Nationalism and Inequality Scholarship in the Age of Populism: Bringing Territory Back In?

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Abstract

The intersection of nationalism and inequality is undoubtedly gaining interest in current debates in nationalism studies. The effects of economic inequalities on nationalist politics are the most researched area; however, there are other ways to explore the relationship between nationalism and inequality. Focusing on economic and political aspects of inequality this state-of-the-field article offers an overview of existing research on the relationship between inequality and nationalism in various areas of nationalism studies, ranging from nationalist politics to exploring the symbolic construction of nationhood. Following the inequality scholars, we highlight the growing importance of capital accumulation and emphasize the spatial aspect of it. We argue that while being largely overlooked, the role of territory—and territorial politics more broadly—becomes crucial for the understanding of the intersection of nationalism and inequality today. Overall, we show that it is necessary for nationalism studies scholars to engage in contemporary literature on inequality and acknowledge the wider implications of growing inequality to various manifestations of nationalism.

Introduction

There is a wide consensus on growing economic inequality within the nations (Piketty 2020; Savage 2021), and there is also an acknowledgment of decreasing global inequality between the states (Kanbur 2019). Scholars highlight that the wealthy and their wealth are concentrated in metropolises or global cities, resulting in polarization along the center/periphery lines (Rodríguez-Pose 2020). This affects both political participation and the growing grievances of those from the peripheries (Massetti and Schakel 2015). Moreover, inequality scholars highlight that although it becomes more difficult to define society structure and the notion of class itself, it can no longer be reduced to the differences in income and modes of earning but encompasses the wide range of characteristics that are based in various forms of capital possession and abilities of capital accumulation (Savage 2015). As wealth, as well as any other form of capital, tends to accumulate over time, it is important to consider today's rise of inequality in historical perspective. Mike Savage, one of the leading scholars of inequality, convincingly explains this importance of duration and historical dynamics in his recent book and suggests that due to the concentration of the world's wealth in the hands of the few, the imperial logic has returned into contemporary politics in most societies and a global order in general (Savage 2021). This has multiple implications including making territorial politics highly relevant for understanding contemporary inequalities and

national political cleavages as well as the logic of nationalist sentiments. At the same time, scholars of territorial politics also argue that the nation-state as a level of analysis is losing its value due to rise of regionalisms and spatial inequalities within states; therefore, a meso-level of analysis (anything between municipalities and nation-states as units of analysis) is more useful for understanding current developments in nation-states (Keating 2013; Hepburn and Detterbeck 2018). However, this makes nationalism in its various forms even more relevant to territorial politics. It worth noting that nationalism in this article is understood as politics, discourse, or sentiment depending on the mainstream analytical approaches taken in the literature that links nationalism and inequality together.

This essay examines recent scholarship (published since 2010) on the intersection of nationalism and inequality and offers a map of existing research that could help navigate between various approaches to the topic within and beyond the focus on the rise of nationalist politics worldwide. Although it is impossible to identify all the gaps and blind spots in such a broadly defined area as the intersection of nationalism and inequality, we believe that this overview of topics, important debates, and popular approaches will help nationalism scholars to situate their own research on related topics within the large existing range of studies and approaches, thus facilitating discussions between them. We argue that, notwithstanding its diverse understandings, inequality has become an increasingly important focus of scholarly debates in nationalism studies today. However, it is still largely narrowed down to interpersonal economic inequality and lacks an appreciation of various other forms that are often reinforcing each other, especially in longer term (Savage 2021). This quality of capital conversion is especially important in gate-keeping activities in which power groups engage in various social fields. As Tomila Lankina (2021) shows in her research on the legacies of Russian Imperial bourgeoisie, gate-keeping activities and ability of wealth to be converted to other forms of capital has helped prerevolutionary bourgeoisie survive and reproduce itself under leveling policies of the Soviet Union. Attention to the ability of economic capital to be converted to other different forms (often thus reinforcing capital accumulation over time) could be of help for scholars of nationalism, especially those of us thinking about the outcomes of exclusionary nationalist politics and other matters related to gatekeeping. Again, one of the specific characteristics of capital accumulation nowadays is its spatial dimension, when economic, political, and cultural elites are concentrated in few global cities or national capitals, and migrant flows are directed at big cities, thus passing less attractive destinations. Therefore, we also suggest that scholars should engage with territorial politics and spatial dynamics more seriously when discussing various intersections between inequality and nationalism, as territory nowadays plays a crucial role both in the prediction of nationalist sentiments and in new understandings of class, as well as in the ability to engage in politics.

