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# 1

## Nationalisms in International Politics

Just because the circumstances of the war have brought the idea of the nation and the national to the foreground of every one's thoughts, the most important thing is to bear in mind that there are nations and nations, this kind of nationalism and that.

—JOHN DEWEY, 1916

On November 11, 2018, world leaders gathered in Paris to mark the 100th Armistice Day observation. Standing under the Arc de Triomphe, French President Emmanuel Macron exhorted his audience to stem the rising tide of nationalism flooding the globe. Nationalism helped to incite World War I, and he warned that the “old demons are coming back . . . to wreak chaos and death.” It would be a “grave error” to succumb to nationalism with “isolationism, violence, and domination.”<sup>1</sup> Instead, Macron implored people to embrace supranational bodies, like the United Nations and European Union, as bastions of enduring cooperation. Bitter enemies can become close friends through supranational unity—a point he underscored when he tweeted “*Unis*” alongside a photo of himself holding hands

1. Full English language transcript available from C-SPAN. “World War I Armistice Centennial Commemoration,” 11 November 2018. See also Nakamura, Kim, and McAuley, 2018. “Macron denounces nationalism as a ‘betrayal of patriotism’ in rebuke to Trump at WWI remembrance,” *Washington Post*, 11 November.

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with German Chancellor Angela Merkel.<sup>2</sup> French and German citizens could bind together as Europeans to face threats from terrorism, climate change, and economic strife.

Macron stood in good company when he drew a connection between nationalism and militarism, and between *supranationalism*—nationalist attachment to an entity that reaches across country borders<sup>3</sup>—and cooperation. When scholars warn that modern-day Chinese “hypernationalism” could spark a great power war (Mearsheimer, 2014), praise shared democratic identification for its pacifying effect (Kahl, 1998), or connect growing European identification to regional security cooperation (Koenig-Archibugi, 2004), they recite two stories that constitute the accepted wisdom in international politics. The first ties nationalism to increased international competition and conflict: Nationalists demonize outsiders, inflate threats, and escalate disputes. These tendencies create a deadly combination, leading to nationalism’s notorious reputation as “inherently prone toward war” (Mylonas and Kuo, 2017, 10) and “one of the most dependable culprits for conflict between nations” (Gruffydd-Jones, 2017, 700). And in line with Macron’s prescription for peace, the second story contends that supranational attachments subdue nationalism’s destructive capacity. French and German nationalism fueled the two world wars, for instance, but a European identity helped citizens in both countries overcome their historic animosity. Supranationalism allows people to think of themselves as part of an overarching group that stretches across borders, such that they stop dividing “us” from “them” along national lines (Cronin, 1999; Acharya, 2001). Citizens across the continent can say that as co-Europeans, “we” trust one another to resolve disputes without force.

These accepted views rest on a misunderstanding: They treat nationalism as one-dimensional, yet nationalisms vary. When people embrace national or supranational identities, they commit to an idea about how people who share that identity think and behave. Those norms carry distinct implications for foreign policy attitudes. Some nationalist norms prescribe foreign policy aggression just as some supranationalist norms prescribe cooperation within the transnational group. Others stipulate measured, reciprocal conflict or undermine support for regional security cooperation.

2. Macron, Emmanuel (@EmmanuelMacron). “Unis.” 10 November, 2018, 11:24am. Tweet. See also Baker, Peter and Rubin, Alissa J. 2018 “Trump’s Nationalism, Rebuked at World War I Ceremony, Is Reshaping Much of Europe,” *New York Times*, 11 November, URL: [www.nytimes.com/2018/11/11/US/politics/macron-trump-paris.wvi.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/11/US/politics/macron-trump-paris.wvi.html).

3. I use supranational, transnational, and regional interchangeably to refer to identities or areas that encompass two or more countries.

For instance, U.S. President Barack Obama invoked nationalism when he claimed that the United States was “the greatest country on earth,”<sup>4</sup> but he largely “eschew[ed] a muscle-bound foreign policy”<sup>5</sup> vision and avoided describing U.S. adversaries with punitive rhetoric (Macdonald and Schneider, 2017). And while 86% of Norwegians were “quite proud” or “very proud” of their nationality in 2018<sup>6</sup>—and more than 70% agreed that Norway is a better country than others in 2013<sup>7</sup>—they seem to assert their superiority through foreign aid, not war (Prather, 2014; Wohlforth et al., 2018). Some scholarship, too, shows that nationalism occasionally corresponds to weaker threat perceptions and less hawkishness (Jones, 2014; Ko, 2019). Meanwhile, support for deeper security cooperation in the EU remains strong amid doubts that many residents identify as European at all (Schilde, Anderson and Garner, 2019; Schoen, 2008; Risse, 2004; McNamara and Musgrave, 2020), and despite evidence that European identification sometimes heightens negative biases against continental neighbors (Mummendey and Waldzus, 2004). Treating all nationalisms as equal fails to account for these complexities.

Faced with inconsistent answers about *whether* nationalism amplifies individual appetites for external belligerence—and whether supranationalism prompts support for cooperation—this book develops an overarching theory to explain *which* nationalisms shape support for conflict and which supranationalisms encourage cooperation. It also confronts three problems that limit most previous work on nationalisms in international politics:

4. Barack Obama, 2013. “Remarks by the President at a DNC Event—New York, NY,” 13 May. Obama White House Archives. Available at: [www.obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2013/05/13/remarks-president-dnc-event-new-york-ny-0](http://www.obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2013/05/13/remarks-president-dnc-event-new-york-ny-0). He decreased ambiguity about whether he meant to invoke American superiority later in the speech, asserting that “objectively, . . . we are poised for a 21st century that is as much the American century as the 20th century.” Related, Gilmore, Sheets and Rowling (2016, 515) find that President Obama invoked American exceptionalism in public speeches more than any of his predecessors since 1945.

5. Landler, Mark and Mark Mazzetti, 2013. “For Obama’s Global Vision, Daunting Problems,” *New York Times*, 24 March. URL: [www.nytimes.com/2013/05/25/us/politics/for-obamas-global-vision-daunting-problems.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/05/25/us/politics/for-obamas-global-vision-daunting-problems.html).

6. Data from the World Values Survey, Wave 7, available at [worldvaluessurvey.org](http://worldvaluessurvey.org). The question (Q254) asks participants, “How proud are you to be Norwegian?” A majority (61.3%) of respondents selected “very proud,” 24.9% chose “quite proud,” and 3.6% and 0.3% chose “not very proud” and “not at all proud,” respectively.

7. Data from the 2013 ISSP National Identity Survey. The question (V20) asks participants whether they agree or disagree that “Norway is a better country than most other countries,” a standard indicator for nationalist attitudes in existing research. Among respondents, 20.5% agreed strongly, and 49.8% agreed. For comparison, 69.9% of U.S. respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the U.S. is a better country than others.

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Research often reduces nationalism to a single dimension, lacks generalizable foundations that apply across problems and levels, or explains either the conventional wisdom *or* aberrations—but not both. This book offers conceptual, theoretical, and empirical contributions to overcome these challenges.

First, my conceptualization incorporates two dimensions of nationalism: The strength of someone's nationalist identity (*commitment*) and the norms that define what it means to be a nationalist (*content*). Scholars often conceptualize nationalism as synonymous with external hostility and supranationalism as synonymous with transnational cooperation (Kosterman and Feshbach, 1989; Koenig-Archibugi, 2004).<sup>8</sup> But when people commit to national and supranational identities, they embrace an idea about what it means to be American, French, or European. For example, nationalism sometimes entails committing to nonviolence—a view that the Indian National Congress expressed in the early twentieth century (Tudor and Slater, 2020, 6)—whereas other equally fervent nationalists demand violence against outsiders to protect their country. Such content shapes how people interact with others inside and outside their group's boundaries, and how they respond to challenges and opportunities in the foreign policy realm. Content differentiates nationalists who prefer to use all available military force from those who would engage in more limited exchanges with adversaries, and likewise differentiates supranationalists who crave deeper security integration from those wary about ceding national foreign policy autonomy to potentially untrustworthy partners. Elevating content can explain variation in nationalist foreign policy attitudes that we otherwise miss when we treat nationalisms as a monolith.

