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Motherland under attack! Nationalism, terrorist threat, and support for the restriction of civil liberties

The paper addresses the role which national attitudes play in terrorist threat perception and in the choice of specific counterterrorism strategies. Study 1 shows that participants higher on nationalism tend to perceive the threat of terrorism as more serious than participants lower on nationalism. Moreover, we found that nationalism mediated the relationship between the perceived terrorist threat and the support for tough domestic policies, even at the expense of considerable limitation of civil liberties. Study 2 confirms the link between the perceived terrorism threat and the support for suspension of civil liberties. Nevertheless, when terrorism was seen in terms of crime rather than in terms of war, the mediating role of nationalism disappeared. The results contribute to a better understanding of the process whereby the perception of one's own national group and the perception of one's own nation-state translate into specific reactions triggered by external threats.

Keywords: national attitudes, terrorist threat, restrictions of civil liberties, perception of terrorism as war, perception of terrorism as crime

Introduction

The threat of terrorism has many faces. Sometimes the threat is perceived as considerably salient and serious, sometimes it appears distant and abstract (e.g. Huddy, Khatib & Capelos, 2002; McCauley, 2004; Podolski, 2004; Goodwin, Willson, & Gaines, 2005; Paez Rovira, Martinez-Sanchez, & Rime, 2004). Numerous studies have confirmed also that the threat of terrorism is a source of various negative individual and social consequences. For example, it can debilitate psychological functioning and induce fears and anxieties, which Zimbardo (2003) labeled "Pre-Traumatic Stress Syndrome" (see also: Somer, Tamir, Maguen, & Litz, 2005). On the intergroup level, the threat of terrorism increases intolerance, prejudice, ethnocentrism and xenophobia (e.g. Echebarria-Echabe, & Fernandez-Guede, 2005; for similar results see: Bar-Tal & Labin, 2001; Huddy, Feldman, Taber, & Jahav, 2005). Moreover, Huddy and colleagues (2005) have shown that, with the increase in intensity of the perception of terrorist threats, people become more supportive of policies that restrict civil

rights of social groups that are commonly associated with terrorist activity (e.g. Arabs, Muslims) or even of citizens in general (see also: Davis & Silver, 2004).

Kruglanski and colleagues (Kruglanski, Crenshaw, Post, & Victoroff, 2007) suggest that the perception of the threat and preferences for different counterterrorist reactions depend upon a specific framing of terrorism. According to the authors, counterterrorist reactions can be perceived as (1) war, (2) law enforcement, (3) containment of a social epidemic, and (4) prejudice reduction. In the first case, terrorism is seen as an evil to be destroyed; in the second, as a crime to be punished; in the third, as a disease to be cured; and in the fourth, as a sort of cultural misunderstanding to be explained and solved.

The four counterterrorism metaphors not necessarily should be orthogonal and in fact in most cases they are not. More than that – as far as the applicability aspect is concerned they even should not be treated as separate policies, due to the most efficient counter-terrorism strategies usually require high flexibility and multi-level responding. Instead, they embrace differing forms of prevention or direct fight

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against terrorism. Thus, while war and law enforcement metaphors focus on actual perpetrators of terrorism, the epidemiological metaphor addresses the sources and mechanisms of spreading terrorist ideologies. Prejudice reduction metaphor in turn brings attention to specific intergroup relations, the attitudes the groups declare, and behaviour towards each other.

While Kruglanski and his colleagues refer to the metaphors for the way terrorism is framed in public discourse, politicians use them in order to convince people to certain actions. However, we are interested for whom such metaphors are, or can be convincing. The self-imposing answer is that preference for reacting one way or another should be dependent upon how people perceive terrorist groups and terrorism itself, and indeed there have been studies showing the link between picturing the image of a terrorist and preference for specific reactions (McCauley, 2007; Pronin, Kennedy, & Butsch, 2006). It has been revealed, for example, that seeing terrorism as an act of war led to preference for fighting against terrorists as if they were enemy soldiers. On the other hand, seeing terrorism as an act of crime evoked a tendency to prosecute and isolate terrorists as any others perpetrators of socially unacceptable and unlawful deeds against the community.

