A BRIEF QUESTIONNAIRE MEASURE OF TERRORISM ENDORSEMENT

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Abstract
A 12-item Likert format questionnaire provides a valid and reliable measure of terrorism endorsement as a psychological trait. Reliability coefficients range from .87 to .95. Validity data suggests psychological, family and political attitude origins of terrorism, reflected in substantial positive correlations with antisocial traits such as rigid thinking, hostile pleasure, homicide endorsement, violence-proneness, feeling badly treated in childhood, authority paranoia, anarchy endorsement, endorsement of tribal democracy (government serving citizens as members of special interest groups), and warmongering endorsement, and negative correlations with pro-social traits such as endorsement of human rights, public democracy (government serving citizens as members of the community overall) and kindly religious beliefs. Low agreeableness and feeling badly treated in one's childhood family both correlate significantly with terrorism endorsement, suggesting genetic as well as environmental contributions.

Key words: Terrorism, violence-proneness, warmongering, psychological scale
A Brief Questionnaire Measure of Terrorism Endorsement

Terrorism is a problem of increasing concern in the United States, heightened by terrorism from within, as exemplified by Timothy McVeigh’s bombing of the Federal Building in Oklahoma City in 1995, as well as terrorism from foreign sources, dramatically exemplified in the al-Qaeda airplane destruction of the World Trade Center in New York City in 2001.

In response, a collaborative effort led to the recent (2007) publication of the textbook, Psychology of Terrorism, which provides a timely review of expert information and opinions (Bonger, et al, 2007) on the topic. This volume is devoted primarily to responses to terrorism, e.g. treatment for anxious citizens. Chapter 2 presents less than 20 pages of expert opinions and research findings as to causes of terrorism: There is virtually no evidence for explaining terrorists in terms of psychopathology. A detailed study of the demographic data available on members of the German Baader-Meinhof Gang found no differences between them and comparable non-terrorist citizens (p.15). Anger does not alone explain much in terms of terrorist activity.

Indeed, individual psychology of any ilk is dismissed as an explanation: "Explaining self-sacrifice as a result of personal problems is no more persuasive for terrorists than for Mother Theresa or U.S. Medal of Honor winners." Instead, group identification is cited as a key, as well as "anger over group insult" (p. 17). Despite citing motivational religious tracts in the possession of 9/11 terrorists, the editors opine that "there is no special relation between religion and violence". They further speculate that persons without social connections are more easily recruited to terrorist groups and that "beliefs and commitments favor action [by such groups] against injustice." Thus, the editors give mixed messages: some that deny psychological traits
unique to terrorists and others that suggest the importance of psychological traits, specifically anger, beliefs, commitments and resentment of injustice.

Editor Clark McCauley in summarizing this research on terrorism also concludes that religion plays no discernible role in terrorist activity. In dramatic contrast Monica Duffy Tobin, Harvard associate professor of Public Policy at the Kennedy School of Government, opines that religious beliefs are an obvious and central contributor to many wars (Tobin, 2007), resonating with the motivational religious tracts in 9/11 terrorist possessions cited by McCauley, et al.

One can study the psychology of terrorism in terms of the mental and emotional processes of the victims of such attacks. The effect of terrorism on victims has been measured with a 13-item Terrorism Catastrophizing Scale (Sinclair and LoCicero), which taps three dimensions: Rumination ("I have difficulty keeping terrorism out of my mind."), Magnification ("I worry that terrorism will only get worse as time passes.") and Helplessness ("There is little I can do to protect myself from terrorism."). These three dimensions are closely related conceptually and statistically, measured in various ways. The Cronbach coefficient alpha reliability is .80 or better for the three dimensions singly and .85 for the total score on a sample of 503 American adults randomly selected. Validity is found in correlations with lower self-esteem and social connectedness, and with higher feelings of general stress, anxiety and depression, consistent with prior theory. Persons who tend to feel depressed, stressed, socially isolated and anxious in general are more likely than others also to feel anxious about the potential threat of terrorism. This instrument is offered as a tool for assessing and then treating individuals with elevated fear and anxiety related to past and future terrorist attacks.

This work by Sinclair and LoCicero demonstrates that individual persons vary on traits related to their responses to terrorism. It seems reasonable to assume that people will also vary on their willingness to identify with oppressed groups, groups that bear grudges against society
or political systems and will also vary specifically on their willingness to identify with groups of
terrorists, and perhaps even reveal personal willingness to participate in terrorism with little or
no training or incentive from a terrorist group.

Some persons create and lead terrorist groups. Additional persons join these groups. Others fund them. Presumably all such persons endorse terrorism in their minds, having
thoughts, feelings and beliefs consonant with terrorism. These psychological characteristics can
be termed "terrorism endorsement".

The possible causes of terrorism endorsement can be imagined on many levels, such as
mental illness, criminal mentality, political disenfranchisement of citizens from government
policy formation, citizen dissatisfaction with government attention to citizen problems, mistaken
displacement of the source of personal problems onto governments, general social unrest,
religious extremism and combinations of such factors. The fact that evidence for such causes has
not yet been documented does not prove that they do not exist.

These possible causes or contributors to terrorism could be studied by interviewing
captured terrorists or reviewing the opinions of experts in various fields. However, there are
potential problems with such approaches, for experts sometimes are expressing only opinions or
theories and not necessarily verified facts. Even captured terrorist opinions might be
rationalizations or learned propaganda rather than accurate information as to their motives.

Theoretical Assumptions

It seemed reasonable to the present author to assume that persons who by themselves plan
and commit terrorist acts or are recruited by terrorist groups have predisposing psychological
characteristics that differentiate them from others who are not so inclined. One reason for this
assumption is that people vary reliably on their proneness to a related trait: violence
endorsement or violence-proneness. The author has successfully designed a 58-item
questionnaire in Likert scale format that provides highly reliable scores on violence-proneness (McConochie, 2007a). Validity is available in many significant correlations with criminal behavior (number of crimes committed in different categories), incarceration status, interest in music with violent lyrics and in the content of the scale items themselves. For example the Homicide Endorsement subscale of eight items, includes "I know someone I would like to kill if I was sure I would get away with it." The fact that persons differ on their responses to such questionnaire items and to scales made up of them seemed to warrant an attempt to measure psychological attitudes and beliefs endorsing terrorism, "terrorism endorsement."

