Diversionary Nationalism: Economic Inequality and the Formation of National Pride

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What accounts for differences in the extent of nationalist sentiments across countries and over time? One prominent argument is that greater economic inequality prompts states to generate more nationalism as a diversion that discourages their citizens from recognizing economic inequality and mobilizing against it. Several other theories, however, propose different relationships between economic inequality and nationalism. This article provides a first empirical test of whether and how economic inequality is related to nationalism. Multilevel analyses using survey data on nationalist sentiments in countries around the world over a quarter century and data on economic inequality from the Standardized World Income Inequality Database provide powerful support for the diversionary theory of nationalism. This finding is an important contribution to our understanding of nationalism as well as of the political consequences of economic inequality.

Nationalism consists of a myth. It is without doubt a powerful and widely accepted myth, one that has led "many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for [its] limited imaginings," but it is a myth nevertheless (Anderson 1991, 7). The myth contends that individuals belong to a unified, homogeneous community that is—or should be—encompassed and represented by its own state. As a consequence, the nationalist myth continues, individuals owe a duty to the state (or would-be state) that "overrides all other public obligations, and in extreme cases . . . all other obligations of whatever kind" (Hobsbawm 1990, 9). Not surprisingly, where a "national" state already exists, the principal purveyor of this myth is the state itself.[1]

States have been shown to employ a wide array of tools to instill nationalism in their citizens. They invent and constantly reinforce "national flags, symbols, anthems, holidays, rituals, and traditions" (Tilly 1994, 140). They create public schools and mandate national histories to be taught in them (e.g., Lewis 1975). They establish national museums; construct national monuments; name and rename streets, schools, and government buildings for national "heroes"; and glorify national symbols in postage stamps and money (Centeno 2002, 178–83). They use the "powerful machinery for communicating with their inhabitants" through media of all forms "to spread the image and heritage of the 'nation' and to inculcate attachment to it and to attach all to country and flag" (Hobsbawm 1990, 91). And they enlist their supporters—particularly those among businesspeople and the intelligentsia—to also repeat and spread the myth of nationalism (Tilly 1994, 140). Nearly all states avail themselves of nationalism to increase their legitimacy and so the voluntary compliance of their citizens, but some states implant much more nationalism in their populations than others (Rose 1985; Smith and Jarkko 1998). The extent of nationalism varies over time within countries as well (Dogan 1994).

One particularly prominent explanation for this variation in the extent of nationalism across countries and over time is that when economic inequality in a country is greater, the state will generate more nationalism in its citizens so as to divert their attention from their diverging conditions and forestall demands for redistributive policies. Other theories, however, contend that greater economic inequality undermines states' efforts to spread nationalist sentiments in their populations by making the nationalist myth increasingly implausible or by encouraging political entrepreneurs to promote competing national identities among the disadvantaged; still another points to purported

[1]Online appendices for this article are available at http://journals.cambridge.org/jop, and the data and materials necessary to reproduce the numerical results are available at http://dvn.iq.harvard.edu/dvn/dv/fsolt.

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psychological benefits of nationalism that vary with economic inequality and individuals' own places within the income distribution. Despite the conflicting expectations of these four theories, they have not yet been systematically investigated. This article uses cross-national survey data collected from countries around the world over more than a quarter century to provide a first test. It finds strong evidence for the diversionary theory of nationalism; there is no support for its three rivals.

Inequality and Nationalism

The diversionary theory of nationalism maintains that states generate nationalist sentiments to respond to the threat of unrest posed by high levels of economic inequality. Carlton Hayes, one of the first scholars of the nationalist myth, explained that nineteenth-century politicians made "a very interesting discovery about the phenomenon of nationalism" that rendered it ideally suited for this purpose:

> They found that the masses when brought under its spell not only were less inclined to criticise their leaders but also were more disposed to accept the *status quo* in economic matters. On the multitudes nationalism could be made to act as a sort of laughing gas. If a labourer could be induced to take a long deep breath of it, he would feel quite exhilarated and for a time at any rate he would forget about overwork and underpay in factory, field, or mine, and lose the reality of his own squalid habitation in the dream of national greatness. A sustained inhalation of nationalism . . . might even deaden the noise of socialists, anarchists, and other apostles of social revolution or economic unrest. (1926, 73–74)

The potential audience for social revolutionaries and others who would demand redistribution grows with increasing inequality (Meltzer and Richard 1981). Simply ignoring high levels of inequality therefore threatens "widespread alienation and disaffection" and so the state's continued existence (Dahl 1971, 92). States lacking the ability to effectively repress massive dissent and unwilling to adopt redistributive policies to reduce inequality must respond with nationalism to anesthetize their citizens against it: the nationalist myth, in short, is "crafted to persuade the public to accept the established social order" (Van Evera 1985, 98).