But what happens if the terrorist image is too abstract to constitute a stable source of attitudes towards the phenomenon of terrorism? This is frequently the case in countries that have not been the target of an attack. We would like to ask whether in these countries, where people cannot draw on the established image of a threatening outgroup in choosing a preference for a certain counteraction, will they draw merely on their concerns regarding the ingroup and their image of it? Would people with different representations of their own community also differ on views to what degree the community is threatened and how it should be protected? In other words, we would like to pose the following question: Is there any link between perception of and attitudes towards *one's own society* and perception of terrorist threat along with a preference or support for certain counteraction? It brings us to the question of national attitudes.

National attitudes and perception of terrorism threat

What attracted us to this question is that nowadays terrorism is usually framed in an international context, and, as a result, terrorist threat is frequently approached from a national perspective. Commonly posed questions are: "is my country a possible target for terrorist attack?", or "may it become one?" Similar questions, raised in different countries, are concerned with the security of the respective state – the state seen as a separate entity – a land limited by national borders. Nevertheless, people bear quite different attitudes towards the nations to which they belong, or generally, even towards the idea of the nation, along with

its role, duties and integrity (cf. e.g. Anderson, 1983; Gellner, 1983; Smith, 1986; Hobsbawm, 1992). And all of this usually translates into their feeling of security, as well as into their ideas on how the nation/state should act in the face of external threats.

There are studies suggesting that the perception of terrorist threat may be related to people's national attitudes. The data collected in countries that have suffered terrorist attacks show that, following attacks, issues concerning national attitudes gained in importance. For example, in the United States after 9/11, nationalism increased both at the level of expression and as the feeling of community (Li & Brewer, 2004); identification with the country likewise increased (Moskalenko, McCauley, & Rozin, 2006). Furthermore, the threat to national security gave rise to support for government decisions, from 29% (March 2001) to 64% (September 25-27, 2001), and people started to highlight matters concerning security, defence and foreign affairs as the most important for the nation/state (Chanley, 2002).

Other studies also suggest that terrorist threat increases national sentiments. In a quasi-experimental study, we measured the level of national attitudes among Poles after the bombing in London in July 2005 (Kossowska, Golec de Zavala, Sekerdej, & Kubik, 2010). The data were collected in London (the place of the attack), Plymouth (UK), and in Krakow (Poland). The latter two cities have never suffered from a terrorist attack. Not surprisingly, Poles living in the UK expressed a higher level of perceived terrorist threat than Poles living in Krakow, Poland. Interestingly though, Poles living in London showed the highest level of national attitudes and perceived ingroup cohesion, stronger identification with the Polish national group, and increased level of the feeling of human solidarity directed primarily towards the national ingroup. Simultaneously, the findings confirm that emigrants residing in another country still perceive their national group as their ingroup. These results corroborate earlier findings indicating that establishing and maintaining positive relations with others, particularly with the members of an ingroup, is one of the important adaptive mechanisms people use to deal with death anxiety (Florian, Miculincer, & Hirschberger, 2002; Taubman-Ben-Ari, Findler, & Miculincer, 2002; Mikulincer, Florian, & Hirschberger, 2003; Śmieja, Kałaska, & Adamczyk, 2006).

National attitudes and reactions to terrorism

As regards the reactions to the threat, commonly posed questions are "what does my country do about it?" or "what can my country do about it?" And then people support or do not support different actions or solutions, which are being drawn up, or at least approved, again, at a governmental, i.e. national, level. Therefore, in the case of preference for certain counterterrorism actions, national attitudes can also play an important role.

