

Are Nationalists Centrists? Introducing and Testing the Concept of Political “Banal” Nationalism

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What Is Political "Banal" Nationalism?

Billig (1995)

	Political	Mundane
"Hot"	"Traditional" nationalism	Doesn't make sense
"Cold"	Political centrism + + nationalism = ???	"Banal" nationalism

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1. Centrist nationalists are more frequent than centrist non-nationalists in less economically affluent countries, and especially in post-Socialist countries (since cultural trauma additionally lowers the estimation of one's country), and among men (rather than women) born in the country where they currently live (rather than immigrants) with relatively lower income and education level, but higher interest in politics.

Hypothesis 2. Centrist nationalists compared to left-wing nationalists are more likely to be found in less affluent countries and among people with lower income, education level, and general social trust and less interest in politics, but higher life satisfaction.

Hypothesis 3. Compared to right-wing nationalists, centrist nationalists are more likely to be found in relatively less affluent countries and among less religious people with higher income and life satisfaction, younger, less religious, and more interested in politics.

WVS, 6th wave

- 1) “I see myself a part of my country/nation” with answer options “strongly agree”, “agree”, “disagree”, and “strongly disagree”.
- 2) National pride, also measured on a four-point scale: “very proud”,
- 3) Ready to fight for his/her country in case of war^ yes or no.

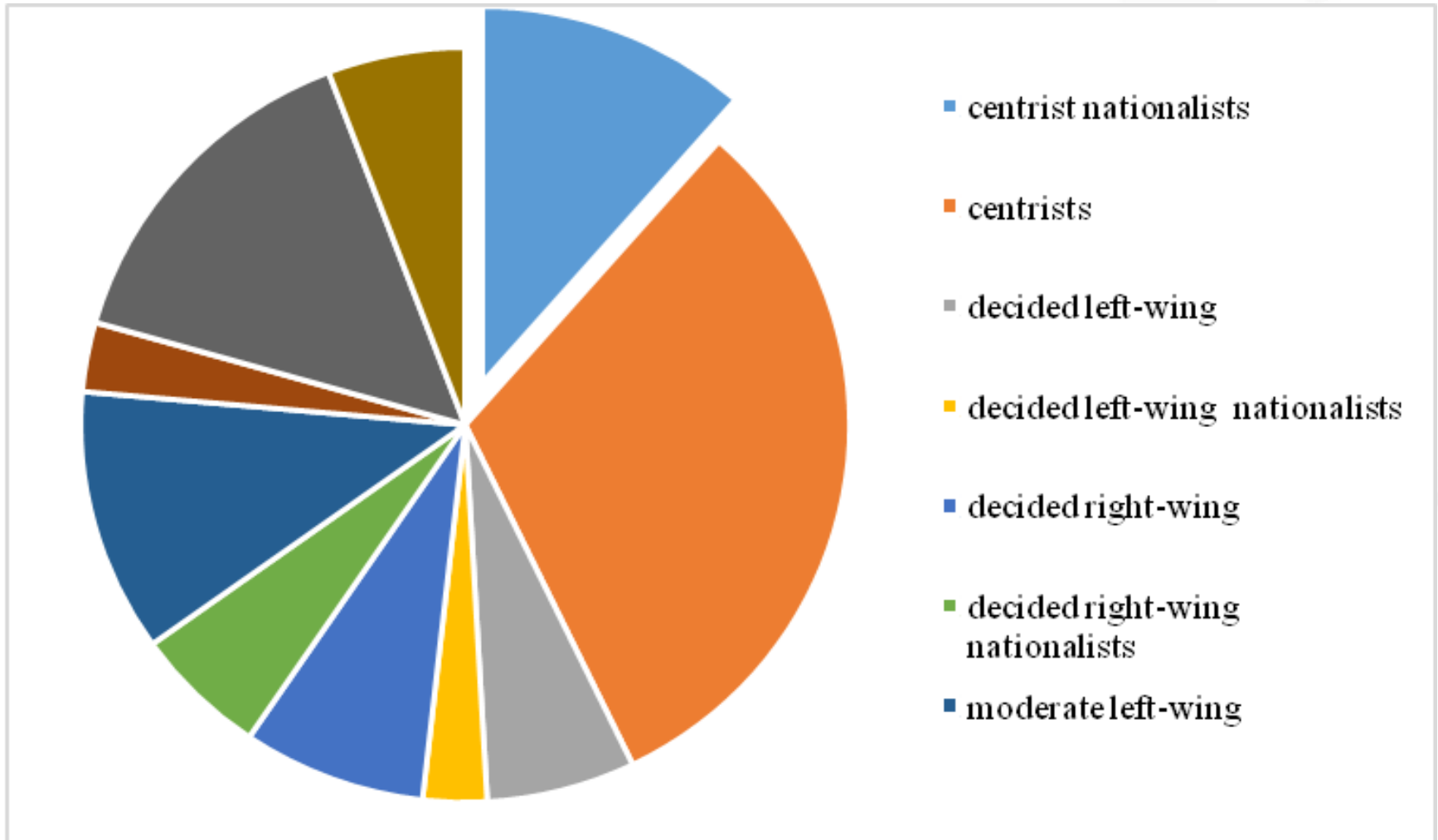
Nationalism = “strongly agree” + “very proud” + “yes”