Nationalism serves states' interests in diverting attention from high levels of economic inequality particularly well for two reasons. First, nationalism works to obscure the extent of inequality in a society. Inherent to the idea of nationalism is the denial that differences of any sort even exist among members of the nation. As Anderson explained, "regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship" (1991, 7). Indeed, idealizing the commonalities shared by members of the asserted national community while forgetting their differences has been recognized as "the essence of a nation" since the nineteenth century (Renan 1996, 43). Rosa Luxemburg (1976, 135) famously decried how "the concept of 'the nation' as a homogenous social and political entity" was used as a "misty veil" to conceal the differing conditions and antagonistic interests of its purported members. To the extent that nationalism is spread among citizens of a country, then, those citizens are unlikely to recognize their unequal circumstances, much less call for policies to ameliorate them.

Second, even when inequality is recognized, nationalism can easily be used to delegitimize demands for redistribution. Redistribution can be cast as a matter inappropriate for political debate, a form of special-interest pleading that must necessarily be secondary to issues of 'national' concern. Because redistribution by definition benefits some citizens at others' expense, it clashes with the state's claims to represent the nation as a whole; according to nationalists, the state therefore cannot properly assent to demands to redress inequalities in this way. Indeed, even making such "narrow" and "self-interested" claims violates citizens' supposed paramount duty to the state (Hobsbawm 1990, 9; Tilly 1998, 171).

The diversionary theory of nationalism therefore contends that states generate nationalism in their citizens to defuse the ticking bomb of economic inequality. Nationalism conceals unequal conditions, preempts calls for redistribution, and thereby prevents the development of unrest, so states should be expected to inculcate more nationalism in their populations when economic inequality is greater (Posen 1993, 88–89; Van Evera 1990, 28–29).

It is important to note that the diversionary theory suggests an unconditional relationship, that is, that the effect of inequality works upon all of a country's citizens regardless of their incomes. It focuses on state action, and, although the state's motivations may be primarily to persuade its poorer citizens to accept inequality, the means it has available to instill nationalism described above do not lend themselves easily to the targeting of specific groups. In fact, the state's nationalist mythology frequently "blows back," working to convince even the elites engaged in creating it (Snyder 1991, 41–42; Van Evera 1984, 406).

Three rival theories propose different relationships between economic inequality and nationalism than that predicted by the diversionary theory. The first of these rivals directly contradicts diversionary theory. Taking nationalist claims of homogeneity at face value, the cohesion theory argues that people are more likely to see themselves as part of a single, unified nation when their economic circumstances are indeed more similar; "divisive disparities," on the other hand, impede any sense of nationhood from developing (Gilbert 1998, 107–108; see also Shulman 2003, 24–25). Deutsch (1964), for example, argued that redistribution was part of the price of building and maintaining national identity. When economic inequality is left unaddressed, he wrote, "social conflict and disintegrative tendencies also exist," reducing attachment to the purported national community (1964, 164).

A second rival, the new-nations theory, takes the state's role in spreading nationalism more clearly into account but contends that economic inequality frustrates rather than spurs the state's creation of nationalist sentiments among its citizens. Unlike the diversionary theory, this argument focuses not on the top-down programs of states to generate nationalism but rather on the "mirror images and mortal enemies" of such efforts, movements to establish new nations and states (Tilly 1998, 174). Some theorists of popular mobilization argue that sharper differences in economic circumstance encourage the emergence of political entrepreneurs who attempt to develop "new" national identities among disadvantaged members of society, different—and rightfully apart—from the nation asserted by the existing state (e.g., Brass 1991; Brown 1998; Hechter 1975).[2] If this is true, then the result of more inequality should be that poorer citizens identify more closely with these new nations and so become more likely to *reject* the nationalism the state attempts to foster among them. Like the cohesion theory, then, the new-nations theory holds that economic inequality should be expected to decrease attachment to the national community the state purports to represent, but it contends this nationalist attachment will depend on the combination of the context of inequality and their own incomes: inequality is expected to negatively affect such sentiments for poorer citizens more than it does those among the more affluent.

