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Effects of Islamist Terror in a Muslim student sample:
Evidence from Turkey in the wake of the November 2003 attacks

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Abstract

In November 2003 Islamist extremists attacked various sites in Istanbul. The fact that the terrorists were Turkish citizens posed a threat to the identity of Turkish Muslims, who firmly reject terrorism. Using a Turkish student sample, this study examines how the categorization of Turkish terrorists as Muslims, or as members of their specific religious sect, impacts Turkish religious identity. Changes in the categorization of terrorists increased or decreased the religious identification depending on whether Turks focused on their identity as Muslims or as members of a specific Muslim denomination. However, regardless of the strength of their identification, an association with Islamist terrorism increased the ambivalence that Turks felt toward their religious identities. The discussion focuses on the benefits and potential hazards of various identity management strategies that a Muslim society may employ in the face of Muslim extremists proclaiming to act in the name of Islam.

(146 words)

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Effects of Islamist Terror in a Muslim student sample:
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On November 2003 four car bombs rocked the Turkish city of Istanbul, killing 27 and injuring at least 450 people. Two of these attacks, aimed at the British consulate and a branch of large business bank, followed earlier explosions at two synagogues that killed 25 individuals, leaving the Turkish public in shock (U.S. Department of State, 2005; but see also Cline, 2004). As a pro-Western secular democracy and Muslim nation, Turkish leaders and media immediately condemned the attacks. Initial suspicions centered on the terrorists being Arabs and foreigners in Turkey, but it was soon revealed that the attackers were Turkish citizens. For a Muslim nation that has long avoided any kind of association with Islamist terrorism, this came as a great shock. Not only was it stunning for the Turkish public to discover religious radicals in their midst but these extreme views also presented a threat to the identity of Turkish Muslims.

Responding to identity threat

Social identity theory proposes that people are motivated to view their ingroups in a positive light (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). When the reputation or public image of their group is threatened by the actions of specific deviant ingroup members, there is a range of strategies as to how regular group members may respond to the threat. The first reaction is typically to protect the group's integrity. If this is impossible, group members will next try to redefine their relationship with their group (e.g., Marques, Abrams, Paez, & Martinez-Taboada, 1998). We review these strategies below in some detail.

The first strategy centers on the deviant group members. Ingroup solidarity may lead the faithful group member to give alleged deviant members the benefit of doubt and/or treat their alleged deviant acts as unproven (e.g., Kerr, Hymes, Anderson, & Weathers, 1995). However, this approach of defending the deviant ingroup members becomes infeasible when there is overwhelming evidence against them—as was the case in the November 2003 bombings.

A second strategy is to reject the deviant members, and thus increase the social distance between the offenders and the ingroup. This approach spares the ingroup from being tainted by deviant ingroup members. Indeed, members often respond quite harshly to those peers who tarnish the reputation of the group. Literature on the black sheep effect shows that deviant ingroup members are more likely to be devalued than nonmembers who committed a similar offense (e.g., Abrams, Marques, Brown & Henson, 2000; Castano, Paladino, Coull, & Yzerbyt, 2002; Scheepers, Branscombe, Spears, & Doosje, 2002; Marques et al., 1988).

Yet, sometimes deviant members cannot simply be excommunicated from the existing category of ingroup members. In the case of the Istanbul bombings, terrorists were Turkish Muslims. In this and similar instances a group's threatened image can be rescued by redefining and renaming the group and focusing on a subset of the original group that excludes the deviant individuals. This third strategy involves the redefinition of the ingroup. For example, following the corporate accounting scandal caused by its former chairman and CEO, the American telecommunication giant WorldCom (re)named itself MCI to distance itself from its troubled past. Similarly, Turkish Islam can be redefined to exclude the terrorists.

Another strategy focuses on regular ingroup members' personal relationship to their group. When people are unable to hold onto a positive image of their own ingroup, they may choose to distance themselves from the now tarnished collective identity (e.g., Blanz, Mummendey, Mielke, & Klink, 1998). When confronted with a deviant member, individuals may leave or disidentify from their group. This fourth strategy is found especially among those who are not very invested in the group (Eidelman & Biernat, 2003; Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 1997).