Self-defined political orientation: 10-point scale ranging from 1 – “left” to 10 – “right”. Centrists – 5 and 6 (1 and 2 - 1 or 2 – “decidedly left-wing” 3 and 4 – moderately left-wing, 7 and 8 – moderately right-wing, and 9 and 10 – “decidedly right-wing”).

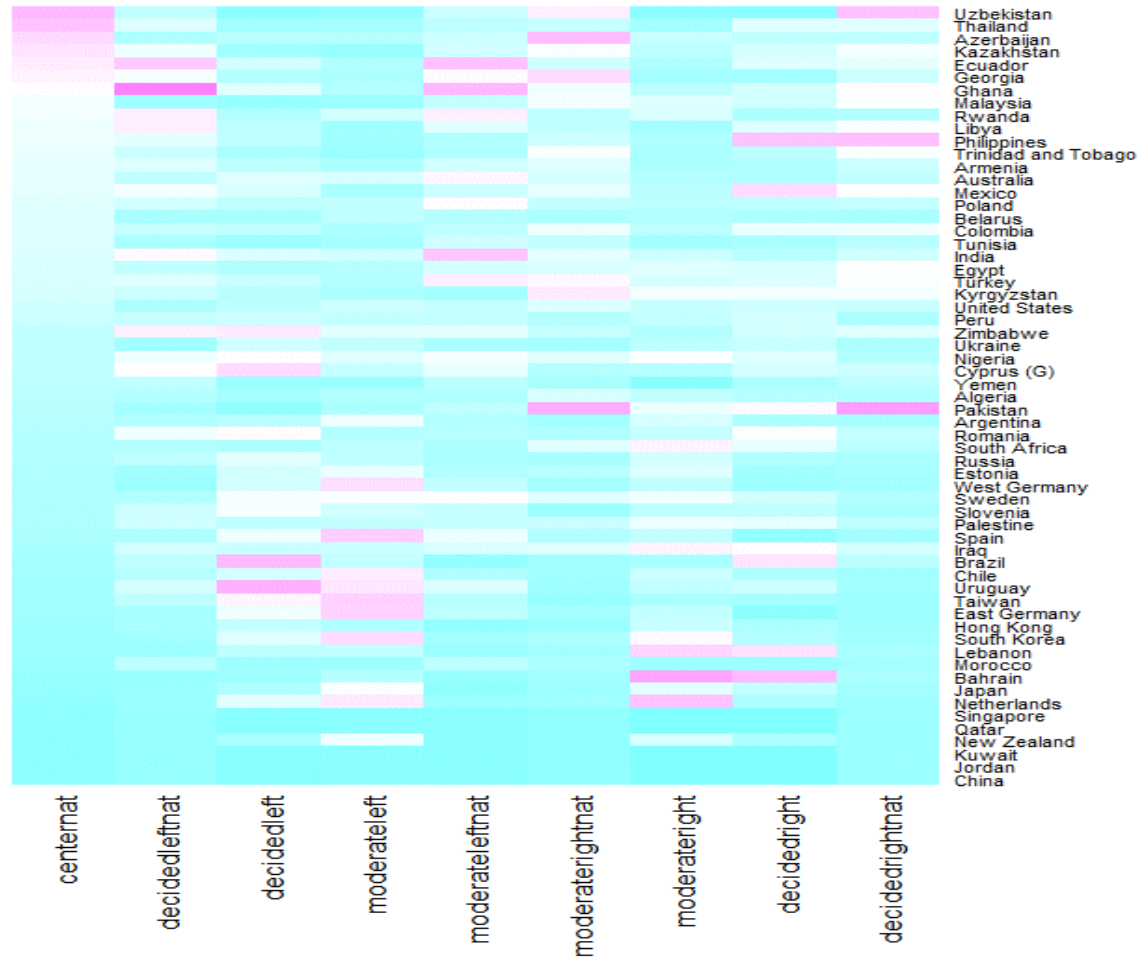
Political “banal” nationalism = nationalism + 5 or nationalism +6