The third and final rival theory looks not to how economic inequality affects the state's incentives to spread nationalism, the obstacles posed to such state efforts by new nationalist movements, or the plausibility of the nationalist myth. Instead, it focuses on how inequality changes the presumed psychological benefits of nationalism for people of various incomes. Shayo (2009) summarized this line of argument: people adopt nationalist sentiments when such attitudes allow them to feel better about themselves and their position in society. Greater economic inequality depresses the social status of the poor and so should induce lower-income individuals to cling more closely to the nation, which offers them an alternate and higher-status identity. At the same time, greater inequality increases the status of the rich and so should discourage identification with the nation among more affluent individuals. Whether economic inequality encourages or depresses one's identification with the nation, according to this psychological-benefits theory, depends on one's income.

Despite the sizable theoretical literature on nationalism and the conflicting expectations of the diversionary theory and its three rivals, the relationship between the extent of economic inequality in a country and nationalist sentiments among its citizens has not been directly investigated empirically. Indeed, there has been relatively little cross-national empirical research on the causes of nationalism at all. Nearly two decades after Van Evera noted that "the nationalism literature leaves ample room for more work on nationalism's causes: much of it fails to frame hypotheses clearly and much does not systematically test hypotheses against empirical evidence; hence the literature leaves many questions unresolved" (1994, 5), his call remains largely unanswered. Empirical research on how economic inequality shapes political attitudes such as nationalism is similarly scant (Neckerman and Torche 2007), although some progress has been made in recent years (see, e.g., Andersen and Fetner 2008; Solt 2008). This article provides a first test of whether economic inequality influences nationalism by examining evidence from countries around the world over a quarter century.

Measuring Nationalism and Inequality

Economic inequality is an aspect of the context in a particular country at a particular time, but it is the

[2]It is worth noting that, like nations, ethnicities too are social and political constructions in this view: it is inequality that leads to the creation of ethnicities and for cultural differences between poorer and richer individuals to become markers of ethnic identities (e.g., Hechter 1975, 9; Brass 1991, 8). The existence of disadvantaged ethnic minorities, therefore, should be understood within the new nations theory not a necessary precondition for inequality to result in the emergence of new nations but rather as a step in the process by which inequality leads to new nations being created among the poor.

individuals within that country who hold varying degrees of nationalist sentiment. For this reason, along with the concerns shared by all quantitative work, the present study requires data that must meet two exacting additional criteria. First, to examine whether aspects of context like inequality affect individual attitudes like nationalism requires data on both the context and the individual. Second, a considerable number of different contexts are required: analyses of the effects of contextual variables depend on the number of distinct contexts just as much as noncontextual analyses depend on the number of observations. The variables employed in this study and the data used to overcome these two methodological challenges are set out below.[3]

Nationalism. Belief in the myth of nationalism—-feeling oneself to be strongly attached to 'the nation' and the state that purports to represent it—is often associated with belief in national superiority and with hostility to outsiders. A well-developed line of works in political psychology, however, has established that these attitudes are best understood to be conceptually and empirically distinct (e.g., Kosterman and Feshbach 1989).[4] As Mearsheimer explained, "Although nationalists often believe that their nation is unique or special, this conclusion does not necessarily mean that they think they are superior to other peoples, merely that they take pride in their own nation" (1990, 21). Nationalism is therefore measured in this study by reference to expressions of national pride and attachment rather than chauvinism or xenophobia.

