National Identity, Pride, and Chauvinism—Their Origins and Consequences for Globalization Attitudes

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ABSTRACT

Theorists of liberal nationalism argue that national identities serve as essential glue holding a nation together. This picture is incomplete, however. National identities also have chauvinistic aspects that undercut or dissolve national glue by creating tensions among subgroups of co-nationals and breeding suspicion of outsiders. We analyze the psychology of national attachments through the lens of social identity theory to better understand the effects of national identity. We identify three types of national attachments: national chauvinism, national pride, and national identity, discuss their theoretical origins and links to social identity theory, and evaluate their political consequences. Using European data from the three ISSP national Identity modules conducted in 1995, 2003, and 2013, we then investigate the differing origins and consequences of national identity, pride, and chauvinism. We focus specifically on their contrasting effects on support for protectionism and attitudes toward immigration, key facets of globalization. We find that national chauvinism undercuts and national pride enhances support for globalization, underscoring the diverse political effects of national attachments. We consider the important role of social context in conditioning the political effects of national attachments and conclude with a call for a unified approach to the study of national attachments.

KEY WORDS: National identity, national chauvinism, social identity, immigration, globalization

Theorists of liberal nationalism argue that national identities serve as essential glue holding a nation together (Miller and Ali 2014). According to Miller (1995) ‘trust requires solidarity not merely within groups but across them, and this in turn depends upon a common identification of the kind that nationality alone can provide’ (p.140). Miller and Ali elaborate, claiming ‘that in culturally diverse, market-driven societies people will only be willing to support socially just institutions and policies - particularly those that together make up the welfare state - if they share a common identity with those who are likely to be net beneficiaries' (p.239). There is empirical support for these claims in studies showing that strong national identities can boost voter turnout (e.g. in the US: Huddy and Khatib 2007), enhance assistance to co-nationals in need (Johnston et al 2010; Theiss-Morse 2009), and increase support for policies that benefit co-nationals of diverse racial backgrounds and immigrants (Ariely 2012; Collingwood et al 2018; Soroka et al 2017; Transue 2007).

This picture is incomplete, however. National identities also have chauvinistic aspects that undercut or dissolve national glue by creating tensions among subgroups of co-nationals or breeding suspicion of outsiders. This can manifest as majority subgroups restricting welfare assistance to certain ethnic or racial minorities whom they regard as underserving of assistance, denying assistance to immigrant newcomers, or fueling internal conflict over what is required of patriotic citizens (Theiss-Morse 2009). Emergent support in the US and Europe for neo-nationalist politicians who advocate opposition to immigration, promote protectionism, and reject supranational and international influence in national affairs reflects this process. Nationalistic chauvinism can spill over into opposition to supranational entities with jurisdiction over aspects of national policy. For example, there is evidence that Europeans with a strong
national identity are most opposed to the EU and various facets of European integration such as the common currency (Müller-Peters 1998; Kuhn and Stoeckel 2014).

The divergent consequences of national identity are confusing and beg resolution. Why does national identity sometimes promote and at other times undercut national cohesion? In this chapter, we turn to the psychology of national identity for answers. The general psychology of social identities helps to explain why national identity promotes trust and solidarity with co-nationals regardless of their ethnic background. It also sheds light on the conditions under which national identity can backfire breeding suspicion of co-nationals, generating national fragmentation, and driving insular welfare chauvinism (Kymlicka 2015).

More specifically, we reconstrue the debate over liberal nationalism to consider the nature of national attachments which includes national identities but also allows for difference in the meaning of national identity that may not be shared by all those who identify with a nation. We focus specifically in this chapter on national identity, national chauvinism, and national pride - concepts whose meaning we explain below. We analyze the psychology of national attachments through the lens of social identity theory, an extremely well-developed approach to the study of social identities (Tajfel and Turner 1979; Tajfel 1981). One of the theory’s major insights is that identities form readily, promote group cohesion, and are pervasive among members of any group, including a nation. From this perspective, national identities are essential to the smooth functioning of a nation-state. This conclusion is complicated, however, by three factors: (1) contestation over the meaning of national identity, (2) variation in the degree to which national as opposed to potentially divisive partisan, ethnic,
or other subnational identities are politically salient, and (3) differences in national norms that affect the political and social expression of national identity within a country.