There is a body of research showing that nationalism is linked with less tolerance for otherness, both external and internal (Hinkle & Brown, 1990; Pick, 1997; Blank & Schmidt, 2003); support for tough or even aggressive international policies and feelings of national superiority (Kosterman & Feshbach, 1989; Schatz & Staub, 1997; Sidanius, Feshbach, Levine, & Pratto, 1997; Federico, Golec, & Dial, 2005), as well as racist- and fascist-based prejudices (Heaven, Rajab, & Ray, 1985; Staub, 1997; Dekker, Malova, & Hoogendoorn, 2003; Leyens, Cortes, Demoulin, Dovidio, Fiske, Gaunt, 2003). Therefore, one can suspect that nationalism would be a reason for subscribing to confrontational metaphor rather than to one of prejudice reduction, according to Kruglanski's and others' (2007) classification of the way people perceive terrorism and counterterrorism. Additionally, as shown in other studies, nationalism correlates negatively with the support for civil liberties (Kosterman & Feshbach, 1989; Crowson, DeBacker, & Thoma, 2006). Hence, one can expect stronger support for state interference in people's lives, justified by matters of security.

Nevertheless, Kruglanski and colleagues (2007), exploring confrontational metaphors, point out different implications for retaliatory or preventive actions that ensue from distinction in perceiving terrorism either as war or law enforcement efforts. In other words, the authors suggest that the character of an undertaken counteraction varies depending on if terrorism is seen as an evil to be destroyed or a crime to be punished. Strong national attitudes, due to their relation with rigid thinking and one-sided perception of conflicts, may then result in perceiving terrorism prevention in a collective way, as "us" versus "them", i.e. in terms of an open intergroup conflict. For that reason we suppose that "nationalists" are more likely to perceive coping with terrorism in terms of conventional warfare, i.e. "open and declared, hostile armed conflict between states or nations" (Webster's Dictionary, 2008), and choose the means of response accordingly; they will also support the restriction of civil liberties as another means of strengthening national security and protecting societies from the threat of future terrorist activities.

There are some findings suggesting that this may indeed be the case. For example, the supporters of the invasion of Iraq, as a reaction to the threat of terrorism, were high on nationalism (Federico, Golec, & Dial, 2005). People high on nationalism were also likely to support military actions in Afghanistan and to ignore or play down the human costs of the war (McFarland & Mathews, 2005; Cohn, Moschner, Maes, & Kielmann, 2005). Likewise, as was shown by Huddy and colleagues, in America, older people and Republicans (presumably higher on nationalism) in comparison to younger people and Democrats (presumably lower on nationalism) more often support retaliatory actions and a tough policy towards terrorism (Huddy,

Feldman, Capelos, & Provost, 2002). The findings suggest a relationship between nationalism and the preference for armed and comprehensive conflict resolution strategies aiming at complete neutralisation of "the enemy."

However, almost all of the findings cited above on the link between the perception of terrorist threat, the preferred counterterrorism actions and national attitudes were collected in countries that had already suffered from terrorist attacks. Likewise, the public rhetoric for war had additionally strengthened people's identification with their own nation on the one hand, and induced support for aggressive reaction on the other. Nonetheless, it raises the question whether people who were initially high on nationalism were simultaneously susceptible to such rhetoric and prone to see the terrorist threat in terms of an open intergroup conflict from the beginning. Our goal is then to test the impact of those initial "pre-war" national attitudes on perception of the terrorist-provoked threat, along with the support for the relevant reactions.

Overview of the study

Although Poland has never been a real target of international terrorism, the issue of terrorist threat is undoubtedly a subject of public debate due, for example, to Poland's involvement in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as the recent negotiations over the location of the proposed US Missile Defence System. Reports on terrorist attacks in Russia and former Soviet Union can also play a certain role in the perception of possible terrorist threat in Central and Eastern Europe. Bearing in mind that when terrorist attacks actually happen, people start to believe more in their own state, support even its radical counterterrorism strategies and focus on security, we asked whether in a situation where terrorist attacks have not actually happened, national attitudes can mediate the relationship between the perceived threat and the support for the state's counterterrorism actions. Moreover, we asked whether high levels of nationalism lead to the perception of counterterrorism as a "global war on terrorism".