Second, I combine IR (International Relations) scholarship with interdisciplinary insights to explain how *unity* and *equality* provide distinct bases for nationalisms and supranationalisms in international politics. My framework builds from psychology's relational models theory (Fiske, 1991). Unity and equality represent two distinct relational models. Relational models are "relational" in the sense that they apply to *social* interactions—relationships with other people, including fellow national or supranational group members. They are "models" because they provide implicit rules of thumb for how we think about and behave toward other people and groups.

8. For notable exceptions that I discuss in more detail later on, see, e.g., Snyder (2000); Schrock-Jacobson (2012); Schoen (2008); Katzenstein and Checkel (2009); Risse (2010); Saide-man (2013).

For example, a group of people tasked with making a joint decision needs to set guidelines. Will the decision rest on majority voting (equality), a consensus position (unity), or another rule? The models facilitate social life by providing a baseline for what to expect. They play a similar role in structuring nationalisms.

Unity norms prioritize in-group homogeneity—a shared culture, history, or other material that binds people as one. Unity requires a binary separation between “us” and “them,” where a “feeling of kinship” allows people to embrace national or supranational insiders as family and guard against outsiders. Those who describe their nation as a “collective individual” embrace unity. For example, nineteenth century Russian elites demanded conformity to the “fatherland” (Greenfeld, 1992, 261), and Jean Monnet asserted that Europe would be strongest when Europeans stand together to enact the “common will” (qtd. in Fursdon, 1980, 118). When we use kinship myths, religion, ethnicity, or other cultural bonds to demarcate national or regional boundaries, we depend on unity.

By contrast, equality requires reciprocity and fairness, and manifests in peer-like interactions. Equality accommodates heterogeneity—creating more flexible group boundaries that avoid the binary separation that corresponds to unity. This variety of nationalism flows from notions of equality rather than kinship; from friendship rather than family. The Federalist papers, for example, reveal efforts to define American nationalism using respect and individual freedom (Sinopoli, 1996, 6), and many modern Americans claim the liberal “American Creed” as the foundation for their nationalism (Smith, 1997; Theiss-Morse, 2009, 18). European citizens whose political identity depends on democratic participation and valuing diversity express equality-oriented supranationalisms—like when Jean-Claude Juncker described the EU as a “cord of many strands,” rather than a unified family.<sup>9</sup> Juncker’s words illustrate the idea of equality nationalism by connecting corresponding descriptive norms to the European group.<sup>10</sup>

To my knowledge, this is the first study to adapt insights from relational models theory for research on nationalisms. And this framework brings several advantages. Unity and equality provide generalizable foundations that apply across issues and across two levels of categorization

9. Jean-Claude Juncker, 2016. “Jean-Claude Juncker European Parliament speech in full,” *Independent*, 14 September. URL: [www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/jean-claude-juncker-european-parliament-speech-full-a7298016.html](http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/jean-claude-juncker-european-parliament-speech-full-a7298016.html).

10. Of course, understanding Juncker’s supranationalism would require systematic research beyond a single public speech.

that matter in international politics. These *fundamental* models structure interactions across a variety of social settings, setting different expectations within friendships (often predicated on equality) than families (unity), for example. In turn, they apply to both nationalisms and supranationalisms, bridging the artificial divide between research that connects identification to conflict or cooperation. Indeed, synthesizing theories about nationalisms and supranationalisms—which I refer to collectively as nationalisms—constitutes one of this book’s contributions.

Building from relational models theory also avoids the trap of defining bespoke nationalisms for each new puzzle;<sup>11</sup> rather, unity and equality have implications for a range of foreign policy problems. Related, these pre-political norms guard against the inclination to infer nationalisms from outcomes, like separating “good” from “bad” nationalisms based on whether they increase the chance of war. Finally, some scholars ascribe different nationalisms to whole countries or regions—comparing French “civic” nationalism to Japanese “ethnic” nationalism. But my theory accounts for the substantial disagreements about content that occur among *individuals* within the same national and transnational groups—that is, among fellow Americans or fellow Europeans.

Third, *unity* and *equality* together account for nationalism’s inconsistent relationship to foreign policy attitudes. Nationalisms centered on unity and equality—my primary independent variables—carry distinct implications for attitudes about militarism in international conflict and security cooperation in transnational groups. In a nutshell, I argue that equality-oriented nationalism mitigates aggressive foreign policy attitudes because group members commit to reciprocity and extend this norm to outsiders. Their unity-oriented counterparts instead inflate external threats and demand disproportionate force to defeat adversaries. As to international cooperation, a supranational identity built on unity undermines trust and support for security integration. Pressures for unity lead supranationalists to reject deepening ties to “deviants” inside the group’s boundaries. Equality, by contrast, accommodates intragroup heterogeneity and encourages cooperation with any co-regionals who reciprocally commit to those same principles. In this respect, my theory both explains the conventional wisdom and challenges it.

And indeed, this book provides empirical evidence to show that the character of nationalisms matters as much as commitment—unity and

11. See Mylonas and Kuo (2017) for a review of different varieties of nationalism.

equality have distinct effects on foreign policy attitudes. Two original experiments manipulate nationalist identity content with treatments that describe how unity or equality comprises the definition of one's membership in a national group. I then evaluate how beliefs about national superiority correspond to foreign policy attitudes, and the degree to which nationalism manifests in different outcomes when it centers on unity versus equality. I find that unity nationalism corresponds to militarism and escalatory aggression in a foreign policy crisis, per the standard story. But equality alters these relationships. Nationalists express less hawkish foreign policy attitudes and more measured escalation when their national group commits to equality, compared to unity.

Recognizing that experiments comprise one part of the inquiry, this book adopts a multi-method approach and tests my hypotheses about supranational cooperation using observational survey data from Europe. I take advantage of the gains in scale from cross-national surveys to test the theory's implications for supranational cooperation in a sample of elites alongside members of the public. Europeans who envision the region as a set of equals or peers trust fellow Europeans, support a common foreign policy, and endorse a European army to a greater degree than their counterparts for whom Europe constitutes a united family. Together, my results underscore the central role played by content; to understand how nationalisms affect foreign policy, we must first know what being a nationalist means to individuals.

Before I present and test my theory in detail, I make the case that we need one. In the remainder of this chapter, I dive into the conventional wisdom on nationalism and foreign policy attitudes and then highlight puzzling contradictions in the scholarship. Next, I preview my conceptual framework by defining nationalism and disaggregating the concept into its unity- and equality-oriented variants. I then summarize my primary argument and this book's contributions. I conclude with an outline of the proceeding chapters.

## **Two Stories about Nationalisms in International Politics**

International relations scholars tell two stories about nationalisms in international politics, both of which Macron highlighted when he decried the perils of nationalism and touted the promise of European unity. The logic that connects nationalism to war is the same logic that ties supranational identification to cooperation, despite the paradigmatic gulf that typically

separates the two research programs. Nationalism scholarship explains how group members react to outsiders; theories about supranational identities address how group members relate to insiders. The two stories share the same mechanisms and assumptions: Lines that separate “us” from “them” cause nationalist hawkishness and war, but when they break down—when French and German citizens no longer see themselves as egoistic adversaries but as fellow Europeans—the trust once reserved for co-nationals expands to people in other countries who share the umbrella identity. To understand how nationalisms shape conflict and cooperation in international politics, we must synthesize these two stories.

In the following section, I first introduce the conventional wisdom that connects nationalism to militarism and supranationalism to cooperation. Ample scholarship supports Macron’s pessimism about nationalism and his correspondingly optimistic take on supranationalism. But these standard stories—while convincing in some respects—neglect crucial information. Individual studies provide empirical evidence that strong or salient nationalism sometimes corresponds to *less* hawkish attitudes, compared to weaker nationalism, and that certain types of nationalism inspire peace rather than war. And in the case of supranationalism, some researchers conclude that European citizens with the strongest commitments to the continent express as much hostility toward fellow Europeans in other countries as those who reject supranationalism. If we take a closer look at both the empirical evidence and theoretical assumptions beneath the standard stories, the foundations start to crack.

