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ARTICLE

National identity and democracy: Effects of non-voluntarism on formal democracy

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Abstract

In this article, I explore whether, and if so how, national identity affects the level of formal democracy in a country. I theorize and then investigate four assumptions: (i) classical nationalist stances hold that national membership depends on the accident of origin and cultural markers learned by early socialization. This non-voluntary identity gives human beings a natural sense of belonging in society and fosters solidarity and trust that lead to better democracy; (ii) drawing on ideas about core values of ideal democracy the non-voluntarist national identity exhibits an inherent contradiction between in-group bias and intrinsic equality, which leads to lower levels of democracy; (iii) homogeneity in belief about what constitutes national belonging eases the dynamics between majority and minority, which benefits democracy; (iv) the presence of an in-group identity, understood as a shared fellow-feeling, boosts trust and solidarity and thereby benefits democracy. Individual-level data about national identity comes from International Social Survey Programme (ISSP, 2013). Data about democracy comes from Varieties of Democracy (Coppedge et al., 2021; Pemstein et al., 2021). Results indicate that higher levels of non-voluntarist features of national identity are strongly negatively correlated with levels of democracy and

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heterogeneity in beliefs about what constitutes national belonging relating to a higher level of liberal democracy.

KEYWORDS

democracy, democratization, ISSP, national identity, nationalism, nationhood/national identity, sociology of nationalism, theories of nationalism, V-Dem

1 | INTRODUCTION

For a long period of time, political philosophy has recognized national identity as a precondition for a democratic state. A common national identity helps to bind people together despite their conflicting beliefs and interests (e.g. Calhoun, 2007; Rousseau, 1973; Rustow, 1970). Although many studies have tried to explain the emergence and correlates of democracy, the relationship between national identity and democracy has not received much attention in empirical studies. In this article, I explore whether, and if so, national identity relates to the level of formal democracy in a country. More specifically, I will examine how normative conceptions of national identity and the degree to which it is shared correlate with democracy.

National identity generally falls into four categories in empirical studies: national attachment, national pride, patriotism and normative national identity (Miller & Ali, 2014, pp. 2–3). This study is limited to national attachment and normative national identity. The normative conceptions have been labelled using different distinctions: civic versus ethnic (Kohn, 1944), primordialism versus instrumentalism (Bačová, 1998), ascriptive/objectivist versus civic/voluntarist (Jones & Smith, 2001), inclusive versus exclusive (Tudor, 2018), etc. What these distinctions have in common is that they raise the question of whether an individual's membership in a nation should be regarded as voluntary or non-voluntary (for an overview, see Miscevic, 2020). According to the non-voluntarist identity, membership depends on the accident of origin and cultural markers learned by early socialization. Voluntarist national identity emphasizes membership as optional, based on respecting laws and granting and annulling of citizenship based on individual volition.

As different forms of national identity generate different political outcomes (e.g. Berg & Hjerm, 2010), it is certainly possible that some national identities, by virtue of their content, will be more advantageous to democracy than others. Voluntarist national identity honours the procedures of civic society and assumes that fellow citizens do likewise, which generates a cohesive effect in society. This cohesive property is more or less implicated in the concept of democracy and is thus necessary to achieve higher levels of democracy (Easton, 1965; Habermas, 1992; Verba, 1965). To be sure, in the sense that democracy refers to self-government and that voluntarist national identity implies the choice to respect institutions and laws, the voluntarist national identity and democracy's coexistence are self-regulating, because self-government requires that members of the nation possess rational voluntarist attachment to self-governed equal laws.

The impact of non-voluntary features on democracy is a more open question and therefore interesting to explore empirically. The correlation between non-voluntarism and democracy can be positive or negative. A positive relationship can be expected as the non-voluntarist identity gives human beings a natural sense of belonging in society and fosters solidarity and trust, which leads to better democracy (Barrington, 1997). The negative outlook reflects the inconsistency between the core values of democracy and non-voluntarism. The non-voluntarist criteria of membership include and exclude by implying an inevitable discrimination between insiders and outsiders, which is irreconcilable with the principle of intrinsic equality in multi-ethnic states (e.g. Blitz & Sawyer, 2011).

Regardless of its normative content, the scope of a national identity, in terms of the extent to which it is shared, may also impact the degree of democracy in a society. Based on this capacity, I relied on two theoretical strands.

First, the degree of consensus regarding what constitutes national belonging is assumed to affect democracy. As the argument goes, the dynamic between majority and minority eases if the disagreement about *who the people are* is not too disparate (Rousseau, 1973). On this account, the way inhabitants recognize themselves as people is not primarily about the importance or unimportance of non-voluntarism. The essential is to what extent these preferences are shared and thereby create the capacity to foster a common conception of *who the people are*. Second, the national attachment account relies on the presence of a common sense of identification. If citizens identify closely with the nation, they will tend to trust their co-nationals. This aspect of national identity is expected to promote democracy (Mill, 2001, ch. 16).

As we have conflicting arguments about how non-voluntarism relates to democracy, and there is no empirical evidence for the necessity of consensus regarding what constitutes national belonging and general attachment to the nation, it is of vital importance to investigate how these aspects of national identity relate to democracy. By taking a more detailed approach to the question of how national identity and democracy are related, I advance the current research field by theorizing and then investigating how and why specific features of national identity and the degree of communality relate to the level to which democracy is established in a country. The findings will also help us to make benign considerations of timely and important questions about national identity. For instance, conflicts rooted in questions of morality and values, associated with the expansion of culture war politics (Hunter, 1992), speak to the normative content of national identity. The results help us evaluate the contents of different forms of national identity.

More concretely, I first rely on data from the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP, 2013) to reveal aggregated levels of different kinds of national identities and the degree of consensus regarding what constitutes national belonging in 32 countries. To measure the relationship between national identity and formal democracy, I draw on data from the Varieties of Democracy (Coppedge et al., 2021; Pemstein et al., 2021) of democracy in these countries on these aggregates. Whereas ISSP is a cross-national collaboration programme conducting annual surveys on diverse topics relating to social sciences, V-Dem is a Sweden-based independent institute that provides a new approach to conceptualizing and measuring democracy.

2 | NATIONAL IDENTITY

A person has a national identity if the person thinks of herself, that is, classifies herself, as belonging to a particular kind of people who are separated from others by virtue of their belonging to a particular nation. Individuals' sense of classification generally involves emotional attachment towards the nation and a wide range of attitudes, including normative conceptions of national memberships. National pride concerns the country's achievements in realms such as sports, the arts, the sciences, reverence for the flag and standing for the anthem. National chauvinism, or uncritical patriotism, refers to an extreme form of patriotism, beliefs of the 'national superiority and dominance' of one's own nation, which is seen as strong and more virtuous than other nations (Miller & Ali, 2014). Normative conceptions generally draw on the ethnic versus civic distinction (Kohn, 1944; for empirical findings, see, e.g. Hjerm, 2000, Janmaat, 2006, Jones & Smith, 2001, Larsen, 2017; for a critique, see Seymour, 2000; Shulman, 2002; Smith, 1983).

