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**Emmanouil Tsatsanis**

Tsatsanis, Emmanouil  
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and should be directed to the author(s).*

Sophia University Institute of Comparative Culture

7-1 Kioicho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 102-8554, JAPAN

TEL: +81-(0)3-3238-4082

FAX: +81-(0)3-3238-4081

Email: [diricc@sophia.ac.jp](mailto:diricc@sophia.ac.jp)

Web page: <http://www.fla.sophia.ac.jp/icc/index.htm>

# **Global Insecurities and Nationalism in Advanced Industrialized Societies: Evidence from Japan and the United States**

The general thesis of this paper is that explanatory models of nationalism can greatly benefit from the consideration and inclusion of a key social-psychological variable: perception of threats related to processes of globalization. Using survey data from Japan and the United States, the theoretical framework links threat perception to nationalism by presenting competing theoretical perspectives, each associated to a different type of perceived threat: a) materialistic, b) ethnocultural, c) existential, and d) global. The findings support arguments that focus on ethnocultural, existential and global perceived threat as key subjective factors in the explanation of nationalist attitudes. Contrary to expectations, perceived materialistic threats appear to have no impact on nationalist attitudes, thus challenging interest-based explanations of the resurgence of nationalism in advanced postindustrial societies. Moreover, perceived global threats (e.g. global warming, environmental pollution, global economic crises) seem to act as a countervailing force, undermining taken-for-granted cognitive and affective ties to the nation-state. In general, this study suggests that the future of nationalism, and thus, the nation-state itself, will be at least partially determined by the resonance of the different understandings of the risks and dangers that define our rapidly globalizing society.

**Emmanouil Tsatsanis**

Emmanouil Tsatsanis is Assistant Professor of Political Science at Al Akhawayn University in Morocco. He holds an MA in Political Behaviour from the University of Essex and a PhD in Political Science from Washington State University. He has taught at the University of Peloponnese and completed a one-year term as Visiting Scholar at the Institute of Comparative Culture at Sophia University (2007-2008). His research interests are mainly focused on ideological trends and political preference formation in postindustrial democracies.

Assistant Professor  
School of Humanities and Social Sciences  
Al Akhawayn University  
PO Box 104, Hassan II Avenue  
53000 Ifrane, Morocco  
Tel: +212 (0) 535 86 24 41

## ***Introduction***

A significant portion of the voluminous literature on globalization examines the effects of globalization-related processes on nationalism and its many psychological and institutional manifestations. Many of these studies produce prognoses about the future of nationalist ideology in the era of globalization, typically by employing theoretical frameworks that hypothesize direct connections between broad structural changes and attitudinal trends. Most theorists of globalization maintain that we have entered a new historical stage, marked by the proliferation and acceleration of economic, political, social, cultural and human flows across national borders. For some, these flows are supposed to be steadily undermining the sovereignty of formerly bounded national communities, producing far-reaching ideological effects (e.g. Featherstone, 1990; Hall, 1991; Castells, 1997). For others, the same developments are more likely to lead to the reinvigoration of nationalist politics, as a defensive reaction to the destabilizing effects of accelerated change (e.g. Noland, 2004; Kitschelt, 1995; Betz, 1994)

However, for all the burgeoning literature, in most theoretical accounts of globalization and nationalism there is no explicit consideration of the psychological factors that mediate the causal relationship between structural processes and attitudinal outcomes. The purpose of this study is to inject into standard explanatory models of nationalism a key social-psychological variable – threat perception – that can increase our understanding of the causal mechanism between globalization-related processes and ideological outcomes. In particular, we explore the thesis that variation in nationalist attitudes at the individual level can be better accounted for by investigating subjective understandings of globalization dynamics and the threats that emanate from them. In this scenario, nationalism is interpreted as a defensive reaction to subjective perceptions of threat rather than objective conditions created by the ‘reality’ of globalization. We examine this question by utilizing survey data taken from the United States and Japan, the two largest economies of the world that have spearheaded, in many ways, post-war globalization. As a result, the societies of the two leading post-industrial nation-states have been among the first to reap the benefits and absorb the effects of this global transformation.

Accordingly, the categories of threat perception that we consider are selected based on the types of challenges that are most prevalent and relevant within advanced industrialized societies. We formulate a framework that links threat perception to nationalism by presenting competing theoretical perspectives, each associated with a different type of perceived threat – materialistic, ethnocultural, existential and global. In order to assess the importance of each type of threat perception as a core explanatory variable of nationalism, we conduct multivariate analyses of the four theoretical models.

## *Nationalism: Conceptual Ambiguity and Attitudinal Manifestations*

A glance at the relevant literature quickly reveals that discussions of nationalism elicit a number of different meanings, usually depending upon the particular topic of investigation. Authors have used this term to refer to the new ideology and form of consciousness that emerged in eighteenth century Europe, to ideologies of specific secessionist, irredentist, and anti-colonial movements, ideologies of extreme right-wing and regionalist political parties, philosophical and artistic trends (romanticism), government policy agendas (in areas of foreign relations, trade, education, ethnic minority rights, etc.), or individuals' ideological attitudes. Most quantitative empirical analyses, including the present study, examine manifestations of nationalism in the latter form by utilizing individual-level data to trace and explain nationalist trends in public opinion. However, even within this subcategory of studies, a cursory examination of the literature quickly exposes the many possible conceptualizations of the term. The apparent polysemy of nationalism is augmented by the proliferation of adjacent concepts that are alternately treated as analytical categories that are independently associated with nationalism, or as underlying dimensions of the same broader concept. More specifically, concepts such as ethnocentrism, xenophobia, jingoism, chauvinism, racism, militarism and authoritarianism have served as both psychological-ideological categories that promote nationalist attitudes and, on different occasions, as proxy variables of nationalism itself. There are numerous possible configurations of these and other related concepts in categories of explanans and explanandum that always run the risk of producing tautological causal arguments. The purpose of this section is to

present certain arguments concerning the advantages and limitations of different understandings and operationalizations of nationalism within the literature and defend our chosen conceptualization of the term.

