

On the Varieties of National Attachment: Blind Versus Constructive Patriotism

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Two studies explored a theoretical distinction between “blind” and “constructive” patriotism. Blind patriotism is defined as an attachment to country characterized by unquestioning positive evaluation, staunch allegiance, and intolerance of criticism. Constructive patriotism is defined as an attachment to country characterized by support for questioning and criticism of current group practices that are intended to result in positive change. Items designed to investigate these dimensions of national attachment were administered to two groups of undergraduates in separate surveys. Measures of the two constructs derived from factor analysis of the responses proved to be reliable and valid. Blind patriotism was positively associated with political disengagement, nationalism, perceptions of foreign threat, perceived importance of symbolic behaviors, and selective exposure to pro-U.S. information. In contrast, constructive patriotism was positively associated with multiple indicators of political involvement, including political efficacy, interest, knowledge, and behavior. The implications of this distinction for theory and research on patriotism are discussed.

KEY WORDS: patriotism; criticism; nationalism; national symbols; political involvement; selective exposure.

Our country! In her intercourse with foreign nations may she always be right, but our country right or wrong.

—Stephen Decatur, 1816

Our country right or wrong! When right, to be kept right; when wrong, to be put right!

—Carl Schurz, 1872

(Both quotes cited in Curti, 1946, p. 1)

Patriotism is arguably one of the most important forms of group attachment in the modern world. Though divergent definitions have been proposed, treatments of patriotism by social scientists and in patriotic prose (e.g., Page, 1915) converge on a central meaning: a sense of positive identification with and feelings of affective attachment to one's country. In psychology, one of the first empirical studies of patriotism is contained in *The Authoritarian Personality* (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswick, Levinson, & Sanford, 1950). In their seminal work, the Berkeley researchers conceptualized patriotism as "blind attachment to certain national cultural values, uncritical conformity with prevailing group ways, and rejection of other nations as outgroups" (p. 107). However, Adorno et al.'s (1950) research was criticized by other psychologists as a methodologically flawed (Christie & Jahoda, 1954; Kirscht & Dillehay, 1967) and conceptually unjust rebuke of patriotism (e.g., Ray & Furnham, 1984). Consequently, more recent research has conceptualized and measured patriotism in a less chauvinistic manner in an attempt to distinguish patriotism from various forms of intergroup discrimination, such as racism, ethnocentrism, and nationalism (Heaven, Rajab, & Ray, 1985; Kosterman & Feshbach, 1989; Ray & Furnham, 1984; Ray & Lovejoy, 1986).

Although virtually all previous empirical work has treated patriotism as a unidimensional construct (for an exception, see Sullivan, Fried, & Dietz, 1992), numerous theoretical distinctions have been proposed. For example, Curti (1946) distinguished between a "military" and a "civic" form of patriotism (see also Bourne, 1919/1977). Morray (1959) contrasted a patriotism of imitation and obedience with a patriotism of innovation and disobedience. Sommerville (1981) distinguished between a patriotism of ignorance and irrationality and a patriotism of reason and dissent. Finally, Adorno et al. (1950) distinguished between "pseudo" patriotism (i.e., blind attachment and uncritical conformity) and "genuine" patriotism, that is, "love of country and attachment to national values based on critical understanding" (p. 107).

Two key issues underlie these distinctions: (a) whether patriotism is necessarily linked to aggressive militarism and hostility toward outgroups, and (b) whether patriotism demands blind and uncritical allegiance to country. The former issue is relevant to a distinction between a bellicose form of patriotism, based in ethnocentrism and group dominance, and a "benevolent" form of patriotism (Reykowski, 1997) guided by a concern for peace (see Nathanson, 1993, 1997). The latter issue is relevant to a distinction between a patriotism of uncritical loyalty—one that adheres to the dictum "My country right or wrong"—and a patriotism based in questioning, constructive criticism, and dissent.

Here, we focused on the latter distinction. In particular, our conceptualization of the multidimensional nature of patriotism was guided by Staub's (1991, 1997) theoretical distinction between "blind" and "constructive" patriotism. Staub described blind patriotism as a rigid and inflexible attachment to country, characterized by unquestioning positive evaluation, staunch allegiance, and intolerance of criticism. These factors comprise core elements of Kelman's (1969; Kelman & Hamilton, 1989) "sentimental attachment" to country. In contrast, constructive patriotism refers to an attachment to country characterized by "critical loyalty" (Staub, 1989), questioning and criticism of current group practices that are driven by a desire for positive change. Both orientations are "patriotic" in the core sense of positive identification with and feelings of affective attachment to country. However, the blind patriot views national criticism and dissent as inherently disloyal, whereas the constructive patriot does not. Instead, the constructive patriot may criticize and even actively oppose the nation's actions because he or she believes they violate fundamental national precepts or are contrary to long-term national interests (see also the discussion of "value orientation" in Kelman & Hamilton, 1989).

We evaluated this theoretical distinction between blind and constructive patriotism in the two studies reported below. We hypothesized that blind and constructive patriotism constitute two largely orthogonal and qualitatively different dimensions of positive identification with and affective attachment to one's country. That is, we hypothesized that patriotism based in unconditional positive evaluation and unquestioning allegiance could be empirically distinguished from patriotism based in constructive criticism and critical loyalty. More specifically, we pursued three major goals in our research: (a) to evaluate the two-dimensional conceptualization of blind and constructive patriotism; (b) to develop reliable and valid measures of blind and constructive patriotism; and (c) to determine whether blind and constructive patriotism are differentially related to a variety of cognitive and behavioral criteria, including political involvement, attitudes toward foreign countries, perceived importance of symbolic behaviors, and degree and type of attitude-relevant information seeking.

