

Emotional Responses to the *Charlie Hebdo* Attacks: Addressing the Authoritarianism Puzzle

Pavlos Vasilopoulos
Sciences Po

George E. Marcus
Williams College

Martial Foucault
Sciences Po

The finding that threat boosts the public's preferences for authoritarian policies has been well established in the research literature. Why this shift occurs remains open as the extant literature reports contradictory findings regarding the interaction of dispositions, such as conservatism and authoritarianism, with threat. One line of research argues that threat increases authoritarian preferences among those who are more prone to authoritarianism. Another argues that it is those with a nonauthoritarian ideology who switch in response to threat. By using a two-wave panel study of the French population taken before and after the January 2015 twin attacks in Paris, we find that both trends occur simultaneously. Our results show that the factors that drive the impact of ideological dispositions on support for authoritarian policies are emotional reactions. On the one hand, anxiety led left-wing respondents to move towards adopting authoritarian policy preferences following the attacks, yet produced no such change among right-wing respondents. On the other hand, anger did not turn left-wing voters more authoritarian but strengthened authoritarian policy preferences among right-wing respondents.

KEY WORDS: authoritarianism, threat, terrorism, emotions

There is a consensus, supported by considerable research, that democracies under threat express heightened desire for security and social solidarity. This rally effect serves to unify the public so as to confront the threat (Chowanietz, 2010; Hetherington & Nelson, 2003; Perrin & Smolek, 2009). Past experience has shown that terrorist events are frequently followed by a wave of antiterrorist policies, often at the expense of civil liberties. France was no exception. The January 2015 twin attacks at the satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo* and a Kosher supermarket in Paris spurred a series of measures, including the prosecution of citizens who propagate terrorism on the Internet and the authorization of intelligence services to gather mass online, phone, and traveler data. These restrictive measures were endorsed by both ideological camps in the French parliament.

As past research has shown, uncovering the psychological mechanisms that account for the public's reaction to terrorist attacks is key to understanding enhanced support for the restriction of civil liberties. Here, we are concerned with two primary goals.

First, we aim at improving current understanding of the impact of terrorist threat on the endorsement of authoritarian policies by drawing on a specific theory of affect, the theory of affective intelligence. Using the case of the *Charlie Hebdo* and the Kosher supermarket terrorist attacks in January 2015, we examine the effect of two negative emotional reactions to terrorist events and their link to the endorsement of authoritarian policies in France. In particular, we examine the differential effects of anxiety and anger on individual-level endorsement of authoritarian policy preferences. Prior studies investigating the effect of threatening events on public opinion have time and again confirmed the well-known hypothesis that threat increases preferences for authoritarian policies (Doty, Peterson, & Winter, 1991; Fedlman, 2003; Feldman & Stenner, 1997; Hetherington & Suhay, 2011; Huddy, Feldman, Taber, & Lahav, 2005; McCann, 1997; Merolla & Zeichmeister, 2009; Perrin, 2005; Sales, 1973). Despite the empirical confirmation at the aggregate level, individual-level variation in the endorsement of authoritarian policies is not fully understood, as extant research comes up with contradictory findings regarding the ideological dispositions of those who are swayed to the endorsement of authoritarian policies when confronting a terrorist threat. We wish to add an important caveat. When we write "confronting a terrorist threat," we include all the complex variants that define what the events might mean to different individuals. Some received word of the Paris attack on the *Charlie Hebdo* office by word of mouth, others from television coverage, and yet others from radio, Internet, or print sources. Some received word as it was happening, yet others later in the day. And, in addition, all these complexities apply as well to the second round of attacks that unfolded in the days that followed. In addition, beyond the attacks were the rallies that occurred on the Sunday following which engaged millions in Paris and elsewhere and were broadcast nationally and internationally. Throughout, opinion leaders offered their views to which any given person might have attended or not. Hence, the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks is not a singular thing that all grasped in the same way. And from that it follows that the understanding of the events are varied. Hence, what people made of "the attacks" depended on what aspects they learned, when they learned, how those aspects changes over time, with whom they shared that experience, as well as what opinion leaders, elected and otherwise, French and otherwise, may have added to the mix. We return to this point in the conclusion.

Second, we seek to advance and further systematize the literature on emotions and politics by assessing the impact of anxiety and anger on the formation of political attitudes. In the following pages, we investigate the impact of negative affective reactions to the Paris terror attacks on attitude change and polarization. Our objective is not to offer a full account that includes the antecedents of emotional reactions to terrorist events along ideological differences. Instead, our focus is on the impact of emotional reactions on the endorsement of authoritarian policies. The main claim we develop is that anxious individuals will be more likely to stop relying on their dispositions in favor of contemporary assessments. Hence, anxiety will trigger greater interest in authoritarian policies among those lacking the respective ideological disposition. On the other hand, anger marks the degree of normative violations so angry individuals, finding themselves threatened, will be more likely to strengthen their relevant extant political preferences.

Ideology, Threat, and the Endorsement of Authoritarian Attitudes

A series of studies have shown that people change policy preferences when threat is present, and further, their shift is conditioned by their ideological dispositions. Yet the literature reports discordant findings regarding the interaction of dispositions, such as conservatism and authoritarianism, with threat. Some researchers argue that threat results in shifts toward greater authoritarianism by those who already have an authoritarian disposition (Feldman, 2003; Feldman & Stenner, 1997; Lavine,

Lodge, Polichak, & Taber, 2002; Merolla & Zechmeister, 2009). Hence, the argument goes, in the light of a threatening stimulus, authoritarian citizens will more strongly manifest their disposition

Others suggest that threat makes nonauthoritarians and liberals more prone to endorsing authoritarian policies, policies they would normally oppose (Hetherington & Suhay, 2011; Hetherington & Weiler, 2009; Jost, Fitzsimons, & Kay, 2004; Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway, 2003; Jost et al., 2007; Landeau et al., 2004; Nail, McGregor, Drinkwater, Steele, & Thompson, 2009). This stream of research argues that conservatives and authoritarians already endorse policies reinforcing social control to the expense of civil liberties, and hence they will be unlikely to be swayed after experiencing a threatening event. Rather, this research suggests that support for authoritarian policies in the light of threatening events increases due to an authoritarian switch by those who under normal times would oppose these policies.

