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What Now?: Students' Reactions to the Attacks of September 11, 2001

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*What Now?: Students' Reactions to the Attacks of
September 11, 2001*

**By: Lara Banjanin and Marc Eaton
Honors Program Senior Thesis**



HONORS THESIS

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September 11, 2001 started off as just another Tuesday. Men and women across America woke up and went about their business as they would on any work day. However, that all changed at 8:45a.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST). A jetliner carrying 92 people slammed into the north tower of the World Trade Center in New York City. Eighteen minutes later, a second jet carrying 65 people plowed into the south tower. A short time later, a third hijacked plane was guided into the Pentagon, and at 10:10a.m. a fourth jet crashed in a field outside Shanksville, Pennsylvania (<http://www.cnn.com>, Accessed 17 August 2002).

This sudden attack against America sent immediate shock waves across the nation. Furthermore, the scope of the tragedy frightened Americans, because they could not believe a terrorist plot as complicated as this could possibly slip past the nation's intelligence services. Concerns regarding the efficiency and effectiveness of our national security system were voiced at all levels of government as well as in the media. Americans wondered why such a sudden attack had occurred and whether a similar attack lay in the future. To further the nation's anxiety, no one could promise that the government could provide Americans with any real security from terrorist attacks if enemies of the country decided to strike again.

Along with its obvious and immediate implications for national security, September Eleventh affected all aspects of American life, on an institutional as well as on an individual level. America's economy experienced instability, and religious institutions noticed a change in the number and intensity of their followers. At the same time, people began to examine their personal lives. The attacks on September 11, 2001, served as a reminder to all Americans of their mortality. As a result, people contemplated making

significant changes in the way they lived their lives, realizing that money and their jobs were in fact quite insignificant in the grand scheme of things.

It is because of this massive impact on the everyday lives of all Americans that we wanted to study the implication of the events of September Eleventh. We wanted to get a better idea of how people in our age and educational cohort reacted to the attacks and what they thought about the future of life in America. Although we realized that our study would be limited by time and budget constraints, we hoped to create a final product that at least provided a vignette of what students at Western Washington University experienced as a result of the attacks. Furthermore, we hope that our research would serve as a model for other researchers who have the resources to examine this compelling subject on a larger scale. In the end, we believed it was necessary to create something positive out of such a tremendous tragedy in order to facilitate the healing process. We hope our study contributes to this healing process in some small way.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A number of studies have focused on the psychological aftereffects of terrorism. For example, Ginny Sprang (2001) examined the psychological distress patterns of people who were indirectly affected by the terrorist attack on the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, on April 19, 1995. The two samples in the study consisted of those who initially presented symptoms for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and those who did not warrant a diagnosis of PTSD. Sprang found that there was a significant abatement of PTSD symptoms in both groups over time. The only symptom that appeared to remain consistent over time was a feeling of victimization, which was held by those who did not seek psychiatric treatment after the attack.

A second study motivated by the Oklahoma City Bombing was Charles Benight, et. al's (2000) research on how appraisals of coping self-efficacy may be effective predictors of psychological distress after such a traumatic event. The researchers defined coping self-efficacy (CSE) as "a person's subjective appraisal of his or her ability to cope with the environmental demands of a stressful or traumatic situation" (Bandura, 1986, as quoted in Benight, et. al, 2000). The study found that, although respondent's perceptions of CSE did not significantly change over time, their PTSD symptomology, social support, and perceived resource loss all significantly decreased over time. This means that, while victims' levels of emotional stress and perceptions of loss may decrease over time, the support provided to them by their communities also waned as the immediacy of the tragedy passed.

In response to the attacks of September 11, 2001, Joseph Ledoux and Jack Gorman (2001) published an editorial examining the responsibilities of psychiatrists during such a time of sadness and anxiety. Ledoux and Gorman were primarily concerned with the possibility that those individuals who were exposed to the trauma of these terrorist attacks may become withdrawn and despondent, as a mechanism for avoiding stimuli that reminded them of the traumatic event. In order to battle these "passive fear responses," the authors suggested that those who were traumatized should begin a process of "active coping" (p.1955). Rather than dwelling on, and being consumed by, memories of the tragedy, traumatized individuals should remain active in pursuits that gave them pleasure in the past. In this way, victims can slowly begin to cope with what happened without becoming overwhelmed and retreating into emotional numbness.

Along with these academic reports, there were several studies published based on national poll results. The first of these (Kuzma 2000) was published prior to the attacks of September Eleventh and compared the responses of poll participants from the mid-1980's to the mid-1990's, shortly after the Oklahoma City bombing. Kuzma's (2000) study focused on the public's perceptions of personal threat, government protection, and national security in the context of a potential terrorist attack. Three other reports were published by the Pew Research Center after the attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon. These studies were based on poll results from September 19, 2001, October 4, 2001, and December 6, 2001. The goal of these polls was to assess Americans' beliefs and perceptions about the terrorist threat to America over time. Each of the four abovementioned reports was used for comparison in the "Results" section of our research.