Political Involvement

A central concern of Study 1 was to investigate whether blind and constructive patriotism are differentially linked to cognitive and behavioral indicators of political involvement. Because information gained from the media constitutes an important basis for criticism of the country, we expected constructive patriotism to be positively associated with reported levels of political information gathering, and consequently with objective political knowledge. Moreover, because constructive patriotism is driven by a desire to improve the country, it should also be positively associated with reported levels of political activism. Finally, because behavioral engagement is positively associated with feelings of efficacy in a wide variety of

domains (Ajzen, 1988; Bandura, 1982; Bandura, Adams, & Breyer, 1977), including politics (Campbell, Gurin, & Miller, 1954; Wollman & Stouder, 1991), we also expected constructive patriotism to be positively associated with political efficacy (i.e., the belief that one's political actions will have the desired effect on the behavioral goal).

In contrast, to the extent that blind patriotism necessitates an active avoidance of political information (at least that obtained from dominant media outlets), blind patriotism may actually be negatively related to levels of political information gathering and political knowledge. Moreover, because political activism is typically premised on the acknowledgment of some problem(s) with a country, blind patriotism may be negatively related to political activism as well. No significant relationship was expected to exist between blind patriotism and political efficacy.

*Attitudes toward Foreign Countries: Nationalism and Perceptions
of Foreign Threat*

The link between patriotism and nationalism has been a prominent concern of political psychologists (Bar-Tal, 1993; Doob, 1964; Druckman, 1994; Kelman, 1997; Kosterman & Feshbach, 1989; Schatz, 1993, 1995). In contrast to patriotism, typified by feelings of affective attachment to country, Kosterman and Feshbach (1989) defined nationalism as "a perception of national superiority and an orientation toward national dominance" (p. 271; see also Worchel & Coutant, 1997).¹ In an empirical study of the two constructs, Kosterman and Feshbach (1989) concluded that patriotism and nationalism represent "functionally different psychological dimensions" (p. 272). However, the two constructs are positively correlated (e.g., Feshbach, 1990, 1991; Sidanius, Feshbach, Levin, & Pratto, 1997). Moreover, the word "patriotism" appears to elicit both nationalistic themes (e.g., "military," "protection," "war") and patriotic themes (e.g., "love," "respect," "pride") (see Kelly & Ronan, 1987).

We propose that distinguishing between blind and constructive patriotism may help to clarify the relationship between patriotism and nationalism. Viewed within an intergroup context, the staunch positive identification with country that characterizes blind patriotism should result in increased attempts to "positively distinguish" the country (Hogg & Abrams, 1988; Tajfel, 1981; Tajfel & Turner, 1986), that is, to view the country as better than or superior to other countries. Moreover, feelings of national superiority could provide ostensible justification for

¹ While often including a belligerent component, definitions of nationalism proposed by historians (e.g., Anderson, 1991; Kohn, 1955; Shafer, 1972), political scientists (e.g., Connor, 1993), and some psychologists (e.g., Kelman, 1969, 1997) emphasize group members' perception of a common origin, and shared sociocultural features such as ethnicity, language, and religious beliefs. A core element of these definitions—concern for the homogeneity and distinctiveness of national culture—was assessed by a measure of "cultural contamination," discussed below.

national dominance. Thus, blind patriotism should be positively related to nationalism. For constructive patriotism, however, criticism of the country might offset the tendency for positive national identification to engender feelings of national superiority. Thus, we expected that constructive patriotism would be relatively orthogonal to nationalism.

Interestingly, nationalism is often accompanied by fears that external forces threaten both national security and national culture (Staub, 1989; White, 1984, 1993). The former concern, termed “national vulnerability,” is manifested in heightened distrust of foreign nations and exaggerated vigilance and preparedness. The latter, “cultural contamination,” is characterized by heightened concern that foreign influences erode the homogeneity and distinctiveness of national culture. Given the predicted relationships with nationalism, blind but not constructive patriotism should be positively related to both national vulnerability and cultural contamination. Additionally, increased blind patriotism would be expected to accompany feelings of national vulnerability and cultural contamination because group members would perceive a need to unite in a staunch and unwavering manner to resist ostensible threats to their country. Indeed, to the extent that such threats are real and substantial (e.g., during war), blind patriotism may be functional for the group.

Shared Positive Relations to National Identification and Attachment

As noted above, blind and constructive patriotism are conceptualized as sharing a sense of positive identification with and feelings of affective attachment to country. To examine this conceptualization directly, we constructed a measure of “national attachment” that assessed the degree to which participants positively identified and felt attachment to the United States without including sentiments that distinguish blind or constructive patriotism. Both blind and constructive patriotism were expected to be positively associated with scores on this measure.

Summary of Predictions

We predicted that blind and constructive patriotism would constitute two relatively orthogonal dimensions of positive identification with and affective attachment to country. In Study 1, we evaluated this model by performing a series of constrained and unconstrained exploratory factor analyses; in Study 2, we used confirmatory factor analysis to validate this two-dimensional structure. We predicted that although both blind and constructive patriotism would be positively related to degree of national identification and attachment, they would exhibit differential relations with the cognitive and behavioral criteria described above. Specifically, we expected that constructive patriotism would be positively associated with political efficacy, knowledge, information gathering, and activism, whereas blind patriotism would be negatively correlated or uncorrelated with these

variables. In addition, we predicted that blind but not constructive patriotism would be positively associated with nationalism and with perceived threats to national security (national vulnerability) and national culture (cultural contamination). Finally, we expected that the hypothesized relations described above would transcend individual differences in political ideology.

STUDY 1

Method

Participants

Undergraduate students at the University of Massachusetts–Amherst participated in the study for extra credit.² Of the 291 students in the sample, 164 were female and 127 were male; 253 (86.9%) identified themselves as Caucasian, 11 (3.8%) as Asian or Pacific Islander, eight (2.7%) as African American, six (2.1%) as Hispanic, four (1.4%) as American Indian, and nine (3.1%) as “other.” The mean age of this sample was 20.35 years.