Finally, terror management theory (TMT) suggests that mortality-related threat reinforces extant political beliefs regardless of whether these are liberal or conservative (Castano et al., 2011; Kosloff, Greenberg, & Sheldon, 2010; Weise, Arciszewski, Verliac, Pyszczynski, & Greenberg, 2012). TMT argues that humans' awareness of the inevitability of their own death produces anxiety. In order to suppress this fear, individuals attach themselves to cultural worldviews or "humanly created and transmitted beliefs about the nature of reality shared by groups or individuals" (Greenberg, Sheldon, & Pyszczynski, 1997, p. 65) that extend beyond their existence and offer a symbolic immortality. Political ideologies serve as "protective shields" (Landeau et al., 2004, p. 1137) against death anxiety. Thus, in line with TMT, some have argued that reminders of mortality such as terror attacks will prime death anxiety that will make individuals attach even more to their existing ideologies. This in turn will have as a result the reinforcement of one's extant policy preferences, regardless of whether these are liberal or conservative, authoritarian or nonauthoritarian (Castano et al., 2011; Kosloff et al., 2010; Weise et al., 2012).

We attempt to bridge these diverging findings regarding the interactions between ideology, authoritarian dispositions, and threat by drawing on the theory of affective intelligence. We understand left-right ideological identification as an organized cluster of political values that make some individuals more inclined to support some political ideas than others. On the left end of the ideological spectrum lie demands for economic equality, tolerance, and personal freedom (Jost, 2006; Jost et al., 2003). On the right end lie demands for economic freedom, protection of moral values, and conformity (Jost, 2006; Jost et al., 2003). In brief, political ideologies are understood as "an attempt to cope with the challenges and exigencies of life" (Bonanno & Jost, 2006, 322).

The extent of the linkage between conservatism and authoritarianism has been the subject of a long—and largely unresolved—debate in social and political psychology as some researchers argue that the two dispositions form a single dimension and others that they are distinct dimensions (Altemeyer, 1998; Duckitt et al., 2010; Feldman, 2003; Feldman & Jonshton, 2014; Greenberg & Jonas, 2003; Hetherington & Weiler, 2009; Jost et al., 2007; Napier & Jost, 2008; Stenner, 2005). We remain agnostic as to whether authoritarianism and conservatism are identical or separate even if similar concepts. However, at a very minimum, we observe that authoritarianism is highly correlated with conservatism (Duckitt et al., 2010; Hetherington & Weiler, 2009). And, regardless of whether authoritarianism and conservatism are two facets of the same concept or different though frequently co-occurring concepts, authoritarianism is by far more prevalent on the right end of the left-right scale (Altemeyer, 1998; Napier & Jost, 2008; Stone, 1980; Stone & Smith, 1993). And this is the case in France (Vasilopoulos & Lachat, 2016). Consequently, both authoritarianism and conservatism fuel a number of shared policy preferences that favor the restriction of civil liberties, defend moral and ethnic homogeneity, and advocate submission to established authorities (Hetherington & Weiler, 2009; Napier & Jost, 2006; Stenner, 2005). In sum, regardless of the differences between authoritarianism and conservatism, a broad stream of research has repeatedly illustrated that people with a right-wing ideological orientation tend to be more intolerant toward minorities and supportive of authoritarian

policies (e.g., Altemeyer, 1998; Lagrange & Perrineau, 1989; Mayer et al., 2015; Stone, 1980; Stone & Smith, 1993; Vasilopoulos & Lachat, 2016). Hence, for the purpose of our analysis, we treat right-wing ideological orientation as a similar disposition to authoritarianism and the ideological basis of authoritarian policy preferences.

In our view, understanding public opinion change in the aftermath of terror attacks must address the emotional mechanisms by which terrorist threat is translated to support for authoritarian policy preferences. Fear and anger are the two prime emotions that citizens experience in the light of threat and in specific following a terror attack. In their study on the impact of 9/11, Smith, Rasinski, and Toce (2001) report that anger was the dominant emotion related to the attacks and experienced by 65% of Americans, followed by worry over one's life changes (40%) and personal safety (37%; see also Huddy, Feldman, & Cassese, 2007). Studies of the 2003 Madrid attacks also place fear and anger high in the list of experienced emotions (Conejero & Etxebarria, 2007).

In early research on the impact of threat on support for social conservative and authoritarian policies, the concept of threat simply referred to periods of economic stagnation or of increased chance of war, while emotional reactions were not investigated (Doty et al., 1991; McCann, 1997). Subsequent studies overwhelmingly focus on fear (Hetherington & Suhay, 2011; Jost et al., 2003; Nail et al., 2009), while the consequences of anger for policy-preference polarization and change have not been taken into account. We hypothesize that fear makes left-wing citizens switch to authoritarian views and that anger leads to a higher reliance on extant convictions both among right-wing and liberal respondents, causing attitude polarization.

Affective Reactions, Threat, and Policy Preferences

We understand threat as an exogenous event that poses harmful consequences for the individual or her environment and evokes negative emotional reactions. A broad stream of research has argued that threat runs higher among conservatives and authoritarians compared to liberals (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswick, Levinson, & Sanford, 1950; Altemeyer, 1981; Jost, 2006; Jost et al., 2003). In fact, many see the endorsement of conservative policies as stemming from a motivational need to overcome this increased sense of threat (Jost, 2006; Jost et al., 2003). In this article, we are interested in investigating the dynamic effect of affect among those groups. In other words, we seek to understand how anxiety and anger once evoked affect the endorsement of authoritarian policies both those on the left and those on the right.

The affective state of anxiety is elevated in threatening circumstances. It is one of the principal prime emotional reactions to a terrorist event (Huddy et al., 2005; Huddy et al., 2007; Marcus, Neuman, & MacKuen, 2000; Lerner et al., 2003; Smith, Rasinski, & Toce, 2001).¹ Heightened anxiety conveys a perception of increased risk and prompts individuals to adopt risk-averse behavior to eliminate or avert the threat (Eysenck, 1992; Lerner & Keltner, 2000, 2001). Along these lines, Huddy et al.'s (2007) study on the impact of anxiety and anger on attitudes toward the war in Iraq illustrates that anxious individuals were more likely to perceive a higher threat from Saddam Hussein and in turn be less supportive of the war (see also Huddy et al., 2005). In sum, this leads us to anticipate that fearful citizens will become risk averse and end up endorsing conservative policies that hold the promise of minimizing the risk of threat.