RESEARCH EXPECTATIONS

Before conducting our study, we hypothesized about the potential outcomes of our research based on expected social and political characteristics of our sample population. First of all, we expected our sample to be much more socially and politically liberal than comparative national samples. Based on this liberal expectation, we predicted that our sample would be more supportive of maintaining civil liberties than nationally representative samples. Furthermore, we expected our sample to be less supportive of the "War on Terror," and be less willing to sacrifice civil liberties in exchange for increased national security. Keeping in mind that our respondents were college students, we expected that they would profess fewer prejudicial views towards those of Middle Eastern and Muslim background than participants in several national

surveys. The assumption that college students would be less likely to harbor these views stems from our belief that most students at Western Washington University are more accepting of individual differences than the general public. This belief is based on our personal experiences and everyday communication with members of the student body, in which we found Western students to be generally open-minded. Overall, we did not expect drastic differences between our results and the results of the national surveys; however, we anticipated higher levels of racial and religious tolerance, and a more prevalent noninterventionist stance on issues of national security and civil liberties.

METHODS

Participants:

The present study consisted of a total of 364 participants (262 females, 91 males, 11 non-responses) from upper level as well as introductory psychology and sociology classes at Western Washington University in Bellingham, Washington. The participants ranged in age from 18 years old to 50 years old¹. Our participants were both undergraduate and post-baccalaureate with the breakdown including: 16.5 % freshmen, 25.5% sophomores, 35.2% juniors, 16.6 % seniors, 1.7% second year seniors, and 1.4 % post baccalaureates. Our sample consisted of 83.5 % Caucasians, 3.3 % Asians/Pacific Islanders, 1.1% African Americans, 1.1% Middle Easterners, .8 % Native Americans and 5.5% of our participants either did not fit those options or declined to answer. All of the participants of the study were treated ethically and fairly under the “Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct” (American Psychological Association, 1992).

¹ For a more detailed breakdown of respondents' ages, see Appendix A.

Although we made no direct comparison between our sample and the university population, we included the following statistics to aid readers in making their own decisions regarding the representativeness of our sample. We obtained the following statistics from the university registrar. The spring 2002 statistics of enrolled undergraduate students at Western Washington University showed that of the 11,344 students enrolled at the time of our survey, 55.9% were females and 44.1% were males. Out of the Spring Quarter population, 16.5% were freshmen, 19.04% were sophomores, 24.6% were juniors, 33.2% were seniors, and 6.7% were Masters or post baccalaureate students. The student body was composed of 78.7% Caucasians, 6.9% Asian or Pacific Islanders, 1.7% African American, 1.8% Native Americans, and 10.8% students that marked "Other" or did not indicate their ethnicity.

Materials:

The survey used in this study was a nine-page compilation of questions adapted from several previously administered surveys. The format and content of our survey was based on three national surveys administered in the months after September 11, 2001, and one survey study conducted previous to the attacks. The survey consisted of fifty-six numbered questions, of which 5 questions were broken down into subsequent categories².

Design and Procedure:

The survey was administered to four undergraduate psychology and sociology classes. We chose an introductory course as well as an upper-division course from each of the disciplines in order to provide a wider range of ages and class levels in our sample. The sessions usually lasted for 20-30 minutes, of which the first 5 minutes were used to brief the participants. We informed the participants of the purpose of our study and

² To view the complete survey, see Appendix B.

allowed them time to read the disclosure statement. Participants were also given oral instructions regarding the survey, and a contact email was provided if they had any additional questions. Lastly, the student-participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and they could stop at any time or skip any questions they found distressing.

BACKGROUND

We conducted our study during the months of April and May, 2002. Since at the time we administered the survey the events of September 11, 2001, were only seven or eight months in the past, the American people and the government were still trying to react to the new realities of a nation rocked by terror. One of the chief concerns in these months was restoring personal and national security. In order to prevent another massive loss of lives, the government remained on high alert and took every potential threat seriously. Consequently, it seemed as though everyday during the spring of 2002 a new warning or advisory was broadcast to the nation. While these warnings represented the national government's efforts to keep Americans informed and safe, they nonetheless provoked new anxieties in the already enervated American public. Therefore, in order to place our study in the context of the period in which it was administered, some background information must be provided. We believe the following summary of events captures the sensation of anxiety still lingering in America during the time of our study.

Six months after the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon some aspects of American life had returned to normal, while others still showed the effects of September Eleventh. From a high of ninety percent immediately after the attacks, President Bush's approval rating had slipped to seventy-seven percent by the time the

six-month anniversary arrived. However, the stock market appeared to have recovered from the slide that followed the terrorist attacks. This stability did not include the tourist industry, which continued to experience the aftereffects of a country afraid of flying or of traveling to foreign countries. The same fear that prevented many from visiting foreign countries also prompted many American to congregate with those sharing similar religious beliefs. This gathering within religious communities may also have been partially motivated by the desire for comfort and solace that religion provided after such a tragedy. As a result, leaders from a variety of religious communities, including Muslims, reported higher numbers of followers attending religious events (Carroll, et. al, 2002).

Aside from these overall trends, warnings by the media about potential future terrorist plots noticeably increased in the period shortly before and during our survey research. In April, crop-dusting pilots tried to reassure the public that the threat of a crop-dusting plane being used to spread biological or chemical weapons was very minor. This occurred because federal officials had information suggesting that Al-Qaeda had considered crop-dusting planes as a potential terrorist tool (O'Driscoll, 4 April 2002). Also in early April, polls showed that a majority of Americans saw suicide bombings similar to those occurring in Israel as a likely possibility in this country (O'Driscoll, 9 April 2002).