Measures

Blind and constructive patriotism. On the basis of pilot research (see Schatz, 1995), we used 19 items to assess blind and constructive patriotism. Twelve blind patriotism items expressed unquestioning positive evaluation of the United States, staunch support for its actions, and intolerance of criticism (e.g., “I would support my country right or wrong”; “It is un-American to criticize this country”). Seven constructive patriotism items expressed support for criticism of the United States that is rooted in affective attachment to country and a desire to bring about positive change (e.g., “I express my love for America by supporting efforts at positive change”; “I oppose some U.S. policies because I care about my country and want to improve it”). Participants indicated their attitudes on a 6-point scale from –3 (disagree strongly) to +3 (agree strongly) with no zero point; these data were later recoded to range from 1 to 6. The same response scale was used for all other measures in Study 1 unless otherwise noted.

National attachment. Seventeen items assessed degree of positive identification with and feelings of affective attachment to country (e.g., “I feel a sense of identification with and attachment to the people of the United States”). Five items

² The sample originally consisted of 314 undergraduates (178 females and 136 males). Of these, 20 were not U.S. citizens, and one did not indicate citizenship; data from these participants were excluded from the analyses. Data from two other participants were excluded because they clearly completed the survey in a careless manner (i.e., supplied long strings of the same response and left large sections of the questionnaire blank).

were borrowed from Kosterman and Feshbach's (1989) measure of patriotism, and 12 were constructed by the authors. An unconstrained principal components factor analysis of these items suggested one dominant factor that accounted for 34.2% of the variance. In addition, reliability analyses revealed that all interitem correlations were positive and that no items attenuated the reliability of the measure. Thus, all 17 items were retained. National attachment scores were constructed by unit weighting and summing participants' scores on these items ($\alpha = .87$). (A complete list of the items for this and other scales used in this study can be found in Schatz, 1995, study 2.)

Nationalism. Six items ($\alpha = .80$) that express perceptions of national superiority and support for national dominance were borrowed from Kosterman and Feshbach's (1989) measure of nationalism (e.g., "In view of America's moral and material superiority, it is only right that we should have the biggest say in deciding United Nations policy"). One item, "It is important that the U.S. win in international sporting competitions like the Olympics," was modified to read as the reversed item, "It is not that important . . ."

Cultural contamination. Three items ($\alpha = .54$) were constructed to assess concern about perceived foreign threats to the homogeneity and distinctiveness of national culture (e.g., "Widespread adoption in the U.S. of cultural practices from foreign countries would trouble me because it might change or water down American culture too much").

Political efficacy. Three items ($\alpha = .73$) were constructed to assess participants' perceived power to change conditions in or policies of the United States (e.g., "I could change things in this country if I really tried").

National vulnerability. Ten items ($\alpha = .79$) were constructed to assess the belief that the United States is vulnerable to foreign aggression and must constantly be on guard (e.g., "The United States would probably be attacked if it weakened its defenses").

Political knowledge. A political knowledge quiz was constructed from six items used previously by Fiske, Lau, and Smith (1990) and by Lavine, Thomsen, and Gonzales (1997). Five items concerned the domestic political system of the United States (e.g., the length of the terms of office for members of the Senate and House), and one item concerned U.S. foreign policy (whether the United States supported the Contras or Sandinistas in Central America during the 1980s). A total knowledge score was computed for each participant by summing the number of correct responses. Because two items allowed for up to two correct responses (the names of the senators from Massachusetts and California), possible scores ranged from 0 to 8 ($\alpha = .43$).

Political information gathering and political activism. Participants were asked to estimate the number of hours per week spent gathering political information during the prior month, and the number of self-defined "political activist" behaviors performed during the prior 6 months.

Political ideology and political party affiliation. Participants rated their political ideology on a 6-point scale (1 = “very liberal”; 6 = “very conservative”) and indicated their political affiliation (Democrat, Republican, independent).

Results

Factor Analyses: Testing the Two-Dimensional Model of Patriotism

The blind and constructive patriotism items were first subjected to an unconstrained exploratory principal components factor analysis. Although four factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.00 emerged, a scree-plot suggested a two-factor model. We then performed a constrained two-factor exploratory factor analysis with varimax rotation (oblimin rotation yielded nearly identical results). As shown in Table I, the blind patriotism items loaded on the first factor and the constructive patriotism items loaded on the second factor. Thus, the factor analyses support the contention that blind and constructive patriotism represent distinct constructs.³

The following item retention criteria were imposed: a factor loading of at least .4 and a difference in factor loadings (across the blind and constructive patriotism factors) of at least .2.⁴ According to these criteria, one constructive patriotism item was removed (Table I, item #13). Blind patriotism scores were constructed by unit-weighting and summing participants’ scores on the 12 items assessing this construct ($\alpha = .88$). Constructive patriotism scores were constructed by unit-weighting and summing participants’ scores on the six items retained to assess this construct ($\alpha = .67$). Consistent with the factor loading data in Table I, scores on

³ It is possible that nonrandom measurement error resulting from response biases (e.g., acquiescence) is responsible for the relative orthogonality of this two-factor solution. In an attempt to assess the presence of such error, we estimated a three-factor confirmatory model in which all of the 18 blind and constructive items (both protrait and contrait) were constrained to load equally on a single method factor. This reflects the assumption that as Likert items, they are potentially plagued by acquiescence and other response biases. The blind and constructive items were loaded (freely) on two additional factors. This model did not produce a good fit to the data [$\chi^2(df = 131) = 321.71, p < .001$], which suggested that measurement error was not an important problem. Consistent with this, the model fit significantly better when the equality constraint on the method factor loadings was not imposed [$\chi^2\Delta(df = 131 - 14 = 17) = 87.75, p < .001$].

