

RESEARCH ARTICLE

# National identity between democracy and autocracy: a comparative analysis of 24 countries

Julian Erhardt\*<sup>1</sup>, Steffen Wamsler<sup>2</sup> and Markus Freitag<sup>3</sup>

Institute of Political Science, University of Bern, Switzerland

\*E-mail: [julian.erhardt@ipw.unibe.ch](mailto:julian.erhardt@ipw.unibe.ch)

(Received 27 April 2020; revised 14 August 2020; accepted 14 October 2020; first published online 20 November 2020)

## Abstract

Recognizing democratic backsliding and increasing support for authoritarianism, research on public preferences for democracy and its authoritarian alternatives has gained traction. Moving beyond the extant focus on economic determinants, our analysis examines the effect of national identity, demonstrating that it is a double-edged sword for regime preferences. Using recent European Values Survey data on 24 European countries from 2017 to 2018, we show that civic national identity is associated with a higher support for democracy and lower support for authoritarian regimes, whereas the reverse holds for ethnic identities. Further, economic hardship moderates these relationships: it strengthens both the negative effect of ethnic national identities and, to some extent, the positive effect of civic national identities on democracy support *vis-à-vis* authoritarian alternatives. This has important implications for the survival of democracy in times of crises and the study of a cultural backlash, since social identity matters substantively for individuals' responses to economic hardship.

**Keywords:** national identity; conceptions of nationhood; support for democracy; regime preference; economic hardship

## Introduction

As democratic backsliding (Waldner and Lust, 2018) and substantial increases in authoritarian attitudes among the citizenry of democracies throughout most parts of the globe (Inglehart and Norris, 2017; Norris and Inglehart, 2019) become a more and more central phenomenon, research on public preferences for democracy and its authoritarian alternatives has gained traction (e.g., Arieli and Davidov, 2011; Magalhães, 2014). While previous research has extensively dealt with economic prerequisites of democracy (e.g., Lipset, 1959b; Bratton and Mattes, 2001; Kotzian, 2011; Andersen, 2012; Teixeira *et al.*, 2014), little research has to date scrutinized cultural accounts of regime support and, most profoundly, the role of national identity therein. This is quite startling, since national identity has moved from being a bit player to center stage in contemporary political science (Schmidt and Quandt, 2018). Considering the long-standing debate whether a strong and shared national identity should be valued as a prerequisite of a well-functioning democratic system (e.g., Miller, 1995; Smith, 1998) or rather as a road to authoritarian rule (e.g., Adorno *et al.*, 1950), it is time to examine systematically to what extent national identity relates to support for democratic or authoritarian regime types.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Democracies can be defined by the existence of several institutions, including 'a democratic electoral regime, political rights of participation, civil rights, horizontal accountability, and the guarantee that the effective power to govern lies in the hands of democratically elected representatives' (Merkel, 2004). While there exist a variety of different autocratic regimes types, their smallest common denominator is that they do not fulfill these criteria of democracies (Linz, 2000). Our study

Viewing national identity as a multidimensional set of attitudes (Davidov, 2009), we differentiate between ethnic and civic conceptions of nationhood as one major aspect of national identity (Kohn, 1939; Brubaker, 1992; Kunovich, 2009). We argue that civic national identity, defining belongingness to a nation by adherence to the national political culture and respect for political institutions, is inherently linked to democracy and its promise of equal rights and an inclusive society. In contrast, ethnic national identity, which conceptualizes nationhood by ascriptive criteria such as place of birth or ancestry, is linked to more authoritarian regime types that promise protection of the in-group by means of strong leadership. Given the prevalence of economic variables in previous research, and also seeing as current research increasingly tends to view economic factors and identity or values as interrelated (e.g., Serricchio, Tsakatika and Quaglia, 2013; Gidron and Hall, 2017, 2019), we go one step further and analyze a moderating effect of economic hardship on our hypothesized relationship between national identity and diffuse support.

Comparing 24 European countries with data from the most recent European Values Survey from 2017 to 18, the results support our main argument: an ethnic national identity is indeed associated with a lower support for democracy and higher support for a strong leadership and army rule, whereas the reverse holds true for a civic national identity. In addition, we find substantial support for one of our hypothesized moderation effects: economic hardship substantially increases the negative effect of an ethnic national identity on the preference for democracy as opposed to authoritarian alternatives. For individuals with a civic national identity, the results indicate a slight increase in this group's support for democracy under economic hardship.

Our study contributes to the existing research in several respects. First, while most research in this field tends to focus on satisfaction with democracy or institutional trust (e.g., Armingeon and Guthmann, 2014; Armingeon, Guthmann and Weisstanner, 2016; Cordero and Simón, 2016), which relates to the side of *specific* support as established by Easton (1965, 1975), only a few exceptions address the *diffuse*<sup>2</sup> side of system support, that is, the preferences for democracy and authoritarian alternatives (Ariely and Davidov, 2011; Magalhães, 2014).<sup>3</sup> Indeed, the notion that 'satisfaction with democratic performance and support for democracy have different etiologies' is supported by previous studies (Magalhães, 2014, but also Dalton, 2004; Bratton, Mattes and Gyimah-Boadi, 2005; Chu *et al.*, 2008). Second, we introduce cultural and identity-based explanations to the study of regime preferences. Third, analyzing a moderating effect of economic variables on our hypothesized relationship between national identity and diffuse regime support, our study is linked to the ongoing debate of a 'cultural backlash' against democratic rule stemming from a (perceived) declining material security (Inglehart and Norris, 2017; Ausserladscheider, 2019).

The remainder of our paper is structured as follows: first, we conceptualize our understanding of national identity and its likely relevance for our dependent variable in more detail. Next, we deduce a total of five hypotheses on both direct and moderated relationships between national identity and support for democracy and authoritarian regime types from this theoretical reasoning. Subsequently, we introduce the European Values Study (EVS) data set and elaborate on our empirical approach before moving to the results of our analysis. Lastly, we discuss the implications and validity of these results and conclude with a look ahead.

---

focuses on two frequently found varieties of authoritarian regimes, in which legitimacy is based on military rule or on the rule of a single, strong leadership figure.

<sup>2</sup>Whereas specific support refers to 'the perceived decisions, policies, actions, utterances or the general style of [...] authorities' (Easton, 1975, p. 437), diffuse support represents 'attachment to political objects [such as regimes] for their own sake' (Easton, 1975, p. 445).

<sup>3</sup>This negligence can partly be explained by the long-standing postulate that support for democracy or any other regime type is 'a stable cognitive value' (Huang *et al.*, 2008, p. 56) or 'a principled affair' (Mattes and Bratton, 2007, p. 201).

## National identity and support for democracy and autocracy

National identity as such describes a ‘deeply felt affective attachment to the nation’ (Conover and Feldman, 1987 cited in Rapp, 2018, p. 3). Recent scholarly literature mostly agrees that individual-level national identity as such is a multifaceted and multidimensional construct (Blank and Schmidt, 2003; de Figueiredo and Elkins, 2003; Helbling *et al.*, 2016; Schmidt and Quandt, 2018). Beyond the strength of individual-level identity and its importance in everyday life, it is especially the content of such an identity that allows for distinguishing subconcepts like (ethnic or civic) nationalism or various forms of patriotism, such as conventional, constitutional, or constructive patriotism (Schatz *et al.*, 1999; Blank and Schmidt, 2003; Davidov, 2009; Kunovich, 2009). However, since the meaning and understanding of such terms vary greatly across different contexts (Reeskens and Hooghe, 2010; Latcheva, 2011), an individual’s conception of what it takes to be a ‘true’ member of her nation has emerged as the major aspect of analyzing national identity across countries and cultures (Brubaker, 1992; Shulman, 2002; Kunovich, 2009; Berg and Hjerm, 2010; Reeskens and Hooghe, 2010; Bonikowski, 2016; Lenard and Miller, 2018), as ‘the importance of this distinction cannot be overstated’ (Helbling *et al.*, 2016, p. 746). Following the seminal work of Kohn (1939), research tends to distinguish between either civic or ethnic conceptions of nationhood based on the criteria that define belongingness to the respective nation.

