In its entire history, the human race has dealt with war and its after effects; the ever-present threat or fear of war has hung over our history, the twentieth-century perhaps more so than other eras, like a shadow (Duiker & Spielvogel, 2004). Media coverage of war has become more and more graphic as time has progressed; whereas photographs from the Second World War remained sequestered for years afterwards, photographs and video feed from the Vietnam conflict arrived in the U.S. with a 24-hour delay (Duiker & Spielvogel, 2004). The Gulf War of the early 90s was televised almost simultaneously, with the more recent conflict in Iraq being aired in a similar fashion. The coverage of combat situations is perhaps even harder to avoid now that there are more 24-hour news networks all airing footage simultaneously in addition to the presence of the internet and its varied news outlets. As the technology of war has advanced, so has the technology to observe war.

With these advancements in mind, it becomes important to understand how people will react to this barrage of imagery; the caveat here being that psychological research on war, and its effects, only seems to occur during and in years following the actual armed conflicts. In the years following World War II the focus of psychological research centered on the effects of war on soldiers (e.g., Ferguson, 1942; Stagner & Osgood, 1946; and Buss & Durkee, 1957). Perhaps due to the conflicting national opinions of the conflict, the Vietnam War brought an increased interest in research on attitudes and perception of civilians (e.g., Granberg & May, 1972; Rosenbaum & Rosenbaum, 1973; Glasmer, 1974; Ross, Lepper, & Hubbard, 1975; and Loh, 1975). Almost certainly due to its brevity, the first Gulf War sparked little research (e.g., Lester, 1994; and Doty, Winter, Peterson, & Kemmelmeier, 1997). Now, in the midst of a period of conflict with even more conflicts potentially arising, new studies on the psychology of war are imminent.

**Mental Processes in the Study of War**

The process of studying the psychology of war is complex. A variety of mental processes, past experiences, and countless other factors may influence how a given individual perceives an act of war, or the idea of war as a whole. In 1994, Lester conducted a study of students’ attitudes towards war and the factors that affected them. Lester studied traits such as masculinity/femininity, esteem, verbal hostility, locus of control, and orderliness/cleanliness. After comparing all

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**The Relationship Between Personality Traits and Students’ Perceptions of War Imagery**

This study investigated patriotism, nationalism, smugness (an extreme form of nationalism), authoritarianism, and negativism and suspicion (subgroups of aggression), and how these traits are related to perceptions of war imagery. Participants were 78 undergraduates (23 male, 55 female) that are native born U.S. citizens. Participants completed surveys for the above personality constructs, then viewed a series of 20 images depicting war and reported their level of support for war. It was hypothesized that high nationalism, smugness, authoritarianism, and suspicion will result in more positive perceptions, while high negativism will result in more negative perceptions. Patriotism will also influence perception in some way. Significant correlations were found between support for war and patriotism, nationalism, smugness, and authoritarianism.
of these different personality traits to a measure of attitudes towards post-Vietnam era wars, Lester found his only significant correlation to be between gender and pro-war attitudes: men tended to be more pro-war than women. In his concluding remarks Lester (1994) wrote, “the major finding [of the study] was that attitudes towards war are too complex and cannot be categorized into a few simple dimensions or components (p. 542).” In addition to attitudes, there are a number of other ways in which the various personality components associated with war influence an individual. In the present study patriotism, nationalism, group-based dominance orientation, smugness, authoritarianism, and two subscales of aggression: negativism and suspicion, will be assessed and compared to students’ perceptions of war imagery to see if these personality constructs play any role in how an individual perceives an image, and consequently the degree of support that person shows for war. The following sections detail these different aspects of personality and associated research.