Imperial Legacies and Identities in Space

In his inquiry about the rise of nationalism, Florian Bieber concluded that the spread of nationalist politics and the nationalist rhetoric of political parties are the main causes of our perception of growing nationalist sentiments among ordinary people, which is not necessarily the case in reality (Bonikowski and DiMaggio 2016; Bieber 2018). Nationalism is neither fading nor on the rise, he argues; rather, it has changed in nature and invades a wide range of political discourses (Bieber 2018). Current research suggests that people who vote for economic policies associated with the exclusion of immigrants from state benefits are receptive to the populist rhetoric on growing social and economic inequality rather than acting from genuine xenophobic attitudes (Bonikovski 2017; Williams 2017). These findings place the intersection of economic inequality and nationalist politics at the center of contemporary debates on nationalism. But they largely ignore the role of territory with the few exceptions that understand the populist support in the disadvantaged territories as "the revenge of the places that do not matter" (Rodríguez-Pose 2020). Still, demands for exclusionary labor markets and welfare, as well as protectionist policies for national products

and vaccine/medicine nationalisms, manifest in social inequality often based on race and ethnicity markers (or understood through these). Thus identity politics becomes even more important than before: "Populist claims-making is located at the juncture of the *politics of inequality* and the *politics of identity*, where questions about *who gets what* are constitutively intertwined with questions about *who is what*" (Brubaker 2020, 56, on the connection between identity-based parties and electoral politics in the context of rising inequality; see also Stroschein 2019). Mike Savage argues that this importance of identity politics today rests on the legacies of imperial orders and nation-building processes that followed the disintegration of empires: racial and gender categories were created to distinguish "us" from "them" in the processes of construction of the nation states (Savage 2021). Thomas Piketty (2020) makes similar arguments though less explicit; he highlights the importance of historical origins of "inequality regimes" that affect the current rise of social nativism. Thus, the importance of categorical differences for maintenance of current national order is based on the return of imperial logic: the wealth is concentrated in metropolises, and it is necessary to legitimize this as a natural outcome of nation-building processes. In our view this leads to multiple ripple effects on the construction of local, national, and regional identities, let alone the nation-building policies in multinational states. However, the centrality of territorial dimension to these processes is often lacks sufficient attention from scholars of nationalism.

Another side of the coin is that populism, combined with nationalist traits, often results in the legitimization of authoritarian politics and the decline of liberal democracy premised on equal rights for all (Bonikowski et al. 2019). Thus xenophobic populism brings identity markers such as race, ethnicity, gender, and class at the center of politics, public discourses, and scholarly investigation and raises issues that include the redefinition of nationhood, national belonging, and citizenship (Leddy-Owen 2019).

In this article, nationalism and populism that drive nationalist politics are seen as overlapping yet distinct discourses that implicate each other due to populism's ambiguity of appeals to "the people" as those on the bottom and those who are "inside the nation" versus outsiders (Brubaker 2020). Thus, we imply that populist discourses internalize nationalist rhetoric while being ambiguous about it. At the same time, following Brubaker's differentiation (2020), we focus on the horizontal (insider vs. outsider) dimension of populist discourses separately from the vertical dimension (people vs. elites). In doing this we consider nationalism as thin ideology that fails to meet the criteria of comprehensive ideology and can be part of other ideology, be it liberalism, socialism, or other (Freeden 1998).

Even though Rogers Brubaker (2020) casts doubt on the importance of ethnic culture in the rise of nationalism, other researchers argue that the protection of ethnic culture often becomes central to nationalist claims today (Mudde 2016; Caiani and Kröll 2017; Schertzer and Woods 2020). These nativist sentiments, in turn, highlight the importance of local cultures and territorial politics: the ethnicization of populist rhetoric often leads to feedback loops in culturally distinctive substate provinces; combined with economic claims, these sometimes result in the rise of regional movements.

