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The Relationship Between the Need for Closure and Support for Military Action Against Iraq: Moderating Effects of National Attachment

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A variety of studies suggest that a high need for closure—that is, a desire for knowledge that is clear, stable, and unambiguous as opposed to confusing or uncertain—may be associated with greater hostility toward relevant outgroups. Using international attitudes as the context, the authors examine the hypothesis that the relationship between the need for closure and support for military action against Iraq may be moderated by identification with the national ingroup. Specifically, it is expected that this relationship will be moderated by nationalism (i.e., an aggressive form of identification based on a desire for national dominance) but not patriotism (i.e., a more neutral love of one’s country). The data provided a clear pattern of support for this hypothesis and additional analyses indicated that a high need for closure reduced variability about the use of force among the highly nationalistic but not the highly patriotic.

Keywords: need for closure; conflict schema; nationalism; patriotism; ingroup identification

On March 21, 2003, the United States and several allies embarked on what became known as “Operation Iraqi Freedom” in an effort to remove Saddam Hussein from power and eliminate the threat posed by his regime’s suspected possession of weapons of mass destruction. In doing so, the United States and its allies ended almost a year of speculation about the likelihood and timing of a second war with Iraq, but its actions did not end a growing controversy both at home and abroad about the appropriateness of such a war. Events following the fall of Saddam Hussein’s government, including the failure to find the weapons of mass destruction whose suspected presence had been used to justify the war and an ongoing guerilla war against American troops, have fueled this controversy even further. Naturally, public-opinion analysts have devoted a great deal of attention to understanding why people both in the United States and elsewhere have gravitated toward one side of this controversy or the other.

In this study, we explore this issue further, focusing on two variables that have not received as much attention, namely, individual differences in cognitive style and the extent and nature of people’s attachments to the United States. Although a large body of research in intergroup relations suggests that the mere salience of an ingroup-outgroup distinction can lead to stereotyping and ingroup favoritism, a variety of studies suggest that this tendency may be stronger among individuals with a high need for cognitive closure—that is, a desire for knowledge that is clear, stable, and unambiguous as opposed to confusing or uncertain—ultimately leading to a...
stronger preference for dealing aggressively with outgroups (Golec, 2002; Golec & Federico, 2004; Kruglanski & Webster, 1996; Shah, Kruglanski & Thompson, 1998; Suedfeld & Tetlock, 1977). This suggests that support for dealing with Iraq in an aggressive fashion may correlate with a high need for closure. More generally, however, the relationship between a high need for closure and “hawkish” responses to conflict may not be as simple or direct as this account suggests. We argue that the relationship between the need for closure and aggressiveness toward outgroups depends not only on the degree to which a person identifies with a particular ingroup but also on whether the form of that person’s identification with the group implies negativity toward outgroups. In the analysis that follows, we examine this possibility in the context of attachment to the national ingroup and attitudes toward military action against Iraq. However, we begin by taking a closer look at research on the interface between the need for closure and intergroup attitudes.

Need for Cognitive Closure and Intergroup Attitudes

As noted above, research suggests that the need for closure may be a particularly important antecedent of intergroup hostility (e.g., Golec, 2002; Golec & Federico, 2004; Shah et al., 1998; see also Kruglanski, Shah, Pierro, & Mannetti, 2002; Kruglanski & Webster, 1996). Importantly, individual differences in the need for closure relate to the amount and quality of information processing during opinion formation and the certainty and rigidity with which the resulting opinions are held (Kruglanski & Webster, 1996; Webster & Kruglanski, 1994). People under a heightened need for closure experience discomfort in the face of uncertainty and are motivated to reduce this discomfort as quickly as possible. They do this by seizing on whatever cognitive cues and information are available to formulate a clear opinion on initially ambiguous issues. However, when they have already formed an opinion, they are motivated to protect the closure it provides them with. As a result, they express great confidence in their judgments and are less prone to “seize and freeze” on the judgments suggested by whatever cues happen to be immediately present in a given context. As a result, their perceptions tend to be more complex and less stereotypical. Alternative views are welcomed because they may improve one’s understanding of new situations.

In intergroup contexts, tendencies associated with a high need for closure may lead to stereotyped modes of perception and a relatively heuristic information processing style, ultimately resulting in a preference for conflict-escalating attitudes and behaviors (Schaller, Boyd, Yohnannes, & O’Brien, 1995; see also Kruglanski & Webster, 1996). For example, research on the need for closure and information processing in negotiation suggests that negotiators under a high need for closure are more likely to be influenced by stereotypical information about the opposing party’s behavior and characteristics, which can lead to perceptions of one’s opponents as inherently and inflexibly aggressive. Negotiators under a high need for closure are also less likely to engage in systematic information processing and are more susceptible to the use of simple us-versus-them cues, making them less likely to see the conflict from perspectives other than own (a necessary prerequisite for cooperation; de Dreu, Koole, & Oldersma, 1999).

