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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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Abstract

A variety of studies suggest that a high need for closure – that is, a desire for knowledge which is clear, stable, and unambiguous, as opposed to confusing or uncertain – may be associated with greater hostility toward relevant outgroups. Using international attitudes as our context, we examine the hypothesis that the relationship between the need for closure and support for military action against Iraq may be both moderated by identification with the national ingroup. Specifically, we expected this relationship to 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). Our 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 21 March 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 US 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 which 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. While a large body of research in intergroup relations suggests that the mere salience of an ingroup-outgroup distinction can lead to stereotyping and in-group favoritism, a variety of studies suggest that this tendency may be stronger among individuals with a high need for cognitive closure – i.e., a desire for knowledge which 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, in press; Kruglanski & Webster, 1996; Suedfeld & Tetlock, 1977; Shah, Kruglanski & Thompson, 1998). 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 or not the <u>form</u> of that person's identification with the group implies negativity toward outgroups. In the analysis which 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, in press; 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, in order 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 develop opinions which resist change even in presence of disconfirming information. On the other hand, uncertainty is not as aversive for people under a low need for closure. They are motivated to process information thoroughly 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, since 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, Yohannes, & O'Brien, 1995; see also Kruglanski & Webster, 1996). For example, research on the need for closure and information processing in negotiation suggest 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. Ingroup 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-delaying 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, in press; 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 et al., 1999, 2003; Kruglanski & Webster, 1996; Webster & Kruglanski, 1994). So, while a hostile stance may have the potential for counterproductive and even destructive consequences, it may also 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 may also motivate intergroup hostility by increasing one's reliance on norms and behavioral cues associated with salient ingroup identities. Along these lines, Shah, Kruglanski, and Thompson (1998) demonstrate that a high need for closure is significantly associated with positive in-group 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 closure, providing them with a sense of confidence, order and stability which 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 in order 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. Since individuals high in need for closure may be attracted to approaches which appear to enhance the security of the national ingroup and wary of approaches which require them to take the perspective of and cooperate with "outsiders" (cf. Golec, 2002; Jost et al., in press; 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 – may also depend on the degree to which individuals <u>psychologically</u> 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 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, and Hoogendoorn, 2003; Feshbach, 1994; Kosterman & Feshbach, 1989; Sidanius et al., 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. While 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 towards 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, in press). 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 has also 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, since 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 may also 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 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 which 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, while nationalists may fixate on the dominance-related constructs at their 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 war when making judgments about the Iraq situation, leading them to oppose military action, while another individual low in nationalism may focus on the humanitarian costs of leaving a brutal dictator in power, leading them 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 which 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, in order 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, i.e., the highly nationalistic.

Method

Respondents

Respondents were 217 undergraduates at a large Midwestern university, 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 occurred well before military action against Iraq was actually initiated on 21 March 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 first-year students, 59 second-year students, 35 third-year students, 3 fourth-year students, and 11 students in their fifth year or higher; fourteen students failed to indicate what year they were in. The mean age was 19.6., and there were 123 men and 89 women, with ten respondents failing to report their gender.

Measures

Four key variables were assessed: (1) nationalism, (2) patriotism, (3) support for military action against Iraq, (4) and need for closure. Several control measures – including the respondent's research session, gender, political awareness, ideology, and party identification – were also used in the analyses.[1] Descriptions of these measures, listed in order of their actual presentation in the survey, are given below. Descriptive statistics and inter-correlations 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; Sidanius 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 a seven-point response scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).   Nationalism was assessed using five items: (1) "The more the U.S. actively influences other countries, the better off these countries will be," (2) "The U.S. should not dominate other countries" (reverse-coded), (3) For the most part, America is no more superior than any other industrialized country in the world" (reverse-coded), (4) To maintain our country's economic superiority, aggressive economic policies are sometimes necessary," (5) "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 (α=.75). Patriotism was measured using five items: (1) "I am proud to be an American," (2) "I find the sight of the American flag very moving," (3) "Every time I hear the national anthem, I feel strongly moved," (4) "The symbols of the United States (e.g. the flag, Washington monument) do not move me one way or the other" (reverse-coded), (5) "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 (α=.91).