Patriotism. Patriotism is a word very closely associated with war. Pena and Sidanius (2002) define patriotism as “love of and pride in a nation and its symbols (p. 783).” They focused their study on the presence of patriotism, nationalism, and group-based dominance orientation in different American racial groups. It was found that in the case of white Americans, African-Americans, Latinos, and Asian-Americans high levels of patriotism were always associated with a preference for white Americans; meaning that even members of minority groups with high levels of patriotism identified more with white Americans than with their own ethnic group. Pena and Sidanius (2002) believed this result to be related to the generalization that white Americans have more “proprietary rights” than other ethnic groups, and patriotism tends to be higher in the cases of those who have more rights. Still, it is seen how a person’s perceptions of their rights affects that person’s degree of patriotism; however, it is possible that there could be that the opposite of this relationship could also be true, and that high levels of patriotism could affect a person’s perceptions of their rights.

Pena and Sidanius’ findings are somewhat in conflict with the findings of O’Brien and Haider-Markel (1998). O’Brien and Haider-Markel (1998) found that members of militia groups in the U.S. tended to have very high levels of patriotism, despite commonly harboring views that the government was violating their individual rights on a regular basis. While this may at first seem confusing, it is important to keep in mind that patriotism is a love and respect for a nation and its symbols, but does not necessarily include a love for that nation’s leadership or political systems. Therefore, it is possible for militiamen seeking to reshape the political structure of America to still have a great love for the United States, and still be moved by the sight of American symbols such as the flag (O’Brien & Haider-Markel, 1998).

In 1992, Sullivan et al. brought the definition of patriotism into question, claiming that patriotism is not a static concept, but one that changes from time to time. Kosterman and Feshbach (1989) agreed, sighting stronger patriotic feelings in Americans when questioned about the attack on Pearl Harbor, but lower feelings when the same people were questioned about Japanese-American internment camps. Sullivan and his team concluded that although patriotism can influence many aspects of a person’s life, including how that person may vote, there is not, as yet, a complete definition of patriotism.

Nationalism. Nationalism may at first seem to be too similar to patriotism to merit its own functional definition; however, the personality construct of nationalism is subtly different from patriotism. Patriotism is a love for a country and its symbols. Nationalism, on the other hand, is a “sense of national superiority and dominance over other nations and peoples” (Pena & Sidanius, 2002, p. 783). In a 1994 study, Feshbach found that nationalism was positively correlated with support for military action and also, although somewhat less so, positively correlated with individual aggression. Using “militant music,” Feshbach also found that stimuli related to war could cause momentary increases in nationalism. Though in the same study, patriotism remained unaffected by the militaristic stimuli (Feshbach, 1994).

Like patriotism, nationalism is a very complicated aspect of personality and a number of factors contribute to it. Loh (1975) studied nationalism in Quebec, where the ethnic identities of the Flemish and the Walloons are in constant conflict. Loh (1975) divided nationalism into three subtypes: political nationalism, cultural nationalism, and bilingual nationalism. Loh’s subtypes of nationalism are, in essence, different groups a person can identify with. Loh (1975) believed that depending on the ethnic identity of the participant, and the number of languages participants spoke, there would be a difference in the type of nationalism the participant displayed. Loh (1975) found support for his hypothesis, illustrating the complex nature of nationalism as a personality construct, with no attention paid to how such a complex construct may affect attitudes.

In their study, Pena and Sidanius (2002) closely associated nationalism with group-based dominance orientation. The concepts are essentially the same; both indicate a feeling within a person that they, and
by magnification their group of identification, are superior to other groups. The difference being that nationalism specifically refers to a national in-group. Even in the case of Loh’s subdivisions of nationalism, cultural nationalism and political nationalism still refer to people within Quebec (i.e., cultural nationalism refers to someone viewing themselves as a Quebecois Walloon, not just as a Walloon). Pena and Sidanius (2002) use a measure of group-based dominance as a measure of nationalism, however it is included here as its own construct: a feeling of ingroup superiority not necessarily tied to a national identity.

Smugness. Another trait very close to, but not interchangeable with, nationalism is what Kosterman and Feshbach (1989) call smugness. Smugness represents an intense form of nationalism, where a participant’s nation is not superior to some other countries in some situations, but is instead superior in every way in all situations to all other countries. Smugness is, in simple terms, a feeling of hyper-nationalism. It was found that Democrats had much higher levels of patriotism and smugness than Republicans, while nationalism tended to be level across the two groups (Kosterman & Feshbach, 1989). Logically, political alignment will play a role in whether a person is in favor of certain military action. However, which political party people align themselves with is not so much an aspect of personality as it is a product of environmental factors (e.g., the party of your parents, spouse, your socioeconomic status, etc.; Sullivan, Fried, & Dietz, 1929).