The article is structured as follows. First, we review the central debates—the existing research on the connection between economic inequality and nationalist sentiments in society and/or support for nationalist politics. Second, we engage with the literature on the role of political inequality in understandings of contemporary nationhood and citizenship. We conclude that attentiveness to territorial politics is crucial to our understanding of the effects of inequality on nationalism and that a dialogue between the various areas of nationalism studies and inequality scholarship is essential for advancing our research on these topics.

Economic Inequality and Nationalist Politics

The link between economic inequality and the rise of nationalist politics has been central to academic debates and journalistic commentary in recent years. Most scholars associate rising

economic inequality with increasing nationalist sentiments, which, in turn, provide a fertile ground for right-wing politics (Jay et al. 2019). Others find a direct link between economic inequality and *voting* for the far right that effectively uses nationalist rhetoric and frames social grievances in nationalist terms (Joon Han 2016). Thus, researchers disagree over the specific mechanisms that translate inequality into growing nationalist sentiments and/or support for nationalist politics. Some scholars indicate that growing inequality threatens the self-perceived social standing of the poor and the middle class, prompting them to seek other, nonmaterial sources of social affirmation such as race or ethnicity—thus, the increased popularity of the radical right (Engler and Weisstanner 2020, 2021). Few scholars, on the opposite, emphasize the supply side. They argue that political elites use nationalism to divert attention away from class divisions and to garner support from the poor despite advancing policies that benefit the rich (Solt 2011; Hacker and Pierson 2020). Daphne Halikiopoulou (2019) shows that the adoption of a predominantly civic nationalist rhetoric allows right-wing parties to win the voices of people of different backgrounds and preferences. Finally, other theorists claim that the rise of nationalist politics is attributable to neither supply nor demand for nationalism but rather to conjunctural, context-specific factors (Bonikowski 2017).

Frederick Solt's (2011) famous study that focuses directly on the question of intersection of economic inequality and national pride also provides the supply theory in his study of large survey data. He finds that the higher economic inequality in society, the higher emotional attachment to the nation and, consequently, national pride is more relevant in unequal societies than in more economically homogeneous ones. According to Frederick Solt, this can only be explained by what he calls a "diversionary theory" of nationalism: "[S]tates generate nationalist sentiments to respond to the threat of unrest posed by high levels of economic inequality' (Solt 2011, 822). According to some scholars, inequality threatens social cohesion, making it less likely for people to see themselves as part of a single, unified nation (Gilbert 2018). Others, in contrast, argue that inequality prompts political challengers to promote alternative national identifications among the poor, threatening the dominant nationalism (Brown 1998). Solt's findings challenge both views. In Solt's analysis, the increases in inequality on a societal level are correlated with increases in national pride regardless of personal income: nationalist propaganda targets everyone indiscriminately, affecting the rich as well as the poor.

In Solt's study, agents of nationalist agitation are simply states. Other researchers are more specific in naming the culprits. Studying party programs collected by the Comparative Manifesto Project, Margit Tavits and Joshua Potter (2015) find that in times of heightened inequality, broadly right-wing (liberal, Christian Democratic, conservative, or nationalist) parties resort to value-based appeals (including nationalism, morality, and religion) as opposed to economic interest-based appeals. According to Tavis and Potter, rising inequality is a boon to left-wing parties that support redistributive policies. Consequently, right-wing parties increasingly appeal to *values* instead of *interests* in order to maintain their voter base among the poor. Importantly, this effect is more pronounced in countries with existing ethnic and religious cleavages as well as large migrant populations—in other words, in places where divisions among the working class can be sown more effectively. Geography is also important here because these cleavages are differently pronounced in different areas.

