



# If Not Democracy, Then What?

## On the Relationships Between National Identification Versus National Narcissism and Support for Different Visions of the Political World

Dominika Adamczyk<sup>1,2</sup>, Michalina Szczęśna<sup>1</sup>, Zuzanna Molenda<sup>1</sup>, Dagmara Szczepańska<sup>1,3</sup>, Marta Rogoza<sup>1</sup>, Radosław Rogoza<sup>1,4</sup>, Dominika Maison<sup>2</sup>, and Marta Marchlewska<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Institute of Psychology, Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw, Poland

<sup>2</sup>Department of Psychology, University of Warsaw, Poland

<sup>3</sup>Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, The Maria Grzegorzewska University, Warsaw, Poland

<sup>4</sup>Psychology Research Institute, University of Economics and Human Sciences in Warsaw, Poland

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**Abstract:** The current paper examines the relationships between different types of national identity and democracy, anarchism, and pacifism. In two studies (UK,  $N = 402$ ; Poland,  $N = 799$ ), national narcissism was negatively related to pacifism and, in Study 2, to democracy, while positively linked to anarchism. National identification, however, was related to lower support for anarchism but higher support for democracy and pacifism (only in Study 2). Additionally, national narcissism was negatively linked to voting intentions, whereas national identification was positively associated with them, mediated by support for democracy. Our research showed that national identity is linked to support for different political visions of the world, which have distinct effects on the functioning of society.

**Keywords:** support for anarchism, support for pacifism, support for democracy, national narcissism, national identification, civic engagement

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Democracy arises out of the notion that those who are equal in any respect are equal in all respects; because men are equally free, they claim to be absolutely equal.

Aristotle, *Politics* (350 B.C.E./2006)

Democracy is a system in which the fools govern – after all, it is well known that there are more fools than wise people.

Janusz Korwin-Mikke, *To fix Poland? No problem!* (2004)

According to the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA, 2023), global democracy has been in decline for the past 6 years, the longest since 1975. This trend is linked to power shifts by radical, populist parties (Bértoa & Rama, 2020), economic collapse (Dalio et al., 2017), and political

polarization (McCoy et al., 2018). In Europe, electoral polarization is at its highest since the Second World War (Bértoa, 2019). Given such a declining trend in the perception of global democracy, political systems that propose alternative approaches to governance, such as anarchism and pacifism, may be perceived more favorably. As support for democracy is influenced by psychological factors, such as trust, empathy (Miklikowska, 2012), psychological security (Marchlewska et al., 2019), or secure national identification (Marchlewska, Cichočka, et al., 2022), certain individual characteristics may likewise be associated with support for different forms of political governance. To address this, the current paper scrutinizes the relationships between different forms of national identity and support for three political visions: democracy, anarchism (i.e., total objection to the state), and pacifism (i.e., total abolition of war). Importantly, while on the theoretical level, neither anarchism nor pacifism suggests a model of governance that would oppose the democratic principle of placing power in the hands of the people, anarchist and pacifist

theorizing differs in the way this power should be exercised. Moreover, anarchism and pacifism oppose the version of democracy that is being practiced today. This means that chosen anarchist and pacifist perspectives criticize the current version of democracy, for allowing the exploitation of the people for example, and place themselves in opposition to that framing of democracy. Therefore, we decided to juxtapose democracy with anarchism and pacifism not solely due to their theoretical differences but also to the way they approach each other.

## Different Forms of National Identity

National identity is linked to the way one views in-group and out-group members—whether attributing good or bad intention (Cichocka, 2016; Marchlewska et al., 2020). Depending on whether national identity stems from individual shortcomings or a secure self-image, it can result in favoring solutions that serve self-interest at the expense of the group or be associated with group altruism and acting for the group's benefit (Maciantowicz et al., 2023). Perceptions of one's national group can be connected to the support for political visions that discuss the role of the people versus the individual in a state decision-making process. Understanding the role of national identity in support for different political systems may therefore shed new light on the decreasing support for democracy on one hand, and the potential increase in interest in other political visions of the world on the other.

As a secure sense of national belonging, national identification stems from a stable and secure self (Cichocka et al., 2018) and satisfied psychological needs, such as high personal control, secure attachment styles, and adaptive stress coping styles (Marchlewska et al., 2020; Marchlewska et al., 2024; Molenda, Marchlewska, Rogoza, & Szczepańska, 2023). National identification involves active participation in one's national group, which does not depend on external validation (Golec de Zavala et al., 2013). Securely identified individuals do not respond to criticism with retaliatory hostility, are not afraid of others laughing at their nation, and engage in many constructive intragroup behaviors (Cichocka, 2016; Maciantowicz et al., 2023; Marchlewska, Hamer, et al., 2022; Szczepańska et al., 2024). Moreover, national identification aligns with support for democracy and encourages societal inclusion in political decision-making processes (Marchlewska et al., 2022).

