CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN IMAGES OF TERRORISTS AND PREFERRED APPROACHES TO COUNTERTERRORISM: THE MODERATING ROLE OF IDEOLOGICAL ORIENTATIONS

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Abstract

Two studies examined the moderating effects of right wing authoritarianism and social dominance orientation on the relationship between terrorist images (soldiers vs. criminals) and preference for counterterrorist actions (military aggression vs. criminal prosecution). Study 1 indicated that the perception of Al-Qaeda terrorists as soldiers was related to preference for military counterterrorism, especially among people high in social dominance orientation. The relationship between the perception of Al-Qaeda terrorists as criminals and preference for the criminal prosecution of terrorists was strengthened among those high in right wing authoritarianism. Study 2 showed that when terrorists were framed as soldiers, social dominance orientation was related to support for military counterterrorism. When terrorists were framed as criminals, only people who endorsed high levels of right wing authoritarianism supported criminal prosecution of terrorists. Social dominance orientation was related to opposition towards military counterterrorism when terrorists were not perceived as soldiers or framed as criminals. It was also related to opposition towards criminal prosecution of terrorists when terrorists were framed as criminals. The findings suggest that different terrorist images are related to preference for counterterrorism that corresponds with the content of the images and individuals' chronic ideological orientations.

Key words: Terrorist Images, Counterterrorism, Right Wing Authoritarianism, Social Dominance Orientation

The question of the most effective and appropriate approach towards counterterrorism is brought to public awareness with every major terrorist attack. Which counterterrorist policies are finally preferred seems to be shaped largely by two factors: the framing of the image of terrorists by the media and politicians (e.g. Norris, Kern & Just, 2003) and the dominating ideological 'climate' (e.g. the emphasis on conservative vs. liberal political values, e.g. Farer, 2008). Recent psychological analyses indicate that different perceptions of terrorists and terrorism are associated with different understandings of the goals of counterterrorism and preferences for different counterterrorist actions (e.g. Kruglanski, Crenshaw, Post &Victoroff, 2007). In particular, framing terrorists' images as either soldiers or criminals, and terrorism as either an act of war or a crime, is likely to have different consequences for the chosen approach to counterterrorism and subsequent intergroup relations (McCauley, 2007). We argue that, in addition, different terrorist images will appeal to people who differ with respect to their ideological orientations such as right wing authoritarianism (RWA) and social dominance orientation (SDO).

Social dominance orientation (Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994) and right wing authoritarianism (e.g. Altemeyer, 1996) are underlined by distinct worldviews and values (Duckitt, 2006; see also Cohrs, Kielmann, Maes, & Moschner, 2005b). They are related to different perceptions of the nature of the social world. They predispose people to focus on different aspects of terrorist threat. As a result, people high in social dominance orientation and people who endorse high levels of right wing authoritarianism are likely to form different understandings of terrorists and their goals. They are also likely to prefer different forms of counterterrorism (military vs. police and criminal justice system actions) especially when they chronically perceive or are prompted to perceive terrorists as enemy soldiers or criminals. We test these propositions in two studies conducted in two European

countries. Before we outline our hypotheses in more detail, we discuss the role of terrorist images and ideological orientations in shaping responses to terrorist threat.

Terrorist images and approaches to counterterrorism

Most authors see terrorism as a rational strategy for attaining organizational goals (e.g. political autonomy, political power; e.g. Crenshaw,1998; Kruglanski & Fishman, 2006; F. Moghadam, 2005). However, bias in and irrational aspect of terrorist thinking are also emphasized (Spirznak, 2001). Importantly, it has been suggested that individual and group-based reactions to terrorist threat may be shaped by the way the image of terrorists is framed and perceived (Kruglanski et al., 2007; McCauley, 2007; Pronin, Kennedy & Butsch, 2006).

Kruglanski et al. (2007) propose that counterterrorism, understood as a search for a cure for the indoctrinated, will follow the perception of terrorism as a disease and the image of terrorists as victims of an ugly and severe illness. Terrorism seen as a strategy of action in an escalated intergroup conflict will motivate the search for the most adequate and rational conflict resolution strategy. Counterterrorism seen as an in-group's fight with a dangerous enemy should be related to understanding terrorist attacks as an act of war and the image of terrorists as enemy soldiers. Finally, the image of terrorists as criminals is likely to relate to efforts to capture and prosecute individual perpetrators of the unlawful acts in order to punish and isolate them. Empirical studies supported some of these propositions. For example, Pronin et al. (2006) demonstrated that portraying terrorists as irrational fanatics elicited preference for unilateral aggression as a way of dealing with terrorism. However, when terrorists were portrayed as rational strategists in conflict, diplomatic ways and negotiations were considered as possible counterterrorist responses.

McCauley (2007) argues that, most typically, terrorist attacks are framed by the media and politicians as acts of war or a crime. Importantly, these frames are likely to elicit different

emotional responses from the public and encourage different approaches towards counterterrorism. When terrorism is framed as a strategy of warfare, it is likely that terrorists will be seen as enemy warriors. They will be seen as homogenous and interchangeable representatives of an out-group that threatens the well-being, if not the very existence of, the in-group. The members of the in-group are likely to be perceived as similarly interchangeable actors motivated by the single purpose of defending the in-group. Framing terrorism as a crime does not mobilize the group-based response. Terrorists are likely to be seen as individual criminals. A proper way of dealing with them is through the efforts of the police and the actions of a criminal justice system.

The different assumptions about who the terrorist actors are (a group vs. an individual) elicit different propositions concerning the most adequate counterterrorist measures. Retaliation and coercion against the whole out-group are adequate responses to terrorist soldiers waging war against the in-group. The efforts of the police and the system of justice to capture, prosecute and punish are appropriate responses to the individual terrorist criminals. These actions differ in target (groups vs. individuals) and scope (short-term mobilization of resources to fight the war until it is won vs. long-term internal strategies and international cooperation, building knowledge bases of the criminal contexts and activities). Framing terrorism as an act of war requires a group-level response. It elicits actions that are likely to intensify intergroup tensions and escalate the intergroup conflict. Framing terrorism as a crime results in more precise targeting of those against whom the counterterrorist actions are directed. The lawful punishment of individual terrorists is less likely than military aggression to radicalize the so-far-halfhearted supporters of the terrorist cause. Mobilization of the group-based response and escalation of the intergroup conflict is what the terrorist organizations usually hope for. Aggressive counterterrorism is likely to grant the terrorists the public support they need to survive and thrive (McCauley, 2006).

In the present paper we attempt to verify empirically some of these theoretical propositions. More specifically, we aim to examine whether there is a relationship between the image of terrorists as soldiers vs. criminals and preference for military counterterrorism vs. the criminal prosecution of terrorists. Importantly, we propose that these relationships may not be as straightforward as initially suggested. They are likely to be moderated by individual ideological orientations related to different assumptions about the nature of the social world and intergroup relations.

Ideological orientations, terrorist images and approaches to counterterrorism

We propose that people may prefer certain approaches to counterterrorism because the terrorist images to which these approaches correspond fit their basic worldviews and meet their psychological needs. In addition, people with different ideological orientations may draw different conclusions from the same terrorist images. Especially, people high in social dominance orientation and people high in right wing authoritarianism may find different terrorist images convincing. Consequently, they may prefer different counterterrorist actions when these images are salient.