### A Social Identity Approach to National Attachment

**National Identity**

According to Tajfel, a social identity (or in this case a national identity) involves an individual’s “knowledge of his membership in a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to the membership” (Tajfel 1981, p.255). From this vantage point, national identity involves both a cognitive awareness and an emotional attachment to a nation. Consistent with this definition, we define *national identity* as a subjective or internalized sense of belonging to the nation and measure it with questions that typically assess an affective bond to the nation and a cognitive sense of belonging (Huddy and Khatib 2007; Huddy 2013).

Social identity theory emphasizes the importance of symbolic concerns such as a group’s social standing as central to the development of group cohesion. There are two distinct branches of social identity theory (SIT): the version developed by Tajfel (1981) and Tajfel and Turner (1979) known as social identity theory, and self-categorization theory (SCT), a cognitive elaboration of SIT (Turner et al., 1987). Both theories acknowledge the origins of social identity in cognitive and motivational factors, although SCT places greater emphasis on cognitive factors (Hogg, 1996; p. 67). Tajfel concluded that cognitive factors such as an awareness of belonging to a group could not solely explain intergroup relations and believed that motivational factors linked to the protection of group status were central to the emergence of intergroup bias. Both SIT and SCT place key emphasis on the need among group members “to differentiate their
own groups positively from others to achieve a positive social identity” (Turner et al., 1987; p. 42).

The need for positive group differentiation leads to a mild form of ingroup bias, in which group identifiers exhibit a weak preference for in-group over out-group members (Jackson & Smith, 1999; Mummendey et al. 2001; Simon et al. 1995). In terms of national identity this means that individuals will prefer co-nationals to foreigners, although it does not automatically generate a dislike of outsiders. National identity is an attachment to the ingroup with no necessary implication for how one feels towards an outgroup (Huddy 2013; Mummendey et al. 2001; Sniderman et al. 2004). A liking for co-nationals among strong national identifiers means by implication that they will be more willing to help co-nationals than foreigners, more likely to conform to national norms, and more driven to defend the nation when it is threatened (Terry and Hogg 1996; Theiss-Morse 2009).

In addition, within social identity theory group solidarity rests on the development of a strong group identity (Huddy 2001). But not everyone identifies strongly with the nation. It is therefore imperative to measure gradations in the strength of national identity to fully understand its effects. It is well documented, for example, that strong group identifiers are more likely to conform to group norms (Terry and Hogg 1996). In the case of national identity, this means that strong national identifiers will be most likely to conform to prescriptive norms, such as voting in the US or egalitarian behavior in Denmark and Sweden, and experience more positive emotions after conforming to them (Huddy and Khatib 2007; Christensen et al., 2004). Those who identify weakly with a nation will be least likely to exhibit solidarity with co-nationals, conform to national norms, or be influenced by national political leaders. For
example, in several western European countries, a greater sense of national pride increases tax compliance, an indicator of national cooperation (Torgler & Schneider, 2007).

In psychology, social identities are measured with multi-item scales that reflect a mix of cognitive factors, such as the acknowledgement that one belongs to a nation or use of the term “we” for co-nationals, plus affective factors, such as the subjective importance of national belonging (Cinnirella 1997; Huici et al. 1997; Mummendey et al. 2001; Sidanius et al. 1997). Citrin et al. (2001) draw on similar items to tap the strength of American identity among respondents in the 1996 General Social Survey (GSS). Sample items include “How important is being American to you.” and “I would rather be a citizen of America than any other country” (see also Sniderman et al.’s 2004 use of Crocker and Luhtanen’s collective self-esteem scale). These items do not touch on the meaning of national identity and avoid contentious behaviors, such as standing for the national anthem, or divisive beliefs such as a dislike of foreigners.

National Pride

As noted above, national identity and a preference for co-nationals over outsiders does not necessarily generate a hatred of outsiders nor automatically lead to an intense love of country. National identity and national bias are obviously related to the concept of national pride, but they are not the same thing. National pride is measured in surveys such as the International Social Survey Program (ISSP) with questions that refer to how proud the respondent is of the country’s achievements in realms such as sports, the arts and sciences. National pride can also be defined more restrictively, however, as involving specific behaviors such as reverence for the flag, standing for the anthem, or refusing to criticize national leaders.
When defined in this way, pride becomes potentially divisive and can lead to a fracturing of national consensus. When simply defined as a positive evaluation of the national institutions and symbols, however, national pride should have similar consequences to national identity in terms of generating solidarity and liking for co-nationals.