Authoritarianism. Another personality trait that may be related to party alignment is authoritarianism (Sullivan et al., 1992). Authoritarianism, unlike patriotism and nationalism, does not represent one personality construct, but rather a collection of closely related personality constructs; the traits of conservatism, militarism, nationalism, and religiosity are all components of authoritarianism (Eckhardt, 1991). The Nazi war criminals prosecuted at the Nuremberg trial are considered the epitome of authoritarianism (Eckhardt, 1991). Although feelings of superiority are characteristic of authoritarianism, it is a mistake to say that authoritarianism is correlated to racism; racism is, in fact, a different construct, completely separate from authoritarianism (Eckhardt 1991). The superiority felt by authoritarians is more general and does not, by definition, include animosity towards another group (Eckhardt, 1991). Authoritarianism has, however, been shown to be related to a number of personality factors.

Doty, Winter, Peterson, and Kemmelmeier (1997) found no strong relationship between authoritarianism, gender, and support for the 1990-1996 Gulf War; however, they did conclude that participants who supported the war were motivated by different reasons. Although no one facet of personality accounted for a subject’s support for war, the combinations of personality traits differed from subject to subject. According to Doty and his colleagues (1997), men tended to show high levels of authoritarianism and support for the war to further their traditional gender roles, the aggression and physical activity associated with the act of war. Women, interestingly enough, showed the same pattern, they displayed high levels of authoritarianism and supported the war to support their traditional gender roles, manifested by the template of “the weeping widow” or “the victim” – recipient of the “sexualized violence” of war (Doty et al., 1997).

Authoritarianism has also been found to be closely related to militarism, a tendency toward military aggression, and nationalism (Eckhardt, 1991). No statistically significant relationship was found between militarism and nationalism; rather, the two traits were shown as components of personality strongly related to authoritarianism (Eckhardt, 1991). The meaning of this is that, by virtue of Eckhardt’s (1991) research, someone high in authoritarianism is more likely to favor military action and is more likely to feel his/her country has a right to be dominant over other countries. It is therefore reasonable to believe that authoritarianism is going to be related to how an individual perceives, feels, and acts about a war situation. Granberg and May (1972) illustrated this in their study of students’ attitudes towards the Vietnam War. They found that authoritarianism was negatively correlated with protest activity (Granberg & May, 1972), meaning that students with high authoritarianism scores tended not to engage in protest behavior against the war. Again, authoritarianism has been linked to support for military action.

Relationships With Aggression

However, authoritarianism like patriotism is not correlated with aggression. Furthermore, there has been little connection between individual aggression and support for war in past research (Feshbach, 1994). Rabbie (1989) points out that while personality constructs like patriotism and nationalism alone cannot indicate how aggressive a person will be, high levels of any in-group identification (e.g., nationalism) can lead to higher levels of aggression, or higher levels of support for group aggression, when that in-group is threatened or otherwise in competition with another group. Rabbi (1989) also found that groups tend to be less capable of restraining their aggression, and so it would then be reasonable to expect group aggression...
to be much higher than individual aggression and to occur with less provocation. In terms of war these constructs become somewhat abstract, it is very hard to conceptualize an individual waging war on anything. However, in terms of intensity of aggression, it is relatively easy to equate the attitudes of war in the group, represented by actions and policy, to the opinions of and attitudes towards war displayed by individuals.

Struch and Schwartz (1989) found that there was no strong relationship between in-group favoritism and out-group aggression or aggression towards members of the out-group. These findings reflect a great deal of the research already presented. The distinction between feelings of superiority and racism in those high in authoritarianism is very similar, because the presence of superior feelings (or a preference for those of a like kind) does not imply hostility towards those who are not of a like kind. Similarly, the concepts of patriotism and nationalism again come into play here. A love for the in-group and its symbols does not necessarily imply a desire to harm or otherwise antagonize the out-group, even though that love for the in-group may include a feeling of superiority to the out-group.