In order 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. While 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 – 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 seven-point response scale: (1)

"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); (2) "Should the United States take military action against Iraq fairly soon, or should the U.S. wait and give the United Nations more time to get weapons inspectors back into Iraq?" (1—take action soon to 7—give U.N. more time) (reverse-coded); (3) "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); (4) "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—will make Middle East less stable) (reverse-coded); (5) "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); (6) "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 (α=.90).

Need for closure. Need for closure was measured using the 42-item Need for Closure Scale (Webster & Kruglanski, 1994). All items were answered a seven-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 (α=.85).

Other controls. Five other controls were also 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) was also included, since 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 inter-group 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: (1) "What percentage vote of Congress is needed to override a veto by the president (a bare majority, two-thirds, three-fourths, 90%)"; (2) "Do you happen to know which party has the most members in the House of Representatives in Washington?"; (3) "Do you happen to know which party has the most members in the Senate in Washington?"; (4) "Whose responsibility is it to nominate judges to the Federal Courts? (the President, the Congress, the Supreme Court)"; (5) "Who is currently vice president of the U.S.?" 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: (1) "How often do you use television news to get political information?" (1—everyday to 5— never); (2) "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 in order 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 respondents' 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 (α=.66; M = .66, SD = .21).

Two political predispositions were also considered. Ideology, or respondents' self-placement along the general left-versus-right dimension of political belief, was measured using two items: (1) "How would you describe your political outlook with regard to economic issues?" and (2) "How would you describe your political outlook with regard to social issues?" Both items used a seven-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 (α=.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 seven-point response scale, ranging from 1 (strong Democrat) to 7 (strong

<u>Republican</u>). Higher scores indicated greater levels of identification with the Republican Party ($\underline{M}$ = 3.60; $\underline{SD}$ = 1.88).[2]

<div align="center">Results</div>

Looking first at the inter-correlations 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 $\underline{p}$s<.001). Moreover, the correlations also suggest that nationalism was more strongly associated with support for military action ($\underline{r}$ = .69, $\underline{p}$<.001) than patriotism was ($\underline{r}$ = .56, $\underline{p}$<.001), $\underline{t}$(213) = 3.14, $\underline{p}$<.01 (two-tailed), consistent with earlier work on the distinction between these two dimensions of national attachment (e.g., Sidanius et al., 1997).

<u>Interactive Effects of the Need for Closure and National Attachment</u>

In order 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 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. In order 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 was also 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, Cislak, & Dial, 2003), the net effect of need for closure was actually reduced to non-significance in this model (i.e., $p > .10$). Moreover, both ideology and party identification were positively associated with hawkishness, although the only 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 ($\underline{b} = .56$, $p < .001$) was far stronger than the net effect of patriotism ($\underline{b} = .13$, $p < .05$). 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 (i.e., $\underline{\Delta F}(1,190) = 11.43$, $p < .001$).

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. In order to address this question, Model 3 added the Need for Closure x Patriotism and Need for Closure x 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 (i.e., $\underline{\Delta F}(1,188) = 3.85$, $p < .05$). In order 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 ($\underline{b} = .57$, $p < .01$), but non-significant and negative at low levels of nationalism ($\underline{b} = -.20$, $p > .10$). Interestingly, simple-slope analyses examining the relationship between need for closure and hawkishness at different levels of patriotism indicated a trend in the opposite direction: i.e., need for closure was positively associated with hawkishness among those low in patriotism ($\underline{b} = .31$, $p < .05$) but not those high in patriotism ($\underline{b} = .05$, $p > .10$). 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. In order to do this, we borrowed a 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. Since a higher level of response variability suggests greater intra-attitudinal 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. Since 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, since previous studies suggest that political awareness may have an impact on ambivalence and intra-attitudinal conflict in the political 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 of all, a likelihood-ratio test for heteroskedasticity[5] rejected the null hypothesis of constant error variances: with 8 degrees of freedom, this test generated a χ^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 (γ = 1.32, p<.01). However, among those high in nationalism, it was associated with less prediction error with regard to support for military action (γ = -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.