The month of May 2002 brought with it a wide variety of reported potential terrorist targets. Farmers in the livestock industry responded to the potential threat that terrorists might infect American cattle with the deadly foot-and-mouth disease that killed millions of cattle and sheep in Britain in 2001 (O'Driscoll, 8 May 2002). In mid-May, apartment owners and landlords were notified of a rumored Al-Qaeda plan to rent

apartments and secretly wire the buildings with explosives. This warning followed closely on the heels of similar bombing plots involving banks and shopping malls (Alvord, 2002). Vice President Dick Cheney announced on television's "Meet the Press" that he believed another attack on the United States was "almost certain" (Schemo, 2002). Likewise, Federal Bureau of Investigation's director Robert S. Mueller warned that suicide bombings like those in Israel were "inevitable" in America. He went on to further break America's illusion of security by admitting the FBI and other federal agencies could do little to stop future attacks (Shenon, 2002). One day after these comments were published, New York City once again beefed up security, this time in response to reports that terrorists may target such landmarks as the Brooklyn Bridge and the Statue of Liberty next. At the same time, Secretary of defense Donald Rumsfeld warned that it was only a matter of time before terrorists used their international ties to acquire weapons of mass destruction (Barry and Baker, 2002). In the meantime, uncorroborated threats ranging from scuba diving saboteurs to possible attacks on nuclear plants on the Fourth of July kept Americans constantly on edge (Woodward, 2002).

At the same time, controversy began brewing around the issue of how much the federal government knew before September Eleventh. A FBI memo revealed that the agency received warning during the summer of 2001 about at least one student in an Arizona flight school that harbored anti-American sentiments (Johnson and Diamond, 2002). In addition, the American public discovered that the CIA had briefed President Bush in August about the likelihood of Osama bin Laden's plot to hijack planes, although this briefing did not anticipate the way in which these hijacked aircraft would be used. However, in both cases the government claimed that the warnings, although frighteningly

accurate in retrospect, did not warrant the mobilization of security forces at the time (Sanger, 2002).

This combination of heightened anxiety and reduced faith in the government during the spring of 2002 undoubtedly affected the results of our study. However, it is not the place of a study such as ours to hypothesize about exactly how the results of our survey research reflected the period in which the surveys were administered. On the other hand, we wanted to provide a historical context upon which the results of our study would be more relevant. By presenting the facts as they existed at this time, we hope that the reader will realize that this research, as any body of research, was not conducted in a sociopolitical vacuum. It is with this background information in mind that we now present the results of our study.

RESULTS

Frequency Measures:

Frequency measures were obtained for all fifty-six questions on the survey using the Statistical Protocol for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program to analyze the data. While we obtained frequencies for all of our responses, there were a number that were particularly interesting. According to the responses, 86.4% of our sampled participants were at least somewhat concerned that there will be more major terrorist attacks in this country. This can be compared to a response of 78% when a similar question was posed in a survey conducted by the American Broadcasting Company (ABC) shortly after the terrorist attack in Oklahoma City in April 1995 (Kuzma 2000). Likewise, 73% of a nationally representative sample answered that they were "somewhat" or "very" worried

that there would soon be another terrorist attack in the United States (Pew Research Center, 4 October 2001).

Nearly 70% of our participants at least somewhat approved of the way President George W. Bush dealt with the attacks on the World Trade Center and Washington, compared with a 77% national approval rating six months after the attacks (Carroll, et al., 2002). Sixty-six point five percent of our sample favored taking military action, including the use of ground troops, to retaliate for the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Compared to the 82% approval of taking military action reported in a nationally representative survey conducted on September 19, 2001, these results show that our sample was not nearly as supportive of a military campaign against those responsible for the attacks (Pew Research Center).

One week after the terrorist attacks, 70% of respondents in a national survey favored requiring citizens to carry National Identity Cards at all times, while only 37.9% at least slightly favored this measure in our survey (Pew Research Center, 19 September, 2001)³. While over half of our participants (58.1%) favored allowing the CIA to contract with criminals when pursuing suspected terrorists overseas, less than half (38.3%) favored allowing the CIA to conduct assassinations overseas in a similar situation. In contrast, 67% of national respondents favored allowing the CIA to contract with criminals and/or conduct assassinations overseas (Pew Research Center, 19 September, 2001). Nearly all of the participants (93.6%) opposed the use of internment camps as a way to control immigrants from unfriendly countries during times of tension or crisis, compared to 57% of those surveyed nationally (Pew Research Center, 19 September, 2001). Although 58.2% of our sample said that they were at least somewhat willing to

³ See Figure 1 on page 14.

give up civil liberties in order to curb terrorism, a strong majority of them opposed government monitored phone calls and emails, as well as federal tracking of credit card purchases (94.5% and 87.9% respectively). While in the national survey respondents also opposed these actions, the percentages opposed were 70% and 55%, respectively (Pew Research Center, 19 September, 2001). Sixty point two percent of our participants favored making it easier for the FBI to put wiretaps on telephone calls made by people suspected of terrorist activities, while 62.2% opposed increasing surveillance of US citizens by the government as a way to reduce terrorist acts. Our responses indicated that 74.1% of the sample agreed that the federal government should have more authority to investigate and plant undercover agents in possible terrorist groups.