The pattern in previous research seems to indicate that overall aggression is rarely linked to attitudes or perceptions of war. That is why aggression itself is not a variable in the present study, and the negativism and suspicion subgroups of aggression from Buss and Durkee’s (1957) research are used in its place. Negativism is defined as “oppositional behavior, usually directed against authority. This behavior involves a refusal to cooperate that may vary from passive non-compliance to open rebellion against rules or conventions” (Buss and Durkee, 1957, p. 343). The nature of negativism seems contrary to the nature of authoritarianism, and it is for that reason that negativism has been included as a variable in this study. If authoritarianism, which traditionally includes compliance as a characteristic, is related to support for military action than it seems reasonable that negativism, characterized by a distain for social convention, would be related to opposition of military action. This opposition to the action would then, by the theory of reactivity (Schwartz, Bless, Stack, Klumpp, Rittenauer-Schatka, & Simons, 1991), result in a predisposition to perceive images of war as negative, and consequently favor the idea of war less.

Buss and Durkee (1957) define suspicion as “projection of hostility onto others. This varies from merely being distrustful and wary of people to beliefs that others are being derogatory or are planning harm (p. 343).” Rabbie (1989) has pointed out that when a group perceives itself to be in competition with an out-group it will react more aggressively. On the individual scale this would translate to an individual who perceives himself in competition with others (or merely an other) to react more aggressively, and by extension favor more aggressive responses. When this assumption is combined with Rothman and Hardin’s (1997) study on heuristics in social judgment, which found a tendency for people to apply more negative schemas with regards to out-groups, it seems reasonable to assume that suspicious people will favor aggressive actions towards out-groups, and therefore apply their negative interpretations to images of such aggression. Stagner and Osgood’s (1946) also found that individual perceptions of individuals could affect perception of specific situations. Stagner and Osgood’s (1946) findings that stereotypes of other nations can affect the interpretation of political events, support the supposition that an individual’s schemas for certain groups of people will color how that individual will perceive a given image.

**Support for War**

The Stagner and Osgood (1946) study, as well as the Rothman and Hardin (1997) study, relate directly to the variable concerned with perceptions of war imagery: support for war. Stagner and Osgood (1946) found that war, and information about war, has “drastically” changed American perceptions of Germans, Russians, the English, and the French. Considering that Stagner and Osgood worked in the years immediately following World War II, it seems likely that in light of changes in world politics, not to mention the collapse of the Soviet Union, perceptions of the aforementioned groups are very different from the way Stagner and Osgood found them. The basic principle, however, remains the same; information is capable of altering perception of certain groups (Stagner & Osgood, 1946).

Rothman and Hardin (1997) found that preexisting schemas could influence memory and behavior in certain social settings. Again, as in Stagner and Osgood’s study (1946), schemas, an underlying cognitive component of the self, are being altered by a external stimulus. Perception of the given situation leads a particular schema to be recalled and applied (Rothman & Hardin, 1997). The personality traits examined in the present study are similar to Rothman and Hardin’s (1997) schemas in that they are components of the self that influence how certain things are perceived: in this case, images of war. Our schemas are formed by our experiences, and experience is only possible through the filter of personality (Rothman & Hardin, 1997). Therefore, just as Rothman and Hardin’s (1997) schemas affected memory and behav-
ior, so too will the various personality traits assessed in the present study affect perception of imagery.

Schwartz, Bless, Strack, Klumpp, Rittenauer-Schatka, and Simons (1991) conducted an experiment similar to Rothman and Hardin. Schwartz et al. (1991) found that recall of information became harder when participants were reminded of instances where they had been less assertive than they tend to view themselves. The more less than normal assertive behaviors the participants recalled the worse their performance on a memory task. Here, unlike in the Rothman and Hardin experiment, memory is being altered directly by an aspect of personality: self-perception (Schwartz, Bless, Strack, Klumpp, Rittenauer-Schatka, & Simon, 1991). Schwartz et al. shows the direct link between personality and behavior; this study leads directly into the present study, an observation of how the various personality traits already discussed, influence how an individual perceives imagery of war.