⁴ In some factor analytic studies, factor loadings of at least .60 are required for item retention. Here, the application of this criterion resulted in the removal of five items from the blind patriotism scale (items 1, 2, 5, 7, and 12) and three items from the constructive patriotism scale (items 14, 16, and 19). However, deletion of these items did not substantially alter the findings reported in this article. Only one predicted relationship was rendered nonsignificant: In Study 1, the positive correlation between constructive patriotism and political activism (Table II) dropped from .15 ($p < .05$) to .10 (not significant). This difference most likely resulted from the reduced reliability of the three-item constructive patriotism scale ($\alpha = .54$). Because the requirement of a .6 factor loading for item retention results in decreased scale reliability and necessitates the removal of items that we believe tap blind and constructive patriotism as defined in this article, we used the more lenient .4 factor loading criterion.

Table I. Exploratory Factor Analysis of the Blind and Constructive Patriotism Items

Item	Factor Loadings	
	1	2
1. People who do not wholeheartedly support America should live somewhere else.	(.58)	.05
2. The United States is virtually always right.	(.57)	.12
3. I would support my country right or wrong.	(.77)	.00
4. The anti-Vietnam war protesters were un-American.	(.72)	-.04
5. For the most part, people who protest and demonstrate against U.S. policy are good, upstanding, intelligent people.	(-.53)	.23
6. I believe that U.S. policies are almost always the morally correct ones.	(.70)	-.05
7. If another country disagreed with an important United States policy that I knew little about, I would <i>not</i> necessarily support my country's position.	(-.53)	.00
8. People should not constantly try to change the way things are in America.	(.63)	-.26
9. I support U.S. policies for the very reason that they are the policies of my country.	(.75)	-.06
10. There is too much criticism of the U.S. in the world, and we its citizens should not criticize it.	(.79)	-.16
11. It is un-American to criticize this country.	(.74)	-.17
12. We should have complete freedom of speech even for those who criticize the country.	(-.46)	.22
13. Because I identify with the United States, some of its actions make me feel sad.	-.34	.44
14. People should work hard to move this country in a positive direction.	-.15	(.50)
15. If you love America, you should notice its problems and work to correct them.	-.02	(.60)
16. If I criticize the United States, I do so out of love for my country.	.33	(.59)
17. I oppose some U.S. policies because I care about my country and want to improve it.	-.08	(.74)
18. I express my love for America by supporting efforts at positive change.	-.01	(.63)
19. My love of country demands that I speak out against popular but potentially destructive policies.	-.13	(.56)

Note. Parentheses indicate retention of item on factor.

the two scales were largely orthogonal ($r = -.12, p < .05$). (Because of occasional missing data, sample sizes vary slightly in the analyses reported below.)

Relationships with National Attachment

Blind and constructive patriotism were both positively correlated with scores on the national attachment measure ($r = .51$ and $.32$, respectively; $ps < .001$). These relationships indicate that blind and constructive patriotism are different ways of expressing a shared sense of positive identification with and attachment to country. At the same time, the relationship between blind patriotism and national attachment was significantly stronger than the relationship between constructive patriotism and national attachment ($t = 2.36, p < .05$).⁵

Analyses of Demographic Data

Blind patriotism was positively associated with political conservatism ($r = .53, p < .001$) and negatively associated with self-reported grade point average (GPA) ($r = -.12, p < .05$). Blind patriotism was also significantly associated with political party identification: Republicans ($n = 28$) had significantly higher scores ($M = 3.31, SD = .88$) than did Democrats ($n = 108; M = 2.24, SD = .76$) or independents ($n = 150; M = 2.40, SD = .79$) [$F(2, 283) = 20.99, p < .001$]. In contrast, constructive patriotism did not vary as a function of political ideology ($r = -.03$), GPA ($r = .01$), or political party identification ($F < 1$). Because political ideology, GPA, and political party identification were each significantly associated with blind patriotism, we controlled for the influence of these variables in the analyses reported below.

Political Involvement

To assess the relationships of blind and constructive patriotism with the political involvement measures, we conducted two separate hierarchical regression analyses. For each regression, political ideology, political party affiliation (dummy-coded 1 = Republican, 0 = Democrat, independent, or other), and GPA

⁵ Because blind and constructive patriotism are not equally correlated with national attachment, it could be argued that differences in their relationships with other constructs reflect quantitative differences in degree of national attachment and not qualitative differences in the type of attachment proposed to distinguish blind and constructive patriotism. To examine this possibility, we recomputed the correlations and regression equations that examined the relationships of blind and constructive patriotism with measures of political involvement (Table II) and attitudes toward foreign countries (Table III) while controlling for the influence of national attachment. Only one predicted relationship was rendered nonsignificant: The negative correlation between constructive patriotism and political information gathering (Table II) dropped from $-.13$ ($p < .05$) to $-.10$ (not significant). Thus, the differential relationships of blind and constructive patriotism with the constructs assessed in Study 1 cannot be explained by differences in levels of national attachment.

were entered as covariates on the first step of the analysis, and the political involvement variables of interest were entered into the equation on the second step of the analysis. Thus, the effects of the predictor variables were adjusted for each of these covariates. Blind and constructive patriotism served as the criterion variables. The same strategy was used to test predictions for the remaining variables in Study 1.⁶

We predicted that constructive patriotism would be positively associated with political efficacy, political knowledge, political information gathering, and political activism, but that blind patriotism would be negatively related or unrelated to these variables. As can be seen from inspection of the zero-order correlations in Table II, this pattern of relationships emerged. When these variables were entered into the second step of a hierarchical regression analysis (see β in Table II), political efficacy and political information gathering emerged as significant positive predictors of constructive patriotism.

