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## **Public Support for Military Actions against Terrorism: The Effects of Age, Generations, and Political Orientations\***

*Abstract:* This paper focuses on attitudes of Poles toward military interventions exercised by Polish troops in foreign countries. Specifically, we study the impact of age, generations, political biographies, and political orientations on mass support for military actions that have been framed in public debate and in the media as attempts to curtail or eliminate terrorism. Using data from the Polish Panel Study, POLPAN 2003–2008, we demonstrate that support for military actions depends on views on the political nature of terrorism, life experiences related to age/period, generational effects as defined by demographic cohorts and historical events, political biographies, and stances toward democracy and a market economy. These results are robust for 2003 and 2008. Although there is a significant decline of support for military actions through time, opinions expressed in 2003 strongly influence those expressed five years later. The longitudinal nature of our data allows us to show the effects of interactions of time-related variables on support for military actions in the most recent period, 2008. Effects of age on support for military action in 2008 depend on individuals' stances on this issue in 2003, after the invasion of Iraq. Among those who were strong supporters of military action in the past, current support does not diminish with age. Among those who did not support military action in the past, however, current support quickly decreases with age.

*Keywords:* attitudes toward terrorism; support for military actions; age; generations; political orientations; Poland.

### **Introduction**

Since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, not only the U.S. but also other countries have been “at war” with Afghanistan, Iraq, and terrorism more generally. Poland participated in the “war on terror” from the very beginning, when Operation Enduring Freedom was launched in Afghanistan in October 2001. Later on, Poland intensified its involvement, particularly after the U.S. invasion of Iraq in March 2003.

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\* This paper resulted from research supported by a grant from the Mershon Center for International Security Studies at The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio. Data come from the Polish Panel Survey, POPLAN, financed by the (Polish) Committee for Scientific Research and the (Polish) Ministry of Science and Higher Education. Additional support was provided by the United States Information Agency, the (US) National Council of Eurasia and East European Research, and the Research Council of Norway. Earlier versions of this paper were presented at seminars at The Ohio State University and Polish Academy of Sciences. Authors wish to thank Tadeusz T. Krauze, Henryk Domański, Paweł Sztabiński, Franciszek Sztabiński, Krzysztof Zagórski, Irina Tomescu-Dubrow, and Małgorzata Mikucka for their involvement in various aspects of the project.

In the case of Poland, the Government's decisions to deploy armed forces abroad, either under the NATO umbrella or through other international arrangements, were taken without public consultation. As in other countries, in Poland mass support for these actions diminished over time.<sup>1</sup>

In this paper we focus on the varied responses of the general public in Poland toward military interventions at two time points: 2003 (just after the invasion of Iraq when Polish troops were sent there) and 2008 (when Polish troops were practically withdrawn). How might one explain why some Poles strongly supported using military actions against terrorism while others did not? What variables are important determinants of these opinions? What accounts for change of opinions on this matter? Do analyses of survey data confirm standard hypotheses on the formation of this type of opinions, or is a new theory needed? In this paper we seek to answer these questions by analyzing longitudinal data and speculating on the implications of our results.

Research on public support for military actions against terrorism has been preceded by small scale surveys on attitudes toward terrorism as such (see, Verdi and Tekooshian 1993; Takooshian and Verdi 1995). In the late 1990s Kuzma (2000) conducted a poll to assess the American public's understanding of sources and threats of terrorism in the United States. After September 11, 2001, public opinion surveys regarding attitudes toward terrorism and ways of combating it were conducted in various countries, from Australia and Canada (Todd and Casey 2005) to China (Shen and Liu 2009). However, after an extensive search of the extant literature, we were unable to find research employing panel data on these issues. The longitudinal nature of our data allows us to show the effects of interactions of time-related variables on support for military actions in 2008.

### Historical and Theoretical Background

On July 17, 2002, President George W. Bush, addressing Polish President Aleksander Kwaśniewski in the White House, thanked Poland for its help in fighting global terrorism. Bush said: "From military forces to law enforcement, terrorist financing and intelligence, Poland's support and solidarity in this great struggle has been unqualified."<sup>2</sup> Indeed, since the 1999 UN Security Council Resolution on Combating Terrorism (Resolution #1269), Poland has been deeply involved in international cooperative efforts against terrorist activities. Here is a brief chronology of such involvement:

1. Poland's response to the events of September 11, 2001 was immediate and decisive. It demonstrated specific readiness to help the U.S. with military action against terrorism—what was announced in the American press with such titles as "NATO's New Members Support U.S. Aims, with Poland Likely to Send Military Units" (*Wall Street Journal*, November 5, 2001). At the end of 2001 similar announcements appeared in the Polish press.

<sup>1</sup> For documentation of the decline worldwide in support of military actions in Afghanistan and Iraq, see e.g., Miller (2001); Pew Research Center (2007, 2008); BBC World Service (2007).

<sup>2</sup> See, <http://usinfo.state.gov/topical/pol/nato/02071706.htm>; last accessed on November 5, 2009.

2. On November 6, 2001, the Polish government organized an international conference in Warsaw on combating terrorism, in which the heads of states of Central, Eastern and South-eastern European countries took part. President Bush presented his arguments in a televised speech. Poland played a crucial role in shaping the documents of this conference that provided unequivocal support for the strengthening of international co-operation and development of new measures to fight terrorism.

3. Poland, as a partner in Operation Enduring Freedom, played an important role with respect to mine clearing in and around the Bagram airport in Afghanistan and provided Special Forces in connection with maritime interdiction. It was claimed that sending 300 sappers, chemical and biological warfare experts, and logistics-supporting warships to Afghanistan cost no less than 15 million U.S. dollars for each six months period. Since December 2001, Poland has expanded its military support to Afghanistan.

4. On September 23, 2002, during a meeting with Polish President Aleksander Kwaśniewski, Prime Minister Leszek Miller, and Defense Minister Jerzy Szmajdziński, U.S. Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld described the U.S.-Polish military-to-military partnership in combating international terrorism as “a strong one, a healthy one, and one which is evolving very favorably.”<sup>3</sup> During this meeting, military intervention in Iraq was discussed.