The tendency for a high need for closure to be related to intergroup hostility becomes even clearer when the subjective meaning of such hostility is considered. In-group bias and hostility toward outgroups reinforces a simple view of the world in which the ingroup is right and outsiders are wrong, and it avoids the tedious, closure-delays process of having to square the outlook and interests of the ingroup with those of the outgroup (Shah et al., 1998; see also Bar-Tal, 1998; Golec & Federico, 2004; Kruglanski et al., 2002; Wallbaum, 1993). The ultimate goal of prevailing over one’s opponents also suggests a finality and certainty consistent with the desires of those high in the need for closure (Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway, 2003; Jost, Kruglanski, & Simon, 1999; Kruglanski & Webster, 1996; Webster & Kruglanski, 1994). Therefore, although a hostile stance may have the potential for counterproductive and even destructive consequences, it also may provide group members with a kind of epistemic satisfaction. Ceteris paribus, this satisfaction may attract people with a high need for closure to hostile approaches to conflict, particularly under the stressful conditions typical of many conflicts (Golec, 2002).

However, other studies have suggested that the need for closure also may motivate intergroup hostility by increasing one’s reliance on norms and behavioral cues associated with salient ingroup identities. Along these lines, Shah et al. (1998) demonstrate that a high need for closure is significantly associated with positive ingroup evaluations and, in turn, with negative evaluations of relevant outgroups. They argue that social groups are an important source of easily accessible cognitive cues, which may be particularly helpful when group members need to form a firm opinion in an uncertain situation. In this respect, the consensually validated definitions of reality afforded by group membership may be particularly attractive to individuals with a high need for clo-
sure, providing them with a sense of confidence, order, and stability that might not otherwise be available.

Most of this research on the relationship between the need for closure and intergroup hostility has been done in the context of evaluative responses to ethnic groups and artificial, lab-based groups (e.g., Kruglanski & Webster, 1996; Shah et al., 1998). Nevertheless, the logic of this research suggests that the need for closure may be an important antecedent of attitudes toward international conflicts, including the one examined here. If individuals under a high need for closure are more likely to seize and freeze on salient group identities to provide themselves with a stable source of epistemic and normative cues, then we might expect them to adopt a more aggressive, “group-centric” approach to the Iraq issue. Because individuals high in need for closure may be attracted to approaches that appear to enhance the security of the national ingroup and wary of approaches that require them to take the perspective of and cooperate with “outsiders” (cf. Golec, 2002; Jost et al., 2003; Shah et al., 1998), a hawkish stance may be more capable of providing them with the sense of order and stability they desire.

However, this general tendency for the need for closure to relate to aggressive responses to potential conflict—particularly in the international context—also may depend on the degree to which individuals psychologically identify with the groups they are nominally a member of (Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 2002; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). In other words, despite their general tendency to rely on whatever cues are available, individuals under a high need for closure may not seize and freeze on cues related to a particular group identity unless it is important to them. This suggests that identification with the national ingroup may moderate the relationship between need for closure and hawkish attitudes toward the resolution of the Iraq issue: a high need for closure may be associated with an aggressive stance only among those who identify strongly with the national ingroup.

Two Types of Identification With the National Ingroup: Patriotism Versus Nationalism

The relationship between the need for closure and attitudes toward military action against Iraq may thus be contingent on identification with the national ingroup. However, existing research also suggests that identification with the national ingroup may not be a unitary dimension. More precisely, a variety of studies have distinguished between national attachment in the form of patriotism and national attachment in the form of nationalism (de Figueiredo & Elkins, 2003; Dekker, Malova, & Hoogendoorn, 2003; Feshbach, 1994; Kosterman & Feshbach, 1989; Sidanius, Feshbach, Levin, & Pratto, 1997; Viroli, 1995).

So, what are the basic elements of this distinction? Patriotism is typically defined as love for and pride in one’s nation, which is not accompanied by antipathy toward other national outgroups (Feshbach, 1994; Kosterman & Feshbach, 1989; Viroli, 1995). It is associated with loyalty toward and concern for one’s national group. It assumes a positive evaluation of the national ingroup but it does not exclude criticism of its vices and failures (Blank & Schmidt, 2003), and they are able to criticize their nation if it does not meet certain standards in these domains and others. Although patriotism is an affirmation of the national ingroup that does not rest on the devaluation of other groups, nationalism can be thought of as a form of ethnocentrism that combines positive feelings toward the national ingroup with hostility toward other national groups. It is typically associated with negativity toward foreign countries and foreigners living within one’s own country. Moreover, it involves a desire for competition, national superiority, and dominance over other nations (Blank & Schmidt, 2003). Rather than honestly appraising their country, they idealize it and react vehemently to any criticism of it.