As the way of thinking of the nation varies within countries, national identity is not a group of people. In reality, the expression 'common national identity' never has a precise equivalent. Many referents are more or less metaphorically expanded and tricky to capture empirically. A good example is Herders' concept of the spirit of common people (Volkgeist). A somewhat later variant, mainly French in origin, refers to a 'collective mentality' to which specific and important causal powers are ascribed. Some scholars use 'common national identity' as equivalent to the nation. In this regard, a common cultural identity refers to the absence or presence of specific cultural traits or the degree of ethno-national fractalization (e.g. Barrington, 1997; Dahl, 1989, p. 255; Hobsbawm, 1992; Smith, 1991; Mill, 2001, pp. 143, 289 and 296). Demography as a referent makes it superfluous to measure and operationalize national identity in terms of emotional closeness, pride, patriotism and normative conceptualizations. In this article,

the interpretations of 'common national identity' rely on factual (non-metaphorical expanded) aggregates of individual preferences. The national attachment account is straightforward. The more self-classified individuals who feel close to the nation, the stronger is their common national identity.

My use of normative conceptions of national membership captures both the content of national identity and the extent to which the content is shared. Instead of employing the civic versus ethnic distinction, I use three dimensions (cf. Pehrson et al., 2009, pp. 29–30): non-voluntary features, cultural requirements as language and religion and voluntary elements. The distinction between non-voluntarism and voluntarism is non-arbitrary. The requirement of being born in the country of one's ancestors is non-voluntary in all contexts. Independent of the national country context, voluntarist properties such as respecting laws and the granting and annulling of citizenship are based on individual volition. This distinction is thus applicable in all countries.

Requirements on cultural markers in order to be true members of a nation need further clarification, as these fall between non-voluntarism and voluntarism. New language learning and conversion are negotiable and something that people can choose to do. However, these possibilities do not annul the non-voluntary nature of language and religious categorization. In both cases, language and religion denote requirements on cultural affiliation; improvement in language skills and appropriate adjustments to religious beliefs affect opportunities to be classified as true members of a nation. In general, cultural markers such as native language and the imposition of religious categories are closer to non-voluntarism (through early socialization) than to voluntarism, historically, partly as a result of the theories of race, language, religion and descent becoming closely associated with the concept of nation (Hobsbawm, 1990). The traditionalist views generally consider voluntarist notions of the nation as too thin and add non-voluntary features and religion to the national identity (e.g. Scruton, 2002).

Now let us consider the extent to which the content of national identity is shared. Consensus regarding what constitutes national belonging means complete homogeneity of national identity, a common national identity. Consequently, disagreement regarding what constitutes national belonging denotes heterogeneity. In this regard, consensual countries have a common national identity, meaning that the degree of consensus regarding what constitutes national belonging is high. Heterogeneous countries exhibit disagreement regarding what constitutes national belonging. In other words, the common national identity can emphasize, or de-emphasize, the importance of phenotypical characteristics and cultural markers learned through early socialization in order to be a true member of a nation.

To sum up, I use three predicators: aggregated scores of national attachments, aggregated preferences of non-voluntarism and requirements on cultural markers and the degree of consensus regarding what constitutes national belonging.

3 | THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NATIONAL IDENTITY AND DEMOCRACY

The positive relationship between national identity and democracy assumes a mechanism that relies on perceived similarity, which fosters social cohesion. The negative approach proposes an inherent contradiction between non-voluntarism and intrinsic equality and a mechanism outlined as stratified collectivism. These viewpoints are discussed in more detail in the following sections.

3.1 | The relationship between non-voluntarism and democracy

In accordance with classical nationalist stances, phenotypical characteristics inherited by ancestors, and cultural affiliation through native language and religion, provide perceived similarity, which gives human beings a natural sense of belonging in society. Perceived similarity fosters solidarity and trust (e.g. Hastings, 1997; Smith, 1991, 2008). This

way of thinking about the nation leads to increased closure of perceived boundaries united with deeper loyalty and cohesion (cf. Bartolini, 2007; see also Margalit, 1997). Strong social cohesion makes it rational to conceptualize the nation in non-voluntary features and to cooperate with like-minded individuals, because non-voluntary criteria of membership benefit the in-group. Identification with non-voluntary attributes such as race and religious practice learned by early socialization can easily pass down to new generations, which ensures long-term stability of the nation (Van den Berghe, 2001).

When linking these mechanisms to democracy, intuitively, national membership depending on the accident of origin and cultural markers does not violate fair procedures and political participation. Rather, strong cohesion and well-functioning cooperation are important features of procedural democracy. The tendency of non-voluntarist identity towards long-term stability, in turn, strengthens the democratic condition. The practice of fair procedures consolidates and secures the governing positions of majorities as defined in non-voluntary features. The dominant position renders restrictions and exclusions against the minorities both needless and unjustified, as the emphasis on the importance of non-voluntarism implies the right of non-dominant minorities to preserve themselves as distinct entities (Smootha, 2002). Taken together, the assumed mechanisms indicate that non-voluntary identity can produce democracy even in multi-ethnic societies and support the following hypotheses:

H1. Non-voluntarism and religion requirements have a positive relationship to democracy.

Individuals' valuation of common language is important to political participation and deliberation and thus has the capacity to strengthen institutional democracy. The hypothesis based on language requirements is stated as follows:

H2. Language requirement has a positive relationship to democracy.

The negative relationship concerns the inconsistency between non-voluntarism and the core values of democracy. The assumed mechanism highlights two essential properties. The first is non-voluntary social stratification; the second is collectivism. If we imagine a world with distinctly bounded non-diversified nation states, where each person is a full member in a nation, social stratification based on non-voluntary features would be less problematic. When we consider actual consideration, the core values of democracy and non-voluntarist national identity appear to be more problematic. The moral properties that must be present for democracy to exist have been outlined as intrinsic equality: 'We ought to regard the good of every human being as intrinsically equal to that of any other' (Dahl, 1989, pp. 9–10), which means that one person's life, liberty and happiness are not intrinsically superior or inferior to the that of any other. This 'constitution of equality' (Christiano, 2008) implies that no person is naturally superior to another and any relation of authority between them stands in need of justification (see also Estlund, 2008, ch. 3).