However, in some situations it may not be possible to leave or even to lower one's attachment to the group. This is the case when the group boundaries are impermeable (e.g., when being a member of the group is not a choice), or when one's personal investment in the group is too important to be abandoned. Arguably, this was the case for the Turkish Muslims who were faced with the bombing attacks in 2003. Their religious identity was important enough to prohibit a mass exodus from Islam. However, if ingroup members maintain their identification with the tainted group and do not disidentify, they will have to acknowledge the adverse aspects of the group. This fifth strategy amounts to absorbing clearly negative aspects into one's otherwise positive identification to the group. As a consequence, one's group attachment is now fraught with ambivalence because there are both positive and

negative elements in how the person relates to the group—reasons to love and reasons to resent one’s ingroup identity existing side by side. Borrowing from the literature on attitude ambivalence (e.g., Priester & Petty, 1996; Thompson & Zanna, 1995), we call this fifth strategy in responding to social identity threat ambivalent identification. Which of those strategies were employed by Turkish Muslims in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of November 2003?

An inclusion/exclusion approach to ingroup identification in the face of identity threat

Schwarz and Bless (1992a) proposed an inclusion/exclusion model, which describes the dynamics of category construal and judgment in social contexts. This model demonstrates that how a social category is represented in the judgment makers mind has important implications for the judgment outcome. Among other things, Schwarz and Bless (1992b) showed that when participants were reminded of the fact that specific politicians have engaged in corruption, an assimilation effect occurred. One’s mental representation of the category politicians now includes clearly undesirable members, thus leading to a devaluation of the entire category (see also Bless, Schwarz, Bodenhausen, & Thiel, 2001; Stapel & Schwarz, 1998).

Even when excluded from the target category, undesirable individuals may still have an influence on one’s evaluation of the category by serving as a standard against which the category is compared. Such exclusion may occur, for instance, when the undesirable individuals are assigned to a different category, or when these individuals are so extreme that they are not included in the mental representation of the target category as a whole (e.g., Eiser, 1990; Helson, 1964; Herr, 1986; Schwarz & Bless, 1992a). As a result, when compared to the excluded undesirable individuals, the target category is much more appealing, and judgments of favorability are enhanced. As in the earlier example of the politician, average politicians may look decent and thus be evaluated more favorably when compared to their clearly corrupt colleagues than when the comparison with undesirable individuals is not invoked. Such a shift in evaluative judgment is called a contrast effect.

We suggest that the inclusion/exclusion model of social judgment can be utilized for understanding identity management strategies. A similar dynamic may occur for the categorization of a deviant ingroup member (e.g., a Turkish terrorist) and how people relate to their ingroup (the community of Turkish Muslims). When one’s salient ingroup includes deviant individuals, the group as a whole is tainted, and an assimilation effect occurs. Group members are likely to distance themselves from this threatened social identity. However, when one’s ingroup excludes the deviant members, one’s identity is not threatened and disidentification or distancing should be less likely to occur. Instead, the comparison with the deviant individuals may even serve to enhance the subjective value of the group, leading to a contrast effect. As a result, identification with one’s ingroup may be strengthened. The only exception is that when the salient ingroup includes extreme deviant members. In this case, extremely deviant individuals do not actually taint one’s ingroup because they can be derogated as atypical members (e.g., Schwarz & Bless, 1992a). Rather they serve as a standard of comparison against which the majority of the ingroup appears very appealing.

Multiple consequences of identity threat and the responses of Turkish citizens

An examination of the public discourse in Turkey following the November 2003 attacks suggests the use of third identity management strategy: a redefinition of the ingroup. Terrorism is an anxiety-inspiring method of repeated violent action, employed by (semi-) clandestine individual, group or state actors, for idiosyncratic, criminal or political reasons, whereby — in contrast to assassination — the direct targets of violence are not the main targets (Schmid, A. p & Jongman, A. J., 1988). In an attempt to dissociate Turkish Islam from terrorism, the Turkish Prime Minister, Tayyip Erdoğan, famously said "I cannot stand using the words ‘Islam’ and ‘terror’ together" (“Islami teror”, 2003). Likewise, much of the public debate focused on a re-definition of religious identity. In order to separate Turkish Islam from “Middle Eastern Islam”, the media quickly suggested different terms, such as “Mediterranean Islam” or “liberal Islam”, thus emphasizing the distinctness of Turkish Muslims (e.g., Berkan, 2003).

The exclusion of terrorists from Turkish Islam was facilitated by the discovery that the terrorists belonged to the Wahhabi sect of Islam—a fact that spread quickly and widely in Turkish society. The Wahhabi is a group that is extremely rare in Turkey, a country where the dominant Muslim denominations are Hanafi Sunni and Alevi (Federal Research Division, 2005). If the terrorists are thought of as Wahhabi and not as Turkish Muslims, they are not treated as part of the Turkish mainstream. Doing so increased the distance between the terrorists and the majority of Turkish Muslim population.