We addressed these questions in two consecutive studies. In study 1 we examined the relationship between national attitudes, the perception of terrorist threat, and the support for the restriction of civil liberties as a counterterrorism strategy. As regards terrorist threat perception, we were interested both in its intensity and in what aspects of peoples' lives it touched upon. As for counterterrorism strategy, we focused primarily on its internal dimension, which is concerned with the means of security the state should or should not impose on its residents and visitors, certainly at the expense of some limitation of civil liberties. Incidentally, the issue of social control as counterterrorism strategy has been recently present in public discourse in Poland. Poles, as many other peoples around the world, have begun to debate about the problem of counterterrorism

itself – about the possible threat it poses to the spirit of democracy and about how far the state should go in efforts to protect national and personal security (Michnik, 2009; Joyner, 2004; Mandel & Dhami, 2005).

As mentioned above, drawing on the data from countries which already suffered from terrorist attacks, and assuming that nationalism is frequently related to the support for aggressive conflict resolution strategies, we hypothesized that strong national attitudes induce decisive support for social control and restrictions of civil liberties. Along this line of thinking, we assumed also that nationalism mediated the relationship between the threat of terrorism and support for the restriction of civil liberties.

In study 2 we tested the role of perception of terrorism as war vs. law enforcement issue in terms of the relationship between nationalism and the support for restrictions of civil liberties. Drawing on the findings suggesting that nationalism is frequently linked with rigid thinking and one-sided perception of conflicts, we hypothesized that people high on nationalism tended to see counterterrorism as war rather than crime fighting. By the same token, they see terrorists groups as an enemy army to be destroyed rather than a gang of criminals to be detained, judged and sent to prison as anybody else is who violates the law. Besides, assuming that war is usually understood as a conflict between states or nations, it is more often perceived in national terms than crime is, which is usually understood as an internal problem for states to address, we hypothesized that nationalism mediated the relationship between perception of terrorism and the support for restriction of civil liberties but only for participants whose view of counter-terrorism was based on a “war metaphor”.

In order to avoid bias of research among one particular social and occupational group we tested our hypotheses on two different samples; in Study 1 participants were young professionals, and the sample of Study 2 comprised students.

STUDY 1

Participants

Participants were eighty young professionals (52 M, 28 F, mean age = 28.7, $SD = 2.8$) employed in the banking sector. All participants had university degrees of Master’s level or equivalent.

Materials

Nationalism Scale. To assess nationalism we used a cumulative scale adapted from Dekker, Malova, & Hoogendoorn (2003), containing 24 items subsumed to 6 subscales reflecting one neutral and five positive attitudes towards one’s own nation: national feeling (2 items, Cronbach’s $\alpha = .96$; $M = 5.31$; $SD = 1.05$ e.g. “I feel I am

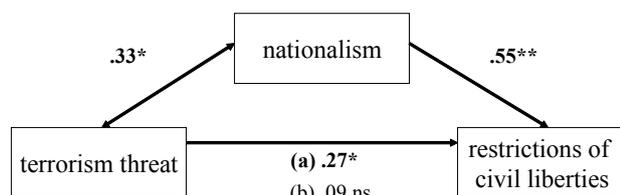
Polish”), national liking (4 items, Cronbach’s $\alpha = .84$; $M = 4.79$; $SD = .94$ e.g. “I enjoy being Polish”), national pride (3 items, Cronbach’s $\alpha = .82$; $M = 3.96$; $SD = 1.04$ e.g. “I’m proud to be Polish”), national preference (4 items, Cronbach’s $\alpha = .75$; $M = 3.53$; $SD = 1.02$ e.g. “I prefer to be a Polish citizen more than any other citizen in the world”), national superiority (4 items, Cronbach’s $\alpha = .75$; $M = 2.41$; $SD = 1$ e.g. “The Polish nationality is the best nationality to have”), and finally what they called nationalism (7 items, Cronbach’s $\alpha = .78$; $M = 2.43$; $SD = .7$ e.g. “I feel I share a common origin with other Polish people”, “I feel I have Polish blood”). For each item, responses were given on 6-point scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 6 (*very much*). All the individual subscales of positive national attitudes were statistically reliable and for further analysis we used overall scores ($M = 3.43$; $SD = .77$).