If a valid and reliable measure of terrorism endorsement could be developed, it would empower researchers considerably, for to study grisly antisocial psychological traits such as violence-proneness and terrorism endorsement, the research scientist must have access to persons with varying degrees of the trait. The scientist rarely has easy direct access to incarcerated criminals and even more rarely to actual terrorists, so it would be helpful to use readily available groups of citizens as research subjects. If ordinary citizens vary on this trait sufficiently to provide a reliable measure of it, then the measuring instrument can be used to study traits that relate to it and might help explain the antecedents and consequences of terrorism. For example, one could explore relationships between terrorism endorsement and measures of religious beliefs, e.g. fundamentalism, religiosity, and personal valuing of religion.

"Terrorism endorsement" is defined by the author as the psychological processes within a potential terrorism perpetrator and directly underlying his or her terrorist thinking and activity.

How individual persons are influenced by factors theorized to underlie terrorism can be explored by measuring the current thoughts or attitudes of individuals. The underlying assumption is that factors contributing to terrorism affect individual citizens differently, with some citizens being more moved toward terrorism than others. Also it is assumed that in most, if
not all, cases a given terrorist's psychological development will result from a unique combination of several influences ranging from genetic predispositions toward disagreeableness and low openness, to the effects of parental abuse, social rejection or humiliation by peers or community authorities, career failure, economic hardship, religious training and less than perfect national governments. It is further assumed that no two terrorists will be exactly alike in their motives and the origins of those motives and that explaining terrorism on an individual psychological level will therefore require an assessment of a complex array of measures.

The specific basis for this expectation of complexity is that the author's At Risk for Violence Test (ARFV) (McConochie, 2007a) is composed of about a dozen psychological facets (social rejection, school or career failure, enjoyment of hostile activities, unwillingness to help stop violence, gun skill and access, etc.). Each of these facets correlates significantly with the eight-item facet within the scale that measures homicide endorsement.

This ARFV instrument total score, based on 58 items, also correlates with literally dozens of other traits that reflect a broad array of social and psychological problem areas (poor emotion handling skills, low agreeableness and conscientiousness, poor self-care skills, poor social skills, anxiety, depression, enjoyment of music with violent lyrics, criminal behavior in adolescents and adults, etc). Individuals with elevated total scores on the ARFV test have unique and varied profiles on the many sub-scales of which it is composed.

The author theorized that whatever the sources of terrorism-proneness -- whether social, family, religious, economic or political -- the effect of these forces will be stored in the individual person's mind. Furthermore, it was assumed that with a well-crafted questionnaire this mental store could be measured reliably, differentiating one person from another.

On the ARFV questionnaire, persons readily report varying levels of endorsement of antisocial attitudes, including endorsement of homicide, enjoying hostile activities and being
unwilling to help stop violence. The resulting measure is highly reliable and valid with samples of "normal" groups of teenagers and adults (e.g. public middle and high school classes, community college classes, church groups). Therefore, it was assumed that such readily-available subjects would also be willing to report varying degrees of endorsement of the antisocial attitude of terrorism endorsement.

Searches of relevant literature revealed no other prior measures of terrorism endorsement per se.

Method for Scale Development

The author is an applied psychologist with experience building psychological measures. Some time after the 2001 terrorist attack on the World Trade Center he received an announcement of a federal government solicitation for proposals to provide tools for screening airport baggage handlers and checkers specifically in regard to illegal items. The author wanted an instrument to measure terrorism endorsement to add to an existing battery of his job applicant screening tests. The entire battery of tests would then be proposed in response to the government solicitation. Therefore, a quick effort was required to meet the deadline.

Based upon decades of clinical experience, including hundreds of diagnostic interviews with mentally disturbed teenagers and adults for the Social Security Administration and with psychotherapy clients, the author wrote a questionnaire of a dozen statements about terrorism to which persons could respond in Likert-scale format. An attempt was made to capture a variety of types of thoughts about terrorism (Figure 1).

While the author's bid by the government was rejected, the instrument has been used in three studies that provide interesting insights. In the first study, the Terrorism Endorsement Scale ("T-12" scale for research presentation) and the author's ARFV questionnaire were administered to 31 community college students. A second study using church members explored
the relationship between terrorism endorsement and the Victoroff measures of felt oppression and perceived oppression. A third study using another group of community college students explored the relationship between terrorism endorsement and 15 other traits related to political behavior.

**Study 1 -- Terrorism Endorsement and Violence-Proneness**

**Method**

Thirty-one community college students (41 percent males) completed the Terrorism Endorsement Scale and the author's 58-item At Risk for Violence scale for extra credit in a psychology class they were taking. Their professor is a friend of the author.

**Results**

To check the relationships between the items in the Terrorism Endorsement scale, a total score consisting of all of them was correlated with each item. Eleven of the 12 items correlated significantly with this total score, the only exception being item 2, which correlated only .26. Another total score was computed: Terrorism total 11, excluding item 2.

The Terrorism Endorsement Scale total score Cronbach alpha reliability was .87 for both the 11 and 12-item scales. Correlations between this score and the ARFV scale scores were in most cases slightly higher for the 12-item version. They correlated at the .05 level (*) or .01 level (**) with several ARFV scores, as follow: Total score .64**, item 44 (Enjoy planning to kill someone) .62**, Rigid Thinking scale .40*, Hostile Anger scale .68**, Homicide Endorsement scale .49**, Closed to Help scale .57**, Not Willing to Help Stop Violence scale .54**, and Test Taking Dishonesty .61**.

ARFV item 44 reads "I would enjoy making a plan to kill someone." In this group the reliability of the ARFV scale in particular is rather low (.60) compared to many other groups tested. These college students are rather "civil", one can surmise. Therefore, any correlations
between the ARFV scores may be underestimates of what they might be were the group of subjects more diverse and the ARFV reliability higher.