It is hypothesized that students with high levels of nationalism will show more support for war than students with low levels of nationalism. Similarly, students high in levels of group based dominance orientation will show more support for war than students low in group based dominance orientation. Also, students high in smugness will show more support for war than students low in smugness. Similarly, it is believed that students high in authoritarianism will show more support for war than students low in authoritarianism. Contrarily, it is hypothesized that students high in negativism will show less support for war than students low in negativism, while students high in suspicion will show more support for war than students low in suspicion. While a relationship between patriotism and perception of the images is expected, the hypothesis is non-directional.

Methods

Participants
78 undergraduates participated in this study. Participants were drawn primarily, but not entirely, from the freshman Introduction to Psychology courses and the Psychology Department Research Participant Pool. There were more female participants than male participants, as the gender demographics for the university are roughly 70% female and 30% male. The same percentages were found in the sample which was composed of 55 female participants (70.5%) and 23 male participants (29.5%). Participants ranged in age from 17 to 32, and because the majority of participants were freshman, the mean age was 19.6 years. Because the experiment deals with concepts very closely related to national identity, such as patriotism and nationalism, only citizens of the United States participated. Participants were recruited on a voluntary basis and were not compensated by the experimenter for their time. Instructors may have encouraged participation in studies by offering class credit.

Materials

Patriotism. Patriotism was assessed using two surveys; the Pena and Sidanius (2002) patriotism and group-based dominance orientation survey, and the Kosterman and Feshbach (1989) patriotism, nationalism, and smugness survey (see Appendix B). Questions 1 to 3 on the Pena and Sidanius survey correspond to patriotism. Each question is answered using a 5-point Likert-type scale where 1 (strongly disagree) represents low patriotism and 5 (strongly agree) represents high patriotism. The internal consistency for this survey was 0.77.

Questions 1 through 12 of the Kosterman and Feshbach scale correspond to patriotism. Each of these questions is scored using a 5-point Likert-type scale where 1 (strongly disagree) represents low patriotism and 5 (strongly agree) represents high patriotism. Five items are reverse scored, specifically numbers 6, 9, 10, 11, and 12. In the case of these questions, a score of 1 (strongly disagree) represents high patriotism and a score of 5 (strongly agree) represents low patriotism.

Nationalism. Nationalism was measured using the Kosterman and Feshbach patriotism, nationalism and smugness survey. Questions 13 through 20 of the Kosterman and Feshbach survey correspond to nationalism. Questions number 13 through 19 are scored using a 5-point Likert-type scale where a score of 1 (strongly disagree) represents low nationalism and a score of 5 (strongly agree) represents high nationalism. Question number 20 is reverse scored, so a score of 1 (strongly disagree) represents high nationalism and a score of 5 (strongly agree) represents low nationalism.

Group Based Dominance Orientation. Group-based dominance orientation, as already discussed, is a personality construct similar to nationalism. The central difference is that group-based dominance orientation does not necessarily divide people into national in-groups. The trait was assessed using the Pena and Sidanius patriotism and group-based dominance orientation questionnaire. Questions 4 through 9 on the Pena and Sidanius survey correspond to group-based dominance orientation. Each question is scored with a 5-point Likert-type scale where a score of 1 (strongly disagree) represents low group-based dominance orientation and a score of 5 (strongly agree) represents high group-based dominance orientation. The measure was found by its creators to have an internal consistency of 0.80.
**Smugness.** Smugness, an extreme form of nationalism, was assessed using the smugness scale of Kostermin and Feshbach’s survey. Questions 21 through 24 correspond to smugness. Each question is scored using a 5-point Likert-type scale where a score of 1 (strongly disagree) represents low smugness and a score of 5 (strongly agree) represents high smugness. None of the items are reversed scored.