Empirical studies confirm that right wing authoritarianism and social dominance orientation, although positively related, are associated with different worldviews and place importance on different aspects of social relationships (Cohrs et al., 2005b; Duriez, Van Hiel & Kossowska, 2005; Pratto et al., 1994; Roccato & Ricolfi, 2005; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999; Whitley, 1999). Social dominance orientation is a desire for hierarchical social order. People high in this orientation strive to belong to dominant groups, suffer if they do not and support beliefs that legitimize and maintain existing social inequalities (Jost & Thompson, 2000; Pratto et al., 1994). Right wing authoritarianism is a convergence of (1) submissiveness to the established social authorities; (2) adherence to the social conventions endorsed by society at

large and the social authorities, and (3) aggressiveness towards those who endanger social conventions and/or those indicated by the established authorities (Altemeyer, 1996). Both variables reliably predict prejudice (e.g. van Hiel & Marvielde, 2002) and aggressiveness in intergroup relations (e.g. Altemeyer, 1996; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). However, they predict different kinds of prejudice (Cohrs et al., 2005b; Duriez & van Hiel, 2002; Duckitt, 2006; Kreindler, 2005) and their intergroup effects are independent (Duckitt et al., 2002; McFarland, 2005), being additive, rather than interactive (Sibley, Robertson & Wilson, 2006).

In other words, people who endorse high levels of right wing authoritarianism and people high in social dominance orientation are hostile for different reasons and often towards different groups. Importantly, right wing authoritarianism and social dominance orientation develop from different motivational goals and are associated with different worldviews (Duckitt, 2006; Duckitt & Fisher, 2003; Duckitt & Sibley, 2006; Duckitt, et al., 2002). They are related to different emotions (e.g. Van Hiel & Kossowska, 2006; Kossowska, Bukowski & van Hiel, 2008); personality traits (e.g. Ekehammar, et al., 2004; Heaven & Bucci, 2001), and values (Cohrs, Kielmann, Maes, & Moschner, 2005c; Duriez & van Hiel, 2002; Rohan & Zanna, 1996).

More specifically, authoritarian goals pertain to control and security in a world seen as a dangerous place. People who endorse high levels of right wing authoritarianism are concerned with group cohesion, social order and stability that maintain group security and the predictability of the social environment (e.g. Duckitt, et al., 2002, 2006). Authoritarian punitiveness and aggression is directed towards those who threaten an in-group, its authorities and the epistemic security they provide (e.g. Kruglanski et al., 2006). People high in right wing authoritarianism are aggressive when they think it is necessary to defend the in-group and when they think such behavior is moral (justified by the authorities) (e.g. Kreindler, 2005). People high in social dominance orientation are motivated by goals of dominance,

superiority and power. They view the social world as a competitive jungle and intergroup relations as a struggle for dominance. Their hostility is directed towards groups that arouse their competitiveness over status or power (e.g. Duckitt, et al., 2002; Duckitt, 2006). People high in social dominance orientation fight to win because otherwise they will lose. They attempt to dominate through fear of being dominated themselves.

The goals of the present studies

In the present studies we test the hypothesis that different terrorist images (criminals vs. enemy soldiers) will be related to preference for different approaches towards counterterrorism. More specifically, we assume that chronic perceptions of terrorists as criminals will be related to preference for criminal prosecution of terrorists but not military counterterrorism. On the other hand, a tendency to believe that terrorists are enemy soldiers will be related to preference for military counterterrorism but not for criminal prosecution of terrorists. We expect that these relationships will be especially pronounced among people high in right wing authoritarianism or people high in social dominance orientation, respectively. In addition, we propose that framing of terrorists' images as criminals vs. soldiers may be effective only when people's ideological orientations correspond to the proposed frame.

Framing of terrorists as criminals - unpredictable social deviants who threaten social order and security - is likely to appeal to people high in right wing authoritarianism concerned with maintaining predictable social order. Consequently, it may result in directing the responsibility for counterterrorism to institutions of criminal justice system only among those high in right wing authoritarianism. The actions that people who endorse high levels of right wing authoritarianism are likely to prefer will focus on regaining and maintaining internal security and control. Thus, people high in right wing authoritarianism perceiving terrorists as

criminals are likely to support the police pursuit of perpetrators of terrorist acts and the prosecution of terrorist suspects. Supporting these predictions, previous studies indicate that those high in right wing authoritarianism prefer counterterrorism that has to do with increasing internal control and surveillance (e.g. Cohrs, Moschner, Maes & Kielmann, 2005a; Cohrs, et al., 2005b; Crowson et al., 2006) and removing 'suspicious' people (e.g. immigrants from countries supporting terrorism) from the country (Skitka, Bauman, Aramovich & Morgan, 2006). However, to our knowledge, no studies have examined the role of right wing authoritarianism in eliciting support for criminal prosecution of terrorists, especially in response to framing terrorists as criminals (see Pronin et al., 2006)[1].

Framing of terrorist images as soldiers may appeal especially to people high in social dominance orientation concerned with intergroup power struggle. Their social world is based on such categories as force, influence, power and competition. Thus, people high in social dominance orientation are likely to attribute terrorists with characteristics typical for rivals in a group struggle over power and dominance. In response, they are likely to prefer coercive, group-based actions against terrorists. Thus, people high on social dominance orientation may prefer military counterterrorism that corresponds to the framing of the terrorists' images as soldiers. Previous studies confirm that support for coercive counterterrorism among people high in social dominance orientation is associated with decreased concern for the human cost of war (McFarland et al., 2005). However, the moderating role of social dominance orientation on the relationship between terrorist image as enemy soldiers and support for military counterterrorism has not yet been tested.

We test our hypotheses in a correlational study conducted in Poland (Study 1) and an experimental study conducted in the United Kingdom (Study 2). In Study 1 we assess individual ideological orientations and chronic tendencies to perceive terrorists as enemy soldiers or criminals. In Study 2 we assess individual ideological orientations and manipulate

the way the images of terrorists are framed. In both studies we examine the role of terrorist

images and individual orientations in shaping preferences for counterterrorist responses.

Study 1

Study 1 examined the relationships between the endorsed terrorist images and support

for different approaches to counterterrorism: military aggression vs. criminal prosecution. The

study looked at how these relationships are moderated by right wing authoritarianism and

social dominance orientation. The study controlled the role of political conservatism, typically

associated with preference for coercive responses to intergroup threat (e.g. Holsti, 1990).

Method

Participants and procedure.

The study was conducted among 298 Polish undergraduate students of whom 176 were

females and 122 males. The mean age of participants was 24.36 (SD = 2.25). Participants

were rewarded with research participation credit.

Measures

Social dominance orientation (α = .87; M = 3.01; SD = 1.08) was measured by a 10-

item version of the SDO Scale (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999) pretested in previous studies (e.g.

McFarland, 2005; Golec de Zavala et al., 2009).