Sample Distribution:

Nationalists – 29%, centrist Nationalists – 11.4% of the sample and 40.1% of all nationalists

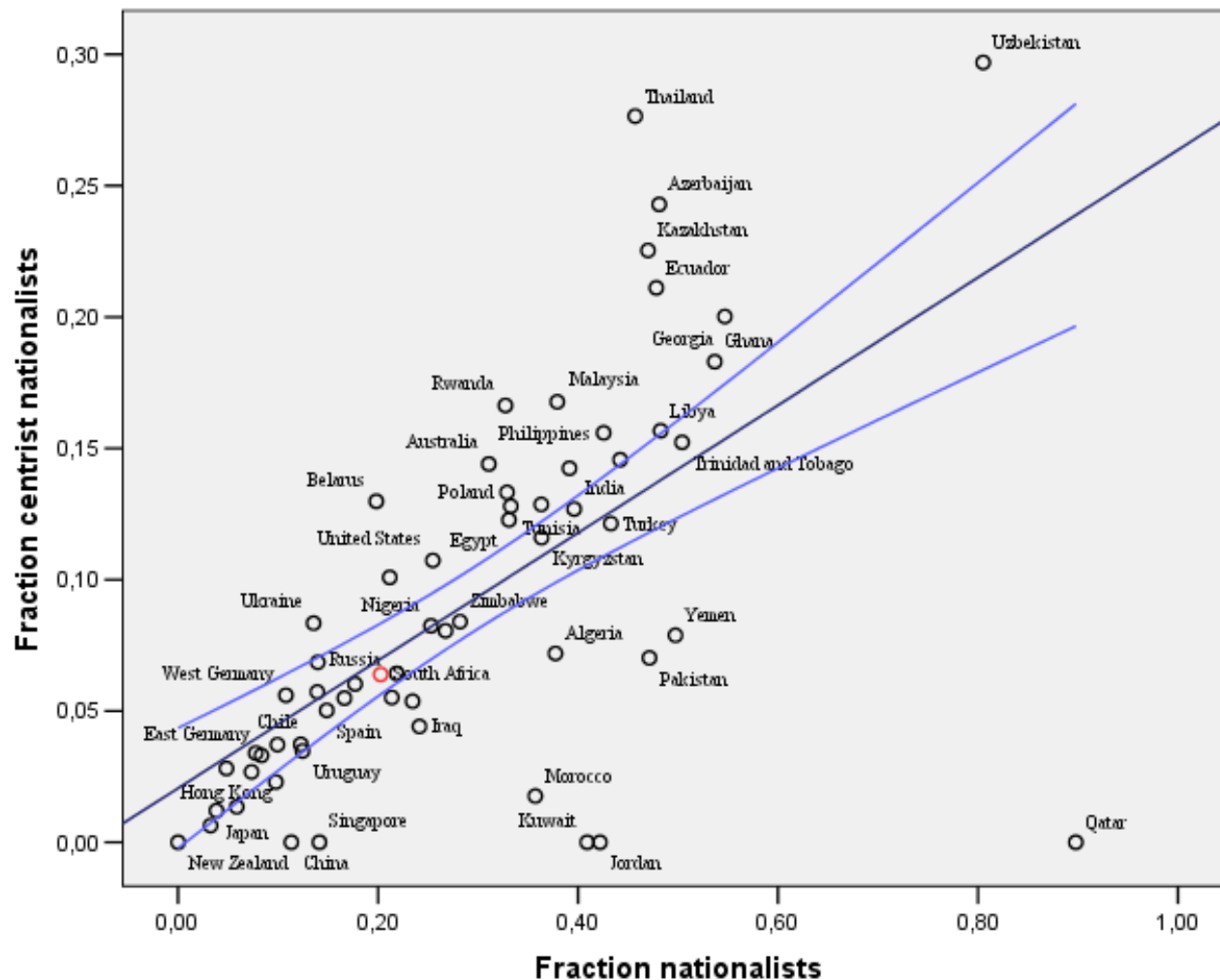