Given five different options about what the terrorist are most likely to do next, 34.2% answered that the terrorists are most likely to attack with biological or chemical weapons, while 46.8% reported that the terrorists are most likely to bomb/attack a public place or infrastructure⁴. This can be compared to 37% and 18% respectively in the national survey (4 October 2001). Less than half (41.3%) felt that, if law enforcement officials were given the tools they need, they would be able to prevent all or many future terrorist attacks in the United States⁵. Sixty-one point two percent felt that the terrorist attacks on the WTC and the Pentagon were motivated equally by both religious and political beliefs; only 6.7% thought the attacks were primarily motivated by religion and 32.1% thought they were primarily political. However, in a national survey only 10% felt that the terrorist attacks were motivated equally by both religious and political beliefs, while 30% thought it was religious and 49% felt that it was political (Pew

⁴ See Figure 2 in Appendix A.

⁵ See Figure 3 in Appendix A.

Research Center, 6 December, 2001).

Figure 1: Government Measures to Curb Terrorism in U.S.

	Frequency Oppose (N)	Percent Oppose (%)	Frequency Favor (N)	Percent Favor (%)
National Identity Cards	218	62.1	133	37.9
CIA Contract With Criminals	140	40.9	202	59.1
CIA Conduct Assassinations	209	61.7	130	38.3
Internment Camps	321	93.6	22	6.4
Monitor Phone Calls and E-Mails	328	94.5	19	5.5
Monitor Credit Card Purchases	304	87.9	42	12.1
FBI Put Wiretaps on Phones	138	39.8	209	60.2
Increase Surveillance	214	62.2	130	37.8

Thirty point five percent of our survey participants reported that they were mostly or very unfavorable towards Muslims as a religious group, compared to 17% in a national survey (6 December 2001). Similarly, a majority of our respondents (53.4%) stated that they would not feel uneasy if a person of Middle-Eastern descent was a passenger on their flight.

Only 40.4% of the sample presumed that the US will ever feel as secure as it did before September 11, 2001; likewise, 46% think that the "War on Terror" will be successful⁶. While 84.6% of the people surveyed expressed that another terrorist attack was at least somewhat likely, a strong majority (91.4%) felt somewhat or very hopeful for the future.

⁶ See Figure 4 in Appendix A.

Cross-tabulations and Correlations:

Along with frequency measures, measures of significance were also performed on the data set via cross-tabulation and correlation. We ran cross-tabulations of several variables to determine if the relationship between two variables was significant. If this analysis showed that the relationship was significant, we next computed a correlation coefficient to determine the strength and direction of the relationship. All of our analysis was conducted using a two-tailed test with a confidence interval of ninety-nine percent. In this part of our analysis, we focused primarily on three major aspects of our study: respondents' perceptions of military action and issues surrounding the "War on Terror;" respondents' perceptions of national security and subsequent willingness to sacrifice civil liberties; and how issues of race may have affected the responses of our participants.

The "War on Terror" Hits Home: One of our first subjects of analysis was the use of military force against those responsible for the attacks. We examined several relationships between support for the war or military action and support for anti-war protests or dissenting viewpoints. The relationship between the respondents' opinions of whether the "War on Terror" will be successful and their support or opposition to military action as a means of retaliation for the attacks on September 11, 2001, was significant at a ninety-nine percent confidence interval ($r = .5539, p < .01$). After running a correlation, we found that the relationship was inverse. This may seem counterintuitive, but the inverse relationship actually means that opposition to military action decreased as belief in the success of the war increased. Although overall our respondents said that they felt

the war would be unsuccessful (54%), this sentiment was much stronger for those who opposed military action (84.2%)⁷.

While our respondents as a whole were strongly in favor of peaceful protest rallies (80.6%), there was a significant inverse relationship between this variable and support for military action. A negative correlation at the $p < .01$ confidence level showed that support for protest rallies increased as military support declined. A similar trend was found for the relationship between favorability of military action and opposition to the expression of opinions in the media by people who blame US policies for the terrorist attacks⁸.

Figure 6: Relationship between Support for Military Action and Public Opinion

Public opinion	Support for military action
Allowing expression of views in media by those who blame US policies for attacks	-.336**
Allowing Americans opposed to military actions to carry out peaceful protest rallies	-.422**
Belief that the “War on Terror” will be successful	-.491**

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

National Security and Civil Liberties: After examining the relationship between public opinion and the “War on Terror,” we next turned to the topic of national security. We wanted to ascertain if participants’ beliefs about the ability of the government to prevent attacks had a significant influence on their support of various proposed national security measures. Indeed, we found a significant relationship between these variables. The majority of people who believed that law enforcement officials would be able to prevent all or many future terrorist attacks against America also favored the mandatory carrying

⁷ See Figures 5a and 5b in Appendix A.