In the present research, we examined whether categorizing terrorists as Muslims vs. Wahhabi had an impact on how our Turkish participants related to their identities as Muslims (an overarching category that includes terrorists) and as Alevi or Sunnis (categories that exclude Wahhabi). We first focused on Turkish citizens' Alevi or Sunni identity. Based on Schwarz and Bless's (1992a) inclusion/exclusion model, we predicted that when the terrorists are categorized as Wahhabi, Turkish respondents would show higher levels of identification compared to when the terrorists are categorized as Muslims. Because Alevi and Sunni are Muslims, the inclusion of terrorists in the overarching category of Muslims taints all Muslim denominations, and therefore prompts social distancing on the part of Alevi and Sunni respondents. However, when terrorists are categorized as Wahhabi, respondents and terrorists occupy non-overlapping categories. The resulting contrast effect should allow sustained high identification of Alevi and Sunni with their religious denominations.

We expected the categorization of the terrorists to have the reverse effect with regard to respondents' Muslim identity. First, consider the case when both Turkish people and terrorists are categorized as Muslims. Although formally a member of the same social category, deviant members are typically not included in one's representation of the social category (e.g., Eiser, 1990; Schwarz & Bless, 1992a). As a result, Muslim terrorists should serve as a standard of comparison for one's Muslims identity and produce a contrast effect. Put differently, when faced with the situation in which they share category membership with terrorists ("They are Muslims and we are Muslims, too"), respondents construe their Muslim identity in a way that excludes the deviant individuals (e.g., "We are the real Muslims"). This may actually strengthen Turkish citizens' attachment to their Muslim identity. Now consider the case when the terrorists are categorized as Wahhabi. In this context, when Turkish people think about their Muslim identity, there is no clear reason why they should think about Wahhabi terrorists or even view them as a standard of comparison. Because the Wahhabi is a rare and atypical group in Turkey, this group has little relevance for how Turkish Muslims conceive of Islam. Research has demonstrated that, regardless of their extremity, exemplars or standards considered to be irrelevant to a judgment do not produce a contrast effect (e.g., Schwarz, Munkel, & Hippler, 1990). Therefore, even though the particular Wahhabi brought to mind are extremists, their membership in this splinter group limits their relevance for how Turkish people evaluate and relate to their Muslim identity. In short, terrorists categorized as Muslim should enhance Turkish citizens' attachment to their Muslim identity relative to a situation when the terrorists are categorized as Wahhabi.

It is important to note that adjusting one's ingroup identification is only one possible response to identity threat. In the present research we examine two other consequences that identity threat may have. First, we offer our Turkish participants an opportunity to devalue the Islamist terrorists in addition to an opportunity to adjust their level of religious identification. Eidelman and Biernat (2003) reported that when faced with undesirable deviants ingroup members either devalue the deviant member or disidentify from the group, but not both. In this research, we did not necessarily conceive of devaluation and disidentification as substitute strategies, but expected to observe effects of Islamist terrorism on Turkish religious identification even in the face of unanimous rejection of terrorism.

Second, even though we expected our predictions based on Schwarz and Bless's (1992a) inclusion/exclusion model to be confirmed, the impact of Islamist terrorism perpetrated at the hand of Turkish citizens may impact Turkish Muslims in ways that go beyond an adjustment of the intensity of one's religious identification. After all, even when Muslim terrorists are deemed to be extreme and Turkish respondents are inclined to exclude them from their own idea of Muslim identity, the terrorists are formally Muslims. In other words, they are still unwanted members of one's cherished ingroup. That is, even though Muslim terrorists serve as a standard of comparison and raise one's own identification with one's Muslim identity, there might be a countervailing effect. The similarity between one's own Muslim identity and the Muslim identity of the terrorists may prompt a fear of being "miscast" in the eyes of others and thus contaminate one's identity by the mere association with terrorism (Cooper & Jones, 1969). We suspected that this is likely to be reflected in an increase in the ambivalence felt toward one's religious identity. Specifically, based on this contamination-by-association idea, we predicted that the more closely linked terrorists are to one's religious identity, there should be an increase in ambivalent identification. In other words, terrorists categorized as Muslims should lead to higher levels of ambivalence in one's identification than terrorists categorized as Wahhabi—regardless of the overall strength of identification.

Method

Participants

A total of 193 undergraduate students (85 males, 97 females; 11 unspecified) of Hacettepe University, a

large public university in Ankara, Turkey, volunteered to be part of the present study (average age 20.20 years, SD = 1.40).