In turn, national narcissism – a belief that one's national group is exceptional and should receive special treatment, but also that it is not sufficiently recognized by others (e.g., Golec de Zavala et al., 2020) – stems from unsatisfied collective and individual needs. For example, it has been linked to defensive (i.e., narcissistic) self-evaluation and

insecure attachment to others (Marchlewska et al., 2022, 2024). National narcissism appears to be an attempt to compensate for various psychological shortcomings (e.g., loneliness, Rogoza et al., 2024). However, this does not necessarily mean that grandiose perceptions of one's in-group effectively help individuals cope with their challenges. On the contrary, such perceptions may exacerbate these vulnerabilities, potentially increasing anxiety (Marchlewska et al., 2024) and diminishing adaptive coping (e.g., Molenda, Marchlewska, Rogoza, & Szczepańska, 2023). National narcissism results in low loyalty and trust to in-group members, acting against them for personal gain (Cichocka et al., 2022; Marchlewska et al., 2020; Molenda, Marchlewska, & Rogoza, 2023), and in negative attitudes toward out-groups, which are underpinned by constant and exaggerated perceptions that the out-groups pose a threat to the in-group (Bertin et al., 2021; Cichocka et al., 2016). Empirical evidence also links national narcissism to support for populist leaders, inhibiting democracy (Marchlewska et al., 2018). In this study, we contrast national narcissism with national identification to examine their distinct links to support for different worldviews regarding state governance – pacifism and anarchism.

## Different Political Visions of the World

Although the concept of democracy has evolved over the years, in its classical form it can be defined as the rule of the people (Popper et al., 1988/2020), where decisions are made based on the opinion of the majority. One of the key premises of democracy is that all citizens should have the freedom to participate fully in their society's life and activities (Nussbaum, 2000). Democracy also demands that individuals show respect for others' judgments, even when they disagree (Rosenberg, 2020). Civic engagement – working together to make a difference in the community – is considered one of the main manifestations of democracy (Cichocka et al., 2024). However, dissatisfaction with the current democratic system can lead to apathy, which reduces civic engagement and further weakens support for democracy (Essomba et al., 2023). Does a decline in support for democracy necessarily result in the rise of alternative political systems? This study focused on two political philosophies that consider the role of the state and civic participation in their theoretical foundations – anarchism and pacifism. These political visions are often overlooked in scientific research, with existing literature mostly reflecting theoretical discussions rather than exploring the motivations and characteristics of those who identify with or support them (e.g., Fox, 2011; Heckert, 2013; Mayton, 2012; Murphy, 2019; Narveson, 1965). Although anarchism and pacifism have many variants (see Franks et al., 2018; Walter, 1969, for

anarchism; Bazargan, 2014; Narveson, 1965; Stevenson, 1934, for pacifism), this study focuses on some of their specific branches.

The key focus of the entire anarchist philosophy is the rejection of the state, prioritization of the individual over state control, viewing any hierarchical state as a threat (Tucker, 1893/1897). This project focuses on individualistic anarchism, particularly Max Stirner's philosophy, which argues that the concept of the state and the concept of the society itself need to be abolished and the only limit to individual rights is a person's ability to obtain what they desire, thus emphasizing the seriousness of individual self-determination and acting in accordance with the individual's sense of what is good for each person (Heider, 1994). Creating a society based on the principles of such anarchism would entail eliminating all top-down forms of power over individuals (Godwin, 1793/2013). The relationship between anarchism and democracy is ambiguous. Some see democracy as a tool for capitalist governments to oppress minorities (CrimethInc Ex-Worker's Collective, 2017), while others argue that anarchism could be considered "democracy without the state" (Price, 2020, p. 6). Generally, anarchism opposes democracy as it currently operates—defined by bureaucratic oppression and legal control (Garrett, 1971). Similarly, the relationship between anarchism and civic engagement (understood as actions within the state structure, such as electoral participation) is not clear. Some anarchists view electoral participation as legitimizing the state and therefore reject it (e.g., Aotearoa Workers Solidarity Movement, 2020), while others see voting as a pragmatic tool for achieving specific outcomes (Conrad, 2016). Following Garrett (1971) we understand anarchism as a distinct political vision, separate from democracy.

Pacifism offers another vision of political governance, based on total opposition to war and violence, as well as resistance to supranational political systems that depend on military power (Benda, 1941). This study focuses on transformational pacifism, which critiques militarism and war culture while promoting peaceful, ethical alternatives (Fiala, 2018). Transformational pacifism emphasizes the abolition of war and the creation of international systems that defend all living beings (Fahey, 1997). Pacifists believe that a democratic state should abstain from war entirely, valuing human life over military action (Benda, 1941). Pacifism emphasizes non-violence and global cooperation, which can align with certain democratic principles while also representing a distinct vision of governance with priorities that may diverge from democracy. Although anarchism and pacifism share a commitment to opposing oppressive structures, they differ in their core principles. While pacifism centers on the rejection of violence as a tool for societal change (De Oliveira, 2017), some anarchist

perspectives see violence as justifiable in resisting oppressive structures (e.g., Goldman, 1969; Stirner, 1995).

Both anarchism and pacifism reject the current liberal form of democracy, but not the theoretical concept itself. They reflect alternative visions of political organization, rooted in disillusionment with how democracy functions today, rather than with the idea of power residing in the hands of the people (see Müller, 2021). Hence our decision to include support for systems that offer alternative political visions that challenge the liberal democratic model, rather than those that reject it completely, such as monarchy or dictatorship.