Thus, not all forms of identification with the national ingroup may normatively imply hostility toward outsiders. Put another way, nationalism and patriotism may vary in the degree to which they are associated with a hostile “conflict schema.” In general, a conflict schema is a set of ideas defining what kinds of situations may be regarded as conflicts and what the most desirable ways of dealing with such conflicts are (Bar-Tal, Kruglanski, & Klar, 1989; Golec & Federico, 2004). On one hand, nationalism may be very strongly linked to a conflict schema that implies competitive and hostile attitudes toward other nations. This is clearly suggested by recent conceptual and philosophical treatments of the construct (e.g., Feshbach, 1994; Viroli, 1995), which have highlighted its emphasis on perceptions of national superiority. Empirical research also has strongly linked the construct to variables associated with dominance and aggressiveness in the intergroup sphere, such as social dominance orientation and support for ideologies of racial and ethnic superiority (Sidanius et al., 1997; see also de Figueiredo & Elkins, 2003) and generalized militarism (Kosterman & Feshbach, 1989). On the other hand, patriotism—a simple love of country—may not be clearly tied to a particular conflict schema. In some cases, it may even imply a conflict schema prescribing a more positive and cooperative approach toward other nations. Accordingly, most studies indicate that patriotic attachment to the national ingroup is not related to hostility toward other nations or “outsiders” within one’s own nation (de Figueiredo & Elkins, 2003; Feshbach, 1994; Kosterman & Feshbach, 1989; Sidanius et al., 1997; Viroli, 1995).
Thus, national identification may not always result in adherence to an aggressive conflict schema. If so, then our basic hypothesis about the moderating effect of national attachment needs to be qualified. More precisely, if only one dimension of national attachment—namely, nationalism—implies hostility toward other nations, then the “seizing and freezing” tendency associated with a high need for closure may result in hawkish attitudes toward the Iraq issue among the highly nationalistic, but not necessarily among the highly patriotic. This qualification suggests that the relationship between the need for closure and hawkishness may be moderated by nationalism but not by patriotism. More precisely, we might expect this relationship to be stronger among the highly nationalistic because a high need for closure may have the effect of increasing one’s reliance on the competitive schema associated with nationalism.

Moreover, this may not be the only way in which the need for closure and national attachment interact. Previous work suggests that individuals under a high need for closure also tend to seize and freeze on whatever their dominant attitudinal response is, causing them to display a greater amount of certainty in their opinions (Kruglanski & Webster, 1996). This suggests that highly nationalistic individuals with a high need for closure also may be more rigid and less variable in their attitudes toward the Iraq issue, as well as being more hawkish. As we have seen, research suggests that nationalists tend to possess an unambiguously hostile conflict schema that predisposes them to an aggressive approach to international conflict across a variety of situations. In other words, nationalists may vary less with regard to the content of their conflict schemas and their willingness to apply that content across contexts. If this is the case, then the seizing-and-freezing tendency associated with the need for closure may lead nationalists to converge even more closely on a hawkish position, leading to policy attitudes that are more uniformly aggressive (i.e., less variable).

However, things may be very different among those who reject nationalism. In particular, we might expect these individuals to experience more conflict when making judgments about the appropriateness of military action against Iraq. At the simplest level, whereas nationalists may fixate on the dominance-related constructs at the heart of their conflict schemas when making judgments about foreign-policy issues, individuals who are low in nationalism may simply bring a wider range of considerations to bear on their judgments (cf. Zaller, 1992). For example, one individual low in nationalism may focus on the humanitarian costs of leaving a brutal dictator in power, leading him or her to support military action. In any case, the wider range of considerations used by individuals low in nationalism may lead those with a high need for closure to seize and freeze on considerations with different implications for the Iraq issue. This suggests that the need for closure may be related to increased variability in respondents’ attitudes toward the Iraq issue among those low in nationalism.

Thus, we expect a high need for closure may be associated with decreased variability in attitudes toward military action among the highly nationalistic and increased attitude variability among those low in nationalism. But what about the role of patriotism? As we have seen, patriotism does not appear to be clearly linked to a particular conflict schema or to particular international attitudes. If patriotism does not imply something specific for individuals to seize and freeze on when making foreign-policy judgments, then it may be largely irrelevant to the relationship between the need for closure and variability in responses to international conflict. As such, we do not expect an interaction between the need for closure and patriotism with regard to attitude variability.

In the analyses that follow, we examine each of these hypotheses about the antecedents of people’s attitudes toward the use of military force against Iraq. At the most basic level, we expected that a high need for cognitive closure would be more strongly associated with support for military action against Iraq among those high in nationalism but not necessarily among those high in patriotism. Moreover, to more thoroughly map out the interactive effects of the need for closure and various forms of national attachment, our examination of national attachment as a moderator also looked at the interactive effects of the need for closure and nationalism on the variability of one’s opinions about the use of force against Iraq. More precisely, we used a heteroskedastic regression procedure to test the hypothesis that the need for closure would be associated with less error in the prediction of hawkishness from the need for closure, but only among those whose attachment to the national ingroup implied a definite preference for aggressiveness, that is, the highly nationalistic.

METHOD

Respondents

Respondents were 217 undergraduates at a large midwestern university who were surveyed in the fall of 2002. The data were collected during a period in which the possibility of military action against Iraq was an active topic of discussion, both on the campus in question and in the nation as whole. However, data collection...
Federico et al. / NEED FOR CLOSURE AND ATTITUDES TOWARD IRAQ 625

TABLE 1: Descriptive Statistics and Intercorrelations for Key Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Descriptives</th>
<th>Intercorrelations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Nationalism</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>1.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Patriotism</td>
<td>4.99</td>
<td>1.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Support for military action</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>1.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Need for closure</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>0.57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: All coefficients are significant at the $p < .001$ level.

occurred well before military action against Iraq was actually initiated on March 21, 2003. Respondents were surveyed in two sessions: in an upper level social science class and a lower level social science class. The sample included 83 1st-year students, 59 2nd-year students, 35 3rd-year students, 3 4th-year students, and 11 students in their 5th year or higher; 14 students failed to indicate what year they were in. The mean age was 19.6, and there were 125 men and 89 women, with 10 respondents failing to report their gender.