The correlations support the interpretation that persons who are more prone to endorsing terrorism are also more prone to endorsing traits known to be related to criminal behavior in general and violence specifically as measured by the ARFV questionnaire.

Higher terrorism endorsement is also associated specifically with enjoying making plans to kill others (0.62**), and rigid thinking (0.40*). Higher terrorism endorsement is associated with expressions of anger in hostile ways (e.g. hitting other people) (0.68**) and endorsing homicide as a resolution of personal problems (0.49**).

Persons who endorse terrorism are more likely to be closed to help with personal problems (0.57**) and not willing to help stop violence in school or the workplace (0.54**). They are more likely to admit to dishonesty in taking tests (0.61**).

*Factor analysis.*

While this initial study sample is small, only 31 persons, and the range of content represented by the questionnaire was limited, only 12 items, factor analysis was performed to explore possible structure among the initial 12 items.

Principle component analysis yielded four factors with Eigen values greater than one. With Varimax rotation the first factor accounted for 43 percent of variance and had highest loadings on items 11, 6, 7, 1 and 3, a general terrorism endorsement factor.

The second factor accounted for 19 percent of variance and had highest loadings on items 8, 4, 5 and 12, items that reflect willingness to join a terrorist organization and commit violent destructive terrorist acts.

The third factor accounted for 14 percent of variance and had highest loadings on items 10 and 9, and appears to reflect a terrorism-backer mindset.
The fourth factor accounted for 13 percent of variance with highest loadings on items 2 (anger at the whole world) and 1 (might be justified in killing people who refuse to help you).

The results of this factor analysis demonstrate how item clusters can be obtained to help the researcher formulate hypotheses about the makeup of the mind of the terrorist.

Study # 2 -- Terrorism Endorsement and Felt and Attributed Oppression

The Terrorism Endorsement Scale was included in a study of the Victoroff Oppression Questionnaire (OQ). The OQ is a 32-item scale measuring feelings of oppression within an individual taking the questionnaire (16 items) and attributes by a group perceived by this person as oppressive (16 items). The scale was written by Jeff Victoroff, M.D., a psychiatrist who has a private practice and teaches at U.S.C. in Los Angeles. The scale also asks by whom one feels oppressed (parents, the police, another government, another religion, etc.), and for what reason (my race or ethnic group, my religion, my sexual orientation, etc.).

When the present author met Dr. Victoroff, the OQ had been administered to only one sample, 52 14-year old children in the Gaza Strip. The author offered to do a study to help explore the reliability and validity properties of the OQ. Dr. Victoroff kindly granted permission and provided his original data file for analysis as part of the present study. His data file consisted of item scores for the 32 OQ items and scores on the Beck Depression and Anxiety scales.

Method

A 163-item questionnaire was written in 5-option Likert scale format measuring many traits. While the present paper is focused on terrorism, details of the Victoroff study are presented to provide a full context for understanding the relationships between terrorism endorsement and the other variables. The variables were the following:

- The present author’s 80-item Social Disenfranchisement Scale (McConochie, 2007b). This
scale measures the five Eidelson worldviews (Helplessness, Vulnerability, Injustice, Distrust and Superiority) at both the individual and group levels. It correlates positively with several global antisocial traits, including warmongering, and negatively with several pro-social traits: Human Rights endorsement, Sustainability endorsement, and Positive Foreign Policy endorsement.

- The OQ (32 items).
- The 12-item Terrorism Endorsement scale.
- The author’s 10-item Warmongering endorsement scale (McConochie, 2007b), which correlates positively with violence-proneness (.67), Social Disenfranchisement (.74), Military Dictatorship Endorsement (.57), Right Wing Authoritarianism (.59), Social Dominance Orientation (.46) and Religious Fundamentalism (.60), and negatively with Human Rights endorsement (-.51), Sustainability endorsement (-.69) and endorsement of a Positive Foreign Policy (-.74).

- Four general national government orientation items: (e.g., "Our nation should be guided by the principle: Might makes right; survival of the fittest").
- Five government type endorsement items ranging from anarchy to public democracy (government serving the community overall, the common good).
- Five items measuring the Big Five personality traits.
- Five items measuring belief that one belongs to "a group that is treated differently and unpleasantly because of my or our..."
  - race or ethnic group
  - religion or spiritual beliefs
  - gender
  - sexual orientation (gay, lesbian, etc.)
• some other reason."

• These five items were created to capture content informally solicited in the original Victoroff questionnaire.

• Ten items measuring mistreatment by parents, teachers, the police, another government, members of another religion, members of the opposite sex, etc. These items also were created to capture content informally solicited in the original Victoroff instrument.

• The 163-item instrument was administered to 35 church members in return for a lecture about the findings. The persons ranged in age from 27 to 87, mean 63.6, standard deviation 14.0. They ranged in education from 8 to 24 years (mean 15.9). Twenty-four percent were males. They were from a mainstream church (one of these: Catholic, Episcopalian, Presbyterian or Lutheran).

Results

The many scales and subscales measured in this study had generally acceptable spreads of scores and thus adequate reliabilities. The 10 section scores for Social Disenfranchisement had alpha coefficients ranging from .59 to .87. The total scores for this Social Disenfranchisement scale were .92 (individual), .89 (group) and .95 (overall total).

The SD scales are “Social Disenfranchisement”, the present author’s term for the dimensions of the Eidelson worldviews. They are measured at the individual and group levels respectively, for a total of 10 scale measures and scores for total individual disenfranchisement, total group disenfranchisement and grand total disenfranchisement.

The Victoroff basic scale scores are OQ Feelings of Oppression, OQ Attributes of oppressing organizations and a total OQ score. The respective alpha reliabilities in this study were .95, .95 and .97. The Warmongering and Terrorism endorsement scale alphas were .86 and .91 respectively.
The spread of scores for these scales and for the Big Five measures were adequate to excellent. For example, the KR-21 reliability of the scale with the lowest spread (Emotional Stability, s.d. .73) was .89.