Whereas other authors stressed orthogonality, or at least differentiated qualitatively nationalism from patriotism (cf. e.g. Kosterman & Feshbach, 1989; Li & Brewer, 2004; Blank & Schmidt, 2003), or blind patriotism from constructive patriotism (Schatz, Staub, & Lavine, 1999), the present scale put emphasis on cumulativeness. Although, as Dekker and his colleagues observed, “the various attachment appeared to correspond with some of our attitudes (‘constructive patriotism’ with national feeling, liking and pride; ‘blind patriotism’ with national preference; ‘nationalism’ with national superiority and nationalism)”, the principal aim was to delineate “a theory explaining variances in national attitudes” (2003, p. 368). Thus, drawing on the findings supporting cumulativeness of the scale we used it as a continuous measure of national attitudes ranging from the least to the most belligerent towards outgroups.

Perceived Terrorist Threat Scale. In order to measure this variable, we adopted two items from Crowson, DeBacker, and Thoma (2006): “I worry that I might be killed or injured in terrorists attack” and “I worry that someone I care about might be killed in a terrorist attack”. Participants answered on 7-point scales, from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very much*). Those two items were highly intercorrelated ($r = .85$; $p < .001$; Cronbach’s $\alpha = .92$). Higher scores indicated a greater level of perceived terrorist threat ($M = 2.42$, $SD = .98$).

Attitudes towards restrictions of civil liberties as a counterterrorism strategy. To assess support for social control we used an adapted version of the Civil Libertarianism Scale developed by Crowson and colleagues (2006); from the 28 original items, we selected 11 that could be applied to the current situation in Poland. In the questionnaire participants expressed their approval or disapproval, on the scale ranging from 1 (*I totally disagree*) to 6 (*I totally agree*), of such practices as: “Secretly monitoring the activities of all people residing in Poland”, “Monitoring the emails of all people residing in Poland”, or “Holding suspected terrorists indefinitely with no trial while evidence

Figure 1. Influence of nationalism on the relationship between perceived terrorism threat and preference for restrictions of civil rights as a counterterrorism strategy.



All effects were calculated controlling for gender and age. Path coefficients are standardized regression weights.

against them is being collected.” (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .89$; $M = 2.54$; $SD = .91$).

Procedure

Participants were asked to complete the questionnaire during a group session, which they attended voluntarily. Each participant received a booklet containing all the questionnaires in a randomized order and was told that the scales measured current social beliefs. At the end of the session, all participants were thanked and debriefed during a short discussion.

Results & Discussion

A linear regression analysis revealed a significant relationship between nationalism and threat ($R^2 = .10$, $\beta = .33$, $t = 3.09$, $p < .01$). Thus, the results confirm that nationalism is linked with the perception of terrorist threat. Moreover, participants who scored high on the nationalism scale were more likely to support the suspension of civil liberties ($R^2 = .34$, $\beta = .58$, $t = 6.28$, $p < .001$).

Next, in order to test our hypotheses, we performed mediational analyses following the procedure proposed by Baron & Kenny (1986) (controlling for the effects of gender and age). As can be seen in Figure 1, nationalism mediates the relationship between the threat of terrorism and acceptance of a reduction of civil rights as a counterterrorism strategy. Entering nationalism scores into the regression equation significantly reduced the direct effect of perceived threat of terrorism on the support for the social control strategy (*Sobel test* $z = 3.15$, $p < .001$).

In conclusion, the findings of Study 1 showed that nationalism (1) intensifies the perception of terrorist threat, (2) increases the support for the restriction of civil liberties and (3) mediates the relationship between the perceived threat and the restriction of civil liberties. In study 2 we examined whether the mediating role of nationalism was the same in cases of different framing of counterterrorism actions. In doing so, we tested the link between nationalism and perception terrorism either as war or crime, as well as mediating role of nationalism between each of those two metaphors and the support of restriction of civil liberties.