## Current Study

Existing research provided robust evidence linking support for democracy to national identification (positively; Marchlewska, Cichocka, et al., 2022) and national narcissism (negatively; Forgas & Lantos, 2019; Gronfeldt et al., 2022; Marchlewska, Cichocka, et al., 2022). Although this may suggest that those scoring high on national narcissism (but not national identification) may be interested in other than democratic forms of governance, to date, this has not been examined, and the current paper aims to fill this gap. In this research, we investigated the relationship between two forms of identity: national narcissism versus national identification and support for different political visions of the world: anarchism, pacifism (Studies 1 and 2), and democracy (Study 2).

First (Studies 1 and 2), we assumed opposite relationships between the two types of national identity and support for anarchism. Specifically, since anarchism is a form of complicated relation with one's own country (i.e., a combination of being a citizen of a particular country with a simultaneous aversion to statism; Tucker, 1893/1897), we assumed that national narcissism should be related to higher support for this philosophy (H1a). Additionally, individuals with high levels of collective narcissism might perceive extreme forms of collective empowerment as a means to fulfill their own individualistic desires (Górska et al., 2023). Thus, they may view anarchism, with its rejection of hierarchical state structures, as an opportunity to assert their own needs and challenge existing norms without external constraints. Given that anarchism fundamentally opposes the existence of the state (Heider, 1994), we hypothesized that national identification would be negatively related to support for anarchism (H1b). Individuals who do not view their nation as a central part of their group identification and who do not feel compelled to act on behalf of the national group may naturally be drawn to a system that views the nation as an artificially created and oppressive construct. Second (Studies 1 and 2),

we assumed that support for pacifism should be differently related to national narcissism versus national identification. Those who support pacifism are not against the concept of a state per se, rather, they seek to establish relationships between countries that are based not on mutual military violence but on mutual respect and openness to one another. Thus, we hypothesized that national narcissism (H2a) should be negatively related to pacifism, but national identification should associate positively with it (H2b). Third (Study 2), since belief in good intention of in-group members underlies the democratic system, we assumed that national narcissism should be negatively related to support for democracy (H3a), but national identification would be positively linked to it (H3b). In such a way, we aimed to replicate the results previously obtained by Marchlewska, Cichocka, et al. (2022).

Finally (Study 2), we aimed to check the potential links between the two types of national identity and support for different political visions of the world with readiness to engage actively in the civic affairs and the responsibilities of one's nation (such as declarative electoral participation). We assumed that national identification should be positively linked to civic participation through support for systems that place a high value on civic participation, in this case, democracy (but not anarchism or pacifism). Although electoral participation is viewed skeptically by anarchists, there is no contemporary clear position on anarchism's approach to voting, so making a clear hypothesis on the relationship between anarchism and this type of civic engagement was not possible. Similarly, in the case of pacifism, participation in elections can be seen as a manifestation of legitimizing power based on military violence, or as a tool for harm reduction, and no clear hypothesis linking pacifism to voting could have been formulated. Thus, we hypothesized that the positive effect of national identification on voting intention should be mediated by support for democracy (H4).

## Cultural Background

We tested our assumptions in two socio-political contexts: postcommunist Poland and the parliamentary democracy of the United Kingdom. Poland's political system is a parliamentary republic with a tripartite division of powers: the legislative (the Sejm and the Senate), the executive (the Council of Ministers and the President), and the judiciary (Courts and Tribunals; Markowski, 2016; see also *Konstytucja Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej*, 1997). The United Kingdom has a parliamentary monarchy with a cabinet-parliamentary system, consisting of two houses: the House of Lords and the House of Commons (UK Parliament, 2024). The democratic systems in Poland and the United Kingdom differ in some respects. Poland's

democracy is relatively young, dating back to 1989 when the Polish People's Republic ended and the state's dependence on the Soviet Union ceased (*Konstytucja Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej*, 1997). In contrast, the British democracy spans over 800 years, beginning with the Magna Carta of Freedoms, which limited the monarch's power and granted more rights to the citizens (Janowski, 2016).

Despite the differences in their political systems, both Poland and the United Kingdom have witnessed the emergence of anarchist and pacifist movements, which, although shaped by their respective socio-political environments, share common themes of resistance to authority, state control, and, in the case of pacifism, commitment to nonviolence. Anarchist movements in the United Kingdom focus on grassroots activism and antiauthoritarianism, often avoiding formal political engagement (Goodway, 2012). During the G20 protests in London (2009), anarchist groups, including Whitechapel Anarchist Group, organized demonstrations against capitalist policies. However, these protests escalated into riots, drawing widespread attention. Property destruction, including vandalizing banks, shops, and other buildings, occurred. While the protests aimed to challenge economic policies, the escalation into violence was widely criticized (e.g., *The Guardian*, 2009). In Poland, anarchists are active in social justice campaigns and oppose state control (Piotrowski, 2023). Anarchist organizations in Poland (such as Alternative Society Movement) often express opposition to legal systems, which they perceive as tools of repression. Their actions – such as boycotting trials, occupying public buildings, or blocking roads – are unconventional and, in some cases, illegal (see: Antonów, 2004).

In the United Kingdom, pacifist groups prioritize nonviolence and have a skeptical view of electoral processes (Scott-Brown, 2024). The Stop the War Coalition was established in 2001 in response to the United States – having declared the “War on Terror” (Stop the War Coalition, 2024). This organization has been actively organizing demonstrations and awareness campaigns against the United Kingdom's involvement in armed conflicts and advocating for NATO's dissolution. Pacifist organizations such as the Peace Pledge Union emphasize remembering all those affected by war and promoting peaceful conflict resolution (Peace Pledge Union, 2024). In Poland, pacifists focus on peacebuilding, shaped by historical conflict experiences (Korybko, 2017). For example, Polish pacifist organization *Wolność i Pokój* (WiP) opposed compulsory military service in the country (Litwińska, 2015).