Eight of the 10 items created to capture sources of oppression provided a very reliable measure (alpha .93) of what the present author calls "Authority Paranoia".

The two items created to capture feelings of oppression related to gay or lesbian status and sexual orientation problems also provided a reliable measure of this dimension (alpha = .86).

*Validity data.*

Correlations between the OQ scales and the other variables are presented in Table 1.

There are many significant correlations between the Felt and Attributed Oppression (OQ) measures and the sub-scales of the Social Disenfranchisement measures (rows 1-10) and summarized in the total scores (rows 11-13). The summary correlations of .63, .74 and .73 for Felt Oppression are quiet substantial, as they are for Attributed Oppressiveness (.60, .71 and .70). The highest correlations are with the Group Injustice sub-scales of the Social Disenfranchisement battery (row 6), .80 and .79. These correlations imply that "oppression" as measured by the OQ scales is very similar to measured feelings of injustice and that felt and perceived oppression is substantially related to general feelings of social disenfranchisement in general.

Social Disenfranchisement appears from other studies to be a measure of antisocial tendencies, not simply feelings of unhappiness or resentful views of the world caused directly by hard life experiences. Thus, we would expect the OQ scales to correlate with other variables that would reflect antisocial tendencies. And, indeed, this is the case.

For example, the OQ scales correlate significantly with Terrorism endorsement (row 17, .37* and .41*). Persons who feel oppressed and see social organizations as oppressive tend also
to endorse terrorism as a response to that oppression. They also endorse warmongering as a response, as reflected in the significant correlations between the OQ scales and warmongering endorsement (row 18, .46** and .40*).

The antisocial element of the OQ scales is further reflected in negative correlations with the Big Five personality traits, which associated with pro-social behavior, such as constructive job attitudes and success in work and school. In the present study, 18 out of 20 correlations are negative, five at a statistically significant level (rows 19-22).

The OQ scales also correlate significantly with the 8-item Authority Paranoia measure, which reflects a perception of having been mistreated by persons in positions of authority, beginning in one's childhood home. The correlations are in row 24 (.51** and .48**).

The correlations specifically between feeling treated differently and unpleasantly by various authorities and terrorism and warmongering are presented in Table 2. These correlations are interesting in several specifics. First, it is reasonable to assume that problems begin in childhood, within one's own family, as that is the first social unit to which we belong. Perceiving one's childhood family as an unfair place appears to set one up for perceiving all subsequent authorities with a jaundiced eye, and to perceive other groups with fear. These groups include governments.

Second, for some persons, feeling mistreated by authorities, beginning in childhood, seems to set one up for terrorism endorsement but not warmongering. Authority paranoia does not generate direct hostility toward other people in retaliation against society as a member of a large public group (warring army, etc.) but instead as a secretive private individual or a member of a relatively small "gang" that lashes out in ambush. Perhaps persons who fear authority have difficulty identifying with normal social groups, including traditional military forces. Instead, they operate as loners or as members of socially isolated quasi-groups, terrorist gangs or cells.
Third, feeling mistreated by authorities does not in itself predispose one to warmongering endorsement. Feeling socially disenfranchised, in addition to authority paranoia, however, apparently can lead to warmongering endorsement, as the correlation between Authority Paranoia and Social Disenfranchisement is .53 and between Social Disenfranchisement and Warmongering endorsement at the group level .58.

Further evidence of the antisocial nature of the OQ scales is evident in correlations between them and certain additional items, presented in the study questionnaire as items to which one is asked to indicate degree of disagreement or agreement, as follow:

My national government should do what best serves the interests of...

135. ...all the citizens of our nation considered together more than any one special interest group (business, labor, the elderly, etc.).

136. ...our nation’s interests, at the expense of other nations, enforced by military action if necessary.

137. Our nation should be guided by the principle: “Might makes right; survival of the fittest.”

138. Our nation should be guided by the principle: “Cooperate, compromise and help others; survival of the kindest.”

The next questionnaire items ask how desirable or undesirable one thinks the following forms of government are:

139. Anarchy. No government at all, just roving bands of armed bandits who rob, kill and do whatever they want.

140. Military dictatorship, headed by a powerful military leader to controls everything and everyone in the country and prevents anyone else from replacing him.

141. Monarchy, headed by a king or queen, with a supportive parliament of elected representatives. They run the country as they “benevolently” see fit.
Tribal democracy. Elected officials run the government to serve the short-term economic interests of the special interest groups (“economic tribes”) that helped them get elected.

Public democracy. Elected officials run the government to serve the current and long-term best interests of the community overall, including sustainable programs such as conservation of resources and control of pollution and global warming. No one special interest group or groups are favored.

Correlations between the scales and these government attitude items are presented in Table 3. In row one of this table all of the six major scales correlate negatively though not statistically significantly with item 135 (promoting government serving the community overall versus special interest groups). Felt Oppression and Social Disenfranchisement at the group level correlate significantly with item 136, reflecting a selfish, militaristic foreign policy. In item 137 an even more aggressive militaristic foreign policy is endorsed by persons higher on Social Disenfranchisement at the group level (.49**), higher on Felt Oppression (.35*) and higher on Warmongering (.45**). Item 138 reflects a converse foreign policy of cooperating and compromising with other nations, which is consistently disavowed by persons higher on all of the six scales.

In terms of government type endorsements, the correlations for items 139-143 are consistent with prior research findings by the author:

Anarchy is endorsed by persons higher on Terrorism and Warmongering endorsement ("terrorists" and "warmongers").

Military dictatorship tends to be endorsed strongest by warmongers and terrorists but also by persons higher on the other four scale measures.

Monarchy is endorsed in this study by persons higher on terrorism.

Tribal democracy, government serving special interest groups, tends to be rather
consistently endorsed by persons higher on all of the six antisocial scales.

In contrast, a new, hypothetical form of democracy serving the best interests of the community overall, as opposed to any special interest groups, is consistently disavowed by persons higher on all of the six [antisocial?] scales.