5. In late September, 2002, in his weekly radio address, President George W. Bush counted Poland’s President Aleksander Kwaśniewski among those world leaders who shared his views on Saddam Hussein’s regime. Subsequently, Prime Minister Leszek Miller declared Poland’s support for a possible U.S. intervention in Iraq as part of combating international terrorism.

6. In January, 2003, during his visit to the U.S., President Aleksander Kwaśniewski expressed support for U.S. policy to combat international terrorism, including a possible U.S. intervention in Iraq. His position was debated in the Polish parliament.

In the political discourse presented in the main-stream mass media, terrorism is portrayed in very broad terms. Analyses of the Polish mass media show that the predominant notion of terrorism refers to threats and/or uses of violence against the civilian population to achieve political ends by collectives of individuals, clandestine organizations, or states (Berent 2003; Goban-Klas 2009). In this understanding, terrorism involves activities such as assassinations, bombings, random killings, hijackings, skyjackings, as well as preparation for such actions by hiding weapons, including weapons of mass destruction. Polish mass media stress that various forms of terrorism are used for political purposes rather than for defined military gains, even if state actors are involved. In 2001–2003, projecting such an understanding of terrorism, military interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq were discussed in the Polish mass media as “cases” of combating international terrorism (Berent 2003).<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> See, [http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Sep2002/n09232002\\_200209234.html](http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Sep2002/n09232002_200209234.html); last accessed on November 5, 2009.

<sup>4</sup> During 2001–2003 the topic of terrorism was very frequently reported and discussed in the press. In this period, in one of the leading daily newspapers, *Rzeczpospolita*, the term “terrorism” was used in over 2,000 publications, i.e., several times per publication per day. In another newspaper, *Gazeta Wyborcza*,

However, mass support in Poland for military combat against international terrorism—even at the beginning of the “war on terror”—was far from uniform or consistent. We present here two examples of diversity and implied incongruence of opinions:

1. In December 2001, a national sample of Poles was asked the following question: “Do you agree that Poland should take part with the United States in military action against Afghanistan?” About 48 percent agreed, and about 41 percent disagreed. Only one third of the adult population expressed no fear that the war could get out of control and, in a sense, become counterproductive. Less than half of the population was afraid of any terrorist bomb attacks in public places in the future. Almost thirty percent believed that “terrorists deserve the same rights as other criminals.” Generally, correlations between different items proved to be weak (CBOS 2001).

2. At the end of September 2002, only 35 percent of Poles spoke in favor of Poland’s support for a possible U.S. intervention in Iraq. Around 45 percent of Poles were against such action. At the same time, 32 percent of the respondents said that in case of intervention in Iraq the destruction of plants producing biological weapons and terrorists’ camps would be justifiable. Also, 32 percent said that such an attack would be justified if approved by the United Nations. Twenty-eight percent said occupation of Iraq by the U.S. and the removal from power of Saddam Hussein would be justified. (CBOS 2002).

We argue here that diversity and implied incongruence of opinions regarding military actions against terrorism do not represent a “non-attitude problem.”<sup>5</sup> Both qualitative and quantitative research demonstrates that a large majority of the adult population in Poland is able not only to express its opinion on this matter but also to justify it. Indeed, as indicated by a number of public opinion polls, just after September 11, 2001 terrorism and actions to combat it have been among the most discussed issues in Poland. Thus, it is safe to assume that the “non-attitude problem” is absent in this case.

Rather, we make the assumption that mass preferences with respect to combating terrorism reflect an integration of cognitive images of the threat, as well as individuals’ experiences and predispositions. In this regard, we follow Herrmann, Tetlock, and Visser’s (1999) cognitive-interactionist model. According to this model, “people adapt broad predispositions in relatively thoughtful ways to specific foreign policy problems” (533). It combines situational and dispositional factors affecting mass attitudes that are extensively discussed in the literature (e.g., Hurwitz and Peffley 1987; Page and Shapiro 1992; Nincic 1992; Holsti 1992; Foyle 1997; Sniderman, Tetlock, and Elms 1999; for a review of main arguments, see Herrmann, Tetlock, and Visser 1999).

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the count of words identifying terrorist targets also exceeded 2,000. For the same period, we found in *Gazeta Wyborcza* 35 articles in which terrorism was discussed in the context of religious fanaticism, and 41 articles in which terrorism was presented as a result of unsolved social and political problems. Some authors argue that in the Polish mass media post 9/11 terrorism has been equated with Islam (e.g., Berent 2003, Stefaniuk 2006).

<sup>5</sup> This problem arises if opinions expressed in surveys are “merely reflecting non-attitudes, labile moods, and/or methodological artifacts” (Smith 1994: 187). This problem was originally formulated by Converse (1970).

Poland is an especially suitable case for testing this model—presented at the end of the next section of this paper—since the legacies of the communist past and the post-communist transition produced clear social divisions reflected in generational and political identities.

### Research Hypotheses and Framework for Data Analyses

For several decades successive generations in Poland have been exposed to different meanings of the concept “terrorism.” Those Poles who remember the Second World War know that Nazis treated all members of resistance movements as “terrorists.” Older generations also remember that the majority of Polish society considered the Nazi occupation as a terrorist act toward the civilian population. After the war, in 1945–1948, anti-communist groups in the southern part of Poland were labeled “terrorists” by the new pro-Soviet government. In 1950–1953, during the height of the Stalinist period in Poland, many Poles used the term “state-terrorism” in their homes to describe the political situation of that time. Later on, in description of the events in Poznan in 1956, in Gdansk in 1970, and in Radom in 1976—all involving clashes between police and civilians which resulted in casualties—the term “terrorism” was used by both the communist authorities and by opposition groups to describe the actions of the other side. The period of martial law in Poland, 1981–1983, evoked a strong association with state-sponsored terrorism and this term has been used in public descriptions of some police actions of that period. But not all Poles defined martial law in terms of terrorism. Those who supported this law avoided such a description, although they rarely used the term “terrorists” to describe persons involved in clandestine organizations at that time. Finally, for the generations that came of age in 1989 or later, the term terrorism appears in mass media pertaining mainly to events outside of Poland.<sup>6</sup>