## Statistical Analyses and Power Considerations

According to the current literature, we expected the relationships between support for the three types of political

visions of the world and different forms of national identity to be especially pronounced when we controlled for the shared variance between national narcissism and national identification (e.g., Cichocka, 2016; Marchlewska, Cichocka, et al., 2022). For this reason, we first reported zero-order correlations, and then, we reported the effects of national narcissism, while considering national identification and *vice-versa*. In both studies, we aimed to include at least 400 participants, which gave us a power of .80 for detecting even small associations between variables (for  $r = .14$ ; Cohen, 1988; G\*Power yields a target of 395 participants; Faul et al., 2009).<sup>1</sup> Data and materials for both studies are available at the Open Science Framework: [https://osf.io/hqnx7/?view\\_only=88b0d92585ac4a408baacda3a41b01a9](https://osf.io/hqnx7/?view_only=88b0d92585ac4a408baacda3a41b01a9).

## Study 1

### Method

#### Participants and Procedure

Study 1 was an online survey conducted in 2023. Participants were recruited via the Prolific Academic platform. A total number of 402 participants completed the survey: 197 women, 203 men, two nonbinary people, aged 19–77 years ( $M_{\text{age}} = 43.32$  years,  $SD_{\text{age}} = 13.70$ ). Participants filled out (in that order) measures of national identification, national narcissism, and support for different political visions of the world (i.e., anarchism and pacifism). Items in each measure were presented in a random order. Besides the variables reported here, the survey also involved a set of individual difference variables included for the purposes of different projects (a full list of measured constructs can be found in the OSF). The study was not pre-registered.

#### Measures

##### *National Narcissism*

We used the five-item version (Golec de Zavala et al., 2013) of the Collective Narcissism Scale, adapted to the national context, with statements such as “British people deserve special treatment.” Participants were asked to respond on a scale from 1 = *definitely disagree* to 5 = *definitely agree*. The scale demonstrated high reliability,  $\alpha = .86$ .

##### *National Identification*

We used the shortened, three-item Social Identification Scale based on Cameron (2004; see also Górska et al.,

2020) with a national in-group (British) as a reference group, using statements such as “I have a lot in common with other British people.” Participants were asked to respond on a scale from 1 = *definitely disagree* to 5 = *definitely agree*. The measure demonstrated good reliability,  $\alpha = .82$ .

##### *Political Visions of the World*

We included two different political visions of the world. The individual items of both scales refer directly to the theoretical background of both visions of the world we describe (e.g., Godwin, 1793/2013; Heider, 1994; Tucker, 1893/1897, for support for the anarchism scale; and Benda, 1941; Fahey, 1997; Fiala, 2018, for support for the pacifism scale). Acceptance of all specific political ideologies (anarchism and pacifism) was measured on a scale from 1 = *definitely disagree* to 5 = *definitely agree*.

##### *Support for Anarchism*

Measured with four items regarding the individualistic aspects of anarchism and antistatism: “The institution of the state is unnecessary/harmful and should be abolished”; “I am not partial to any form of exercising power (e.g., by the president/parliament/government, etc.)”; “The economic system should be based on a complete absence of specific norms/applicable laws”; and “I believe that people know what is good for them and are able to organize themselves without any authorities.” The scale showed sufficient reliability,  $\alpha = .75$ .

##### *Support for Pacifism*

Measured with four items regarding the transformational aspects of pacifism: “We should strive to exercise power based on peaceful talks without the use of armed forces”; “I am in favor of establishing lasting peace between all countries”; “I am against all military activities”; and “We should strive to create an international legal, political, and economic order that will ensure the equality of all earthly beings.” The scale showed high reliability,  $\alpha = .72$ .

## Results

### Descriptive Statistics and Zero-Order Correlations

Correlations between continuous variables are presented in Table 1. Support for anarchism was significantly positively correlated with national narcissism, but it was not related to national identification. Support for pacifism was significantly negatively correlated both with national narcissism and with national identification.

<sup>1</sup> Confirmatory factor analyses for Support for Pacifism and Support for Anarchism are provided in the supplementary materials, along with additional analyses (e.g., including RWA, SDO, and globalism).

**Table 1.** Descriptive statistics and correlations with confidence intervals (Study 1)

Measure	<i>M</i> ( <i>SD</i> )	1	2	3	4
1. National narcissism	2.20 (0.81)	—			
2. National identification	3.10 (0.94)	.71** [0.66, 0.76]	—		
3. Support for anarchism	2.43 (0.78)	.10* [0.01, 0.20]	-.08 [-0.17, 0.02]	—	
4. Support for pacifism	3.85 (0.73)	-.38** [-0.46, -0.29]	-.31** [-0.39, -0.22]	.02 [-0.08, 0.16]	—

Note. \* $p < .01$ . \*\* $p < .001$ .