The primary measure of individuals' nationalism was drawn from the five waves of the World Values Survey (WVS), conducted from 1981 to 2007, as well as the International Social Survey Program (ISSP) survey on national identity conducted in 2003–2004. These surveys asked respondents the extent of their pride in their respective nations: "How proud are you to be French [or Albanian, or Belgian, etc.]?" Answers were on a 4-point scale recoded to range from (1) not at all proud, through (2) not very proud and (3) quite proud, to (4) very proud. Together, the surveys used here provide data on national pride in 78 countries, in one to six different years each, for a total of 222 different country-year contexts (see online Appendix A).

Two additional measures of nationalism were also examined. Both are based on the aforementioned 2003–2004 ISSP survey on national identity as well as the earlier version of that survey conducted in the mid-1990s. Respondents were first asked "How close—how emotionally attached—do you feel to France [or Australia, etc.]?" with answers on a 4-point scale from "not close at all" to "very close." On the 4-point, "not at all proud" to "very proud" scale, the ISSP respondents were also asked to rate their pride in each of five areas: (1) their country's achievements in the arts, (2) its achievements in sports, (3) its achievements in science and technology, (4) its armed forces, and (5) its history. Responses to these five questions load on a single factor, with all loadings exceeding .65; following Hjerm (1998), this factor was used to create an index of national-cultural pride (details available in online Appendix B). Although these measures are available in a total of only 54 country-year contexts (see online Appendix A), they should provide additional insight into patterns of nationalism.

Economic Inequality. Scholarship on the effects of economic inequality on nationalism and other political phenomena has suffered from a dearth of comparable data, but the recent release of the Standardized World Income Inequality Database (SWIID) provides a solution to this problem. Based on data from the Luxembourg Income Survey and the United Nations University World Institute for Development Economics Research, the SWIID maximizes the comparability of data on income inequality across the broadest possible sample of countries and years (Solt 2009). I use the SWIID measure of the Gini index of net income inequality, which has a theoretical range from 0, indicating that each household receives an equal share of income after taxes and government transfers, to 100, indicating that a single household receives all net income. Among the countries and years examined in this study, the Gini index

[3]This study does not directly investigate the mechanisms implicated by the four theories to link higher levels of inequality to variation in nationalism: increased state action to promote nationalism, widespread awareness of the greater extent of economic disparities, stronger new nationalist movements among poorer citizens, or larger differences in perceived status between various income groups and the nation. All of these mechanisms pose considerable measurement challenges, particularly given that a large number of observations in differing contexts of economic inequality are necessary. The uncertainty caused by omitting any test of mechanisms is mitigated, however, by the uniqueness of each theory's predictions, and by identifying the overarching relationship between inequality and nationalism, this article takes the necessary first step for empirical research on the topic (see Gerring 2010; Van Evera 1997, 31). Further examination of mechanisms is left for future work.

[4]Unfortunately, these same works reintroduce confusion among the phenomena by labeling feelings of attachment to and pride in the nation and "its" state as not "nationalism" but "patriotism" and using nationalism to refer to feelings of national superiority (see Kosterman and Feshbach 1989, 261). This definition of nationalism is in sharp contrast to the way the term is used in the broader scholarship on the topic. Hechter underscores this point: he rejects conflating "the desire to raise the prestige and power of one's own nation state relative to rivals in the international system" (2000, 17) with nationalism and instead labels this desire *patriotism*.

ranged from about 21 (e.g., Sweden in 1982) to over 60 (e.g., South Africa in 2001).

Relative Income. Because the new-nations and psychological-benefits theories predicts that the effects of economic inequality on an individual's nationalism depends on that individual's relative income, the income quintile of each respondent's household is also included. To facilitate interpretation, this variable was centered with the median quintile at zero: the poorest quintile was therefore coded as -2 and the richest quintile as 2.