## THE STANDARD STORY ABOUT NATIONALISM AND MILITARISM

Nationalist conflicts litter our history books and prediction lists—from Bismarck advancing German unification via war against France (Sambanis, Skaperdas and Wohlforth, 2015) to both World Wars, the 1969 Football War (Bertoli, 2017), and ominous warnings that nationalism drives China’s extraverted foreign policy (Schweller, 2018).<sup>12</sup> IR scholars accordingly treat nationalism as a pernicious force in world politics (Van Evera,

12. Yet Schweller (2018) argues that the U.S. can manage China’s assertive foreign policy posture if they adopt the more restrained and isolationist grand strategy implicated by nationalism in a declining power. See Johnston (2017) for an argument that Chinese nationalism is not rising and Mearsheimer (2014) for an argument connecting Chinese “hypernationalism” to predictions about the next great power war.

1994), in part because it animates militaristic attitudes (Mylonas and Kuo, 2017, 10).

The standard story: National identities bring people together within countries (Sambanis and Shayo, 2013; Robinson, 2016),<sup>13</sup> but tear them apart in the international arena (Mercer, 1995).<sup>14</sup> Nationalism creates a bond among citizens who see their own group as superior. This process situates those who reside outside the nation as threatening “others” (Schrock-Jacobson, 2012). Driven by our human tendency toward groupism—which has both neurological and evolutionary roots (Sapolsky, 2019; Brewer and Caporael, 2006)<sup>15</sup>—we view outsiders with suspicion. “They” are more threatening when they differ from “us.” Nationalist pride can blind people to their country’s strategic or material shortcomings, leading to overconfidence and myths about incompetent rivals (Snyder, 1991; Druckman, 2001; Walt, 1996).<sup>16</sup> “We” are powerful and righteous, whereas “they” are weak. Scholars presume that nationalists display their superiority with aggression.

Research designed to test these propositions often finds that nationalist individuals support foreign policy aggression more than those who reject sentiments about national greatness (Druckman, 1994; De Figueiredo and Elkins, 2003; Kimmelmeier and Winter, 2008; Federico, Golec and Dial, 2005). Indeed, proponents of the conventional wisdom point out that stronger nationalism correlates with support for nuclear armament (Feshbach, 1987), “hard-line” policies toward the Soviet Union (Hurwitz and Peffley, 1990), and both dispositional militarism and foreign policy aggression (Herrmann, Isernia and Segatti, 2009). Experiments reveal similar patterns. For example, when Chinese participants watch a nationalistic video depicting a struggle between China and outside enemies, they support hawkish responses to China’s territorial disputes (Ko, 2019). Leaders

13. Normative theorists and comparative politics scholars often prescribe nation-building and nationalism to resolve civil strife, emphasizing nationalism’s “light side.” See, for example, Emerson (1960); Horowitz (1985); Kymlicka (1998); Osaghae (1999); Goodson (2006); Diamond (2006); Johnston et al. (2010); Sambanis and Shayo (2013); Robinson (2014, 2016); Tamir (2019). See Mylonas (2012) on the politics of nation-building and variation in state nation-building strategies.

14. For more macro-level research on nationalism and international conflict, see Mansfield and Snyder (2002)—and the exchange between Narang and Nelson (2009) and Mansfield and Snyder (2009)—Schrock-Jacobson (2012); Wimmer (2013); Bertoli (2017); Gruffydd-Jones (2017).

15. See, e.g., Lopez, McDermott and Petersen (2011) on how coalitions and community groups conferred important advantages for our ancestors’ survival.

16. For more on the relationship between optimism and war, see, e.g., Blainey (1988); Altman (2015).

can be nationalists too, and research from the Leadership Trait Analysis tradition suggests that leaders who favor their national in-groups incline toward using force (Hermann, 1980). In short, nationalism corresponds to “authoritarianism, intolerance, and warmongering” (Li and Brewer, 2004, 728), consistent with its status as a *casus belli*.

These patterns create a dynamic relationship, whereby scholars assume that nationalism both causes and incentivizes foreign aggression (Sambanis, Skaperdas and Wohlforth, 2015; Hixson, 2008). Misplaced confidence and threat inflation might lead nationalist leaders to start a war, and nationalist masses might demand confrontational displays that provoke conflict (Gruffydd-Jones, 2017, 705). Nationalist hawkishness theoretically enables leaders to mobilize support for their foreign policy adventures, overcome collective action problems, prepare citizens to sacrifice, or signal resolve to their adversaries (Posen, 1993; Weiss, 2013, 2014). According to the conventional wisdom, nationalism provides both the tinder and the spark for war.

## THE STANDARD STORY ABOUT SUPRANATIONALISM AND COOPERATION

Supranationalism offers a ray of hope for those concerned that nationalism makes “war, conflict, and misery natural and inevitable products of international politics” (Mercer, 1995, 252). And the standard story about supranationalism seems shrewdly simple: Building bigger groups combats nationalist competition by turning outsiders into insiders. Arguments about nationalist conflict and transnational cooperation go hand in hand.

Supranationalism facilitates cooperation by redefining self-interest, assuaging animosity, and strengthening interstate trust. Individuals trust and favor their fellow in-group members. And when people “recategorize” themselves into an overarching group that bridges two or more otherwise competitive subgroups (Gaertner and Dovidio, 2000), their in-group expands. When a group transcends national boundaries—forming a supranational identity (see, e.g., Adler and Barnett, 1998; Cronin, 1999)—members look out for each other. Rather than advance only their national interest, French citizens care about protecting Europe as a whole. Citizens also trust each other to resolve disputes without force and no longer view co-regionals as outsiders even though they fly a different national flag.<sup>17</sup>

17. Within the group, they display what Uslaner (2002) and Rathbun (2009) call “particularized” trust—two or more parties trust each other implicitly.

Turning Americans and Canadians into “North Americans” transfers the trust previously reserved for co-nationals up to a higher level of categorization (Rousseau and Garcia-Retamero, 2007). Group members expect that others will preserve regional peace rather than pursue myopic national gains. These assurances provide a pathway to security cooperation and integration: If we trust one another, we can redirect our energies to protecting the region, rather than protecting our borders from each other.

If supranationalism fosters cooperation, we should see its effects on full display among Europeans (Risse, 2010).<sup>18</sup> Europe provides “an important test for determining whether a supranational identity is possible” (Curtis, 2014, 522), and whether supranationalism promotes trust and support for security cooperation. The EU has expanded beyond a monetary union to shape everything from human rights practices to foreign policy via a joint diplomatic corps. Common symbols and practices permeate citizens’ everyday lives, designed to foster shared identification,<sup>19</sup> making it a most-likely case for the accepted wisdom. Indeed, IR scholars overwhelmingly emphasize Europe when they present the argument that regional identities facilitate cooperation.

And again, some evidence from Europe supports the story that supranationalism promotes cooperation.<sup>20</sup> European identification can overcome the nationalist impulse for autonomy in the security realm. People who identify as European view the common defense and foreign policies more favorably (Citrin and Sides, 2004; Schoen, 2008), support deeper integration (Hooghe and Marks, 2005; Risse, 2010), and endorse intra-European immigration at greater rates than those who reject supranationalism

18. IR scholars also use supranationalism to explain why democracies avoid conflict with other democracies (Rousseau, 2006; Risse-Kappen, 1995; Kahl, 1998; Hayes, 2009; Tomz and Weeks, 2013), or how states can create the conditions for peaceful conflict management in security communities (Deutsch, 1957; Adler and Barnett, 1998; Cronin, 1999; Wendt, 1999; Acharya, 2001). These research traditions typically use countries, regions, or the international system as units of analysis, though many rely on psychological insights to explain how these encompassing identities tear down seemingly fortified borders. Scholars disagree about whether identification precedes cooperation (Hemmer and Katzenstein, 2002; Schimmelfennig, 2007) or emerges from it (Haas, 1958; Deutsch, 1961), but they agree that these two phenomena reinforce each other.