Prospective participants learned that they would be participating in a brief survey study on religious identity. As % 99 of the population in Turkey is Muslim (CIA Factbook, 2005), it was safe to assume that most participants were Muslims. The study was conducted in December 2003, that is, during the month following the attacks described in the introduction. The language of the experiment was Turkish, which is the native language of the first and third author of this paper.

Design

We introduced two experimental variations. First, when referencing the November 2003 bombing attacks, the questionnaire either referred to the attackers as Muslims, a broad social category that included participants as well, or as members of their specific Muslim sect, the Wahhabi, of which there are only a very small number in Turkey.

Similarly, participants were asked to either reflect on their identity as Muslims, a category that included the attackers, or on their identity as Sunni or Alevi Muslims, a category that excluded the attackers.¹ That is, we used a 2 (Respondent Identity: Alevi/Sunni Muslim vs. Muslim) x 2 (Terrorist category: Wahhabi vs. Muslim) factorial design. A categorization of both terrorists and participants as members of the same broad category of Muslims rendered them similar. Conversely, when attackers and participants were each categorized by their memberships in their respective subgroups, similarity between them was minimized. Outside of this factorial design, we also included a control group. Respondents in the control group responded to the same questions, but received no categorization information.

Procedure

Respondents in the four experimental conditions received one of four questionnaire versions, which varied the labels for the attackers and the respondents' identity of interest. Specifically, participants read:

This study addresses how the behaviors of members of other Muslim sects (or other Muslims) affect Alevi/Sunni Muslims (or Muslims). As you know, last November in Istanbul, members of the Wahhabi sect (or Muslims) committed a number of bombing attacks. We are interested in how this event affects your identity as an Alevi/Sunni Muslim (or Muslim).

In order to randomize the assignment of participants to experimental conditions, the questionnaires were shuffled, and then distributed to the people who volunteered to take part in the study. Respondents in the control condition received a version of the questionnaire that explained that the survey focused on their identity as Muslims. It did not contain any reference to the terrorist attack. In all of the experimental materials there was no labeling of the bombing acts as terrorism or the attackers as terrorists. The events were referred to as "bombing attacks", and the attackers were labeled as either Wahabites or Muslims, i.e., not as terrorists. Respondents in all experimental conditions were then asked to what extent they approved of "the deeds committed by" Wahabites / Muslims on a scale ranging from 1 not at all to 9 definitely yes. Using the same response scale, all respondents answered three questions concerning their identification with their religious group: "I feel strong ties with people in my religion", "My religion is part of my identity" and "Being a member of this religious group is important for me". The internal consistency of the scale was high regardless whether participants indicated their identification as Muslims (Cronbach's $\alpha = .88$) or their identification as Alevi/Sunni Muslims (Cronbach's $\alpha = .83$).

To assess ambivalent identification, participants completed two additional items, again using the same response scale: "I am glad that I belong to this religious group" and "I would rather belong to another religious group". These items represent diametrical opposites in characterizing the evaluation of the group membership. To compute a measure of ambivalence, we first identified the dominant (D) and conflicting (C) evaluative responses for this pair of evaluations of one's group membership, with D being the numerically higher rating and C being the numerically lower rating of the two. For instance, if participants responded by marking a 7 when answering how glad they are to be a member of their religious group, but with a 5 in response to the statement that they would rather be a member of a different group, the D = 7 and C = 5. That is the response to "I am glad that I belong to this

¹ The overwhelming majority of Turks are either Alevi or Hanefi Muslims with Hanefi being a subgroup of the Sunnis. Because most Turks refer to themselves as Sunni rather than Hanefi Muslims, this term was employed here as well.

religious group” was designated as the dominant response, and the response to “I would rather belong to another religious group” was designated as the conflicting response, since the former has a higher rating than the latter. These scores provided the basis for the computation of two measures of ambivalent identification: the Similarity Intensity Model, SIM (Thompson, Zanna, & Griffin, 1995) and the Graduate Threshold Model, GTM (Priester & Petty, 1996). Although both measures have advantages and disadvantages, these measures of ambivalence tend to produce consistent outcomes (e.g., Jost & Burgess, 2000).²