Additional Predictors of Nationalism. A number of other variables are included as controls but are only briefly discussed here; more information can be found in online Appendix C. Age and education have been repeatedly shown to have powerful impacts on an individual's nationalist sentiments (e.g., Coenders and Scheepers 2003); gender, marital status, and being unemployed may also have important effects. Absolute as well as relative income may be important, with countries with higher levels of GDP per capita thought to be less nationalistic (Inglehart and Welzel 2005). Many scholars have argued that states foment more nationalism when they have recently faced more international conflict (see, e.g., Posen 1993). The effect of the size of a country's immigrant community on nationalism is the subject of conflicting hypotheses, and because large-scale immigration is sometimes thought to cause greater economic inequality, it is especially important to account for its effects on nationalism to avoid the potential for omitted-variable bias. Similarly, states ruling ethnically diverse populations may face additional challenges in implanting nationalist beliefs in their citizens (e.g., Centeno 2002, 175).[5] Democracies may rely more heavily on nationalism than authoritarian regimes, which can often simply repress dissent (e.g., Van Evera 1994, 31).[6] Past experience with authoritarian rule has also been hypothesized to depress nationalism. First, nationalist sentiments are particularly low in the former Axis powers; efforts by the victorious Allies to eradicate nationalism within their former adversaries appear to have met with considerable success (see Van Evera 1984, 451–52). Second, citizens of new democracies have been found to express lower levels of national pride than those in countries with long-established democratic regimes (Smith and Jarkko 1998). Finally, nationalism may also be affected by whether a country has a federal or unitary government (see, e.g., Riker 1964).

Method

Accurately gauging the relationship between nationalism and economic inequality requires a method that takes into account the fact that inequality and the other aspects of context introduced as controls do not vary across all of the individuals examined, but only across those surveyed in different countries or different years. Further, some of the control variables, such as federalism, do not vary over time in this dataset but only from country to country. This means that there are actually three nested levels in the data: individuals, country-years, and countries. Failing to recognize the multilevel character of the data violates the assumption of independent errors (Steenbergen and Jones 2002). To avoid this pitfall, this analysis proceeds with multilevel modeling techniques. For individual i in country-year j in country k, the equation to be estimated is defined as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} Nationalism_{ijk} = {} & \gamma_{000} + (\gamma_{100} + r_{1jk})Age_{ijk} + (\gamma_{200} + r_{2jk})Education_{ijk} + (\gamma_{300} + r_{3jk})Female_{ijk} \\ & + (\gamma_{400} + r_{4jk})Married_{ijk} + (\gamma_{500} + r_{5jk})Unemployed_{ijk} + (\gamma_{600} + r_{6jk})Income_{ijk} \\ & + \gamma_{010}Inequality_{jk} + \gamma_{610}Inequality_{jk} \times Income_{ijk} + \gamma_{020}GDP/Capita_{jk} \\ & + \gamma_{030}International\,Conflict_{jk} + \gamma_{040}Migrant\,Stock_{jk} + \gamma_{050}Democracy_{jk} \\ & + \gamma_{050}New\,Democracy_{jk} + \gamma_{001}War\,Guilt_{k} + \gamma_{002}Federal_{k} + \gamma_{003}Ethnic\,Diversity_{k} \\ & + r_{0jk} + u_{00k} \end{aligned} \tag{1}$$

In addition to including predictors at all three levels of analysis, each with a coefficient γ, this multilevel model includes both varying intercepts

[5]Ethnic diversity might be considered an intermediate outcome of the new nations theory and as such properly excluded from the analysis (see Gelman and Hill 2007, 188). Omitting it from the analyses presented below, however, leaves the results for the other variables substantively unchanged.

[6]As all of the countries in the ISSP surveys were considered democratic when surveyed, this variable was omitted from the analyses of emotional attachment to country and the national cultural pride index.

and varying slopes (see Gelman and Hill, 2007). That is, first, that through separate error terms for each country (u_{00k}) and country-year (r_{0jk}), it allows the average level of nationalism within these units to vary to reflect circumstances in a particular country or year that remain outside of the model.[7] And second, it includes a separate error term for each individual-level predictor ($r_{.jk}$) and so allows their estimated effects to vary from one country-year context to the next. Because national pride and emotional attachment to country take on one of just four ordered values, the equation was estimated using ordered logistic regression for those measures of nationalism.[8] For the index of national-cultural pride, linear regression was used. Robust standard errors are reported. All analyses were performed using HLM 6.0 software.

Before proceeding to the presentation of the results, we pause to review the expectations provided by the four contending theories of nationalism. Diversionary theory predicts that the coefficient for economic inequality, γ_{010} in equation (1), will be positive. Cohesion theory maintains that this coefficient will be negative. New-nations theory predicts that the coefficient for inequality will be negative and that the interaction between inequality and income, γ_{610}, will be positive, that is, the magnitude of the expected negative effect of inequality on nationalism will be smaller for richer individuals than for poorer individuals. The psychological-benefits theory predicts that the coefficient for inequality will be positive and the interaction of inequality and income will be strongly negative: inequality will increase nationalism for poorer individuals but depress it for richer ones.