Right Wing Authoritarianism (α = .77; M = 3.75; SD = .90) was measured by a 10-

item version of the original RWA Scale proposed by Altemeyer (1988) pretested in previous

studies (e.g. McFarland, 2005; Golec de Zavala et al., 2009).

Political conservatism was measured by one question: *"Please describe your political

outlook using the following scale:"* and the scale from *"1" = "very liberal"* to *"5" = "very

conservative"* (M = 3.87; SD = .98).

Al-Qaeda Terrorist Images were assessed by means of the Terrorist Image Scale (Kubik & Kossowska, 2007). In this scale participants are asked to assess the probability that a typical Al-Qaeda terrorist possesses each of the 26 characteristics. The participants respond using a scale ranging from 0% to 100%. The sub-scale assessing the image of terrorists as soldiers contains adjectives and phrases emphasizing the political goals of terrorists (*organized, power hungry, focused on a political goal*) and methods to achieve them (*armed, publicity seeking*) (α = .79; *M*=77; *SD*=12.01). The sub-scale assessing the image of terrorists as criminals contains adjectives and phrases that stress the egocentric goals and cynical methods of individual terrorists. The traits ascribed to terrorists seen as criminals suggest emotional blindness and lack of human feelings: *criminal, blood-thirsty and cruel* (α = .69; *M*=80; *SD*=17.7)[2].

The Terrorist Image Scale was constructed to uncover people's 'private theories' of who terrorists are and what they are like. The adjectives used to describe the Al-Qaeda terrorist emerged from content-analytic validation studies (Kubik & Kossowska, 2007; Kossowska, Golec de Zavala & Kubik, 2010a). First, a diverse group of participants was interviewed about their perceptions of Al-Qaeda terrorists. The interviews were content-analyzed by 3 independent judges who classified the obtained descriptions into categories. A list of 31 adjectives and phrases was obtained and administered to a large group of participants in Poland (and a number of other countries such as Great Britain and Spain, Kossowska, et al., 2010a; Kossowska, et al., 2010b). Factor analyses examined the structure of cognitive representations of Al Qaeda terrorists. In Poland, they revealed a four-factor structure with orthogonal factors. The factors pertain to images of terrorists that can be interpreted as: (1) ideologues motivated by beliefs; (2) warriors using terrorist actions as a method of warfare; (3) criminals, blood thirsty lawbreakers, and (4) victims of the system: brain-washed or forced to unwanted violence by experienced oppression. The results in other

countries reliably revealed a two-factor structure. The factors can be interpreted as (1) strategically thinking warriors and (2) inhumane criminals (Kossowska et al., 2010b).

Support for coercive counterterrorist actions was measured with 5 items adapted from Pronin and colleagues (2006). Participants were asked whether they agreed that each of the following was a good and effective strategy of dealing with terrorism. The items pertained to aggressive military actions e.g. *"Air strikes against terrorist weapons and supply storage"; "Entering war with countries that support terrorism";* or *"Attacks by ground troops against terrorist strongholds"* (α = .79; *M* = 2.92; *SD* = .62). Participants indicated their opinions on a scale ranging from *"1"= "totally disagree"* to *"6" = "totally agree"*.

Support for criminal prosecution was measured with 4 items adapted from Pronin and colleagues (2006) pertaining to the actions of the police and criminal justice system e.g. "C*ooperation of police forces tracking terrorist organizations and their networks"; "Hunting down terrorist leaders by police"* or *"International cooperation among criminal courts in fast and tough sentencing of captured terrorists"* (α = .90; *M* = 3.73; *SD* = 0.59). Participants indicated their opinions on a scale ranging from *"1"= "totally disagree"* to *"6" = "totally agree"*.

Results

The correlational analyses indicate that a tendency to perceive Al-Qaeda terrorists as soldiers is positively associated with a preference for military counterterrorism. It is positively associated with social dominance orientation, but not right wing authoritarianism. The image of Al-Qaeda terrorists as criminals is positively associated with a preference for criminal justice system actions in response to terrorism and right wing authoritarianism and negatively related to social dominance orientation. The two images of Al-Qaeda terrorists are not correlated. Political conservatism correlates positively with all measured variables (Table 1).

TABLE 1

In order to test the hypothesis that military vs. criminal justice system based counterterrorism can be predicted from different perceptions of Al-Qaeda terrorists in interaction with different ideological orientations, we conducted 2 hierarchical multiple regression analyses. The model was first tested using support for military counterterrorism as the criterion variable. Next, support for criminal prosecution was used as the criterion variable. The images of Al-Qaeda terrorists as enemy soldiers and as criminals, right wing authoritarianism and social dominance orientation were entered into the regression equation in Step 1. The hypothesized interactions of right wing authoritarianism and the terrorist image as criminals and social domination orientation and the image of terrorists as soldiers were entered in Step 2^3. Since previous studies and present correlations indicate that conservatism is related to right wing authoritarianism, social dominance orientation and coercive intergroup actions, its effect should be covaried out. Thus, political conservatism was entered into the equations as a control variable (together with age and gender). All variables were centered prior to the analysis, following the procedure proposed by Aiken and West (1991).

The results of the analysis that used the support for coercive counterterrorism as the criterion variable revealed the significant, positive effects of social dominance orientation and the image of Al-Qaeda terrorists as soldiers. These single-order effects were qualified by a significant interaction of social dominance orientation and the perception of terrorists as enemy soldiers. Adding the interaction terms to the equation significantly increased the amount of explained variance (Table 2).

TABLE 2

This interaction was then probed using the procedure proposed by Aiken and West (1991). Social dominance orientation was positively and significantly related to support for military counterterrorism among participants who perceived terrorists as warriors (one standard deviation above the mean of the scale measuring the image of Al-Qaeda terrorists as

enemy soldiers, b =.27; SE =.05; β= .25; p<.01). Social dominance orientation was

negatively related to support for military counterterrorism among participants who did not

perceive Al-Qaeda terrorists as enemy soldiers (one standard deviation below the mean of the

scale, b =-.25; SE =.07; β= -.19; p<.05) (Figure 1).

FIGURE 1

The results of the multiple regression analysis using the support for criminal

prosecution as the criterion variable revealed significant, positive effects of right wing

authoritarianism and perception of Al-Qaeda terrorists as criminals. These effects were

qualified by a significant interaction of right wing authoritarianism and the perception of

terrorists as criminals. Adding the interaction terms to the equation significantly increased the

amount of explained variance (Table 3).

TABLE 3

The probing of this interaction indicated that right wing authoritarianism was

positively related to support for criminal prosecution of terrorists among those participants

who perceived terrorists as criminals (b =.23; SE =.07;β=.21;p<.01) and it was negatively

related to it among participants who did not perceive terrorists as criminals (b =-.19; SE

=.08;β= -.15;p=.06). This slope was marginally significant (Figure 2).

FIGURE 2

Discussion of Study 1

The results of Study 1 confirmed the expected pattern of results. They indicate that

different images of Al-Qaeda terrorists are related to a preference for different approaches to

counterterrorism. The preferred approaches correspond to the content of the terrorist images.

People who see terrorists as enemy soldiers support coercive and warlike counterterrorism.