This data appears to document that felt oppression and perceived oppressiveness as measured by the Victoroff scales are reflections of antisocial tendencies. Persons who feel oppressed and who see social organizations as oppressive tend to have antisocial attitudes about government, disavowing government that serves the common good and endorsing types of government that promote selfishness and hostility.

Warmongering itself correlated with the other variables in a manner that is generally consistent with prior findings by the author: Social Disenfranchisement group .57**, Social Disenfranchisement total .48**, Felt Oppression .46**, Attributed Oppression .40*, total Oppression .44**, and Terrorism endorsement .33.

The one exception is the modest correlation with Terrorism endorsement (.33), which is lower that in most other studies, perhaps because these churchgoers are relatively civil persons. In a study of community college students reported below, for example, the correlation is .54**.

*Comparing American churchgoers to Gaza Strip teenagers.*

Another way to explore the meaning of the Victoroff scales is to compare the scores of his data for 52 14-year-olds living in the Gaza Strip with the churchgoers from Oregon. If we view the OQ scales as likely to reflect external social and political conditions, we would expect the Gaza Strip persons to feel more oppressed than Eugene churchgoers, as the Gaza Strip is fraught with terrorist and military violence. Gaza Strip scores are all slightly higher than those for the Eugene churchgoers, but none were significantly higher.

Thus, while it may seem strange, there is no significant difference between the American
churchgoers and Gaza Strip teenagers on felt or perceived oppressiveness. The Gaza Strip teenagers live in a country where the media report frequent terrorist bombings, etc., while no such events plague citizens of Eugene, Oregon. This suggests that the OQ scales do not reflect objective social reality so much as personal perceptions of social events, perceptions heavily personalized by underlying antisocial tendencies originating in childhood families.

Perhaps if a child feels loved by his parents or other adults, family members and/or peers, he or she can weather community violence without feeling "oppressed". If the person has been mistreated by parents or others, he/she may then be predisposed to perceive social stress and political threat as an antisocial, retaliatory person.

The Authority Paranoia scale created by eight questionnaire items provides a measure of such apparent mistreatment and subsequent generalization to all authorities. The correlations between this scale and the other variables throw light on this issue: Social Disenfranchisement individual .61**, Social Disenfranchisement group .53**, Social Disenfranchisement total .60**, Felt Oppression .51**, Attributed Oppression .48**, Terrorism Endorsement .52**, Warmongering .17, Big Five Agreeableness -.45**, Big Five Conscientiousness -.39*, Big Five Emotional Stability -.28, Big Five Openness -.20, Gay/Lesbian Paranoia .41*.

Thus, we see a strong relationship between Authority Paranoia and many measures of antisocial tendencies. There are also significant correlations with two of the Big Five traits, complicating the picture. Similar negative correlations have been found by the author between antisocial behavior (e.g. violence-proneness and incarceration) and these Big Five traits, especially Agreeableness. Perhaps genetically disagreeable and lazy persons elicit negative reactions from parents that escalate into significant perceptions by children of parents as unfair or oppressive. This then generalizes to negative attitudes toward authority figures in general and toward government of benevolent type (public democracy).
Government by minority control, especially military dictatorship, or no government at all (anarchy), is endorsed by socially disenfranchised, "paranoid" persons, perhaps as a fantasy expression of desires for rebellion or retaliation against what is perceived in other spheres as oppressive authority.

*Anxiety, Depression and Felt and Perceived Oppression.*

In Victoroff’s Gaza Strip sample, scores on the Beck Depression and Anxiety scales were available. The correlations between them and the OQ scores were mild but significant in three of for cases: Felt Oppression and Depression .29*, and Anxiety .31*; Perceived Oppression and Depression .27, and Anxiety .28*.

Thus, we see a modest positive relationship between felt and perceived oppression on the one hand and symptoms of emotional instability on the other. These findings are consistent with the correlations between Felt and Perceived Oppression and the Big Five Emotional Stability score ( -.36* and -.43*), Table 1, above. Thus, low Emotional Stability, along with low Agreeableness and low Conscientiousness may contribute to the origins of problems with parents and other authorities, problems which contribute to depression and anxiety and color perceptions of the world, seeing it as an oppressive place against which to rebel.

The present data suggest that felt and perceived oppression seem to reflect an underlying antisocial disposition. Thus, by implication, some persons apparently can live in a socially chaotic, physically dangerous community and not feel “oppressed”.

Perhaps persons who do not have conflicts with authority stemming from childhood, or have been able to resolve or compensate for such conflicts, are able to weather life’s greater stressors without resentment and retaliation. By implication, terrorism and war do not necessarily generate a retaliatory response from overtly threatened persons. Only persons with underlying anti-authority problems may be the ones most prone to respond with counter-
productive feelings and responses, such as excessive military action rather than other more peace-promoting responses. Not all Americans would be expected to endorse conventional war as a reasonable response to the terrorist attack on the Twin Towers. Those who have underlying feelings of oppression and authority paranoia would be expected to endorse war most quickly.

Regarding terrorism specifically, an examination of the correlations between terrorism endorsement and the other variables of this study is enlightening. The Pearson Product Moment correlations are: Felt Oppression .37*, Attributed Oppression .41*, Total Oppression .40*, Social Disenfranchisement Individual .33, Social Disenfranchisement Group .42*, Social Disenfranchisement total .40*, Warmongering .33, Big Five Agreeableness -.56**, Felt Mistreated ("treated differently and unpleasantly") by Parents .55**, and by Police .57**, and by local government .36*, and by other governments .39*, Authority Paranoia score .52**, Belong to a group mistreated because of our race .50**, our religion .33*, for some other unspecified reason .44*, felt mistreated by other groups .44*, Endorse Anarchy .80**, and Endorse Military Dictatorships .64**.

These many significant correlations are of interest for several reasons. One is that they appear in a group of American churchgoers who we would have no reason to think are particularly unusual citizens, other than perhaps because the church is led by a very compassionate and kind pastor of long standing in the community. He has told the author that he has both conservative and liberal parishioners. He seems to attract persons of many sorts, including gay and lesbian parishioners. The participants in the study were all volunteers.