**Table 2.** Predictors of support for specific political visions of the world (Study 1)

Variable	Model 1 Support for anarchism				Model 2 Support for pacifism			
	<i>B</i>	95% CI	$\beta$	<i>p</i>	<i>B</i>	95% CI	$\beta$	<i>p</i>
National narcissism	0.31	[0.18, 0.44]	0.32	<.001	-0.29	[-0.41, -0.17]	-0.32	<.001
National identification	-0.26	[-0.37, -0.14]	-0.31	<.001	-0.06	[-0.16, 0.04]	-0.08	.235
$R^2$	.06				.15			
<i>F</i>	$F(2, 401) = 12.01^{***}$				$F(2, 401) = 34.02^{***}$			

Note. \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

### Regression Analyses

To investigate whether two types of national identity were related to anarchism and pacifism, we tested two linear regression models with national identification and national narcissism entered as independent variables, and anarchism (Model 1) and pacifism (Model 2) entered as a dependent variable (Table 2). The overall regression models for support for anarchism and pacifism were both significant. In line with our hypotheses, support for anarchism was related positively to national narcissism (H1a) and negatively to national identification (H1b). In turn, as expected, support for pacifism was significantly negatively related to national narcissism (H2a); but the relation to national identification was, contrary to our predictions (H2b), nonsignificant.

## Study 2

### Method

#### Participants and Procedure

The data for Study 2 were obtained from a 2023 online survey, conducted via Pollster – a Polish research panel used in academic research before (e.g., Szczepańska et al., 2024). A total number of 799 Polish participants completed the survey: 386 women, 412 men, one nonbinary person, aged 18–87 years ( $M_{\text{age}} = 47.89$  years,  $SD_{\text{age}} = 16.02$ ). Participants filled out (in that order) measures of national identification, national narcissism, support for different political visions of the world (including democracy), and intention to vote in parliamentary elections, among other variables. The items within each measure

were randomized to mitigate potential response biases due to order effects. This approach was intended to reduce any influence of item sequence on participants' responses, thereby enhancing the findings' validity. The study was not pre-registered.

### Measures

#### National Narcissism

As in Study 1, we used the five-item version (Golec de Zavala et al., 2013) of the Collective Narcissism Scale adapted to the Polish national context. The scale demonstrated high reliability,  $\alpha = .91$ .

#### National Identification

We used full, twelve-item Social Identification Scale adapted from Cameron (2004) with a national in-group (Poles) as a reference. The measure demonstrated good reliability,  $\alpha = .92$ .

#### Political Vision of the World

We included three political visions of the world.

#### Support for Anarchism

Measured with the same four items as in Study 1. The scale showed sufficient reliability,  $\alpha = .83$ .

#### Support for Pacifism

Measured with the same four items as in Study 1. The scale showed high reliability,  $\alpha = .81$ .

#### Support for Democracy

We used the Polish version of the seven-item Democratic Support Scale (e.g., Inglehart et al., 2003; Magalhães,

**Table 3.** Descriptive statistics and correlations with confidence intervals (Study 2)

Measure	<i>M (SD)</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. National narcissism	2.87 (1.06)	—					
2. National identification	3.67 (0.79)	.53** [0.48, 0.58]	—				
3. Support for democracy	3.61 (0.78)	-.37** [-0.44, -0.32]	.05 [-0.02, 0.12]	—			
4. Support for anarchism	2.09 (0.91)	.20** [0.14, 0.27]	-.16** [-0.23, -0.09]	-.49** [-0.55, -0.44]	—		
5. Support for pacifism	4.26 (0.77)	-.09* [-0.16, -0.03]	0.06 [-0.01, 0.13]	.30** [0.24, 0.36]	-.25** [-0.32, -0.19]	—	
6. Intention to vote in elections	6.33 (1.47)	.004 [-0.07, 0.07]	.14** [0.07, 0.20]	.26** [0.19, 0.33]	-.21** [-0.27, -0.14]	.14** [0.07, 0.21]	—

Note. \* $p < .01$ . \*\* $p < .001$ .

2014; Marchlewska et al., 2019). Participants were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with statements such as: “We should have a political system based on the principles of a democratic system” using a scale from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*. The scale demonstrated good reliability,  $\alpha = .82$ .

#### *Intention to Vote in Parliamentary Elections*

We used one item to measure intention to vote in parliamentary elections: “How likely are you to participate in the upcoming parliamentary elections (15/10/2023)?” on a scale from 1 = *very likely* to 7 = *very unlikely*. Of all participants, 75% ( $n = 597$ ) declared that it is very likely that they will vote.

## Results

### **Descriptive Statistics and Zero-Order Correlations**

Correlations between variables are presented in Table 3. Support for anarchism correlated positively with national narcissism and negatively with national identification. Support for pacifism and support for democracy were both negatively related to national narcissism but not related to national identification. Intention to vote in parliamentary elections were positively correlated with national identification, support for democracy, and support for pacifism, and negatively associated with support for anarchism.

### **Regression Analyses**

To investigate whether two types of national identity were related to support for democracy, anarchism, and pacifism, we tested three linear regression models with national identification and national narcissism entered as independent variables, and democracy (Model 1), anarchism (Model 2), and pacifism (Model 3) entered as dependent variables

(Table 4). The overall regression models for support for democracy, anarchism, and pacifism were significant. In line with our hypotheses, support for anarchism was related positively to national narcissism (H1a) and negatively to national identification (H1b). In turn, as expected, support for pacifism was significantly negatively related to national narcissism (H2a), and positively related to national identification (H2b). Support for democracy was significantly negatively related to national narcissism (H3a) and positively related to national identification (H3b).