If national identity is supposed to be a precondition to institutional democracy, this national identity must provide the normative elements that coincide with the core values of democracy. Non-voluntary membership, with its inevitable discrimination between insiders and outsiders, is incompatible with intrinsic equality. The inconsistency comes to the fore as citizens of one nation frequently move to other nations and contemporary nation states generally accommodate multiple ethno-national groups. As non-voluntarist identity does not recognize intrinsic equality, non-voluntary national identities cannot bring about formal equality, that is, equal treatment of every citizen (Dahl, 1989, pp. 64–68; for a Kantian approach, see Kedourie, 1994, pp. 14–15; Smith, 1983, pp. 31–35). Social stratification based on non-voluntarist criteria and requirements for belonging to a religious category violates the principles of intrinsic equality and respect for diversity to which democracies should be committed (Blitz & Sawyer, 2011; Tudor, 2018, pp. 120–126).

This assumed negative impact on democracy of non-voluntarism relates also to collectivism. When we take the cumulative nature of national identity into account, non-voluntarism, by extension, turns religion, language and voluntarist criteria of membership into racial non-voluntary characteristics. By doing this, the non-voluntary

identity divests the individual of what constitutes individuality by dissolving individual agency and making it favourable to think of people as a non-voluntarist mass: a nation as an indivisible entity. The need for freedom is thus limited though the individual is not perceived as a free agent. Agency is then ascribed to the nation, diminishing the importance of individual freedom of expression, alternative sources of information and universal suffrage (cf. Aristotle, n.d., *Politics* Book II, section 1261a; Greenfeld & Eastwood, 2005, p. 259). Consequently, conceptualizing the nation in non-voluntarist features decreases the need for institutionalized protection of individual and minority rights, for constitutionally protected civil liberties and for the independence of the judiciary.

Hence, non-voluntarism violates the principles of individual freedom and intrinsic equality. The greater emphasis on non-voluntary social stratification and collectivism suggests that non-voluntary national identities are related to lower levels of formal democracy. Regarding religion, however, the importance of belonging to a religious category through early socialization can either benefit democracy or work against it. If the traditional perspective is the right one, democracy can be enhanced. However, it works against intrinsic equality and thus undermines core democratic values. Therefore, I posit the following:

H3. Non-voluntarism and religion requirement have a negative relationship to democracy.

3.2 | A common national identity and democracy

Another possible causal contributor explaining levels of formal democracy concerns the degree to which national identity is shared. As noted at the outset, this paper focuses on two aspects of the term 'common national identity', that is, a common conceptualization of *who the people are* and national attachment.

Regarding the former, empirical research linking attitudinal homogeneity to democracy has focused on homogeneity using estimates of the variance of survey items as aggregate at the state or the country level (e.g. Bishin et al., 2006) and the number of political parties (Anckar, 2002) and in regard to the size of governing units (Ott, 2000; see also Dahl & Tuftte, 2002). The relationship between the homogeneity of beliefs about what constitutes national belonging and democracy has not been considered in previous research. Why should this aspect of national identity correlate with the level of democracy? Democracy is a system of government in which political sovereignty is retained by the people, exercised by the people directly or through their representatives. Therefore, an agreement on *who the people are* will benefit democracy. The mechanism at work is assumed to be an exchange with others for mutual benefits granted by one individual or community to another. More specifically, in a democracy, the minority must accept the decisions of the majority; at the same time, the majority must take the viewpoints of the minority into account when taking decisions. Consensus regarding perceived national group boundaries magnifies the capacity to surmount conflicting beliefs and interests (class, geographical dispersal, local traditions, etc.). For this to happen, citizens must agree on who is to be subject to democratic decisions and thereby be willing to support equal opportunity legislation (cf. de Tocqueville, 2010 [1835]; ch. 5–6). The majority's empathy for the minority, which informs the vote, only functions if there is general agreement on the group's bounded membership (Nodia, 2017, pp. 14–17; Rousseau, 1973).

Accordingly, a common conceptualization of *who the people are*, the level of disagreement on how inhabitants recognize themselves as people, is not primarily about the importance/unimportance of non-voluntarism. The essential aspect is to the extent to which preferences are shared. If this is correct, consensus regarding what constitutes national belonging, through an overriding reciprocity, eases the dynamics between majority and minority and thereby relates to higher levels of formal democracy. Thus, I expect the following:

H4. Consensus regarding what constitutes national belonging, in respect to language, religion and non-voluntarism respectively, has a positive relationship to democracy.

Now, let us have a look at the national attachment aspect. Following J. S. Mill's idea about the importance of a sense of a common national identity, some contemporary researchers rely on a social identity approach to national attachment when they investigate the significance of national identity. From this perspective, a shared national identity denotes the extent to which individuals consider themselves as emotionally close to the nation and co-nationals. A certain threshold of aggregate scores of these cognitions is expected to facilitate trust and solidarity (Miller, 1995, pp. 92–94; Miller & Ali, 2014, p. 18; for the social psychology approach, see, e.g. Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner & Giles, 1981).

The benefits of trust and solidarity to democracy are captured by the 'national identity-argument' (Miller, 2006, p. 328). The common national identity serves as a 'glue' that holds modern, culturally diversified societies together, with the capacity of taking precedence over available alternative foci of affiliation such as kinship, religion, economic interest, race or language and fostering social cohesion, solidarity and cooperation. Thus, higher aggregated scores of national attachments play a twofold role. First, they generate sympathy with co-nationals and interpersonal trust, enabling individuals to act on their sympathy (Miller, 2006, p. 328, *ibid.*). Second, acting on the acknowledgement of a common national identity increases confidence that others will reciprocate one's own cooperative behaviour (Miller, 1995, p. 92; see also Slater, 2009). The empirical findings so far have been far from conclusive (for an overview, see Miller & Ali, 2014). Hence, if this is right, the presence of an in-group identity, understood as a shared fellow-feeling, boosts trust and solidarity and thereby produces democracy. The national attachment account supports the following hypothesis:

H5. Higher levels of national attachment are positively correlated with the level of formal democracy.

In comparison with classical nationalist stances and a common conceptualization of *who the people are*, the differences of this account are not primarily about assumed mechanisms and their outcomes. However, there were two notable differences. First, the national attachment approach operationalizes self-classification and articulation of positive emotions, whereas the non-voluntarist approach specifies the content of national identity. Second, a certain threshold of national attachments suggests curvilinear effects, whereas the latter two propose linear relationships.

In his book *Liberal Purposes*, William Galston (1991) argues that liberal citizenship cannot focus only on the justice or fairness of the political principles that are embodied in the state, but must also develop an emotional pride and identification with fellow citizens and with the particular institutions of the society. Because liberalism is operationalized everywhere within particular states, what is also required is a positive attitude of affection for the co-members of the state and the political institutions and practices of one's particular community hypotheses. The first hypothesis draws on non-voluntarism, which holds that national membership depends on the accident of origin and cultural markers learned by early socialization. The classical nationalist idea that the non-voluntary identity gives human beings a natural sense of belonging in society, and fosters solidarity, which support the following expectation.