19. Though see, e.g., McNamara (2015*a*) and McNamara and Musgrave (2020) for research on why those symbols have limited efficacy.

20. Although some constitutive arguments rely on social processes that cannot be reduced to micro-foundations (Wendt, 1999; Fearon and Wendt, 2002), much research on supranational cooperation attributes causal mechanisms to the same individual-level theories and dynamics that explain nationalist conflict (Cronin, 1999; Hayes, 2012). See Kertzer (2017) for more on micro-foundations and macro-arguments in IR.

(Curtis, 2014).<sup>21</sup> European identification also seems to influence policy: When larger proportions of the general public and opinion leaders identified as European, their country was more likely to support treaty reforms that centralized foreign and security policies at the 1996 Intergovernmental Conference (Koenig-Archibugi, 2004). Politicians exhibit the same tendencies. For example, stronger European identification corresponds to a greater willingness to comply with nationally costly EU laws among German parliamentarians (Bayram, 2017).

Scholars expect supranationalism to develop outside Europe, too—whereupon it should lead to increased cooperation within those regions. For example, Asia is known more for its divisions than binding supranational identities. Distance, geography, wartime resentments, and geopolitical fissures foment competition (Hagström and Gustafsson, 2015; Glosserman and Snyder, 2015).<sup>22</sup> At the same time, the region does possess ingredients for supranationalism. For example, scholars argue that identification with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) could foster peace (Jones, 2004; Kivimäki, 2010), or that their shared Confucian or Buddhist heritage might facilitate trust in Northeast Asia (Clements, 2018, 7). And indeed, public opinion data show signs that citizens in ASEAN countries increasingly identify with the region—though it may take time for ASEAN supranationalism to match its European benchmark (Moorthy and Benny, 2012, 2013; Acharya, 2016*a*; Lee and Lim, 2020). Arguments about the cooperative effect of supranationalism theoretically apply just as well outside Europe, but the comparatively less-established identities in other regions limit the inferences we can draw about them using contemporary evidence.

In short, the conventional story about supranationalism presents an optimistic foil for research on nationalist conflict. Building international cooperation and stifling conflict requires shifting people's commitments to a different and more inclusive level of categorization.

## INTERLOCKING PUZZLES

On first pass, these stories seem to shed light on persistent patterns in foreign policy attitudes and international politics. But on both empirical

21. See Hobolt and De Vries (2016) for a recent review that discusses identification in the context of European integration.

22. Though cf. Katsumata and Iida (2011) on an emerging Asian identity.

and theoretical grounds, the conventional wisdom falls short. The standard stories skip over contradictory evidence that fails to link nationalism to consistent militarism and limits nationalism's explanatory power. Moreover, the notion that supranationalism suppresses conflict ignores the fact that such broadly inclusive identities can paradoxically magnify intragroup animosity toward fellow regional residents who depart from the mold—thereby undermining the trust required for security integration.

### **What's puzzling about nationalism?**

A closer look at the empirical record reveals that nationalism does not always increase support for conflict, threat inflation, and hawkish foreign policy attitudes.

First, inconsistencies in public opinion data contradict notions that nationalism must coincide with militarism. For example, some American study-abroad students return from their experiences *more* nationalistic but *less* threatened by the prospect that their host country might overtake the United States militarily (Jones, 2014).<sup>23</sup> Nationalism and threat perceptions moved in opposite directions. Others find that national affirmation helps build trust—not suspicion—between citizens in rival countries like China and Japan (Chung, 2015). And one experiment showed that although depictions of China's struggle against enemies increased both nationalism and bellicose responses to conflict, watching a video about China's strong economy caused nationalism but not militarism (Ko, 2019).

Some nationalists reject militarism and even promote international cooperation. Many Canadian nationalists embrace their reputation as a “kinder and gentler” country” invested in peace-keeping, mediation, and international law: “One is a good Canadian nationalist by being a good internationalist” (Kymlicka, 2003, 364, 361). In one important study, Bonikowski and DiMaggio (2016) analyze data from a representative sample of Americans who completed the 2004 General Social Survey. Using latent class analysis to inductively derive four varieties of nationalism based on how people responded to questions about their national identity, the

23. The students in Jones's (2014) sample studied in a variety of host countries. The five most popular host countries included Spain, the UK, France, Italy, and Australia, but the data also included people who studied in countries with more adversarial relationships with the U.S.—including China, Cuba, and Russia. Importantly, the host countries are evenly distributed between the control and treatment groups in the study, and results are based on pooled estimates.

researchers found one group of nationalists who were less militaristic than key others. These “creedal” nationalists expressed unquestionable nationalism—“they strongly endorsed the ideas that America is a better country than most” and “a plurality agreed that the world would be better if others were more like Americans and that one should support one’s country even if it is wrong” (Bonikowski and DiMaggio, 2016, 963). They also embraced key elements from the liberal American Creed alongside pride in American institutions, democracy, and commitment to treating groups equally. But compared to at least one other nationalist class, respondents in this “creedal” nationalism class—more than 20% of the sample—expressed more opposition to the idea that the United States should pursue its interests even if it might mean war (Bonikowski and DiMaggio, 2016, 966). If nationalism and militarism go hand in hand, how do we account for these relatively dovish nationalists?

Second, similar empirical inconsistencies characterize research linking nationalism to actual foreign policy outcomes and demand scrutiny. Indeed, many scholars argue that “the relationship between nationalism and warfare is largely contingent” (Hutchinson, 2017, 2), such that “civic” nationalisms are less prone to conflict than their “ethnic” counterparts (Snyder, 2000; Schrock-Jacobson, 2012), for example. France’s Vichy regime contained nationalists who aimed to promote French interests and greatness, maintain sovereignty, and protect the country—yet engaged in “paradoxical behavior” (Kocher, Lawrence and Monteiro, 2018, 118), per the standard story, when they chose to collaborate with Nazi Germany to suit their partisan aims (Kocher, Lawrence and Monteiro, 2018, 131–35). Nationalism sometimes even corresponds to efforts to foster peace through international institutions or foreign aid. For a state like Ireland, expressing superiority might mean advancing human rights or strengthening international law rather than pursuing great power status (Hutchinson, 2017, 180)—just as the predominant strain of Norwegian nationalism prescribes foreign aid, not war, as an expression of Norway’s superiority (Wohlforth et al., 2018, 532). Although we are not used to thinking about nationalism as something expressed through external collaboration, cooperation, or aid, people can display their national commitment and superiority without domination.

Nationalism does not inexorably drive support for conflict. Resolving the empirical divide between the standard story and puzzling evidence against it requires a comprehensive theory of nationalisms in international politics; ad hoc explanations cannot smooth over these anomalies.

### What's puzzling about supranationalism?

The flip side of nationalist belligerence, we tell a straightforward story about how and why supranational identities drive international cooperation. Scholars rely heavily on the European Union to evaluate claims about identification as a basis for cooperation, due to its status as the most well-integrated contemporary international security community. If supranationalism has universally positive implications for cooperation, they should manifest in Europe. But empirically, we know that support for European cooperation persists despite shortcomings in the European identity project. Moreover, supranationalism provides an insufficient foundation for trusting cooperation as it sometimes *enhances* animosity toward subgroups who share the same umbrella identity.

First, European citizens and elites resoundingly endorse security integration *despite* apparent shortcomings in the European identity project. The Maastricht Treaty introduced the Common Foreign and Security Policy as one of the three EU pillars in 1992 (Schoen, 2008), and large majorities of the public support integrating European defense. Indeed, Schilde, Anderson and Garner (2019, 153) contend that “no other policy domain is as popular and robust as the idea of pooling national sovereignty over defence.” But this popularity stands against a backdrop of disagreement about whether Europeans hold “fundamentally fragile” commitments to the region or even identify with Europe at all (McNamara and Musgrave, 2020, 175; Risse, 2004; Bruter, 2003; Cram, 2012; McNamara, 2015*a*). This disconnect could indicate that other factors account for European security cooperation, of course. But given scholars’ preoccupation with identity as the foundation for international cooperation, why should we see one without the other?

