

___ most weeks

___ occasionally

___ rarely

___ never

Have you or someone you are close to been in the military or in law enforcement?

___ YES ___ NO

If yes, what is their relation to you, and in what branch of the military or law enforcement did they serve?

APPENDIX H

IRB DEBRIEFING

The purpose of this study was to see whether an initial picture or description had an effect on participants' thinking. The first phase was a picture and/or description of either the "War on Terror," efforts to stop terrorism using law enforcement, or a blank page. Participants were then asked to write an open-ended question regarding the War on Terror, law enforcement, or their daily activities. Studies have shown that when participants are subconsciously reminded of death, followed by a distractor task (such as the mood assessment you took), and then a word completion task, they are more likely to fill in the words with death-related content. For instance, the word SKU_ _ could be filled in as skunk or skull, the latter being a death-related word.

Some people got a description of the "War on Terror," and this experiment sought to test whether using the phrase "War on Terror" had the same effect as reminding people of death. The study then tested whether reminding people of death had an effect on their opinions of various policy questions, including policies that limit civic freedoms.

Thank you for your participation in this project. If you have any questions about the results, please contact the test administrator.

APPENDIX I

SCRIPT

Thank you for your participation in our study. Everyone should have signed in at the front desk, which allows us to give you the proper credit for your participation. If you have any questions about your participation credit, please ask us questions after the study is completed.

Everyone should be sitting at a computer. The URL for the study should already be in the browser, so all you need to do is start.

Please read the informed consent page and all instructions slowly and carefully and take the survey seriously. You can take as much time as you need, but we do not expect it will take longer than an hour to complete. Your responses will be anonymous and not tied to any individual. If you have any questions, please let me know. Please keep your eyes on your own computer and try not to read anyone else's responses.

You may begin.