Discussion

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, in press; 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 which 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 <u>reliable</u> tendency to converge on hostile strategies when one's mode of identification implies a definite preference for models of international 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 which 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, since neither a high or 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, in press; Golec, Federico, Cislak, & Dial., 2003; Shah et al., 1998; see also Kruglanski & Webster, 1996). Above all, they underscore the complexity of this relationship. While 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 like 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, while 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 in order 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, in press; see also Jost et al., 1999). The results reported here take this finding one step further. Not only do they demonstrate that one's <u>level</u> 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, while 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. While 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. While most research on national attachment suggests that broad identifications like nationalism and patriotism constrain specific international attitudes, such as opinions about the use of force in particular conflicts (rather than vice versa; see de Figueiredo & Elkins, 2003; Feshbach, 1994; Sidanius et al., 1997), we cannot definitively address the question of directionality using the present data.[6] Finally, we should also note that our conclusions are based on data taken from a student sample. Nevertheless, studies which 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). While we thus 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.

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Notes

[1] Besides the measures described in this section, the survey contained ten additional items: (1) five items measuring generalized militarism and (2) five items measuring the degree to which the US 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, Cislak, & Dial, 2003), 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 which follow. However, when the two ideology items and the one party identification items were averaged to create a single political-orientation scale (α=.85), use of this measure in place of the separate indices did not change any of the substantive results reported below.

[3] Recent work suggests that the need for closure may be bound up with a number of other predispositions – such as political conservatism – 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 et al 1999, 2003). This argument suggests that the need for closure may be more strongly related to support for military action among individuals for whom fear and insecurity are "normative" responses, i.e., those on the political right. While this hypothesis was not our primary focus, we did examine it in an additional regression. This analysis added product terms for the Need for Closure $\times$ Ideology and Need for Closure $\times$ Party ID interactions. Neither of these interactions reached significance ($\underline{b}$ = -.13, for Need for Closure $\times$ Ideology; $\underline{b}$ = .09, for Need for Closure $\times$ Party ID; both $\underline{p}$s>.30). Moreover, the Need for Closure $\times$ Nationalism interaction remained significant ($\underline{b}$ = .27, $\underline{p}$<.05) and the Need for Closure $\times$ Patriotism interaction remained non-significant ($\underline{b}$ = -.08, $\underline{p}$>.10), confirming our original findings. Taken together, these results suggest that strictly political predispositions have little or no moderating 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 following general functional form (Greene 2003; Harvey 1976):

$$Var(\varepsilon_i) = e^{z_i\gamma}$$ (1)

where ε_i is the error term for the mean equation, z_i is a vector of observations on the independent variables in the variance equation, and γ is the vector of coefficients for the variance equation. The likelihood function for the overall analysis takes the following general form:

$$\log L = -\frac{n}{2}\ln 2\pi - \frac{1}{2}\sum_{i=1}^{n} z_i\gamma - \frac{1}{2}\sum_{i=1}^{n} e^{-z_i\gamma}(y_i - x_i\beta)^2$$ (2)

This function was estimated using the program STATA.

[5] This likelihood ratio test took the following form (Alvarez & Brehm, 1997):

$$LR = 2 \times (L_H - L_S)$$ (3)

where L_H is the log-likelihood for the full heteroskedastic regression model and L_S is the log-likelihood for a null model in which the variance equation contains only the constant. This statistic is evaluated against the chi-square distribution, with a degrees of freedom equal to the number of variables included in the variance equation for the full model.