4 | DATA AND MEASUREMENTS

4.1 | Measuring national identity

For information on individual-level characteristics, I use data from the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP, 2013). Most cross-national empirical analyses of national identity have used the ISSP module for nationalism. This is for good reason as it is the most comprehensive dataset on perceptions of different aspects of national identity. The module was fielded in 23 nation states in 1995, 33 in 2003 and 33 in 2013. In each nation state, a representative sample of adults (18 years old and above) was asked a common set of standard survey items.

'Ancestry' and 'born in' necessarily define non-voluntarist membership. I estimate the effects of two cultural markers: language and religion. 'Citizenship', 'feel', 'lived in' and 'laws' all denote voluntarist membership, which

means that these items are achievable or manipulable through acts of will. Table 1 reports the number of respondents and how questions about national identity were answered.

In general, religion requirements are unimportant, and the other criteria of national membership are considered to be important. In Table 2, I aggregate these data at the country level.

I include voluntarism to show that the distribution indicates that the restrictiveness of national identity is cumulative, meaning that increased restrictiveness results in higher scores on voluntarist items, cultural markers and non-voluntarist items. Thus, differences between countries are not a question of emphasis on voluntarist or non-voluntary items. On the whole, Table 3 shows that dissimilarity appears in the lack of accentuation of religion and non-voluntarism. Aggregated national identity at the country level linked to classical nationalist stances thus means that the levels of all four aspects are high.

4.2 | Measuring homogeneity in belief about what constitutes national belonging

The degree of consensus regarding what constitutes national belonging is measured for all three aspects: language, religion and non-voluntarism. The relative standard deviation (RSD) was calculated for all the three current items to capture preference homogeneity. For each aspect, in each country, the RSD shows the extent of variability in relation to the mean of the population. A low RSD signifies a high degree of consensus regarding what constitutes national belonging or a common national identity.

The differences between countries are large regarding language (min = .19, max = .80) and non-voluntarism (min = .16, max = .87) and huge with respect to religion (min = .32, max = 1.74). Within countries, in general, the degree of consensus regarding religion and non-voluntarism is lower than the degree of consensus regarding language.

TABLE 1 National identity measures: Ns and frequencies for all participating countries

Criteria of national membership					
Some people say that the following things are important to be a truly [Nationality]? Others say they are not important. How important do you think each of the following is	N	Not important at all	Not very important	Fairly important	Very important
Non-voluntarism					
To have [Country Nationality] ancestry?	41,336	13.5	23.1	25.5	29.1
You have been born in [Country]	41,676	8.3	19.0	28.5	36.2
Cultural markers					
To be a [Religion]?	40,918	32.0	22.5	15.9	19.9
To be able to speak [Country language]	41,814	3.4	7.9	26.5	54.4
Voluntarism					
To respect political institutions and laws?	41,411	3.3	8.6	32.4	47.1
Lived in [C.] for most of one's life?	41,561	4.9	18.2	33.2	35.4
To have [C. N.] citizenship?	41,758	3.3	10.1	30.7	48.0
To feel [C. N.]	41,536	3.0	8.5	30.4	49.8

Notes: 'No answer', 'cannot choose' and 'NAV;ZA: answer categories differ from ISSP standard' (South Africa) are reported as missing. The three dimensions are standardized on a 0–1 scale, where the deserving response is at the higher end of the scale.

Source: ISSP (2013).

TABLE 2 Normalized aggregate scores of different features of national identity by country

	<u>Voluntarism</u>	<u>Language</u>	<u>Religion</u>	<u>Non-vol</u>		<u>Voluntarism</u>	<u>Language</u>	<u>Religion</u>	<u>Non-vol</u>
BE	.76	.80	.22	.56	LV	.75	.80	.30	.60
HR	.68	.76	.56	.61	LT	.71	.81	.55	.67
CZ	.78	.90	.33	.71	MX	.76	.75	.57	.74
DK	.76	.86	.30	.54	NO	.80	.91	.26	.55
EE	.74	.83	.21	.51	PH	.89	.92	.84	.92
FI	.72	.76	.25	.52	PT	.76	.82	.37	.66
FR	.82	.90	.21	.54	RU	.80	.81	.69	.77
GE	.82	.90	.79	.76	SK	.76	.86	.52	.73
DE	.72	.88	.30	.51	SL	.69	.82	.26	.52
HU	.78	.88	.48	.74	ES	.72	.82	.34	.65
IS	.76	.85	.31	.56	SE	.72	.85	.15	.36
IN	.80	.60	.61	.82	CH	.74	.89	.35	.50
IE	.72	.40	.35	.70	TW	.77	.67	.29	.54
IL	.75	.75	.59	.49	TR	.79	.81	.84	.79
JP	.72	.70	.31	.65	UK	.78	.91	.35	.65
KR	.76	.79	.48	.72	US	.81	.88	.49	.56

Note: The table includes the means standardized on a 0–1 scale.

Abbreviations: BE, Belgium; CG, Switzerland; CZ, Czech Republic; DE, Germany; DK, Denmark; EE, Estonia; ES, Spain; FI, Finland; FR, France; GE, Georgia; HR, Croatia; HU, Hungary; IE, Ireland; IL, Israel; IN, India; IS, Iceland; JP, Japan; KR, South Korea; LT, Lithuania; LV, Latvia; MX, Mexico; NO, Norway; PH, Philippines; PT, Portugal; RU, Russia; SE, Sweden; SI, Slovenia; SK, Slovakia; TR, Turkey; TW, Taiwan; UK, United Kingdom; US, United States.

Source: ISSP (2013).

4.3 | Measuring national attachment

In choosing the indicators to measure national attachment, I use one item that captures the extent to which citizens feel close to the country (cf. Huddy & Khatib, 2007). Table 4 reports the number of respondents and how the questions about national attachment were answered.

In general, individual citizens tend to feel close to their own countries. As shown in Table 5, the aggregated scores of national attachment are high in most countries.

4.4 | Measuring democracy

When I measure the relationship between different features of national identity and democracy, I use different constituents of democracy as a dependent variable. The reason for this is threefold. First, democracy means different things to different people and refers to many different theoretical strands: folk democratic theories (Achen & Bartels, 2016); fair procedures as an overriding value (Schumpeter, 1942); the protection of minorities where normative implications precede majority rule (Rawls, 1972, pp. 356–359); democracy as a way to track the truth (epistemic democracy, e.g. Estlund, 2008); and deliberative democracy (Habermas, 1986). Second, the levels and features of democracy vary across countries. Third, the empirical tests are executed using macro–macro analyses, which have limitations in terms of statistical power. Reporting the correlation to each constituent is a robustness check.