Measures

Four key variables were assessed: (a) nationalism, (b) patriotism, (c) support for military action against Iraq, and (d) need for closure. Several control measures—including the respondent’s research session, gender, political awareness, ideology, and party identification—also were used in the analyses. Descriptions of these measures, listed in order of their actual presentation in the survey, are given below. Descriptive statistics and intercorrelations for the four key variables are shown in Table 1.

National attachment. In line with our hypotheses—and with previous work on the structure of national attachment (e.g., Kosterman & Feshbach, 1989; Sidanis et al., 1997)—two different dimensions of national attachment were assessed: nationalism and patriotism. The items used to measure each of these constructs were answered on a 7-point response scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Nationalism was assessed using five items: (a) “The more the United States actively influences other countries, the better off these countries will be.” (b) “The United States should not dominate other countries” (reverse-coded), (c) “For the most part, America is no more superior than any other industrialized country in the world” (reverse-coded), (d) “To maintain our country’s economic superiority, aggressive economic policies are sometimes necessary,” and (e) “To maintain our country’s superiority, war is sometimes necessary.” All items were coded such that higher scores indicated higher levels of nationalism, and they were averaged to form a scale ($\alpha = .75$). Patriotism was measured using five items: (a) “I am proud to be an American,” (b) “I find the sight of the American flag very moving,” (c) “Every time I hear the national anthem, I feel strongly moved,” (d) “The symbols of the United States (e.g., the flag, Washington monument) do not move me one way or the other” (reverse-coded), and (e) “I have great love for my country.” All items were coded such that higher scores indicated higher levels of patriotism, and they were averaged to form a scale ($\alpha = .91$).

To test the assumption that these two sets of items correspond to two different dimensions of national attachment, two confirmatory factor-analytic models were estimated using LISREL. Consistent with our assumptions, maximum-likelihood estimation revealed that a two-factor model—with the nationalism and patriotism items specified to load onto separate but correlated factors—fit the data better than a single-factor model. Although the sample size was large enough to produce a significant chi-square for both models, $\chi^2(34) = 133.51, p < .01$, for the two-factor model, and $\chi^2(35) = 192.32, p < .01$, for the single-factor model, other tests pointed toward the superiority of the two-factor model. In this vein, the comparative fit index (CFI), which is less sensitive to sample size and model complexity, indicated an adequate fit for the two-factor model, CFI = .91. In contrast, the fit of the single-factor fell below conventional levels of adequacy, CFI = .86. Moreover, a chi-square difference test indicated that the addition of a second factor provided a highly significant improvement in fit, $\Delta \chi^2(1) = 58.81, p < .00001$.

Support for military action. Respondents’ approval of military action against Iraq—our primary dependent variable—was indexed using six items, each answered on a 7-point response scale: (a) “Should the United States rely on diplomatic pressure to contain Saddam Hussein’s regime in Iraq or should it take military action to force Saddam from power?” (1 = diplomatic solution to 7 = military action); (b) “Should the United States take military action against Iraq fairly soon or should the United States wait and give the United Nations more time to get weapons inspectors back into Iraq?” (1 = take action soon to 7 = give United Nations more time) (reverse-coded); (c) “Is the United States justified in taking ‘preventive’ military action against possible threats from Iraq, even if Iraq does not attack the United States or its allies first?” (1 = preventive action justified to 7 = preventive action is not justified) (reverse-coded); (d) “If the United States takes military action against Iraq, do you think it will help stabilize the situation in the Middle East or do you think it would make the situation in the Middle East more unstable?” (1 = will help stabilize Middle East to 7 =

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will make Middle East less stable) (reverse-coded); (e) “If the United States takes military action against Iraq, do you think the threat of terrorism against Americans at home or abroad would be reduced or do you think an attack on Iraq would increase the threat of terrorism against Americans?” (1 = reduce threat to 7 = increase threat) (reverse-coded); and (f) “If the United States takes military action against Iraq, do you think it will further American interests in the Middle East or do you think it would generate more problems for America in the region in the long run?” (1 = further American interests to 7 = generate more problems) (reverse-coded). Higher scores indicated greater levels of support for military action against Iraq ($\alpha = .90$).

Need for closure. Need for closure was measured using the 42-item Need for Closure Scale (Webster & Kruglanski, 1994). All items were answered on a 7-point response scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Responses to the items were all coded such that higher scores indicated a higher need for closure and averaged to form a composite ($\alpha = .85$).