### ***Patriotism and Nationalism***

On the other hand, conceptualizations of nationalism are not only marked by such divergence of meaning but also by one crucial similarity. As Michael Billig (1995) points out, there is a clear tendency among social scientists to develop narrow definitions of nationalism as an “extreme/surplus phenomenon” (Billig, 1995: 16). The term itself carries a priori negative connotations and is conceptually associated with forms of irrationality, intolerance, extremism and aggressiveness. Moreover, such narrow conceptualizations of nationalism are usually accompanied by parallel understandings of pride, attachment and loyalty to the nation-state as a natural and positive psychological state which is typically labeled ‘patriotism’. The distinction between patriotism and nationalism rests on a blending of analytical and normative considerations, where patriotism becomes the positive, defensive, rational and benign form of attachment to the national group and nationalism is reduced to the negative, irrational and belligerent condition. The concept of patriotism and its analytical separation from nationalism not only obscures the commonalities between the two concepts – i.e. they both capture loyalty and attachment to the nation-state – but it also precludes contextual interpretations of national identity by opting for essentialist understandings. Even so, for the majority of authors in political science, sociology and social psychology, this distinction constitutes part of a long-running theoretical orthodoxy (e.g. Doob, 1964; Snyder, 1976; Kosterman and Feshbach, 1989; Bar-Tal, 1993; Bar-Tal and Staub, 1997; Staub, 1997; Schatz et al., 1999; De Figueiredo and Elkins, 2003; Dekker et al., 2004; Coenders et al., 2004b). Some of these works attempt to support this conceptual distinction with empirical evidence that examine the claim that patriotism and nationalism (the latter occasionally perceived as synonymous with chauvinism) are analytically independent categories. The operationalization of the two variables involves the separation of positive feelings and attitudes toward the in-group (patriotism), and negative feelings against out-groups and/or blind attachment to the in-

group (nationalism). However, even in studies that purportedly confirm the bi-dimensionality of these concepts, the evidence shows that the patriotism and nationalism scales are highly correlated.<sup>1</sup>

We agree with Billig's contention that the distinction is of questionable analytical importance and carries ideological implications – it is a way of defining out of existence familiar and venerated manifestations of nationalist ideology (Billig, 1995: 13-19, 55-59; see also Spencer and Wollman, 1998; Sapountzis, 2008). Social identity theory and its successor, self-categorization theory, have significantly enhanced our understanding about the underlying psychological mechanisms that influence both positive valorizations of the in-group and negative out-group attitudes (Tajfel 1978, 1981; Tajfel and Turner, 1979; Turner, 1982; Turner et al., 1987). The starting point of this process is the cognitive function of social categorization, which refers to the conceptual use of groups and categories to deal with the complexity of the social environment. As part of this function, individuals categorize themselves as members of an in-group and assign themselves a social identity. The latter is defined as “that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership in a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership” (Tajfel, 1981: 255). One of the central assumptions of social identity theory is that individuals strive to achieve or maintain a positive self-concept and, therefore, a positive social identity. In addition, Tajfel and his associates maintained that social identities are primarily relational and based on social comparisons, meaning comparison between in-group and relevant out-groups regarding perceived behaviors, beliefs, attitudes or innate characteristics. Social comparison provides the way to create and maintain a positive social identity through positive in-group distinctiveness (Hogg, 1992: 92). More specifically, the need to evaluate one's own group positively creates psychological pressure to accentuate differences between the in-group and other groups and to achieve superiority over them on some valued dimension of comparison (Coenders et al., 2004a: 9-10). This is accomplished by selectively perceiving mainly positive characteristics among in-group members and negative characteristics among out-

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1. See Billig's (1995: 57-58) critique of Kosterman and Feshbach's (1989) influential study claiming the functional independence of the concepts of patriotism and nationalism.

group members. The positive characteristics are applied to the entire in-group and, by extension, one's own self-concept (social identification) and the negative ones are generalized to the out-group (social contra-identification) (Coenders et al., 2004a: 10; Hogg, 1992: 91-92; Brown, 1995).

### *Core Principles and Attitudinal Types of Nationalism*

The great success of social identity theory has been to identify the minimal conditions and psychological processes that are associated with in-group favoritism and out-group derogation and show that the two are interconnected. The minimal group experiments (Tajfel et al., 1971; Billig and Tajfel, 1973) have established that mere categorization of individuals into arbitrary groups is enough to put into motion the underlying psychological dynamics that generate both positive in-group evaluation and negative feelings towards out-groups. However, the phenomenon of nationalism cannot be fully explained by relying solely on universal psychological categories. The specific meaning of this type of social categorization (national group) and identification (nationhood) is provided by the content of nationalist ideology, which would become irrelevant if we focus exclusively on the act of categorization. Nationalism infuses the mental act of social categorization with emotionally potent narratives about ethnoculturally distinct historic communities marked by common descent and/or shared territory, culture, memories, and destiny. To paraphrase Benedict Anderson's (1991) famous apothegm, nationalism allows for an aggregation of individuals to be 'imagined' as an in-group, even though the majority of its members do not know and will never get to meet each other. The core ideas of connectedness and sameness among the members of the 'nation' replaced previous ideas of community, and formed the basis of the principle of popular sovereignty: the people of the nation, not a transcendental power, become the source of law and authority (Greenfeld and Eastwood, 2005: 251). The political dimension of nationalist ideology has been captured by Ernest Gellner's minimal definition, which equates nationalism with the basic principle that the political and national unit should be congruent (Gellner, 1983: 1).

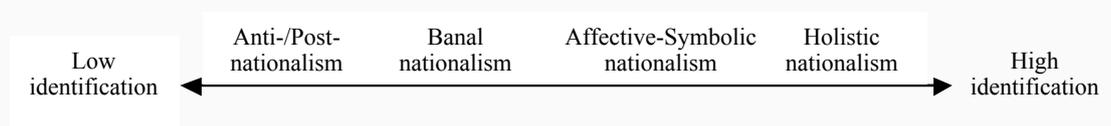
This definitional discussion reveals an understanding of nationalism as an idea

that is closer to commonsensical notions of social and political organization than to principles of an extremist political ideology. Nationalism becomes the ideology that stresses the naturalness and inevitability of the division of the world into nation-states and inhabits our everyday lives in innumerable ways. This phenomenon has been labeled 'banal' nationalism, a term introduced by Billig (1995) to capture modes of thinking and routine practices that are taken for granted even though they are a product of formal and informal applications of nationalist principles. As suggested above, such cognitive components of nationalism provide the raw material for a much more profound type of social categorization and are thus accompanied by strong affective elements: positive valorization of the nation, emotional attachment to the group and its symbols, and a meaningful sense of belonging.