As noted earlier, pride is linked to an automatic liking for fellow group members, a hallmark of all social identities. Complexity arises, however, when those on the political left and right have different views on what constitutes patriotic loyalty (linked to pride) and the specific behaviors expected of patriots. In that sense, pride can be more contentious than national identity. In the US, those on the political left and right have differed at times on whether support for national symbols such as the flag and anthem, military service, and uncritical allegiance to national authorities constitute proud, patriotic behavior (Hurwitz and Peffley 1999).

National Chauvinism

In contrast to pride, national chauvinism is defined as a sense of “national superiority and dominance” which includes an attachment to the nation (as does pride) but spills over into animosity toward outsiders (De Figueiredo and Elkins p. 175). Moreover, national chauvinism is most likely to fracture national consensus because unlike pride it leads to heightened xenophobia and greater perceived external threat. The distinction between pride and national chauvinism is grounded in The Authoritarian Personality, a seminal work in which the authors differentiated simple love of country, labeled as pride, from “blind attachment to certain national cultural values, uncritical conformity with the prevailing group ways, and rejection of other nations as outgroups”, termed pseudopatriotism (Adorno et al. 1950; p. 107). National
chauvinism is the contemporary intellectual heir of pseudopatriotism. National chauvinism has also been referred to as nationalism (see Huddy 2013 for a review) and national superiority (Dekker et al. 2003). National chauvinism is typically assessed by asking for agreement or disagreement with statements such as “other countries should try to make their government as much like our as possible” or “the world would be a better place if other countries were more like ours” (Kosterman and Feshbach 1989).

The fracturing effects of national chauvinism on perceptions of who belongs to the nation, immigration policy, and perceived external threat raise questions about who is most likely to hold this kind of divisive and exclusive national attachment. Much of the research on national attachments is grounded in a group-focused approach, such as social identity theory, which does little to explain why those within the same nation would hold differing views on what it means to belong to the nation.

Authoritarianism, however, is a stable individual characteristic that is linked to national chauvinism (Huddy and Khatib 2007). Osborne et al (2017) delve more deeply into the origins of both pride and national chauvinism in a New Zealand panel study. They find much stronger effects over time of right-wing authoritarianism (RWA) on national chauvinism than on pride. National chauvinism is also predicted by higher scores on social dominance orientation (SDO) which reflects a preference for greater social hierarchy and inequality. In that sense, national chauvinism is a product of stable individual differences in social outlook that vary little over time. Evidence that national chauvinism is more of a personal orientation than a malleable conception of the nation raises important questions about the conditions under which national chauvinism becomes politically potent.
Evidence on Diverse National Attachments: European ISSP Data

To underscore the diversity of national attachments and their differing political effects, we turn to data in the three national identity modules conducted as part of the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP). We focus on 10 European countries included in all three modules (1995, 2003, and 2013) and examine the determinants and consequences of each form of national attachment. We begin with an analysis of national levels and correlates of national attachments. We then test several predictions concerning their origins: First, we expect higher levels of national identity than other more divisive forms of national attachments because it forms the foundation for all types of national attachments. Second, national attachments should be relatively stable over time at the national level, because of their grounding in personality factors (chauvinism) and early socialization. Third, national chauvinism should be less common among better educated people but education should have little effect on national pride or identity. Fourth, some factors that have traditionally defined European nations such as ancestry and religion should increase all forms of national attachments whereas others, including age and birth cohort, should have little effect because cohorts experience common national socialization.

We then extend Ariely’s (2012) research on 2003 ISSP data to analyze the link between different national attachments and support for different facets of globalization. Consistent with past evidence of the ethnocentric nature of chauvinism, we expect it to increase opposition to immigration and promote support for economic and cultural protectionism. In contrast, national European norms and policies in support of immigration and opposition to protectionism over this period will increase support for globalization policies among those high
in national pride. We expect the effects of pride to fully convey the effects of national identity which will have no additional effect on policy views. The ISSP data provide an excellent opportunity to examine the effects of national attachments on attitudes toward protectionism and immigration since the mid-1990s, a period characterized by emergent disunity on matters such as austerity, immigration, and national sovereignty.