Other controls. Five other controls also were included. Three of these were quite general. A research session dummy variable was included to account for possible differences between the upper level (coded 1) and lower level (coded 0) social science classes in which the data were collected. A dummy variable corresponding to respondents’ gender (0 = female, 1 = male) also was included because a number of analyses have suggested that men are reliably more likely to favor the use of military force in international disputes and be generally dominance oriented in intergroup situations (e.g., Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Political awareness, or one’s overall level of cognitive engagement in politics (e.g., Zaller, 1992), was assessed using seven items measuring political knowledge and media use. Five items measured political knowledge: (a) “What percentage vote of Congress is needed to override a veto by the president (a bare majority, two thirds, three fourths, 90%)?” (b) “Do you happen to know which party has the most members in the House of Representatives in Washington?” (c) “Do you happen to know which party has the most members in the Senate in Washington?” (d) “Whose responsibility is it to nominate judges to the Federal Courts (the President, the Congress, the Supreme Court)?” and (e) “Who is currently vice president of the United States?” Each of these items was scored on a 0/1 basis, with a score of 1 given for correct answers and a score of 0 given for incorrect or “don’t know” responses. Two items measured media use: (a) “How often do you use television news to get political information?” (1 = everyday to 5 = never); (b) “How often do you use newspapers to get political information?” (1 = everyday to 5 = never). Scores on the five factual items were summed and divided by 5 to create a single 0 to 1 scale of political knowledge. Similarly, each of the media-use items was reversed and put on a 0 to 1 scale by subtracting 1 from each respondent’s item responses and dividing by 4. An overall political awareness scale was created by averaging respondents’ scores on the knowledge scale and the two media-use items. Higher scores indicated greater levels of political awareness ($\alpha = .66, M = .66, SD = .21$).

Two political predispositions also were considered. Ideology, or respondents’ self-placement along the general left-versus-right dimension of political belief, was measured using two items: (a) “How would you describe your political outlook with regard to economic issues?” and (b) “How would you describe your political outlook with regard to social issues?” Both items used a 7-point response scale ranging from 1 (very liberal) to 7 (very conservative). Responses to these two items were averaged to form a composite. The higher the score, the greater the level of conservatism ($\alpha = .84, M = 3.60, SD = 1.50$). Party identification was assessed using a single item, “How would you describe your political party preference?” This item used a 7-point response scale ranging from 1 (strong Democrat) to 7 (strong Republican). Higher scores indicated greater levels of identification with the Republican Party ($M = 3.60, SD = 1.88$).

RESULTS

Looking first at the intercorrelations shown in Table 1, we find basic support for the idea that a high need for closure should be associated with various dimensions of national attachment and hawkish foreign-policy attitudes. In this regard, need for closure was positively correlated with patriotism, nationalism, and support for military action against Iraq (all $p < .001$). Moreover, the correlations also suggest that nationalism was more strongly associated with support for military action ($r = .69, p < .001$) than was patriotism ($r = .56, p < .001$). $t(213) = 3.14, p < .01$ (two-tailed), consistent with earlier work on the distinction between these two dimensions of national attachment (e.g., Sidanius et al., 1997).

Interactive Effects of the Need for Closure and National Attachment

To take a more detailed look at the relationships between these variables—and examine the hypothesis that a high need for closure would be associated with hawkish attitudes only among those high in aggressive, dominance-oriented forms of national attachment—we conducted a series of hierarchical ordinary least-squares regressions. In these models, support for military action against Iraq was regressed on need for closure, patriotism, nationalism, and the two-way interactions between
TABLE 2: Interactive Effects of Need for Closure and National Attachment on Support for Military Action

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th>Model 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>SE b</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need for closure</td>
<td>.73***</td>
<td>(.17)</td>
<td>.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>(.19)</td>
<td>−.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.39**</td>
<td>(.18)</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideology</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>.15*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party identification</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patriotism</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>.13*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationalism</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>.56***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need for Closure × Patriotism</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need for Closure × Nationalism</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>2.96***</td>
<td>(.16)</td>
<td>3.28***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

F (df) 8.80 (3, 208)*** 47.59 (7, 190)*** 34.18 (9, 188)***
R² .113 .551 .560
N 212 198 198

NOTE: Entries are unstandardized ordinary least-squares regression coefficients and HC3 robust standard errors. Standard errors are given in parentheses.

*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001.

need for closure and patriotism and need for closure and nationalism. Four other variables—gender, a dummy variable for the research session, ideology, and party identification—were included in each model as well. To guard against possible heteroskedasticity problems, HC3 robust standard errors were used in these analyses (see Long & Ervin, 2000).

The results of these analyses are shown in Table 2. Model 1 simply looked at the effects of need for closure, research session, and gender. As expected, need for closure was positively related to support for military action. Gender also was associated with support for military action, with men showing more hawkish attitudes. To these predictors, Model 2 added ideology, party identification, and the two dimensions of national attachment: patriotism and nationalism. The estimates for this model are shown in the middle column of Table 2. Consistent with the idea that the relationship between need for closure and hawkish foreign policy attitudes may be mediated by these other political predispositions (see Golec, Federico, Gislik, & Dial, 2004), the net effect of need for closure was actually reduced to nonsignificance in this model (i.e., p > .10). Moreover, both ideology and party identification were positively associated with hawkishness, although only the effect of ideology reached significance. Finally, both dimensions of national attachment were positively associated with hawkish attitudes toward Iraq. However, as expected, the net effect of nationalism (b = .56, p < .001) was far stronger than the net effect of patriotism (b = .13, p < .05). Confirming this pattern, running Model 2 with patriotism and nationalism constrained to have effects of equal intensity significantly reduced the overall fit of the model, that is, ΔF(1, 188) = 11.43, p < .001.