Analysis and Results

Table 1 presents the results. The first column tests the hypothesis derived from the diversionary theory of nationalism and its rivals using national pride as the indicator of nationalism, the second examines emotional attachment to country, and the third turns to the national-cultural pride index. Inequality has a statistically significant positive effect on all three of these indicators of nationalism, and its effect does not vary significantly across incomes.[9] These results are consistent with only the diversionary theory and disconfirm the cohesion, new-nations, and psychological-benefits theories.

A closer examination of these results provides additional insights. Age and education displayed their expected effects across all three measures of nationalism. Women and men are generally similar in terms of nationalism, although women on average do express slightly higher scores on the national-cultural pride index. Married people tend to express somewhat more national pride and emotional attachment to country, while the unemployed generally express somewhat less nationalism by those two measures. Income does not appear to shape nationalism in important ways at all.[10]

Economic development, federalism, and ethnic diversity were not found to affect nationalist sentiments either. Postwar antinationalism programs in the former Axis did result in lower levels of national pride and emotional attachment to country; the decline in the national-cultural pride index, however, could not be distinguished from zero in the sample for which that dependent variable is available. People in countries with larger immigrant communities tend to exhibit lower levels of national pride and lower scores on the national-cultural pride index but no less emotional attachment to country. Recent experience with intense international conflict was estimated to result in higher levels of national pride, but, unexpectedly, lower levels of emotional attachment to country.[11] People living in

[7]In this way, the model is similar to fixed effect pooled time series models, which include dummy variables for each country to capture country specific effects.

[8]Brant tests of the parallel lines assumption confirm that ordered logistic regression is appropriate for these models.

[9]The estimated effect of inequality derived from equation (1) is expressed by $\frac{\partial Nationalism_{ijk}}{\partial Inequality_{jk}} = \gamma_{010} + \gamma_{610} \times Income_{ijk}$, and therefore both its magnitude and statistical significance vary with individual income (e.g., Braumoeller 2004). For all three measures of nationalism, the reported coefficient for inequality (γ_{010}) overwhelms the second term in this equation, the product of the interaction coefficient with individual income: the variation across incomes in the magnitude and statistical significance of inequality's effect is negligible. For this reason, further discussion of this variation is omitted.

[10]Due to the interaction term, the estimated effect of an individual's household income quintile varies according to the context of income inequality. This effect does not approach statistical significance at any observed value of income inequality for any of the three indicators of nationalism. The average effect of household income across all contexts of income inequality, calculated by omitting the interaction term, similarly fails to approach statistical significance. Additional analyses confirm that this effect does not vary meaningfully with GDP per capita and is not statistically significant at any observed value of that variable.

[11]Much of this discrepancy appears to be an artifact of the relatively limited sample of countries and years for which data are available for emotional attachment. When national pride is examined in the sample of just the countries and years that most closely match those in the emotional attachment sample, the estimated effect of international conflict turns negative; all the other coefficients remain substantively similar to those presented for the full national pride sample.