The theory of affective intelligence (Marcus et al., 2000) provides a framework for understanding the interplay of fear and anger with ideological convictions. With respect to anxiety, the theory holds that when citizens find themselves in novel circumstances they tend to break from habitual political

¹ Affective reactions to exogenous stimuli have been primarily investigated at the personal level. Yet individuals may experience negative emotions such as fear and anger not only in the cases when themselves are being threatened but also when members of a group they identify strongly with are threatened (Rydell et al., 2008; Smith, 1993; Mackie, Devos, & Smith, 2000; Smith, Seger, & Mackie, 2007).

attachments, such as ideological or partisan identifications, and actively attend to contemporary circumstances about their environment (MacKuen, Marcus, Neuman, & Keele, 2007; Marcus et al., 2000). Research suggests that anxiety enhances information seeking by making citizens attentive to contemporaneous messages that may well contravene their predispositions (Albertson & Gadarian, 2015; Brader, 2005, 2006; Redlawsk, Civettini, & Emmerson, 2010; Valentino, Hutchings, Banks, & Davis, 2008). Hence, the theory of affective intelligence offers psychological mechanisms which can inform what occurs in the interplay between ideological dispositions and terrorist threat. Left-wing citizens who react to a terrorist event with anxiety will tend to be more attentive to and place more weight on information regarding the threat. In such instances the political environment often endorses the restriction of civil liberties so as to address the terrorist threat. This was the case both in 9/11 and the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks. Indeed, the adoption of these proposals was largely uncontested by the opposition. Hence, anxious left-wing citizens may tend to ignore their ideological dispositions and move in the direction of endorsing calls for restrictive measures that seek to protect the public against further terrorist attacks.

A threatening stimulus is also likely to trigger anger (Berkowitz & Harmon-Jones, 2004; Di Giuseppe & Tafra 2010; Kennedy 1992). However, anger leads to a different approach to decision-making than does anxiety. Anger is generated when people are obstructed from reaching a valued goal by an external agent whose conduct is deemed unfair (Berkowitz & Harmon-Jones, 2004; Lazarus, 1991) and in cases where the threatening stimulus is perceived as familiar (MacKuen, Wolak, Keele, & Marcus, 2010; Marcus, 2002). In contrast to anxiety, anger is associated with a tendency of coping with the threatening stimulus by reliance on previously learned routines (MacKuen et al., 2010; Wagner, 2014). Specifically, anger has been found to reduce cognitive effort, inhibit learning, and enhance the employment of fast, deft, and flexible heuristics (Bodenhausen, Sheppard, & Kramer 1994; MacKuen et al., 2010). Although the distinction between anxiety and anger is not new (e.g., Ax, 1953), it did not begin to receive much attention in psychology and political science until the 2000s (Banks & Valentino, 2012; Lerner & Keltner, 2001; Lerner et al., 2003; MacKuen et al., 2010; Marcus, 2002; Marcus et al., 2000; Valentino, Brader, Groenendyk, Gregorowicz, & Hutchings, 2011; Wagner, 2014). And, up to this point, the role of anger in the endorsement of authoritarian policy preferences has not been fully examined.

Anger triggered by threat may impact on support for authoritarian policies in two ways. First, directly, we can expect anger to increase punitive and aggressive tendencies, both central elements of authoritarianism (Adorno et al., 1950; Altemeyer 1988). Second, in line with the theory of affective intelligence, anger may trigger authoritarian policy preferences through the activation of habitually learned routines, activating conservative or authoritarian attitudes among individuals who already hold a right-wing disposition. Additionally, as anger increases reliance on dispositions to the expense of contemporary assessments, this should lead angry left-wing citizens to strengthen their endorsement of leftist policies as they confront a terrorist threat.

In Figure 1, we show how the theory of affective intelligence can accommodate the two contending claims. A threat stimulus is likely to be evaluated on two distinct grounds: First, is this event novel (yielding heightened anxiety); and, second, is this event a normative violation by familiar enemies (yielding heightened anger). Affective intelligence holds that it is not the potency of the threat that dictates anger but rather the degree of normative violation (cf. Marcus, Wood, & Theiss-Morse, 1998; see also Sullivan et al., 1982). It is likely that any negative event will generate both assessments, that is, generating both heightened anxiety and heightened anger. And, as shown in Figure 1, each of these dimensions of affective appraisal leads to quite different cognitive responses to the challenge then being confronted. Hence, we hypothesize that increased anger will enhance decision-making based on past dispositional convictions, leading to increased attitude polarization between left-wing and right-wing individuals. We anticipate that anger should strengthen authoritarian tendencies among citizens who place themselves on the right end of the left-right scale, and anger should weaken those tendencies among those placing themselves on the left end. And, we hypothesize that

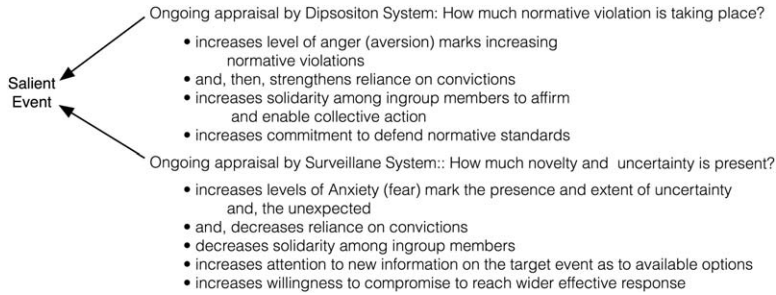


Figure 1. Theoretical roles for anger and for anxiety in response to authoritarian policy proposals.

increased anxiety will initiate decision-making that is less reliant on extant convictions and hence make those on the left end of the left-right scale more attentive and responsive to calls by the right to adopt authoritarian policies.

We test these hypotheses using a two-wave panel study on a representative sample of the French population. One wave was conducted before the January 7 attacks; the second wave was conducted soon after the attacks. Unlike previous studies that have examined the impact of threat on conservatism or authoritarianism using experimental or cross-sectional data, these data enable us to estimate the causal effect of a terrorist event on attitude change in this representative sample. Our approach offers two advantages over experimental approaches. The first is that we test the impact of a real rather than an experimentally manipulated threat taking place inside the lab. Second, by using a representative sample of the French population, we gain a measure of external validity.

Methodology and Data

Data come from the CEVIPOF barometer of political confidence (*Baromètre de la Confiance Politique*). The Baromètre is a regularly recurring survey of French public opinion overseen by Science Po's research laboratory, Center for Political Research (CEVIPOF). The survey was conducted using a representative sample consisting of 1,524 respondents in two waves, one prior to the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks and one three weeks after.² Data were collected by the use of Computer Assisted Web Interview (CAWI). The dependent variable is a scale consisting of all available items in our study that measure adoption or rejection of authoritarian policy preferences.³ Each of these items were measured using 4-point response options, with higher values indicating greater support for the authoritarian option on each of the four policies. The four items are:⁴

- 1) "The death penalty should be restored in France";
- 2) "France should have a strong leader who does not have to worry about elections or the parliament";

² The sample was quota controlled for age, gender, and professional status and stratified by region and size of community. The response rate in the second wave was 81%. The study was conducted for the Centre de Recherches Politiques de Sciences Po by the French polling institute Opinionway. Field dates were December 5–15 for wave 1 and January 26–February 5 for wave 2.