We focus on data from ten European countries included in all three ISSP modules: the Czech Republic, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, and Sweden.¹

Measures: National Attachments and Support for Globalization

National Chauvinism. Respondents were asked how strongly they agreed or disagreed with five items: “I would rather be a citizen of [COUNTRY] than of any other country in the world”, “The world would be a better place if people from other countries were more like [CITIZENS OF COUNTRY]”, “Generally speaking [COUNTRY] is a better country than most other countries.” “People should support their country even if their country is in the wrong,” “There are some things about [COUNTRY] today that make me ashamed of [COUNTRY].” The latter is reversed and all five items are combined to create a national chauvinism scale rescaled to vary from 0 (low) to 1 (high) (α = .63). Alphas ranged from 0.70 in Slovakia and Spain to 0.59 in Hungary.

¹ In all analyses data are weighted within country using post stratification weights included in the ISSP data (for more information see the codebook for each module; http://www.gesis.org/issp/modules/issp-modules-by-topic/national-identity). We present findings for all countries combined and note separately trends and divergent findings by country.
National Pride: Respondents were asked how proud they felt of their country (a four-point scale ranging from not at all to very) in ten different domains: the way democracy works, its political influence in the world, economic achievements, social security system, scientific and technological achievements, its achievements in sports, its achievements in the arts and literature, armed forces, history, and fair and equal treatment of all groups in society. Items were combined to form an additive pride scale that was rescaled to vary from 0 (low) to 1 (high) ($\alpha = .81$). Alphas ranged from 0.85 in Spain to 0.76 in Sweden.

National Identity. National identity was tapped by a single question: “How close do you feel to [Country]?“ Responses are measured on a 4-item scale ranging from “Very close” to “not close at all”. This was rescaled to vary from 0 (not close at all) to 1 (very close).

Protectionism. Respondents were asked to agree or disagree on a five-point scale with the following items: “[COUNTRY] should limit the important of foreign products in order to protect its national economy.” “For certain problems, like environmental pollution, international bodies should have the right to enforce solutions.” “[COUNTRY] should follow its own interests, even if this leads to conflicts with other nations.” “Foreigners should not be allowed to buy land in “[COUNTRY]”.” “[COUNTRY’s] television should give preference to [COUNTRY’s] films and programs.” All items were combined to form a protectionism scale that ranged from 0 (oppose protectionism) to 1 (support) ($\alpha = .58$). Alphas ranged from 0.64 in Germany and the UK to 0.51 in Latvia.

Anti-Immigration. Respondents were asked to agree or disagree with the following statements: “Immigrants increase crime rates.” “Immigrants are generally good for [COUNTRY’s] economy.” (reversed) “Immigrants take jobs away from people who were born in
“Immigrants improve [COUNTRY’s] society by bringing new ideas and culture.” (reversed). All items were combined to form a reliable anti-immigration scale that ranged from 0 (pro-immigration) to 1 (anti-immigration) ($\alpha = .79$). Alphas ranged from 0.84 in Sweden to 0.71 in the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

Results

Levels of National Attachment

As seen in Figure 1, national identity is rated more highly than either national chauvinism or national pride in each nation (except in the UK, where the level of national identity is lower than in all the other countries). This is consistent with the foundational role of national identity in driving all forms of national attachments. National pride is also more strongly felt than national chauvinism in all ten countries. Chauvinism is thus the weakest type of national attachment. The average national chauvinism score across countries is roughly .5 with the lowest level in Latvia and the highest in Hungary, suggesting some variation in its endorsement. In contrast, the average score for pride is higher at .67. Pride is at its lowest in Latvia and at its highest in Ireland. Levels of national identity are higher again with an average of .75. Between 75% (Great Britain) and 95% (Hungary) of residents of all countries consider themselves close or very close to the nation.

All three measures of national attachments are significantly positively correlated as expected and undergirded by a common sense of national identity. Chauvinism and pride are modestly correlated with national identity ($r = .32$ for chauvinism and $r = .31$ for pride; all $ps < .001$) and national chauvinism and pride are also positively correlated ($r = .43; p < .001$). This confirms the entwined nature of different facets of national attachments. Also notably, the
correlations between all three measures of national attachments are statistically significant in all ten European countries.