**Authoritarianism.** Authoritarianism was assessed using the Altemeyer (1991) right-wing authoritarianism scale. The entire 24-item questionnaire was used. Each question is scored using a 6-point Likert-type scale where a score of 1 (disagree strongly) represents low authoritarianism and a score of 6 (agree strongly) represents high authoritarianism. 12 of the 24 items are reversed scored, specifically items 2, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 13, 16, 18, 19, 22, and 23. In the case of these items a score of 1 (disagree strongly) represents high authoritarianism and a score of 6 (agree strongly) represents low authoritarianism. Reliability for the measure has been found to be 0.90; validity of the measure, however, was not discussed in detail as higher reliability measures, tend to have lower validity (Altemeyer 1991).

**Negativism and Suspicion.** The Buss and Durkee hostility survey (1957) was used to assess negativism and suspicion. Questions 1 through 5 correspond to negativism and questions 6 through 15 correspond to suspicion. Each question is scored using a weighting system. In the case of most items “true” answers are preferable and indicate the presence of the specific type of aggression. However, there are some reverse, or “false,” scored items, where the answer of “false” indicates the presence of the specific type of aggression. Questions number 14 and 15 are “false” scored item.

**Support for War.** Support for war was assessed using an experimenter-constructed questionnaire. For each of the 20 images the following 2 statements were given. 1) I would say this picture makes me favor the idea of US military action and 2) I am certain I know who/what this is a picture of. Each question is scored on a 5-point Likert-type scale where a score of 1 (disagree strongly) represents little support for war and a score of 5 (agree strongly) represents a great deal of support for war. The second question was to ensure that the student understands what is being presented. A low score, below 2, on the second question indicates a problem with the reliability of the answer to the first question. If the students do not feel certain in any way that they understand who or what they are looking at, their perceptions of the image will not be as accurate as the perceptions of students who are certain what they are looking at.

**Design and Procedure**

The study is a non-experimental, correlational design. The variables are the personality constructs of patriotism; nationalism, including the related construct of group-based dominance orientation; smugness, an extreme form of nationalism; authoritarianism; negativism and suspicion, each subscales of aggression; and support for war as determined by question 1 of the image perception questionnaire. Because the focus of this study is on perceptions of war imagery it is difficult to establish controls.

A person’s attitudes towards war, and by extension their perceptions of war imagery, are deeply personal and influenced by a number of traits and personal experiences. A relatively large sample size was sought in an attempt to control for a few individuals with extreme views from upsetting the data set. Furthermore, non-U.S. citizens were excluded from the sample set because the focus of this study is on American perceptions of images of American armed conflict. Therefore the perceptions of non-U.S. students will likely be colored in some way by their nationalistic/patriotic feelings for their country of origin.

A varied list of personality traits was assessed in this study because the relationships between patriotism and nationalism to attitudes and perceptions have been shown to be complicated in the past (e.g., Pena & Sidanius 2002, Lester 1994, Rosenbaum & Rosenbaum 1973, Granberg & Mary 1972, and Stangner & Osgood 1946). By assessing multiple personality traits it becomes easier to identify if any traits, or if an interaction between any traits, impacts perception in some way by removing some doubt as to if the measured effect alone were responsible for the influence; for example, if patriotism alone were studied and a relationship between patriotism and perception were found, it would not be clear if patriotism alone were responsible for that relationship.

The study was conducted in groups ranging from 2 to 15 people. Each participant was given the five personality surveys once they had read and signed the informed consent form. Following the completion of the six personality surveys the participants were given the image perception questionnaire. The participants were then shown the 20 images constituting the image set and asked to respond to the questions for each image. The image set was given to the participants at the same time as the image perception questionnaire. Following the end of the image set the experimenter collected the surveys and the participants were debriefed as to the nature of the study and urged to contact the Student Counseling Center should they feel bothered in any way by the images. Following the debriefing the participants were free to leave. Each
session lasted somewhere between 20 and 35 minutes, depending on how much time participants took to fill out the six questionnaires.