Nationalism and Perceptions of Foreign Threat

We predicted that blind but not constructive patriotism would be positively related to nationalism, national vulnerability, and cultural contamination. As can be seen in Table III, these relationships were found. Significant zero-order correlations with blind patriotism resulted for all three variables, and these associations remained significant in a hierarchical regression analysis (see β in Table III). No significant zero-order correlations were found for constructive patriotism; however, cultural contamination emerged as a significant negative predictor of constructive patriotism in a hierarchical regression analysis.⁷

⁶ That blind and constructive patriotism scores served as the criterion variables does not imply that they are causally endogenous to the predictor variables used in the present research. Blind and constructive patriotism were used as criterion variables in the regressions so as to examine their relations with relevant cognitive and behavioral criteria after controlling for political ideology, political party identification, and GPA.

⁷ The strength of the zero-order correlation between blind patriotism and nationalism (.65) suggests the possibility that the two sets of items assess a single construct. To examine this possibility, we performed confirmatory factor analyses on the items using LISREL 8 (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1993). The results indicated that a two-factor model of blind patriotism and nationalism [$\chi^2(N = 275, df = 134) = 307.92, p < .001, \chi^2/df = 2.29, GFI = .89$] fit the data better than did a single-factor model in which the blind patriotism and nationalism items loaded on one factor [$\chi^2(N = 275, df = 135) = 421.77, p < .001, \chi^2/df = 3.12, GFI = .83; \chi^2\Delta(df = 1) = 113.85, p < .001$]. Thus, the two sets of items would seem to comprise two related yet separate constructs. Moreover, all of the hypothesized relations involving blind patriotism (i.e., with national vulnerability, cultural contamination, and the political involvement measures) remained significant after controlling for nationalism in addition to the other covariates (i.e., political ideology, political party identification, and GPA).

Table II. Zero-Order Correlations and Standardized Regression Coefficients for the Political Involvement Measures

Variable	Blind Patriotism		Constructive Patriotism	
	<i>r</i>	β	<i>r</i>	β
Political efficacy	-.04	-.07	.30***	.28***
Political knowledge	-.09	-.12*	.11	.04
Political information gathering	-.13*	-.06	.18**	.20**
Political activism	-.19**	-.10	.15*	.11

Note. When a familywise Bonferroni adjustment of $p < .0125$ is used, the β between blind patriotism and political knowledge and the zero-order correlation between constructive patriotism and political activism are no longer statistically significant.

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

Table III. Zero-Order Correlations and Standardized Regression Coefficients for Nationalism, National Vulnerability, and Cultural Contamination

Variable	Blind Patriotism		Constructive Patriotism	
	<i>r</i>	β	<i>r</i>	β
Nationalism	.65***	.39***	-.04	.00
National vulnerability	.52***	.15***	-.04	.01
Cultural contamination	.53***	.22***	-.14*	-.11

Note. When a familywise Bonferroni adjustment of $p < .016$ is used, the zero-order correlation between constructive patriotism and cultural contamination is no longer statistically significant.

* $p < .05$, *** $p < .001$.

Discussion

The results of Study 1 support the hypothesized multidimensionality of patriotic attitudes. Specifically, the results support the proposition that blind and constructive forms of patriotism constitute two largely orthogonal (sharing less than 2% of their variance) and qualitatively different dimensions of positive identification with and affective attachment toward one's country. Exploratory factor analyses revealed a clearly interpretable two-dimensional structure, with blind and constructive patriotism items loading on separate factors. One factor comprised items suggesting a patriotism based in unconditional positive evaluation and unquestioning allegiance (blind patriotism), whereas the other factor comprised items suggesting a patriotism based in critical loyalty and a desire for positive change (constructive patriotism).

We also provided evidence for the reliability and validity of the blind and constructive patriotism measures. Although both measures were positively related to national attachment, they were differentially related to a variety of cognitive and

behavioral criteria. Blind patriotism was characterized by disengagement from the political system, nationalistic attitudes, and perceived threats to national security and national culture. In contrast, constructive patriotism was characterized by heightened political efficacy, information gathering, and activism.

That blind and constructive patriotism were both positively correlated with national attachment indicates that they share core patriotic sentiment. At the same time, blind patriotism was more strongly related to this measure than was constructive patriotism. Though not predicted, this difference is not surprising given the different types of ingroup evaluation that characterize the two forms of patriotism. Whereas blind patriotism involves global and uncritical positive evaluation of the ingroup, constructive patriotism stems from recognition of the ingroup's problems, which would be expected to result in disapproval of some elements that constitute the group. Thus, constructive patriotism would be less positively correlated than blind patriotism with a measure that assesses generalized attachment to the ingroup. Further, as noted above (see footnote 5), controlling for the influence of national attachment did little to alter the differential relationships of blind and constructive patriotism with the constructs assessed in the study.

Although the results of Study 1 are highly supportive of our hypotheses, a number of theoretical and empirical issues remain unresolved. First, it would be useful to validate our two-dimensional model of patriotism by comparing its fit to that of a bipolar, unidimensional model of patriotism in which blind and constructive patriotism are viewed as opposite ends of the same (patriotism) continuum. In Study 2, we compared the fit of these alternative models on a separate sample. Second, although the pattern of relationships with political involvement supported our predictions, these relationships were relatively weak, perhaps in part because the political knowledge measure had low reliability and because two constructs (political information gathering and political activism) were assessed with single-item measures. In Study 2, we sought to replicate these relationships using more reliable measures of political involvement.

Third, the construct of blind patriotism is theoretically similar to Altemeyer's (1981, 1988) construct of right-wing authoritarianism (RWA). Specifically, the RWA clusters of authoritarian submission, authoritarian aggression, and conventionalism bear some similarity to the blind patriotism notion of uncritical allegiance and the correlates of nationalism and political conservatism. In Study 2, we examined the discriminant validity of the blind patriotism construct by examining whether its relations with other constructs were independent of RWA.