The implication of this conceptualization is that nationalism should be understood not as a form of extremism but as a broadly shared 'worldview' or dominant ideology. Not surprisingly, most surveys reveal that the majority of individuals are nationalists in the basic sense of the term: they identify with a specific nation and positively valorize their national membership (feelings of national pride, attachment, etc.). However, Michael Freedman reminds us that similar to any other political ideology, the core concepts of nationalism are "not sufficient to account for the complexity of all forms and instances of nationalism or to bear the totality of beliefs incorporated in any one variant of nationalism." They are, however, "necessary for identifying any given instance as belonging to the family of nationalisms" (Freedman, 1998: 752). The argument has been made that such inclusive conceptualizations of nationalism lead to the 'inflation' of the conceptual value of the term (Dekker et al., 2003: 346). Nonetheless, it is our contention that failure to employ an inclusive conceptualization would result in incomplete analyses of nationalism by defining cognate national sentiments as functionally independent attitudinal categories. Nationalism can manifest in different forms: 'ethnic' or 'civic', depending on the criteria for inclusion in the national group, 'holistic' or 'individualistic', depending on whether the nation is defined as a unitary or composite entity and on the intensity of the constituting ties between the nation and its members (cf. Greenfeld and Eastwood, 2005: 255-258;

Freeden, 1998: 751-754). These different versions of nationalism constitute ideal types that can be found in varying degrees and combinations in actual definitional narratives of the 'nation' across space and time. At the individual level, though, the type of nationalist orientation held can vary as a direct function of the intensity of national identification, particularly on the holistic-individualistic dimension. High degree of identification with the national group results in forms of holistic nationalism, where national identification becomes the most important form of social identification and the nation is perceived as a collective entity, "with its own will, rights, and interests, independent of the will, rights, and interests of the individuals who compose it" (Greenfeld and Eastwood, 2005: 157). Thus, holistic nationalists will tend to display attitudes of uncritical allegiance to the institutions of the nation-state and will be reluctant to accept political dissent or the detachment of individuals from national aims (see also Freeden, 1995: 753).

By focusing on the intensity of the perceived constituting ties between the nation and its members, nationalism can be conceptualized as a unidimensional ideological category which is underpinned by the psychological process of identification (see Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** Types of Nationalism as a function of National Identification

In Figure 1, 'banal nationalism' implies moderate level of identification with the national group and mostly unreflective acceptance of basic principles of nationalist ideology. 'Affective-symbolic nationalism' reflects stronger national identification and more intense (and self-conscious) positive valorization of the nation-state as well as potent emotional attachment to its symbols, culture and history. Both these types can be classified as forms of individualistic/pluralistic nationalism as they allow more critical and conditional modes of loyalty to the nation-state and tolerate the existence of plural forms of social identification. As mentioned before, at the high end of the identification continuum we encounter holistic nationalism, where modes of attachment and loyalty to the nation-state become ardent and

unconditional, and national identity becomes a near-totalizing form of subjectivity. Finally, at the low end of the identification continuum, 'anti-/post-nationalism' refers to ideological attitudes that challenge basic assumptions of nationalist ideology and assign little or no value to membership in a national group. These types of attitudes can be induced by perceptions of incompatibility with other primary social identities (religious, racial, supra-national, regional, etc.) or deeply-held ideological principles (e.g. cosmopolitanism, pure forms of neoliberalism). It should also be noted that movement from lower to higher degrees of identification does not imply a relationship of mutual exclusivity between the corresponding types of nationalism. Banal, affective-symbolic, and holistic nationalism form a cumulative hierarchy, where each type incorporates the previous one (cf. Dekker et al, 2003: 347-348). In other words, the basic assumptions and attitudinal dispositions of banal and affective-symbolic nationalism are prerequisites for holistic nationalism, not antithetical to it. Holistic nationalism employs the same assumptions but only in conjunction with specific ideas concerning the unitary nature of the national community and the duty of individuals for unconditional allegiance to the nation-state.

## *Perceived Threat and Nationalism*

Even though social identity theory combined with notions of banal nationalism are adequate in explaining ubiquitous-minimal forms of nationalism, they are less helpful in explaining variations in the intensity of national identification and the type of nationalist attitudes. In this section we explore four competing approaches that purport to account for individual-level differences, with a special focus on the mediating effects of globalization-related threat perceptions. In other words, each perspective employs a different variation of the same intervening social-psychological variable: the perception of a particular kind of globalization-induced threat to the national in-group at large, or individuals as national group members. However, the categorization into different dimensions of threat (materialistic, ethnocultural, existential, global) does not imply uniformity of epistemological and ontological assumptions across, or even within categories. As we shall see, different theoretical

approaches employ different conceptualizations of threat, usually depending on whether they subscribe to 'realist' or 'constructivist' interpretive frameworks. Our goal is to incorporate insights from all the different approaches discussed briefly, and present a synthesized framework that employs both objective and subjective factors, and lessons from both realist and constructivist understandings.

### ***Perceived Materialistic Threat***

From early sociological analyses of inter-group conflict to recent contributions to social identity theory, some authors (Sherif, 1967; Coser, 1956; Blumer 1958; Blalock, 1967; Bobo, 1983, 1988; Turner, 1999) have suggested that the existence of intergroup competition has an impact on the intensity of in-group bias and out-group rejection. These arguments form the basis of 'realistic group conflict theory', an approach that posits a linear connection between objective conditions of intergroup competition, subjective perceptions of threat and, ultimately, ethnocentric/prejudicial attitudes (Quillian, 1995: 588; Bobo, 1983: 1197). The basic assumption underlying this theory is that threat results "when people's personal interests are jeopardized because their group has to compete with other groups for scarce resources" (Branscombe et al., 1999: 36). Even though the explanatory significance assigned to the difference between real and perceived threat can vary within this literature (see Coenders et al., 2004a: 11-16; Quillian, 1995), the type of threat that one would expect to elicit nationalistic attitudes is typically instrumental/materialistic in nature.

It is worth noting that although realistic group conflict theory was primarily developed to address issues of ethnic/racial group relations, its basic premise and assumptions tie in well with a wide range of works within the globalization/modernization literature that view the rebirth of nationalism in parts of the advanced industrialized world as a self-interested response of individuals to new realities created by global economic restructuring (e.g. Kitchelt, 1995; Betz, 1994; Gabel, 1998; Anderson and Reichert, 1996; Rodrik, 1997; Rogowski, 1989; Noland, 2004; see also Kaldor, 2004: 166; Rydgren, 2007: 248). In this scenario, certain occupational groups (especially the traditional middle class and low/semi-skilled workers) that

face risks to employment and income from globalization-related developments (relocation of manufacturing plants, outsourcing of secondary and tertiary sector jobs, influx of cheap labor, welfare state retrenchment and overall decline of social wages) are expected to favor solutions that protect the economic sovereignty of nation-states and uphold the boundedness of national markets. The conceptual alignment of these expected instrumental preferences with basic principles of nationalist ideology forms the basis of the hypothesis that individuals of similar social position will tend to display matching levels of nationalist attitudes.