The communist legacy and its re-definition are particularly important here. One can agree that the political crisis of the communist system resulted in a divide labeled *the state against society* (Ekiert 1996). However, presently the meaning of this phrase is frequently distorted, at least in comparison with its origin. Currently in Poland, according to some conservative politicians, the communist state should be described in the same terms as clearly terrorist international organizations such as al-Qaida. Moreover, such extreme views are not limited to Poland; if expressed outside of Poland, sometimes they resonate in Polish politics. For example, former U.S. president George W. Bush compared the totalitarian (communist) regimes in East Europe to al-Qaida in the following way: “We see the same intolerance of dissent, the same mad

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<sup>6</sup> By providing this extended account of different usages of the terms “terrorism” and “terrorists” in Poland, we do not claim that subsequent generations have absorbed and retain appropriate meanings to these usages. However, we hypothesize that because of these different usages there could be observable shift in meanings.

global ambitions, the same brutal determination to control every life and all of life.”<sup>7</sup> This statement was positively received by several right-wing Polish politicians.

Would former communist party members, whose most active years of adult life fall into the period of 1965–1975, agree with the comparison of the old communist regime with al-Qaida? The answer to this question “probably not” seems trivial. One can speculate that their definition of terrorism differs from the definition of those who were engaged in the opposition movement, in Solidarity activities in particular. Generally, it is likely that individuals’ understanding of terrorism depends not only on age-related experiences of respondents but also on their political biographies and identities. Moreover, an analysis of existing data suggests that subjective definitions of terrorism influence the extent of support for using military force against groups who are seen as current or potential threats (CBOS 2001).

In this study, we distinguish among five types of variables:

Y—Support for military action against terrorism. This is our dependent variable pertaining to the use of armed forces against 9/11 targets.

U—Understanding terrorism in political terms: Whether people believe that who is labeled as a terrorist depends on current interpretation of national and sub-national interests, or that the definition of a terrorist is somehow free of being controlled and stage-managed.

G—Generations measured in objective terms: a generation refers to historically determined experiences of an age-cohort.

P—Political stances: attitudes toward democracy and a market economy.

A—Age.

B—Political biographies: past membership in the Polish United Workers Party and Solidarity.

Figure 1 provides hypothesized relationships among our variables. According to our assumptions, support for military actions (Y) is explained by one’s understanding of terrorism (U), generations (G), political stances (P), age (A), and political biographies (B). The initial equation that we estimate is the following:

$$Y = a + b_1U + b_2G + b_3P + b_4A + b_5B + e$$

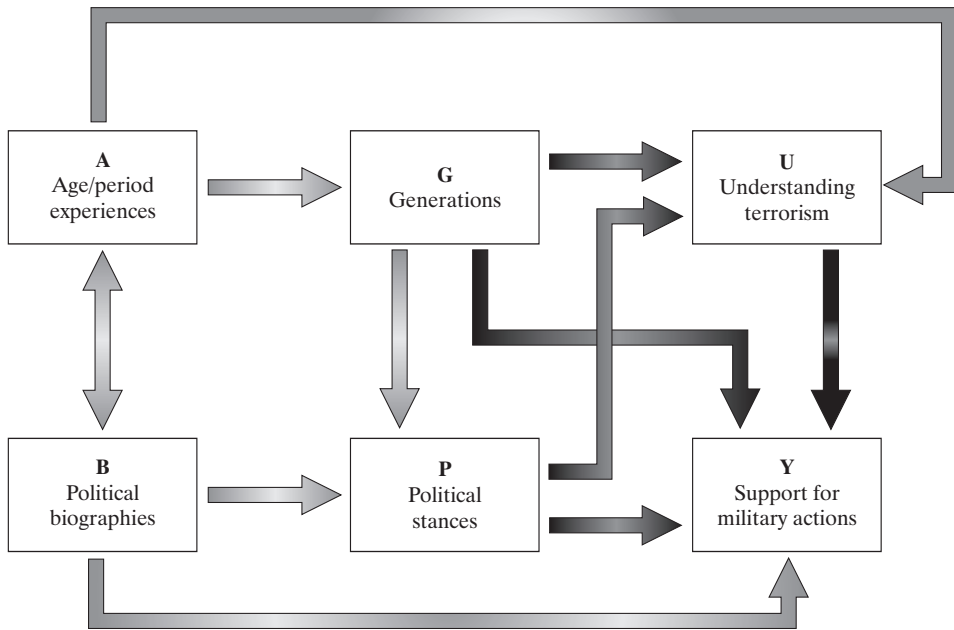
where  $a$  is a constant and  $e$  refers to the random error.

Here we advance two pairs of contradictory hypotheses:

1. *Ambivalence Hypothesis vs. “Hard Reality” Hypothesis.* According to the former, those individuals with relatively high education, who belong to young generations, and who hold pro-democratic and pro-market attitudes tend to see terrorism in political terms. The main basis for this hypothesis stems from cognitive social psychology. As research shows, the better educated and younger people are, in general, more open-minded, anti-authoritarian, and tolerant; their intellectual flexibility allows them to see the complex nature of social phenomena, often leading them to ambivalent judgments. However, the “ambivalence” hypothesis can be contrasted with the “hard

<sup>7</sup> See, [http://www.boston.com/news/daily/06/attacks\\_bush.html](http://www.boston.com/news/daily/06/attacks_bush.html); last accessed on November 5, 2009.