### **National Narcissism, National Identification, and Support for Different Political Visions of the World as Predictors of Intention to Vote in Parliamentary Elections**

To test H4 that national identification (but not national narcissism) would be related to intention to vote in parliamentary elections, and if this relationship would be mediated by support for democracy (but not by support for anarchism or pacifism), we conducted a hierarchical multiple regression analysis (Table 5). In the first step, we introduced national identification and national narcissism as joint predictors of voting intention. In line with our assumptions, national identification was related positively to voting intention. Interestingly, we also found negative relation between national narcissism and voting intention. In the second step, we introduced support for different political visions of the world (anarchism, pacifism, and democracy). After that, the relation of both national narcissism and national identification became nonsignificant. We observed a negative effect of support for anarchism and a positive effect of support for democracy on voting intention, while the effect of support for pacifism on voting intention was nonsignificant.

**Table 4.** Predictors of support for specific political visions of the world (Study 2)

Variable	Model 1 Support for democracy				Model 2 Support for anarchism				Model 3 Support for pacifism			
	<i>B</i>	95% CI	$\beta$	<i>p</i>	<i>B</i>	95% CI	$\beta$	<i>p</i>	<i>B</i>	95% CI	$\beta$	<i>p</i>
National narcissism	−0.41	[−0.46, −0.36]	−0.56	<.001	0.40	[0.28, 0.41]	0.34	<.001	−0.13	[−0.19, −0.07]	−0.18	<.001
National identification	0.34	[0.27, 0.41]	0.34	<.001	−0.38	[−0.52, −0.35]	−0.43	<.001	0.15	[0.08, 0.23]	0.16	<.001
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	.23				.14				.03			
<i>F</i>	<i>F</i> (2, 798) = 116.74***				<i>F</i> (2, 798) = 66.59***				<i>F</i> (2, 798) = 11.03***			

Note. \*\*\**p* < .001.

**Table 5.** Predictors of intention to vote in parliamentary elections (Study 2)

Variable	Step 1			Step 2		
	<i>B</i>	$\beta$	<i>p</i>	<i>B</i>	$\beta$	<i>p</i>
National narcissism	−0.13	−0.10	.02	0.11	0.08	.09
National identification	0.35	0.19	<.001	0.13	0.07	.11
Support for democracy				0.44	0.23	<.001
Support for anarchism				−0.14	−0.09	.03
Support for pacifism				0.09	0.05	.15
<i>F</i>	10.36			16.82		
<i>df</i>	798			798		
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	.03			.10		
$\Delta R^2$	.02			.09		

In the last step, we conducted a mediation analysis using PROCESS 4.2 (Hayes, 2018; Model 4). We tested whether support for democracy would mediate the path between national identification (but not national narcissism) and voting intention. Thus, we entered national identification as the independent variable, support for three political visions of the world as mediating variables, and national narcissism as a covariate (Figure 1). The indirect positive effect of national identification on voting intention via support for democracy of 0.15 was significant, with a bootstrapped 95% bias-corrected confidence interval of 0.08–0.22. The indirect positive effect of national identification on voting intention via support for anarchism of 0.06 was nonsignificant, with a bootstrapped 95% bias-corrected confidence interval of −0.004 to 0.13. The indirect positive effect of national identification on voting intention via support for pacifism of 0.02 was nonsignificant, with a bootstrapped 95% bias-corrected confidence interval of −0.01 to 0.05. Hence, in line with our hypothesis, these results identified support for democracy as a significant mediator of the relationship between national identification and voting intention (H4). Support for pacifism and support for anarchism were not found to significantly account for this relationship.

Although it was not hypothesized, we decided to test whether support for democracy would mediate the path between national narcissism and voting intention. Thus,

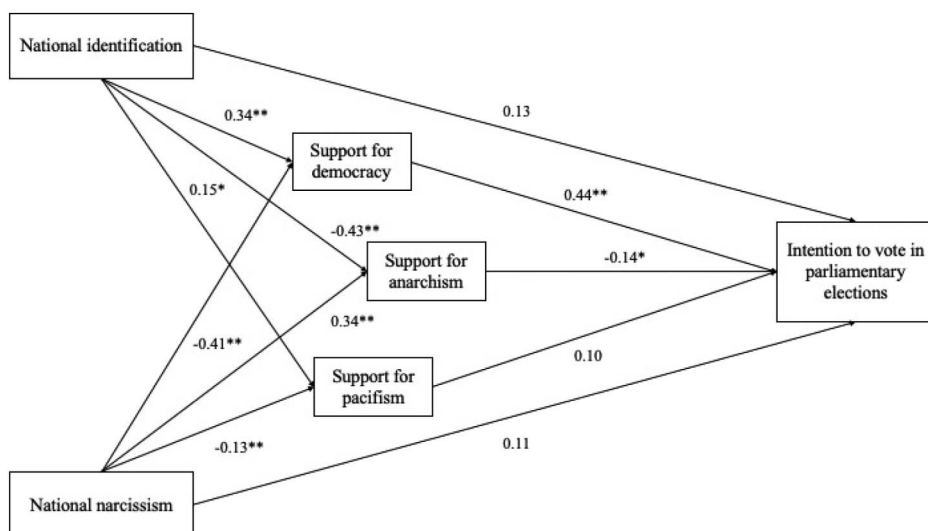
we entered national narcissism as the independent variable, support for three political visions of the world as mediating variables, and national identification as a covariate. The indirect negative effect of national narcissism on voting intention via support for democracy of −0.18 was significant, with a bootstrapped 95% bias-corrected confidence interval of −0.32 to −0.17. The indirect negative effect of national narcissism on voting intention via support for anarchism of −0.05 was nonsignificant, with a bootstrapped 95% bias-corrected confidence interval of −0.10 to 0.004. The indirect negative effect of national narcissism on voting intention via support for pacifism of −0.01 was nonsignificant, with a bootstrapped 95% bias-corrected confidence interval of −0.04 to 0.009. Hence, these results identified support for democracy as a significant mediator of the relationship between national narcissism and lower voting intention. Support for pacifism and support for anarchism were not found to significantly account for this relationship.