Second, psychological theories about overarching identities come with important scope conditions. For one, many people find it difficult to sustain identities like “Europe,” “the West,” or “all of humanity” (Brewer, 1991; though cf. McFarland, Webb and Brown 2012; McFarland et al. 2019)—which might make them dubious candidates for the foundations of a security community designed to outlive its founders.

But most importantly, supranationalism often creates an in-group caste system that exacerbates negative biases rather than mitigating them. Recall that the conventional story assumes that supranational commitments dampen nationalist distrust and animosity. When French and German people belong to the same larger group, they extend the compatriotism they typically reserve for those inside their borders to a broader group of

Europeans. But some supranationalists challenge this claim. Some Germans who identify as both German and European impugn citizens from Poland or Italy precisely *because* the latter are part of their European in-group, for example. When they identify with a group, people form an implicit (or sometimes explicit) idea about what it means to be a “good” member (Turner, 1985). Indeed, social identification requires these group prototypes—people judge their connection to a group based on how closely they align with their image of the standard member. For German citizens who associate Europeaness with their own cultural ideals, Italians and Poles serve as poor exemplars for the group (Mummendey and Waldzus, 2004). Bad in-group members are worse than out-group members.<sup>24</sup> If supranationalism often undermines trust within groups, what explains the relatively consistent relationship between European identification and support for cooperation on the continent?

Again, I take a close look at the empirical and theoretical record to find that supranationalism fails to pave the unobstructed path to in-group trust and support for security cooperation that scholars have come to expect.

## Resolving the Puzzles

Against the conventional wisdom’s intuitive appeal, questions about *whether* nationalisms inspire cooperative or conflictual foreign policy attitudes produce an unsatisfying answer: “Maybe.” A theory about nationalisms in international politics must be able to account for the standard stories alongside the puzzling contradictions. This book resolves these challenges—first by taking seriously the notion that nationalisms are social identities. Doing so offers several advantages, which I outline below. Chief among them, when we recognize that nationalisms “exist in the plural” (Katzenstein and Checkel, 2009, 213), we can identify which nationalisms drive support for intergroup conflict and intragroup cooperation.

## CONCEPTUALIZING NATIONALISM IN INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

I treat nationalisms as social identities. Social identities refer to the “part of the individual’s self-concept which derives from his knowledge

24. To use a more familiar example, “we” may be researchers. But if someone determines that a “good” researcher uses quantitative data, she might direct resources away from or impugn colleagues (in-group members) who do qualitative research—while she nevertheless applauds investigative journalists (out-group members) who rely on qualitative interviews.

of his membership of a social group (or groups)” (Tajfel, 1981, 255).<sup>25</sup> Nationalism denotes a commitment to one’s nation and its superiority (De Figueiredo and Elkins, 2003; Herrmann, Isernia and Segatti, 2009), whereas supranationalism translates that commitment to a broader categorization level—with boundaries that cross state borders (Herrmann and Brewer, 2004). In both cases, individuals claim membership in a collective and navigate the world in terms of what “we” as Germans or Europeans think, want, and do. Defining each of these powerful forces as social identities is more than a lexical twist. This approach offers four advantages for understanding nationalisms in international politics.

First, this conceptualization removes the artificial separation between nationalisms and supranationalisms. Scholars tend to engage one level at a time to develop and test theories about nationalist conflict and supranational cooperation, often sorting along paradigmatic lines. Realists agree that “groupism” matters in international politics (Wohlforth, 2008), and cite nationalist status-seeking as a cause of conflict (Mearsheimer, 2014; Wohlforth, 2009). Liberal and constructivist scholars draw different lessons to argue that shared identities facilitate a democratic peace (Herrmann and Kegley Jr, 1995; Kahl, 1998; Oneal and Russett, 2001; Hayes, 2009, 2012) or provide the glue that binds security communities (Adler and Barnett, 1998). Yet French and European nationalisms rest on the same psychological micro-foundations: Humans sort the world into groups, and define themselves in part by their membership in these larger social organizations. Group commitments shape attitudes and behavior toward fellow group members and outsiders.

Treating nationalisms as social identities emphasizes the common dynamics that underlie national and supranational commitments. Someone can identify with her family, neighborhood, state, nation, and global region at the same time—“superordinate” groups, like Americans or Westerners, contain small “subgroups,” like Californians. The fact that people can identify with groups that span levels of categorization highlights shortcomings in research that treats nations as objects of “terminal loyalty” (Cottam and Cottam, 2001, 93), that “supersedes their loyalty to other groups” (Van Evera, 1994, 6).<sup>26</sup> Such conceptualizations preclude

25. I return to discussing nationalisms as social identities in chapter 2. Although pinning down a definition for these ubiquitous concepts entails “sweeping a conceptual minefield” (Levy, 1994, 279), see Druckman (1994), Theiss-Morse (2009), Huddy and Khatib (2007), Herrmann and Brewer (2004), and Risse (2010) for thorough discussions of national and European identities as social identities.

26. See also, e.g., Emerson (1960); Citrin et al. (1994).

supranationalisms, because they imply that people cannot identify with groups that encompass multiple national communities. That assertion goes against well-accepted evidence to the contrary: “That individuals hold multiple identities is not controversial” (Risse, 2010, 23). My approach treats nationalisms and supranationalisms as separate, sometimes complementary, objects of identification that share psychological foundations (Herrmann and Brewer, 2004; Risse, 2010).

Second, this conceptualization—based on the degree to which an individual embraces national or supranational superiority—reflects colloquial use. When we refer to nationalists waving flags, donning face paint, or saluting their military (Gruffydd-Jones, 2017; Schatz and Lavine, 2007), we describe people who embrace symbols and actions that connect them to their country. The same applies when European citizens and elites display the EU’s twelve gold stars, describe themselves as “European,” or distinguish European civilization from their North American or Asian counterparts. People place themselves within social categories and declare their allegiance both internally and via outward signals.

This description departs from scholarship that explicitly incorporates nationalisms’ political goals into the definition.<sup>27</sup> For instance, some definitions of nationalism emphasize borders and ideology (Gellner, 1983). Such definitions provide important insights—nationalist demands for political, cultural, and territorial congruence help explain Zionists’ quests for a Jewish homeland, Quebecois secessionist movements, Russia’s twenty-first-century irredentism (Saideman, 2013), and Milosevic’s exploitation of institutional weaknesses to advance claims about Serbian persecution in Kosovo (Snyder and Ballentine, 1996). But privileging political ends understates the cognitive and emotional bonds that most people associate with nationalist passions—the force that permeates daily life and explains why UK citizens cheer for British Olympians or why American support for President Roosevelt soared after the attacks on Pearl Harbor (Berinsky et al., 2011).

Third, and related, my conceptualization separates cause from effect. If we want to explain how nationalism influences foreign policy attitudes, we must excise foreign policy attitudes from our definitions. Existing research often conflates the two. Examining nationalism’s relationship to Iraq war

27. Van Evera (1994, 6) laments that “the academic literature defines nationalism in an annoyingly wide range of ways,” a statement that remains true 25 years after it first appeared in print. See also Hechter (2000) and Hutchinson (1994) on some of the challenges to defining nationalism.

attitudes, for example, Federico, Golec and Dial (2005, 623) define nationalism in terms of the “hostile ‘conflict schema’” it is meant to predict: “nationalism” is a “form of ethnocentrism” that entails “hostility toward other national groups” and the desire for “dominance over other nations” (see also Kosterman and Feshbach, 1989; Osborne, Milojev and Sibley, 2017). Herrmann, Isernia and Segatti (2009) similarly argue that “national chauvinists” necessarily hold an extreme and intolerant ideology that pits “us” against threatening, inferior enemies.<sup>28</sup> Others argue that nationalism describes a population’s desire to restrict foreign influence in internal affairs (Woodwell, 2007, 16). The latter again embeds the dependent variable into the definition—leaving us flummoxed by examples of nationalists who instead embrace foreigners or reject conflict.