People who see terrorists as criminals choose to delegate the responsibility for counterterrorist

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actions to forces indicated for the chase, capture and prosecution of criminals. As predicted, those high in right wing authoritarianism, concerned with security and social order, prefer criminal prosecutions of terrorists. People high on social dominance orientation, concerned with intergroup power-struggle, prefer to fight the terrorists. Importantly, the relationships between terrorists' images and approaches to counterterrorism were moderated by individual ideological orientations. The support for coercive counterterrorism was strongest among people high in social dominance orientation who viewed terrorists as enemy soldiers. The support for criminal prosecution was strongest among people high in right wing authoritarianism who saw Al-Qaeda terrorists as criminals.

Social dominance orientation, but not right wing authoritarianism interacted with perception of terrorists as soldiers in predicting support for war on terrorism. Right wing authoritarianism but not social dominance orientation interacted with the perception of terrorists as criminals in predicting support for the criminal justice system in dealing with the terrorist threat. These results indicate that people high in right wing authoritarianism and people high in social dominance orientation are sensitive to different aspects of the terrorist threat. Different terrorist images mobilize them to form and express preferences for different approaches towards counterterrorism.

Study 1 revealed that ideological orientations were related more than support for counterterrorism methods associated with the content of the terrorist images. They were also related to the opposition to those actions when participants did not endorse the corresponding terrorist image. People high in social dominance orientation tend to believe that terrorists are enemy soldiers and prefer to use military aggression against them. However, when they did not believe that Al-Qaeda terrorists were enemy soldiers, they opposed the use of coercive counterterrorism against them. This suggests that people high in social dominance orientation pick their fights carefully and strategically. They may prefer to mobilize resources and

aggress only against 'worthy' opponents. They may actively oppose investing resources and energy to engage with an opponent who is not perceived as a representative of an out-group or who is not seen as a serious threat to the in-group's position.

Similar results, although marginally significant, were found also among people high in right wing authoritarianism. They tended to perceive terrorists as criminals and preferred the criminal justice system to deal with them. However, when they disagreed that terrorists are criminals, they opposed criminal prosecution of terrorists. Together, the present results may suggest that ideological orientations are linked to well-defined ideas of what are effective ways of dealing with the threats vital to each orientation. These ways are to be applied in the face of such vital threats but they are not supposed to be used when the challenging problems are not classified as vital threats.

The results of Study 1, however promising, left several issues unresolved. The correlational design of Study 1 does not allow us to draw a firm conclusion about the direction of causality in the hypothesized relationships. We assumed that the terrorist images would lead to a preference for relevant counterterrorist actions. This assumption is based on numerous studies which suggest that basic perceptions and broader ideological orientations constrain specific attitudes, such as support for intergroup actions (rather than vice versa; e.g. Cohrs, et al., 2005b; Duckitt, 2006; Duckitt & Sibley, 2006; de Figueiredo & Elkins, 2003; Sidanius, Feshbach, Levin & Pratto, 1997). However, it is possible to imagine that the terrorist perceptions might serve as justification for preferred counterterrorist strategies that are, for example, related to individual ideological orientations. The negative relationship between social dominance orientation and a preference for military counterterrorism when terrorists are not perceived as soldiers, and the marginally significant and negative association between right wing authoritarianism and a preference for criminal justice system actions already speak against this possibility. However, in order to be able to demonstrate

convincingly that people who endorse high levels of right wing authoritarianism and people high in social dominance *react* differently to different terrorist images, we conducted a second, experimental study.

Study 2

Study 2 tested the hypothesis that when terrorists are framed as warriors, participants would be more likely to prefer coercive, military counterterrorism than when terrorists are framed as criminals, especially when they are high in social dominance orientation. It was also expected that when the terrorists are framed as criminals, the preferred approach to counterterrorism would be of control and detainment, especially among those high in right wing authoritarianism. Thus, Study 2 tested the proposition that people high in right wing authoritarianism and people high in social dominance orientation selectively find different terrorist frames appealing. Different terrorist images inspire them to choose corresponding counterterrorist actions.

Method

Participants and procedure

The study was conducted among 220 British undergraduate students who participated in exchange for research participation credit. There were 152 women and 68 men among the participants and the mean age was 24.15 ($SD = 6.37$). One hundred and twelve participants defined their religion as Christian; 21 identified themselves as Muslim; 40 described themselves as non-religious; 7 as Hindu; 3 as Buddhists and 3 as Jewish. One hundred participants defined their ethnicity as White; 67 as Black; 25 as Arab; 20 as Asian and 10 participants did not provide data about their ethnicity.

The data from participants who identified their religion as Islam or their ethnicity as Arab were removed from further analyses ($n = 27$). Since the study was designed around the

London Bombings of 7th of July 2005 perpetrated by Arab Muslims, we assumed that the

religious identity of Muslim participants might influence their responses. The analyses were

performed on the reduced sample of 193 participants, 133 female and 60 male. Mean age was

24.25 ($SD = 6.44$).

Participants were asked to take part in a study on opinions about the terrorist threat and

counterterrorism policy in Britain. They first responded to the demographic questions, the

Conservative-Liberal Self-Placement Scale, SDO (Pratto et al., 1994) and RWA Scales

(Altemeyer, 1996). Then they read a mock newspaper article on terrorist threat and

counterterrorism strategies that contained the experimental manipulation, and they responded

to a measure of preference for counterterrorist actions. Ninety five participants were asked to

respond to an additional measure checking the effectiveness of the experimental manipulation.

The manipulation check analyses were performed on a sample of 77 participants after the data

obtained from Muslim participants were removed.

Experimental manipulation

In order to frame the image of terrorists as soldiers or criminals, we used a mock

newspaper article that contained an alleged speech by the then Mayor of London after the

terrorist attacks perpetrated by Al Qaeda in London in July 2005. In the criminal image

condition ($n = 99$) the participants read the following fragment: *"Terrorist bombing is an*

indiscriminate attempt at mass murder. Terrorists are organized criminals, deviants from

their own society. It is not just an attempt to slaughter people, irrespective of any

considerations for age, for class, for religion, or whatever. It is an attack of the social order

of free, inclusive and civil society". In the soldier image condition ($n = 94$) participants read

the following fragment:*"Terrorist bombing is an unprovoked act of war. Terrorists are the*

soldiers of the enemy fighting for the goals of their group. It is not just an attempt to slaughter

people, irrespective of any considerations for age, for class, for religion, or whatever. It is an attack of the idea of free, inclusive and civil society".

Measures

The same measures of social dominance orientation (α = .74; *M* = 2.76; *SD* = .88); right wing authoritarianism (α = .62; *M*= 3.52; *SD* = .76) and political conservatism (*M*= 2.62; *SD* = .83) as in Study 1 were used. Participants indicated their support for military counterterrorism (α = .79; *M* = 3.28; *SD* = 1.13) and the efforts of police forces and criminal justice systems in capturing and prosecuting terrorists (α = .90; *M* = 4.69; *SD* = 1.24) as in Study 1.