**Figure 1: Levels of National Chauvinism, Pride, and National Identity by Country**

![Bar chart showing levels of national chauvinism, pride, and national identity by country]

**Determinants of National Attachments**

**Stability Over Time.** We expect national attachments to be relatively stable within a country over time and that is what we largely find. We regress each form of attachment on a set of demographic factors and control for chauvinism when analyzing pride and pride when analyzing chauvinism to get at their unique determinants. Chauvinism is the most stable type of national attachment and shows no change between 1995 and 2013 despite the recent emergence of neo-nationalist political movements in some of the nations included in the data. There is also no evidence that national chauvinism increased between 2003 and 2013, an era marked by the debt crisis, the inclusion of the eastern bloc in the EU, and increased movements of people among EU countries. In contrast, pride increased slightly between 1995 and 2013. In the Eastern countries, Ireland and Spain, national identity decreased over the same period,
whereas in Germany, Great Britain, and Sweden it remained the same. These analyses are presented in Table 1. When the data are analyzed separately by country, there is some variation in trends across countries. Overall, we conclude that most importantly there was no systematic increase in national chauvinism between 1995 and 2013.

*Educational Differences in Chauvinism.* For the most part, we did not expect national attachments to vary substantially with education because citizens receive comparable socialization concerning the nation’s history and what it means to belong. The one exception is national chauvinism which is likely to decrease with advanced education as found in past research, consistent with the well-established link between high education and tolerance (Coenders and Scheepers 2003; Schuman et al 1997). In the analyses, educational attainment is a 6-level variable created from information on highest degree and, when degree information is absent, years of schooling. In all countries, greater education is associated with lower national chauvinism. Somewhat unexpectedly, higher levels of educational attainment have the opposite effects on national pride. In most countries, education is positively linked to pride although the two are unrelated in Spain and Germany.

We also expected attributes associated with majority ancestry and religion to boost all types of national attachment. As seen in Table 1, having a parent who is a citizen (indicating

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2 Ireland, Spain, Latvia, and Slovenia experienced a decline in national chauvinism between 1995 and 2013. Ireland and Slovenia experienced decreased pride. In a contrary trend, the Czech Republic, Germany, and Slovakia experienced an increase in national chauvinism between 1995 and 2013. Pride increased over that same period in most countries except Ireland, Latvia, and Slovenia.

3 Education is divided into 6 levels: no formal education, some primary, completed primary, some secondary, completed secondary, at least some tertiary.

4 Religious attendance was assessed on a 6-point scale that ranged from never to several times or more a week. Immigrant background was assessed by a single question on whether one of the respondent’s parents was not a citizen.
that someone is at least a second-generation native) increases levels of national identity and pride but not chauvinism. In other words, recent immigrants are not as proud of the nation or hold as strong an identity as those whose families have been in the country for a longer period. Religiosity also consistently strengthens national attachments as seen in Table 1. We cannot show that a person adheres to the major religion or denomination but religiosity is a crude proxy for that and religiosity is associated with higher levels of all three types of national attachments in support of this notion. Looking at trends within each country, we find that the positive relationship between religiosity and national chauvinism holds up in all countries except the Czech Republic, Germany, Great Britain, and Sweden. In Latvia, it has the opposite effect. Religiosity also boosts national pride in all countries except Hungary and Slovenia. Finally, there is a mixed relationship between religiosity and national identity. Religiosity has no effect on national identity in the Czech Republic, Great Britain, Latvia, Slovenia, and Sweden, whereas it boosts national identity in the remaining five countries. Overall, however, there is clearly a close tie between religiosity and national attachments in all ten European countries.

We had not expected any of the national attachments to vary by age or birth cohort because of roughly comparable national socialization over time. Nonetheless, there is some evidence that older people are slightly more chauvinistic than younger people and hold stronger national identities. However, those born during and just after WWII are less chauvinistic than other cohorts, a likely reaction to having grown up during the war.