We have evidence that "normal" citizens vary on terrorism endorsement, with some more likely than others to endorse it, even though they live in a peaceful community. Those that do endorse terrorism tend to report having felt badly treated in their own childhood homes. They appear to have projected resentment about this onto all authorities, from police to governments,
and even to other governments. They see themselves as belonging to oppressed and mistreated groups, perhaps identifying with groups that report such mistreatment as an indirect expression of unresolved feelings of mistreatment as children at home.

They are low on the Big Five personality trait of Agreeableness, as are many violence-prone persons in general. Thus, they may be genetically predisposed to an argumentative, obstinate personality that has set them up for conflict first with their own parents and siblings and then with other authorities and perhaps people in general. Politically, they are inclined to endorse authoritarian governments or no government at all instead of government serving citizens as members of the community overall. This suggests that they do not identify with the community per se and seek revenge through simple terrorist destruction of society.

Study #3 -- The Relationship between Terrorism Endorsement and 15 Other Traits

Method

A third study was conducted with another sample of 42 community college students. This study was offered over the author's web site, www.politicalpsychologyresearch.com, in the spring term, 2007. The subjects were community college students taking psychology classes with a professor friend of the author. The students earned extra credit in their classes for participating. They took three questionnaires, each measuring several traits. They immediately and automatically received a report of their personal scores on the traits measured. All traits were measured with scales developed by the author over several years. All of the trait measures have good or excellent reliability and validity data in other studies. Most of the students completed all three questionnaires. The sample sizes varied from correlation to correlation but ranged from 39 to 42. This study is unusual in the large number of items required of the students (92, 151 and 123 respectively for the three questionnaires). It is also unique in the large number of variables studied (16) on a single sample of persons, permitting exploration of the relationships between
all of the traits.

**Results: Basic Trait Statistics**

Cronbach alpha reliabilities in this particular study ranged in the .80's and .90's for the most part and in all cases were high enough to reveal significant correlations between variables. All of the scales except scale 13, Direct Participation in Government (by citizens), are discussed in detail in the Political Psychology Research Manual (McConochie, 2007b). Scale 13 is a new one consisting of items reflecting interest in direct voter participation in government decisions, e.g. about the budget. In all of the scales, items are presented in Likert scale format, five options (e.g. Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree), except the violence-proneness test, which has four options.

The correlations were generally insignificant between the 16 trait measures and age, gender and education. However, two clusters of correlations were significant and of interest. The antisocial traits tended to correlate positively with male gender, as in prior studies. For example, maleness correlated .37* with Warmongering, .35* with Violence-proneness and .34* with Religious Fundamentalism. Males were more likely than females to have elevated scores on these three traits. Years of education was positively correlated with Religiousness (.33*), Endorsement of a Meta-religion (.46**), and Personal Valuing of Religion (.43**).

**Correlations between variables**

The Pearson product moment correlations between the variables are presented in Table 4, with effects of age, gender and education partialled out. Correlations of .34 are significant at the .05 level. Correlations of .40 are significant at the .01 level. While the present paper is focused on terrorism, the correlations between all the variables are presented for context.

**Specific trait correlates.**

The relationship between each of the 16 traits and the remaining 15 traits can be
summarized by studying each row or column in the correlation matrix. Below, the term "strongly" is used to refer to correlations of .60 and above, the term "moderately" for correlations between .45 and .59, and "mildly" for correlations of .34 to .44.

1. Warmongering is associated:
   - **Strongly** with higher violence-proneness, and lower Kindly Religious Beliefs.
   - **Moderately** with higher Terrorism endorsement and Authoritarianism endorsement, and lower Human Rights endorsement, Desire for Government Services, a Positive Foreign Policy and Sustainable Policies and Programs.
   - **Mildly** with higher Religious Fundamentalism, and lower Public Democracy Endorsement, Citizen Participation in Government, and desired Government services.

2. Terrorism Endorsement is associated:
   - **Strongly** with higher Violence-Proneness, lower Kindly Religious Beliefs and lower Human Rights endorsement.
   - **Moderately** with higher Warmongering, and lower Public Democracy endorsement, and Desired Government Services.
   - **Mildly** with lower Positive Foreign Policy endorsement.

   Thus, Terrorism endorsement as measured by the present 12-item scale appears in this study to suggest an extreme, antisocial and violent disposition that is associated with endorsement of invasive, preemptive war and repudiates human kindness in many forms: religious beliefs of a kindly nature, human rights, government serving citizens as members of the community overall, desires for improved government services and endorsement of a positive, helpful foreign policy.

   The repudiation of Desired Government Services is especially interesting, as it implies anger not just with present government but with the social institution of government itself;
terrorists don't want *better* government, they seem to wish to destroy government, or at least
citizen confidence in government.

However, the substantial correlations with the several other traits specific to this study
suggests that Terrorism endorsement is generally not a rational, ideological statement of
intention specifically to achieve some carefully crafted political goal, such as undermining
citizen confidence in a specific government. Rather, it appears to be an expression of a general
anti-social, anti-civilization worldview, trait or disposition. While specific terrorist leaders may
be motivated by a carefully crafted political goal, they could expect persons high on the trait of
Terrorism endorsement to be willing to follow their lead without having or understanding any
carefully crafted goals of their own. They simply harbor a nasty disposition that orients them
toward terrorist action. And from this data we might expect some persons high on the Terrorism
endorsement trait to engage in terrorist activity with little or no leadership or carefully crafted
political goals at all.

For example, the present author recently interviewed a claimant for Social Security benefits
who, as an expression of mental illness and a terribly abusive childhood, had an irrational
impulse to immolate herself at the Olympic Track and Field Trials in Eugene, Oregon. She said
she had no idea where this impulse came from. Fortunately, she did not act on it. One can
imagine such an individual having a similar but highly destructive impulse to drop a lighted
match in a vehicle fuel tank in the midst of such a public event. The resulting explosion and fire
could kill the perpetrator and many innocent citizens. Such an act could be interpreted as a
terrorist doing, with an investigation searching for group connection and political motivation,
though there would be none.