A civic conception of national membership mostly revolves around a common (national) language and a shared political culture (Ignatieff, 1993; Lenard and Miller, 2018). These so-called voluntarist criteria for belongingness to a nation originate from the ideals of the French Revolution and stress the element of choice in national membership (cf. Brubaker, 1992; Habermas, 1994; Miller, 1995; Luong, 2016). An ethnic view of nationhood, however, puts a strong emphasis on ancestry and birth for defining belongingness by objectivist criteria (Lenard and Miller, 2018).<sup>4</sup> Importantly, these presumably biological criteria do not necessarily require actual kinship but are considered to be proxies for the belief in a common culture that includes history, myths, and values (Brubaker, 1999; Kymlicka, 2000; Larsen, 2017). This is what Berg and Hjerm (2010) refer to as a ‘thick’ national identity as opposed to a ‘thin’, civic one.

In research, these two conceptions of nationhood hardly occur as ideal types or mutually exclusive. Thus, scholars have proposed to conceptualize criteria for national membership as one continuum with civic and ethnic identities as the respective extreme points (Smith, 1991; Brubaker, 1999; Kuzio, 2002; Brubaker, 2004; Lenard and Miller, 2018). Looking deeper into the issue of mutual exclusiveness, previous research has concluded further that whereas adherence to ethnic view on nationhood does not necessarily preclude agreement with indicators like language or political norms (Reeskens and Hooghe, 2010; Wright *et al.*, 2012), the reverse may be the case of civic conceptions of nationhood (Habermas, 1991; Markell, 2000; Müller, 2010). Eventually, most individuals combine elements of both civic and ethnic criteria for national membership (Wright *et al.*, 2012; Lenard and Miller, 2018). Given that these arguments also touch upon methodological issues, we return to this in the empirical section. Despite these discussions on how to conceptualize views on nationhood appropriately, the civic–ethnic framework remains widespread and is used frequently in cross-national research (Reeskens and Hooghe, 2010; Helbling *et al.*, 2016; Larsen, 2017).

The theoretical argument that civic conceptions of nationhood are linked to support for democracy has a long history. Early scholars like Giuseppe Mazzini, John Stuart Mill, or Ernest Renan have established the notion that liberal forms of nationalism as an ideology are inherently connected to and sometimes even a prerequisite of a well-functioning democracy (Smith, 1998). Others, such as Habermas (1991, 1994), argue consistently that the creation of

<sup>4</sup>Although some research suggests that civic and ethnic conceptions of nationhood bear normative connotations by reflecting ‘good’ and ‘bad’ identities (Brubaker, 1999; Reeskens and Hooghe, 2010; Larsen, 2017), we contend that such ascriptions should not impede a meaningful distinction between definitions of membership that emphasize a shared political culture and those that value a ‘thicker’ (Berg and Hjerm, 2010, p. 390) set of criteria.

a common political sphere in a democratic system requires a shared identity that is detached from all references to blood and ancestry (see also Miller, 1995; Markell, 2000; Müller, 2010). From an individual-level perspective, if citizens rely on language and respect of political institutions as indicators for a shared political culture, they should also be more likely to value certain characteristics of a democratic regime type, such as equal rights for all members of the nation (Berg and Hjerem, 2010). Further, the inclusiveness of a civic national identity regarding incorporating outsiders into the national community by upholding these values fits well to the participatory character of liberal, democratic societies (Kunovich, 2009; Pehrson *et al.*, 2009; Simonsen, 2016). Authoritarian regimes frequently oppose inclusive societies directly, which contradicts central premises of a civic conception of nationhood. Therefore, this group of citizens should support democratic means of governance and be less likely to desire authoritarian rule.

**Hypothesis 1:** Individuals holding a civic conception of nationhood are more likely to support democracy and less likely to support authoritarian alternatives.

Regarding ethnic conceptions of nationhood, ideologies emphasizing the necessity of national ancestry in order to be viewed as a ‘true’ member of a nation like ethnic nationalism or even fascism (cf. Calhoun, 2007) are mostly linked to authoritarian forms of government. Ethnic definitions of national belongingness often relate to perceptions of national superiority (Adorno *et al.*, 1950; Blank and Schmidt, 2003; Cottam *et al.*, 2010) and the feeling of being threatened by the immigration of out-group members into the national community, which tends to result in hostility toward them (Kosterman and Feshbach, 1989; Schatz *et al.*, 1999; Wagner *et al.*, 2012). Rule by means of strong leadership often appeals to either the promise of increasing the nation’s impact in the international arena or to the pledge of protecting the nation from undue or detrimental influences outside the nation, as can be seen in cases of democratic backsliding or (semi-)authoritarian regimes in general, such as Putin’s Russia or Erdogan’s Turkey (cf. Bermeo, 2016; Soest and Grauvogel, 2017; Hellmeier and Weidmann, 2020). In contrast, the openness of democratic systems to change poses a perceived threat to the nation as defined in ethnic and thus conservative terms (cf. Vincent, 2013).<sup>5</sup> Given how well the two resonate with each other, it seems likely that individuals holding an ethnic view on nationhood also have a more positive view on authoritarian ways of political rule.

**Hypothesis 2:** Individuals holding an ethnic conception of nationhood are less likely to support democracy and more likely to support authoritarian alternatives.

In addition to these direct relationships between national identity and the preference for democratic as opposed to authoritarian regime types, we argue that these relationships are likely

---

<sup>5</sup>Previous research has also found that authoritarian and dominance-oriented mindsets contribute to national identity in the form of nationalism and patriotism (Osborne *et al.*, 2017). Our argument differs from such analyses on both the independent and dependent variables. Whereas right-wing authoritarianism (Altemeyer, 1996) and social dominance orientation (Pratto *et al.*, 1994) relate to authoritarian attitudes, we depart from this by studying preferences for regime types, which are undoubtedly related to, yet still distinct from the former, given that we measure political attitudes instead of values. Authoritarianism is a ‘social attitudinal or ideological expressions of basic social values or motivational goals that represent different, though related, strategies for attaining collective security at the expense of individual autonomy’ (Duckitt and Bizumic, 2013, p. 842). Nationalism and patriotism reflect a dimension of national identity that is not linked to conceptions of nationhood comprehensively (Citrin *et al.*, 2001), nationalism may be defined in both civic and ethnic terms depending on the respective context (Smith, 1998; Simonsen and Bonikowski, 2019; Tamir, 2019a). The main difference between the two lies in their view of national out-groups instead of defining membership to the national in-group (cf. Davidov, 2009). Vargas-Salfateet *et al.* (2020) take a similar approach and study the relationship between RWA and the *strength* of national identification but do not go into detail regarding the content of conceptions of nationhood.

moderated by economic hardship. Economic hardship on the individual or on the societal level has been a key determinant in extant studies on the support for and satisfaction with democracy. Several studies have found support for democracy to be lower for individuals with a lower income as well as in countries with a lower level of economic development, a higher level of income inequality, or in an economic crisis (Bratton and Mattes, 2001; Kotzian, 2011; Andersen, 2012; Armingeon and Guthmann, 2014; Teixeira *et al.*, 2014; Armingeon *et al.*, 2016), even though democracy is arguably the only political system that provides citizens with the means to voice their discontent with economic conditions and economic policy effectively and to mobilize for political change (Kurer *et al.*, 2019, p. 867). Further, as public support is the only means through which democratic systems ensure political legitimacy (Kotzian, 2011, p. 23), support for democracy (including diffuse support) in general should be particularly susceptible to economic hardship among members of the public, if democracy is viewed as not ensuring fulfillment of people's economic needs.

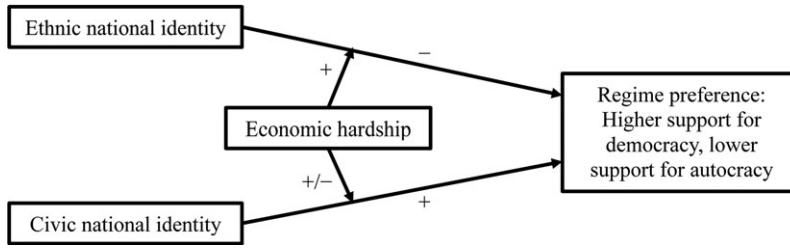
Instead of regarding economic hardship and cultural influences, such as national identity, separately, scholars in the fields of populism (e.g., Gidron and Hall, 2017; Manow, 2018), Euroskepticism (e.g., Serricchio *et al.*, 2013; Hobolt and De Vries, 2016) or income redistribution (e.g., Shayo, 2009) increasingly begin to view them as interrelated, either arguing that identity politics becomes aggravated during times of economic hardship or that identity plays less of a role and economic considerations become more relevant instead. We follow this line of thought and contend that economic hardship moderates the relationship between national identity and support for regime types. Economic hardship threatens past economic achievements and entails insecurity about one's present as well as future income leading to status anxiety. Such a declining existential security can reinforce the cultural backlash of those who feel disoriented by the erosion of familiar values (Inglehart and Norris, 2017; Ausserladscheider, 2019).