From a social-psychological perspective, the crucial predictor of the intensity of nationalist attitudes is the degree of perceived rather than actual economic threat. Objective risks and real presence of threat to employment or income become antecedent factors that can influence the intensity of nationalist attitudes only through the way in which they are subjectively perceived. To use the language of social identity, the stronger the perceived threat to the individual's economic interests by globalization-related structural changes, the more the mechanisms of social (contra-) identification will be reinforced, inducing stronger nationalist attitudes (hypothesis 1) (Coenders et al., 2004a: 18).

### *Perceived Ethnocultural Threat*

Most works dealing with the effects of threat on sociopolitical attitudes have relied on the assumption that the most relevant types of threat are restricted to the economic domain. However, in recent years some scholars have suggested that in the context of a rapidly globalizing social environment, some less tangible dimensions of competition accrue greater significance. In the social psychological literature, notions of 'cultural threat' (Zárte et al., 2004; Stephan et al., 1998; McLaren 2002, 2003) and 'social identity threat' (Branscombe et al., 1999) increasingly accompany resource-based conceptualizations of threat as predictors of individual attitudes. Such approaches emphasize the role of symbolic, value, and identity aspects in inter-group relations and subsequent attitudinal formation.

Cultural threats refer to the perceived danger of cultural contamination through increased forced contact (not necessarily competitive) with other

ethnocultural groups. Adapted to globalization themes, what we more precisely call 'ethnocultural threat' (due to the invariably ethnic definitional component of culture) is associated with the time-space compression brought by technological and structural changes, and the new concomitant opportunities for cross-cultural contact. The effects of these globalization-related developments are manifested in the form of high international mobility, easy access to global communication networks, increased immigration levels, or the mass cross-national consumption of standardized cultural products. On one level, ethnocultural threat becomes more accentuated when the differences between the culture of the host in-group and the culture of the immigrant out-group are perceived as great and/or important (Zárate et al., 2004: 100). On another level, the perception of ethnocultural threat can be activated by increased cultural homogenization or perceived flattening of cultural differences across different national groups. Given that, according to social identity theory, we derive part of our self-esteem from positive social identities and positive comparisons with other groups, "it follows that social comparison with similar out-groups could threaten group distinctiveness and social identity" (Branscombe et al., 1999: 42).

Perceptions of ethnocultural threat and the psychological need for cultural purity and distinctiveness are also associated with what Anthony Giddens calls 'ontological insecurity' (Giddens 1991), a state of generalized anxiety that is induced by processes of modernization and globalization. According to this argument, the disruption of culturally meaningful social relations and structures through the cross-cultural standardization of norms and practices can lead to nationalist and/or traditionalist backlashes by segments of the population whose primary sense of self derives from firmly established identities and routines. Following Erik Erikson's work on identity and trust (1950), Giddens argues that identity functions as an anxiety-controlling mechanism which reinforces a sense of trust, predictability, control and security in reaction to the destabilizing effects of globalization (Kinnvall, 2004: 746). Nationalist ideology, based as it is on narratives of continuity, belongingness and distinctiveness, enables the individual to recreate a lost sense of security by reaffirming established social identities and old certainties. The common thread in both sociological and

psychological treatments of threat to cultural purity is the implied hypothesis that there is an association between higher levels of perceived ethnocultural threat and increased levels of nationalism (hypothesis 2).

### *Perceived Existential Threat*

The final type of perceived threat that has been positively linked to nationalistic attitudes is the perception of threat to basic security. ‘Terror management theory’ (Pyszczynski, 2004; Pyszczynski et al, 2004) is the most prominent social-psychological approach that posits a direct connection between the perception of physical security-related threats (specified as ‘existential threat’) and the appeal of nationalism. More specifically, terror management theorists have argued, similarly to social identity theorists, that one of the key motivating factors for individuals is the pursuit and maintenance of high levels of self-esteem and posit that there is a strong association between the pursuit of self-esteem enhancement and in-group favoritism. However, terror management theory specifies the origin of the universal need to enhance self-esteem by highlighting its function to shelter individuals “from deeply rooted anxiety inherent in the human condition” which is connected to awareness of the inevitability of death. The effect of the latter is to give rise to “the potential for paralyzing terror” which humans have been able to mitigate by constructing “shared symbolic conceptions of reality that give meaning, order and even permanence to existence”. These cultural constructs or ‘worldviews’ set the parameters for self-esteem maintenance and enhancement: self-esteem is obtained by “confident belief in the shared cultural worldview and by meeting or exceeding the standards of value associated with the social role one plays within that worldview” (Pyszczynski et al. 2004: 436-437).

The logical application of these foundational assumptions directed this team of social psychologists to the formation of the ‘mortality salience thesis’: reminders of physical danger and mortality lead individuals to attempts to maintain faith in their worldviews and enhance their social-identity derived self-esteem. Pertaining to nationalism, in particular, there have been several empirical studies that have examined the mortality salience thesis and have provided strong evidence of consistent positive connections between mortality reminders (including threats to

physical security) and nationalist attitudes (e.g. Dechesne et al, 2000; Castano et al, 2002; Greenberg et al, 1990). Following the same line of reasoning, the terror management theorists have focused on the effects of global terrorism on threat perception and nationalist attitudes in the post September 11, 2001 environment (Pyszczynski et al, 2003). The recent world events that have led to the increased visibility (created mainly by the mass media) and awareness of terrorism-related threats have led these scholars to examine the real-world applicability of their thesis. This specific version of the mortality salience thesis posits a direct relationship between perceived terrorism threat and nationalist reactions (particularly in the United States), including increased identification with and attachment to the nation-state, intolerance towards dissent, hostility towards cultural 'others', support for military action, and extolment of national security-related functionalities (Pyszczynski, 2004: 838-843). In other words, higher levels of existential threat are expected to be positively associated with nationalist attitudes (hypothesis 3).