⁸ See Figure 6.

of national identity cards ($x = 10.22$, $p < .01$), allowing the CIA to contract with criminals in pursuing suspected terrorists overseas ($x = 19.02$, $p < .01$), and allowing the CIA to conduct assassinations overseas when pursuing suspected enemies of the US ($x = 8.81$, $p < .01$). This resulted in an inverse relationship between each of the independent variables and the dependent variables⁹. In other words, opposition to each of these measures increased as respondents believed the federal government could prevent fewer and fewer attacks.

Figure 7: Relationship between Belief that Law Enforcement Officials Could Stop Future Attacks and Federal Government Control

Federal Government control tactics	Belief that law enforcement can stop future attacks
National identity cards requirement	-.260**
CIA contracting with criminals	-.256**
CIA conducting assassinations overseas	-.199**

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

These individuals also supported allowing the US government to monitor personal telephone calls and emails ($x = 5.04$, $p < .05$) and their credit card purchases ($x = 8.41$, $p < .01$), although these correlations were weaker (-.123 and -.159, respectively). There was no correlation between giving law enforcement officials tools to prevent future terrorist attacks and support for placing legal immigrants from unfriendly countries into internment camps; regardless of circumstances, nearly all of our respondents opposed using internment camps as a way to prevent terrorist attacks.

⁹ See Figure 7.

Next, we examined the relationships between participants' willingness to give up some civil liberties and their opinions on a number of questions pertaining to increased surveillance capabilities by federal agencies such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). First, we examined the relationship between support for the way President Bush dealt with the terrorist attacks and respondents' willingness to sacrifice some of their civil liberties. We found a significant correlation showing that their willingness to give up civil liberties increased as their opposition to the President decreased¹⁰. Next, we looked at the relationship between respondents' willingness to give up some civil liberties and their belief that the federal government should have more authority to plant undercover agents in possible terrorist groups. We found a significant correlation between these two items as well, showing that those who were willing to give the FBI authority were often the same people who agreed to give up civil liberties (correlation coefficient= .322, $p < .01$). Similarly, we also found that those respondents who were more willing to give up some civil liberties in order to curb terrorism in this country supported making it easier for the FBI to put wiretaps on telephone calls made by people suspected of terrorist activities. The same group also supported increasing surveillance of United States citizens as a way to reduce terrorist acts. When these relationships are examined as a whole, they show that a significant number of our sample population was willing to give up some privacy and freedom if increased protection from terrorist attacks was offered in return.

¹⁰ See Figure 8 on following page.

Figure 8: Relationship between Willingness to Give Up Civil Liberties and Government Control and Involvement

Government control and involvement	Willingness to give up civil liberties
Opinion of the way George Bush dealt with the terrorist attacks	-.320**
Supporting making it easier for FBI to put wiretaps on phones	-.433**
Supporting increasing surveillance of US citizens by the government	-.536**

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Opinions of Muslims: For our final topic of analysis, we hoped to determine if racism played a role in the opinions of our respondents. In particular, we looked at how higher levels of exposure to Muslims or people of Middle Eastern descent may influence our participants' responses to questions about people in these categories. Based on our own observations, witnessing on-campus anti-war demonstrations and the University's commitment to diversity, we hypothesized that the majority of students at Western Washington University would express a high level of tolerance towards races other than their own. Working off of these personal experiences, we expected that intolerant racial attitudes would not be a significant factor in our respondents' opinions towards Muslims and people of Middle Eastern descent.

In our first analysis, we looked at the relationship between the participants' opinions of Muslims and their reported levels of uneasiness if a Middle Eastern person was aboard a flight on which they were passengers. After recoding our variables and creating a two-by-two cross-tabulation table, we found that as the participants' opinion of Muslims increased in favorability, they reported that they would not feel any uneasiness if there was a passenger of Middle Eastern descent on their flight. However, after running a correlation we discovered that the relationship between respondents' opinions

of Muslims was not significantly related to their expected level of uneasiness if a Middle Eastern passenger boarded their flight (correlation coefficient= $-.066$). Therefore, favorability towards Muslims was not a significant predictor of a respondent's comfort level on a flight with a Middle Eastern passenger.

Next, we ran a correlation between respondents' favorability to the Muslim religion and whether they knew anyone who was Muslim. By running this correlation we hoped to discover whether people who responded unfavorably to the Muslim religion tended to have little social contact with a member of that religious group. Indeed, we found that participants who knew a member of the Muslim religion had a significantly more favorable opinion of that religious group (correlation coefficient= $.174$, $p < .01$). However, these results cannot be interpreted as a "cause-and-effect" relationship due to our level of analysis.

DISCUSSION

Frequency Results:

On the whole, our results showed what we expected to find at the beginning of our study. With a generally liberal population, we expected to find lower than national levels of support for military action and increased national security measures. Indeed, less than half of our respondents believed that the "War on Terror" would be successful, and a lower percentage than those reported in nationally representative surveys supported military action as a response to the terrorist attacks. However, we were surprised to find that the split between those who believed the war would be successful and unsuccessful was so close (46% and 54%, respectively). Since Western's campus had a vocal anti-war group and students frequently expressed opposition to the "War on Terror," we expected

to find a more dramatic majority percentage who thought the war would not be a success. Likewise, although our participants responded with lower than national support for military action, it was surprising that two-thirds of our sample supported this type of action in retaliation for the attacks. Going along with the anti-war demonstrations on campus, we expected that a majority of the sample would oppose military action. On the other hand, our expectations were met by our respondents' lower than national support for increased national security measures, such as national identification cards, internment camps, and federally monitored phone calls and e-mails.