Manipulation check questions were asked in each condition. Perception of terrorists as soldiers was measured by 2 items: *"Terrorists are soldiers" and "Terrorists are fighters for the cause"* (α = .53; *M* = 4.13; *SD* = 1.12). Perception of terrorists as criminals was assessed by 2 items: *"Each and every terrorist is a criminal"* and *"Terrorists are cold-blooded and cunning lawbreakers"* (α = .67; *M* = 4.19; *SD* = 1.18). Participants were asked to provide their answers on a scale from *"1" = "totally disagree"* to *"6" = "totally agree"*.

Results

Mean responses to the questions measuring the perception of terrorists as enemy soldiers revealed that participants scored significantly higher on this measure in the research conditions in which the terrorists were framed as soldiers (*M* = 4.52; *SD* = 1.25) than in the conditions in which the terrorists were framed as criminals (*M* = 3.95; *SD* = 1.29; *F* (1,76) = 4.40; *p*<.04). Similarly, in the research conditions in which terrorists were framed as criminals participants agreed more with the statements that terrorists are criminals (*M* = 4.45; *SD* = 1.22) than in the research conditions in which the terrorists were framed as enemy soldiers (*M* = 3.95; *SD* = 1.11; *F* (1,75) = 3.48; *p*<.05). There were no interactive effects of social

dominance orientation or right wing authoritarianism and conditions of either of the manipulation check measures.

Correlational analyses revealed that across the research conditions political conservatism was significantly associated with preference for coercive counterterrorism (r (192) =.31; p< .01). The relationship between preference for coercive counterterrorism and social dominance orientation was marginally significant (r (192) = .14; p = .09). Preference for criminal prosecution of terrorists was positively associated with right wing authoritarianism. This relationship was marginally significant (r (192) = .11; p = .10). Political conservatism was included in further analyses as a control variable.

In order to test the hypothesis that framing terrorists as soldiers will result in the choice of military counterterrorism, especially among people high in social dominance orientation, and the hypothesis that framing terrorists as criminals will result in preference for criminal prosecution of terrorists, especially among people high in right wing authoritarianism, we conducted a series of 2 hierarchical multiple regression analyses following the procedure proposed by Cohen et al. (2003).

All continuous variables were centered prior to analysis. Research conditions (dummy coded -1 –criminal/1 - soldier), right wing authoritarianism and social dominance orientation were entered into the regression equation in Step 1. Two interaction terms - right wing authoritarianism x research conditions and social dominance x research conditions were entered in Step 2. The analyses controlled for age, gender and political conservatism[4].

The results of the regression analysis that looked at support for coercive counterterrorist actions as the criterion variable revealed significant, positive single-order effects of age and political conservatism, and a significant interaction effect between social dominance orientation and research conditions[5]. Adding the interaction terms to the regression equation significantly increased the explained variance (Table 4).

TABLE 4

The simple slopes were computed for the conditions in which terrorists were framed as criminals and for the conditions in which terrorists were framed as soldiers according to the procedure proposed by Cohen et al. (2003). The results indicate that, when the terrorists were framed as enemy soldiers, people high in social dominance orientation supported the military counterterrorism ($b = .27$; $SE = .12$; $\beta = .15$; $p < .02$). They rejected it when the terrorists were framed as criminals ($b = -.26$; $SE = .11$; $\beta = -.18$; $p < .01$) (Figure 3).

FIGURE 3

The results of the analysis that examined support for criminal prosecution as the criterion variable revealed a marginally significant, positive, single order effect of right wing authoritarianism, while the second step revealed a significant interaction between right wing authoritarianism and research conditions, and a significant interaction between social dominance orientation and research conditions. Adding the interaction terms to the regression equation significantly increased the explained variance (Table 5).

TABLE 5

The results of simple slopes analyses probing the interactions showed that only when the image of the terrorists was framed as criminals did people who endorsed high levels of right wing authoritarianism support criminal prosecution of the suspected terrorists ($b = .32$; $SE = .14$; $\beta = .23$; $p < .02$). When terrorists were framed as soldiers, the relationship between right wing authoritarianism and preference for criminal prosecution of terrorists was not significant ($b = -.01$; $SE = .16$; $\beta = .23$; $p = .80$) (Figure 4).

FIGURE 4

When terrorists were framed as criminals, the relationship between social dominance orientation and support for criminal prosecution was negative and significant ($b = -.38$; SE =

.14; $\beta = .24$; $p < .01$). When the terrorists were framed as soldiers, the relationship was not significant ($b = .18$; SE $= .17$; $\beta = .09$; $p = .28$) (Figure 5).

FIGURE 5

Discussion of Study 2

The results of Study 2 replicate, in an experimental context, the interactive effects found in the Study 1. The effects of framing terrorists as soldiers vs. criminals on preferences for corresponding approaches towards counterterrorism were moderated by individual ideological orientations. Framing of the terrorist images in itself did not affect preferences for corresponding counterterrorist actions. However, when terrorists were framed as criminals, people who endorsed high levels of right wing authoritarianism preferred criminal prosecution of terrorists. When terrorists were framed as enemy soldiers, people high on social dominance orientation preferred military counterterrorism.

The additional, unexpected results deepen our understanding of the role of social dominance orientation as a moderator of the relationship between terrorist images and preference for counterterrorist measures. People high in social dominance orientation opposed aggressive counterterrorism when terrorists were framed as criminals. These results corroborate the findings of Study 1 indicating that people high in social dominance orientation oppose coercive counterterrorism when they do not believe that terrorists are enemy soldiers. In addition, in Study 2 the relationship between social dominance orientation and support for criminal prosecution of terrorists was negative and became significant when the terrorists were framed as criminals. Framing terrorists as criminals seem to have meant different things to people high in right wing authoritarianism and people high in social dominance orientation.

In order to better understand these results we examined the effects of research conditions, ideological orientations and their interactions on each of the manipulation check questions regarding perception of terrorists. This allowed for more in-depth analysis of

whether social dominance orientation affected terrorist perceptions after the framing of terrorist images. The analysis revealed a marginally significant interaction effect of social dominance orientation and research conditions (apart from the main effect of research conditions) on agreement with the statement *"Each and every terrorist is a criminal"* ($b = .27$; $SE = .19$; $\beta = .15$; $p = .11$). The simple slopes analyses indicate that people high in social dominance orientation disagreed with this statement particularly when terrorists were framed as criminals ($b = -.61$; $SE = .31$; $\beta = -.28$; $p = .06$ vs. when they were framed as soldiers, $b = .01$; $SE = .22$; $\beta = .01$; $p = .98$). These results may indicate that people high in social dominance orientation find the framing of terrorists as criminals unconvincing. Especially when such a framing is proposed, they tend to disagree and refuse to support the counterterrorist actions that this framing implies.

General Discussion

Studies presented in this paper aimed to advance our understanding of the role of terrorist images in shaping people's preferences for different counterterrorism approaches. More specifically, the studies looked at predictors of the preference for coercive, military counterterrorism vs. criminal prosecution of terrorists. Two studies were conducted in two European countries using correlational and experimental designs. Their findings converge to indicate that preference for counterterrorist actions is shaped by the way terrorists are perceived or portrayed *and* the extent to which the terrorist image fits the worldviews, values and fears underlying individual ideological orientations.