³ Four items were selected out of a total of nine policy statements that were included in both waves. The items that are not included in the authoritarian preferences scale did not explicitly mention authoritarian policies (e.g., "It should be experts and not the government who decide, based on what they believe is best for the country.") or were irrelevant (e.g., "France needs business leaders and not a government who decide based on what they believe is best for the country."). Adding any of the additional five items lowers the scale reliability. A complete list of the nine policy items is available from the authors.

⁴ We have repeated the analysis for each the four policy items separately in the appendix.

- 3) “There are too many immigrants in France”; and,
- 4) “The army should run the country.”

An exploratory factor analysis yielded only one factor with an Eigenvalue over 1. The scale has good reliability (Cronbach’s alpha = 0.67).⁵

Emotional reactions over the attack were measured through an item asking “Can you tell me how you feel when you think of the attacks that occurred in January?” Respondents were provided with a list of emotions and could then choose whether they felt the emotion in question or not.⁶ They could select as many as they wished. Eighty-four percent of the sample reported they felt anger, 52% reported they felt fear, while 42% reported experiencing both emotions. Hence, we use one variable for anger and one for fear. Ideological self-placement is measured in a 5-point scale ranging from far left to far right.⁷ We measured ideological placement in wave 1, that is, before the attacks. A *t*-test comparing the wave 1 measure with the same measure obtained in wave 2 showed that there was no significant change in the two scores. As anticipated the measure of left-right orientation is positively correlated with the authoritarian preferences scale, yielding a Pearson’s *r* of 0.46. In brief, those on the left tend to reject authoritarian policies while those on the right tend to adopt them.

In order to assess the impact of the emotional reactions to the January events, we construct two OLS models. Model 1 measures attitude change as a function of demographic variables (measured in wave 1), ideology (measured in wave 1), as well as anxiety and anger (measured in wave 2).⁸ Model 2 adds two interaction terms, one between anger and the left-right scale and one between anxiety and the left-right scale. The expectation here is that the effect of fear and anger on the endorsement of authoritarian policies will be conditional on prior ideological convictions. The models are estimated using the following equations:

Model 1:

$$\text{Attitude}_{i2} = \text{fear}_{i2} + \text{anger}_{i2} + \text{left-right scale}_{i1} + \text{attitude}_{i1} + \text{demographics}_{i1}$$

Model 2:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Attitude}_{i2} = & \text{fear}_{i2} + \text{anger}_{i2} + \text{left-right scale}_{i1} + \text{fear}_{i2} \times \text{left-right scale}_{i1} \\ & + \text{anger}_{i2} \times \text{left-right scale}_{i1} + \text{attitude}_{i1} + \text{demographics}_{i1} \end{aligned}$$

⁵ The reliability of the scale reduces if any of these four items is dropped.

⁶ The emotions were fear, anger, hatred, indignation, compassion, and indifference. The team overseeing the *Baromètre* asked that compassion and indifference be included. Only the word “fear” has face validity for the dimension of anxiety, while “anger,” “hatred,” and “indignation” are all words that have face validity with the anger dimension. Nonetheless, we gain two modest tests as a consequence. Nonrelevant terms should not produce the hypothesized results, and the two additional measures of the concept of anger (hatred and indignation) ought to replicate the analyses reported below. That is the case (results available from the authors). Repeating the analysis using each of three anger items separately and as a scale yielded very similar results. In order to secure comparability with the measure for fear, we use the dichotomous measure of anger rather than the scale. We acknowledge that this is a crude measurement of affect. On the Monday following the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks, one of the authors was invited to submit one item to measure the emotional reactions of the French population. While not optimal, this one question does generate a series of dichotomous items that understates the actual variance in emotional responses and hence provide a stricter test of our hypotheses (Bollen & Barb, 1981).

⁷ In the presented version of the analysis, the left-right scale merged respondents who place themselves on the center with those who respond that they are “neither left nor right.” We have replicated the analysis excluding the last group from the analysis. The results fully replicate.

⁸ These include age, gender, level of education (low/middle/high), and a variable measuring professional activity that includes 10 professional domains.

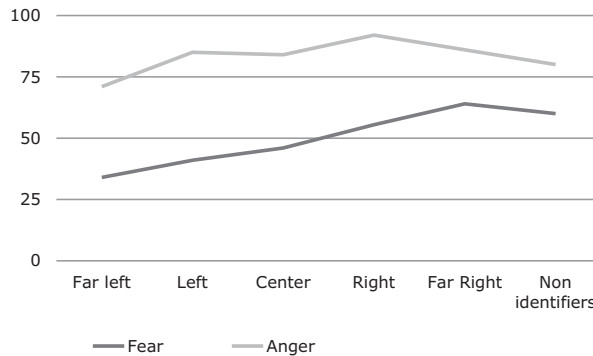


Figure 2. Distribution of emotional reactions to the January attacks by ideological self-placement entries are percentages. *Source. Baromètre confiance en politique.*

Both models assess the direct and interactive effects of emotional reactions on the endorsement of authoritarian policies after the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks, controlling for the independent variables as well as respondents' values on the dependent variable prior to the attacks (T_1). Both models make use of the panel nature of the data to gauge individual-level *changes* in authoritarian preferences as a result of the terror attacks (see Bartels, 2006; Finkel, 1995).⁹ We employed this method because we anticipate that—as is typically the case with political attitudes (Bartels, 2006)—authoritarian preferences after the attacks are shaped by attitudes respondents held before the attacks.¹⁰

Results

A comparison of the authoritarian policy preferences, before (wave 1) and after (wave 2) the attacks, suggests a moderate, yet significant, authoritarian switch of the French citizenry ($x_{pre} = 0.45$, $x_{post} = 0.46$; $t = -4.21$, $p < 0.01$; see also Table A1 in the appendix; each item separately). These findings are in line with past research indicating a modest increase in authoritarian attitudes in the aftermath of a terrorist attack (Huddy et al., 2002). At the individual level, we anticipate that some respondents moved toward and others moved away from adopting authoritarian policy preferences. We seek to account for the shifts in both directions. Figure 2 presents the emotional reactions arrayed by ideological self-placement. The majority of respondents reacted to the attacks by expressing anger. However, anger appears to be less strongly reported by respondents who place themselves on the far

⁹ While the survey is a panel, that is, data collected on the same individuals at more than one point in time, the majority of the variables of interest are in fact either only available at one point in time (emotions, demographics) or do not vary substantially over the one-month period (left-right scale). For these reasons, we cannot apply true panel modeling strategies such as fixed effects or random effects to our full model. However, as a robustness check, we ran a fixed-effects model that predicts the difference in attitudes, controlling for period of observation, on four different samples: the fearful, the nonfearful, the angry, and the nonangry. These results, included in the appendix, show that emotions have an impact on changes in the endorsement of authoritarian policies: People who feel fear or anger display a significant increase on the endorsement of authoritarian policies scale, while no significant change is found for individuals who did not feel those emotions.