Table 1 Effects of Economic Inequality on Nationalism

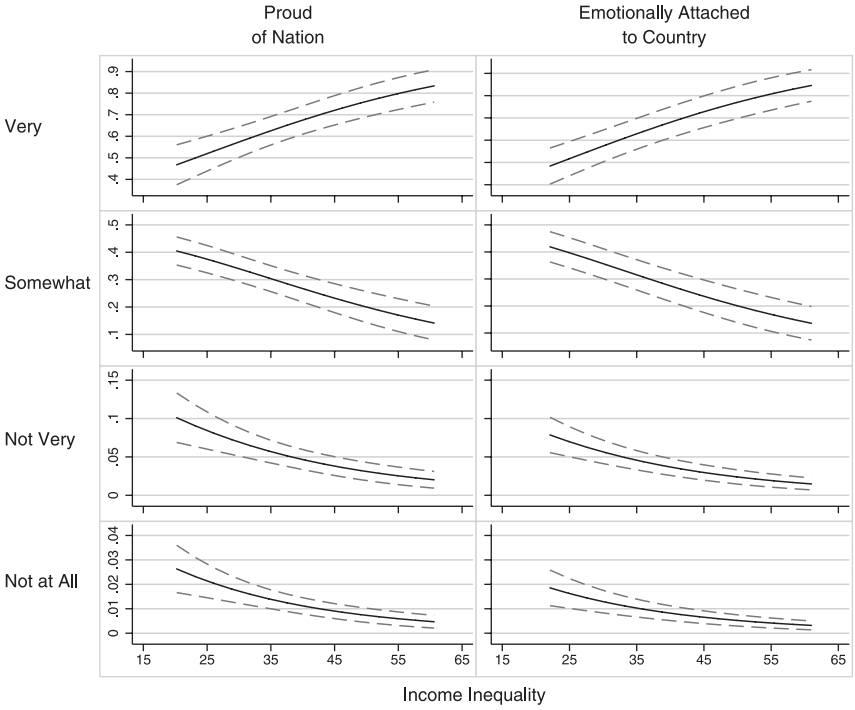
	Model 1 National Pride	Model 2 Emotional Attachment to Country	Model 3 National-Cultural Pride Index
	Estimate (Std. Error)	Estimate (Std. Error)	Estimate (Std. Error)
Economic Inequality			
Inequality	.044* (.011)	.042* (.009)	.013* (.005)
Inequality × Household Income	≫ .001 (.001)	.001 (.001)	> .001 (.001)
Individual Controls			
Age	.013* (.001)	.021* (.002)	.005* (.001)
Years of Education	.041* (.005)	.014* (.006)	.013* (.004)
Female	.005 (.019)	.052 (.032)	.063* (.019)
Married	.099* (.013)	.059* (.021)	.008 (.013)
Unemployed	.116* (.025)	.097* (.038)	.021 (.014)
Household Income	.010 (.032)	.013 (.035)	.006 (.018)
Country-Year Controls			
GDP/Capita	.007 (.008)	.015 (.010)	.003 (.004)
International Conflict	.158* (.068)	.262* (.087)	.040 (.033)
Migrant Stock	.023* (.011)	.009 (.009)	.010* (.004)
Democracy	.331 (.316)		
New Democracy	.210 (.228)	.390* (.186)	.385* (.107)
Country Controls			
War Guilt	.849* (.281)	.474* (.237)	.216 (.174)
Federalism	.348 (.245)	.150 (.182)	.063 (.113)
Ethnic Diversity	.005 (.005)	.007 (.005)	.002 (.003)
Constant	1.942* (.471)	2.719* (.529)	.293 (.200)
Second Threshold	1.691* (.061)	1.753* (.090)	
Third Threshold	3.759* (.079)	4.064* (.155)	
Variance Components			
Age Slope	≪.001*	≪.001*	≪.001*
Education Slope	.002*	.001*	< .001*
Female Slope	.023*	.029*	.010*
Married Slope	.016*	.005	.002*
Unemployed Slope	.030	.013	.003
Income Slope	.006*	.002	.001*
Country-Year Intercept	.599*	.339*	.056*
Country Intercept	.453*	.146*	.032*
Observations			
Individuals	264,384	68,789	68,760
Country-Years	222	54	54
Countries	78	34	34
2 × *Log Likelihood*	1314144.6	335472.2	185380.36

* $p < .05$, two tailed tests.

new democracies expressed markedly less emotional attachment to country and national-cultural pride than those in established democracies.