## Discussion

In two studies conducted in two different socio-political contexts, British and Polish, we explored the relationship between two different types of national identity and support for different political visions of the world: anarchism, pacifism, and democracy. We found consistent significant relationships between national narcissism and lower support for pacifism and democracy, but higher support for anarchism. In contrast, national identification was linked to lower support for anarchism, but higher support for democracy and it was partially linked to pacifism.

### Support for Anarchism

The negative relationship between national identification and support for anarchism is unsurprising. Although the idea of a nation is not the same as the idea of a state, part of the idea of anarchism is the assumption that states are political symbols, and national affiliation is one of their



**Figure 1.** An indirect effect of the two forms of national identity on intention to vote in parliamentary elections via support for different political visions of the world (Study 2). Nonstandardized path coefficients are significant at \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .001$ .

tools. As Turcato (2015) points out, “since anarchists do not want to build states, they do not need to identify the corresponding units” (p. 31). Anarchism does not contradict the inclusive conception of the nation based on voluntary identification and a flexible approach to cultural boundaries. However, it does contradict the exclusive conception of the nation based on coercion and rigid cultural boundaries. At the theoretical level, the creation of an inclusive nation is possible, however, while speaking of identification with current nations (Poland and Great Britain), these are exclusive identifications, contrary to the anarchist inclusive concepts. This, however, was not the case among individuals scoring high on national narcissism, who were found to support anarchism. It seems plausible that narcissistic optimism regarding anarchism may stem from the belief that this system would help them overthrow current norms and ultimately fulfill their unmet individual needs, regardless of the cost. Indeed, previous studies showed that people with higher levels of national narcissism were prone to manipulate the emotions of their fellow in-group members or act contrary to the group’s interests (e.g., Molenda, Marchlewska, & Rogoza, 2023). Thus, it can be suspected that those who support anarchism are not authentically attached to their national group because they do not support the idea of the state at all, and for them, the national group is based on artificial, even oppressive ties. One way or another, they are forced to function as members of this group, having to deal daily with state bodies or concepts such as citizenship and its consequences. It would be interesting to see whether individuals scoring high on national narcissism find opportunities to realize their needs in anarchism, distorting its tenets, or whether anarchism itself promotes narcissistic attachment to a national group.

### Support for Pacifism

In both studies, support for pacifism was negatively related to national narcissism, and in Study 2, it was positively related to national identification. Negative relationship between national narcissism and pacifism can be explained not only by a certain similarity between pacifism and democracy (Clough, 2007) but also by the fact that pacifism can be considered in the context of total support for a world based on respect for other citizens and the desire to create an international system operating on the principles of a peaceful cooperation. National narcissism, on the other hand, is connected to intergroup hostility and support for hostile retaliatory actions (e.g., Golec de Zavala et al., 2016, 2020), which does not fit into the pacifist vision of the world based on transnational benevolence. It is worth noting that the positive relationship between support for pacifism and national identification was significant only in the study conducted on the British sample, while no significant relationship between these variables was observed in the Polish sample. The reasons for this can be traced to the difference in the popularization of the pacifist movement in Poland and Great Britain. The pacifist movement in Britain played a significant role in the 20th century, being more than a small movement but rather a mass phenomenon, with pacifist actions and literature being widely spread among the general public (Eller, 1990). In Poland, the pacifist movement was weak and unable to play a serious role. The complicated Polish history, involving the tradition of armed struggle for independence, caused a negative perception of any pacifistic or antimilitaristic movements (Kasprzycki, 2016). Therefore, in these two countries, the approach to pacifism and, therefore, its links to national identification may be

different. Future research would do well to examine how the visions of the world we identified (i.e., anarchism and pacifism) can be combined with national identification in other conditions (i.e., in countries that are disappointed with the democratic system or in very culturally diverse countries, e.g., the United States).

## Support for Democracy

Additionally, our analyses showed that support for democracy had a crucial role in the relationship between national identification and civic engagement, mediating the path between both national narcissism (negatively) and national identification (positively), and intention to vote in the elections. Our study confirmed that the way people identify with their nation may have robust associations with their support for a democratic political system (Marchlewska, Cichocka, et al., 2022). Therefore, we showed that in addition to the classic connection between support for democracy and low individual defensiveness (e.g., Hastings & Shaffer, 2005), support for this system was also connected to identity defensiveness. Our results also confirmed the positive impact of support for democracy and national identification on voting intention, adding to previous findings indicating that constructive patriotism predicted political engagement (Rupar et al., 2020). However, the observed negative relation between national collective narcissism and voting intention does not necessarily mean lack of participation at all. Perhaps individuals scoring high on national narcissism prefer non-normative collective actions more than normative ones, thus wanting to participate but not by voting (Górska et al., 2023), which is also emphasized by the positive correlation with anarchism. As it turns out, although support for pacifism and support for anarchism were also associated with both types of national identity, they did not mediate the relationship between national identification and voting intention. Although it was observed that anarchism was related negatively to participation in the elections, the positive effect of support for democracy seemed to be a more robust correlate.