With increasing economic hardship, the negative relation between a more ethnic national identity and support for democracy should become even stronger. Those who define national membership in terms of ancestry and birth should respond to economic insecurity stemming from adverse economic conditions by calling for more protection for their 'own' people and restricting the access to public goods for those who do not conform to their conceptions of nationhood (Rickert, 1998; Dancygier and Donnelly, 2014). Under such circumstances, and given the overall propensity of authoritarian attitudes to thrive under economic adversity (Lipset, 1959a; Duckitt and Fisher, 2003; De Regt *et al.*, 2012), ethnic nationalists should be more supportive of demands to restrict democratic pluralism and the liberties of those who are not considered 'true' members of the nation, calling for a strong leader to enact such reforms.<sup>6</sup>

**Hypothesis 3:** Economic hardship increases the negative relationship between an ethnic national identity and the support for democracy as opposed to authoritarian alternatives.

For those holding a more civic national identity, the direction of a potential moderating effect of economic hardship is less clear and also taps into the long-standing question of whether economic conditions drive identity politics or whether attitudes, culture, and identity prevail over economic concerns (cf. Mishler and Rose, 1996; Rose *et al.*, 1998; Bratton and Mattes, 2001; Kotzian, 2011; Andersen, 2012). On the one hand, the preference for democracy by those with a civic nationalist worldview may be lower under economic insecurity, as economic considerations become of paramount importance in times of economic hardship (cf. Dahl, 1998; Mair, 2013; Offe, 2013). The performance of (representative) democracy is perceived as unsatisfactory due to the prevalence of economic hardship, which may erode the trust in the institutions of democracy

<sup>6</sup>In this regard, right-wing populism is a related, yet distinct phenomenon. While populism goes in hand with illiberal understandings of democracy, it is not necessarily antidemocratic (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser, 2018, p. 1670). At the same time, national identity and populism do not necessarily have to occur together (de Cleen, 2017).



**Figure 1.** The hypothesized relationships between ethnic and civic national identity, economic hardship as well as the support for democracy as opposed to authoritarian alternatives.

(cf. Kroknes *et al.*, 2015; Foster and Frieden, 2017). On the other hand, civic nationalists' diffuse support of democracy may be unfazed by economic insecurity. As 'critical citizens' (Norris, 1999, 2011), they continue to value democracy as the ideal form of government. Although economic hardship may still lead to dissatisfaction with the economic performance of their political system, this only transfers to a lower regime support for those citizens who view the common political culture and institutions as less important for their national identity. In other words, economic adversity may weaken specific but not diffuse support of democracy for those holding a civic conception of nationhood. We thus formulate two alternative hypotheses as follows:

**Hypothesis 4a:** Economic hardship weakens the positive relationship between a civic national identity and the support for democracy as opposed to authoritarian alternatives.

**Hypothesis 4b:** Economic hardship bolsters the positive relationship between a civic national identity and the support for democracy as opposed to authoritarian alternatives.

Figure 1 summarizes our core arguments.

## Method and data

In order to test the hypothesized relationships between an ethnic or civic national identity, economic hardship at the individual or societal level as well as the individual preference for democracy as opposed to autocratic alternatives, we employ cross-sectional survey data from the EVS 2017–18 (EVS, 2019), including over 27,000 respondents in 24 Western and Eastern European democracies:<sup>7</sup> Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Serbia, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. To account for the multilevel structure of our data and given that we are not interested in the direct effects of country-level variables, we run linear<sup>8</sup> regression models with country fixed-effects and country-clustered standard errors, which are more robust than multilevel models<sup>9</sup> because they control for all potential differences between the countries. In the first step of our analysis, we regress the preference for a democratic or autocratic regime  $Pref_i$  on the ethnic or

<sup>7</sup>We only included countries that are considered full democracies by both Freedom House (2019) and Polity IV (Marshall *et al.*, 2019).

<sup>8</sup>With only four response categories, one might argue that ordered logit models might be preferable. We decided to use OLS regression due to the improved applicability to fixed-effects models (Riedl and Geishecker, 2014) and the easier interpretability. The results are robust to changes in the model specification, as can be seen in Figure A1 and Figure A2 in the online appendix.

<sup>9</sup>Also, the number of countries is on the lower end for multilevel models (Stegmueller, 2013). As a robustness check, we also ran multilevel models, the results are substantively similar, as can be seen in Figure A1 and Figure A2 in the online appendix.



civic conceptions of national identity  $Nat_i$  as well as a set of control variables  $CV_i$ . Our models always include both ethnic and civic conceptions of national identity simultaneously to account for the conceptual and empirical interrelatedness of the two concepts:

$$Pref_i = \beta_1 Nat_i + \beta_2 CV_i + \alpha_j + \varepsilon_i \quad (1)$$

For our dependent variable, we opt for a measure that distinguishes the support of respondents for a democratic regime *vis-à-vis* authoritarian alternatives. In this regard, the democracy–autocracy preference<sup>10</sup> (DAP) scale has been established and has found increasing use in literature as a measure of diffuse support for democracy (Inglehart and Welzel, 2005; Ariely and Davidov, 2011; Magalhães, 2014). The EVS question asks respondents whether they perceive certain types of political systems to be a good way of governing their country, including (a) a democratic political system, (b) a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament and elections, and (c) having the army rule the country, with answers ranging from 1) very bad to 4) very good.<sup>11</sup> Even though a principal component factor analysis shows that the items load onto a single factor (factor loadings: democracy 0.65, strong leader –0.78, army –0.80), we opt for analyzing these three items separately in the first step to allow for a more fine-grained analysis and to test whether the results are in fact similar for all three items or driven by a specific item.

Our key independent variable is measured with five commonly used items for the ethnic or civic national identity (Kunovich, 2009; Berg and Hjerm, 2010; Reeskens and Hooghe, 2010; Helbling *et al.*, 2016). Respondents are asked how important they regard several aspects for being truly of the country's nationality: (a) to have ancestry from the country, (b) to be born in the country, (c) to share the country's culture, (d) to be able to speak the country's language, and (e) to respect the political institutions and laws of the country, answers ranging from 1) not at all important to 4) very important. Ancestry and birth requirements have been indisputably connected to an ethnic and respecting the political institutions to a civic conception of nationhood. Language requirements also lean closer to the civic side of the spectrum, while sharing the culture positions somewhere in between the two ideal points (Reeskens and Hooghe, 2010). As with our dependent variable, we decided on a more fine-grained analysis at first, adding all items individually to our model. This also allows to test the effect of the more disputed language and culture requirements (Brubaker, 1999) separately. Further, such single-item models of the proposed relationships consider that Reeskens and Hooghe (2010) found that – while loading well onto single factors – not all indicators are equally applicable in cross-national research given differences in measurement invariance. Principal component factor analysis seems to confirm the classification in literature, resulting in a two-factor solution with ancestry (0.93) and born (0.90) loading strongly on the first factor, institutions (0.88) and language (0.73) on the second factor, while the culture criterion loads weakly on both factors (0.38 on the ethnic and 0.56 on the civic factor).

We control for a set of sociodemographic and political covariates that have been shown to affect both national identity (McLaren, 2017; Canan and Simon, 2018; Hadler and Flesken, 2018) and diffuse support of democracy (Magalhães, 2014).<sup>12</sup> Age (in quadratic form), sex,

<sup>10</sup>This scale has been called a preference scale because it implicitly compares support for democracy along with support for authoritarian alternatives, even though it does not directly measure a preference order of different regimes. In line with previous research (Inglehart and Welzel, 2005; Ariely and Davidov, 2011; Magalhães, 2014), we refer to the overall measure as democracy–autocracy or regime preference, while the individual items measure support for different regime types.

<sup>11</sup>The question also includes the item d) having experts, not government, make decisions according to what they think is best for the country. However, we exclude this item from the analysis, given that expert rule can happen in democracies and may not necessarily be undemocratic (McDonnell and Valbruzzi, 2014; Pastorella, 2016; Ackermann *et al.*, 2019). Besides, the link between an ethnic or civic conception of nationhood and a preference for expert rule is less clear compared to leader or army rule. For these reasons, it is unsurprising that the results for expert rule mostly indicate no relationship at all.