Figure 1  
**Hypothesized Relationships Among Main Variables Explaining Support  
 for Military Actions Against Terrorism**



reality” perspective. Presumably, this perspective can be shared by those with relatively high education, belonging to young generations, and having pro-democratic and pro-market attitudes—definitely, the winners of the post-communist transformation in Poland in both the ideological and the material sense. Relatively well versed in international news regarding common threats presented by global terrorism and terrorists, as described by the most popular among the leading Western media outlets, they opt for an active stance against danger, which they perceive as real and already well-defined on the international arena as an ominous challenge to the “Western way of life” they want to enjoy and see continued. Thus, according to the “hard reality” hypothesis, persons with relatively high education, belonging to young generations, and those who hold pro-democratic and pro-market attitudes would oppose the view that labeling someone a terrorist depends on current politics and propaganda.

*2. Liberal Opposition Hypothesis vs. Defending Interests Hypothesis.* A predominant view of politicians and mass media is that opposition against using armed forces for solving political conflicts is likely to be expressed by the well-educated, younger persons, and those who hold strong democratic and pro-market stances—in short, “liberals.” The traditional anti-war movements were rooted in this social base. On this basis one might expect that good education, belonging to young cohorts, subscribing to democratic and pro-market values, as well as viewing terrorism in political terms, would have a *negative effect* on support for military action against terrorism. However, another scenario is also possible. Assume that (1) “liberals” are strong defenders

of democracy and a market economy; (2) they see that democracy and a market economy are endangered by current terrorist movements; and (3) they believe that the most efficient way to diminish the terrorist threat is through the use of military actions. Under these assumptions the expected effect of pro-democratic and pro-market attitudes, for example, on support for military actions against terrorism will be *positive*.

### **Data and Measurement**

To address the issue of support for military actions against terrorism, we analyze a new data set on Poland that comes from the POLPAN panel survey, which the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences supported and administered. The initial survey was conducted in 1988 on a random (probability) sample of the adult Polish population aged 21 to 65. Four subsequent waves of the survey were conducted in 1993, 1998, 2003, and 2008. The core of the 1988-2008 sample consists of respondents 41 years of age or older in 2008. However, in all waves after 1993 new sub-samples of younger respondents were also interviewed. Adding the sub-samples of persons who were 21 to 25 years of age in 2003 and similarly in 2008 makes the entire sample at these times representative of the adult population of Poland. The POLPAN questionnaire includes items regarding both individuals' understanding of terrorism (U) and support for military actions to combat terrorism (Y). It also contains well-established measures of generations and political stances (G and P). In addition, we use age/period experiences (A) as well as political biographies (B). We describe these variables in some detail.

#### **Dependent Variable: Support for Military Actions against Terrorism**

The key POLPAN question about support for military action against terrorism is straightforward: "Do you think that Poland should take part in military actions against terrorism (a) only when there is a direct danger for our country, (b) even if there is no such danger, or (c) Poland should not take part in military actions against terrorism." We assume that answer (b) is a sign of unconditional support for military actions against terrorism (strong support), answer (a) indicates conditional support (weak support), and answer (c) refers to a lack of support. In Table 1 we provide a distribution of answers to this question, together with appropriate data from the Public Opinion Research Center (CBOS).

To avoid any misinterpretation of our results, we want to make a few key points about this question. First, it does not refer to any specific country in which actions against terrorism could take place, Afghanistan and Iraq in particular. Second, it does not stipulate the context in which the Polish military could be used, such as a participation in NATO operations or joining the United States in conducting an undeclared war. However, it is safe to assume that the term "terrorism" was understood in the context



Table 1

**Distribution of Support for Military Actions in the Polish Panel Data (POLPAN, 2003 and 2008) and in the Data from the Public Opinion Research Center (CBOS, around 2003 and 2008)**

	POLPAN general question on support for military actions <sup>a</sup>		CBOS question on support for military action in Afghanistan <sup>b</sup>		CBOS question on support for Polish troops in Iraq <sup>c</sup>	
	2003	2008	2002	2008	2003	2007
	Proportions					
Strong support	0.312	0.226	0.247	0.063	0.138	0.052
Weak support	0.534	0.487	0.596	0.484	0.553	0.433
Lack of support	0.154	0.286	0.157	0.453	0.329	0.515
Sum	1.000	1.000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
Number of cases	1,619	1,457	992	1,100	1,106	1,343

<sup>a</sup> Question: *Do you think that Poland should take part in military actions against terrorism (a) only when there is a direct danger for our country, (b) even if there is no such danger, or (c) Poland should not take part in military actions against terrorism.* We assume that answer (b) is a sign of unconditional support for military actions against terrorism (strong support), answer (a) indicates conditional support (weak support), and answer (c) refers to lack of support.

<sup>b</sup> Question: *Do you support participation of Polish troops in the NATO operation in Afghanistan?* We grouped the answers as follows: Decisively yes = strong support; somewhat yes + somewhat not = weak support; decisively not = lack of support. Not having strictly comparable data for 2003, we rely on data for 2002, with similar, but not identical, wording of the question. See, CBOS 2002 (Table 1, X 2003), CBOS 2008 (Table 1, II 2008). We recalculated proportions omitting “hard to say” from the base.

<sup>c</sup> Question: *Do you support participation of Polish troops in Iraq, or not?* We grouped the answers as follows: Decisively yes = strong support; somewhat yes + somewhat not = weak support; decisively not = lack of support. See CBOS 2007 (Table 1, X 2003, VIII 2007). We recalculated proportions omitting “hard to say” from the base.

of post-September 11, 2001 threats since it was asked during the period of an ongoing public debate about the likelihood of such events.

Responses to this question in the 2003 and 2008 waves of the POLPAN survey show a significant decline in strong support for military actions against terrorism, from 31.2 percent in 2003 to 22.6 percent in 2008, accompanied by an increase in the lack of support, from 14.4 to 28.6 percent, respectively. As the CBOS data demonstrate, opposition to the use of Polish troops for specific missions in Afghanistan and Iraq is even greater. According to these data, for a comparative time interval strong support slipped to around 5 percent and the complete lack of support for such military involvement is in the range of 45–50 percent.<sup>8</sup> Thus, the more generally formulated question in the POLPAN study produced less opposition against the use of armed forces.