STUDY 2

Participants

The participants were a hundred and thirty nine part-time students from the University of Education in Bielsko-Biała, Poland (34 M, 105 F, mean age = 23.57, $SD = 6.2$).

Materials

Nationalism Scale. We used the same version of scale to measure nationalism as in Study 1 ($M = 4.04$; $SD = 0.77$).

Perceived Terrorist Threat Scale. Participants completed the same scale as in the previous study (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .87$; $M = 3.23$; $SD = 1.18$).

Attitudes towards the restrictions of civil liberties as a counterterrorism strategy. Participants completed the same scale as in the previous study (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .89$; $M = 3.4$; $SD = 0.80$).

Terrorism as war or crime. The scale was constructed in order to assess the individual perceptions of terrorism as war or crime. Twenty-two items reflecting different understandings of terrorism as a phenomenon, as well as of who terrorists are, what they are like and what their motivations are, were developed on the basis of social scientific literature on terrorism (Crenshaw, 1998; Kruglanski, Chen, Dechesne, Fishman, & Orehek, 2009; Kruglanski & Fishman, 2006; McCauley, 2006; F. Moghadam, 2005; A. Moghadam, 2003; Pape, 2005) as well as media images of terrorism and terrorists (Norris, Kern, & Just, 2003). Participants stated their agreement with each item on 6-point scales from 1 (*totally disagree*) to 6 (*totally agree*). Maximum Likelihood Exploratory Factor Analysis with Varimax rotation was performed on the data. A scree plot analysis indicated a two-factor solution explaining 35% of the variance (eigenvalues = 2.22 & 1.99; no other eigenvalues greater than 1). Two scales were constructed from 20 items with the strongest factor loadings.

Terrorism as crime was measured by 10 items (e.g. “The fight against terrorism is principally the matter of the police”; “Terrorist attack is an act of crime” and “Terrorist groups are like armed criminal organizations”; Cronbach’s $\alpha = .81$; $M = 4.20$; $SD = .67$). *Terrorism as war* variable was also measured by 10 items (e.g. “The fight against terrorism is principally the matter of the army”; “Terrorist attack is an act of declaring war” and “Terrorist groups are like enemy’s troops”; Cronbach’s $\alpha = .78$; $M = 3.51$; $SD = 0.73$). The scale ran from 1 (*totally disagree*) to 6 (*totally agree*).

Procedure

Participants were asked to complete the questionnaire during a group session, which they attended voluntarily. Each participant received a booklet containing all the questionnaires in a randomized order and was told that the

Table 1
Standard Multiple Regressions and Standardized Betas Predicting Support for Restrictions on Civil Liberties.

| | Standardized Betas | t | p |
|----------------------------|--------------------|-------|------|
| perceived terrorism threat | .316 | 4.479 | .001 |
| nationalism | .212 | 2.845 | .005 |
| terrorism as war | .464 | 5.871 | .000 |
| terrorism as crime | -.055 | -.700 | .485 |
| gender | .079 | 1.121 | .264 |
| age | .024 | .326 | .745 |

R² = .46

scales measured current social beliefs. At the end of the session all participants were thanked and debriefed during a short discussion.

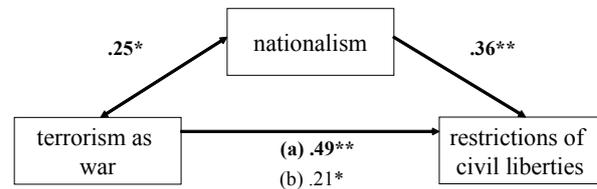
Results & Discussion

The regression analysis revealed a relationship between nationalism and the perception of counterterrorism as war ($R^2 = .06$, $\beta = .25$, $t = 2.94$, $p < .005$), whereas no such link was found in the case of perception of counterterrorism as crime. Thus, the results confirm that people high on nationalism tended to see counterterrorism as war rather than crime.