<sup>12</sup>As robustness checks, we also ran models that included only sociodemographic control variables as well as models, in which more control variables were added (whether respondents regard their political system as democratic; attitudes towards immigrants; particularized trust; club membership; national pride to ensure that our relation is not contingent on the general

and education are included because younger, older, male, and less-educated respondents may lean stronger toward ethnic conceptions of nationhood and also display a lower preference for democracy. Several economic variables are added, including household income, work status as well as experience with unemployment and welfare dependency during the last 5 years. Economically deprived respondents are expected to be both more inclined toward ethnic conceptions of nationhood as well as stronger preferences for authoritarian alternatives to democracy. We also control for marital status, children, and the frequency of attending religious services to control for the – on average – more conservative worldviews of married respondents, respondents with children, and religious respondents. Finally, respondents with a migration background may be less prone to ethnic conceptions of nationhood given that they would lead to their exclusion, but a socialization in nondemocratic countries may also lead them to be more favorable of autocratic alternatives to democracy. As to the political covariates, more rightist or extremist views on the left–right scale may both be negatively related to civic conceptions of nationhood as well as support of democracy. Furthermore, more politically interested respondents as well as respondents with a higher generalized trust may favor a civic conception of nationhood and also be stronger proponents of democracy. Finally, we also include a measure of specific support of democracy operationalized as the satisfaction with the functioning of the political system in order to block potential pathways between specific and diffuse support of democracy (Easton, 1965, 1975), as we are interested in the direct effects of ethnic and civic conceptions of nationhood on diffuse regime preference. An overview of all variables, their data sources as well as summary statistics can be found in Table A1 of the online appendix.

In the second step of our analysis, we strive to test how the direct effects of ethnic or civic conceptions of nationhood on regime preference are moderated by economic hardship. We thus adapt our models as follows:

$$Pref_i = \beta_1 Nat_i + \beta_2 Nat_i * EconHard_{ij} + \beta_3 CV_i + \alpha_j + \varepsilon_i \quad (2)$$

DAP is measured as above, but for simplicity, it is now combined to a single scale as the average of the three items (with leader rule and army rule reversed, so that higher values indicate a preference for more democratic systems). Similarly, ethnic and civic conceptions of national identity are recoded into two indices, with ethnic national identity as the mean score of the importance of ancestry and born requirements and civic national identity as a means of respect for institutions and language requirements.<sup>13</sup> All other control variables are included as before. In addition, the model now includes interaction terms between the two indices of national identity and one of several economic hardship variables, measured through both individual-level and country-level<sup>14</sup> indicators. We decided to test our hypotheses with a diverse set of variables (see Table 1) to substantiate the reliability and validity of our measurement, seeing as economic hardship is a multifaceted concept affected by income levels, unemployment as well as social security. At the individual level, economic hardship can be produced by a low-household income or recent

---

level of national pride; liberal vs. traditional values in the form of believing that homosexuality, abortion, divorce, and euthanasia can be justified to ensure that our results are not a by-product of a conservative/traditional ideology; authoritarian attitudes measured as deeming a greater respect for authority a good thing). The results are robust to such changes, as can be seen in Figure A1 and Figure A2 in the online appendix.

<sup>13</sup>The culture requirement was excluded because it did not clearly fit into either category. As the results will show, it is situated closer to the other two civic criteria. As a robustness check, we included the culture item in our civic national identity index. This has no substantial effect on the results, as can be seen in Figure A1 and Figure A2 in the online appendix. Further robustness checks also address alternative specifications regarding the dimensionality and mutual exclusiveness of the civic–ethnic framework. First, we subtract the civic national identity index from the ethnic national identity index to arrive at a single index going from an exclusively ethnic to an exclusively civic national identity, as some authors conceptualize this distinction on a continuum. Second, we weighted the civic national identity index by an inverse of the ethnic national identity index in order to account for the idea that accepting ethnic conceptions of national identity could be considered a contradiction to civic conceptions of national identity.

<sup>14</sup>For country-level economic hardship variables, the base term of the interactions is not included because it is collinear with the country fixed effects.



**Table 1** Economic hardship variables

	Individual level	Country level
Income	Household income	GDP per capita
Unemployment	Unemployment experience	Unemployment rate
Social security	Welfare dependency experience	Income inequality

experiences of unemployment or welfare dependency. We take into account the country level as well because the perceived individual risk of economic hardship or the likelihood of overcoming economic hardship might crucially hinge on the economic situation of the country as a whole. At the country level, the risk of individual economic hardship can be increased by a low level of economic development, a high unemployment rate, and a low degree of social security (measured by the degree of income inequality<sup>15</sup> as the Gini index).<sup>16</sup>

### Empirical analysis

A first look at descriptive statistics of our key dependent and independent variables<sup>17</sup> shows that, as suggested by previous work (e.g., Norris, 2011), diffuse support for democracy is fairly high in European democracies. Only 5% of the respondents consider democracy as a bad way to run their country. Nevertheless, 10% still consider army rule, a potential authoritarian alternative, as a good way to run their country and support for the rule of strong leaders who do not have to bother with parliament and elections is substantial, with 28% of the respondents deeming it a good way to run their country. At the same time, we also observe some differences between the items measuring the respondents' conception of nationhood. On the one hand, a large majority of roughly 95% of the respondents considers respecting the institutions and being able to speak the country's language – the two civic membership criteria – as important for being a national, with sharing the country's culture following closely. On the other hand, the quintessential ethnic membership criteria of having common ancestry and being born in the country are split more evenly between supporters and opponents, with 50% of the respondents regarding a common ancestry and 59% being born in the country as important criteria.<sup>18</sup>

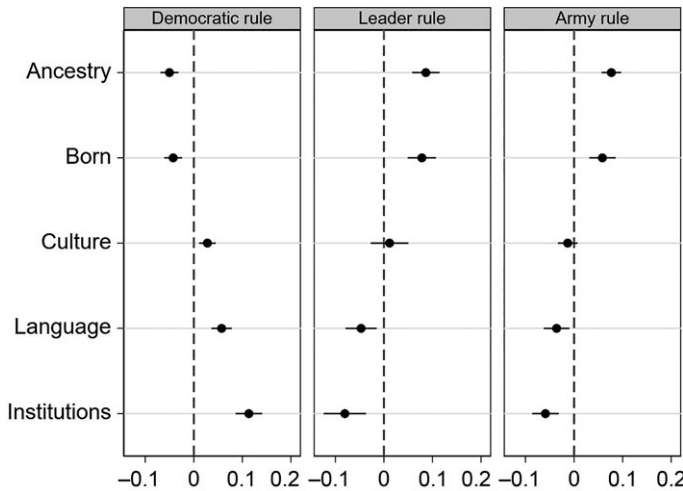
Figure 2 presents the results of the linear regression models testing the direct effect of an ethnic or civic national identity on the three items measuring support for democracy as opposed to authoritarian alternatives such as a strong leader or having the army rule the country. As discussed in the previous section, we do not combine our independent and dependent variables into indices but analyze the items separately in the first step. All models include a set of control variables, and the full regression results can be found in the online appendix in Table A3.

<sup>15</sup>As a robustness check, an alternative measure of social security in the form of the average replacement rates for unemployment, sickness, and minimum pensions was tested (Scruggs et al., 2017). The data, however, was only available for the year 2010 and is missing for Croatia, Iceland, and Serbia. Nevertheless, the results are similar, although some of the results are only significant at the 10% level with this alternative measure, as can be seen in Figure A1 and Figure A2 in the online appendix.

<sup>16</sup>Even though a few studies highlight the effect of a subjective evaluation of the country's economic situation (Bratton and Mattes, 2001; Armington and Guthmann, 2014; Teixeira et al., 2014), we focus on the objective economic situation, as no subjective evaluations of the economy were collected in the EVS.

<sup>17</sup>See Table A1 in the online appendix for summary statistics and Table A2 for frequency tables of the key variables.

<sup>18</sup>These cross-country averages do not express, of course, that there is substantial variation in both regime support and national identity between the countries. For instance, support for a strong leader ranges from 13% (Norway) to 78% (Romania) and considering ancestry as an important criterion ranges from 15% of the respondents (Sweden) to 88% (Bulgaria). In particular, there are differences between the older Western European and the newer Eastern European democracies. In our analysis, we control for such differences through fixed effects and by conducting sensitivity analyses through jackknifing and separate sample analyses of Western and Eastern European countries.



**Figure 2.** Regression coefficients of the relation between ethnic or civic national identity and support for democracy as opposed to authoritarian alternatives.

Note: Displayed are linear regression coefficients with 95% confidence intervals.