**Results**

**Patriotism**

For the variable of patriotism a significant positive correlation was found with support for war. Both patriotism as determined by the Kosterman and Feshbach (1989) survey ($r(76) = .570$, $p < .01$) and patriotism as determined by the Pena and Sidanius (2002) survey ($r(76) = .568$, $p < .01$) yielded positive correlations with support for war. Furthermore an average of the two patriotism scores was also correlated with the support for war scores and a significant correlation was found ($r(76) = .583$, $p < .01$). The coefficient alpha for the Kosterman and Feshbach scale was found to be .9311, while the coefficient alpha for the Pena and Sidanius survey was found to be .91.

**Nationalism**

Nationalism as assessed by the Kosterman and Feshbach (1989) survey yielded a positive correlation with support for war ($r(76) = .602$, $p < .01$). The coefficient alpha for this measure was found to be 0.85.

**Group Based Dominance Orientation**

The trait of group based dominance orientation was hypothesized to show the same trend as nationalism, as the concepts are very closely related. This belief was supported by the data. A significant correlation was found between group based dominance orientation and support for war ($r(76) = .423$, $p < .05$). The coefficient alpha for this measure was found to be 0.87.

**Smugness**

Smugness, another trait closely related to nationalism, was positively correlated with support for war ($r(76) = .633$, $p < .01$). The smugness measure was found to have a coefficient alpha of .85.

**Authoritarianism**

Authoritarian scores from the Altemeyer right wing authoritarianism scale (1991) found a positive correlation with support for war ($r(76) = .633$, $p < .01$). The coefficient alpha for this measure was found to be 0.85.

<table>
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<th>Smugness</th>
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<th>Negativism</th>
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**p < 0.01, *p < 0.05, N = 78**
Support for war

Responses to question 1 on the image questionnaire, “This image makes me favor the idea of U.S. military action,” for each of the 20 images were averaged to find an overall score, called support for war. Correlations between the other personality variables and the support for war for each individual image showed no noticeable trend. That is to say, no one image appeared to have higher levels of support than all others in all participants. However, the coefficient alpha for the questionnaire was found to be .9320. No images were removed from the sample based on responses to the second question: “I am certain I know who/what this is a picture of.” The mean responses showed least certainty (M = 2.3205, SD = 1.2431) for image 2 (a photo of the Kosovo conflict) and the most certainty (M = 4.5256, SD = 1.00291) for image 19 (the flag raising at Iwo Jima).

Other Findings

Correlations were found between many of the measures (Table 1). The Kosterman and Feshbach patriotism score (pat1) correlated positively with scores for nationalism, smugness, and authoritarianism as well (r(76) = .344, r(76) = .573, r(76) = .646, p < .01). Similarly the Pena and Sidanius patriotism score (pat2) also correlated positively with the same other scores (r(76) = .421, r(76) = .569, r(76) = .656, p < .01). Logically, the overall score for patriotism also correlated positively with these variables (r(76) = .397, r(76) = .585, r(76) = .667, p < .01). Also, nationalism positively correlated with smugness, as well as authoritarianism (r(76) = .592, r(76) = .603, p < .01). In addition smugness positively correlated to authoritarianism (r(76) = .517, p < .01). Group based dominance orientation correlated significantly with nationalism, smugness, and authoritarianism; also, a weaker correlation was found between group based dominance orientation and the Pena and Sidanius patriotism measure (r(78) = .655, r(78) = .530, r(78) = .444, p < .01, r(78) = .242, p < .05).

Discussion

Many, but not all, of the hypotheses set forth in the beginning of this project were supported. The patriotism hypothesis was supported; a relationship was found between patriotism and support for war. The original hypothesis was non-directional, however, the relationship was found to be a positive one. Students high in patriotism—on either scale and in overall patriotism—were found to show more support for US military action than students low in patriotism. The nationalism hypothesis was also supported; students high in nationalism were found to show more support for US military action than students low in nationalism.