Indeed, researchers diminish nationalism’s causal role when they suggest that nationalism and militarism represent co-constitutive attitudes. As Weiss (2019, 680) declares in her research on Chinese hawkishness, “feelings of national identification are not the same as foreign policy beliefs and attitudes.” Measuring nationalism on its own cannot tell us whether the Chinese public supports an aggressive posture in the East China Sea, because some “nationalists may support liberal international policies out of deference to the government.”<sup>29</sup> The same pattern holds for supranationalism, where constructivist scholars make explicitly constitutive claims that transnational identification redefines states’ interests to prioritize the whole—though they focus on countries rather than people (Adler and Barnett, 1998; Wendt, 1999). In that respect, “a state’s interests merge with the collective interests of the community” (Pouliot, 2007, 608). But some supranationalists do not trust each other enough to cede their foreign policy autonomy (Risse, 2004), just as some nationalists display their superiority vis-à-vis outsiders without force.

Fourth, shifting from the political to the psychological allows me to embrace the fruits of interdisciplinary engagement and construct a theory of nationalist identity content from the ground up. Psychologists have

28. See Kinder and Kam (2010) for more on ethnocentrism and political attitudes. Many scholars separate in-group love from out-group hate when they treat national attachment and nationalism as distinct dimensions and claim that only the latter causes conflict (Brewer, 1999; Kosterman and Feshbach, 1989; De Figueiredo and Elkins, 2003; Rathbun, 2015), but even this distinction “is far too simple to capture the many variants of national ideology” (Reicher and Hopkins, 2001).

29. See, e.g., Gries (1999, 2004, 2005); Gries et al. (2011); Gries, Steiger and Wang (2016); Weiss (2014); Johnston (2017) for additional research on Chinese nationalism.

spent decades building on Tajfel and Turner's (1986) social identity theory to explain that people trust, favor, and cooperate with people who share their identity. And people distrust, dismiss, and sometimes degrade outsiders. In short, our conventional stories about supranational cooperation and nationalist competition rely on fundamental insights about how group memberships affect human behavior.

But these theories tell us that identification, on its own, only tells part of the story: Nationalisms and supranationalisms motivate people to conform with their group's norms. To understand when and how group memberships affect in-group trust or out-group aggression, we need to know what it means to be part of a particular group. Who "we" are shapes what "we" do: Some Christian religious groups, for example, prescribe "benevolence toward strangers" (Thomsen, 2010, 5). In that case, a group member might believe that being a good Christian means committing to out-group kindness, not out-group hostility.<sup>30</sup> Importantly, such benevolence stems from the same moral superiority we associate with nationalist calls to dominate via force. "We" Christians are better than "those" secular people precisely *because* "we" are more committed to helping others. Moreover, the same group membership can mean different things to different people—some American nationalists think that Americans must speak English, whereas others do not (Theiss-Morse, 2009).

Conceptualizing nationalisms as social identities allows me to synthesize insights from across disciplinary divides and provides solid psychological micro-foundations for studying nationalisms in international politics—and for filling gaps in the conventional stories. Notably, some scholars might disagree with my characterization of nationalisms as social identities. But decisions to separate "identification" from patriotism, attachment, or national chauvinism often smuggle content into the definitions—describing nationalism as uniquely divisive, for example (Huddy and Del Ponte, 2019). My conceptualization engages the cognitive component of social identification—people assess the degree to which they relate to typical group members (Turner, 1985)—alongside the affective component whereby claiming membership in the national group makes nationalists feel good. Moreover, nationalisms entail the sense of moral superiority common when people compare their own group to other groups (Brewer, 1999, 2001*b*). Whether nationalist superiority manifests in conflictual or

30. See also, for example, Postmes and Spears (1998); Reicher, Spears and Postmes (1995); Ellemers, Spears and Doosje (2002).

cooperative foreign policy attitudes, however, depends on what it means to be a nationalist.

## **THE ARGUMENT: UNITY, EQUALITY, AND FOREIGN POLICY ATTITUDES**

Nationalisms vary.<sup>31</sup> Factors in the environment—like dueling historical narratives and respected elites—combine with dispositional traits to create disagreement between individuals. Some people perceive their country or region as committed to equality, whereas others think that the same group requires unity. Variation in these norms explains whether nationalism increases militarism and support for escalation in foreign policy, and whether supranationalism increases or undermines transnational trust and support for security cooperation.

### **Unity drives nationalist militarism and undermines support for international cooperation**

Unity, solidarity, and consensus constitute unity-oriented nationalism. Unity implies that group members share important characteristics. These qualities might include familial ties, ethnicity, religion, national myths, or other elements that provide glue to bind the “imagined communities” central to standard definitions of nationhood (Anderson, 1983). Unity norms encourage people to help their compatriots.<sup>32</sup> What’s good for the group is good for all of us. And because “we” are all the same—unity assumes homogeneity—an attack on one is an attack on all.

In-group solidarity comes with a cost, though. Unity implies a sharp distinction between “us” and “them.” It creates a binary that encourages suspicion against outsiders, and against insiders whose differences introduce problematic heterogeneity (Fiske, 1992; Fiske and Rai, 2015). German scholars once defined German nationalism by the stark contrast between Germans and Frenchmen, for example (Greenfeld, 1992, 373), but also between the “real” Germans and German Jews whose Western values threatened the group’s unity (*ibid.*, 379). References to nationalist

31. For other frameworks that differentiate nationalisms by content, see, e.g., Barnett (1995); Snyder (2000); Risse (2004); Saideman (2013). See chapter 2 for a discussion about how my theory resolves theoretical and empirical challenges associated with applying the civic/ethnic framework to individual nationalisms and foreign policy attitudes.

32. This observation corresponds to research on national identities and preferential in-group biases. See, e.g., Theiss-Morse (2009); Wong (2010); Mutz and Kim (2017).

unity span time and place—from John Jay’s description of America as “one united people . . . descended from the same ancestors, speaking the same language, professing the same religion, attached to the same principles of government” (Hamilton, Madison and Jay, 2009, 12) to UKIP’s 2015 manifesto demanding that their “amazing” country reject “divisiveness through multiculturalism” and instead integrate to create a more harmonious society (Burst et al., 2020).<sup>33</sup> Others elide explicit references to homogeneity, but nevertheless emphasize that “we” must join together and stifle differences to meet threats—like former Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn’s insistence that UK citizens “stand united . . . united in our determination not to let triumph those who would seek to divide us”<sup>34</sup> and Jean Monnet’s declaration that “without unity,” nationalist power-seeking doomed Europe. The “architect of European Unity” (Whitman, 1979, 1), Monnet contended that supranational unity would foster continental peace: “What we have to do first of all is make people aware that they’re facing the future together” (Jean Monnet qtd. in Fursdon, 1980, 118). Cooperation will follow.

What does this mean for foreign policy? On one hand, unity primes people for militarism. During an external attack or foreign policy crisis, unity norms imply that people should band together and fight, escalating conflicts to eliminate threats: “*we must all join* in the fight to protect *our* nation, indivisible, because it is *our* land” (Fiske and Rai, 2015, 100). When George W. Bush addressed the nation after the September 11 attacks, he crafted a narrative predicated on unity-oriented nationalism. He built a stark contrast between good, “civilized” people and “evildoers” who must be punished (Krebs and Lobasz, 2007; Bostdorff, 2003), and alluded to American exceptionalism as he called for citizens to “remain strong and united” against terrorist threats.<sup>35</sup> Disunity via dissent was un-American (Krebs and Lobasz, 2007), and the public initially rewarded his message with widespread support for the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq (Hutcherson et al., 2004; Foyle, 2004). Unity norms can account for evidence that

33. See UKIP’s 2015 platform in the Comparative Manifestos Project database. Party identifier 51951.

34. Jeremy Corbyn, 2017. “Jeremy Corbyn speech on terrorism and foreign policy: Full text,” *New Statesman*, 26 May. URL: [www.newstatesman.com/politics/staggers/2017/05/jeremy-corbyn-speech-terrorism-and-foreign-policy-full-text](http://www.newstatesman.com/politics/staggers/2017/05/jeremy-corbyn-speech-terrorism-and-foreign-policy-full-text).