In sum, national chauvinism, pride, and national identity differ in level of endorsement within a nation with national identity being the most strongly felt aspect of national
attachment. All forms of national attachments are stronger among the most religious and pride and national identity are stronger among those with a longer national lineage.
Table 1: Determinants of National Attachments (OLS regression and ordered probit)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>National Chauvinism</th>
<th></th>
<th>Pride</th>
<th></th>
<th>Close to Nation</th>
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Note. Entries are unstandardized regression coefficients and standard errors. The first two models are OLS regressions. The third model is an ordered probit. * p<.1; ** p<.05; *** p<.01.
Divergent Effects on Opposition to Globalization

As noted, all three forms of national attachments are grounded in a common connection to the nation. Nonetheless, they are expected to have divergent political and social effects. National chauvinism is associated with ethnocentrism and is most likely to drive opposition to key facets of globalization and foreign influence. In contrast, national identity and pride should be associated with support for globalization to the extent they have become established national policy and thus serve as a national norm. The existence of pro-globalization norms increases the chance that someone who identifies with and is proud of their country will adhere to them.

These expectations are tested in analyses presented in Table 2. In these analyses, support for protectionism and opposition to immigrants is regressed onto all three types of national attachments plus demographic factors. As expected, national attachments have divergent political effects despite being positively correlated. The effects of national chauvinism stand out as the most distinct and divisive. Chauvinism boosts support for protectionism and anti-immigration policies. The effects of chauvinism on opposition to globalization are consistent and sizeable across countries as seen in Figure 2 with especially strong effects in western Europe. In contrast national chauvinism has weaker effects on opposition to immigration and support for protectionism in the east.

In contrast, pride increases support for immigration but has no effect on support for protectionism. The negative effects of pride on anti-immigration sentiment are large and consistent across countries except in Latvia. We had expected the effects of national identity to be largely conveyed by pride and chauvinism but it has additional effects that vary substantially
across countries. National identity boosts opposition to immigration mostly in eastern countries (Czech Republic, Latvia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, and Germany) whereas it increases support for immigration in Great Britain and Ireland as seen in Figure 2, which shows these relationships per country.

Table 2: National Attachments and Anti-Globalization Attitudes

<table>
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<td>R-squared</td>
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Note. Entries are regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Based on a series of OLS regressions.

* p<.1; **p<.05; *** p<.01.

It is interesting to note that national identity boosts negative immigration views in four of the five former eastern bloc nations where norms of liberal tolerance may have been less
well established than in the west. It may require greater examination of national norms to understand why national pride and identity have divergent effects on support for immigration. We note, however, that the effects of national identity are less pronounced than the effects of national pride.

Figure 2: The Effects of National Attachments on Anti-Immigration Attitudes by Country

Anti-Immigrant Sentiment and National Chauvinism
There are several other consistent trends seen in Table 2 and additional analyses conducted within country. Less well educated respondents and those with parents who are citizens of the nation are more opposed to globalization: they support protectionism and hold negative immigration views. Other factors such as gender, age, and union membership are significant in Table 2 but their effects are not consistent across countries. Protectionism increased between 1995 and 2013 in Eastern European countries. Negative immigrant attitudes decreased over the same period in all but one of the eastern European nations (Czech Republic where it increased) and increased in three western European nations (Great Britain, Ireland, and Spain).

**Context Matters**

National pride and national chauvinism are both associated with a strong national identity but have differing political effects. This underscores the need to go beyond simply assessing the effects of national identity to look more closely at its different meanings. But variation in the political effects of national identity do not just depend on differences in its meaning. Social identity theory generates further insight into other factors that condition the effects of a strong national identity on political attitudes. This necessitates a shift of focus from the simple link between national identity and support for specific national solidarity to the conditions under which nations are expected show stronger and weaker unity.

In this concluding section, we consider in greater detail several contextual factors that condition the political effects of national identity. First, we consider the conditions under which national identity is most likely to unify the nation on matters ranging from universal social welfare to concerted international military action against a foe. Second, we assess the
conditions under which national chauvinism has heightened political effect. All countries likely harbor nationalistic individuals but that does not always lead to neo-nationalist politics. Given the recent nationalistic turn in world events, it is essential to examine more closely the factors that enhance the link between national chauvinism and support for ethnocentric policies, such as the existence of neo-nationalist political parties.