Group based dominance orientation, is closely related to nationalism (Pena & Sidanius, 2002), and so there was also a relationship found between group based dominance orientation and support for war as well as between group based dominance orientation and nationalism and smugness. Therefore, the group based dominance orientation hypothesis was supported. Interestingly enough, in the Pena and Sidanius (2002) study where the measure was developed, a relationship was found in their study between patriotism and group based dominance orientation. In the current study such a relationship was found, but it was a relatively weak relationship. Group based dominance orientation was more closely related to nationalism, smugness and authoritarianism. Logically though, group based dominance orientation would relate very closely to these concepts, as smugness is itself an extreme form of nationalism, and one of the traits of authoritarianism is nationalism. Even Pena and Sidanius (2002) describe group based dominance orientation as being closely related to nationalism.

Likewise, the smugness hypothesis was supported; students high in smugness were found to show more support for US military action than students low in smugness. It is logical that smugness would show a correlation similar to nationalism’s as smugness is defined as a severe form of nationalism. In the same line of thinking, it is also logical that there was a positive correlation found between nationalism and smugness. The authoritarianism hypothesis was supported: it was found that students scoring high on the authoritarianism measure also showed higher levels of support for US military action than students scoring low on the authoritarianism measure.

Neither the negativism nor suspicion hypotheses were supported. Students high in negativism were not
found to show lower levels of support for US military intervention than students low in negativism; and students high in suspicion were not found to show higher levels of support for US military action than students low in suspicion. These measures were both found to have very low internal consistency as measured with coefficient alpha. However, the findings of Buss and Durkee (1957) showed no correlation between measures of patriotism or nationalism and aggression. For this study smaller subscales of aggression were studied instead of an overall aggression variable in the hopes that some relationship may appear. Unfortunately, no relationships appeared. It is possible than measures for these subscales of aggression that are more reliable could yield different results, however, given the findings of Buss and Durkee, it does not seem likely that any relationship exists between these subscales of aggression and patriotism, nationalism, or support for war.

The images used in the current study all yielded some variation in support for war between subjects and appeared to elicit some response to at least one of the variables. Also, they all appeared to be readily identifiable, although more recent conflicts such as Kosovo and some South American conflicts of the 1990s were not as easily recognized by subjects as images of Vietnam and World War II. It is possible that the correlations would be stronger if the images used were all from a specific war. It would be interesting to see how students today perceive the events of the Vietnam War. Perhaps future researchers could consider this as an option: using images entirely from one war. Similarly, it would be interesting to see what results would be found if all the images used were from the most recent conflicts (e.g. Kosovo, Somalia, Iraq, and Afghanistan). Iraq and Afghanistan were not included in this study because of the topical and potentially very personal connections subjects could have if they themselves have family in the military. However, the feelings of students about the current (or at least, most current) military action should be recorded, if for no other reason than to be compared to feelings about the same conflict years later.

It was suggested by several participants that images of humanitarian efforts could be included in the image set. It was commented that all of the images appeared to be of the negative actions taken during war, and none showed the good done by US soldiers. Originally some images of humanitarian effort were included in the image set. However, these images were removed because they were not very clear when or where they were occurring. In future research, however, these pictures could be included to see if any difference is seen as to how students react to images of soldiers dispensing food and medicine or removing land mines, for example. While it will be harder to find such images, as Humanitarian organizations like the Red Cross tend to be more active in such activities than combat soldiers, and because photojournalists are more apt to take pictures of more sensational situations and therefore less images of humanitarian efforts exist.

This study was limited by some of the instruments being poor in internal consistency as measured with coefficient alpha and also by the scale of the study. If more funding had been available higher quality reproductions of the images could have been used, and a larger sample could have been gathered by offering some form of compensation for participants. Had they been compensated the image set could have been larger, as participants would not object greatly to 10 or 15 more images were they being compensated in some way, be it with food or money. With a larger sample size the sample could be further broken down into Americans of various ethnic identities, which could yield very interesting results. It is unlikely, given the findings of past researchers that any relationship exists between aggression and any war related personality constructs. With that in mind, future researchers may remove the measures of negativism and suspicion from the survey set.

### References