First, the formula for computing evaluative ambivalence, according to the SIM, considers both the similarity of dominant and conflicting reactions (i.e., their difference) as well as their intensity. That is the difference between D and C grows to be larger, as the conflicting response becomes more extreme. SIM would take on values between -6 (no ambivalence) to 15 (complete ambivalence):

$$\text{SIM: Ambivalence} = 3C - D.$$

Second, according to the GTM ambivalence is a joint function of dominant and conflicting reactions when the conflicting component is weak. However, once the conflicting reaction exceeds a certain threshold, ambivalence is considered to be exclusively a function of the conflicting reaction. GTM would take on values between -4 (no ambivalence) to 18 (complete ambivalence):

$$\text{GTM: Ambivalence} = 5C^5 - D^{1/C}.$$

Results

Consistent with the idea that the November 2003 terrorist attacks represent a violation of basic norms, the overwhelming majority of participants did not approve of them. One hundred seventy-three participants (89.6%) checked a 1 on the 9-point approval scale, and an additional 10 (6%) checked other values below the midpoint of the scale, with only 10 participants feeling neutral toward or approving of the attacks (overall mean rating 1.39). This confirmed our expectation that the attack of Islamist terrorists constituted a deviant act for the Turkish Muslims in our sample, thereby representing a threat to their social identity.³ We used a one-way ANOVA to see if the derogation of terrorist depends on the categorization of the terrorists or the respondents. No significant effect emerged, $F(4, 188) = 1.48, p = .56, \eta_p^2 = .02$. Therefore, in the present study participants did not derogate the terrorists differentially as a function of the experimental manipulations, but rather uniformly treated them as unacceptable extremists. For all other analyses we excluded the 10 participants who approved of or felt neutral toward the November 2003 attacks as for them Islamist terrorism does not necessarily pose a threat to their identity as Muslims.

Identification

Using 2 (Respondent Identity: Alevi/Sunni Muslim vs. Muslim) x 2 (Terrorist Category: Wahhabi vs. Muslim) analysis of variance (ANOVA), the analysis of religious identification revealed a significant Respondent Identity by Terrorist Category interaction effect, $F(1, 143) = 7.41, p = .007, \eta_p^2 = .05$. We followed up by using pairwise comparisons to explore whether ratings for participants’ Muslims or Alevi/Sunni identification varied as a function of how the terrorists were categorized. With regard to participants’ Alevi/Sunni identities, as predicted, identification was higher when the terrorists were categorized as Wahhabi compared to when they were categorized as Muslims, $F(1, 143) = 5.25, p = .023$, (see Table 1). The magnitude of this effect was $d = 0.51$, which, based on Cohen’s (1988) criteria, must be considered an effect of medium size.⁴ This finding confirms that participants are more strongly identified with their religious group when terrorists and self are categorized in non-overlapping categories. For participants’ Muslim identity, higher levels of identification occurred as predicted when the terrorists were also categorized as Muslims but this difference only approached statistical significance, $F(1, 143) = 2.51, p = .116, d = 0.38$.

² Because the two items used to measure ambivalence were similar in content to the three items used to measure identification, we repeated all analyses using a five-item index of identification. These analyses confirmed the results reported here.

³ Rejection of terrorist acts in our university sample was higher than in the Turkish population at large, in which roughly 14% consider suicide terrorism at least sometimes justifiable (Pew Global Attitudes Project, 2005).

⁴ Cohen (1988) proposed to call an effect of $|d| < 0.40$ to be “small,” between $|d| = .4$ and $.7$ “medium,” and effect larger than $|d| = .70$ large.

Next we were interested in whether respondents' attachment to their Muslim identity varied between the control group and the two experimental conditions (left column of Table 1). An inspection of the means clearly suggested that, compared to the control condition, the reminder of fellow Muslims having committed terrorist attacks increased Muslim identification. In a one-way ANOVA, which took the unequal variances of the means into account, this difference approached statistical significance, Welch's $F(1, 62.2) = 3.00, p = .088, d = 0.41$. Thus, the findings for respondents' identification with their religion provide partial support for our predictions based on the inclusion/exclusion model.

Table 1
Religious Identification as a function of respondent identity and terrorists' categorization

Terrorist Category	Respondent Identity			
	Muslim		Alevi/Sunni	
	<i>M</i>	<i>(SD)</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>(SD)</i>
Muslim	5.67	(1.89)	4.42	(2.09)
<i>n</i>		32		36
Wahhabi	4.86	(2.29)	5.52	(2.17)
<i>n</i>		37		38
Control	4.69	(2.75)		
<i>n</i>		36		

Note. Responses were made on 9-point scale, with higher values indicating higher levels of identification.