How strong is the positive effect of inequality on the generation of nationalism? As the coefficients in the models of national pride and emotional attachment to country are estimated in logits, their magnitudes are not readily interpreted directly. The results were therefore used to calculate the predicted probabilities of each value of these variables for a person of median characteristics in a typical context over the observed range of income inequality. These predicted probabilities are displayed graphically in Figure 1, and they reveal that economic inequality has a strikingly powerful effect on nationalism. Consider national pride, the first column of graphs in the figure. When

FIGURE 1 Nationalism by Income Inequality: Predicted Probabilities



Solid black lines represent predicted probabilities; dashed gray lines indicate the bounds of the corresponding 95% confidence intervals. All predicted probabilities were calculated assuming individuals and contexts with median characteristics .
Source: Results presented in Table 1.

income inequality is at its lowest observed level, the predicted probability that a typical person in typical circumstances will be "very proud" of their nation is 47 ± 9%; at inequality's highest observed level, this probability increases to 83 ± 7%. The predicted probability of such a person being only "somewhat proud" falls from 40 ± 5% to just 14 ± 6%. Feeling "not very proud" or "not at all proud," uncommon sentiments among typical people even in very equal contexts (together a probability of only 12 ± 3%), are estimated to become almost vanishingly rare as inequality increases (2.5 ± 1.1% at the maximum observed level of inequality). The second column of graphs shows that emotional attachment to country is estimated to change similarly with higher inequality. These estimated effects are the strongest in either model, about twice as large as those of war guilt, the decades of antinationalist programs begun by the Allies in the defeated Axis powers, which is the next strongest aspect of context; they are also roughly twice as large as those of education, which, as in previous studies (see, e.g., Coenders and Scheepers 2003), was found to be the individual characteristic most important to shaping nationalist sentiments.

Discussion

One of the oldest theories of nationalism is that states instill the nationalist myth in their citizens to divert their attention from great economic inequality and so forestall pervasive unrest. Because the very concept of nationalism obscures the extent of inequality and is a potent tool for delegitimizing calls for redistribution, it is a perfect diversion, and states should be expected to engage in more nationalist mythmaking when inequality increases. The evidence presented by this study supports this theory: across the countries and over time, where economic inequality is greater, nationalist sentiments are substantially more widespread.

This result adds considerably to our understanding of nationalism. To date, many scholars have focused on the international environment as the principal source of threats that prompt states to generate nationalism; the importance of the domestic threat posed by economic inequality has been largely overlooked. However, at least in recent years, domestic inequality is a far more important stimulus for the

generation of nationalist sentiments than the international context. Given that nuclear weapons—either their own or their allies'—rather than the mass army now serve as the primary defense of many countries against being overrun by their enemies, perhaps this is not surprising: nationalism-inspired mass mobilization is simply no longer as necessary for protection as it once was (see Mearsheimer 1990, 21; Posen 1993, 122–24).

Another important implication of the analyses presented above is that growing economic inequality may increase ethnic conflict. States may foment national pride to stem discontent with increasing inequality, but this pride can also lead to more hostility towards immigrants and minorities. Though pride in the nation is distinct from chauvinism and outgroup hostility, it is nevertheless closely related to these phenomena, and recent experimental research has shown that members of majority groups who express high levels of national pride can be nudged into intolerant and xenophobic responses quite easily (Li and Brewer 2004). This finding suggests that, by leading to the creation of more national pride, higher levels of inequality produce environments favorable to those who would inflame ethnic animosities.

Another and perhaps even more worrisome implication regards the likelihood of war. Nationalism is frequently suggested as a cause of war, and more national pride has been found to result in a much greater demand for national security even at the expense of civil liberties (Davis and Silver 2004, 36–37) as well as preferences for "a more militaristic foreign affairs posture and a more interventionist role in world politics" (Conover and Feldman 1987, 3). To the extent that these preferences influence policymaking, the growth in economic inequality over the last quarter century should be expected to lead to more aggressive foreign policies and more international conflict. If economic inequality prompts states to generate diversionary nationalism as the results presented above suggest, then rising inequality could make for a more dangerous world.

The results of this work also contribute to our still limited knowledge of the relationship between economic inequality and democratic politics. In particular, it helps explain the fact that, contrary to median-voter models of redistribution (e.g., Meltzer and Richard 1981), democracies with higher levels of inequality do not consistently respond with more redistribution (e.g., Bénabou 1996). Rather than allowing redistribution to be decided through the democratic process suggested by such models, this work suggests that states often respond to higher levels of inequality with more nationalism. Nationalism then works to divert attention from inequality, so many citizens neither realize the extent of inequality nor demand redistributive policies. By prompting states to promote nationalism, greater economic inequality removes the issue of redistribution from debate and therefore narrows the scope of democratic politics.

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