35. George W. Bush, 11 September 2001, “Statement by the President in His Address to the Nation.” Transcript available at [georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010911-16.html](http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010911-16.html).

connects nationalism to support for war (Druckman, 1994; De Figueiredo and Elkins, 2003; Herrmann, Isernia and Segatti, 2009).

On the other hand, unity undermines intragroup trust and threatens interstate cooperation when it underlies supranationalism. Unity implies that group members share an obligation to help each other—to look out for their figurative “brothers and sisters.”<sup>36</sup> But in heterogeneous groups, some people inevitably deviate from whichever characteristics purportedly unite people who share that group membership. Just as I might hesitate to trust the family outcast to watch my house,<sup>37</sup> unity leads supranationalists to demur when asked to rely on people with different ideals for their own security. This pattern played out at the European project’s inception. Prominent Western European policymakers began promoting European unity by 1949—on the basis of their shared Western philosophy and Christian values (Fursdon, 1980, 49, 52)—but negotiations for the European Defence Community broke down when French leaders ultimately balked during the final stages (Parsons, 2002). Despite enthusiasm for the project, they viewed security guarantees with suspicion and feared that granting parity to the Germans would backfire. The Germans were unreliable Europeans, after all. Moreover, integrating the French army into a united force would mean losing an institution that made them unique,<sup>38</sup> too high a price to pay (Fursdon, 1980, 200).

The same dynamics that shattered the EDC persist in the twenty-first century. European citizens who proclaim that “Europe is for Europeans” clearly embrace their supranational community. But I nevertheless expect them to reject opportunities to deepen continental security cooperation. If “we” must share kinship ties or religious traditions (Checkel and Katzenstein, 2009; Risse, 2004), then “we” will view non-Christians or citizens from newer EU member-states with suspicion (Waldzus, Mummendey and Wenzel, 2005). In this way, unity creates Euroskeptics—and explains the seemingly puzzling levels of intragroup animosity among some European supranationalists (Mummendey and Waldzus, 2004). Figure 1.1

36. See, e.g., Wong (2010) for more on how Americans define their community boundaries and the conditions under which they feel obligated to support fellow American in-group members.

37. See Rai and Fiske (2011) and Fiske and Rai (2015) for a moral psychology perspective on how protecting a group’s unity can justify violence against deviants.

38. See Mols and Weber (2013) for a discussion about how distinctiveness threats can undermine European cooperation.

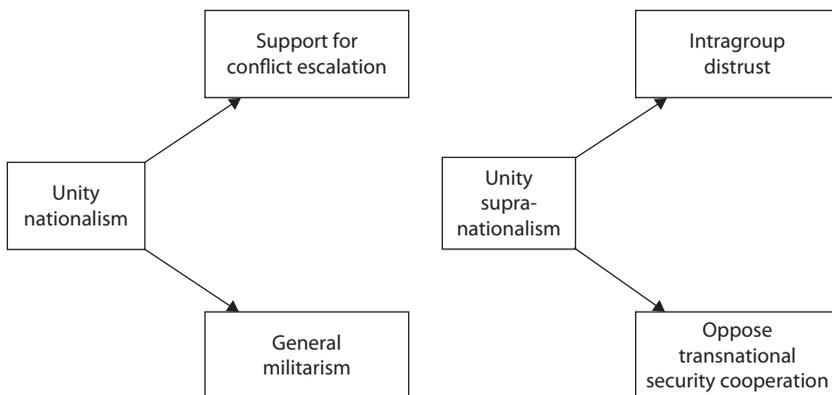


FIGURE 1.1. Unity drives nationalist militarism and undermines support for international cooperation.

summarizes the argument about unity-oriented nationalisms in international politics.

#### **Equality mitigates support for nationalist militarism and promotes support for transnational cooperation**

Equality, balance, and reciprocity create distinct nationalist norms. Common among peers or co-workers, these norms accommodate heterogeneity. When our group demands that “all are created equal,” we will cooperate so long as members maintain a commitment to fairness. Importantly, people can maintain strong commitments to equality even while viewing their national or supranational group as superior to others—“our” commitment to equality is good and virtuous, whereas “their” commitments are bad. Many Canadian nationalists, for example, view themselves as more tolerant, accepting, and committed to global cooperation than their American neighbors to the south (Kymlicka, 2003).<sup>39</sup> Like unity, political leaders make regular references that connect equality to national identities: For example, the early twentieth century National Congress defined Indian nationalism by its commitment to equality and nonviolence (Tudor and Slater, 2020, 6), Justin Trudeau recently proclaimed that being Canadian demands “openness, respect, compassion, a willingness to work hard,”<sup>40</sup>

39. Of course, not all Canadians share these values, and scholars are quick to point out that the government’s formal commitment to diversity sometimes falls short—especially with respect to indigenous communities (Kymlicka, 2004).

40. Justin Trudeau, 2015. “Differences should be a source of strength’: Trudeau at G20,” *CBC*, 15 November. Available at [www.cbc.ca/player/play/2678854482](http://www.cbc.ca/player/play/2678854482).

and Jean-Claude Juncker remarked that Europe is a “cord of many strands” that offers a “fair playing field.” As these examples suggest, nationalisms vary—Juncker’s vision of the EU clashes with Monnet’s. The EU may be “United in Diversity,” but even contemporaries place different emphases on these two ideals (Risse, 2010).

Equality mitigates the militaristic impulse that we typically associate with nationalism. Equality does not create pacifists—committing to reciprocity means that nationalists will respond to violence targeting people in their national group with equivalent force. But relative to unity, equality mutes reflexive hawkishness and escalatory aggression. Rather than condemn all outsiders as evildoers after 9/11 and support war with Iraq, equality might instead encourage nationalists to advocate limited strikes against al Qaeda targets. Such strikes differentiate between responsible parties and everyone else. Equality discourages people from interpreting an attack against one New York target as an attack on all Americans. They respond as if someone attacked coworkers, not family members. Following the 2015 terrorist attack in San Bernardino, Barack Obama relied on equality-laden rhetoric to call for *inaction* during an Oval Office address—to tamp down public enthusiasm for large-scale retaliation (Yglesias, 2015). His speech reinforced his early claims on the campaign trail that American nationalism centers on justice, equality, and diversity (Augoustinos and De Garis, 2012). Noting that the United States was founded on the idea that “you are equal in the eyes of God and equal in the eyes of the law,”<sup>41</sup> he asked American citizens to extend those values outward. Obama’s appeal invited the American public to distinguish perpetrators from ordinary outsiders and to create opportunities for mutual peace (Prokop, 2015). Seen in this light, the relatively dovish “creedal” American nationalists from Bonikowski and DiMaggio’s (2016) analysis no longer seem puzzling—committed to internal equality, they seek reciprocity in foreign policy rather than militaristic dominance.

Moreover, equality creates the conditions for supporting supranational cooperation. Because it accommodates heterogeneity—people must share a commitment to fairness but differences do not threaten the group—equality facilitates trust. Reciprocity can turn enemies like France and

41. Obama, Barack. 2015. “President Obama’s address to the nation on the San Bernardino terror attack and the war on ISIS,” 6 December. Transcript available from [www.cnn.com/2015/12/06/politics/transcript-obama-san-bernardino-isis-address/index.html](http://www.cnn.com/2015/12/06/politics/transcript-obama-san-bernardino-isis-address/index.html).