The results of Study 1 revealed the correspondence between the content of the terrorist image and the counterterrorist actions people deem most effective and suitable. When terrorists are perceived as warriors, war is seen as the most adequate response to terrorist threat. When terrorists are perceived as criminals, criminal prosecution is seen as the most desirable counterterrorist response. To our knowledge, these are the first studies empirically to

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demonstrate this relationship hypothesized by other authors (e.g. McCauley, 2007). At the same time, the results of Study 2 indicate that the framing of terrorist images (as opposed to endorsing them) does not in itself result in preference for corresponding counterterrorist actions. Framing the terrorist image is followed by the expression of preference for the corresponding approach to counterterrorism only when it matches peoples' worldviews, and appeals to the basic goals and motivations that shape their ideological orientations. A given way of painting the terrorist image results in a preference for corresponding counterterrorist actions only when it makes sense to people.

Specifically, the results of Study 1 indicate that the relationship between support for coercive counterterrorism and the perception of terrorists as soldiers is strengthened among people high in social dominance orientation. People high in social dominance orientation tend to support military actions against terrorists more when they believe the terrorists are enemy soldiers. People who endorse high levels of right wing authoritarianism support criminal prosecution of terrorists more when they believe that terrorists are criminals. The relationship between the image of terrorists as criminals and a preference for criminal prosecution of terrorists is strengthened among people high in right wing authoritarianism. Study 2 indicates that when the terrorists are framed as criminals, only those high in right wing authoritarianism support criminal prosecution of terrorists. Framing terrorists as soldiers increases support for aggressive counterterrorism only among people high in social dominance orientation. Thus, framing of the terrorist image is effective only when people are predisposed to believe in it because it is consistent with the image they already hold or it makes sense within their understanding of the social world. In addition, as suggested by the present research, people may even be predisposed to object to the framing of the terrorist image that does not concur with their worldviews and their understanding of the social world.

In this vein, the present studies yield several unexpected findings which advance our understanding of the way ideological orientations and terrorist images interact. Firstly, the present studies suggest that ideological orientations, especially social dominance orientation, enhance the precision and firmness of the correspondence between terrorist images and counterterrorist actions. Study 1 revealed that people high in social dominance orientation preferred military aggression only when they saw terrorists as enemy soldiers. When they disagreed that terrorists were enemy soldiers, they *opposed* the use of military aggression against them[6].

It seems that people high in social dominance orientation support aggression against a group that threatens the in-group's intergroup position but oppose mobilization of resources against a group that does not. There are reasons to believe that people high in social dominance orientation prefer to see terrorists as representatives of a group rather than as individual deviants. In Study 1, people high in social dominance orientation did not endorse the image of terrorists as individual criminals but believed they were enemy soldiers. In Study 2 they tended to reject the belief that each and every terrorist is a criminal when prompted to think about terrorists as criminals. Arguably, people high in social dominance orientation opposed the criminal prosecution of terrorists as an effective way of dealing with terrorist threat because they did not believe terrorists are 'only' individuals who commit criminal acts. Therefore, they should not be approached as other criminals.

The present findings advance our understanding of how preferences for counterterrorism approaches are shaped. However, they are also relevant beyond the situation of terrorist threat. Any intergroup tensions are likely to escalate when extremists in one group are seen as being typical representatives of that group, rather than as deviants (e.g. Deutsch, 1973). Such a perception may be 'advertised' by the media, politicians and other opinion-makers (McCauley, 2007). The present studies indicate that it may first appeal to people to

whose ideological orientations it corresponds. More specifically, it is likely to convince and mobilize the support of people high in social dominance orientation. People who endorse high levels of right wing authoritarianism prefer to see extremists as individual deviants. However, they do not oppose the framing of terrorists as enemy soldiers. The more the perception of hostile extremists as typical out-group representatives is endorsed, the more the worldviews, values and fears underlying social dominance orientation may become representative and defining for the whole in-group's 'ideological climate' (e.g. Farer, 2008). Goals of intergroup dominance are likely to overbalance the goals of intergroup harmony, the value of the sacrifice in the name of the group may become more important than the value of individual life. The group is then more likely to engage in hostile intergroup actions and escalate intergroup tensions.

Aggressive, military actions and criminal justice system actions in response to terrorist threat are not mutually exclusive and are often enacted at the same time. However, the criminal prosecution of terrorists, as opposed to engaging in a war, does not require mobilization of social support and a long-lasting shift in the in-group's values and out-group perception. Such a shift is likely to contribute to escalation and persistence of the intergroup tensions that resulted in terrorist actions in the first place. The present results suggest that attempts to persuade people who tend to support intergroup hostility that the out-group extremists are individual deviants from the out-group's norms, rather than its typical out-group representatives, are not likely to be successful. In Study 2 people high in social dominance orientation seemed to oppose the framing of terrorists as individual criminals, potentially less harmful to intergroup relations. This indicates that, among people high in social dominance orientation, the perception of extremists as group representatives, once it is formed, may be particularly difficult to change. The present research offers a suggestion of a way in

which the 'disarming' of the propensity for hostile intergroup responses among people high in social dominance orientation may be attempted. Framing of the out-group as unworthy opponents may lead to rejection of aggressive group-based responses. This possibility, however, was not directly addressed in the present research and it requires further examination. Future studies should also further examine the intriguing possibility that has emerged from the present research that ideological orientations correspond not only to endorsement but also to a rejection of certain terrorist images.

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Endnotes

1. Studies show that right wing authoritarianism is related to support for aggressive counterterrorism. However, it is likely that the motivation behind support for such actions is the following of the call of the established authorities (e.g. McFarland, 2005).

2. In Study 1 we were primarily interested in these two terrorist images. However, studies indicate that four distinct terrorist images can be differentiated in Poland. Thus, in Study 1 we measured all images and performed additional multiple regression analyses looking at all terrorist images and their interactions with right wing authoritarianism and social dominance orientation. These analyses yield no other significant results and they did not change the pattern of the reported results.

3. Additional hierarchical multiple regression analyses were performed that included all possible two way interactions of the four main predictors in Step 2 to exclude the possibility that the predicted interactions are affected by intercorrelations between right wing authoritarianism, social dominance orientation and other possible interactions between the ideological orientations and the two images. These analyses do not reveal any other significant results and do not change the pattern of the results. We also performed a series of analyses treating political conservatism as the predictor rather than the control variable, and tested the interactive effects of terrorists' perceptions and political conservatism. These analyses did not yield any additional significant results. Finally, because the two approaches to counterterrorism were positively correlated, we performed analyses entering the counterterrorist approach that was not the criterion variable as a control variable. The pattern of results did not change.

4. A hierarchical multiple regression analysis that included all possible two way interactions of the three main predictors in Step 2 and three-way interaction in Step 3 was also performed.

It did not reveal any other significant results and did not change the pattern of the presented results.

5. Additional multiple regression analyses were run adding the interaction between political conservatism and research conditions in Step 2 and all three way interactions of ideological variables and research conditions in Step 3. No other significant interaction was found and the presented pattern of results reminded unchanged.

6. To some extent similar was true for people who endorsed high levels of right wing authoritarianism who opposed criminal prosecution of terrorists when they did not agree that terrorists were criminals, although this result was marginally significant.