One of the most unexpected results of our frequency analysis was the discovery that our sample actually reported a higher percentage of unfavorable opinions towards Muslims than reported in a national survey. This was unexpected because we believed that students on Western's campus would hold less racial prejudice than the nation as a whole. However, it must be said that the results from our survey cannot be inferred as completely representative of Western Washington University's student population, as it is often difficult to generalize to a larger population when participants are not randomly selected. It is also possible that these results occurred because of a flaw in the survey or some other internal error. Another unexpected result was the large percentage (47%) of respondents that expected terrorists to bomb a public place or infrastructure next. These results are difficult to explain if one looks only at the samples surveyed and does not examine the time in which the surveys were administered. The national survey in which 18% of respondents said a bombing was likely was conducted in October 2001, previous to the string of suicide bombings that occurred in Israel during the period in which we conducted our study. It is possible that this change in international circumstances

affected our respondents' perception of the likelihood of a public bombing happening in America. In the end, though, we were reassured to find that nearly all of our respondents held at least some hope for the future, even when they expected another attack and felt that the country would never again feel as secure as it did before September 11, 2001.

Correlation and Cross-tabulation Results:

Much like the results for our frequency measures, our cross-tabulations and correlations confirmed many of our expected relationships. Participants' levels of support for military action were significantly related to their tolerance for dissenting views in the media. As respondents' support for military action increased, they also tended to lose support for public protests by anti-war demonstrators and people who blamed the United States' policies for the attacks. Also as expected, those who believed the government could stop attacks if given the proper tools reported significantly higher levels of support for increased national security measures. There was also a clear correlation between respondents' willingness to give up civil liberties and their support for increasing the ability of the federal government to employ surveillance and other investigative tactics in order to thwart possible terrorist plots.

We expected to discover a significant relationship between participants' opinions of the Muslim religion and their level of social contact with Muslim individuals. Our results did show a significant relationship, but with our level of analysis we were unable to determine a "cause-and-effect" relationship. It is likely that lack of social contact tends to cause unfavorable opinions of Muslims to form through xenophobia and prejudice. However, it is equally likely that lack of contact may be determined by an already-held unfavorable opinion of Muslims.

In another attempt to analyze possible religious or racial prejudice, we expected to find a significant relationship when correlating respondents' favorability toward Muslims and their level of uneasiness if a passenger of Middle Eastern descent was aboard their flight. However, only a weak and insignificant relationship appeared in our data, showing that our participants' opinions about Muslims did not significantly affect their reported comfort level around people from regions dominated by Muslims. If these results were reproduced in a representative study with a larger sample, it is possible that conclusions could be drawn about the relationship of one's religious preferences and one's comfort with individuals who do not share one's views. Namely, further studies may show that religious beliefs are independent of religious or racial stereotypes and prejudices.

Looking Ahead:

This study is a small piece of research within an ever-growing body of research into the important psychological and sociological aftereffects of the September Eleventh terrorist attacks. Although the results of our study must be viewed critically due to the lack of a representative sample or a large number of respondents, our findings are nevertheless intriguing. We hope that our study may serve as a model for future research in this area. Large, nationally representative samples of college students and other demographic groups could provide great insight into the current psychological state of Americans, post-9/11. Specifically, such studies could elucidate how the effects of racially charged events, such as September 11, taint public perception of individuals associated with the attacking group (in this case, Muslim- and/or Middle-Eastern Americans). In addition, future studies could increase researchers' understanding of the

relationship between terrorist activity and public perceptions of national security. Rather than viewing September 11, 2001, as the end of America's age of innocence and security, that fateful day can also be seen as the beginning of an age of greater understanding in the field of post-traumatic psychological reactions and the social effects of terror.

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Appendix A: Data and Figures

Age Breakdown of Respondents:

18 yrs.= 13 respondents	19 yrs.= 85 respondents	20 yrs.= 88 respondents
21 yrs.= 69 respondents	22 yrs.= 46 respondents	23 yrs.= 15 respondents
24 yrs.= 7 respondents	25-30 yrs.= 20 respondents	31-45 yrs.= 8 respondents
45 yrs.-above= 2 respondents		

Figures 2-5b:

Figure 2: What Are Terrorists Going To Do Next?