**National Identity Salience**

One of social identity theory’s key insights is that group solidarity depends on context (Turner et al. 1987). Someone can be strongly identified with the nation yet not support welfare assistance, for example, because support for social welfare benefits is divisive within the nation, fractured along lines of political ideology, race or ethnicity, religious, or regional identities. Internal cohesion and conformity to national norms will be greatest when national identity is most salient such as when the nation is compared to outsiders. For example, Canadians’ national identity is likely to boost support for their national health scheme or overseas humanitarian aid missions when Canada is compared to the US because it increases Canadians’ positive differentiation from Americans. National identity also becomes increasingly relevant to foreign policy when the country is threatened. For instance, national identity is likely to increase Americans’ support for sanctions against North Korea when it threatens belligerent action against the US but have far weaker effects when North Korea and the US are engaged in friendly bilateral negotiations. In this way, national cohesion can be enhanced by a comparison with a competing nation that increases the salience of national identity or undermined by heightening the salience of divisive internal identities that reduce the salience of national identity.
Turner and colleagues (1987) make clear the degree to which identities differ in cognitive salience, and importance, across situations. When among co-nationals, a citizen may think of herself as a unique individual. But in an international group, or when her nation is under threat, national identity comes to the fore and she thinks in national not individual terms. National identity can generate powerful solidarity towards fellow citizens when the country is under threat, such as during a terrorist attack or in the aftermath of natural disasters such as extreme weather events (Theiss-Morse 2009). Social identity theory thus provides needed nuance to the debate concerning national attachments by underscoring the contextual nature of their effects.

Several experimental studies have documented greater national solidarity across lines or race and ethnicity when national identity is made salient. For example, white Americans are more supportive of spending on minority education when their national identity is made salient but are less supportive of the same program when their racial identity is salient (Transue 2007). Charnysh et al. (2015) found that priming the nation among Hindus by exposing them to a map of the country colored by the national flag increased support for co-nationals across divisive religious lines. In this study, Hindus gave more to Hindu than Muslim fire victims without a national prime but gave equally when the map and flag were made salient. The 9/11 terrorist attacks may have had a similar effect on white Americans. In one study, experimental exposure to information about the events of 9/11 heightened American identity and increased support for multiculturalism policies (Davies, Steele, & Markus, 2008). Kam and Ramos (2008) find that national identity shapes presidential approval in periods of national threat but partisan identity has greater effect on presidential approval in “normal” political times.
Other studies underscore the powerful combined influence of national identity and threat, which can transform a benign national identity into outgroup animosity. For example, in two studies conducted in Switzerland Falomir-Pichastor and colleagues (2009) observed discriminatory attitudes towards immigrants among those who reported a strong national identity and perceived immigrants as a cultural threat. No such negativity was found, however, among those who held a strong national identity but did not perceive immigrants as a threat. There is thus a fluid aspect to the effects of national attachments, suggesting that they vary with the salience of national identity and the existence of an external threat.

External Threat and Political Rhetoric

Negative feelings towards foreign nationals are not an automatic consequence of national identity but rather arise under conditions of external threat and thus vary across contexts. When a nation is under threat, strong national identifiers will feel more positive about co-nationals and more negative towards threatening outsiders. The rise in American pride after the 9/11 terror attacks provides a compelling example of this process at work (Gallup 2005). Social identity theory predicts that a loss or threat to national power, status, or culture will constitute especially potent national threats that can generate enmity and promote support for xenophobic government policies (Huddy 2013). Sniderman, Hagendoorn, and Prior (2004) provide supportive evidence. They exposed Dutch participants to various scenarios concerning new immigrants and found that immigrants who did not fit into Dutch culture, and thus posed a symbolic threat, aroused greater opposition that unskilled immigrants who pose a potential economic threat to the nation. Moreover, a strong Dutch identity increased the perception that immigrants posed a cultural threat to the Netherlands.
Threat promotes ingroup solidarity and fosters a dislike of the threatening outgroup, generating emotions, such as anger, that can incite action, including military action, against foreign nations. Researchers studying a range of different groups find that strong group identifiers react more angrily than others to group threat (Musgrove & McGarty 2008; Rydell et al. 2008; van Zomeren et al. 2008). When it comes to national identity, strong American patriots reacted with greater anger toward terrorists in the lead up to the Iraq war, heightening their support for war (Feldman et al. 2012; Huddy et al. 2007). Strong American identifiers also responded with greater anger to an insulting message about the U.S. and Americans written by a foreigner (Rydell et al. 2008). Fischer et al. (2010) made salient British subjects’ national or gender identity and then exposed them to photos of the July 7, 2005 London bombings. Subjects whose British identity was made salient were more likely to report feeling aggression and expressed greater support for the war on terror than those for whom gender identity was made salient.