Germany into friends:<sup>42</sup> One state extends a hand, and the two sides build trust over time in tandem with supranationalism. Canada again serves as an instructive analog, insofar as the Canadian state comprises many separate nations—English-speaking Canadians, French-speaking Quebecois, and numerous indigenous communities.<sup>43</sup> Though few Quebecers support political independence—a 2016 poll found that 82% of Quebecers support remaining in Canada<sup>44</sup>—they have long resisted unity within a pan-Canadian identity (Kymlicka, 2003, 373). Many nevertheless retain strong trust in and support for Canadian institutions—in part because they believe that Canadian law treats them fairly (*ibid.*). And if European supranationalism does not depend on ascriptive characteristics, like adapting to certain religious or cultural standards or giving up a native tongue, concerns about heterogeneity decline. Equality in turn encourages citizens to pool resources and form a European army or diplomatic corps. This strand of supranationalism likely explains why the standard story about international cooperation persists. The popular visions of an EU predicated on equality and democratic governance explain why we find robust correlations between European identification and support for security cooperation (Citrin and Sides, 2004; Schoen, 2008)—many citizens, though not all, likely have equality on the mind when they report their identification with Europe. Figure 1.2 summarizes my argument about equality, nationalism, and foreign policy attitudes.

Individual citizens perceive unity or equality as nationalist norms. Content represents an interaction between the individual and the group—not a dispositional trait—and two French citizens might ascribe different criteria to being French just as a single individual might ascribe different criteria to being French versus European. One American might view their country as a united family, whereas another thinks that being American means committing to equality. In other words, norms are properties of the group, but different people can view the same group as adhering to different norms. This characteristic animates debates within countries and continents, creating theoretically important variation among people who share nominal nationalisms.

42. See, e.g., Kupchan (2010) on reciprocity and *rapprochement*.

43. See McRoberts (1997) for a comprehensive discussion of Canadian federalism.

44. CBC News, 2016. “Majority of Quebecers believe question of independence is settled: Poll,” 3 October. URL: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/quebec-angus-reid-canada-independence-1.3788110>.



Of course, focusing on Europe also risks elevating IR's Western dominance (Acharya, 2016*a*; Kang and Lin, 2019). More importantly, the field's overwhelming dependence on European supranationalism constitutes part of the puzzle itself. If our search for supranationalism and cooperation treats Europe as a benchmark (Acharya, 2014),<sup>45</sup> we might over-learn from this salient case or miss important patterns elsewhere in the international system.<sup>46</sup> For example, Barnett (1995) chronicles how Arab leaders like Jordan's King Hussein redefined Arab nationalism to require sovereign equality, not pan-Arab unification. These supranational norms, in turn, promoted regional order. And perhaps we underestimate the degree to which the Southeast Asia identity-building project contributes to support for cooperation and relative peace within the region (Kivimäki, 2010)—either because the “ASEAN Way” lacks the EU's legalism (Acharya, 2009), because we assume that ASEAN's heterogeneity and commitment to sovereign equality impedes supranational identification (Moorthy and Benny, 2013, 1044–45), or simply because surveys about ASEAN identity have only recently entered the field (Lee and Lim, 2020, 807; Moorthy and Benny, 2012, 2013). Questioning the nature of the relationship between supranationalisms and support for cooperation in Europe helps determine what we get right about supranationalisms—and what we get wrong—thereby setting the stage for rigorous comparative analyses in the future.

## Plan of the Book

Why are some nationalists more belligerent than others? Moreover, why do some supranationalists—but not all—support transnational security cooperation? The remainder of this book combines theory, experiments, and survey analyses to answer these questions within a unified framework for research on nationalisms in international politics.

In chapter 2, I explain three things about nationalisms in international politics: (1) Nationalisms and supranationalisms represent different

45. See also Acharya (2016*b*) on the “EU-centrism” in research on regional institutions, and Börzel and Risse (2020, 32) on evidence that “Europe and the EU are not so special after all”—62% of South American survey respondents felt close to their continent in 2003, for example (Roose, 2013, 287).

46. See Johnston (2012) for a discussion about how decisions to include or exclude East Asian cases have implications for IR theories, and Kang (2003) for a seminal argument about how IR scholars “[get] Asia wrong” to our detriment.

levels of categorization but share psychological foundations, and taking those foundations seriously requires accounting for content; (2) Unity and equality constitute two separate foundations for varieties of nationalisms; (3) Unity and equality have competing implications for attitudes about conflict and cooperation in international politics. After laying my theoretical groundwork, I review how history, institutions, rhetoric, and dispositions produce contestation between individuals about nationalist norms—thereby justifying my assumption that nationalisms vary within countries and transnational regions. I close the chapter by situating my framework vis-à-vis the civic/ethnic dichotomy that other scholars use to differentiate nationalisms in international politics.

In the next three chapters, I use a multi-method approach to test my *intergroup conflict* and *intragroup cooperation* hypotheses and triangulate evidence for my theoretical propositions. Experiments remain the gold standard for testing causality, but debates about nationalisms primarily rely on observational data. Accordingly, I use original survey experiments to investigate how unity and equality influence nationalist militarism in chapters 3 and 4. The experiment in chapter 3 manipulates the content of a fictional national identity—“Fredonia”—and measures responses to an escalating territorial conflict vignette. Building a fictional nationalism from scratch allows me to manipulate a country’s norms while mitigating concerns that people will bring their pre-existing nationalist commitments to bear on the foreign policy crisis. Participants received instructions to imagine themselves as typical citizens of Fredonia, and read and wrote about how unity or equality prevail among the fictional Fredonians. The survey then asked them to report on Fredonia’s national superiority—using the same scales for nationalism that scholars often equate with militarism—before eliciting responses to the foreign policy crisis. In the unity treatment, I find a positive relationship between nationalism and conflict escalation in the crisis and between nationalism and general militarism. Equality changes the story: Strong equality nationalists exhibit less hawkish attitudes compared to their counterparts in the unity group.

Chapter 3 introduces some evidence that content changes the relationship between nationalism and militarism and provides an important first test for my theory—but chapter 4 presents a second experiment that extends the results in two ways. First, I manipulate the content of American nationalisms to test the theory in a real-world context. Participants read fictional excerpts from an American history textbook, which described either unity or equality as foundations for American national identity.

A related writing task followed this excerpt. Like the Fredonia experiment, these treatments targeted content—what it means to be an American nationalist—using language and concepts that directly correspond to my theoretical framework. Second, I test the implications of unity and equality for general foreign policy militarism alongside concrete policy problems, like how the United States should respond to China and ISIS. In a national sample of Americans, I find evidence that both supports and extends my theory. Unity nationalism increases militant internationalism and hawkish China postures relative to equality, but both unity and equality drive nationalist support for conflict when an adversary has committed direct aggression against the United States or its allies.

In chapter 5, I shift from nationalisms to supranationalisms to test my intragroup cooperation hypothesis in Europe. I analyze data from surveys in 16 EU member-states, collected as part of the IntUne project on European identity (Cotta, Isernia and Bellucci, 2009), alongside Eurobarometer data from the complement of EU members (European Commission, 2018, 2020). These large-scale surveys bring important advantages in external validity: I test my hypothesis with data that spans multiple years (2007, 2009, 2014, and 2019), countries, and populations (public and elite). I first use a battery of items that tap what it means to be European to proxy equality and unity, and test the relationship between these supranationalisms and three attitudinal outcomes: intra-European trust, support for a single EU foreign policy, and support for military integration via a European army. These analyses account for alternative explanations by controlling for European identification, national attachment, generalized trust, political ideology, and other important traits like university education. If the conventional story suffices to explain attitudes about cooperation, the content-free measures for national and European identification should supplant any effects of unity or equality. Instead, the results provide clear and consistent evidence to support my expectation that equality promotes intra-European trust and support for EU security cooperation. Indeed, equality's effect on support for a single EU foreign policy is nearly five times the size of the effect associated with the one-dimensional measure for European identification in the IntUne mass public data. By contrast, unity decreases trust and drives opposition to foreign policy and military integration. Supplementing these analyses, I next show that my theory extends to attitudes about economic cooperation. Finally, I use data from the 2014 and 2019 Eurobarometer surveys—which include representative samples from all 28 member-states—to show that my core findings remain robust at different

*(continued...)*

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