Overall, we find clear support for our hypothesized relationships: the more ethnic conceptions of nationhood (ancestry and born) are negatively related to support for democracy and positively related to support for leader and army rule, while the more civic conceptions of nationhood (institutions and language) are positively related to support for democracy and negatively related to support for leader and army rule. The order of the coefficients is also as expected, with ancestry as the most ethnic criterion displaying a slightly more negative relationship than the birth criterion and the respect of institutions criterion displaying a slightly more positive relationship compared to the language criterion (Reeskens and Hooghe, 2010). The culture criterion is in between but leans somewhat closer to the civic items: it has a positive effect on support for democracy but is insignificant for support for leader or army rule.

The effect size is substantive and one of the strongest predictors of DAP.<sup>19</sup> A change in the ancestry criterion from the minimum to the maximum reduces support of democracy (on a scale from 1 to 4) by 0.15 and increases leader and army support by 0.26 and 0.23, respectively. At the same time, the same change in the respect for institutions criterion increases support of democracy by 0.34 and decreases leader and army support by 0.24 and 0.18. This also shows that a civic national identity has a stronger effect on support for a democratic regime, while an ethnic national identity has a slightly stronger effect on support of authoritarian alternatives. Jackknifing robustness checks show that the results are not contingent on individual countries.<sup>20</sup> The results also

<sup>19</sup>The strongest ethnic and civic national identity variables (ancestry and institutions respectively) amount to a change of roughly 0.07–0.08 in the regime preference if these variables are increased by one standard deviation. In comparison, an increase of education, the most consistently powerful control variable, by one standard deviation changes regime preference by in between 0.05 and 0.11.

<sup>20</sup>The models were, however, also run separately for Western and Eastern Europe to test whether the results are different for the comparably younger democracies of Eastern Europe with a postcommunist legacy (Rose et al., 1998) – results can be found in Figure A1 in the online appendix. In comparison, Western European and Eastern European countries are fairly similar, with three exceptions: first, the ordering of the ancestry and born criteria is reversed in Eastern European countries: regarding being born in the country as an important criterion for belongingness to the nation has a much stronger effect than ancestry. The effect of ancestry is even insignificant in the models of support for democracy and leader rule, and it only has a positive effect on the support for army rule. Second, the effect of the culture criterion is mostly driven by Eastern European countries, where the effect is considerably stronger. Culture only has a significant effect on support for democracy (at the 10% level) but no effect at all on support for leader or army rule in Western European countries. Third, although the coefficients of the language

**Table 2** Regression coefficients of the moderating effect of economic hardship on the relation between ethnic or civic national identity and support for democracy as opposed to authoritarian alternatives

Ethnic national identity						
Economic hardship variables	Interaction term coefficient		Effect of ethnic NI at the min		Effect of ethnic NI at the max	
Individual level						
Household income	0.007	(0.00)***	-0.162	(0.01)***	-0.102	(0.01)***
Unemployment experience	-0.025	(0.01)**	-0.128	(0.01)***	-0.154	(0.01)***
Welfare dependency experience	-0.053	(0.02)**	-0.127	(0.01)***	-0.180	(0.02)***
Societal level						
GDP per capita	0.027	(0.01)*	-0.182	(0.02)***	-0.112	(0.01)***
Unemployment rate	-0.008	(0.00)***	-0.104	(0.01)***	-0.224	(0.02)***
Income inequality	-0.005	(0.00)*	-0.104	(0.01)***	-0.181	(0.02)***
Civic national identity						
Economic hardship variables	Interaction term coefficient		Effect of civic NI at the min		Effect of civic NI at the max	
Individual level						
Household income	-0.007	(0.00)*	0.172	(0.02)***	0.104	(0.03)***
Unemployment experience	-0.008	(0.02)	0.139	(0.02)***	0.131	(0.02)***
Welfare dependency experience	0.008	(0.02)	0.137	(0.02)***	0.145	(0.03)***
Societal level						
GDP per capita	-0.022	(0.03)	0.178	(0.05)***	0.121	(0.02)***
Unemployment rate	0.012	(0.00)*	0.092	(0.02)***	0.268	(0.06)***
Income inequality	0.002	(0.01)	0.129	(0.04)**	0.155	(0.05)**

Column 1 displays fixed-effects regression coefficients with cluster-robust standard errors in parentheses, and columns 2 and 3 display the marginal effect of ethnic or civic national identity at the minimum or maximum of the respective economic hardship variable, +  $P < 0.10$ , \*  $P < 0.05$ , \*\*  $P < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $P < 0.001$ .

hold when using combined indices instead of the individual items. In addition, we performed several robustness checks, as alluded in the previous section. We replicated the models with a more narrow set of covariates including only sociodemographic control variables as well as a more broad set of covariates, including measures of whether respondents regard their political system as democratic, attitudes toward immigrants, particularized trust, and club membership as a measure of structural social capital. Next, we also selected alternative modeling strategies such as ordered logit regression with country dummies as well as multilevel models with several country-level control variables (GDP per capita, GDP growth, unemployment rate, Gini index, KOF globalization index, net migration rate, WGI government effectiveness, and FH democracy index). Finally, we also replicated our models with the EVS 2008 data set (EVS, 2008) using the same country set in order to ensure that our results are comparable across time. The results of these robustness checks can be found in Figure A1 in the online appendix. Overall, they do not have any substantive effects on our results and the results are very similar in the EVS (2008).

The effects of other covariates are largely as expected. Support for democracy as opposed to authoritarian alternatives increases with age, education, income, political interest as well as general trust and is higher among the part-time employed, self-employed, and students. In contrast, authoritarian alternatives are more popular among those with welfare dependency experiences, married or widowed respondents, respondents with children, religious and right-wing respondents as well as respondents with first-generation migration background.

Moving on to the second part of our analysis, Table 2 displays the results of our interaction models. The first column shows the fixed-effects regression coefficient of the interaction term

and institution requirements are almost the same in both Western and Eastern European countries, the variance is higher in Eastern Europe – both are insignificant for leader rule and language is also insignificant for army rule.

between the ethnic or civic national identity index and one of the economic hardship variables. In order to compare how much economic hardship moderates the effect of an ethnic or civic conception of nationhood, column two and three display the marginal effect of ethnic or civic national identity at the minimum or maximum of the respective economic hardship variable. The full results of our interaction models can be found in the online appendix in Table A5.

With regard to an ethnic conception of nationhood, all economic hardship variables support our Hypothesis 3. At the individual level, ethnic national identity is more negatively related to preferences for democracy for respondents with a lower income as well as unemployment and welfare dependency experiences. At the societal level, ethnic conceptions of nationhood are more strongly related to lower preferences for democracy in countries with a lower GDP per capita, a higher unemployment rate, and higher economic inequality. The effects are significant at the 5%, 1%, or 0.1% significance level and substantial, in particular, for economic hardship at the societal level. At the lowest level of unemployment (Iceland), an increase in the ethnic national identity index by 1 unit only decreases the preference for democracy as opposed to authoritarian alternatives by 0.10 on a scale from 1 to 4, whereas at the highest level (Spain), the DAP is decreased by 0.22.

The moderating effects are less coherent for civic conceptions of nationhood: only two of our economic hardship indicators have a significant moderating effect, both showing that economic hardship slightly reinforces the positive effect of civic national identity on preferences for democracy. Respondents with a lower income and respondents in countries with a higher unemployment rate have a more positive effect of a civic national identity on preferences for democracy as opposed to authoritarian alternatives. The effects are significant at the 5% level and, again, in particular substantial for economic hardship at the societal level: at the lowest level of unemployment, an increase in the civic national identity index by 1 unit only increases the preference for democracy by 0.09, while at the highest level, it is increased by 0.27. Overall, Hypothesis 4a clearly has to be refuted; however, there is at least some support for Hypothesis 4b, although only two of the six interaction terms turn out significant.

As in the first step, we again perform several robustness checks (see Figure A2 in the online appendix for detailed results). Jackknifing again shows that the results generally do not hinge on certain countries being included in the sample.<sup>21</sup> With the exception of the ordered logit models, the results are also robust to a different selection of control variables, different modeling approaches as well as civic national identity being measured with three instead of two items (i.e., including the culture criterion). As to our robustness check using the EVS (2008) (see Table A5 in the online appendix), the coefficients generally point into the expected direction, but only the interaction term for welfare dependency experience is significant for an ethnic national identity and only the unemployment rate for a civic national identity. However, the EVS (2008) may very well be a special case in this regard, as it was conducted at the height of the Great Recession 2007–09.