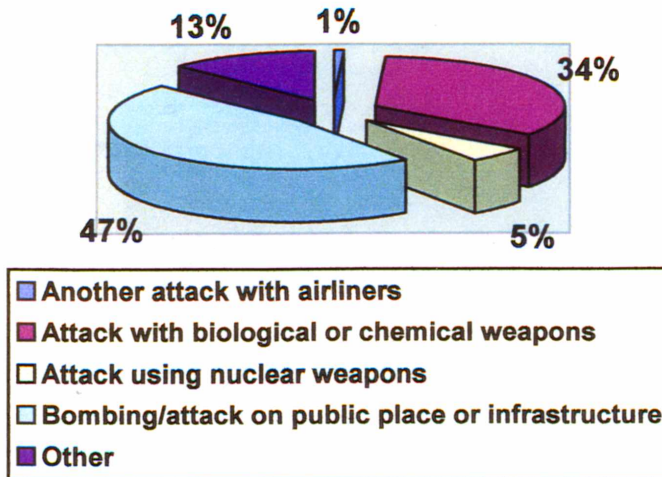


Figure 3:

Confidence In Ability Of U.S. Government To Prevent Attacks

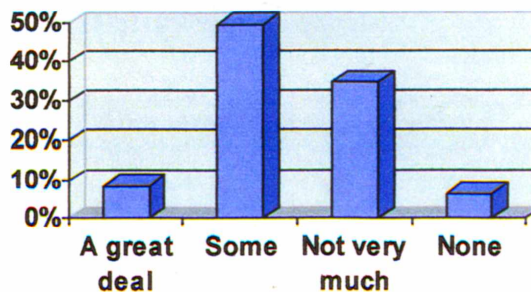


Figure 4: Will "War on Terror" Be Successful?

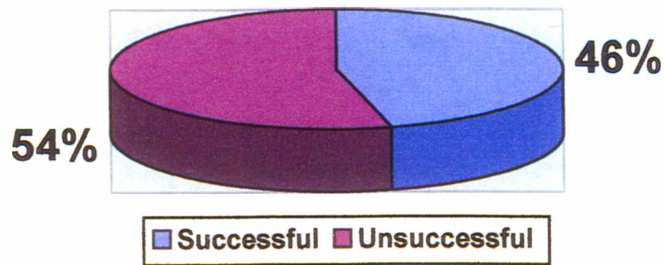


Figure 5a: View of "War on Terror" by Supporters of Military Action

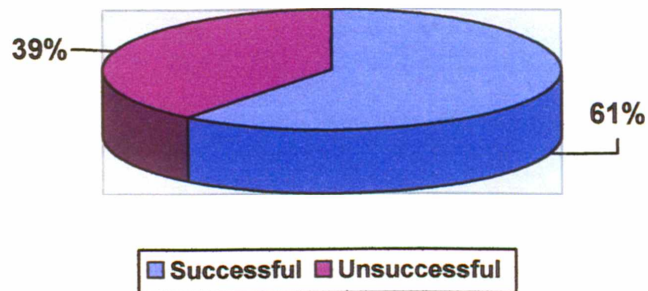
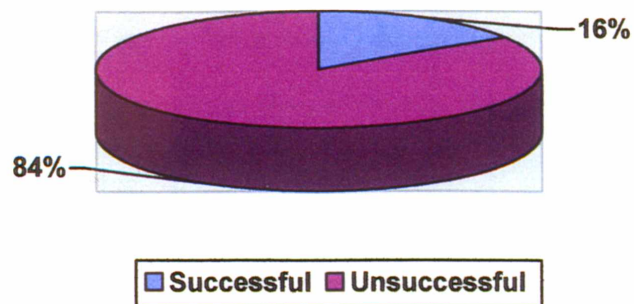


Figure 5b: View of "War on Terror" by Opposers of Military Action



Appendix B: Copy of Survey

Attitudes on race and feelings of personal and national security as a result of terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001

By Lara Banjanin and Marc Eaton

For the following questions, please fill in the blank or circle your response as necessary.

1. Age _____

2. Year in school _____

3. Gender _____

4. Race/Ethnicity:

Caucasian African American Asian/Pacific Islander Middle Eastern Native
American Other

5. Religious preference:

Catholic Protestant Other Christian Muslim Buddhist Hindu
Jewish Agnostic/Atheist Other _____

6. How closely do you follow news reports on the current situation of America's "War on Terror"?

Every day Every other day Twice a week Once a month Less than once a month

7. How concerned are you about the possibility there will be more major terrorist attacks in this country?

Very concerned Somewhat concerned Not concerned

8. Overall do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling his job as president?

Strongly disapprove disapprove slightly disapprove slightly approve approve strongly approve

9. Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush dealt with the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon in Washington?

Strongly disapprove disapprove slightly disapprove slightly approve approve strongly approve

10. Would you say your overall opinion of the federal government in Washington, D.C., is favorable or unfavorable?

Very unfavorable mostly unfavorable slightly unfavorable slightly favorable mostly favorable very favorable

11. Do you favor or oppose taking military action, including the use of ground troops, to retaliate against those responsible for the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001?

Strongly oppose oppose slightly oppose slightly favor favor strongly favor

12. What concerns you more right now? That the government will fail to enact strong, new antiterrorism laws, or that the government will enact new antiterrorism laws that excessively restrict the average person's civil liberties?

Fail to enact strong laws

New laws will restrict civil liberties

13. In order to curb terrorism in this country, do you think it will be necessary for the average person to give up some civil liberties, or not?

It will be necessary to give them up

It won't be necessary to give them up

14. Would you favor or oppose the following measures to curb terrorism:

a. Requiring that all citizens carry a national identity card at all times to show to a police officer on request

Strongly oppose oppose slightly oppose slightly favor favor strongly favor

b. Allowing the CIA to contract with criminals in pursuing suspected terrorists overseas

Strongly oppose oppose slightly oppose slightly favor favor strongly favor

c. Allowing the CIA to conduct assassinations overseas when pursuing suspected enemies of the U.S.