STUDY 2

The purpose of Study 2 was fivefold: (a) to replicate the two-dimensional structure of patriotism using confirmatory factor analysis; (b) to replicate the relations of blind and constructive patriotism to indicators of political involvement

using more reliable measures of political involvement than in Study 1; (c) to examine whether blind and constructive patriotism are differentially associated with the perceived importance of symbolic versus instrumental behaviors (as described below); (d) to examine whether blind and constructive patriotism show different patterns of attitude-relevant information-seeking preferences; and (e) to examine whether blind patriotism is associated with these variables above and beyond the contribution of RWA.

In Study 2, we used confirmatory factor analysis to directly compare the fit of a two-factor model of patriotism to that of a single-factor model in which blind and constructive patriotism are conceived as opposite ends of a single bipolar patriotism factor. Further construct validity for our two-factor model of patriotism would be gained if this model were to fit the data significantly better than a single-factor model. In addition, we attempted to replicate the finding of Study 1 that constructive patriotism but not blind patriotism is positively associated with indicators of political involvement.

We also tested two additional hypotheses in Study 2. First, we examined whether blind and constructive patriotism are associated with a preference for symbolic behaviors such as singing “The Star-Spangled Banner” or celebrating the Fourth of July versus instrumental behaviors such as increasing the effectiveness of the political system or renovating a national highway. Because symbolic behaviors express global and unqualified allegiance to country, we predicted that blind patriotism would be positively associated with a preference for symbolic over instrumental behaviors. Consistent with this reasoning, previous researchers have found that symbolic expressions of commitment to country are positively linked to heightened intolerance of criticism (DeLamater, Katz, & Kelman, 1969; Kelman & Hamilton, 1989; see also Goldstein, 1995). No preference for either type of behavior was expected for constructive patriotism.

Second, we presented participants with attitude-relevant “op-ed”-type article titles that conveyed either positive or negative information about the United States (e.g., “The American ‘Bill of Rights’ Is Hailed as a Model for Democracy by Leaders Around the World”; “America, a Failing Democracy: The United States Political System Is a Failing System of Government Where Few People Bother to Vote”). Because blind patriotism is characterized by intolerance of criticism of the country, we expected that it would be associated with a selective exposure effect, such that participants with high scores for blind patriotism would show a preference for pro-U.S. over anti-U.S. information. In contrast, because constructive patriots would appear to value both positive and negative attitude-relevant information, they should be unlikely to consistently prefer one type of information over the other. Finally, we expected that predicted relationships of blind and constructive patriotism with political involvement, symbolic versus instrumental behavior preference, and pro-U.S. versus anti-U.S. information preference would remain significant (and substantial) when controlling for RWA.

Method

Participants

Undergraduate students enrolled in psychology classes at Northern Illinois University ($n = 128$) and Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi ($n = 125$) participated in the study for extra credit. The total sample of 253 students included 199 females, 53 males, and one participant who did not indicate his or her sex; 154 (60.9%) identified themselves as European American, 47 (18.6%) as Hispanic, 21 (8.3%) as African American, and 19 (7.5%) as Asian [12 participants (4.8%) did not indicate their ethnicity]. The mean age of this sample was 23.90 years. Northern Illinois participants completed the study in large groups; Texas A&M participants completed the study at home.

Measures

Blind and constructive patriotism. Measures of blind ($\alpha = .79$) and constructive ($\alpha = .71$) patriotism were identical to those used in Study 1. As in Study 1, scores on the two measures were orthogonal ($r = -.09$, not significant).

Symbolic versus instrumental behaviors. Participants completed 14 forced-choice items in which one of the choices represented a symbolic behavior (e.g., children should learn to say the Pledge of Allegiance in school, renovation of a national monument) and the other choice represented an instrumental behavior (e.g., children should learn about our system of government in school, renovation of a national highway). Each choice was preceded by a specific question (e.g., “Which of the following do you think is more important?,” “Which of the following government programs would you be more likely to support assuming equal cost?”). A final index for symbolic versus instrumental preferences was constructed by subtracting the number of instrumental items endorsed from the number of symbolic items endorsed ($\alpha = .68$). Thus, higher numbers reflect a preference for symbolic over instrumental choices.

Political knowledge, interest, and behavior. Eight items from Lavine et al.’s (1997) measure of political knowledge were used in Study 2. These items were similar to those used in Study 1. An index of political knowledge was constructed by summing the number of correct responses ($\alpha = .72$). Three items were used to assess participants’ interest in the political process. Because the data were collected during the month preceding the 1996 presidential election, two of these items referred to interest in the upcoming election (e.g., “Some people don’t pay much attention to political campaigns. How about you? How interested are you in the presidential campaign of 1996?”). An index of political interest was constructed by averaging participants’ responses to the three items ($\alpha = .79$). Finally, to assess the frequency with which participants engaged in political behaviors, we asked

participants whether in the past year they had engaged in each of seven different political behaviors (e.g., writing a letter to an elected official, signing a petition, working to get a candidate elected to political office). An index of political behavior was constructed by summing the number of behaviors in which participants had engaged ($\alpha = .61$).

Information-processing preference. To assess participants' relative interest in exposing themselves to pro-U.S. versus anti-U.S. information, we created four pro-U.S., four anti-U.S., and two attitude-irrelevant article titles. We then presented these 10 titles to participants in eight different sets that varied in composition. For each set, participants were asked to "please place an X on the line next to the article you would prefer to read most." Four sets contained two pro-U.S. and two anti-U.S. article titles, two sets contained two pro-U.S. and two attitude-irrelevant titles (e.g., "The Healing Power of Food: An Exploration of the Therapeutic Effect of Natural Ingredients in Food Products"), and two sets contained two anti-U.S. and two attitude-irrelevant titles. Participants received the eight title sets in one of 12 random orders. Participants then rank-ordered all 10 titles, and then used 7-point scales to rate their interest in each of the 10 article titles (1 = "definitely would not like to read this article"; 7 = "definitely would like to read this article").