## Conclusion

Is democracy still ‘the only game in town’ (Linz and Stepan, 1996, p. 5) in European societies? While there is widespread support for democracy, support for authoritarian alternatives such as army rule or a strong leader is far from negligible and may threaten democratic rule particularly in less-consolidated (Eastern) European countries but also in supposedly established democracies. In this paper, we set out to explain variation in regime support for democracy as opposed to authoritarian alternatives using cross-sectional survey data from 24 Western and Eastern European

<sup>21</sup>The interaction effects are generally less robust in Eastern Europe, as can be seen in models restricting the sample to Eastern European countries (see Figure A2 in the online appendix). However, this may also be due to the small number of countries left (11) in combination with country-level variables being used as moderators.

democracies included in the EVS 2017–18 (EVS, 2019). While existing research has primarily examined the economic determinants of diffuse (and specific) support for democracy (e.g., Kotzian, 2011; Armingeon and Guthmann, 2014; Teixeira *et al.*, 2014), our analysis focuses on the content of national identity. Tying in with the discussion whether national identification and democracy are complementary or competing logics (Calhoun, 2007; Helbling, 2009; Tamir, 2019b), we show that national identity is a double-edged sword for regime preference. On the one hand, a national identity that emphasizes civic conceptions of nationhood (i.e., respect for the country's institutions and laws, being able to speak the language) is positively related to support for democracy and negatively related to army or leader rule; on the other hand, the reverse holds true for a national identity that highlights ethnic conceptions of nationhood (i.e., a common ancestry, being born in the country). Considering that ethnic conceptions of nationhood are held by roughly half of the respondents in our sample, this may be an important contribution in explaining why a substantial share of citizens in European democracies expresses support for authoritarian alternatives to democracy.

However, economic explanations are not to be neglected, either. Economic hardship entails existential insecurity and status anxiety and reinforces the cultural backlash of those who feel disoriented by the erosion of familiar values (Inglehart and Norris, 2017). While economic hardship generally decreases support of democracy (e.g., Teixeira *et al.*, 2014), it also further strengthens the negative effect of an ethnic conception of nationhood on support for democracy *vis-à-vis* authoritarian alternatives. This means that it is the economically deprived citizens with an ethnic conception of nationhood who are particularly vulnerable to authoritarian promises. On a more positive note, however, economic hardship also strengthens the positive effect of a civic conception of nationhood on support for democracy in some of our models. As 'critical citizens' (Norris, 1999, 2011), those with a civic national identity may thus continue to value democracy as the ideal form of government despite their dissatisfaction with the current economic performance of their democratic system.

This has important implications for understanding at least two crucial issues in contemporary European (if not global) societies. One is the relationship between the economy and identity/culture in driving diffuse system support. Economic crises and other performance-related crises of the political system are bound to occur every now and then in democracies. It is thus of vital importance for the survival of democracy that such crises or individual economic hardship do not substantially weaken diffuse support for democracy and reinvigorate support for authoritarian alternatives uniformly across all members of society. An individual's social identity substantially shapes how she responds to economic hardship when evaluating her support for a democratic regime type. Therefore, our study shows that the often postulated primacy of economic concerns over values and culture is not as stable as it is frequently postulated. The second vital implication of our results is that democracies in which a large majority of citizens holds a civic conception of nationhood are decisively less in danger of 'democratic backsliding' (Bermeo, 2016; Waldner and Lust, 2018) than those where an ethnic conception prevails. Thus, our results show two ways in which democracies can strengthen support for a democratic regime: first, by ensuring that they perform well economically and citizens are protected from economic hardship and insecurity, democracies can weaken the negative effects of an ethnic national identity and potentially even strengthen the positive effects of a civic national identity. Second, by promoting a permeation of a civic as opposed to an ethnic definition of national membership criteria through their citizenry, democracies can strengthen preferences for a democratic regime and also dampen the negative impact of economic crises. The latter point touches upon recent discussions on citizenship laws and immigration as well. In this regard, Tamir (2019b) stresses the promotion of liberal nationalism with respect and empathy for foreigners in education and public discourse and the need to distribute social risks and opportunities in fair and transparent ways. Other authors also point to the role of education as well as the political discourse in shaping people's position on the civic-ethnic continuum (Hjerm, 2001; Hadler and Flesken, 2018).

Naturally, we have to acknowledge certain limitations of our study. Unfortunately, our data set is restricted to exclusively European democracies. We thus cannot test whether our results can be generalized to a broader set of non-European democracies. In addition, our moderation analyses focus on objective measures of the economic situation, even though several studies emphasize that, in particular, a subjective evaluation of the country's economic situation contributes to explaining support for democracy (Bratton and Mattes, 2001; Armingeon and Guthmann, 2014; Teixeira *et al.*, 2014). Alas, our data set includes no measure for subjective evaluations of the economy. Finally, our research design is purely cross-sectional and thus not causal in nature. While we do believe that there are sound theoretical reasons for a causal influence of national identity on diffuse support for democracy, (quasi-)experimental evidence is needed to ascertain the causal nature the relationships found in our study.

Nevertheless, our conclusions allow for insights into determinants of diffuse system support in general and the role of identity therein that have been lacking in previous research. People with an ethnic national identity portray substantially lower support for a democratic regime than those holding a civic national identity, while the reverse is the case for authoritarian regime types. Additionally, we shed further light on the relationship between economic hardship and identity by showing that they profoundly interact with each other instead of looking at both separately. Economic hardship decisively strengthens the negative relationship between an ethnic national identity and support for democracy. For individuals with civic national identity, the results are less robust but they indicate a slight increase in this group's support for democracy under economic hardship. These all in all consistent and robust findings yield crucial implications for both scholarly research as well as everyday politics and call for further endeavors in analyzing the relationship between other aspects of individual-level social identity and support for regime types.

**Supplementary material.** To view supplementary material for this article, please visit <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755773920000351>.

**Acknowledgments.** An earlier version of this paper was presented at the SPSA Annual Conference 2020 in Lucerne and a research seminar at the University of Bern. We are grateful to Quynh Nguyen, Valon Hasanaj, and the other participants as well as Lars Bischoff, Keonhi Son, Maximilian Filsinger, and Jonas Schmid for their valuable feedback, which has helped improve this paper tremendously. We also thank the three anonymous referees and the editors for their very helpful comments and suggestions.

## References

- Ackermann, M., K. Ackermann and M. Freitag (2019), 'The personality of stealth democrats: how traits shape attitudes towards expert-based governments', *West European Politics* 42(3): 573–592.
- Adorno, T., E. Frenkel-Brunswik, D. Levinson and R. Sanford (1950), *The Authoritarian Personality*, New York: Harper & Row.
- Altemeyer, B. (1996), *The Authoritarian Specter*, Cambridge, MA: Cambridge Univ. Pr.
- Andersen, R. (2012), 'Support for democracy in cross-national perspective: the detrimental effect of economic inequality', *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility* 30(4): 389–402.
- Ariely, G. and E. Davidov (2011), 'Can we rate public support for democracy in a comparable way?: Cross-national equivalence of democratic attitudes in the World Value Survey', *Social Indicators Research* 104(2): 271–286.
- Armingeon, K. and K. Guthmann (2014), 'Democracy in crisis?: The declining support for national democracy in European countries, 2007–2011', *European Journal of Political Research* 53(3): 423–442.
- Armingeon, K., K. Guthmann and D. Weisstanner (2016), 'How the Euro divides the union: The effect of economic adjustment on support for democracy in Europe', *Socio-Economic Review* 14(1): 1–26.
- Ausserladscheider, V. (2019), 'Beyond economic insecurity and cultural backlash: economic nationalism and the rise of the far right', *Sociology Compass* 13(4): e12670.
- Berg, L. and M. Hjerm (2010), 'national identity and political trust', *Perspectives on European Politics and Society* 11(4): 390–407.
- Bermeo, N. (2016), 'On democratic backsliding', *Journal of Democracy* 27(1): 5–19.
- Blank, T. and P. Schmidt (2003), 'National identity in a United Germany: nationalism or patriotism? An empirical test with representative data', *Political Psychology* 24(2): 289–312.