Strongly oppose oppose slightly oppose slightly favor favor strongly favor

- d. Allowing the U.S. government to take legal immigrants that are now residing in the U.S. to internment camps during times of tension or crisis if those immigrants originated from unfriendly countries.

Strongly oppose oppose slightly oppose slightly favor favor strongly favor

- e. Allowing U.S. government to monitor your personal telephone calls and e-mails

Strongly oppose oppose slightly oppose slightly favor favor strongly favor

- f. Allowing the U.S. government to monitor your credit card purchases

Strongly oppose oppose slightly oppose slightly favor favor strongly favor

15. In the media (newspaper, television, radio...) has there been too much, too little, or the right amount of:

- a. Discussion of ways to stop terrorists *other than* using military force

Too much Too little Right amount

- b. Suspicion of people with Middle East backgrounds living in America

Too much Too little Right amount

- c. Expressions of religious faith and prayer

Too much Too little Right amount

16. In the general public has there been too much, too little, or the right amount of:

- a. Discussion of ways to stop terrorists *other than* using military force

Too much Too little Right amount

- b. Suspicion of people with Middle East backgrounds living in America

Too much Too little Right amount

- c. Expressions of religious faith and prayer

Too much Too little Right amount

17. In the federal government has there been too much, too little, or the right amount of:

a. Discussion of ways to stop terrorists *other than* using military force

Too much Too little Right amount

b. Suspicion of people with Middle East backgrounds living in America

Too much Too little Right amount

c. Expressions of religious faith and prayer

Too much Too little Right amount

18. Do you favor or oppose allowing Americans not in support of taking military action to carry out peaceful protest rallies?

Strongly oppose oppose slightly oppose slightly favor favor strongly favor

19. Do you favor or oppose allowing Americans who blame U.S. policies for the terrorist attacks to express their views in the media?

Strongly oppose oppose slightly oppose slightly favor favor strongly favor

20. How worried are you that there will soon be another terrorist attack in the United States?

Not worried Slightly Worried Very Worried

21. What do you think the terrorists are most likely to do next?

- a. Another attack with airliners
- b. Attack using biological or chemical weapons
- c. Attack using nuclear weapons
- d. Bombing/Attack on public place or infrastructure
- e. Other _____

22. How serious do you feel terrorism is here in the United States?

Very serious Somewhat serious Not very serious

23. How concerned are you that there will be more violence from international terrorists in the United States?

Very concerned Somewhat concerned Not very concerned

24. How concerned are you personally about another terrorist attack in the United States?

Very concerned Somewhat concerned Not very concerned

25. Do you personally worry about terrorism when you are in public places?

Yes No

26. How much, if at all, do you worry about terrorism when you're in public places here in the United States?

Worry a lot Worry sometimes Don't worry at all

27. How concerned are you that there will be violence from terrorists near where you live or work?

Very concerned Somewhat concerned Not concerned

28. Have you or your family changed the way you live, such as how or where you travel, because of concern about terrorism?

Yes No

29. Do you or your family fly more or less as a result of the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001?

More Less No Change

30. As a result of September 11, 2001, do you feel that you would be more uneasy if there was a passenger of Middle Eastern descent on your flight?

Extremely uneasy Somewhat uneasy Not uneasy

31. Generally speaking, how much confidence do you have in the ability of the U.S. government to prevent terrorist attacks against Americans in this country?

A Great Deal Some Not Very Much None

32. Do you think there are any actions that the United States government could take to prevent future terrorist attacks in this country, or is it not possible to prevent future attacks?

Yes, there are actions to prevent attacks No, not possible to prevent attacks

33. How much do you know about current U.S. antiterrorism laws?

A Great Deal Some Not Very Much None

34. Do you think federal antiterrorism laws currently on the books in this country are too strong, too weak, or about what they need to be?

Too Strong Too Weak About What They Need To Be

35. If law enforcement officials are given the tools they need, do you think they will be able to prevent all future terrorist attacks here in the United States, many of them, only a few of them, or will they be able to prevent none of them?

All Many Few None

36. In your view, did the terrorists attack the World Trade Center and the Pentagon primarily because of religious beliefs, primarily because of political beliefs, or were they motivated equally by religious and political beliefs?

Religious Beliefs Political Beliefs Equally Religious and Political

37. These days, do you think that the greater threat to America from terrorism comes from citizens of the United States or non-citizens of the United States?

Citizens Non-Citizens Both Citizens and Non-Citizens

38. How worried are you that you or someone in your family will become a victim of a terrorist attack similar to the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon?

Very concerned Somewhat concerned Not concerned

39. Do you think in order to fight terrorism, the federal government should have more authority to investigate and plant undercover agents in possible terrorist groups, or would this violate Americans' constitutional rights?

Should Have More Authority Violates Constitutional Rights

40. Do you favor or oppose making it easier for the FBI to put wiretaps on telephone calls made by people suspected of terrorist activities?

Strongly oppose oppose slightly oppose slightly favor favor strongly favor

41. Would you favor or oppose increasing surveillance of U.S. citizens by the government as a way to reduce terrorist acts?

Strongly oppose oppose slightly oppose slightly favor favor strongly favor