TABLE 3 Homogeneity measures, overall RSD by country

	Language	Religion	Non-vol		Language	Religion	Non-vol
Belgium	.33	1.38	.55	Latvia	.31	1.03	.46
Croatia	.36	.69	.48	Lithuania	.35	.55	.32
Czech Republic	.22	1.06	.36	Mexico	.26	.67	.34
Denmark	.24	1.08	.57	Norway	.37	1.20	.58
Estonia	.29	1.36	.56	Philippines	.19	.36	.16
Finland	.36	1.30	.60	Portugal	.20	.90	.36
France	.21	1.55	.61	Russia	.24	.47	.30
Georgia	.25	.45	.35	Slovakia	.31	.68	.32
Germany	.23	1.07	.56	Slovenia	.24	1.28	.57
Hungary	.23	.74	.31	Spain	.31	1.07	.47
Iceland	.26	1.13	.52	Sweden	.29	1.74	.87
India	.63	.63	.24	Switzerland	.26	1.02	.61
Ireland	.80	1.06	.39	Taiwan	.43	1.00	.50
Israel	.43	.68	.62	Turkey	.34	.32	.33
Japan	.42	.97	.43	UK	.20	1.05	.45
South Korea	.31	.65	.34	US	.25	.85	.57

Source: ISSP (2013).

TABLE 4 National attachment measures: Ns and frequencies for all participating countries

National attachment	N	Very close	Close	Not very close	Not close at all
How close do you feel to your country?	45.297	30.9	45.4	18.9	4.9

'No answer' and 'cannot choose' are reported as missing.

Source: ISSP (2013).

TABLE 5 Normalized aggregate scores of national attachment by country

Belgium	.60	India	.83	Russia	.57
Croatia	.64	Ireland	.62	Slovakia	.72
Czech Republic	.77	Israel	.77	Slovenia	.68
Denmark	.52	Japan	.76	Spain	.75
Estonia	.64	South Korea	.68	Sweden	.65
Finland	.59	Latvia	.63	Switzerland	.68
France	.70	Lithuania	.57	Taiwan	.71
Georgia	.74	Mexico	.71	Turkey	.79
Germany	.67	Norway	.68	UK	.62
Hungary	.73	Philippines	.62	US	.61
Iceland	.48	Portugal	.78		

Source: ISSP (2013).

Accordingly, to overcome these difficulties, I assess and report how national identities relate to the following constituents of democracy: *deliberation* (to what extent public reasoning emphasizes respectful dialogue among informed and competent participants focused on the common good to motivate political decisions); *fair elections*

(including freedom of association and freedom of expression, alternative sources of information, universal suffrage and the degree to which government policy is vested in elected political officials); *participation* (active participation by citizens in electoral and non-electoral political processes in civil society organizations, via direct democracy,

TABLE 6 Democracy index on a scale of 0–1

	Liberal Democracy Index (LDI)	Electoral Democracy Index (EDI)	Liberal Component Index (LCI)	Egalitarian Democracy Index (EGDI)	Participatory Democracy Index (PDI)	Deliberative Democracy Index (DDI)
Belgium	.80	.86	.94	.79	.61	.77
Croatia	.71	.82	.85	.65	.62	.66
Czech Republic	.75	.84	.91	.77	.56	.71
Denmark	.87	.91	.97	.86	.69	.86
Estonia	.85	.90	.95	.81	.61	.83
Finland	.79	.84	.96	.79	.59	.78
France	.84	.93	.91	.85	.68	.84
Georgia	.56	.71	.76	.56	.41	.57
Germany	.82	.87	.97	.80	.62	.82
Hungary	.53	.64	.79	.53	.43	.45
Iceland	.80	.88	.92	.79	.66	.71
India	.50	.65	.77	.43	.40	.48
Ireland	.81	.88	.92	.77	.63	.80
Israel	.61	.88	.84	.56	.47	.60
Japan	.72	.79	.92	.70	.51	.71
South Korea	.57	.68	.84	.59	.44	.51
Latvia	.75	.85	.88	.76	.68	.74
Lithuania	.77	.83	.94	.75	.63	.74
Mexico	.47	.65	.67	.37	.43	.47
Norway	.86	.90	.97	.86	.65	.87
Philippines	.46	.61	.74	.33	.41	.54
Portugal	.81	.88	.93	.77	.62	.82
Russia	.12	.27	.27	.22	.14	.14
Slovakia	.75	.86	.86	.69	.66	.66
Slovenia	.79	.86	.93	.77	.69	.75
Spain	.74	.84	.88	.76	.58	.74
Sweden	.87	.91	.97	.83	.65	.87
Switzerland	.88	.92	.96	.86	.80	.89
Taiwan	.67	.79	.84	.70	.58	.64
Turkey	.27	.45	.53	.27	.29	.19
United Kingdom	.80	.86	.92	.75	.63	.73
United States	.84	.90	.93	.72	.65	.82

Source: Varieties of Democracy (Coppedge et al., 2021; Pemstein et al., 2021).

participation and representation through local and regional governments); *liberal principles* (protection of individual and minority rights, the strength of rule of law and constitutionally protected civil liberties, independence of judiciary); *egalitarianism* (equal capabilities to participate in the political arena by making informed voting decisions, expressing opinions, demonstrating, running for office or influencing policymaking); and liberal democracy (index of liberal principles + fair elections). Table 6 shows democracy index on a scale of 0 to 1 by country.

V-Dem provides a multidimensional and disaggregated dataset that reflects this complexity and specifically measures these five high-level principles of democracy. These principles are translated into more than 400 detailed questions with well-defined response categories or measurement scales. A minimum of five independent experts responded to each question for each country and year, going back to 1900. Thus, the data capture similarities and differences in democratic quality for independent states at different points in time. V-Dem is well established and often referred to when the level of development of democracy is used in empirical research (Lindberg et al., 2014; for further details, see Coppedge et al., 2016).

When examining the relationship between the degree of homogeneity in belief about what constitutes national belonging and democracy, I use only the liberal democracy index as a dependent variable. The concept of liberal democracy captures the dynamics between the majority and minority.

I use ordinary least squares (OLS) regression to measure the relationship between x (different aspects of national identity and degree of homogeneity) and y (in total, six aspects of democracy). This is a method for estimating the unknown parameters in a linear regression model, with the goal of minimizing the sum of the squares of differences between the observed responses on the level of democracy in the given dataset and those predicted by a linear function of a set of aggregated levels of the three aspects of national identity and degree of homogeneity.

4.5 | Controls

Cultural diversity is often seen as a threat to the stability of democracy (e.g. Barrington, 1997; Dahl, 1989, pp. 183–185). I consider being born in a foreign country to be a sufficient indication of cultural diversity due to differences in socialization contexts. Foreign-born percentage is therefore one of the two controls. The other is the gross domestic product (GDP) per capita.