We computed three separate measures of exposure preference. First, using the data from the four pro-anti title sets, we subtracted the number of times participants chose an anti-U.S. article from the number of times participants chose a pro-U.S. article. Second, we subtracted the sum of the ranks for pro-U.S. titles from the sum of the ranks for anti-U.S. titles. Third, we subtracted the sum of the ratings for anti-U.S. titles from the sum of the ratings for pro-U.S. titles. In all cases, higher positive numbers reflect greater selective exposure to *pro-U.S.* information. These variables were then standardized and averaged to produce a single index of selective exposure ($\alpha = .79$).

RWA, political ideology, and political party identification. Altemeyer's (1988) right-wing authoritarianism scale was used to assess RWA ($\alpha = .90$). Political ideology was assessed using a single 7-point item used by the National Election Studies surveys ("We hear a lot of talk these days about liberals and conservatives. Where would you place yourself on the liberalism-conservatism scale, or haven't you thought much about this?"). Political party identification was assessed with a single 7-point item where 1="strong Democrat" and 7="strong Republican."

Results and Discussion

Confirmatory Factor Analyses

To compare our two-factor model of patriotic attitudes to a single bipolar factor, we used LISREL 8 (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1993) to estimate the maximum

likelihood parameters of a single bipolar factor. To do this, we loaded all of the 18 items retained in Study 1 onto a single patriotism factor. This single-factor model did not provide a good fit to the data [$\chi^2(N = 252, df = 135) = 469.55$, goodness-of-fit index (GFI) = .78, root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = .10, $\chi^2/df = 3.48$ (scores between 1 and 2 are considered to be a good fit; Byrne, 1989)]. Moreover, two-thirds of the constructive patriotism items did not have significant loadings on this general factor. Next, we estimated the parameters of the two-factor blind-constructive patriotism model in which the 12 blind patriotism items were loaded onto one factor and the six constructive patriotism items were loaded onto a second factor. In contrast to the single-factor model, this two-factor model did provide a good fit to the data [$\chi^2(N = 252, df = 134) = 229.24$, GFI = .90, RMSEA = .05, $\chi^2/df = 1.71$]. Moreover, all of the factor loadings were significant ($p < .001$). Finally, the two-factor model provided a significantly better fit to the data than did the single-factor model [$\chi^2\Delta(df = 1) = 240.31, p < .001$]. Thus, the underlying structure of the data is well captured by a two-factor model involving blind and constructive patriotism.

Ideological covariates. As in Study 1, blind patriotism was positively related to a conservative political ideology ($r = .26, p < .001$) and a Republican (versus a Democratic) political party identification ($r = .32, p < .001$). Moreover, as we suspected, blind patriotism was strongly correlated with RWA ($r = .54, p < .001$). In contrast, constructive patriotism was uncorrelated with each of these variables ($r_s < .11$, not significant). To assess the relations of patriotic attitudes with the symbolic versus instrumental behavior choices, the political involvement measures, and selective exposure preference, we conducted zero-order correlations and hierarchical regression analyses. For each regression, the covariates (RWA, political ideology, and political party identification) were entered into the equation on the first step of the analysis, and the cognitive and behavioral variables of interest were entered into the equation on the second step of the analysis. Thus, the effects of the predictor variables were adjusted for each of these covariates. As in Study 1, blind and constructive patriotism served as the criterion variables.

Symbolic versus instrumental behaviors. As we predicted, blind but not constructive patriotism was positively associated with the belief that symbolic behaviors were more important to the country than instrumental behaviors (Table IV). Thus, relative to participants with low scores for blind patriotism, those with high scores for blind patriotism appear to be more concerned with the relatively abstract aspects than with the concrete aspects of attachment and devotion to the country. In contrast, constructive patriotism was not associated with a preference for either symbolic or instrumental pro-U.S. behaviors.

Political involvement. Next, we conducted separate regressions to examine the relations of blind and constructive patriotism to political knowledge, political interest, and political behavior (Table IV). We predicted that constructive but not blind patriotism would be associated with increases in each of these indicators of political involvement. That is essentially what we found. Specifically, although

Table IV. Zero-Order Correlations and Standardized Regression Coefficients for Cognitive and Behavioral Criteria

Variable	Blind Patriotism		Constructive Patriotism	
	<i>r</i>	β	<i>r</i>	β
Preference for symbolic vs. instrument behaviors	.43***	.28***	-.02	-.06
Political interest	.04	.11*	.44***	.42***
Political knowledge	-.19*	.00	.20**	.22**
Political behavior	-.07	-.03	.22***	.26***
Selective exposure	.30***	.21***	-.06	-.04

Note. When a familywise Bonferroni adjustment of $p < .008$ is used, all associations with political knowledge and the β between blind patriotism and political interest are no longer statistically significant. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

both blind and constructive patriotism were associated with increased interest in the political realm, only constructive patriotism was positively associated with greater knowledge about politics and more frequent politically relevant behavior (Table IV).

Selective exposure. The correlation and regression coefficients for selective exposure (Table IV) show that, consistent with our hypotheses, blind but not constructive patriotism was associated with a preference for pro-U.S. over anti-U.S. information. That is, the higher the score on blind patriotism, the greater the preference for exposure to information that glorifies rather than criticizes the country.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Taken together, the results of the two studies demonstrate that blind and constructive patriotism represent two qualitatively distinct forms of national attachment. The confirmatory factor analyses in Study 2 indicate that a two-factor unipolar model fits the responses to the blind and constructive patriotism items better than does a single-factor bipolar model. Moreover, in both studies, measures of blind and constructive patriotism were largely orthogonal, and their relationships with other constructs were not mirror opposites of one another.