<sup>8</sup> Such a dramatic decline occurred in other countries, including the United States. In spring 2003 over 70% of adult Americans stated that the decision to use military force in Iraq was right, while in February 2008 this proportion dropped to 38% (Pew Research Center 2008). Bloch-Elkon (2007) documented that American confidence in the Bush administration’s ability to combat terrorism had declined rapidly from 2001 to the end of 2005. For details, see AEI (2007). For other parts of the world, see Terror Free Tomorrow: The Center for Public Opinion (TFT-CPO), which conducts research worldwide on attitudes toward extremism and curtailing it ([www.TerrorFreeTomorrow.org](http://www.TerrorFreeTomorrow.org), last accessed December 19, 2006).

### Viewing Terrorism in Political Terms

In the 2003 POLPAN questionnaire one item aimed at measuring the extent to which respondents viewed terrorism as subject to political interpretation rather than defined somehow independently from current political interests. Thus, respondents were presented with the statement “*Who is labeled a terrorist depends on current politics and propaganda*” and asked whether they agreed or disagreed with it, using a five-point scale. The distribution of answers resembles a normal distribution, with 12.7 percent strongly agreeing with the statement, 31.7 percent somewhat agreeing, 31 percent neither agreeing nor disagreeing, 16.2 percent somewhat disagreeing, and 8.4 strongly disagreeing. We treat this variable as Likert-type, assigning arbitrary consecutive numbers from 1 (strongly disagreeing) to 5 (strongly agreeing). For the total sample, the mean value is 3.24, with a standard deviation of 1.12.

### Age and Generations

This paper does not aim at a rigorous analysis of age-period-cohort effects since a too short time-span has elapsed for our dependent variable: support for military actions against terrorism. Instead, we focus on the effects of age and generations (capturing time/period experiences) in a rather blunt manner. Age, measured in years, is an interval variable which might be related to our dependent variable in a non-linear fashion. Generations are dummy variables and for each one the effect could be unique in terms of its magnitude, resulting in complicated patterns.

Table 2 provides the list of generations included in our analyses. We define five cohorts: “the Second World War generation,” “the socialist-state generation,” “Solidarity generation,” “radical social change generation,” and the “post-communist generation.” The end of WWII, the events of 1968, the repression of Solidarity, the fall of communism, and the beginning of economic stabilization in 1993 are the main historical events defining these generations, respectively.

Table 2

**Generations Defined by Demographic Cohorts, Historical Events, and Respondent’s Age.  
POLPAN Sample, 2003**

Generation	Year of birth	Events, year	Age at the event	Age in 2003	N (%)
Second World War	1920–1933	End of war, 1945	12–25	70–83	184 (10.8)
Socialist state	1934–1948	Events of 1968	20–34	55–69	417 (24.5)
Solidarity	1949–1960	Solidarity Repressed, 1981	21–32	43–54	487 (28.7)
Radical social change	1961–1971	Fall of communism, 1989	18–28	32–42	245 (14.4)
Post-communist	1972–1982	Economic stabilization, 1993	16–26	21–31	366 (21.5)

### Political Orientations

In an earlier study (Shabad and Slomczynski 2000), we constructed complex political biographies of Poles based upon their adulthood experiences during the commu-

nist regime. We demonstrated that past membership in the communist party (Polish United Workers' Party) and in the opposition movement (Solidarity) did not produce divergent attitudes toward democracy and a market economy, at least in the initial stage of the post-communist transition. One of our conclusions from this earlier study was that the basic elements of political biographies—past membership in the communist party and in Solidarity—should be included into analyses independently of individuals' more current political stances.

In this paper, membership in the communist party and in Solidarity is established on the basis of recall information provided by respondents during the 1993 interview. Of course, the proportions of respondents in the 2008 wave of the panel study who in 1993 reported having been members of the communist party and of Solidarity are small, 13.6% and 23.2%, respectively.

In addition, for 2003 and 2008 we produced two scales measuring attitudes toward democracy and a market economy (see Table 3). These are abbreviated versions of scales used in previous analyses of POLPAN data (Slomczynski and Shabad 2002; Marquart-Pyatt 2007; Glass and Marquart-Pyatt 2007), based on standard items. As mean values of these items show, there is not much difference between 2003 and 2008 in degree of support for principles of democracy and a market economy. Factor loadings are relatively high ( $\lambda > 0.5$ ), and overall the measurement models fit the data well in terms of eigenvalues and proportion of explained variance.

### Analyses

Our analyses provide strong and convincing evidence that generations differ in their view of terrorism. In comparison with the reference category, the "Solidarity generation," namely those born between 1949 and 1960, older generations tend to agree with the statement that who is labeled a terrorist depends on politics and propaganda. In contrast, the effect of belonging to younger generations is negative. This supports the hypothesis that those who, through their life course, were exposed to the identification of varied target groups as terrorists understand the political nature of this phenomenon. New generations tend to opt for a more settled, "less manipulable" definition of a terrorist since the predominant message which they have been exposed to equates terrorists with "bad extremists" who "use unacceptable weapons for unacceptable goals."<sup>9</sup> Although the effects of generations are not very strong, they are statistically significant when controlled by gender, education, and age. They retain significance even when political biographies and political stances are taken into account (cf. Model I and Model II in Table 4).

It is not surprising that the effects of former membership in the communist party and in Solidarity are opposite. Communist party membership enhances a more settled

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<sup>9</sup> This formulation appeared during interviews in the focus group conducted prior to the construction of the 2003-version of the POLPAN questionnaire. These interviews were a part of pre-testing procedures of the main POLPAN study. The focus group of people 21–26 discussed the issue of terrorism and attitudes toward it.