3. Violence-Proneness is associated:

- *Strongly* with higher Warmongering, Terrorism endorsement, and lower Kindly Religious
Beliefs.

- *Mildly* with higher Religious Fundamentalism, lower endorsement of Citizen Participation in Government, a Positive Foreign Policy, and Sustainable Policies and Programs.

4. Authoritarianism Endorsement is associated:

- *Moderately* with higher Warmongering and Religious Fundamentalism.
- *Mildly* with higher Violence-Proneness, lower endorsement of Human Rights, Citizen Participation in Government, a Positive Foreign Policy, and Sustainable Policies and Programs.

5. Religious Fundamentalism is associated:

- *Moderately* with higher Authoritarianism endorsement, Religiousness and Valuing of Religion.
- *Mildly* with higher Warmongering, Violence-Proneness and lower endorsement of Public Democracy.

6. Kindly Religious Beliefs are associated:

- *Strongly* with lower Warmongering, Terrorism endorsement and Violence-Proneness, and with higher Human Rights endorsement.
- *Moderately* with lower Desire for Improved Government Services.
- *Mildly* with higher Religiousness, Personal Valuing of Religion, Citizen Participation in Government, endorsement of a Positive Foreign Policy, and Sustainable Policies and Programs.

7. Religiousness is associated:
• *Strongly* with higher Personal Valuing of Religion.

• *Moderately* with higher Kindly Religious Beliefs, Meta-Religion endorsement and Citizen Participation in Government.

• *Mildly* with lower endorsement of Public Democracy.

8. Meta-Religion Endorsement is associated:

• *Strongly* with higher Personal Valuing of Religion.

• *Mildly* with higher Religiousness, and lower endorsement of Public Democracy.

9. Personal Valuing of Religion is associated:

• *Strongly* with higher Religiousness and endorsement of a Meta-Religion.

• *Moderately* with higher Religious Fundamentalism and lower endorsement of Public Democracy.

10. Human Rights Endorsement is associated:

• *Strongly* with higher Kindly Religious Beliefs, Improved Government Services endorsement, Positive Foreign Policy Endorsement and Sustainable Policies and Programs endorsement and lower Terrorism endorsement.

• *Moderately* with lower Warmongering endorsement and Violence Proneness.

• *Mildly* with higher Citizen Participation in Government and lower Authoritarianism endorsement.

11. Public Democracy Endorsement if associated:

• *Moderately* with lower Terrorism Endorsement, Violence-Proneness, and Valuing Religion Personally.

• *Mildly* with higher Kindly Religious Beliefs, and lower Warmongering, Religious Fundamentalism, and Meta-Religion Endorsement.
12. Public School Proportional Budget endorsement is associated with:
   - None of the other variables to a statistically significant level in this study.

13. Citizen Direct Participation in Government is associated:
   - Moderately with higher Religiousness.
   - Mildly with higher Kindly Religious Beliefs, and Human Rights Endorsement, and lower Warmongering, Violence Proneness, and Authoritarianism.

14. Desire for Improved Government Services endorsement is associated:
   - Moderately with higher Kindly Religious Beliefs and Positive Foreign Policy Endorsement, and lower Warmongering, Terrorism Endorsement, and Violence Proneness.

15. Positive Foreign Policy Endorsement is associated:
   - Moderately with higher Desire for Improved Government Services, and lower Warmongering.
   - Mildly with higher Kindly Religious Beliefs and lower Terrorism endorsement, Violence-Proneness and Authoritarianism endorsement.

16. Sustainable Policies and Programs endorsement is associated:
   - Strongly with higher Improved Government Services endorsement, Positive Foreign Policy endorsement, and Human Rights endorsement.
   - Moderately with lower Warmongering endorsement and Violence Proneness, and higher Kindly Religious Beliefs.

For the most part, these correlations are consistent with those in other prior studies by the author. One exception is the correlation between Kindly Religious Beliefs and Religiousness, which is .43 in this study but was insignificant in a prior study. While the present sample of persons is not large, the author has found that community college students in some respects are
close to a random sample. For example, in one study their mean scores on Big Five personality traits were almost identical to those of a national sample of tens of thousands. Thus, overall, the relationships between the variables in this study are considered likely to represent what would be found in a large random sample of the U.S. population.

Initially, just two items were used to measure Citizen Participation in Government. These two items had low reliability (.33) but correlated significantly with several other variables, suggesting that an improved measure of the trait might be worth developing. These items reflected direct interest in voting on government policy decisions. They correlated significantly with Warmongering (-.38), Terrorism endorsement (-.55), Violence Proneness (-.49), Kindly Religious Beliefs (.49), and Public Democracy endorsement (.51). The 6-item measure used in the present study has a higher reliability but a broader meaning, trust in citizen participation in government in a broader sense than just policy decision-making.

Factor analysis.

While the sample size was not large enough to provide data for a confident factor analysis, an exploratory factor analysis was performed. Principle components analysis with Varimax rotation yielded four factors with Eigenvalues of 1 or greater. The factors and their highest loadings are presented in Table 5:

The first factor appears to be a basic pro-civilization dimension, reflecting respect and concern for the environment and human rights, a desire for improved government services, and a positive, constructive attitude toward other nations.

The second factor is a pro-constructive government factor, reflecting endorsement of direct participation by citizens in government decisions, government serving the best interests of the community overall (as opposed to special interest groups), kindly religious beliefs (tolerance of religious diversity), and eschewing violence and terrorism. The very heavy negative loading
on terrorism endorsement (-.81), suggests that terrorism endorsement in many cases may be essentially and simply a statement of extreme revulsion for or repudiation of the social institution of government, consistent with the interpretation given earlier.

The third factor is a valuing religion factor, reflecting much personal use of religion as a life guide, frequent religious activity and endorsement of meta-religious practices to unite persons of all faiths around the world.

The final factor is a selfish, authoritarian factor with elements of religious fundamentalism and disapproval of a model of public school budgeting of a proportional nature versus one driven by union contracts.

A rough estimate of the number of persons who hold each of the four factor belief systems can be gleaned by computing the percentage of persons with mean item scores at or above 3.5, as presented in Table 6.