¹⁰ Alternatively, one could use the unconditional change score (i.e., $Attitudet2 - Attitudet1$) as the dependent variable (see Allison, 1990). However, models of this type, using unconditional change scores, come with the assumption that $Yt1$ does not cause $Yt2$ (see Finkel, 1995). But this presumption cannot be met when using political attitudes (Bartels, 2006). Hence, it is recommended that in these cases a lagged dependent variable should be used (Bartels, 2006; Finkel, 1995, p. 8). A large number of political-behavior studies estimate changes in political attitudes using lagged dependent variable models such as the one used in this study (e.g., Bartels, 2006; Dimitrova, Shehata, Strömbäck, & Nord, 2014; Elenbaas, De Vreese, Boomgaarden, & Schuck, 2012; Eveland & Thomson, 2006; Kahne, Lee, & Feezell, 2013; McCann & Chávez, 2016), including two-wave panel studies assessing the effects of terror attacks (e.g., Gross, Brewer, & Aday, 2008; Schmierbach, Boyle, & McLeod, 2005).

Table 1. The Stand-Alone Impact of Ideology and Emotional Reactions to the January Attacks on Authoritarian Policy Preferences (OLS)

<i>Dispositional</i>	
Left-Right Scale	0.10* (0.02)
Preattack Preferences	0.72* (0.02)
<i>Situational</i>	
Fear	0.04* (0.01)
Anger	0.02 (0.01)
Constant	0.17* (0.05)
Observations	1,384
R ²	0.67

Note. Entries are OLS coefficients (with their standard errors in parentheses). All models control for the impact of age, gender, education, and profession. All variables are recoded ranging from 0 to 1. * $p < 0.05$.

left. Fear is high throughout the electorate, though more so among those with a conservative disposition.

Table 1 reports the stand-alone impacts of the two emotional reactions on postattack attitudes. Results suggest that emotions played a significant role in the French public's authoritarian switch after the January events. Our findings show that, all else equal, people who felt fear after the attack are more likely to have switched their opinion in an authoritarian direction. The respective coefficient for anger, however, even though it is positive, falls short of reaching statistical significance. Further, the results in Table 2 show that ideology is significantly associated with postattack attitude change, with right-wing respondents being more likely to have moved their policy preferences in the authoritarian direction following the attack.

Up to this point it appears that anxiety, and not anger, drives the relationship between threat and the endorsement of authoritarian preferences. But before we come to a firm conclusion, we turn to the conditional impact of emotions on attitudinal change. Based on the theory of affective intelligence, we anticipate that anxious voters on the left of the political spectrum will be more likely to abandon their ideological convictions and change opinion in the direction of the contemporary mood. But, people with right-wing dispositions will not find their convictions challenged, hence anxiety will not alter their preferences. Further, we anticipate that angry voters will exhibit the opposite behavior, that is, strengthen their prior convictions. Consequently, we anticipate that right-wing citizens will more strongly endorse authoritarian policies when angry while left-wing citizens will more strongly reject these same authoritarian policies than their less angry peers.

The results from Model 2, which adds the two interaction terms, is presented in Table 2. The findings confirm our theoretical expectations. The interaction between ideology and fear is negative and significant. In addition, the interaction term between ideology and anger is positive and significant. These results show that the effect of threat on the endorsement of authoritarian preferences is conditional on both ideological predispositions and the emotional reactions to the threatening stimulus.¹¹

Left-wing citizens who felt predominantly fearful after the attack were more likely to change in the direction of endorsing authoritarian policies. This finding aligns with Jost et al.'s (2003) hypothesis on the role of fear in conservatism. Anger, however, activates authoritarianism in citizens who

¹¹ A robustness check was performed by treating ideology as a categorical variable with three categories. Results replicate. This analysis is shown in the appendix.

Table 2. The Conditional Impact of Emotional Reactions to the January Attacks on Authoritarian Policy Preferences

<i>Dispositional</i>	
Left-Right Scale	0.04 (0.04)
Preattack Preferences	0.72* (0.02)
<i>Situational</i>	
Fear	0.07* (0.02)
Anger	-0.04* (0.02)
<i>Dispositional × Situational</i>	
Fear × Left-Right Scale	-0.07* (0.03)
Anger × Left-Right Scale	0.12* (0.04)
Constant	0.20* (0.05)
Observations	1,384
R ²	0.68

Note. Entries are OLS coefficients (with their standard errors in parentheses). All models control for the impact of age, gender, education, and profession. All variables are recoded ranging from 0 to 1. * $p < 0.05$.

already hold conservative dispositions, a finding which is in line with Feldman and Stenner (1997). Figure 3 illustrates the marginal effects of anger and anxiety on ideology (along with 95% confidence intervals). It shows that those on the far left who felt angry over the attacks tend to have *less* support