Table 3

**Factor Analysis of Pro-democracy and Pro-market Items, POLPAN Sample 2003 and 2008**

Variables	2003			2008		
	Mean	Standard deviation	Factor loading	Mean	Standard deviation	Factor loading
<i>Pro-democracy factor</i>						
Majority rule <sup>a</sup>	3.697	1.180	0.662	3.700	1.094	0.633
Concessions for problem solving <sup>b</sup>	4.145	0.898	0.769	4.001	0.903	0.780
Minority right to criticize <sup>c</sup>	4.184	0.918	0.662	3.857	1.014	0.692
Fit statistics	Eigenvalue = 1.40, % var = 46.6			Eigenvalue = 1.49, % var = 49.6		
<i>Pro-market factor</i>						
Prices depend only on the market <sup>d</sup>	0.294	0.456	0.598	0.249	0.422	0.504
Income differentials unlimited <sup>e</sup>	2.239	1.188	0.759	2.156	1.088	0.789
No state intervention in jobs <sup>f</sup>	1.662	0.992	0.765	1.837	1.010	0.803
Fit statistics	Eigenvalue = 1.52, % var = 50.6			Eigenvalue = 1.52, % var = 50.7		

<sup>a</sup> Democracy means that after the election the minority must yield to the majority. Scale from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1).

<sup>b</sup> In politics, mutual concessions are the best way of solving difficult problems. Scale from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1).

<sup>c</sup> In politics the minority should have an unlimited right to criticize decisions made by the majority. Scale from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1).

<sup>d</sup> Do you think that (a) prices for basic food products should depend only on the market and not be under governmental control, or (b) prices for basic food products should be under the government's control? Alternative (a) = 1, otherwise = 0.

<sup>e</sup> The state should aim at reducing differences in people's income. Scale from strongly agree (1) to strongly disagree (5).

<sup>f</sup> The state should provide jobs to everyone who wants to work. Scale from strongly agree (1) to strongly disagree (5).

definition of terrorists since the ideology of this party presented all political events in a non-ambivalent, "white-and-black" manner. In contrast, members of Solidarity were accustomed to seeing how the depiction of "reality" was subject to political manipulation, as was so often the case regarding their activity in the pre-1989 period.

The effects of generational belonging and political biography are independent of the effects of pro-democracy and pro-market attitudes. Persons who score relatively high on the pro-democracy scale tend to understand terrorism in political terms. The opposite is the case, however, with regard to attitudes toward the market: those who score high on the pro-market scale tend to reject the notion that the definition of a terrorist depends on politics and propaganda.

Table 5 presents results for support of military actions against terrorism in 2003. The data show that men, persons with relatively high education, and those who score high on pro-democracy and pro market scales tended to approve the use of force. Younger generations are less inclined to be supportive than older generations.

In Table 6, which pertains to support of military actions against terrorism in 2008, we included only a subset of variables initially considered in our theoretical model. After preliminary analyses, we eliminated variables related to political biographies—

Table 4

**Regression of the Scale of Understanding Terrorism in Political Terms (U) on Age (A), Generations (G), Political Biographies (B), and Political Stances (P). POLPAN Sample, 2003**

Independent Variables	Model I			Model II		
	B	SE	Beta	B	SE	Beta
<i>Basic control variables</i>						
Gender (male = 1)	0.086	0.062	0.036	0.097	0.069	0.040
Education (years of schooling)	-0.037	0.011	-0.089***	-0.020	0.011	-0.047*
<i>Age (A)</i>						
Age (years)	0.040	0.033	0.523	0.040	0.033	0.523
Age square	-0.008	0.003	-0.073*	-0.006	0.003	-0.694*
<i>Generations (G)</i>						
Generation born 1920–1933	0.694	0.301	0.168**	0.715	0.323	0.167**
Generation born 1934–1948	0.322	0.142	0.114**	0.373	0.150	0.132**
Generation born 1961–1971	-0.222	0.125	-0.066*	-0.342	0.157	-0.101**
Generation born 1972–1982	-0.108	0.284	-0.036	-0.037	0.311	-0.013
<i>Political biographies (B)</i>						
Communist party member (yes = 1)	—	—	—	-0.230	0.116	-0.059**
“Solidarity” member (yes = 1)	—	—	—	0.179	0.194	0.055**
<i>Political stances (P)</i>						
Pro-democracy scale, 2003	—	—	—	0.080	0.033	0.067***
Pro-market scale, 2003	—	—	—	-0.006	0.002	-0.072***
<i>Constant</i>	2.546	0.841	—	2.806	0.921	—

\* p &lt; 0.10

\*\* p &lt; 0.05

\*\*\* p &lt; 0.01

past membership in the communist party and in Solidarity—since with the passage of time they proved to be insignificant. We also eliminated the set of dummy variables for generations, not only because their effects were insignificant but also because they exactly paralleled the effects of age. Thus, in the final model we included age and the interaction term of age and support for military actions against terrorism in 2003. The reason for doing so is that the effect of age on support for the deployment of the military to combat terrorism in 2008 depends on the level of support for such actions five years earlier. Figure 2 provides an illustration of this relationship, expressed in terms of probabilities of strong support.

Figure 2 is based on the logistic regression in which the dependent variable is expressed as  $Y_t = \log(p/1-p)$  where  $p$  is a probability of strong support for military action in 2008. Age ( $A$ ), support of military action in 2003 ( $Y_{t-1}$ ), and the interaction term  $A \times Y_{t-1} = Z$  are dependent variables. The solution is given by:

$$(Y_t = \log p/1 - p) = -2.474 - 0.031 \times A + 0.523 \times Y_{t-1} + 0.013 \times Z$$

with  $R = 0.146$ , and 76.6% overall correct predictions. For this model, the likelihood function value increased significantly (at  $p < 0.05$ ) in comparison with the base model.