From these percentages we get a picture of citizens who are predominantly pro-civilization (100%), most of whom favor improved and helpful government both at home and internationally (90%), some of whom find personal value in some form of religion (25%), and a tiny minority of whom are authoritatively self-righteous and selfish (approximately 1%).

These percentages are compatible with similar ones on larger samples of persons studied by the author and reported in his web site publications (McConochie, 2007).

Discussion and Conclusion

A brief measure of terrorism endorsement has been developed. We can debate whether terrorism endorsement is a trait, or may be better described by some other term: "attitude", "disposition", "bias", "prejudice", "antisocial hostility", etc. Regardless of what it is termed, this psychological phenomenon appears to be readily measured in a reliable and valid way with a brief scale in Likert format.
These findings suggest that political attitudes, religious beliefs and pro-social/anti-social traits are all intimately interwoven. Understanding these complex relationships can enlighten thinking about government activity and planning. The implications are important, especially in today's political climate of serious problems on many topics, such as religiously colored political campaigns, special interest group control of legislative decisions through lobbyists in the United States, and international problems with terrorism, militarism and warmongering.

The present study suggests that the psychological underpinnings of political attitudes are complex. Two different basic religious orientations are pro-social (Kindly Religious Beliefs) and anti-social (Fundamentalist Beliefs) respectively. Thus, to the extent that religion is allowed to directly influence politics, a nation will be at risk for war if fundamentalism predominates. If leaders with kindly religious beliefs predominate, peace appears more likely. Authoritarianism is also directly associated with warmongering and related anti-social traits. To the extent that authoritarian leaders gain control of governments, nations appear at greater risk for conflict.

Fortunately, the strong majority of citizens appear to be pro-social in their beliefs and attitudes. Appealing to the majority of citizens of this type can help politicians guide their nations along peaceful, cooperative courses within their nation and with other nations.

These studies are, in effect, pilot studies. While the samples of persons were large enough to obtain reliable measures, one cannot generalize confidently to a national population without larger samples. Data on large relatively random national samples of adults will permit more confident generalizations.

This initial data provides a tentative psychological profile of the terrorist. The fact that the profile includes a disinterest in help with personal problems adds a complicating factor to protecting society. Simply making psychological treatment available to citizens with obvious emotional problems will not reach all terrorist-prone persons. Terrorist-prone persons may have
to be identified among persons other than persons in mental health clinics. They may be more often found among populations of criminally active persons or persons who are overtly hostile, rigid and angry and otherwise prone to violence as manifested by publicly observable behaviors, such as fighting, threats and hostile verbal statements.

Comprehensive measures may require major shifts in society and government funding, priorities. Terrorism is not a disposition of rare and foreign origin. It is a behavior that seems to have roots in the human condition itself. Terrorism attitudes seem likely to originate in one's childhood family. Guiding young citizens in family planning, parenting skills, preparing for employment, communication skills and maintaining constructive social networks may help guard against persons who feel differently and unpleasantly treated and who raise children that do. Research to clarify possible ameliorating influences, such as love and support from school teachers, understanding employers and a stable economy that provides decent jobs for persons of all ability levels may prove valuable. Government funding focused on these issues rather than for traditional military actions against foreign terrorist groups may prove more effective in reducing future overt terrorism.

Further studies might add new items to the original terrorism endorsement scale, with content reflecting broader theory about the origins and correlates of terrorist thinking. For example, one could add items about attitudes toward government, political parties, poverty, difficulty finding or keeping employment, social class resentments, mental illness symptoms, feelings of helplessness and wishes for power. Additional such items that correlate substantially with a total score made up of such items will add depth and texture to the psychological trait of "terrorism endorsement".

Further studies can also compare groups of persons, such as incarcerated persons versus non-incarcerated, young adults versus middle aged, Muslims versus Christians, and evangelical
Christians versus persons of mainstream-denomination faiths.

Researchers are invited to use the McConochie T-12 scale without permission from the author, though it is copyrighted and thus not available for commercial use without prior arrangements. It is hoped that the instrument will facilitate meaningful studies to help protect communities and nations from terrorist acts. It might also be a useful part of a battery of tests for screening applicants for jobs where terrorist activity is of special concern, such as in airports.

References


Figure 1. Terrorism Endorsement Scale

T-12 Scale, Copyright 2001 William A. McConochie, Ph.D.

Circle only one number to indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each item below using the following code:

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<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
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<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1  2  3  4  5  1. If people refused to help you with your problems, you might be justified in killing them.
1  2  3  4  5  2. If you are mad at the whole world, then it makes sense to destroy the whole world.
1  2  3  4  5  3. The United States deserved the September 11, 2001 destruction of the World Trade Center buildings in New York City.
1  2  3  4  5  4. I have the courage to die in committing an act of terrorism.
1  2  3  4  5  5. I would be willing to join a terrorist organization.
1  2  3  4  5  6. A good way to bring down a corrupt government is to kill its civilians in terrorist acts.
1  2  3  4  5  7. People who feel very mistreated by a country have the right to commit terrorist acts against that country.
1  2  3  4  5  8. I would enjoy steering a big plane into the Pentagon building or another military headquarters, to destroy it.
1  2  3  4  5  9. If I were wealthy, I would be willing to donate money to a terrorist organization.
1  2  3  4  5  10. I would feel honored if I were invited to join a terrorist group.
1  2  3  4  5  11. I want to learn more about how to become a terrorist.
1  2  3  4  5  12. I admire terrorists who die for their cause.
Table 1
Correlations Between Felt Oppression, Attributed Oppressiveness, Authority Paranoia and Gay/Lesbian Persecution versus Other Scales

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* = significant at the .05 level, ** at the .01 level
Table 2

Correlations between authority paranoia items and terrorism and warmongering

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Table 4

*Pearson Product Moment Correlations Between Traits*

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Table 5

*Rotated Factors*

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<td>4) Authoritarian-selfishness factor</td>
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*Estimated percentage holding cited factor (mean item score => 3.5)