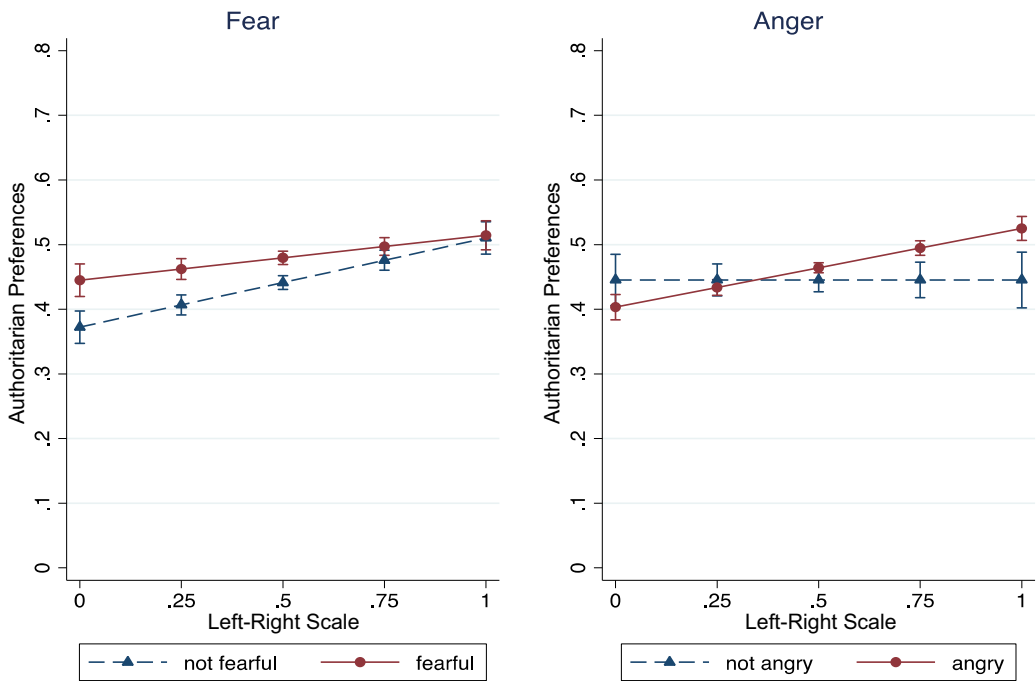


Figure 3. The marginal effect of fear and anger on the endorsement of authoritarian policy positions for different ideological self-placements. [Color figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

than other ideological groups for authoritarian policies. Yet this tendency falls short of reaching statistical significance. We have no conclusive explanation to offer as to why, in these data, the impact of anger is stronger on the right than on the left. We can offer three possible lines of inquiry. First, Converse (1966) marked the asymmetry of partisan intensity with the right being more likely to hew to and act upon their convictions. Second, we have crude measures of emotional response that may contribute to this difference (see fn. 6). Third, the far-right political elite was quite vocal in asserting the rightness of their authoritarian policies while the left's political elite was largely silent in response. Hence, it is worth adding that political leaders can either address or avoid topics, and they can be more or less effective in marshaling public support for the policy positions they advance. Exploring the consequences of the stances the political elites take on the public via these emotional routes returns us to the work of Roger Masters and his colleagues and is well worth revisiting (Masters & Sullivan, 1989a,b; Sullivan & Masters, 1988; Warnecke, Masters, & Kempter, 1992).

Conclusion

Terrorist events can have a robust influence on public policy. Following a terrorist act, governments tend to address the threat by adopting measures meant to enhance national security (for example, by increasing electronic surveillance, by increasing policing, and other such proposals). While these measures often limit civil liberties, there is rarely a substantial counterreaction by citizens. Public opinion polls generally show that, following a threatening event, citizens are prone to accept policies that promise security. Our data suggest that this was the case in France. After the twin January attacks in Paris, people became modestly more willing to endorse authoritarian policies such as capital punishment or a desire for a forceful leader.

Relying on the theory of affective intelligence led us to argue that emotional reactions offer an answer to the puzzle of when and how authoritarian dispositions influence support for authoritarian policies under conditions of threat. Anxiety leads respondents with a nonauthoritarian ideological disposition to switch toward the endorsement of authoritarian policies following the attacks, yet produced no authoritarian change among right-wing respondents. Anger, however, strengthens authoritarian preferences among right-wing respondents. But anger does not convert left-wing voters to adopt authoritarian policy preferences. Finally, we found some evidence that anger tended to bolster nonauthoritarian policy preferences among far-left respondents. These findings support the claim that anxiety causes the abandonment of habitual routines and increases the reliance on contemporary assessments. On the other hand, anger increases reliance on extant ideological and partisan convictions, making respondents less likely to change political attitudes.

It might be helpful to use the formulation of Clore and Ortony (2008) to contrast affective intelligence theory with cognitive appraisal theories. They argue that some affect processes are "fast, automatic, and perceptual" while others, largely those that fall within the focus of cognitive appraisal theories, focus on "full-blown emotional states" and how people come to the specific emotional state of the moment (p. 638). To elaborate on that observation, affective intelligence theory is concerned with accounting for what lays before a subsequent cognitive appraisal process that might further shape the subjective experience of emotion evident in consciousness.

More specifically, central to affective intelligence theory is the treatment of the novelty appraisal (expressed as variations in levels of anxiety or fear) and of the normative violations appraisal (expressed as variations in levels of anger or disgust) as parallel mutually available but distinct appraisal processes. And, when people confront nonbenign circumstances, as in the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks, most found themselves both angry and fearful. Research that focuses on one but ignores the other is likely to be underspecified. Incorporating the multiple parallel appraisals that make up affective intelligence theory into research on the roles of emotion in public opinion, political behavior, and political judgment will help guard against empirical research that yields misestimated relationships.

Our findings improve current understanding on the impact of terrorist events in public opinion in several ways. First, this research is, to our knowledge, the first study assessing the impact of emotional reactions to a terrorist event on the endorsement of authoritarian policies outside the United States. Despite the ample cultural and political system differences between the two countries, we have little reason to doubt that the link between threat and authoritarianism in the United States and France are not shaped by the same psychological mechanisms. Second, the bulk of studies examining the link between threat and authoritarianism focus principally on anxiety, which is only one emotional reaction to a terrorist event. The results show that in addition to heightened anxiety, the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks also triggered considerable anger in the majority of the French public, and that increased anger was instrumental into generating increased support for authoritarian policies among people who identify as right wing. The theory of affective intelligence led us to identify this dual dynamic: the adoption of authoritarian policies by anxious left-wing and angry right-wing French citizens.

Moreover, our findings improve current understanding of the psychological mechanism behind the formation of political attitudes. Our results illustrate the benefit of combining dispositional and situational factors to explain the positions people adopt. As does considerable research on political attitudes, our results show that ideology plays a powerful role on political attitudes. Yet at the same time, our findings illustrate that this impact is not uniform across situations but changes drastically as a function of the emotional reactions triggered by specific situations. In circumstances that elicit anger, the predictive power of dispositions on attitudes will be higher. In circumstances that trigger anxiety, the impact of the same dispositions will be reduced. Along these lines, our findings suggest that the different decision-making properties of fear and anger may help us understand attitude polarization: As fear leads citizens to rely more on the momentary context, a fearful public will tend to be less polarized. On the other hand, in cases where anger prevails, polarization may increase, as citizens will tend to strengthen their extant convictions.

Nonetheless, some important questions remain. First, it is still unclear why the same event triggers greater anxiety for some people, yet greater anger for others. Future research should explore whether this disposition-situational dynamic is applicable to other dispositions. For example, would social dominance orientation and the emotional reactions of anger and anxiety show the same pattern as does ideology and affective response? Further, past literature has shown that when periods of high threat are followed by low-threat periods, levels of authoritarianism return to their prior levels. This, however, has not been shown using individual-level research. An interesting question concerns the duration of the increased authoritarian tendencies and the affective reactions to terrorist events. What happens as the events, and the emotional reactions thereto, recede into the past?