Table 5

**Regression of the Scale of Support for Military Actions (Y) on Age (A), Generations (G), Political Biographies (B), Political Stances (P), and Understanding Terrorism in Political Terms (U). POLPAN Sample, 2003**

Independent Variables	Model I <sup>a</sup>			Model II <sup>b</sup>		
	B	SE	Beta	B	SE	Beta
<i>Basic control variables</i>						
Gender (male = 1)	0.239	0.041	0.181***	0.254	0.043	0.192***
Education (years of schooling)	0.029	0.008	0.129***	0.027	0.008	0.118***
<i>Age (A)</i>						
Age (years)	-0.042	0.021	-0.959**	-0.030	0.021	-0.407
Age square	0.004	0.002	0.796*	0.002	0.002	0.243
<i>Generations (G)</i>						
Generation born 1920–1933	0.063	0.198	0.025	0.062	0.203	0.024
Generation born 1934–1948	0.007	0.087	0.005	0.039	0.091	0.026
Generation born 1961–1971	-0.227	0.093	-0.123***	-0.235	0.093	-0.126***
Generation born 1972–1982	-0.340	0.192	-0.200*	-0.287	0.176	-0.172*
<i>Political biographies</i>						
Communist party member (yes = 1)	-0.003	0.068	-0.001	-0.027	0.070	-0.013
“Solidarity” member (yes = 1)	0.127	0.114	0.034	0.104	0.115	0.029
<i>Political stances (P)</i>						
Pro-democracy, 2003	0.084	0.021	0.123***	0.079	0.022	0.116***
Pro-market, 2003	0.051	0.021	0.078***	0.048	0.022	0.074***
<i>Views of terrorism (U)</i>						
Terrorism in political terms (scale)	—	—	—	0.240	0.069	0.109***
<i>Constant</i>	3.171	0.683	—	2.787	0.700	—

<sup>a</sup>R<sup>2</sup> = 0.095<sup>b</sup>R<sup>2</sup> = 0.104

\* p &lt; 0.10

\*\* p &lt; 0.05

\*\*\* p &lt; 0.01

The interaction term,  $A \times Y_{t-1} = Z$ , allows us to detect the impact of age on the probability of strong support for military action in 2008 dependent on support of military action in 2003. For those who did not support military action at the initial period, we observe a relatively small but systematic and linear decrease in the probability of strong support for military action in 2008 attributable to age. In contrast, for those with strong support for military action in 2003, we observe an increase in the probability of such a level of support in 2008 until respondents reach their mid-60s and then stability in their views. Thus, the interaction term accounts well for intergroup differences in the relationship of age and the probability of strong support for military action in 2008. Clearly, the effects of age on support of military action in 2008 depend on earlier stances on the same matter.

The upper part of Table 6 presents the results of a panel regression in which support for military action in 2008 is the dependent variable while support for military deployment in 2003 is an independent variable. The most important results are

Table 6

**Regression of the Scale of Support for Military Actions in 2008 ( $Y_{2008}$ ) and the Change in Support ( $Y_{2008}-Y_{2003}$ ) on Age (A), Political Stances (P), and Understanding Terrorism in Political Terms (U).  
POLPAN Sample, 2003–2008**

Independent Variables	Model I			Model II		
	B	SE	Beta	B	SE	Beta
<i>Support for Military Actions in 2008 (<math>Y_{2008}</math>)<sup>a</sup></i>						
<i>Basic control variables</i>						
Gender (male = 1)	0.147	0.045	0.105***	0.126	0.042	0.089***
Education	0.022	0.008	0.090***	0.019	0.008	0.077***
Support for military actions, 2003, Z	0.165	0.101	0.155*	0.161	0.101	0.151*
<i>Age (A)</i>						
Age (years), A	-0.002	0.001	-0.036*	-0.002	0.001	-0.053*
Interaction A and Z	0.002	0.001	0.121	0.002	0.002	0.108
<i>Political stances (P)</i>						
Pro-democracy, 2003	0.054	0.023	0.076**	—	—	—
Pro-market, 2003	0.066	0.023	0.097***	—	—	—
Pro-democracy, 2008	—	—	—	0.104	0.021	0.147***
Pro-market, 2008	—	—	—	0.112	0.021	0.165***
<i>Views of terrorism (U)</i>						
Terrorism in political terms (scale)	0.177	0.072	0.067***	0.179	0.067	0.077***
Constant	1.164	0.290	—	1.271	0.278	—
<i>Change in Support for Military Actions between 2008 and (<math>Y_{2008}-Y_{2003}</math>)<sup>b</sup></i>						
<i>Basic control variables</i>						
Gender (male = 1)	0.147	0.045	0.092***	0.126	0.042	0.078***
Education	0.022	0.008	0.079***	0.019	0.008	0.067***
Support for military actions, 2003, Z	-0.835	0.118	-0.688***	-0.839	0.113	-0.685***
<i>Age (A)</i>						
Age (years), A	-0.002	0.001	-0.032*	-0.002	0.001	-0.046*
Interaction A and Z	0.002	0.001	0.106	0.002	0.002	0.095
<i>Political stances (P)</i>						
Pro-democracy, 2003	0.054	0.023	0.066**	—	—	—
Pro-market, 2003	0.066	0.023	0.084***	—	—	—
Pro-democracy, 2008	—	—	—	0.104	0.021	0.128***
Pro-market, 2008	—	—	—	0.112	0.021	0.114***
<i>Views of terrorism (U)</i>						
Terrorism in political terms (scale)	0.177	0.072	0.066***	0.179	0.067	0.067***
Constant	1.164	0.290	—	1.271	0.278	—