However, our main interest was in how the relationship between need for closure and hawkish foreign-policy attitudes may depend in different ways on each of the two dimensions of national attachment. To address this question, Model 3 added the Need for Closure × Patriotism and Need for Closure × Nationalism interactions to the overall model. As predicted, these estimates indicated that need for closure interacted significantly with nationalism but not patriotism. Confirming this pattern, running Model 3 with the two interactions constrained to equality again reduced the overall fit of the model, that is, ΔF(1, 188) = 3.85, p < .05. To probe the significant interaction, we computed simple slopes for the relationship between need for closure and support for military action at nationalism levels one standard deviation above (high) and below (low) the variable’s mean, using Aiken and West’s (1991) method. These analyses indicated that the relationship between need for closure and hawkishness was significant and positive at high levels of nationalism (b = .57, p < .01) but nonsignificant and negative at low levels of nationalism (b = −.20, p > .10). Of interest, simple-slope analyses examining the relationship between need for closure and hawkishness at different levels of patriotism indicated a trend in the opposite direction, that is, need for closure was positively associated with hawkishness among those low in patriotism (b = .31, p < .05) but not those high in patriotism (b = .05, p > .10). These two patterns of interaction are displayed in Figure 1; the “low” and “high” values for each variable are one standard deviation below and above that variable’s mean, respectively (see Aiken & West, 1991). Thus, as expected, a high need for closure was more likely to be associated with more hawkish foreign-policy attitudes among individuals high in forms of
national attachment that imply a normative commitment to aggressive ways of dealing with international conflict.3

Need for Closure, National Attachment, and Variability in Attitudes Toward Military Action

In addition to suggesting that the need for closure and certain dimensions of national attachment may interact to predict attitudes toward the use of military force, our hypotheses also suggest that a high need for closure may be associated with reduced variability among those high in nationalism, suggesting decreased ambivalence, and increased variability among those low in nationalism, suggesting higher levels of ambivalence. Patriotism, on the other hand, should be largely irrelevant. A statistical test of this hypothesis can be obtained by looking at whether the need for closure interacts with either of the national-attachment dimensions to predict variability in respondents’ attitudes toward military action against Iraq. To do this, we borrowed an econometric procedure known as heteroskedastic regression. This procedure allows the error variance of the dependent variable—as well as scores on the dependent variable itself—to vary systematically as a function of several independent variables. In a regression of this sort, two equations are simultaneously tested using maximum-likelihood estimation: a mean equation, which predicts actual scores on the dependent variable, and a variance equation, which models the implicit error variances associated with these predicted scores (Greene, 2003; Harvey, 1976).4 Thus, in contrast to traditional ordinary least-squares regression, which assumes that the errors of prediction are constant across levels of the independent variables included in the mean equation, heteroskedastic regression actually parameterizes these errors as a function of a second set of independent variables. Naturally, the implied error variance associated with a given predicted value will be larger when respondents’ scores on the dependent measure are more variable, making it useful proxy for response variability. Because a higher level of response variability suggests greater intraattitudinal conflict (Alvarez & Brehm, 1997, 2002; Zaller, 1992), estimates from the variance model can be used as an indirect indicator of the degree to which respondents with certain scores on the independent variables in the variance equation are conflicted with regard to the attitudes measured by the dependent variable. As such, this method has been used to explore the antecedents of ambivalence about a number of social and political matters, including abortion and racial policy (for a review, see Alvarez & Brehm, 2002) and the affective content of Whites’ perceptions of Blacks (e.g., Federico, 2004).

In the present context, the mean equation was specified to contain the same predictors as the regression shown in Model 3 from Table 2. Following standard heteroskedastic-regression practice (e.g., Alvarez & Brehm, 2002), the variance equation was specified to include only those variables theoretically and empirically relevant to the variability of respondents’ attitudes toward military action against Iraq. Because research session and gender were assumed to be relevant only to the magnitude of respondents’ scores on the dependent variable (i.e., via different political norms across classes and gender-based differences in social dominance), these two variables were not included in the variance equation. However, because previous studies suggest that political awareness may have an impact on ambivalence and intraattitudinal conflict in the political
TABLE 3: Heteroskedastic Regression for the Interactive Effects of Need for Closure and National Attachment on Support for Military Action

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>SE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean equation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need for closure</td>
<td>0.13 (0.12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session</td>
<td>0.03 (0.12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>-0.09 (0.13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideology</td>
<td>0.22*** (0.06)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party identification</td>
<td>0.03 (0.05)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patriotism</td>
<td>0.13** (0.05)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationalism</td>
<td>0.58*** (0.07)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need for Closure × Nationalism</td>
<td>-0.09 (0.06)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need for Closure × Patriotism</td>
<td>0.13* (0.07)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>3.37*** (0.13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variance equation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need for closure</td>
<td>-0.02 (0.25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political awareness</td>
<td>-0.34 (0.57)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideology</td>
<td>0.12 (0.11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party identification</td>
<td>-0.14† (0.08)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patriotism</td>
<td>0.13 (0.09)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationalism</td>
<td>0.06 (0.13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need for Closure × Patriotism</td>
<td>0.04 (0.19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need for Closure × Nationalism</td>
<td>-0.84*** (0.27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>0.07 (0.39)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Log-likelihood</td>
<td>-256.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wald $\chi^2 (df)$</td>
<td>688.38 (9)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood ratio $\chi^2$ test for heteroskedasticity (df)</td>
<td>24.26 (8)**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: All coefficients are unstandardized. Standard errors are given in parentheses.
†p < .10. *p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