5 | RESULTS

I first test the assumption regarding the main effects of non-voluntarism and cultural markers on liberal democracy. Figure 1 assesses the continuous relationship between national identity and liberal democracy. My findings lend clear support to the assumption that non-voluntarist identity correlates with a lower level of democracy. Both non-voluntarism ($\beta = -.71$) and religion ($\beta = -.79$) and the sum of these aspects of national identity ($\beta = -.79$) correlate negatively with the level of liberal democracy. Throughout the three scatterplots, the coefficient for non-voluntarism and religion is negative, statistically significant at a level of 99.9% or higher, and of prohibitive magnitude. The last scatterplot displays the correlations between language requirements and the level of liberal democracy. This correlation is positive, weak ($\beta = .11$) and insignificant.

Table 7 reports the relationships between national identity and five fundamental aspects of democracy: electoral democracy, liberal principles, egalitarianism, participation and deliberation. Models estimate how non-voluntarism + religion and non-voluntarism and cultural markers (religion and language) correlate with democracy.

The top row of the table reveals that non-voluntarism and religion are strongly negatively correlated with all aspects of democracy. The correlation coefficient tops out around $-.84$ and bottoms out around $-.72$. With controls included, the association is strongest regarding EGD1 ($-.79$), where R^2 is 0.69, meaning that 69% of the variation of EGD1 can be explained by aggregated levels of national identity. The marginal alternation of R^2 by including controls

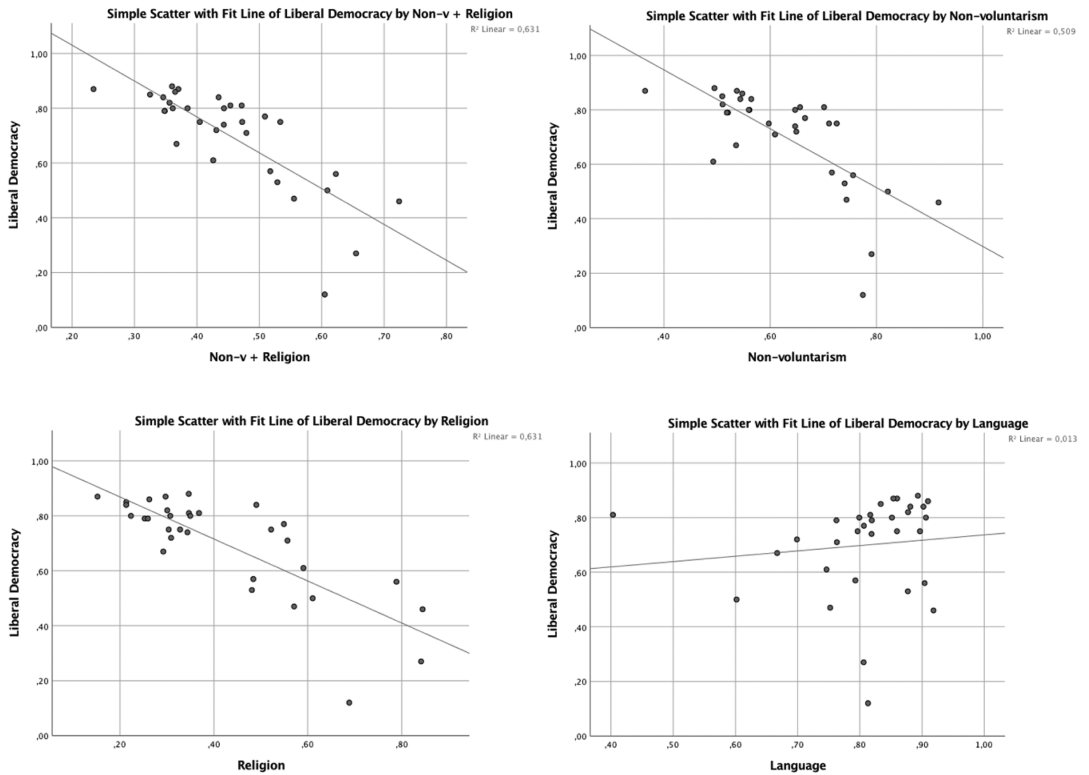


FIGURE 1 Scatterplots with fit line of liberal democracy by different aspects of national identity

(0–0.02) shows that aggregated levels of these aspects of national identity are much more powerful predictors of democracy indices than per capita GDP and the percentage of foreign-born population.

The correlates of non-voluntarism and religion, one by one, follow the same pattern. The strengths of the correlation between non-voluntarism and constituents of democracy vary between $-.52$ and $-.75$. The correlation of non-voluntary criteria on democracy is strongest with respect to EGD1 ($\beta = -.65$; $R^2 = 0.56$). Higher aggregate levels on religion have the strongest impact on EGD1 ($\beta = -.75$, controls included), and the impact on the remaining indices is slightly lower, between $-.61$ and $-.64$. Adjusted R^2 is very high, 0.49–0.77 when controls are included. These statistically significant relationships remain when the GDP and the per cent of foreign-born population are controlled.

The correlation between the second cultural marker, language and the different aspects of democracy is weak, positive and insignificant. Hence, these empirical tests provide strong support for the notion that non-voluntarist identity exhibits an inherent contradiction between in-group bias and intrinsic equality, which results in lower levels of democracy and no support for classical nationalist stances. In other words, non-voluntarism and requirement of religion relate to lower levels of such basic democratic conditions as fair elections by majority rule, equal political participation and functional deliberation. H3 is supported. H1 is not supported.

5.1 | A common national identity and democracy

I turn now to testing to what extent a common conceptualization of ‘who the people are’ correlates with democracy. The results of these analyses are presented in Table 8.

TABLE 7 National identity and democracy

	Electoral Democracy Index			Liberal Component Index			Egalitarian Component Index			Participatory Component Index		
	b	SE	b	SE	b	SE	b	SE	b	SE	b	
Non-voluntarism + religion	-.76	(0.16)***	-.68	(0.23)***	-.71	(0.19)***	-.72	(0.25)***	-.84	(0.16)***	-.79	(0.24)***
Per cent foreign born			.16	(0.00)			-.12	(0.00)			.01	(0.00)
GDP			-.01	(0.00)			.10	(0.00)			.08	(0.00)
Constant	1.25	(0.07)***	1.30	(0.19)***	1.28	(0.08)***	1.30	(0.25)***	1.30	(0.16)***	1.325	(0.15)***
R ²	0.56		0.56		0.48		0.47		0.70		0.69	
Non-voluntarism	-.71	(0.16)	-.59	(0.25)**	-.63	(0.17)***	-.63	(0.22)**	-.75	(0.18)***	-.65	(0.28)**
Per cent foreign born			.09	(0.00)			-.19	(0.01)			-.08	(0.01)
GDP			.10	(0.00)			.20	(0.00)			.25	(0.00)
Constant	1.34	(0.10)***	1.22	(0.20)***	1.33	(0.11)***	1.35	(0.22)***	1.39	(0.11)***	1.23	(0.23)***
R ²	0.49		0.48		0.37		0.39		0.55		0.56	
Cultural markers												
Religion	-.74	(0.10)***	-.62	(0.12)***	-.72	(0.10)***	-.64	(0.13)***	-.87	(0.09)***	-.75	(0.11)***
Per cent foreign born			.31	(0.00) [†]			.04	(0.00)			.15	(0.00)
GDP			.01	(0.00)			.12	(0.00)			.11	(0.00)
Constant	1.04	(0.05)***	0.93	(0.08)***	1.10	(0.05)***			1.02	(0.04)***		
R ²	0.52		0.59		0.50		0.49		0.74		0.77	
Language	.08	(0.09)	0.02	(0.22)	.07	(0.08)	0.20	(0.24)	.12	(0.10)	.05	(0.26)
Per cent foreign born			.36	(0.00) [†]			.10	(0.00)			.24	(0.00)
GDP			.34	(0.00) [†]			.46	(0.00) [†]			.48	(0.00) [†]
Constant	.68	(0.29) [*]	0.62	(0.18)**	.75	(0.29) [*]	0.74	(0.20)***	.44	(0.36)	0.42	(0.22) [†]
R ²	0.00		0.31		0.01		0.19		0.02		0.35	
N	32		32		32		32		32		32	