Political rhetoric is another factor that enhances the divisive effects of national chauvinism. Hooghe and Marks (2004) suggest that divisive political rhetoric found among the leaders of Euroskeptic political parties may enhance the negative effects of an exclusive national identity on EU support. More broadly, the mere presence of neo-nationalist parties in a country can create a megaphone for nationalistic citizens and foster a climate of intolerance toward outgroups. A recent study by Van Assche and colleagues (2017) provides an example of this process. Using European Social Survey (ESS) and World Values Survey (WVS) data, the authors found that a right-wing climate in a country or a sub-national region was associated with more negative outgroup attitudes among citizens regardless of their personal ideology.
The authors did not test whether this effect was confined to nationalistic citizens but that is a distinct possibility. Using Eurobarometer data from twelve European countries, Semyonov et al. (2006) found that anti-immigrant attitudes were more pronounced across the general population precisely in countries where extreme right-wing parties enjoy greatest support.

**Conclusion**

Liberal nationalists believe that national identities act as national glue to hold together citizens of a nation. This perspective is consistent with social identity theory and we have provided some supportive evidence. Nonetheless, the liberal nationalist thesis is overly simplistic. We have drawn on social identity theory to underscore the different meanings and dynamic nature of national identities and discuss factors that determine whether citizens are likely to act cohesively. National unity depends on the salience of national as opposed to subnational identities, the existence of an external threat, and the degree to which pride and patriotic activities are consensual. The nation becomes more fractured when national chauvinism is activated by prevailing concerns about foreign influence and inflammatory political debate. In times of rousing nationalist rhetoric, chauvinism can emerge forcefully and trigger outgroup derogation and opposition to foreign influence and alliances characteristic of “nation-first’ politics.

In this chapter, we have outlined key distinctions between national identity, pride, and national chauvinism. One of the clearest conclusions to emerge from this research is the differing effects of these dimensions of national attachment on matters linked to
ethnocentrism, immigration, and foreign influence. Those with a strong sense of national pride and identity are most likely to conform to national norms including support for globalization if supported by national leaders. In contrast, national chauvinism consistently promotes ethnocentric policies and opposition to foreign influence regardless of norms. Our findings resonate with previous literature that has examined a broad range of outcomes. Carter and Perez (2016) also find unifying effects of pride and fracturing effects of national chauvinism in a survey of black and white Americans. Among white and black Americans, national chauvinism decreased positive ratings of African, Asian, and Latino immigrants; it also decreased black ratings of white immigrants. In contrast, national pride boosted blacks’ ratings of African, Asian, Latino, and white immigrants although had more limited effects among whites (confined to more positive ratings of Asian immigrants). In Ariely’s (2012) analysis of 2003 ISSP data, pride in the country’s democracy, social security, and treatment of groups similarly led to more positive views of immigration whereas national chauvinism led to more negative assessments.

A social identity framework helps to explain why national identity and pride generate national trust and solidarity. It sheds less light on the existence of national chauvinism and its divisive effects on support for immigration, diversity, and tolerance. For this, it is important to understand that people differ in ways that influence their understanding of, and attachment to, the nation. Ultimately, it is clear that national attachments can have both positive and negative political effects depending on context, the existence of threat, and an individual’s stable proclivities.

We hope this chapter has made clear the value of a psychological approach to the study of national attachments. Past research on pride and national chauvinism has spawned a variety
of scales and concepts, drawn differing normative conclusions, and has been characterized by conflicting and contradictory terminology and measurement. It is not uncommon to find the same survey question being labeled quite differently by different researchers. A stronger theoretical focus should help to minimize these problems and lead to greater progress in research on pride at a time when global movements of people raise thorny questions in many nations about immigrant pride and xenophobia among existing citizens. A unified framework for the study of national attachments will greatly enhance our ability to address such questions.
References