The distinction between blind and constructive patriotism emphasizes *process*, that is, differences in the *manner* in which individuals relate to their country. Measures of these constructs include little in the way of content, such as support for specific policies, programs, or values. Even so, data from both studies suggest a close link between blind patriotism and political conservatism as measured by self-reported political ideology, political party affiliation, and RWA.

The relationship between blind patriotism and conservatism is reminiscent of Rokeach's (1960) research on inflexible or "closed" belief systems. Rokeach's measure of this orientation, called "dogmatism," was intended to capture what he referred to as the "structure" of authoritarianism, a rigid adherence to one's beliefs, without including political content. However, as had been the case with previous measures of authoritarianism, Rokeach and others consistently found positive associations with conservatism (for reviews, see Altemeyer, 1981; Sanford, 1973). Similarly, blind patriotism, conceived as a staunch and uncritical way of relating to country, seems to be allied with conservative ideological content. This is not to suggest that all conservatives are blindly patriotic; it is to suggest, however, that the political philosophy associated with blind patriotism will often be a conservative one.

In Study 1, blind and constructive patriotism were differentially related to nationalism. Both zero-order correlations and standardized regression coefficients showed positive associations between blind patriotism and nationalism but no significant associations between constructive patriotism and nationalism. These findings are notable because they further our understanding of the relationship between patriotism and nationalism: A patriotism based in staunch and uncritical attachment to country predicts increased nationalism, whereas a patriotism based in critical loyalty may not. In the spirit of Kosterman and Feshbach's (1989) distinction between patriotism and nationalism, nationalism was operationalized as a form of intergroup discrimination (feelings of national superiority and support for national dominance), whereas both blind and constructive patriotism were operationalized as forms of ingroup identification and attachment: Unlike the nationalism items, none of the blind or constructive patriotism items made explicit intergroup comparisons. Thus, our findings also suggest more generally that the relationship between ingroup identification and intergroup discrimination—a central concern of social identity theory and self-categorization theory (Hogg & Abrams, 1988; Tajfel, 1978, 1981; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner, 1987)—is mediated by the manner in which individuals identify with and evaluate the ingroup.

In both studies, constructive patriotism was positively associated with political involvement, whereas blind patriotism was associated with political disengagement. However, under certain circumstances, blind patriotism might lead to increased political activity. Since the election of Bill Clinton in 1992, anti-government criticism and political involvement among conservatives have been on the rise. This increase in political engagement poses an interesting challenge for the present distinction. The positive correlation between conservatism and blind patriotism suggests that some active conservatives would score relatively high on the blind patriotism measure. At the same time, their heightened levels of criticism and political involvement seem counter to blind patriotism and suggest that such individuals may also be high in constructive patriotism.

This conundrum may be solved by distinguishing criticism of the government from criticism of the country in the abstract. Many conservatives have become

highly critical, even disdainful, of government policies and agencies. Indeed, some (e.g., the “patriot” militia groups) seem to feel that the single biggest threat to the American way of life is the federal government itself. At the same time, many of these same people are leading the charge for a constitutional amendment prohibiting desecration of the U.S. flag (see Goldstein, 1995; Welch, 1992). One would also suspect that many of those now highly critical of the government would vehemently oppose challenges to daily recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance in the public schools, or interpretations of U.S. history that are less than glorious (see Frisch, 1989; Knowles, 1992). Witness, for example, the successful efforts of some veterans’ groups and others to exclude a critical perspective on the decision to drop the atomic bomb in the Second World War from the Smithsonian Institution’s exhibit of the *Enola Gay* (see Harwit, 1996; Linenthal & Engelhardt, 1996).

Although the above discussion is admittedly speculative, it suggests a number of testable predictions concerning the relationships of blind patriotism to criticism and political involvement. First, people scoring high on the blind patriotism measure should not tolerate or advance criticism that challenges the righteousness and magnificence of the country as a whole (e.g., its culture, history, and military exploits) or is aimed at abstracted representations of the country (e.g., the flag and national monuments). Second, people with high scores for blind patriotism should criticize government policies and institutions that are perceived to threaten U.S. superiority (e.g., defense cuts, acquiescence to United Nations policies deemed to conflict with the national interest) or the homogeneity and distinctiveness of American culture (e.g., multiculturalism and bilingual education). Strong dissatisfaction would be expected to spur political engagement that is designed to move the government in the desired direction—for example, “America first” movements, support for immigration restrictions (or bans), the English-only movement, and other neo-“Americanization” efforts (see Crawford, 1992; Padilla et al., 1991). If such goals are achieved, however, criticism of the government should drop and be viewed negatively.

Our research has several limitations. First, although our samples were drawn from different areas of the United States (the Northeast, the Midwest, and the Southwest) and contained a variety of ethnic groups, all participants were college students. Clearly, future research using non-student samples is necessary to increase the external validity of the present findings. Second, it would be useful to replicate the distinction in countries other than the United States. Finally, additional research is necessary to identify individual and societal factors that promote blind and constructive patriotism. For example, early socialization experiences that promote autonomy and independence might engender a more constructive orientation toward one’s country, whereas the suppression of these expressions might lead to a more blind orientation (see Staub, 1991, 1993, 1997). In addition, the strong attachment to national symbols associated with blind patriotism might reflect the “terror management” function of protecting against individuals’ fear of mortality (Greenberg, Porteus, Simon, Pyszczynski, & Sheldon, 1995). At the

societal level, increased blind patriotism would be expected when a society experiences “difficult life conditions” (Staub, 1989) of either an internal nature (e.g., economic hardship or very great and rapid societal change) or an external nature (e.g., war), whereas increased constructive patriotism would be expected in the absence of these conditions, or in response to the growth of blind patriotism generated by these conditions. Thus, our research is best regarded as a preliminary investigation of the distinction between blind and constructive patriotism. Additional research is needed to generalize more broadly from the present findings and to examine the origins of these patriotic orientations.

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