### *Perceived Global Threat*

Our discussion of how different approaches incorporate accounts of threat in explanations of nationalism (or favorable attitudes towards analogous cultural in-groups), has thus far revealed consistent assumptions about the directionality of the relationship: the higher the perceived threat, the more pronounced the nationalism. The reason for this has been that the threats in previous accounts were conceptualized as threats towards nationally-defined targets: national communities and their constituent members. Within the latter framework, the potential victims and potential perpetrators are clearly distinguished in a way that culpability can be directly assigned to the external forces that threaten the in-group by way of economic, cultural or violent means. However, in a scenario where the consequences of a realized threat are felt globally, the previous differentiation is rendered meaningless as every individual on the planet, regardless of social categorization, becomes a potential victim. Ulrich Beck's celebrated 'world risk society' thesis advances precisely this perspective, in which looming dangers are associated with globally shared risks instead of specific external threats. These global risks are

a distinctive feature of contemporary society (risk society) in the sense that they constitute unintended consequences of industrialization and modernization that cannot be locally controlled or contained. Unlike hazards of pre-modern periods and of the early industrial society (or 'first modernity'), these risks are not 'natural' and controllable through technological advancement, but entirely manufactured by humans through industrial or techno-scientific activities (Beck, 1999: 48-65). In addition, they create cross-national spillover effects that conventional sociological understandings (classified as exemplars of 'methodological nationalism') and existing institutional arrangements are ill-equipped to grasp or manage.

The quintessential threats that beset Beck's 'risk society' are the growing environmental risks (e.g. global warming, air and water pollution, applications of biotechnological innovation) that have come to dominate social experiences globally. However, world risk society is not conceptualized as an exclusively environmental risk society. For instance, the integration of global financial markets has created new 'global market risks' exemplified by recent events such as the Asian market crisis that produced worldwide reverberations which eluded the control of national governments (Beck, 1999: 6) or, more recently, the subprime mortgage crisis that originated in the United States in 2007 and has since developed into a truly global economic crisis. Furthermore, environmental or economic instability can become the sources of new transnational conflicts over basic goods and natural resources. In other words, world instability in the new risk society creates an environment of plural and multidimensional global threats that permeate national borders and traditional social groupings.

Beck's implied thesis concerning the inverse relationship between perceived global threat and nationalism rests on his assumptions about the increased sociopolitical reflexivity in the period of the 'second modernity' and in the context of the new risk society. As individuals begin to question the coping abilities of nation-states to address the challenges of 'world risk society', there are opportunities for the creation of global political and civil society spaces – such as already existing transnational ecological or anti-war movements – that challenge established nationalist orthodoxies and are unfit to conform to traditional models of national

politics. The emergence of new transnational movements and organizations, accompanied by a gradual saturation process of the public sphere with attention to the new global challenges and risks are thus expected to have profound ideological/cognitive effects. For Beck, these developments will lead to increased awareness of the new global threats, which will ultimately facilitate the realization of global instead of national 'imagined communities' by cultivating a cosmopolitan common-sense. In other words, the expectation is that increased levels of perceived global threat will be negatively associated with nationalist attitudes (hypothesis 4).

### ***Background individual-level factors***

Recapitulating our previous discussion about the hypothesized effects of threat perception on nationalism, we can discern two trends: 1) theoretical perspectives that focus on materialistic, ethnocultural and existential threat postulate a positive relationship between these types of perceived threat and nationalism (hypotheses 1 to 3), whereas 2) Ulrich Beck's theoretical account of the 'world risk society' posits a negative association between global threat perception and nationalist attitudes (hypothesis 4). Each of the theoretical perspective presented above, as well as previous related empirical research, consider the impact of other individual level factors as antecedents of perceived threats, nationalist attitudes or both. The most common ones are demographic variables such as age, gender, income and education (Davis and Silver, 2004; Coenders et.al., 2004b; Huddy et. al, 2005; McLaren, 2003). Prior research has often confirmed a positive relationship between age and nationalism (hypothesis 5a); however, we expect this effect to be mediated by global (hypothesis 4a), materialistic (hypothesis 1a) and existential threat perception (hypothesis 3a) (Cf. Inglehart, 1992). Also there is ample evidence in the literature about a connection of gender with both nationalism (hypothesis 5b) and perceived existential threats (hypothesis 3b). More specifically, men tend to display higher levels of nationalism related attitudes (usually as a component of conservatism) and a heightened sensitivity to perceived dangers to physical security (Huddy et al, 2005; Friedland and Merari, 1985). Furthermore, previous studies have illustrated that higher levels of education can have a direct negative effect on

levels of nationalism, either directly, (hypothesis 5c) (Coenders and Sheepers, 2003), or indirectly through perceived existential threat (hypothesis 3c) (Friedland and Merari, 1985; Skitka et al, 2004) or materialistic threat (hypothesis 1c) (Betz, 1994). Low levels of income, as well as related structural factors such as employment in low skilled professions, have been linked to higher levels of nationalism directly (hypotheses 5d and e), or indirectly through perceived materialistic threat (hypotheses 1d and 1e) (Coenders et.al., 2004b; Kitschelt, 1995; Betz, 1994). Finally, we want to explore the formative effects of intercultural contact since there is a long standing argument in the sociological literature which suggests an inverse relationship between increased levels of contact with individuals outside the in-group and nationalist related attitudes (hypothesis 5f) or mediated by perceived ethnocultural threat (hypothesis 2a) (McLaren, 2003, Sherif and Sherif, 1969). Unlike other individual-level studies of nationalism, we refrain from employing attitudinal factors such as left-right ideology or religiosity as possible determinants of nationalist orientations. The repeatedly confirmed strong interrelationship of these components should be seen as a case of conceptual consanguinity (partial overlap of ideological dimensions) rather than a reason to develop hypotheses about causal effects.

## *Data and Measurement*

For the examination of our hypotheses we chose to use the study of “Social Attitudes and Global Engagement” (SAGE), a cross-national mail survey (1551 total respondents) conducted in Japan (sample: 581) and the United States (sample: 970) during 2004 by a joint research team from Washington State University and International Christian University. Its unique treatment of threat perception as a multi-dimensional phenomenon as well as the inclusion of standard items on national identification and forms of national attachment makes this dataset an excellent tool with which to analyze the relationship between different types of threat perception and nationalist attitudes.

## *Nationalism*

Our measure of nationalism is based on an additive scale of four selected items from the SAGE survey that capture both degree of attachment to the nation-state and its symbols<sup>2</sup> as well as the type of loyalty towards national leadership<sup>3</sup>. The possible scores range from 4 to 16 (a: 0.72). A principal component analysis confirms the uni-dimensionality of our additive scale (eigenvalue of 2.17 and 52.3 % of the variance). Descriptive statistics also support our hypothesis of the cumulativeness of our nationalism scale. Cross-tabulations revealed that there were no respondents throughout the entire sample that simultaneously displayed low degrees of attachment to the nation-state and unconditional allegiance to its leadership, confirming that holistic nationalism presupposes high levels of identification with the national in-group.