An emerging body of research suggests that individuals under a high need for cognitive closure may be particularly prone to aggressiveness (e.g., Golec, 2002; Golec & Federico, 2004; Jost et al., 2003; Shah et al., 1998). This is often attributed to the fact that individuals under a high need for closure are more likely than others to rely on cues linked to membership in various groups. Here, public debate over the appropriateness of using force against Iraq provided us with a unique context in which to explore the relationship between the need for closure and aggressiveness in the domain of international affairs. We argued that the relationship between the need for closure and support for military action against Iraq may be moderated by the degree to which individuals psychologically identify with a relevant ingroup, in this case, the national ingroup. However, we also argued that effects of this sort may not be associated with all forms of national attachment. Instead, only those forms of identification with the national ingroup that apply a confrontational “conflict schema” to international relations may be implicated in the relationship between the need for closure and hawkish attitudes toward Iraq. With regard to this issue, we suggested that nationalism would moderate the relationship between the need for closure and hawkishness but that patriotism—a simple love of one’s country—would not.

Our data provided a strong pattern of support for this basic hypothesis. Adding another dimension to this finding, a heteroskedastic regression analysis suggested that the need for closure was associated with greater certainty in one’s opinions on the use of force against Iraq—or more concretely, with less error variance in the prediction of attitudes toward the use of force—only among the highly nationalistic. Among those who rejected nationalistic sentiments, a high need for closure was actually associated with less certainty about the use of force. Moreover, patriotism had little or no moderating effect on the relationship between the need for closure and variance in the degree to which attitudes toward the use of force could be predicted without error, further suggesting that patriotism is not clearly connected to any particular conflict schema. On the whole, what these results suggest is that the need for closure will be associated with a more reliable tendency to converge on hostile strategies when one’s mode of identification implies a definite preference for models of international domain (e.g., Alvarez & Brehm, 2002; Zaller, 1992), we added this variable to the variance equation.

Unstandardized estimates for this analysis are shown in Table 3. Looking first at the mean equation, the results simply confirm the ordinary least-squares regression findings reported above: need for closure interacted with nationalism but not patriotism to predict mean support for military action. However, the estimates for the variance equation are of greater interest here. First, a likelihood-ratio test for heteroskedasticity rejected the null hypothesis of constant error variances; with 8 degrees of freedom, this test generated a $\chi^2$ value of 24.26, which was significant ($p < .01$). In turn, the actual model estimates indicate that need for closure interacted with nationalism to predict error variance in expected support for military action. In contrast, need for closure did not interact with patriotism in this model. Again, simple slope analyses were used to probe this interaction. Among those low in nationalism, need for closure was associated with increased prediction error with regard to support for military action ($\gamma = 1.32, p < .01$). However, among those high in nationalism, it was associated with less prediction error with regard to support for military action ($\gamma = -1.36, p < .01$). Thus, these results suggest that a high need for closure is associated with reduced variability among those high in nationalism and increased variability among those low in nationalism.
relations that emphasize aggression and dominance. When these attachments are actively rejected, people may bring a wider range of considerations to bear on their policy judgments, causing the need for closure to polarize people’s opinions and increase the variability of their attitudes. On the other hand, forms of national attachment that have fewer implications for attitudes toward outgroups—such as patriotism—may have little or no moderating effect with regard to variability in people’s preferences because neither a high nor a low level of attachment would have definitive implications for what those with a high need for closure are likely to seize and freeze on.

In sum, then, our results both reinforce and extend the notion of a relationship between “epistemic motivations” like the need for closure and a hostile orientation toward intergroup relations (see Golec, 2002; Golec & Federico, 2004; Golec et al., 2004; Shah et al., 1998; see also Kruglanski & Webster, 1996). Above all, they underscore the complexity of this relationship. Although some treatments of the connection between need-for-closure-related constructs and intergroup hostility have focused on stereotyping and a general preference for simplicity and finality as mediators of this relationship (e.g., Schaller et al., 1995), recent work places a stronger emphasis on the tendency of high-need-for-closure individuals to seize and freeze on salient worldviews or identities in their quest for definite reference points (e.g., Shah et al., 1998). According to the perspective we have developed here, it is the fact that a high need for closure may have both of these effects, which suggests that the traditional prediction of a simple, positive relationship between the need for closure and aggressive attitudes toward conflict may need to be qualified. In this respect, one of the key questions is what happens when the orientation a person seizes and freezes on suggests a relatively cooperative approach to political conflict. In circumstances such as this, the two tendencies associated with a high need for closure—namely, a preference for simplistic, seemingly closure-producing attitudinal responses and a heightened tendency to fall back on dominant conflict schemas—may not push conflict-related attitudes in the same direction. More precisely, although a preference for simplicity may have the typical effect of promoting aggressive attitudes, a stronger tendency to rely on a relatively cooperative conflict schema might suppress them.