Ambivalent identification

Recall that based on our contamination-by-association idea we anticipated the greater similarity between self and the terrorists would in turn induce a greater amount of ambivalence. We submitted our ambivalence scores to the same 2 x 2 ANOVA used above. For both of the analysis of the SIM score and the GTM we found a main effect for the categorization of the terrorists, $F(1, 142) = 5.48, p = .021, \eta_p^2 = .04$ and $F(1, 142) = 6.17, p = .014, \eta_p^2 = .04$. As summarized in Table 2, when terrorists were categorized as Muslims rather than as a Wahhabi, participants were more ambivalent in their identification, regardless of whether they rated their identity as a Muslim or as an Alevi/Sunni (Table 2). The main effect for respondent identity was marginally significant for GTM ($M = 2.07$ vs. $M = 0.68$), $F(1, 142) = 3.14, p = .079, \eta_p^2 = .02$, but nonsignificant for SIM ($M = -0.41$ vs. $M = -1.77$ for), $F(1, 142) = 2.72, p = .101, \eta_p^2 = .02$.

Again, we performed separate comparisons between the control group and the experimental conditions focusing on respondents' Muslim identity (left column of Table 2). The first analysis revealed that when the terrorists were categorized as Muslim, levels of ambivalent identification were significantly higher than in the control group for both SIM $F(1, 65) = 5.57, p = .02, d = 0.58$, and GTM $F(1, 65) = 5.08, p = .03, d = 0.55$. However, parallel comparison between the control group and the condition in which terrorists were categorized as Wahhabi did not produce any significance, SIM $F(1, 70) = 1.14, p = .29, d = 0.25$, and GTM $F(1, 70) = 1.44, p = .24, d = 0.28$. This pattern is consistent with our notion that reminders of deviant ingroup members taint one's relationship with a cherished group, but not when the deviant individual is part of an outgroup.

Table 2
Ambivalent Religious Identification (SIM and GTM) as a function of respondent identity and terrorists' categorization

Respondent Identity	
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Terrorist Category	Muslim		Alevi/Sunni	
	<i>M</i>	(<i>SD</i>)	<i>M</i>	(<i>SD</i>)
Muslim				
SIM	0.63	(6.05)	-0.69	(5.07)
GTM	2.89	(5.47)	1.96	(4.88)
<i>n</i>		32		39
Wahhabi				
SIM	-1.29	(4.64)	-2.87	(5.37)
GTM	1.37	(4.65)	-0.64	(5.03)
<i>n</i>		37		38
Control				
SIM	-2.46	(4.59)		
GTM	0.01	(4.98)		
<i>n</i>		35		

Note. Higher values reflect higher levels of ambivalence in identification.

Discussion

The goal of the present research was to examine identity management strategies observed in the Turkish public following the November 2003 terrorist attacks in Istanbul. Specifically, we examined the effects of the re-categorization of the Turkish Muslim terrorists on their rejection and the religious identification of the Turkish public. Our findings extend existing research on identity management strategies and their sometimes complex consequences in the face of a threat stemming from deviant ingroup members. Beyond examining devaluation of the deviant individuals and disidentification as possible responses, we introduced the concept of ambivalent identification. This new concept taps the notion that threat to one's social identity may lead to a co-existence of approach and avoidance tendencies in the attachment to one's ingroup.

Our findings paint a differentiated picture of the consequence of the re-categorization of the terrorists. We did not find that how our Turkish participants categorized the terrorists or how they categorized their own religious identity had an effect on their almost unanimous rejection of the terrorists—a source of considerable threat to their religious identity. At the same time, our experimental variation produced considerable differences with regard to ingroup identification. Before discussing these findings in detail, note that our findings are somewhat at odds with Eidelman and Biernat (2001). These authors found that devaluation of the deviant member and disidentification can be substitute strategies to distance the individual from negative implications of identity threat. In their study, they exposed participants to varying degrees of identity threat and presented participants with the opportunity to both devalue the deviant member and to disidentify from their ingroup. Eidelman and Biernat found that social distancing in response to identity threat occurred only on the first opportunity to augment the social distance between self and deviant member that participants encountered, but not on the second one—regardless of which of the two came first. Put differently, in Eidelman and Biernat's design the absence or presence of identity threat caused variability on the first measure, but not the second one. In contrast, the present research found no variation in the devaluation of terrorists, even though this measure was always administered prior to the identification questions. Instead, all variation occurred on our measures of identification. We speculate that the heinousness of the 2003 terrorist attacks had a much greater impact on our respondents than the identity threat examined by Eidelman and Biernat (2003), namely, the support for creationism on the part of an ingroup member. In the present case, simply rejecting the terrorists was psychologically insufficient to ward off the identity threat. In addition to the perhaps inevitable rejection of the terrorists, participants adjusted how they felt about their religious identities in order to further increase their social distance. That is, the devaluation of the deviant individuals and disidentification are not necessarily substitute strategies, but they may complementary in protecting the individual from being associatively miscast (cf. Cooper & Jones, 1969).