Furthermore, in order to obtain a clearer picture of the relationships between the variables of greatest theoretical interest, we conducted standardized multiple regressions entering gender, age, perceived threat, perception of terrorism as war, perception of terrorism as crime and nationalism as predictors of support for restrictions of civil liberties. As can be seen in Table 1, when controlling for other background variables, the perceived threat, nationalism and the perception of terrorism as war explained significant unique variance in support for restrictions of civil liberties. As perceived threat, nationalism and perception of terrorism as war increased, so did support for the restrictions of civil liberties; the former link additionally confirms the findings from Study 1.

Subsequently, path analyses were conducted to test a potentially viable mediational model discussed above, and to explore whether the potentially viable mediator met the remaining requirement, i.e. that the direct effect of perception of terrorism as war would be reduced or eliminated when controlling for nationalism, while predicting support for restrictions of civil liberties. As can be seen in Figure 2, nationalism partially mediated the effects of perception of terrorism as war on support for restrictions of civil liberties. Perception of terrorism as war was associated with greater nationalism that was in turn associated with greater support for restrictions of civil liberties. Controlling for nationalism significantly reduced, but did not fully eliminate, the direct effect of perception of terrorism as war on support for restrictions of civil liberties (*Sobel test* = 2.44, $p < .01$). This result means that a proportion of the effect of perception of terrorism as war

Figure 2. Influence of nationalism on the relationship between perception of terrorism as a war and preference for restrictions of civil rights as a counterterrorism strategy.



All effects were calculated controlling for gender and age. Path coefficients are standardized regression weights.

was direct, but another significant proportion of the effect was mediated through nationalism.

The results suggest that “nationalists” tend to see terrorism as an external phenomenon and terrorist group as a clear-cut enemy, which should be neutralized with the means and methods of conventional warfare. Moreover, apart from the fight on the frontline, they are concerned with securing the rear or the headquarters, that is, the state, due to the conviction that the enemy may lurk around every corner. Certainly, any suspensions of civil liberties hit all residents of the country, thus, both the “loyal citizens”, and public enemies as well as their allies. Nevertheless, all this is considered to be the costs, which the society must pay in the name of security. Besides, people with nationalist and pro-state worldviews usually maintain that those who lead an honest and law-abiding life should not be afraid of any restrictions because they have nothing to hide. This is a quite frequent argument when it comes to the proposals of tightening the law, so it is understandably used by people, who declare their love for the country and claim superiority of their own nation over others.

General Discussion

Study 1 provided evidence for the relationship between nationalism perception of terrorist threat and restriction of civil liberties. Firstly, the findings showed that high scores on the nationalism scale were linked with greater feeling of threat than low scores. Secondly, participants high on the nationalism scale were decisively in favour of limitation of civil liberties. Finally, we found that nationalism mediated the relationship between the intensity of perceived terrorist threat and support for restriction of civil liberties. Study 2 showed that nationalism mediated to a large degree the

direct effect of perception of terrorism as war on support for restrictions of civil liberties, whereas there was no such mediation in case of perception of terrorism as crime.

The feeling of threat among participants high on the nationalism scale seems to support the conclusions drawn from earlier results: they are indeed considerably concerned that terrorism poses a serious threat to their country, its cherished social order and its citizens. As shown in many studies, for people with strong national affiliation the country is almost constantly in danger irrespective of any real conflict or threat (cf. e.g. Kosterman & Feshbach, 1989; Dekker, Malova, & Hoogendoorn, 2003). In the same vein, Jost and his colleagues (Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway, 2003) found that political conservatism (which is related to authoritarianism, dogmatism, and right-wing ideologies) correlates with anxiety, especially death anxiety and fear of threat and loss. According to those authors, conservatives are generally more sensitive to the things which threaten the stability of the social system. And, as shown by Dekker and colleagues (2003), both conservatives and, especially, right-wingers, score significantly higher on nationalism than left wingers; likewise conservatives frequently tend to perceive the world as a threatening, dangerous place that teeters on the brink of destruction from the forces of evil. Therefore, we think it is generalized anxiety that can account for the result. Jost and colleagues found also a correlation between conservatism and fear of change, which may additionally explain the link between nationalism and feeling of threat that appeared in our study. Besides, there can be a certain "social feedback" between perception of terrorist threat and the strength of national attitudes: on the one hand people high on the nationalism scale tend to feel higher threat than people low on the nationalism scale, and then, in the face of increased actual threat following a terrorist attack, this perception would further increase. On the other hand, a stronger perception of the threat produces stronger national attitudes.