†p < .1.

*p < .05.

**p < .01.

***p < .001.

TABLE 7 (Continued)

	Participatory Component Index			Deliberative Component Index			Liberal Democracy Index		
	SE	b	SE	b	SE	b	SE	b	SE
Non-voluntarism + religion	(1.6)***	-.62	(0.24)***	-.77	(0.20)***	-.68	(0.29)***	-.79	(0.18)***
Per cent foreign born		.15	(0.00)			.05	(0.00)		
GDP		.04	(0.00)			.10	(0.00)		
Constant	(0.07)***	0.88	(0.14)***	1.26	(0.09)***	1.17	(0.17)***	1.29	(0.09)***
R ²		0.50		0.57		0.58		0.62	
Non-voluntarism	(0.15)***	-.52	(0.24)*	-.70	(0.20)***	-.57	(0.31)**	-.71	(0.19)***
Per cent foreign born		.08	(0.00)			-.04	(0.00)		
GDP		.18	(0.00)			.25	(0.00)		
Constant	(0.10)***	.88	(0.20)***	1.35	(0.13)***	1.19	(0.25)***	1.34	(0.12)***
R ²		0.44		0.47		0.49		0.49	
Cultural markers									
Religion	(0.09)***	-.61	(0.24)***	-.77	(0.11)***	-.64	(0.14)***	-.79	(0.11)***
Per cent foreign born		.24	(0.00) ⁺			.17	(0.00)		
GDP		.09	(0.00)			.14	(0.00)		
Constant	(0.04)***	0.68	(0.07)**	1.00	(0.05)***	0.86	(0.09)***	1.02	(0.05)***
R ²		0.59		0.59		0.63		0.79	
Language	(0.08)	.07	(0.00)	.12	(0.11)	.03	(0.28)	.11	(0.11)
Per cent foreign born		.34	(0.00) ⁺			.25	(0.01)		
GDP		.34	(0.00) ⁺			.48	(0.00)*		
Constant	(0.27)	.35	(0.17) ⁺	.44	(0.37) ⁺	.44	(0.23) ⁺	.54	(0.26)*
R ²		0.30		0.01		0.32		0.01	
N	32	32	32	32	32	32	32	32	32

⁺p < .1.
^{*}p < .05.
^{**}p < .01.
^{***}p < .001.

Sources: Coppedge et al. (2021); ISSP (2013); Pemstein et al. (2021); World Bank (2010) (per cent foreign born, Taiwan and South Korea missing); World Bank (2013).

TABLE 8 Homogeneity of national identity and liberal democracy

	(1)		(2)		(3)	
	b	SE	b	SE	b	SE
Non-voluntarism	.64	(0.18)***	.41	(0.28) ⁺		
Religion			.75	(0.06)***	.59	(0.08)***
Language					-.17	(0.26)
Per cent foreign born			.04	(0.01)	.15	(0.01)
GDP			.30	(0.00)	.15	(0.00)*
Constant	0.33	(0.09)***	.37	(0.09)***	0.33	(0.06)***
R ²	0.39		0.40		0.58	
N	32		32		32	

⁺ $p < .1$.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

*** $p < .001$.

Sources: Coppedge et al. (2021); ISSP (2013); Pemstein et al. (2021); World Bank (2010) (per cent foreign born, Taiwan and South Korea missing); World Bank (2013) (GDP).

TABLE 9 National attachment and democracy

	Electoral Democracy Index			Liberal Component Index			Egalitarian Democracy Index			Participatory Democracy Index		
	b	SE	N	b	SE	N	b	SE	N	b	SE	N
Feeling close to country	-.1	(0.10)	32	-.06	(0.17)	32	-.06	(0.13)	32	-.05	(0.18)	32
Per cent foreign born	.13	(0.01)	32	.04	(0.00)	32	.18	(0.01)	32	.18	(0.01)	32
GDP	.48	(0.00) ⁺	32	.42	(0.00) ⁺	32	.61	(0.00) ^{**}	32	.61	(0.00) ^{**}	32
Constant	0.97	(0.30) ^{**}	32	1.34	(0.12) ^{***}	32	0.95	(0.46) [*]	32	0.67	(0.36)	32
R ²	0		32	0		32	0.13		32	0.37		32
N	32		32	32		32	32		32	32		32

⁺p < .1.
^{*}p < .05.
^{**}p < .01.
^{***}p < .001.

TABLE 9 (Continued)

	Participatory Democracy Index			Deliberative Democracy Index			Liberal Democracy Index		
	b	SE	N	b	SE	N	b	SE	N
Feeling close to country	-.05	(0.14)	32	-.25	(0.14)	32	-.03	(0.20)	32
Per cent foreign born	.25	(0.01)	32	.12	(0.01)	32	.12	(0.01)	32
GDP	.44	(0.00) [*]	32	.57	(0.00) ^{**}	32	.57	(0.00) ^{**}	32
Constant	0.58	(0.50)	32	1.26	(0.43) [*]	32	0.64	(0.40)	32
R ²	0.04		32	0.03		32	0.35		32
N	32		32	32		32	32		32

⁺p < .1.
^{*}p < .05.
^{**}p < .01.
^{***}p < .001.

Sources: Coppedge et al. (2021), ISSP (2013), Pemstein et al. (2021), World Bank (2010) (per cent foreign born, Taiwan and Korea missing); World Bank (2013) (GDP).

Contrary to expectations, Model 1 shows that the RSD of non-voluntarism is positively correlated with the level of liberal democracy. Model 2 follows the same pattern: a strong positive relationship between the RSD of religion and liberal democracy, meaning that disagreement regarding religion requirements is associated with higher levels of democracy. In other words, lower levels of homogeneity with regard to religion and non-voluntarism are associated with higher levels of liberal democracy. Model 3 shows that the correlation between liberal democracy and homogeneity regarding language is positive, weak and insignificant.