- Bonikowski, B. (2016), 'Nationalism in settled times', *Annual Review of Sociology* 42(1): 427–449.
- Bratton, M. and R. Mattes (2001), 'Support for democracy in Africa: intrinsic or instrumental?', *British Journal of Political Science* 31(3): 447–474.
- Bratton, M., R. Mattes and E. Gyimah-Boadi (2005), *Public Opinion, Democracy, and Market Reform in Africa*, Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Pr.
- Brubaker, R. (1992), *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany*, New York: Cambridge Univ. Pr.
- Brubaker, R. (1999), The Manichean myth: rethinking the distinction BETWEEN "Civic" and "Ethnic" nationalism, in H. Kriesi, K. Armingeon, H. Siegrist and A. Wimmer (eds.), *Nation and National Identity: The European Experience in Perspective*, Chur, Zürich: Rüegger, pp. 55–72.
- Brubaker, R. (2004), *Ethnicity without Groups*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Pr.
- Calhoun, C. (2007), *Nations Matter: Culture, History, and the Cosmopolitan Dream*, London, New York: Routledge.
- Canan, C. and M.K. Simon (2018), 'Immigration, diversity and the relevance of ascriptive characteristics in defining national identity across 21 countries and 28 West-German districts', *Migration Studies* 94(3–4): 1–19.
- Chu, Y.h., M. Bratton, M. Lagos Cruz-Coke, S. Shastri and M.A. Tessler (2008), 'Public opinion and democratic legitimacy', *Journal of Democracy* 19(2): 74–87.
- Citrin, J., C. Wong and B. Duff (2001), The meaning of American national identity, in R. D. Ashmore, L. Jussim and D. Wilder (eds.), *Social Identity, Intergroup Conflict, and Conflict Resolution*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 71–100.
- Cordero, G. and P. Simón (2016), 'Economic crisis and support for democracy in Europe', *West European Politics* 39(2): 305–325.
- Cottam, M., B. Uhler-Dietz, E. Mastors and T. Preston (2010), *Introduction to Political Psychology*, 2nd ed, New York: Psychology Pr.
- Dahl, R.A. (1998), *On Democracy*, New Haven: Yale Univ. Pr.
- Dalton, R.J. (2004), *Democratic Challenges, Democratic Choices: The Erosion of Political Support in Advanced Industrial Democracies*, Oxford: Oxford Univ. Pr.
- Dancygier, R. and M. Donnelly (2014), Attitudes toward Immigration in Good Times and Bad, in N.G. Bermeo and L.M. Bartels (eds), *Mass Politics in Tough Times: Opinions, Votes and Protest in the Great Recession*, Oxford: Oxford Univ. Pr, pp. 148–184.
- Davidov, E. (2009), 'Measurement equivalence of nationalism and constructive patriotism in the ISSP: 34 countries in a comparative perspective', *Political Analysis* 17(1): 64–82.
- De Cleen, B. (2017), Populism and nationalism, in C. Rovira Kaltwasser, P.A. Taggart, P. Ochoa Espejo and P. Ostiguy (eds), *Oxford handbooks. The Oxford Handbook of Populism*, Oxford, New York: Oxford Univ. Pr, pp. 342–362.
- De Figueiredo, R. and Z. Elkins (2003), 'Are patriots bigots? An inquiry into the vices of in-group pride', *American Journal of Political Science* 47(1): 171–188.
- De Regt, S., T. Smits and D. Mortelmans (2012), 'The relevance of class in shaping authoritarian attitudes: a cross-national perspective', *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility* 30(3): 280–295.
- Duckitt, J. and B. Bizumic (2013), 'Multidimensionality of right-wing authoritarian attitudes: authoritarianism-conservatism-traditionalism', *Political Psychology* 34(6): 841–862.
- Duckitt, J. and K. Fisher (2003), 'The impact of social threat on worldview and ideological attitudes', *Political Psychology* 24(1): 199–222.
- Easton, D. (1965), *A Systems Analysis of Political Life*, New York: Wiley.
- Easton, D. (1975), 'A re-assessment of the concept of political support', *British Journal of Political Science* 5(4): 435–457.
- EVS (2008), 'European values study 2008, integrated dataset (EVS 2008), ZA4800, data file version 4.0.0. [online]'. Retrieved 27 April 2020 from <https://dbk.gesis.org/dbksearch/sdesc2.asp?no=4800&db=e&doi=10.4232/1.12458>
- EVS (2019), 'European values study 2017, integrated dataset (EVS 2017), ZA7500, data file version 2.0.0. [online]'. Retrieved 27 April 2020 from <https://dbk.gesis.org/dbksearch/sdesc2.asp?no=7500&db=e&doi=10.4232/1.13314>
- Foster, C. and J. Frieden (2017), 'Crisis of trust: Socio-economic determinants of Europeans' confidence in government', *European Union Politics* 18(4): 511–535.
- Freedom House (2019), 'Freedom in the world, country and territory ratings and statuses, 1973–2019. [online]'. Retrieved 27 April 2020 from <https://freedomhouse.org/report-types/freedom-world>
- Gidron, N. and P.A. Hall (2017), 'The politics of social status: Economic and cultural roots of the populist right', *The British Journal of Sociology* 68(S1): S57–S84.
- Gidron, N. and P.A. Hall (2019), 'Populism as a Problem of Social Integration', *Comparative Political Studies* 68(1): 1–33.
- Habermas, J. (1991), *Staatsbürgerschaft und nationale Identität*, St. Gallen: Erker.
- Habermas, J. (1994), Struggles for recognition in the Democratic constitutional state. In: A. Gutman (ed.), *Multiculturalism*, Princeton: Princeton Univ. Pr, pp. 106–184.
- Hadler, M. and A. Flecken (2018), 'Political rhetoric and attitudes toward nationhood: a time-comparative and cross-national analysis of 39 countries', *International Journal of Comparative Sociology* 59(5–6): 362–382.
- Helbling, M. (2009), 'Nationalism and democracy: competing or complementary logics', *Living Reviews in Democracy* 1(1): 1–14.

- Helbling, M., T. Reeskens and M. Wright** (2016), 'The mobilisation of identities: a study on the relationship between elite rhetoric and public opinion on national identity in developed democracies', *Nations and Nationalism* 22(4): 744–767.
- Hellmeier, S. and N.B. Weidmann** (2020), 'Pulling the strings? The strategic use of pro-government mobilization in authoritarian regimes', *Comparative Political Studies* 53(1): 71–108.
- Hjerm, M.** (2001), 'Education, xenophobia and nationalism: a comparative analysis', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 27(1): 37–60.
- Hobolt, S. B. and C.E. De Vries** (2016), 'Public Support for European Integration', *Annual Review of Political Science* 19(1): 413–432.
- Huang, M.-h., Y.-t. Chang and Y.-h. Chu** (2008), 'Identifying sources of democratic legitimacy: a multilevel analysis', *Electoral Studies* 27(1): 45–62.
- Ignatieff, M.** (1993), *Blood and Belonging: Journeys into the New Nationalism*, Toronto: Viking.
- Inglehart, R. and P. Norris** (2017), 'Trump and the populist authoritarian parties: the silent revolution in reverse', *Perspectives on Politics* 15(2): 443–454.
- Inglehart, R. and C. Welzel** (2005), *Modernization, Cultural Change, and Democracy: The Human Development Sequence*, Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Pr.
- Kohn, H.** (1939), 'The nature of nationalism', *American Political Science Review* 33(6): 1001–1021.
- Kosterman, R. and S. Feshbach** (1989), 'Toward a measure of patriotic and nationalistic attitudes', *Political Psychology* 10(2): 257–274.
- Kotzian, P.** (2011), 'Public support for liberal democracy', *International Political Science Review* 32(1): 23–41.
- Kroknes, V.F., T.G. Jakobsen and L.-M. Grønning** (2015), 'Economic performance and political trust: the impact of the financial crisis on European citizens', *European Societies* 17(5): 700–723.
- Kunovich, R.** (2009), 'The sources and consequences of national identification', *American Sociological Review* 74(4): 573–593.
- Kurer, T., S. Häusermann, B. Wüest and M. Enggist** (2019), 'Economic grievances and political protest', *European Journal of Political Research* 58(3): 866–892.
- Kuzio, T.** (2002), 'The myth of the civic state: a critical survey of Hans Kohn's framework for understanding nationalism', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 25(1): 20–39.
- Kymlicka, W.** (2000), 'Nation-building and minority rights: Comparing West and East', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 26(2): 183–212.
- Larsen, C.A.** (2017), 'Revitalizing the 'civic' and 'ethnic' distinction. Perceptions of nationhood across two dimensions, 44 countries and two decades', *Nations and Nationalism* 23(4): 970–993.
- Latcheva, R.** (2011), 'Cognitive interviewing and factor-analytic techniques: a mixed method approach to validity of survey items measuring national identity', *Quality & Quantity* 45(6): 1175–1199.
- Lenard, P.T. and D. Miller** (2018), Trust and national identity, in E.M. Uslander (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Social and Political Trust*, Oxford: Oxford Univ. Pr, pp. 57–74.
- Linz, J.J.** (2000), *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publ.
- Linz, J.J. and A. Stepan** (1996), *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Pr.
- Lipset, S.M.** (1959a), 'Democracy and working-class authoritarianism', *American Sociological Review* 24(4): 482–501.
- Lipset, S.M.** (1959b), 'Some social requisites of democracy: economic development and political legitimacy', *American Political Science Review* 53(1): 69–105.
- Luong, F.** (2016), The crisis of western democracies and national identity: citizenship, immigration, and constitutional patriotism, in R. Verdugo and A. Milne (eds.) *National Identity: Theory and Research*, Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publ, pp. 55–79.
- Magalhães, P.C.** (2014), 'Government effectiveness and support for democracy', *European Journal of Political Research* 53(1): 77–97.
- Mair, P.** (2013), Smaghi versus the parties: representative government and institutional constraints. In: A. Schäfer and W. Streeter (eds.), *Politics in the Age of Austerity*, Cambridge: Polity Pr, pp. 143–168.
- Manow, P.** (2018), *Die Politische Ökonomie des Populismus*, Berlin: Suhrkamp.
- Markell, P.** (2000), 'Making affect safe for democracy?: on "Constitutional Patriotism"', *Political Theory* 28(1): 38–63.
- Marshall, M.G., T.R. Gurr and K. Jagers** (2019), 'Polity IV project, political regime characteristics and transitions, annual time-series, 1800–2018. [online]'. Retrieved 27 April 2020 from <http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscrdata.html>
- Mattes, R. and M. Bratton** (2007), 'Learning about democracy in Africa: awareness, performance, and experience', *American Journal of Political Science* 51(1): 192–217.
- McDonnell, D. and M. Valbruzzi** (2014), 'Defining and classifying technocrat-led and technocratic governments', *European Journal of Political Research* 53(4): 654–671.
- McLaren, L.** (2017), 'Immigration, national identity and political trust in European democracies', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 43(3): 379–399.
- Merkel, W.** (2004), 'Embedded and defective democracies', *Democratization* 11(5): 33–58.
- Miller, D.** (1995), *On Nationality*, Oxford: Clarendon Pr.