<sup>a</sup>Model I,  $R^2 = 0.143$  Model II,  $R^2 = 0.166$

<sup>b</sup>Model I,  $R^2 = 0.343$  Model II,  $R^2 = 0.363$

\*  $p < 0.10$

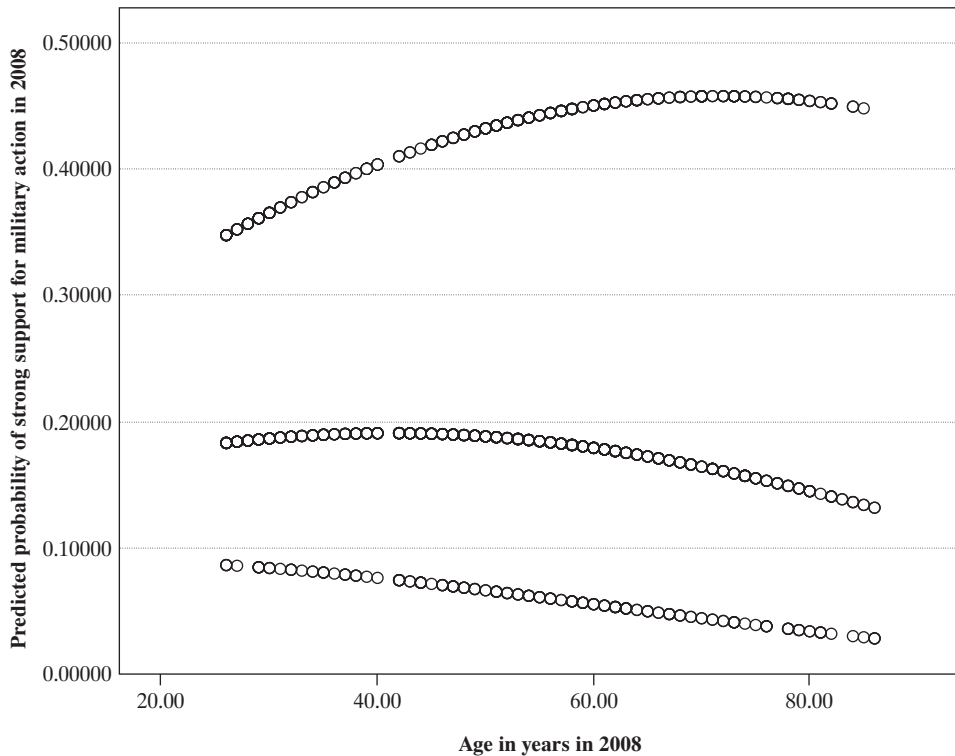
\*\*  $p < 0.05$

\*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

that—like for analyses in the earlier period—pro-democracy and pro-market attitudes influence support for military action. We presented the results for the measurement

Figure 2

**Predicted Probability of Strong Support for Military Actions Dependent on Differentiated Support for Military Action Five Years Earlier**



Three lines refer to support for military actions in 2003. Upper line: strong support; middle line: weak support; bottom line: no support.

of these attitudes in two time points: 2008 and 2003. Overtime correlations of these measures are not particularly high: 0.260 for the pro-democracy scale, and 0.532 for the pro-market scale. However, the measurement of these attitudes for each of the two years produces a similar effect. The effects of lagged variables are more convincing as probable causal effects than the effects of a contemporaneous measurement.

The panel regression presented in the upper part of Table 6 only implicitly deals with the change of opinions between 2003 and 2008. In the lower part of this table we show results for an analysis in which the change score ( $Y_{2008} - Y_{2003}$ ) is the dependent variable. In this model the unstandardized coefficients and standard error for all variables, with the exception of  $Y_{2003}$ , are the same as in the model in the upper part of the table. However, standardized coefficients differ between the panel regression and the change-score regression. Obviously, the effect of the lagged variable of support for military actions in 2003 on the change score is negative and large, larger by far than in the case of other coefficients. What is particularly important to note is that, independently of the effect of the lagged variable, those with stronger pro-democratic



and pro-market attitudes increased their support for military action through time while those with weaker pro-democratic and pro-market attitudes decreased such support. According to the regression coefficients presented in Table 6 those persons who on both the pro-democratic and pro-market scales are above the mean by one standard deviation are expected to have a change score above the mean by around one fourth of a standard deviation. Thus, the finding that pro-democracy and pro-market attitudes influence not only support for military action but also change of opinions in this matter should be considered as unquestionably robust.

### Conclusion

Generally speaking, there is a widespread view that mass-level attitudes with regard to foreign policy issues, as compared to stances toward domestic concerns, tend to be rather shallow, subject to the events of the moment, and, therefore, quite fluid over time. One might expect that such would be the case with stances toward the use of one's own military to combat international terrorism, particularly when one's country has not been directly affected by such acts or is not the likely target of an imminent attack.

Our data indeed show that in the case of Poland mass-level support for military actions to combat terrorism declined significantly between 2003 and 2008, as did support in other countries as well. At the same time, however, our findings stand in sharp contrast to the view that attitudes toward foreign policy issues—whether and how to combat international terrorism in this instance—are shallow and quite changeable. Rather, our analyses demonstrate that mass-level attitudes toward the use of force to combat terrorism are rooted in individuals' life experiences, as indicated by generational belonging and political biography, and are related as well to fundamental orientations toward politics and the economy. Moreover, we have shown that individuals' stances toward military action against terrorism do not change dramatically over time. Rather, the passing of time tends to reinforce individuals' earlier positions. Those who favored such policy previously became even more supportive five years later; those who opposed such policy continued to do so.

More specifically, our findings speak to the two sets of contrasting hypotheses we posed regarding the determinants of perceptions of terrorism and stances toward the use of military force to combat terrorism. With regard to perceptions of terrorism, we posited the 'ambivalence' hypothesis vs. the 'hard reality' hypothesis. Although our results do not confirm one as opposed to the other *in toto*, overall our data accord better with the "hard reality" proposition. Those with relatively high education, belonging to young generations, and having pro-democratic views are more inclined to reject the notion that the definition of terrorism is subject to political manipulation. With regard to the determinants of support for the use of military actions to combat international terrorism, we proposed the "liberal opposition" hypothesis vs. the "defending interests" hypothesis. In this case, our results tend to accord with the "defending interests" hypothesis: the better educated and those who hold strong pro-democratic

and pro-market values are more likely to support the deployment of Poland's military to combat terrorism. Thus, in this regard, too, we show that attitudes toward this foreign policy issue are based in individuals' life experiences, their social structural position, and that indeed "people adapt broad predispositions in relatively thoughtful ways to specific foreign policy problems" (Herrmann, Tetlock, and Visser 1999: 533).

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