Hence, the idea that the homogeneity of preferences that define the true member of the nation eases the dynamics between majority and minority and thereby increases levels of liberal democracy, is not supported. H4 can be rejected. Contrary to expectations, heterogeneity in beliefs about what constitutes national belonging relates to a higher level of liberal democracy.

In the last table, I report the relationship between national attachment and democracy.

Table 9 shows that there are no correlations between national attachment and democracy.

To summarize, I posited five hypotheses: I found strong support for the claim that non-voluntarism works against democracy; H3 is supported. I found no support for classical nationalist stances, asserting that non-voluntarism benefits democracy; H1 is rejected.

H2, language requirement has a positive relationship to democracy, is not supported.

Regarding the degree of consensus regarding what constitutes national belonging, I found that a common national identity does not relate to a higher level of liberal democracy. Hence, H4 was not supported. The last hypothesis concerns national attachment: Higher levels of national attachment are positively correlated with the level of formal democracy. H5 is not empirically supported.

5.2 | Robustness checks

The findings of this study have been confirmed using several different sources of data. Regarding national identity, I tested two additional rounds of ISSP (1995, 2003) and the corresponding data from V-Dem. The theoretical strands were also tested using alternative measurements of democracy (Economist Intelligence Unit, 2015) (Appendix B).

6 | CONCLUSIONS

In this article, I examined the relationship between national identity and democracy, something previous empirical research had not considered. Contrary to expectations, there is no correlation between national attachment and democracy. One possible explanation might be that the operationalization of national attachment does not tell us anything about what inhabitants take the national identity to consist of when assessing their feelings of closeness to a country and feeling close to other co-nationals does not implicate attachment to each co-national (cf. Holtug 2020, p. 14). As national identity is not a group of people, it is therefore not obvious that national attachment refers to *one* in-group essentially, although the objective of the intentional directedness of these emotions remains unidentified (Descartes, 1985, pp. 349–350; Hume, 1964, p. 75; Parkinson, 1995, p. 8). Furthermore, the extent to which emotionally driven self-classification generates affiliation is unclear. Pro-nationalists sometimes argue that citizens are not emotionally close to the nation (Gans, 2003). Put to an extreme, all citizens perceive that they are the only ones who feel close to the nation and co-nationals. This means that citizens can be attached to a nation without these attachments being mutually interconnected. These shortcomings might help explain why and how national attachment and the assumed mechanisms in work do not produce democracy.

Merely adding positive emotions to classification criteria to denote national identity is too vague to predict the level of democracy. What actually matters is the content and degree of consensus regarding what constitutes

national belonging. The empirical analyses show that non-voluntary features of national identity and the requirement of belonging to a religious category are both associated with lower levels of democracy.

The empirical tests indicate that the degree of consensus regarding conceptualized national group boundaries affects democracy. However, it will suffice to say that there are different forms of national identity and that these different forms invoke different properties in their standards for a common national identity. Homogeneity in belief about what constitutes national belonging in turn, born of a sense of unity, an idea that we are one people because of our common accidental origin and our early socialization in religion, correlates with lower levels of democracy.

In theory, the low spread of non-voluntarism emphasizes or deemphasizes the importance of non-voluntarism and religion requirement. In these samples, low RSD and higher aggregated levels of these items were highly correlated. However, the empirical test is still interesting, as large spread on non-voluntarism and religion requirement do not challenge contemporary liberal democracies. Heterogeneity is associated with higher levels of liberal democracy. In other words, the conceptualization of people possessing a plurality of cultural expressions and voluntarism is important to democratic societies. Democratic national identity signifies the capacity to manage to be a national citizen in an imperfect state and still remain a free man (cf. Rousseau, 1979, p. 40).

Taken together, a common non-voluntarist national identity, classically understood as nationalism, generates stratified collectivism and correlates with lower levels of democracy. Considering that democracy helps its citizens avoid the tyranny of cruel and vicious autocrats, guarantees them essential rights and general freedom and tends to be more prosperous than other possible alternatives, we can question the normative validity of classical nationalist stances.

Even when controlling for cultural diversity and GDP per capita, non-voluntarism and religion requirement is significantly associated with lower levels of democracy. The robustness checks confirm that non-voluntarism and religion requirement is negatively correlated with liberal principles, deliberation (DDI), egalitarianism (EGDI), electoral processes (EDI) and political participation (PDI).

Regarding the civic versus ethnic discussion, I suggest that the difference between countries is not about the emphasis on voluntarist items. The differences appear in regard to the presence or absence of the importance of religion requirements and non-voluntarism, which challenges the classical distinction where non-voluntarism (ancestry) is in opposition to voluntarism (laws). The restrictiveness of national identity is better understood as *cumulative*. This view might explain some negative outcomes of civic nationalism, such as anti-Muslim attitudes (Simonsen & Bonikowski, 2020). Put simply, individuals scoring high on voluntarist items and low on non-voluntarism and religion requirement probably have lower levels of anti-Muslim attitudes.

My empirical tests do not provide causal explanations. First, the causal direction can go either way between non-voluntary identity and democracy; lower levels of democracy can cause higher levels of non-voluntary features of national identity. The arguments against this are that national identity existed before democracy at an earlier time and different kinds of institutionalized non-democracies might cause different kinds of quantities and qualities of national identities. A fascist regime promotes the idea of non-voluntary national identity; a military regime might counteract sub-ethnic clan loyalties and encourage civic nationhood; an expanding multi-ethnic empire accommodates multiple heterogeneous conceptualizations of nations; etc. A more cogent approach is to assume the following causal explanation: If a group of any size form a well-bounded identity and emphasizes voluntary criteria of membership while de-emphasizing non-voluntarist criteria of membership, they are fairly independent of control by outsiders, and the members of the group will tend to see each other as equals; democracy is likely to arise or be successfully implemented (for empirical evidence, see Appendix A). High levels of non-voluntary features of national identity thus constitute a missing link in the causal approach towards higher levels of democracy. Second, it is reasonable to expect feedback loops (see Elster, 1994): A low level of formal democracy (Y) is an effect of high levels of non-voluntarism (X). Y is beneficial for the majority population (Z), as lower levels of democracy favour beliefs and interests enjoyed by the ethnic majority population (for instance, a high level of civil rights has the capacity to support practices and beliefs of ethnic minorities, whereas lower levels of civil rights tend to favour beliefs and practices enjoyed by the ethnic majority population). Ergo, a low level of democracy (Y), maintains high levels of

non-voluntarism (X) by a causal feedback loop passing through the privileged position of the ethnic majority population in a country (Z).

This is the first study to measure the relationship between national identity and democracy. Future research should address how the relationship changes over time and how different kinds of national identity affect preferences for democracy at the individual level.

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