## *Types of threat perception*

For the measurement of different types of threat perception we selected from a larger pool of items seven questions that tap exclusively each perceived threat of interest in relation to processes of globalization. Those items are: fear of losing employment opportunity to a lower paid worker, fear of losing employment opportunity to an overseas competitor, threat of terrorism, threat of country being attacked, global warming threat, global economic crisis threat and threats to national identity<sup>4</sup>. A principal component factor analysis confirms the multidimensionality of these concepts. The rotated solution yielded four extracted factors (see Table 1) supporting the hypothesis of four underlying dimensions of perceived threat

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2 One item asked 'How patriotic are you?' with possible answers extremely patriotic, very patriotic, somewhat patriotic or not very patriotic, while the other one asked to state their opinion regarding the statement 'Schools should teach children to respect the flag', ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

3 Participants were asked whether they agree or disagree on a 4 point scale (strongly agree to strongly disagree) with the following two statements: 'In times of war or crisis, we should support our nation's leaders even though we do not agree with their policies' and 'In times of war or crisis, citizens should be willing to give up some freedoms so that our nation's leaders can provide better security for our country'.

4 Questions were worded as: 'how concerned you are about the following: terrorism; losing your job to an overseas competitor and with losing your job to a lower paid worker'; 'Please indicate how much of a threat you believe the following are to your country: Your country being attacked'; 'Please indicate how much of a threat you believe the following are to world stability: global economic crisis, global warming. The possible responses ranged from very concerned or a large threat to not concerned or not a threat resulting each in a 4-point-scale item. Regarding threat to national identity a 7-point Likert scale was used to assess this concept asking: 'Some people feel that immigration enriches our societies through cultural diversity. Suppose these people are at one end of the scale, at point 1. Others feel that immigration threatens to undermine our national identity. Suppose these people are at the other end, at point 7. Which is closer to the way you feel?'

related to processes of globalization. Our measures of materialistic threats (fear of losing job to a lower paid worker and an overseas competitor), global threats (global economic crisis and global warming) and existential threats (fear of terrorism and country being attacked) are based on two-item attitude scale, whereas the ethnocultural threat is measured by a single 7-point Likert scale (immigration enriches or threatens national identity).

**Table 1.** Principal Component Analysis of Items referring to Threat Perception

	Materialistic threat	Global Threat	Existential threat	Ethnocultural threat
Fear of losing your job to a lower paid worker	<b>.923</b>	.064	.090	.002
Fear of losing your job to an overseas competitor	<b>.926</b>	.053	.049	-.057
Global economic crisis threat	.062	<b>.787</b>	.160	.059
Global warming threat	.048	<b>.834</b>	.065	.000
Terrorism threat	.173	.005	<b>.871</b>	.009
Threat of country being attacked	-.041	.288	<b>.766</b>	-.155
National identity threat	-.047	.055	-.101	<b>.986</b>
Variance explained	25%	20%	20%	14%

Note: The analysis uses Varimax rotation method with Kaiser normalization; N=1341

### *Background variables*

As indicated above, our analysis will also include standard control demographic variables such as age, gender (male is coded 0 and female 1), education and income. Our occupational group variable has been recoded as a dummy variable for semi- and low-skilled manufacturing and service industry workers since this occupational group has been specified as the most exposed to the dangers of global economic restructuring. Our measure of intercultural contact is operationalized as an additive scale composed of four items referring to personal experience beyond national and cultural boundaries<sup>5</sup>. Finally, we add a dummy variable representing the participants' country (United States is coded 0 and Japan 1).

<sup>5</sup> The selected items correspond to questions that investigate whether the respondents lived, worked or served in another country, whether they hold a current passport, whether they have friends whose first language is other than the national language and whether they have co-workers whose first language is other than the national language.

## Multivariate Analysis

We are interested in assessing the independent effect of each type of perceived threat on nationalism as well as its mediating impact on the background variables. Thus, we run four two-level OLS regression models to estimate the explanatory power added by each type of perceived threat and prior interaction effects between them and our background variables on nationalism. The results of each of the regression models are presented in tables 2 through 5.

**Table 2.** Multivariate Regression for Nationalism and Perceived Materialistic Threat

Model	(1)		(2)a	
	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized $\beta$	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized $\beta$
Intercept	11.66 (0.40)		11.94 (0.45)	
Gender	-0.35 (0.15)	-0.06*	-0.35 (0.15)	-0.07*
Age	0.18 (0.03)	0.19**	0.18 (0.03)	0.19**
Education	-0.20 (0.06)	-0.10**	-0.21 (0.07)	-0.10**
Income	0.14 (0.05)	0.09**	0.13 (0.05)	0.08**
Intercultural Contact	-0.15 (0.06)	-0.07*	-0.14 (0.06)	-0.07*
Low skilled worker	0.10 (0.16)	0.02	0.12 (0.16)	0.02
Country	-1.57 (0.16)	-0.28**	-1.60 (0.16)	-0.29**
Materialistic Threat			-0.05 (0.04)	-0.04
Summary Statistics	R <sup>2</sup> =.12		R <sup>2</sup> =.13 $\Delta$ R <sup>2</sup> =.01	

Note: \*\*p<.01;\* p<.05; +p<.10; N=1258

**Table 3.** Multivariate Regression for Nationalism and Ethnocultural Perceived Threat

Model	(1)		(2)b	
	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized $\beta$	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized $\beta$
Intercept	11.65 (0.39)		9.58 (0.42)	
Gender	-0.34 (0.14)	-0.06*	-0.24 (0.14)	-0.05+
Age	0.18 (0.02)	0.21**	0.16 (0.02)	0.17**
Education	-0.18 (0.06)	-0.09**	-0.10 (0.06)	-0.05+
Income	0.12 (0.05)	0.07**	0.09 (0.05)	0.06*
Intercultural Contact	-0.17 (0.06)	-0.08**	-0.05 (0.06)	-0.02
Low skilled worker	0.05 (0.16)	0.01	-0.09 (0.15)	-0.01
Country	-1.51 (0.15)	-0.28**	-1.42 (0.14)	-0.26**
Ethnocultural Threat			0.45 (0.04)	0.27**
Summary Statistics	R <sup>2</sup> =.13		R <sup>2</sup> =.20	$\Delta$ R <sup>2</sup> =.07