Jacob Hacker and Paul Pierson's (2020) book-length case study of the United States complements Tavis and Potter's large-*N* study. Hacker and Pierson trace the shift of the US Republican Party from the moderate right to insurgent populism and nationalism. They use the term "plutocratic populism," (coined by Fareed Zakaria (2017) in relation to Pierson's (2017) previous work) to describe a combination of pro-rich policies and populist appeals that is directed at mobilizing working-class whites to vote against their own economic interests. Race-baiting and attacking minorities constitute an essential part of this strategy. Hacker and Pierson emphasize the role of the media as well as the power of identity: "Issue positions can inform identities, but it is identities—perceptions of shared allegiance and shared threat—that really mobilize" (Hacker and Pierson 2020, 117). The book lends support to the supply theory of inequality and nationalism:

"spirals of extremism do not bubble up from below; they emerge when elites capitalize on preexisting prejudices in pursuit of political gain" (Hacker and Pierson 2020). Voters are not the original source of nationalist extremism: elites are.

Nevertheless, other researchers disagree with Hacker and Pierson's claim that the elites are primarily to blame for the rise of nationalism in times of heightened inequality. They argue in favor of a psychological theory that connects inequality to social status. Sarah Engler and David Weisstanner (2020) find a negative relationship between income inequality and the self-perceived status of lower-educated men: with high levels of inequality, they feel threatened in terms of their social standing. This sense of threat, in turn, is directly related to the vote for the radical right. According to Engler and Weisstanner, rising inequality hurts working-class men's perceptions of their personal social standing, prompting them to support nationalist parties that provide non-economic criteria of status (such as being native). In a later work, Engler and Weisstanner (2021) find that income inequality increases the support for the radical right among middle-income and high-status groups. They interpret this as evidence that the *fear* of social decline that is instilled by rising inequality creates a momentum for the radical right. Kyung Joon Han (2016) also finds that rising inequality increases the vote for radical right parties among low-income groups and those in working-class occupations. Jay et al. (2019, 8) further elucidate the connection between rising inequality and nationalist backlash: "Under unequal economic conditions, wealth is made salient and is likely to be used as a basis for intergroup comparisons. Because of feelings of threat, people cleave to identities that can provide a sense of psychological security." Far-right parties exploit this type of psychological reaction. Importantly, for Jay et al., economic inequality increases the sense of threat for rich and poor alike, resulting in growing nationalist sentiments across all income groups. Thus Solt's (2011) findings that inequality affects national pride regardless of a person's income do not necessarily contradict the demand theory of nationalism as formulated by Jay et al.

Finally, Bart Bonikowski (2017) argues that, in the long run, both supply and demand for nationalism have been relatively stable. However, he argues that the last two decades witnessed rapid economic, demographic, and cultural changes that shifted the ground for radical right politics. Bonikowski does name inequality as one of the economic stressors, emphasizing both rising demand for nationalism and political strategies of the radical right (Bonikowski 2017, 202). On one hand, he argues that "outsider candidates have effectively guided voters toward out-group hostility, by persistently blaming minorities and immigrants for contributing to these voters' acutely experienced collective status threat" (Bonikowski 2017, 204). On the other hand, he maintains that "status-insecure voters have placed identity issues at the forefront of their political decision making, making it easy for entrepreneurial elites to capture their support" (Bonikowski 2017, 205). In essence, both politicians and their voting base are responsible for the rise of the far-right.

Indeed, rising support for nationalist politics is likely the result of a double movement that consists of changes in mass attitudes combined with new strategies of the radical right. What is more, this double movement generates certain feedback loops. For example, nationalist politicians exploit the sense of insecurity generated by economic inequality. Once in power, they implement highly regressive social policies (such as Trump's tax cuts for the richest income groups), deepening inequality even more and thus generating further nationalist backlash. According to Jay et al. (2019, 8), "growing support of FR [far right] populism only serves to secure rather than challenge the unequal status quo." A pessimistic conclusion is that both inequality and exclusionary forms of nationalism are here to stay, becoming permanent features of the socioeconomic landscape.

Importantly, modern forms of economic inequality are tightly linked to spatial polarization. Globalization benefits big postindustrial cities yet hurts the deindustrializing rustbelts and rural areas across the developed world. Consequently, the connection between inequality and national-ism has a distinctly spatial dimension. Researchers talk about "the revenge of places that don't matter" (Rodríguez-Pose 2020), a phenomenon that often takes the form of voting for the far-right in rural and small-town areas. Nationalist politicians capitalize on provincial discontent by

contrasting the truly national heartland to the cosmopolitan elites residing in big cities. A connection between inequality, identity, and support for the radical right in rural areas has been at the forefront of several recent studies (see Mamonova and Franquesa 2020).