Consistent with this argument, studies have suggested that the need for closure may interact with various political identifications to shape conflict-related preferences, such that a high need for closure is more strongly associated with an aggressive orientation to intergroup relations among individuals who belong to political groups whose conflict schemas are highly competitive (Golec & Federico, 2004; see also Jost et al., 1999). The results reported here take this finding one step further. Not only do they demonstrate that one’s level of identification with a certain group may affect the relationship between the need for closure and attitudes toward intergroup conflict but they also show that different types of identification with the very same group may have very different effects on this relationship. Nationalistic identification with the national ingroup, which typically implies the acceptance of a competitive conflict schema, is associated with a stronger relationship between need for closure and hawkishness in the international sphere, whereas patriotic identification with the national ingroup, which does not imply a competitive orientation toward international conflict, is not.

Thus, our results suggest that the relationship between the need for closure and intergroup hostility may depend on the nature of an individual’s identification with his or her ingroup. Although we find these results compelling, we would like to conclude with a few caveats. Above all, given the correlational nature of the data used here, we cannot draw firm conclusions about the causal mechanisms implied by our analysis. Although most research on national attachment suggests that broad identifications such as nationalism and patriotism constrain specific international attitudes, such as opinions about the use of force in particular conflicts (rather than vice versa; see Feshbach, 1994; de Figueiredo & Elkins, 2003; Sidanius et al., 1997), we cannot definitively address the question of directionality using the present data.6 Finally, we also should note that our conclusions are based on data taken from a student sample. Nevertheless, studies that have looked at the effects of various dimensions of national attachment in both student samples and adult samples taken from the general population have found no important differences in the antecedents and consequences of nationalism and patriotism across these two types of respondents (Sidanius et al., 1997; see also Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Although we have no reason to believe that the relationships explored here would be any different in any other sample, we hope to see our findings replicated in adult samples.

NOTES

1. Besides the measures described in this section, the survey contained 10 additional items: (a) 5 items measuring generalized militarism and (b) 5 items measuring the degree to which the United States should have sought support from other countries before taking military action against Iraq. These items were included in the survey for analysis in a different study (Golec, Federico, Gislak, & Dial, 2004) and they are not considered here.

2. Research on political attitudes tends to conceptualize ideology and party identification as separate predispositions, despite their correlation (Sears, 1993; Zaller, 1992). As such, they were kept separate in the analyses that follow. However, when the two ideology items and the one party identification item were averaged to create a single political-
Multiple regression: Testing and inter-
REFERENCES
toward immigrants—and the lack of a relationship between patriotism
they found that the relationship between nationalism and attitudes
policy attitudes from nationalism and patriotism. More specifically,
effects by correcting for the effects of simultaneity in the prediction of
squares regression deal somewhat with the possibility of reciprocal
the number of variables included in the variance equation for the full
ance equation contains only the constant. This statistic is evaluated
against the chi-square distribution, with degrees of freedom equal to
6. Nevertheless, in a somewhat different context, analyses by de
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orientation scale (x = .85), use of this measure in place of the separate
indices did not change any of the substantive results reported below.
5. Recent work suggests that the need for closure may be bound up
with a number of other predispositions—such as political conserva-
tivism—that allow individuals to manage fear and uncertainty through
support for the status quo, conventional ideas, and a robust defense of the
ingroup and its prerogatives (e.g., Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway, 2003; Jost, Kruglanski, & Simon, 1999). This argument sug-
gests that the need for closure may be more strongly related to support
for military action among individuals for whom fear and insecurity are
“normalized” responses, that is, those on the political right. Although
this hypothesis was not our primary focus, we did examine it in an addi-
tional regression. This analysis added product terms for the Need for
Closure × Ideology and Need for Closure × Party Identification interac-
tions. Neither of these interactions reached significance (b = -.13, for
Need for Closure × Ideology; b = .09, for Need for Closure × Party Identi-
fication; both p > .30). Moreover, the Need for Closure × Nationalism
interaction remained significant (b = -.27, p < .05) and the Need for Clo-
sure × Patriotism interaction remained nonsignificant (b = -.08, p >
.10), confirming our original findings. Taken together, these results
suggest that strictly political predispositions have little or no moderat-
ing role once the interactions between the need for closure and the two
dimensions of national attachment are accounted for.
4. The variance equation for an analysis of this sort takes the follow-
ing general functional form (Greene, 2003; Harvey, 1976):
\[
\log(\pi_{i}) = \alpha + \beta' \mathbf{x}_{i} + \gamma' \mathbf{z}_{i}
\]
where \(\epsilon_{i}\) is the error term for the mean equation, \(z_{i}\) is a vector of obser-
vations on the independent variables in the variance equation, and \(\gamma'\)
is the vector of coefficients for the variance equation. The likelihood
function for the overall analysis takes the following general form:
\[
\log L = -\frac{1}{2} \ln 2 \pi - \frac{1}{2} \sum_{i} z_{i}^{2} \gamma' \gamma - \frac{1}{2} \sum_{i} \ln(1 - \pi_{i} + x' B)^{2}
\]
This function was estimated using the program STATA.
5. This likelihood ratio test took the following form (Alvarez &
Brehm, 1997):
\[
LR = 2 \times (L_{2} - L_{0})
\]


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