- Mishler, W. and R. Rose (1996), 'Trajectories of fear and hope: support for democracy in post-communist Europe', *Comparative Political Studies* 28(4): 553–581.
- Mudde, C. and C. Kaltwasser Rovira (2018), 'Studying populism in comparative perspective: reflections on the contemporary and future research agenda', *Comparative Political Studies* 51(13): 1667–1693.
- Müller, J.-W. (2010), *Verfassungspatriotismus*, Berlin: Suhrkamp.
- Norris, P. (ed.) (1999), *Critical Citizens: Global Support for Democratic Government*, Oxford: Oxford Univ. Pr.
- Norris, P. (2011), *Democratic Deficit: Critical Citizens Revisited*, Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Pr.
- Norris, P. and R. Inglehart (2019), *Cultural Backlash: Trump, Brexit, and Authoritarian Populism*, Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Pr.
- Offe, C. (2013), 'Participatory inequality in the austerity state: a supply-side approach', in A. Schäfer and W. Streeck (eds.), *Politics in the Age of Austerity*, Cambridge: Polity Pr, pp. 196–218.
- Osborne, D., P. Milojev and C.G. Sibley (2017), 'Authoritarianism and national identity: examining the longitudinal effects of SDO and RWA on nationalism and patriotism', *Personality & Social Psychology Bulletin* 43(8): 1086–1099.
- Pastorella, G. (2016), 'Technocratic governments in Europe: getting the critique right', *Political Studies* 64(4): 948–965.
- Pehrson, S., R. Brown and H. Zagefka (2009), 'When does national identification lead to the rejection of immigrants?: cross-sectional and longitudinal evidence for the role of essentialist in-group definitions', *The British Journal of Social Psychology* 48(1): 61–76.
- Pratto, F., J. Sidanius, L.M. Stallworth and B.F. Malle (1994), 'Social dominance orientation: a personality variable predicting social and political attitudes', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 67(4): 741–763.
- Rapp, C. (2018), 'National attachments and the immigrant participation gap', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 7(2): 1–23.
- Reeskens, T. and M. Hooghe (2010), 'Beyond the civic-ethnic dichotomy: investigating the structure of citizenship concepts across thirty-three countries', *Nations and Nationalism* 16(4): 579–597.
- Rickert, E.J. (1998), 'Authoritarianism and economic threat: implications for political behavior', *Political Psychology* 19(4): 707–720.
- Riedl, M. and I. Geishecker (2014), 'Keep it simple: estimation strategies for ordered response models with fixed effects', *Journal of Applied Statistics* 41(11): 2358–2374.
- Rose, R., W. Mishler and C. Haerpfer (1998), *Democracy and Its Alternatives: Understanding Post-Communist Societies*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Pr.
- Schatz, R., E. Staub and H. Lavine (1999), 'On the varieties of national attachment: blind versus constructive patriotism', *Political Psychology* 20(1): 151–174.
- Schmidt, P. and M. Quandt (2018), 'National identity, nationalism, and attitudes toward migrants in comparative perspective', *International Journal of Comparative Sociology* 59(5–6): 355–361.
- Scruggs, L., D. Jahn and K. Kuitto (2017), 'Comparative welfare entitlements dataset 2. Version 2017–09. [online]'. Retrieved 27 April 2020 from <http://cwed2.org/>
- Serricchio, F., M. Tsakatika and L. Quaglia (2013), 'Euro-scepticism and the global financial crisis', *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 51(1): 51–64.
- Shayo, M. (2009), 'A model of social identity with an application to political economy: nation, class, and redistribution', *American Political Science Review* 103(2): 147–174.
- Shulman, S. (2002), 'Challenging the civic/ethnic and west/east dichotomies in the study of nationalism', *Comparative Political Studies* 35(5): 554–585.
- Simonsen, K.B. (2016), 'How the host nation's boundary drawing affects immigrants' belonging', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 42(7): 1153–1176.
- Simonsen, K.B. and B. Bonikowski (2019), 'Is civic nationalism necessarily inclusive? Conceptions of nationhood and anti-Muslim attitudes in Europe', *European Journal of Political Research* 10(1): 1–23.
- Smith, A.D. (1991), *National Identity*, Reno, NV: Univ. of Nevada Pr.
- Smith, A.D. (1998), *Nationalism and Modernism: A Critical Survey of Recent Theories of Nations and Nationalism*, London, New York: Routledge.
- Soest, C. von and J. Grauvogel (2017), 'Identity, procedures and performance: how authoritarian regimes legitimize their rule', *Contemporary Politics* 23(3): 287–305.
- Stegmüller, D. (2013), 'How many countries for multilevel modeling? A comparison of frequentist and Bayesian approaches', *American Journal of Political Science* 57(3): 748–761.
- Tamir, Y. (2019a), 'Not so civic: is there a difference between ethnic and civic nationalism?', *Annual Review of Political Science* 22(1): 419–434.
- Tamir, Y. (2019b), *Why Nationalism*, Princeton: Princeton Univ. Pr. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9780691193359>
- Teixeira, C.P., E. Tsatsanis and A.M. Belchior (2014), 'Support for democracy in times of crisis: diffuse and specific regime support in Portugal and Greece', *South European Society and Politics* 19(4): 501–518.
- Vargas-Salfate, S., J.H. Liu and H. Gil de Zúñiga (2020), 'Right-wing authoritarianism and national identification: the role of democratic context', *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 32(2): 318–331.

- Vincent, A.** (2013), Nationalism, in M. Freeden and M. Stears (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Political Ideologies*, Oxford: Oxford Univ. Pr, pp. 452–473.
- Wagner, U., J.C. Becker, O. Christ, T.F. Pettigrew and P. Schmidt** (2012), ‘A longitudinal test of the relation between German nationalism, patriotism, and outgroup derogation’, *European Sociological Review* **28**(3): 319–332.
- Waldner, D. and E. Lust** (2018), ‘Unwelcome change: coming to terms with democratic backsliding’, *Annual Review of Political Science* **21**(1): 93–113.
- Wright, M., J. Citrin and J. Wand** (2012), ‘Alternative measures of American national identity: implications for the civic-ethnic distinction’, *Political Psychology* **33**(4): 469–482.