The discontent with economic inequality that is used by left-wing politicians in their populist discourses touches on the nationalist agenda as well. Nationalism, often seemed alien from left ideology, nowadays successfully serves for its broader appeal. As Dalle Mulle and Kernallegen (2022) argue, Western European left-wing parties have used instrumental conceptions of nation-hood to address the challenge of separatist parties, whereas subnational left parties organically use nationalist rhetoric integrating it with left ideology (Dinas 2012). Some left actors fully and openly engaged with nationalism (Custodi 2021). A recent themed section on "Left Nationalism in the Western Europe" shed light on some specificities of left nationalism while highlighting that there is still lack of research on this topic (Dalle Mulle and Kernallegen 2022). All discussions of economic inequality from both a nationwide perspective and a subnational perspective, however, highlight the plural nature of their populations but lack the considerations of practical implications of it. Economic nationalism as such is one of the pillars both of the left- and right-wing nationalist politics in modern states, both liberal democracies (Rioux 2020) and autocracies (Rutland 2015) adopted it for their agendas; moreover, economic nationalism was recently fueled by the pandemic and national responses to it (Bieber 2022). Protectionism as a politics has come back into political agenda on both national and subnational levels. This is relevant both for country-level and substate protectionism (Parker 2022). Many scholars argue that protectionist politics at the aftermath of pandemic will lead to increasing economic inequality between developed and developing countries (Mylonas and Whalley 2022), thus putting global inequality in a more recognizable spatial dimension than before, contributing to the North and the South division.

Political Inequality and Nationhood

In this section, we discuss the major approaches that examine various implications of differential citizenship and inequality in accessing citizenship and civic and political rights for minority groups in pluralistic societies. We argue that territorial politics are an important—if often overlooked—aspect of inequality in citizenship rights and symbolic representation of nationhood more generally. Citizenship inequality can manifest itself in many ways and often intertwines with categorical inequality like class, gender, race, and ethnicity. In some sense, citizenship is inherently about minority–majority divides because in the process of defining citizenship rules, obtaining it or challenging background ideas on which it rests, one can switch from minority to majority and vice versa.

The Politics of Immigration

The focus on inequalities between mainstream and minority populations understood as cultural, racial, or ethnic divisions is predominant when discussing politics of citizenship and national belonging (Brubaker 2010). Before the recent rise of populism across the globe, these studies mostly examined policies and practices of multicultural citizenship and the rise of minority rights within societies (Kymlicka 1995; Joppke 2007), or various obstacles to migrants' integration and exercise of social rights within national boundaries (Schuster and Solomos 2002; Baumeister 2003). This scholarship, focused on definitions of citizenship per se and transformations of ideas about national belonging often highlighted the importance of the symbolic and (multi)cultural aspects of citizen-ship (Delanty 2002). With the rise of populist discourses and nationalist politics, the focus has shifted to the exclusionary politics of citizenship and to populist discourses that promote politics of hardening naturalization rules and limiting the civil and other rights of internal minorities and migrants (Jones 2016; Mudde 2016). However, in multinational states the politics of immigration has its internal regional differences that might have led to significant political consequences and

political divides. Although the different approaches to immigration in substate regions of multinational countries are acknowledged, they are rarely focusing on its influence on nation-building and the politics of national belonging. Rather, research around substate nationalism simply shows that the promotion of interculturalism, and inclusive substate immigration policies are what most distinguishes leftist regions from right-wing national governments (Conversi and Jeram 2017; Zuber 2020) but often lacks attention to other aspects of these differences that affect centroperipheral divide and contestation over nation-building policies (like language policy or rules for naturalization). Moreover, as Brexit and other recent events have shown, internal territorial divides, political attitudes, and immigration discourse are important areas for research on the current right-wing turn in politics. Are there only economic explanations for higher xenophobia in "places that do not matter"? What is the role of digital divide or, more precisely, digital literacy for understanding center-periphery divisions for nationalist support and welcoming immigration attitudes?