Table 1. *Correlations between terrorist images, preferences for military vs. criminal justice approach to counterterrorism, right wing authoritarianism and social dominance orientation: Study 1 (N = 298).*

	RWA	SDO	criminal prosecution	aggressive counter terrorism	terrorists as criminals	terrorists as soldiers
Conservatism	.28**	.23*	.27**	.32***	.20*	.26**
terrorists as soldiers	.10	.19*	-.09	.27**	.13	------
terrorists as criminals	.30***	.08	.25**	.18*	------	------
aggressive counterterrorism	.25**	28**	.21*	------	------	------
criminal prosecution	.28**	-.23*	------	------	------	------
SDO	.09	------	------	------	------	------

Note: *p<.05; ** p<.01; *** p<.001

Table 2.

Multiple regression analysis of terrorist images, social dominance orientation and right wing authoritarianism on support for aggressive counterterrorism (no significant effect of age, gender or political conservatism): Study 1 (N = 298).

Variable	B	SE B	Beta
Step1			
Terrorists as soldiers	.19**	.06	.19
Terrorists as criminals	.11	.10	.09
SDO	.22***	.05	.22
RWA	.20**	.08	.19
Step 2			
Terrorists as soldiers	.19**	.06	.19
Terrorists as criminals	.10	.11	.09
SDO	.22**	.05	.22
RWA	.15	.10	.11
SDO X terrorists as soldiers	.14*	.07	.15
RWA X terrorists as criminals	.09	.12	.07

Note.
$F(1, 297) = 1,64$; $p = .19$; $R^2 = .14$ for Step 1;
$F(2, 296) = 2.77$; $p < .05$; $\Delta R^2 = .02$ for Step 2 ($p < .05$)
$\underline{\Delta R^2}(2, 297) = .02$; $p < .05$

$*p < .05.$ $**p < .01.$ $***p < .001.$

Table 3.

Multiple regression analysis of terrorists images, social dominance orientation and right wing

authoritarianism on support for criminal prosecution of terrorists (no significant effect of age,

gender or political conservatism): Study 1 (N = 298).

Variable	B	SE B	Beta
Step1			
Terrorists as soldiers	.03	.06	.03
Terrorists as criminals	.25***	.05	.25
SDO	-.09	.06	-.09
RWA	.23***	.06	.23
Step 2			
Terrorists as soldiers	.03	.06	.03
Terrorists as criminals	.25***	.05	.25
SDO	-.09	.06	-.09
RWA	.18**	.05	.15
SDO X terrorists as soldiers	-.10	.07	-.09
RWA X terrorists as criminals	.18**	.05	.15

Note.
$F(1, 297) = 1.22$; $p = .25$ $R^2 = .16$ for Step 1;
$F(2, 296) = 2.46$; $p < .05$; $\Delta R^2 = .02$ for Step 2 ($p < .02$)
$\underline{\Delta R^2}(2, 297) = .02$; $p < .01$
*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

Table 4.

Multiple regression analysis of the framing of the terrorist image, social dominance orientation and right wing authoritarianism on support for aggressive counterterrorism (no significant effect of gender): Study 2 (N = 193).

Variable	B	SE B	Beta
Step1			
Age	-.04**	.01	-.21
Political conservatism	.39***	.08	.34
Image framing	-.07	.08	-.06
SDO	-.05	.08	-.04
RWA	.01	.08	.01
Step 2			
Age	-.04**	.01	-.25
Political conservatism	.39***	.08	.35
Image framing	-.07	.08	-.06
SDO	.004	.08	.003
RWA	-.003	.02	-.002
SDO X image framing	.27**	.04	.24
RWA X image framing	-.12	.08	-.11

Note.
F (6, 178) = 6.06; $p < .001$; R^2 = .169 for Step 1;
F (8, 176) = 6.11; $p < .001$; ΔR^2 = .05 for Step 2 ($p < .005$)
ΔR^2 (2,176) = .05; $p < .01$
**$p < .001$. ***$p < .000$.

Table 5.

Multiple regression analysis of the framing of the terrorist image, social dominance orientation and right wing authoritarianism on support for criminal prosecution of terrorists (no significant effect of age, gender or political conservatism): Study 2 (N = 193).

Variable	B	SE B	Beta
Step1			
Image framing	-.03	.09	-.02
SDO	-.16	.10	-.13
RWA	.17$^+$	.10	.13
Step 2			
Image framing	-.03	.09	-.02
SDO	-.11	.10	-.08
RWA	.13	.10	.11
SDO X image framing	.28**	.10	.23
RWA X image framing	-.18*	.11	-.15

Note.
$F(6, 178) = 1.32$; $p = .25$ $R^2 = .043$ for Step 1;
$F(8, 176) = 2.11$; $p < .02$; $\Delta R^2 = .05$ for Step 2 ($p < .02$)
$\Delta R^2 (2,176) = .05$; $p < .02$
$^+ p < .10$. $*p < .05$. $**p < .01$. $***p < .001$.

Figure 1: Interaction of the terrorists' image as soldiers and social dominance orientation on preference for aggressive counterterrorism (Study 1: N =298).

Figure 2. Interaction of the terrorists' image as criminals and right wing authoritarianism on preference for criminal prosecution of terrorists (Study 1: N =298).

Figure 3: Interaction of the terrorists' image as soldiers and social dominance orientation on preference for aggressive counterterrorism (Study 2: N = 193).

Figure 4: Interaction of terrorists' image as criminals and right wing authoritarianism on preference for criminal prosecution of terrorists (Study 2: N = 193).