Note: \*\*p<.01; \* p<.05; +p<.10; N=1308

**Table 4.** Multivariate Regression for Nationalism and Existential Perceived Threat

Model	(1)		(2)c	
	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized $\beta$	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized $\beta$
Intercept	11.61 (0.39)		8.93 (0.47)	
Gender	-0.36 (0.14)	-0.07**	-0.61 (0.14)	-0.11**
Age	0.19 (0.02)	0.21**	0.20 (0.02)	0.22**
Education	-0.18 (0.06)	-0.09**	-0.12 (0.06)	-0.06+
Income	0.12 (0.05)	0.08**	0.11 (0.05)	0.07**
Intercultural Contact	-0.16 (0.06)	-0.08**	-0.13 (0.06)	-0.06*
Low skilled worker	0.05 (0.16)	0.01	0.04 (0.15)	0.01
Country	-1.53 (0.15)	-0.28**	-1.56 (0.15)	-0.28**
Existential Threat			0.44 (0.04)	0.25**
Summary Statistics	R <sup>2</sup> =.13		R <sup>2</sup> =.19	$\Delta$ R <sup>2</sup> =.06

Note: \*\*p<.01; \* p<.05; +p<.10; N=1344

**Table 5.** Multivariate Regression for Nationalism and Global Perceived Threat

Model	(1)		(2)d	
	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized $\beta$	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized $\beta$
Intercept	11.66 (0.39)		13.37 (0.48)	
Gender	-0.35 (0.14)	-0.06*	-0.18 (0.15)	-0.03
Age	0.18 (0.02)	0.20**	0.19 (0.02)	0.21**
Education	-0.19 (0.06)	-0.09**	-0.18 (0.06)	-0.09**
Income	0.13 (0.05)	0.08**	0.12 (0.05)	0.07**
Intercultural Contact	-0.17 (0.06)	-0.08**	-0.16 (0.06)	-0.08**
Low skilled worker	0.04 (0.16)	0.01	0.03 (0.16)	0.01
Country	-1.51 (0.15)	-0.28**	-1.11 (0.16)	-0.20**
Global Threat			-0.32 (0.05)	-0.18**
Summary Statistics	R <sup>2</sup> =.13		R <sup>2</sup> =.15 $\Delta$ R <sup>2</sup> =.02	

Note: \*\*p<.01; \* p<.05; +p<.10; N=1302

Model 1 establishes the relationship between the background variables and nationalism, whereas models 2a, b, c and d incorporate in the analysis the four different kinds of threat perception. At a first glance, hypotheses 5a, 5b, 5c, 5d, and 5f are supported by our results as male sex, age and income are positively correlated ( $p<.01$ ) with nationalism, and education and intercultural contact are negatively ( $p<.01$ ) correlated. However, when ethnocultural threat perception is introduced in the model, the effect of intercultural contact is fully mediated (hypothesis 2a), a pattern that is repeated with gender and perceived global threat. Contrary to our expectation the low-skilled worker dummy variable has no impact on intensity of identification with the nation-state (hypothesis 5e). The introduction of the different types of perceived threat into our models performed according to expectations with the exception of perceived materialistic threat, which is not significantly correlated with nationalism and its introduction barely affected the performance of the model (no statistically significant change). As a result we can safely reject the notion that perceived materialistic threat is positively associated with nationalist attitudes (hypothesis 1). On the contrary, the introduction of perceived ethnocultural, existential and global threat to our models produced statistically significant improvements of the overall goodness-of-fit of each model

( $\Delta R^2=.07$ ,  $\Delta R^2=.06$ ,  $\Delta R^2=.02$  respectively at  $p<.01$ ). Specifically, ethnocultural and existential threat perception are positively correlated with nationalism (hypotheses 2 and 3), whereas global perceived threat presents a strong but negative association with nationalist orientations. (hypothesis 4).

Examining the indirect impact of our background variables on nationalism, we can confirm the mediating function of perceived existential threat on the relationship between education and nationalism (hypothesis 3c). On the other hand, hypotheses 3a and 4a are not supported by our findings as there appears to be no mediating effect of global or existential threat perception on the relationship between age and nationalism. Furthermore, the effect of gender is not mediated by existential threat perception as expected (hypothesis 3b). The findings that are related to the cross-national composition of our sample indicate the existence of potent contextual factors that produce significantly different average levels of nationalist attitudes between the two countries. In addition, the impact of the country-specific factors appears to be unmediated by levels of threat perception with the minor exception of perceived global threat that produces a partially mediated effect on the country dummy variable.

Interpreting our findings in reference to the broader literature, the theoretical perspectives that focus on the effect on economic conflict and competition in objective or subjective forms are not validated by our analysis. Both structural position and perceived economic threat have no significant independent impact on nationalistic attitudes, and the materialistic threat perception model performs poorly in relation to the other models. A prior empirical study (Coenders et.al., 2004b) that also examined objective and subjective effects of economic threat on patriotism and chauvinism, uncovered a similar explanatory weakness of economic factors. Our two models that included ethnocultural and existential perceived threats performed the best, supporting the thesis of the sociological and social-psychological approaches that highlight identity-related threats, as well as new security threats associated with the emergence of new terrorist threats, as powerful predictors of nationalist orientation at the individual level.

However, most interesting is the case of the perceived global threat model. To our knowledge, this is the first empirical study that examines the relationship between global risk awareness (in the form of global threat perception) and nationalism at the individual level. In other words, the findings appear to be in tune with Beck's main thesis about the emergence of cosmopolitan values in the new 'world risk society' which is taken place at the expense of old forms of national identifications and attachments. The observed inverse relationship between perceived global threat and nationalism appears to validate Beck's thesis concerning the increased sociopolitical reflexivity of individuals within the new risk society. The first casualties of the mounting doubts of individuals about the capacity of nation-states to address new global challenges seem to be their unconditional and unquestioning trust and allegiance towards the leaders and institutions of the nation. Therefore, there appears to be an incompatibility between increasing awareness of global risks and forms of holistic nationalism. In practical terms, this means that the translation of concerns about global threats into dynamic grassroots and political movements is likely (but not certain) to be accompanied by post-national principles and commitments.