Class and Citizenship

Another often overlooked effect of inequality on citizenship and the politics of belonging is its growing relation to class categories. Scholarship that examines limitations in access to citizenship has begun to acknowledge the role of class in citizenship acquisition in welfare states and has focused on such phenomena such as "flexible citizenship" or "birth tourism" when the members of the upper class from poor countries acquire multiple or double citizenships in rich countries (Balta and Altan-Olcay 2016). Flexible citizenship phenomena exacerbate the spatial dimension of capital accumulation: rich people tend to keep their wealth in a few countries that are convenient, where they can lobby immigration rules. On the other hand, this can raise resentment from the less advantaged local population expressed in racial prejudices. High-skilled migrants' social mobility in host societies is also gaining academic interest. Researchers highlight the effects of cultural and racial distinctiveness on exclusion from citizenship rights and opportunities for social mobility (Preminger 2020). However, this scholarship often lacks engagement with current debates on the redefinition of the notion of class in the sociology of social stratification, which highlights the territorial dimension of class (Savage 2015). The idea that class today is increasingly defined not just by specific locality but also by the proximity to areas where capitals are concentrated can significantly affect the research on flexible citizenship and the relative influence of race on social mobility of new citizens. At the same time, a recent overview of scholarship in nationalism studies highlighted the lack of academic attention to the interplay between local and national identification and interrelations between local and national politics (Mylonas and Tudor 2021). Therefore, we argue that nationalism studies scholars should engage more with this literature and investigate how locality and territorial characteristics affect the intersections of social and spatial mobility, class, and citizenship.

Race

Scholarship on racialized inequalities in access to citizenship and in the recognition of the rights of racial minorities is quickly expanding (FitzGerald 2017; Partridge 2020). However, even though the death of George Floyd galvanized both activist movements and academic discussions in the Americas and Europe, there is still a lack of academic interest in racialized minorities and their access to citizenship rights and perceived inequality in political representation in other parts of the world. The predominant focus is on Black and Asian minorities, whereas the experiences of indigenous minorities and mixed-race people are rarely seen through this perspective. Although linguistic diversity, often associated with territorial diversity, used to be considered as one of the characteristics of racial distinctiveness, linguistic diversity per se in conjunction with official language policies are also largely overlooked in nationalism and citizenship research.

Another explanation for the rise of popular support for racialized nationalist projects lies on the idea that resentful nonurban whites feel alienation from the nation's elite multicultural project (Kaufmann 2019) that is complemented by research arguing that the disadvantages experienced by minority groups lead to struggles for social justice, which in turn activate a reactionary nationalism among national majorities (Ashutosh 2022). Although both sides of this coin largely acknowledge the role of territory—namely, the urban-rural divide—they do this rather simplistically, ignoring other spatial divides that can be important for the analysis (Kaufmann and Harris 2015; Silver, Taylor, and Calderón-Figueroa 2019).

Gender

Growing scholarship concerns gender inequality and the politics of belonging. Researchers scrutinize various citizenship regimes and look at how assumptions about what constitutes a good marriage or the right gender establish the boundaries of the nation and heteronormative citizenship (Johnson 2002; Kristol and Dahinden 2020). Other scholars look at the role of sexuality in political participation in illiberal settings and its connection to citizenship rights (Kondakov 2019). The growing body of literature on intersectionality addresses the struggles around the determination of what is involved in belonging per se and in being a member of the national community as such (Yuval-Davis 2016). Surprisingly, the aforementioned issues are rarely addressed from the everyday nationalism perspective; although this could be a fruitful way of exploring gender politics in bottom-up practices of nationalism and vice versa (Goode and Stroup 2015). The lack of attentiveness as to how various gender regimes are reflected in representations of nationhood depending on territorial politics, urban–rural divides, and local traditions in culturally heterogeneous states is another lacuna in the relevant literature that merits scholarly attention. How are normative gender regimes contested in culturally different and economically distinctive territories of a single state? Who decides which gender regime should be dominant and how alternative gender regimes seek national recognition?