Distribution by Countries



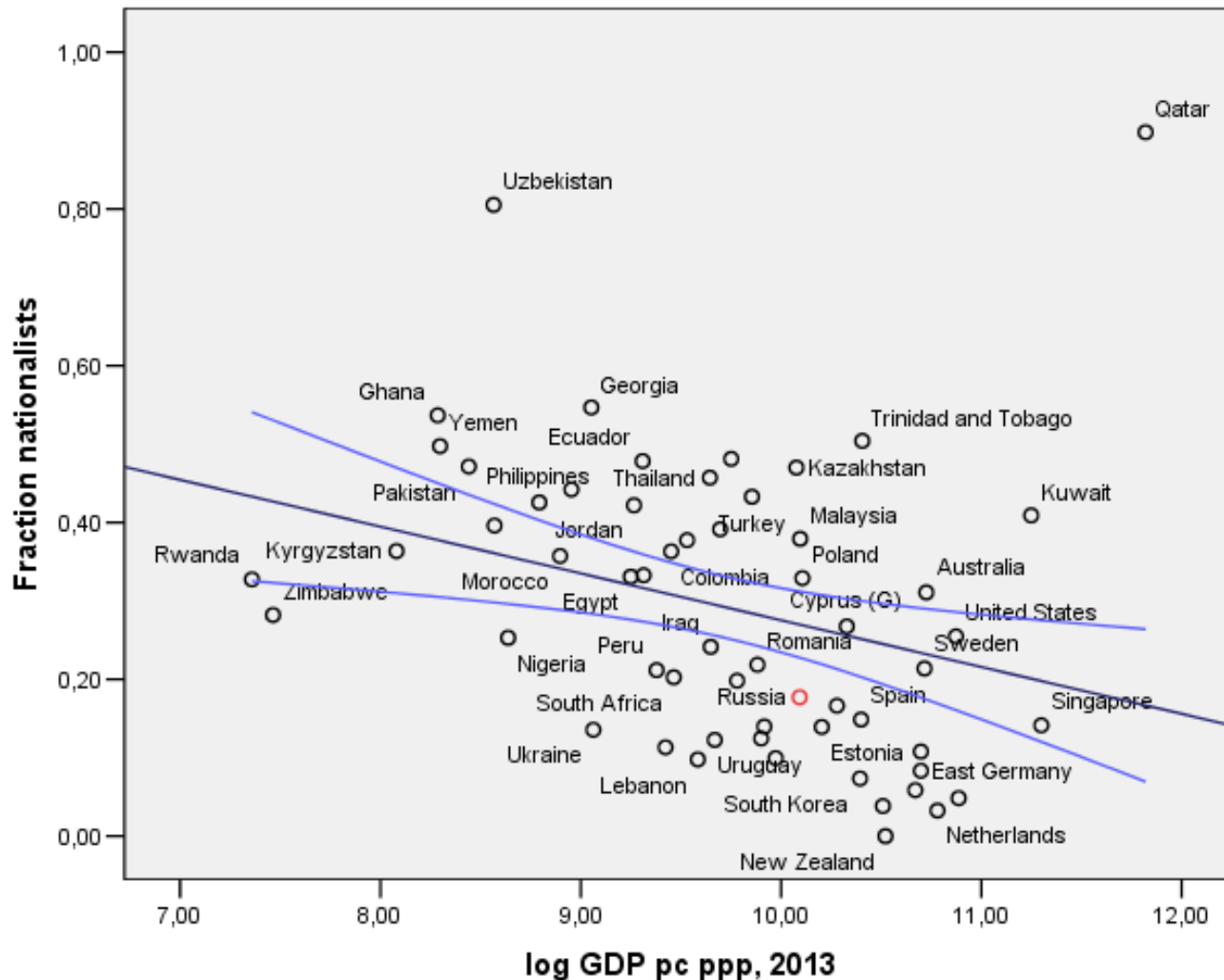
Fraction of Nationalism with Fraction of Centrist Nationalists:

$r = 0.62$

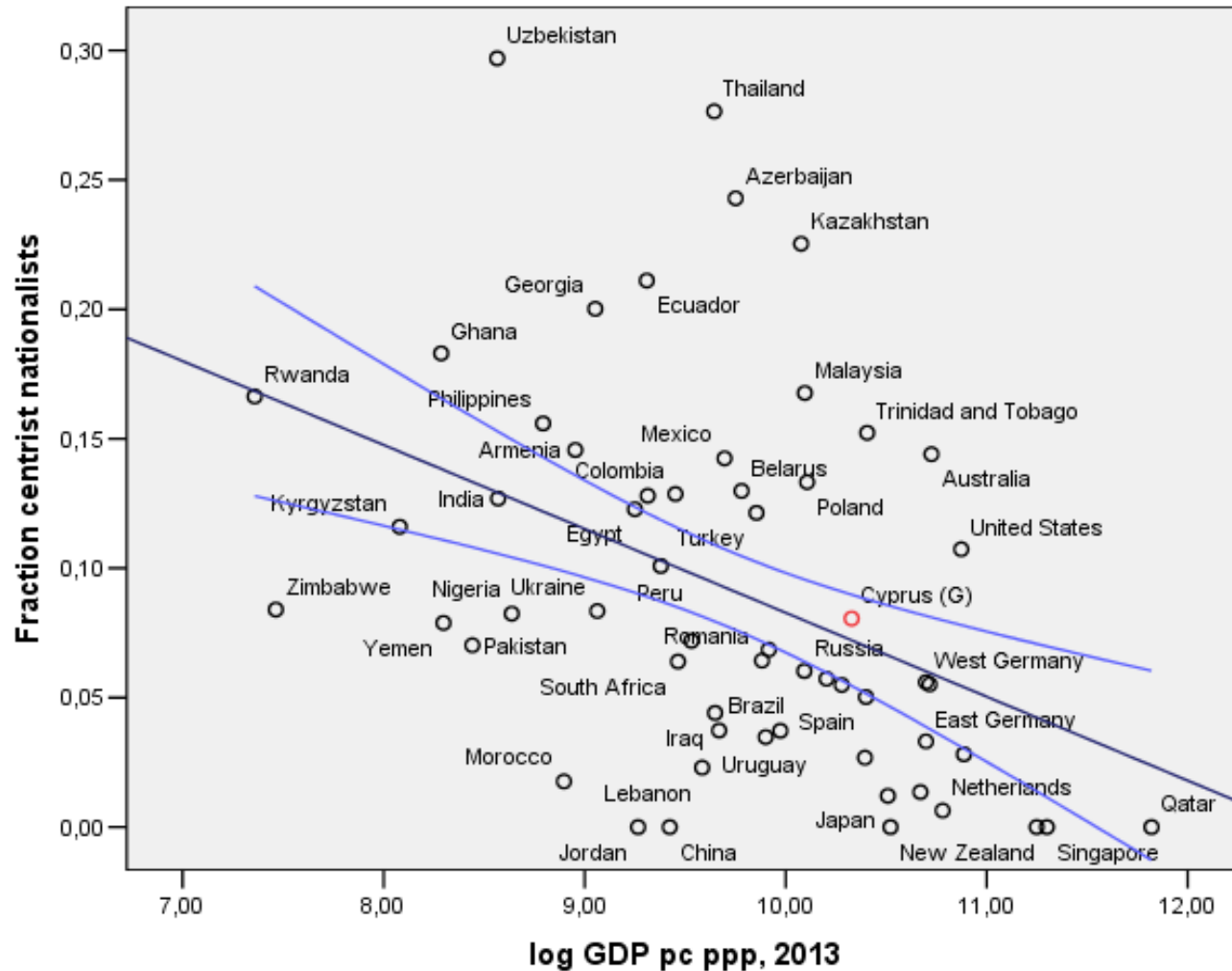


Fraction of Nationalism with GDP

pc: $r = -0.30$



Fraction of Centrist Nationalism with GDP pc: $r = -0.41$



Regression Models (Binary Logit)

	Ref Centrists not nationalists	Ref moderate left- wing nationalists	Ref decided left- wing nationalists	Ref moderate right-wing nationalists	Ref decided right-wing nationalists
Individual level variables					
Age	-0.001	-0.002	-0.006**	-0.005**	-0.004**
Gender female	-0.271***	0.157**	0.036	0.101*	0.062
Education level	0.009	-0.034*	-0.004	0.008	0.065***
Respondent immigrant	-0.659***	0.168	0.409	0.044	0.299
Income level	-0.026**	-0.026	-0.001	-0.087***	-0.001
Religiosity	0.040***	0.018	0.071***	-0.023	-0.067***
Interest in politics					
not very interested	0.046	-0.123	0.012	-0.301***	0.044
somewhat interested	0.239***	-0.160*	0.127	-0.495***	-0.376***
very interested	0.539***	-0.291**	-0.579***	-0.647***	-0.944***
Life satisfaction	0.114***	0.058***	-0.015	-0.042***	-0.110***
General social trust	-0.046	-0.237**	-0.151	0.030	-0.014
Country level variables					
log GDP pc ppp	-0.602***	-0.101	0.318*	-0.026	0.118
Post-Socialist	0.533*	0.472*	0.303	0.247	0.301
AIC	25097	8032	7487	12349	11706
BIC	25216	8138	7592	12458	11814
N1	23298	8364	8233	10136	10028
N2	48	47	47	47	47

(Preliminary) Conclusions

- 1) Centrist nationalists constitute a fairly large fraction of the world population, which this fraction varies considerably across countries. Hence, it makes sense to study political “banal” nationalism in cross-national perspective.
- 2) Centrist nationalists differ both from non-nationalist centrists and left-wing nationalists by combining lower income and lower affluence of their countries with higher life satisfaction, and from right-wing nationalists, by lower income combined with lower life satisfaction.



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Thank you for your attention!

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