[6] Nevertheless, in a somewhat different context, analyses by de Figueiredo and Elkins (2003) using a variant of two-stage least-squares regression deal somewhat with the possibility of reciprocal effects by correcting for the effects of simultaneity in the prediction of policy attitudes from nationalism and patriotism. More specifically, they found that the relationship between nationalism and attitudes toward immigrants – and the lack of a relationship between patriotism and this dependent variable – was robust to functional forms which corrected for the relationship between these two predictors and the residual variance in attitudes toward immigrants.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics and Intercorrelations for Key Variables

Variable	Descriptives		Intercorrelations		
	M	SD	1	2	3
1. Nationalism	3.91	1.17	--		
2. Patriotism	4.99	1.60	.60	--	
3. Support for military action	3.31	1.40	.69	.56	--
4. Need for closure	4.07	.57	.24	.25	.39

Note. All coefficients are significant at the p<.001 level.

Table 2

Interactive Effects of Need for Closure and National Attachment on Support for Military Action

Predictor	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	B	SE b	B	SE b	b	SE b
Need for closure	.73***	(.17)	.17	(.12)	.18	(.11)
Session	.15	(.19)	-.04	(.14)	-.05	(.14)
Gender	.39**	(.18)	.07	(.14)	.04	(.14)
Ideology	--	--	.15*	(.07)	.15*	(.07)
Party identification	--	--	.08	(.05)	.07	(.05)
Patriotism	--	--	.13*	(.06)	.14*	(.06)
Nationalism	--	--	.56***	(.08)	.53***	(.08)
Need for closure x Patriotism	--	--	--	--	-.11	(.09)
Need for closure x Nationalism	--	--	--	--	.24*	(.12)
Constant	2.96***	(.16)	3 .28***	(.13)	3.30***	(.13)
F (degrees of freedom)	8.80 (3, 208) ***		47.59 (7, 190) ***		34.18 (9, 188) ***	
R^2	.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<.10. *p<.05. **p<.01. ***p<.001.

Table 3

Heteroskedastic Regression for the Interactive Effects of Need for Closure and National Attachment on Support for Military Action

	Coefficient	SE
Mean equation		
Need for closure	.13	(.12)
Session	.03	(.12)
Gender	-.09	(.13)
Ideology	.22***	(.06)
Party identification	.03	(.05)
Patriotism	.13**	(.05)
Nationalism	.58***	(.07)
Need for closure x Patriotism	-.09	(.06)
Need for closure x Nationalism	.13*	(.07)
Constant	3.37***	(.13)
Variance equation		
Need for closure	- .02	(.25)
Political awareness	- .34	(.57)
Ideology	.12	(.11)
Party identification	- .14^{+}	(.08)
Patriotism	.13	(.09)
Nationalism	.06	(.13)
Need for closure x Patriotism	.04	(.19)
Need for closure x Nationalism	- .84**	(.27)
Constant	.07	(.39)

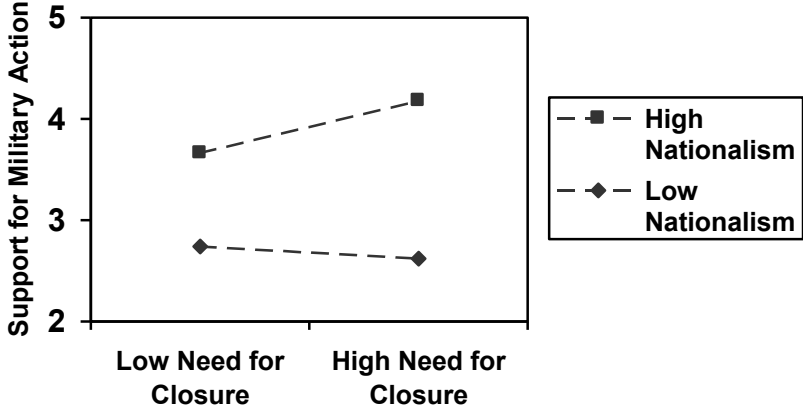|	
Log-likelihood	-256.54
Wald χ^2 (df)	688.38 (9) ***
N	198
Likelihood ratio χ^2 test for heteroskedasticity (df)	24.26 (8) **

Note. All coefficients are unstandardized. Standard errors are given in parentheses.

$^{+}$p<.10. *p<.05. **p<.01. ***p<.001.

Figure Captions

Figure 1. Interactions between the need for closure and two dimensions of national attachment.

NFC x Nationalism

NFC x Patriotism