With regard to respondents' Alevi/Sunni identity, we observed that similarity resulting from overlapping

categorizations of self and deviant ingroup members brought about greater social distancing from the ingroup compared to distinct categorizations. When the terrorists were categorized as members of a separate Muslim sect (Wahhabi), thinking about them as fellow Muslims lowered the identification of our Turkish participants with their specific Muslim denomination (Alevi/ Sunni). These findings were very much in line with Schwarz and Bless's (1992a) inclusion/exclusion model. Further, we observed that this similarity between self and other increased the ambivalence that participants felt with regard to their Alevi/Sunni identities. This finding confirms that sub-typing deviant ingroup members as members of a non-overlapping group is a successful strategy in protecting oneself from the negative implications of being associated with these deviant individuals.

Our findings were somewhat more complex, however, when Turkish Muslim participants were asked about their Muslim identity because these findings were in seeming contradiction to the idea that greater similarity between self and deviant people promotes social distancing from the ingroup. Specifically, we observed that terrorists categorized as Muslims increased, albeit slightly, participants' own identification with their Muslim identity compared to when the terrorists were categorized as members of a Muslim splinter group. In keeping with Schwarz and Bless's (1992a) inclusion/exclusion model, we explain this phenomenon with regard to how respondents thought about the terrorists. Consistent with existing research on the effects of extreme category members on social judgments, Muslim terrorists were too extreme to be included in participants' representation of their Muslim ingroup. Thus, the terrorists served as a salient standard of comparison against which the ingroup was contrasted (see Eiser, 1990; Helson, 1964; Herr, 1986; Schwarz & Bless, 1992a).

When looking at the November 2003 attacks, it appears that by virtue of the terrorists being Muslim extremists, they may have inadvertently affirmed Turkish citizens' identification with their religious group and commitment to their Muslim faith—a faith viewed as incompatible with terrorism (e.g., “Islami teror”, 2003). Ironically, compared to categorizing the terrorists simply as Muslims, the discovery of the terrorists' Wahhabi identity may have lowered Turkish people's commitment to Islam. Learning about the Wahhabi identity of terrorists implied, at least to some degree, that they were Muslims (even though members of a minority group in Turkey). Therefore, they were included in the social category of Muslims about which our Turkish respondents were asked to think. By contrast, viewing the terrorists as Muslims may have prompted the active construal of the ingroup as excluding the terrorists. It appears that, whereas thinking about the terrorists as Wahhabi protected one's Alevi/Sunni identity from threat, it seems to have rendered their Muslim identity more vulnerable.

At the same time, we did find that the “Muslim terrorists”, as opposed to “Wahhabi terrorists”, tainted Turkish citizens' Muslim identity, even though, as discussed in the previous paragraph, this categorization of terrorist also promoted a positive attachment of Turkish people with this particular identity. Consistent with our contamination-by-association hypothesis, we found a simultaneous increase in ambivalent identification, thus leading to the paradoxical consequence of higher attachment and higher ambivalence at the same time. While perhaps counterintuitive, there is no true contradiction if one considers that, as with any other attitude, the intensity of identification is conceptually and often empirically distinct from the tension associated with it (e.g., Priester & Petty, 2001). From this point of view, it seems that the categorization of the terrorists as Muslims fostered a more intense attachment of Turkish people to Islam and their Muslim identity, though at the cost of also increasing some negative feelings toward this tainted identity.

Given this intriguing finding of simultaneous increases in positive ingroup identification and in ambivalent identification, it is an open question as to whether high levels on both variables can be sustained over time. High levels of ambivalence may eventually force a resolution of the tension between approach to and avoidance of the ingroup—and the negative affect associated with it (e.g., Hass, Katz, Rizzo, Bailey & Moore, 1992). Models of cognitive consistency argue that humans are motivated to reduce evaluative tension and contradictions (e.g., Festinger, 1957; Heider, 1946). As a result, one might expect that, over time, ambivalent identification with one's ingroup is likely to give way to a more clear-cut disidentification from or identification with the ingroup. However, more recently theorists have argued that, rather than eliminating any inconsistency by all means possible, people are able to hold on to conflicting beliefs, while minimizing any adverse reactions they might experience (e.g., Cacioppo & Berntson, 1994; Thompson & Zanna, 1995). Indeed, the literature on ingroup attachment does support the notion that people can be loyal to their ingroup, yet acknowledge negative aspects of their social identity. For instance, the concept of constructive patriotism maintains that individuals, who are otherwise highly committed to their ingroup, might sometimes be their ingroup's harshest critic (Schatz & Staub, 1997; Staub, 1997). Again, from this perspective it is plausible that ambivalent identification can be maintained over time, even though future research

should investigate the temporal dynamics of ambivalence.