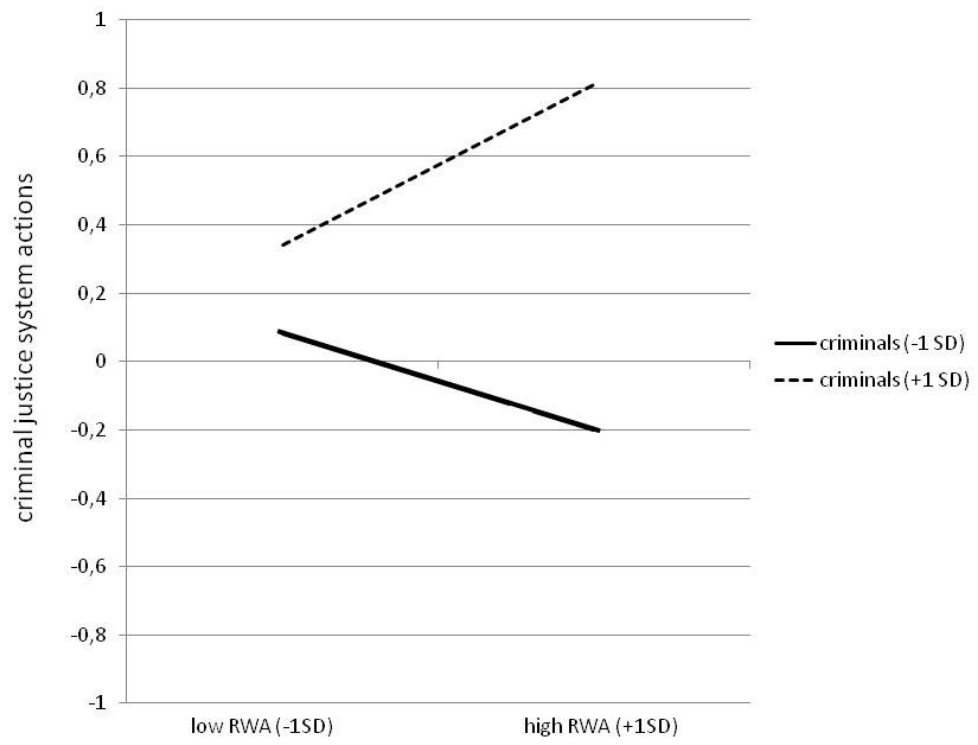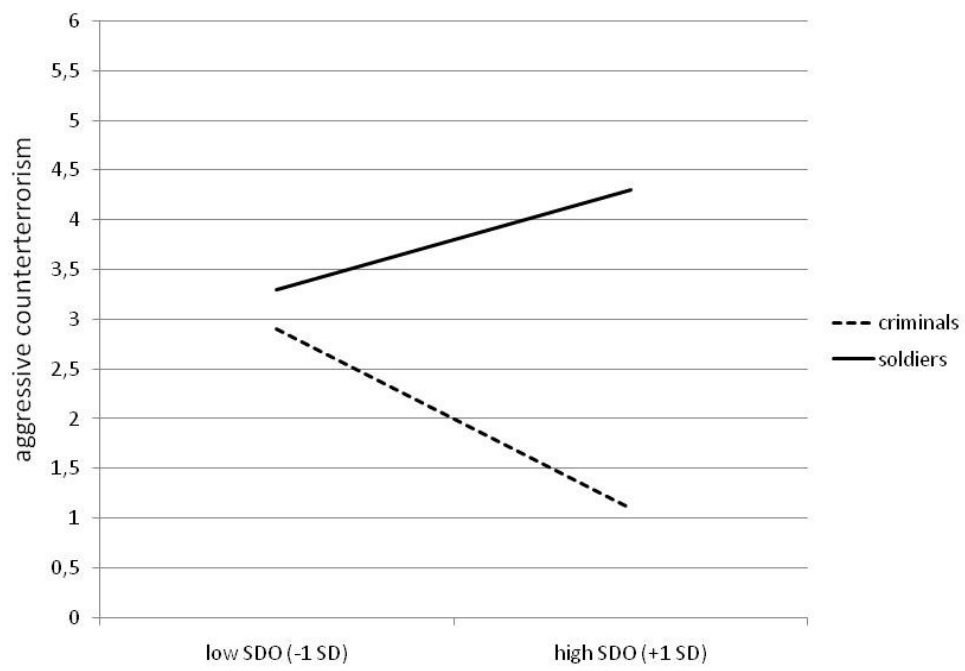*Figure 5*: Interaction of terrorists' image as criminals and social dominance orientation on preference for criminal prosecution of terrorists (Study 2: N = 193).
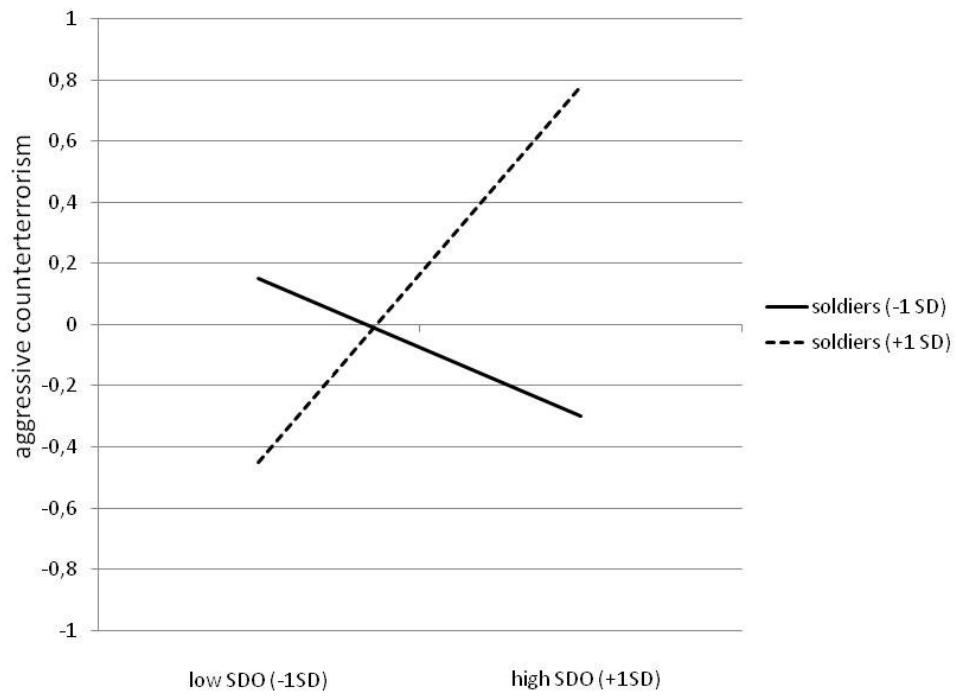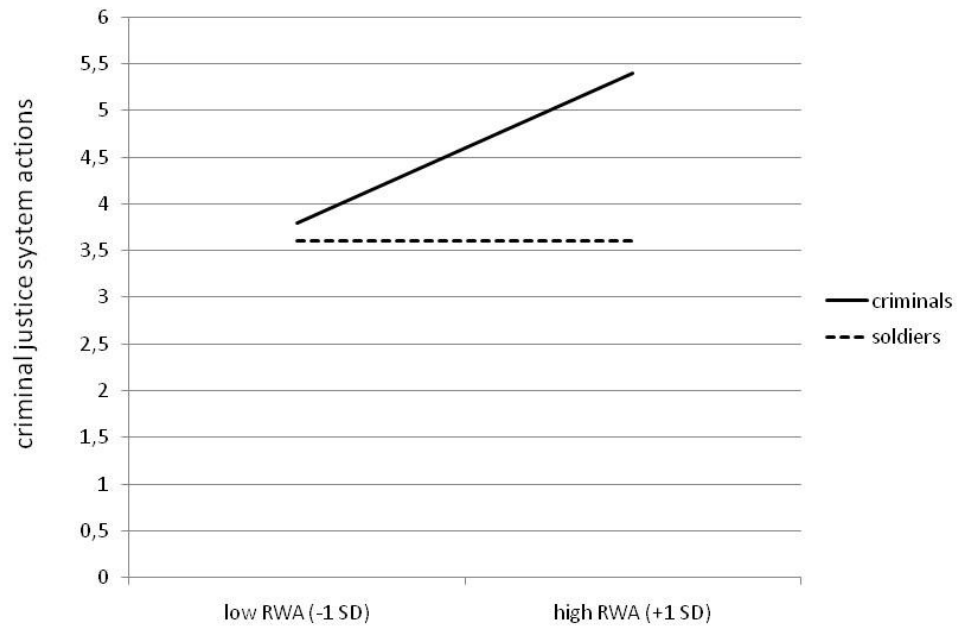
Figure 1.

Figure 2.

Figure 3.

Figure 4.

Figure 5.