## Limitations and Future Directions

Although our research offered a completely new perspective of support for various political visions of the world, our work also has some limitations. Most of all, in both studies, we focused mainly on two alternative visions of the world understood in a very specific way. In this research, anarchism was conceptualized in line with individualistic anarchism (Heider, 1994), while in the case of

pacifism, we referred to transformational pacifism, which is based on total opposition to violence and offers a more peaceful alternative way of living (Fiala, 2018). It is worth noting, however, that both anarchism and pacifism are very broad political concepts and diverse social movements that have many, often contradictory, varieties. Therefore, the obtained results should not be generalized to general support for anarchism or pacifism, but rather their very specifically defined types. Consequently, it may be worth exploring in the future how other types of anarchism (e.g., collective anarchism, which draws attention to the importance of collective decision-making) or pacifism (e.g., conditional pacifism, which draws attention to the fact that war could be morally justified if and only if satisfies the condition of not causing serious harm or death to innocent citizens) connect with national identity.

Particularly in the case of anarchism, it is possible that people who support such a vision of the world, although they do not identify with a national group, instead identify with their own groups that function on mutually agreed upon rules not imposed from the outside. Considering the multitude of approaches and the lack of tools to measure support for the different visions of the world, in the future, it might be worth creating a scale based on the beliefs of people defining themselves as anarchists and pacifists in a given country, thus examining anarchism and pacifism rather as social movements with certain practices than philosophical approaches. Such an approach would be of particular value due to the fact that a certain limitation of our study is the comparison of philosophical approaches to the political system present (in better or worse condition) in the studied countries. Importantly, the scales used to measure support for anarchism and pacifism were created specifically for this study and are based on particular theoretical assumptions; therefore, they should be further tested in future research.

In addition, we decided to test the relationship between national identification and previously unexplored visions of the world that differ from democracy but are not based on a completely different arrangement of power in the society. However, in future studies of national narcissism, it would be interesting to include support for systems that directly oppose the democratic system as such (e.g., authoritarianism, totalitarianism, or dictatorship).

While the reported effects supported our hypotheses, it is important to note that the amount of the explained variance was in general – low, thus advocating some restraint in the interpretation and generalization of these results. While such low estimates of explained variability are quite typical in regard to social and political attitudes, which tend to be related to a broad range of other variables, this issue should not be neglected as it creates the risk to overstate the importance of the studied variables. In

interpreting the results of our study, it is important to note that these were two cross-sectional studies using self-report measures, and our results do not provide the evidence for the causal model. Future studies should focus on determining causation in the identified connections through experimental or longitudinal studies.

The larger sample size achieved in Study 2, while increasing the precision and robustness of the findings, also raises the possibility of overpowered analyses, where even small effects may reach statistical significance. This deviation should be considered when interpreting the results, and future studies should aim for consistency in sample sizes across studies to enable more reliable comparisons. Additionally, neither of the studies was pre-registered, which may limit the confirmatory nature of the analyses. Future research would benefit from pre-registration to enhance replicability and ensure that findings are interpreted in the context of predefined hypotheses and analytic strategies.

## Conclusions

Overall, our work expanded research on national identity by examining its association with support for previously unexplored visions of the world. The results provided one of the potential explanations for why some people are more supportive of some visions of the world than others. Most importantly, we demonstrated that national narcissism – previously also linked to support for populist parties (Federico & Golec de Zavala, 2018; Marchlewska et al., 2018) and opposing democracy (Marchlewska, Cichocka, et al., 2022) – may also be a positive predictor of support for anarchism. Our research showed that national identity is linked to support for different political visions of the world, which have distinct effects on the functioning of society. It appears that for those high in national narcissism (but not national identification), politics may be another opportunity to carry out their own non-normative desires. Visions of the world in which there are no preimposed rules (such as anarchism) may better fulfill the needs of certain individuals. Presumably, they may allow more freedom to act in accordance with one's own interests, which are not always aligned with the interests of the group.

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Dominika Adamczyk: Conceptualization; investigation; writing – original draft; formal analysis; methodology; writing – review and editing. Michalina Szczęsna: Conceptualization; investigation; methodology; writing – original draft. Zuzanna Molenda: Investigation; validation; writing – review and editing. Dagmara Szczepanska: Investigation; writing – review and editing. Marta Rogoza: Investigation; writing – review and editing; formal analysis. Radosław Rogoza: Investigation; writing – review and editing. Dominika Maison: Investigation; writing – review and editing. Marta Marchlewska: Investigation; conceptualization, methodology; writing – review and editing; funding acquisition; project management.

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## Dominika Adamczyk

Institute of Psychology  
Polish Academy of Sciences  
Stefana Jaracza 1  
00-378 Warsaw  
Poland  
dadamczyk@psych.pan.pl