Our results add to a growing literature that challenges two conventional views of affect. The first considers emotions as an irrational, turbulent state that hinders enlightened reasoning (this goes back at least to Plato's *Republic*). The second integrates emotion in attitude theory as a passive repository of likes and dislikes (Fiske and Taylor, 1991; McGuire, 1969). Instead, our findings illustrate the activating role of affect in guiding political decision-making. Anger and anxiety offer two different routes to manage the demands of the moment: Anxiety signals that habitual patterns of political behavior may not be effective in dealing with the threat stimulus, making individuals more prone to attitude change in the direction of the momentary context. Anger, however, offers an alternative pathway to attitude formation, making individuals rely more strongly on familiar routines to cope with the threatening stimulus. Needless to say this conception of affect does not hold that emotional reactions are infallible. However, it points to an action-oriented (rather than passive storage) conceptualization of affect that depending on the emotional reaction may enhance open deliberation in political decision-making rather than impair judgment.

Finally, the manner by which political elites use emotion to engage their public, especially but not uniquely to terror attacks, becomes a more pressing issue, though we are hardly the first to suggest such (Aristotle, 1954; McHugo, Lanzetta, Sullivan, Masters, & Englis, 1985). The events, here the

Charlie Hebdo attacks, were not the only affectively proactive events that drew public attention. Political elites spoke about the attacks, and these speeches most certainly also evoke emotion. Others with access to the public via social media, notably those who took credit for launching the attacks, also addressed the attacks. Moreover, the public themselves demonstrated their reactions in the various marches that took place in various cities and towns all across France. All these engage emotion. The terror attacks in addition to generating public responses also generate speech and actions that in turn also elicit some mixture of anger, anxiety, and surcease. Unpacking how much of each and with what consequences is likely to be important to the public, politicians, and scholars.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors would like to thank Julie Artke, Ann Crigler, Stanley Feldman, Eric Groenendyk, Nonna Mayer, Haley McAvay, Elizabeth Suhay, Nicolas Sauger, Don Tucker, and the participants at the Sciences Po quanti and the 2015 French political science association conferences for their useful comments in earlier versions of the article. Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Pavlos Vasilopoulos, CEVIPOF, Sciences Po, 98 rue de l' Université 75007, Paris, France. E-mail: pavlos.vasilopoulos@sciencespo.fr

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APPENDIX

Table A1. Authoritarian Attitudes Before and After the *Charlie Hebdo* Attacks.

	Death Penalty	Strong Leader	Too Many Immigrants	Army Should Govern France
Preattacks	0.45	0.48	0.64	0.2
Postattacks	0.48	0.5	0.64	0.22
Significance	$p < 0.01$	$p < 0.1$	ns	$p < 0.01$

Table A2. The Conditional Impact of Emotional Reactions on Authoritarian Preferences After the Attacks seemingly unrelated regression

	Death Penalty	Strong Leader	Immigration	Army
<i>Dispositional</i>				
Left-Right Scale	0.05 (0.06)	0.11 (0.08)	0.19* (0.05)	-0.01 (0.06)
Attitude _{t1}	0.75* (0.02)	0.40* (0.02)	0.63* (0.02)	0.58* (0.02)
<i>Situational</i>				
Fear	0.10* (0.03)	0.16* (0.04)	0.07* (0.03)	0.04 (0.03)
Anger	-0.05 (0.03)	-0.05 (0.05)	-0.01 (0.03)	-0.06 (0.03)
<i>Dispositional × Situational</i>				
Fear × Left-Right Scale	-0.10* (0.05)	-0.23* (0.06)	-0.07 (0.04)	0.02 (0.05)
Anger × Left-Right Scale	0.15* (0.06)	0.18* (0.09)	0.05 (0.06)	0.11 (0.06)
Constant	0.15 (0.08)	0.32* (0.11)	0.21* (0.07)	0.31* (0.08)
Observations	1394			
R ²	0.69	0.27	0.64	0.44

Note. Entries are seemingly unrelated regression coefficients (with their standard errors in parentheses). All models control for the impact of age, gender, education, and profession. All variables are recoded ranging from 0 to 1. Instead of estimating separate OLS regression models, we employ Seemingly Unrelated Regression, because according to our theoretical expectations the dependent variables will be affected by the same array of independent variables (Zellner, 1962). * $p < 0.05$.