At the aggregate level, the predominance of different types of threat perception within particular national societies, can act as powerful contextual factors that undermine or reinforce nationalism. For example, the higher levels of perceived global threat in Japan account for much of the difference on overall levels of nationalism between Japan and the United States. The mean score for nationalism in the United States is substantially higher than the one in Japan, possibly reflecting short and medium-term ideological trends within each country respectively. More specifically, several empirical studies diagnosed a general upsurge in the intensity of nationalist sentiments in the United States following the events of September 11, 2001 (e.g. Huddy et al, 2002; Skitka, 2005). On the other hand, the recent history of Japan has been marked by the stigmatization of nationalist ideology following the defeat of the country in the Second World War. Many of the prewar symbols of Japan were banned during this period as they were associated with the prewar militaristic regime and have only gradually begun to be restored as officially

sanctioned national symbols. For instance, the national flag and anthem of Japan ('Hinomaru' and 'Kimigayo') were restored as recently as 1999 (McCormack, 2002:152) triggering a backlash from pacifist movements and the highly active teachers' union.

The fact that our measure of nationalism is rather state-centric, i.e. it corresponds more closely to the self-professed relationship of the individual to the state than the ethnic in-group, surely contributes to this observed discrepancy in the results between the two national samples. It has been argued that cultural forms of nationalism are prominent in Japan, reinforced and reproduced by popular discourses of enduring cultural distinctiveness (the ubiquitous nihonjiron literature) (see Yoshino, 1995). However, pride in the national culture and feelings of cultural distinctiveness do not always accompany more politicized forms of nationalism,

**Table 6.** Nationalist Attitudes by Age Group and Country - A

	How patriotic are you?				Children should be taught respect for the national flag at school			
	Extremely/Very Patriotic		Somewhat/Not Very Patriotic		Strongly/Somewhat agree		Strongly/Somewhat Disagree	
	Japan (%)	USA (%)	Japan (%)	USA (%)	Japan (%)	USA (%)	Japan (%)	USA (%)
Age Group								
16-25	3	2	1	2	1	4	2	0
26-35	7	7	5	4	6	10	6	1
36-45	12	15	5	6	10	19	7	1
46-55	17	16	4	6	16	21	5	2
56-65	20	14	3	3	20	16	4	1
66 and older	21	22	2	3	21	25	2	1
Total	80	77	20	23	74	94	26	6

**Table 7.** Nationalist Attitudes by Age Group and Country - B

	In time of crisis should support leaders even if they are wrong				In time of crisis citizens should be willing to give up freedoms			
	Strongly/Somewhat agree		Strongly/Somewhat Disagree		Strongly/Somewhat agree		Strongly/Somewhat Disagree	
	Japan (%)	USA (%)	Japan (%)	USA (%)	Japan (%)	USA (%)	Japan (%)	USA (%)
Age Group								
16-25	1	2	2	2	1	2	2	2
26-35	4	7	8	3	7	8	6	3
36-45	7	13	10	7	10	15	6	6
46-55	9	14	12	8	13	14	8	8
56-65	13	11	10	7	16	13	7	4
66 and older	14	18	9	7	16	21	7	5
Total	49	66	51	34	64	72	36	28

especially in a country where levels of distrust toward the entire political class and the state itself remain exceptionally high (Tamamoto, 2001: 40).

On a related note, the findings contradict one of the most fashionable theses in the recent literature on Japanese nationalism, namely the thesis of an emerging 'youth' nationalism in Japan (see Honda, 2007). According to this thesis, the generations that are most removed from the experience of the Second World War have recently displayed nationalist tendencies and a general shift toward the political right. The examples that are cited as evidence of this trend include the fanatical support of the national soccer team in international competitions, the increase in young people worshipping at Yasukuni shrine, and the popularity of the comic book *Ken-Kanryu* (*Hating the Korean Wave*) (Honda, 2007: 281). However, as it is evidenced by our findings in tables 6 and 7, for every separate nationalism-related item the younger age groups in both countries exhibit much less nationalistic tendencies than the older cohorts, thus reaffirming the finding of our regression analyses that there is a strong positive relationship between age and nationalist attitudes. Furthermore, this trend appears to be even stronger in Japan than in the United States, especially when it comes to the questions of patriotism and the need to respect the national flag. This finding is consistent with our previous argument regarding the relative ambivalence of the Japanese people towards the state and its symbols, while clearly disconfirming any notion of a rising tide of 'youth' nationalism in Japan.

## *Conclusion*

In this study we set out to examine the general thesis that explanatory models of nationalism can greatly benefit from the consideration and inclusion of subjective factors such as threat perception. In particular, we investigated the performance of competing models of nationalism that incorporated materialistic, ethnocultural and global perceived threats. Indeed, our findings support the theoretical arguments that focus on ethnocultural, existential and global perceived threats as key subjective factors in the explanation of nationalist attitudes. Conversely, materialistic threat perception did not do much to improve the explanatory power of objective social and demographic factors. The latter finding runs counter to a big portion of the globalization literature. Structural and interest-based explanations

of nationalism dominate the globalization literature. Specifically, these accounts posit that the interests of particular social groups are increasingly threatened by the integration of global markets, thus making them more susceptible to nationalist ideas and political platforms that promise to reverse the tide of globalization.

However, as discussed above, individuals are more likely to identify strongly with their nation and support nationalist ideals when they perceive a greatest sense of danger towards their national identity and sense of personal security posed by external actors. In practice, this means that upsurges in nationalist sentiments are more likely to be expressed in the form of policy preferences which favor tighter immigration, protectionism in the educational and cultural spheres, as well as strict anti-terrorism laws. Nonetheless, perceived global threat acts as countervailing force, undermining taken-for-granted cognitive and affective ties to the nation-state. New forms of global risks, such as global warming, environmental pollution, or global economic crises, can reduce the confidence levels of individuals in the institutions of the nation-state and propel them to contemplate and support post-national solutions, in the form of more effective and inclusive (and thus more legitimate) global or regional institutions.

The contradicting dynamics of these types of threat perception are well exemplified by our two country cases. In the United States, the overwhelming preoccupation with terrorism, the deterioration of the quality of national culture and erosion of national identity can be viewed as largely responsible for high levels of holistic nationalism. On the other hand, the predominance of banal forms of nationalism in Japan can be partly attributed to the higher awareness of the Japanese public of the new global risks and dangers.

In our introduction we laid out the conflicting prognoses about the future of nationalism. Even though it is still too soon to confirm either one of the prognoses, our study helped uncover the particular causal mechanisms and inner-dynamics of the opposing forces. Globalization brings forth not only new forms of reality, but perhaps more importantly, new perceptions of it. Our study suggests that the future of nationalism, and thus, the nation-state, will be at least partially determined by the resonance of the different understandings of the risks and dangers that define our rapidly globalizing society.

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