An important limitation of our study, however, is the fact that we relied on a student sample. This sample is not representative for Turkish society, in which participation in higher education is comparatively low (e.g., Clancy & Goastellec, 2007). However, as evident from the outcry in the Turkish press and other sources (e.g., Karakaya et al., 2006) the terrorist attacks of November 2003 elicited a strong response in Turkish population, who, as a group, is generally opposed to Islamist terrorism (e.g., Pew Global Attitudes Project, 2005). Further, because the primary goal of our present experiment was to investigate causal mechanisms underlying social identity management, the representativeness of our samples was of secondary concern.

Nevertheless, it certainly limits the generalizability of the present findings. We cannot ascertain that other members of Turkish society would respond in a similar fashion. This might be a concern if one considers that higher levels of education are typically associated with lower levels of religiosity (e.g., Iannaccone, 1999). In other words, it is possible that the present results pertain primarily to Turkish people with low levels of religious identification, but would be absent among high identifiers. This objection must be examined in light of the fact that social identity management effects are more pronounced the more people care about the identity in question (e.g., Mummendey, Klink, Mielke, Wenzel & Blanz, 1999). Therefore, the very fact that our study did produce such effects is evidence that in our sample of Turkish university students' religious identification was not trivial. Rather, one may suspect that our study underestimated the actual effects that would have been obtained in a more representative and presumably more religious sample. There is, however, a caveat. Turkish citizens with high levels of religious identification may not experience the same kind of identity threat that the present student sample experienced, because they are much less opposed to terrorism. Specifically, in our sample of 193 students, there was a positive correlation between religious identification and approval of the terrorist acts, Spearman $r = .20$, $p < .01$. Ultimately, future research needs to resolve to what extent low identifiers and high identifiers differ in the responses to terrorist attacks of the kind that occurred in November 2003.

At a much broader level, the present research shows that Islamist extremism is not only a problem for non-Muslims, as some Westerners might suspect, but also for many Muslim societies. As demonstrated in the present paper, terrorism committed in the name of Islam poses a threat to the Muslim identity of the Turkish public and induces mixed feelings about their religious identity. This should not diminish the obvious fact that the damage done by Islamist terrorism to the Muslim public in Turkey was more than symbolic. The overwhelming majority of those killed or injured in the November 2003 blasts were Turkish citizens. In a similar vein, Islamist terrorism in Algeria has killed over 100,000 Algerian Muslims during the last 15 years, causing a significant impact on the lives of most Algerians (e.g., Khaled, 2004). In other words, Islamist terrorism presents a major challenge to Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

Perhaps as a result of the violence, as well as the implications for their religious identity, the majority in many Muslim countries do reject Islamist terrorism (Haddad & Khashan, 2003; *Terror Free Tomorrow*, 2005). Yet, there is much greater support for Islamist terrorism in other Muslim countries than there is in Turkey (e.g., Pakistan and Lebanon, see Haddad & Khashan, 2003; *Terror Free Tomorrow*, 2005). Further, there is evidence that Muslims are more likely to support Islamist terrorism than members of other religions. For instance, Levin, Henry, Pratto and Sidanius (2003) found in a Lebanese sample that Muslims showed greater approval of violence against the West than did Christians. However, the same study also illustrated that identification with Arab identity was a much more powerful predictor of supporting terrorist violence than being a member of either religion. Because the sample contained both Muslim and Christian Arabs, this finding hints at the possibility that it is a particular mixture of religion and ethnicity that is related to condoning Islamist terrorism. This implies that Islam by itself should not be equated with Islamist extremism.

Many people in the West, however, are likely to overlook this diversity of opinion or the fact that many Muslims find terrorism irreconcilable with Islam. For instance, according to Nisbet and Shanahan (2004a, 2004b), roughly half of Americans believe that Islam encourages violence and think that Muslims in general are violent, dangerous and fanatical. This perception is likely to exacerbate intergroup tensions, both domestically and internationally, and create a world in which the clash of civilizations (Huntington, 1996) becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. Perhaps the present work can contribute to creating a more differentiated perception of Muslims' response to terrorism that proclaims to be perpetrated in the name of Islam.

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