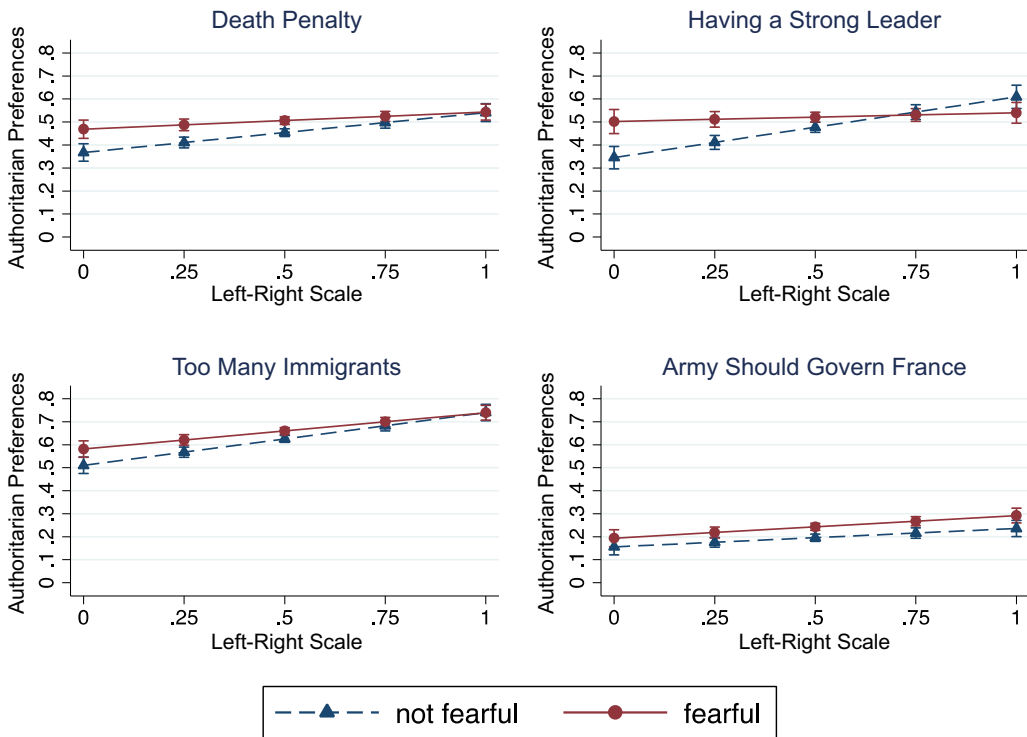


Figure A1. Fear. [Color figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

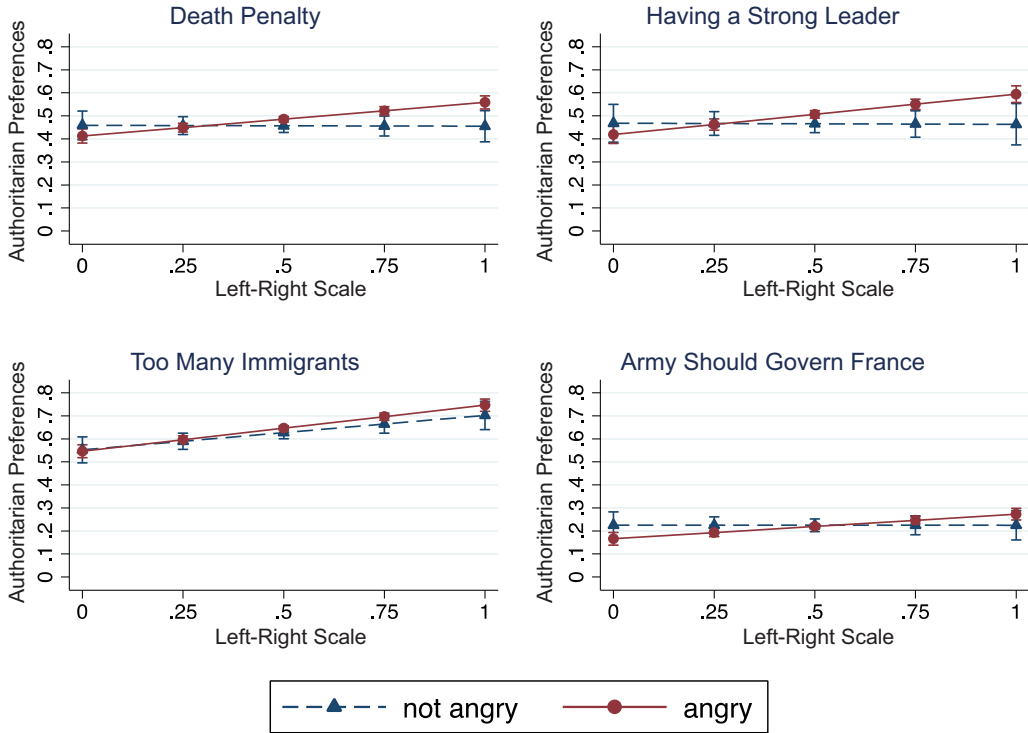


Figure A2. Anger [Color figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

Table A3. Robustness Check: Replication of the Analysis Treating Ideology as a Categorical Variable

	Authoritarian Preferences T2
Center	0.01 (0.02)
Right	0.02 (0.03)
Fear	0.06* (0.01)
Center × Fear	-0.03 (0.02)
Right × Fear	-0.04* (0.02)
Anger	-0.02 (0.02)
Center × Anger	0.04* (0.02)
Right × Anger	0.08* (0.03)
Authoritarian Preferences T1	0.06* (0.00)
Constant	-0.03 (0.05)
Observations	1,394
R ²	0.68

Note. Entries are OLS coefficients (with their standard errors in parentheses). Reference category in ideological comparisons is left-wing respondents. The model control for the impact of age, gender, education, and profession. All variables are recoded ranging from 0 to 1. * $p < 0.05$.

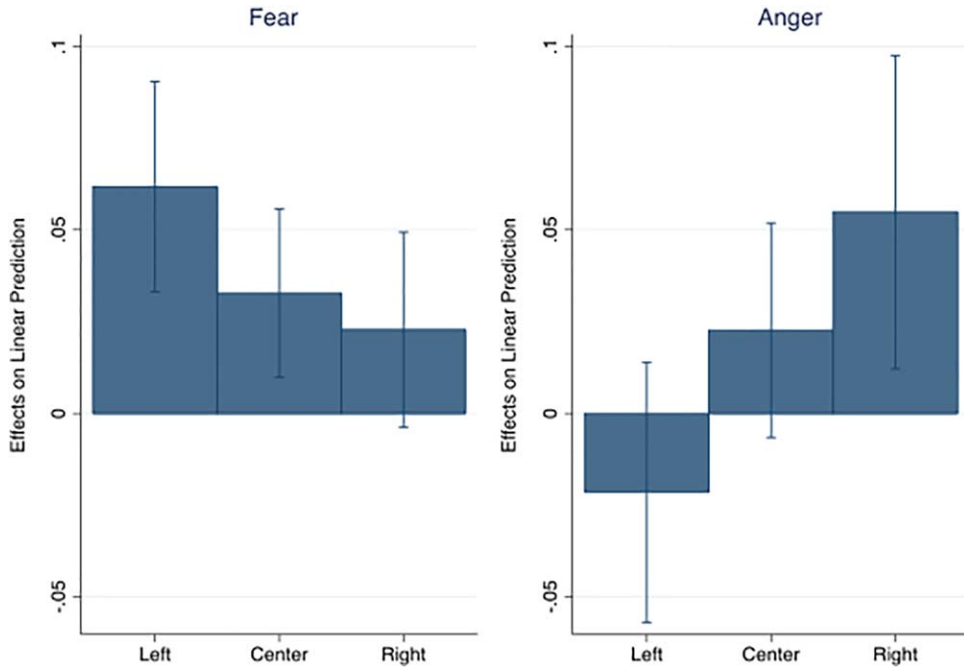


Figure A3. The marginal effect of fear and anger on the endorsement of authoritarian preferences, treating ideology as a categorical variable. [Color figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

Table A4. Robustness Check: Fixed Effects Models Predicting Attitude Change by Emotional Responses

	Not Angry	Angry	Not Fearful	Fearful
Period	0.01 (0.01)	0.02*** (0.00)	0.01 (0.01)	0.03*** (0.01)
Constant	0.38*** (0.02)	0.44*** (0.01)	0.38*** (0.01)	0.48*** (0.01)
Observations	460	2,435	1,382	1,493
R ²	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.03
Number of Observations	234	1,247	704	766

Note. The dependent variable predicts attitude change. Period denotes panel wave 2 compared to panel wave 1. For angry and fearful respondents, the postattack period is associated with a significant increase in authoritarian attitudes. These models control for unobserved time invariant characteristics of individuals. Standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.