Furthermore, our results also showed that participants high on the nationalism scale also strongly supported the possible suspension of civil liberties. By and large, the question of prevention usually translates into the question of the balance between security and freedom. This was elegantly described by Bauman (1997) in his seminal book *Postmodernity and its discontents*. Bauman argues that to lead happy and satisfactory lives, people must counterbalance both security and freedom, which is a considerably difficult task. In other words, if we want to feel more secure we have to sacrifice some part of our freedom. In political terms, one could say that in democracy the fight against terrorism is thorny. If Western democracies introduced, for example, methods of surveillance common in Stalinist Soviet Union, such as house searches, severe censorship, police raids, wiretapping, interception of mail, anonymous

denunciations and so forth, the problem with international terrorism within their borders would soon disappear. And the State would keep the monopoly of violence on which it is premised. Nevertheless, in democracy the state is neither capable to act according to such rules, nor is it endowed with such trust; at least, not by the majority.

As has been mentioned, people scoring high on nationalism are simultaneously more anxious than people scoring low on nationalism and they express stronger pro-state attitudes. A higher fear of change and/or fear of death engender a motivation to defend one's cultural worldview, i.e. the social order he or she supports that, in turn, instigates a need for control over those who threaten the status of cherished social order (Jost et al., 2003). Therefore, one can suspect that, in the name of security, they would allow the state to restrict their own civil liberties because, by the same token, the state could control not only its external, but also internal, foes, which more often than not, seem to be more dangerous.

Furthermore, a number of findings from the research on terror management (cf. e.g. Mikulincer, Florian, & Hirschberger, 2003; Taubman-Ben-Ari, Findler, & Miculincer, 2002; Florian, Miculincer, & Hirschberger, 2002; Śmieja, Kałaska, & Adamczyk, 2006) clearly show that establishing and maintaining positive relations with others, particularly with the members of one's own group, is one of the important adaptive mechanisms as far as primordial anxiety is concerned. Therefore it leads to a greater acceptance of group norms, respect for its leaders and pressure over those who violate the rules (e.g. Duckitt, 1989; Citrin, Wong & Duff, 2001, Sidanius & Petrocik, 2001). Our findings, by showing that nationalism mediates the relationship between perception of personal threat and support for social control, additionally corroborate such a line of thinking. However, although there are direct positive effects of seeing counterterrorism both as war and crime on the support for social control, nationalism mediates the effect only within a "war metaphor". It suggests certain boundary conditions for the mediating role of nationalism between different perceptions of the phenomenon of terrorism and the support for restriction of civil liberties.

While research on the threat of terrorism and counterterrorism strategies has by now focused on the perception of the phenomenon of terrorism (e.g. Kruglanski, Crenshaw, Post, & Victoroff, 2007) or the perceived images of terrorists (e.g. Kossowska, Golec de Zavala, Sekerdej, & Kubik, 2010), the present studies examine the role that the perception of one's own national group plays in prediction of perceived threat and the relevant reactions. We think that these results indicating the mediating role of attitudes towards one's own nation between the perceived threat of terrorism and support for the specific counter-terrorism actions are promising and thought-provoking, opening a path for future investigations aimed at experimental

confirmation of the relationship and specifying the processes through which it occurs.

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