Ethnicity and Belonging

Social scientists' interest in the rise of ethnonationalism in the national imagination and the politics of citizenship has also been increasing recently (Ketola and Nordensvard 2018; Kaufmann 2019; Schertzer and Woods 2020). This strand of scholarship is mainly concerned with how and why a civic understanding of nationhood has been replaced with a focus on cultural or ethnic understandings. Scholars highlight the role of ethnosymbolism and its effects on the redefinition of a nation and on the politics of citizenship. However, there remains a lack of research on these processes from a bottom-up perspective, especially using qualitative methodologies which can shed a light on which (local) symbols and why become legitimate for the representation of a nation as a whole. Although big data provides opportunities to explore the way fake news circulate and nationalist sentiments become viral, there is still a limited analysis of digital platforms' ability to mediate top-down discourses and enable bottom-up resistance to exclusionary politics by minorities themselves. How do various minority groups adjust, resist, or transform mainstream ethnonationalist discourses and policies? Which alternative visions of nationhood coexist when ethnonationalist discourses prevail? What determines a particular constellation of ideas about nationhood, and which vantage points and voices are the loudest in the multivocal orchestra of a nation? Is it true that the white male working class has the loudest voice? In other words, it is the time to flip the coin and focus more on those that are disadvantaged in political communication. Considering digital media have been playing an increasingly major role in shaping the political behavior of both elites and masses nowadays, especially in the domain of nationalism (Yusupova and Rutland 2021), it is important to take into consideration the effects of digital inequalities. Often spatialized digital divide, in the form of lack of digital literacy rather than Internet access itself, has a

crucial effect on political participation (Sylvester and McGlynn 2010; Gilbert and Masucci 2020). Also, spatial segregation has been only accelerated by the pandemic (Kuk et al. 2021); therefore, the territorial dimension in analyzing the participation in debates over nationhood is becoming more important and can shed light into current success of nativist claims and support for exclusionary politics.

Attention to the effect of territorial politics on political inequality in border regions has become a spotlight in nationalism studies recently. However, although there is a growing body of literature on irredentist politics due to the annexation of Crimea, there is still a lack of academic attention to the geopolitical implications of the rise of ethnonationalism and on kin states' reaction to exclusionary discourses and policies toward their kin populations in other countries. Research of extreme examples like Uighur "reeducation" camps in China and discrimination against Muslims under India's new citizenship policy also focuses mostly on elite discourses and policy implementation and does not account for the global or neighboring Muslim communities' response (McKinney 2022). We argue that attention to territorially differential responses on nation-building policies across and beyond certain countries is essential for understanding those policies' promotion and implementations.

Separatism and Ethnic Conflicts

Economic issues and unfair territorial distribution of wealth are usually seen as dominant reasons for separatism or regionalism. However, with the rise of populist politics in recent years this understanding has been slightly altered and expanded from predominantly economic explanations to encompass the role of political inequalities as well (Cetrà 2019; Basta 2021). As Gagnon and Tremblay (2019) highlighted in their research agenda for studies on federalism and diversity, political pluralistic federalism is the most potentially useful way to accommodate ethnic diversity in deeply divided societies today, thus securing equal political rights for all. In other studies, carried out mostly by scholars who focus on hot ethnic conflicts such as separatism, secessionism, ethnic riots, and other types of ethnic mobilization, the reasons for these conflicts are usually attributed to horizontal inequalities that are inherently multidimensional. These researchers focus on culturally defined groups, not individuals or territories (Stewart 2008; Brown and Langer 2010), and see horizontal inequalities as a cause for identity-based conflicts. As noted by Canelas and Gisselquist (2018), the work on horizontal inequalities is closely related to the research on ethnic stratification or categorial inequalities and ranked and unranked ethnic groups, with these categories of analysis often being used interchangeably (Canelas and Gisselquist 2018, 306). This direction of research has recently started to look at horizontal inequalities as an outcome of various processes of group formation rather than as an independent variable: scholars become interested in how horizontal inequalities may change following the composition and boundary formation of the ethnic groups themselves (306). This shift has facilitated research on horizontal inequalities both from an intersectional perspective (Munir and Ullah 2020) and from a multidimensional focus on inequality (Burchi et al. 2019). This multidimensional approach to horizontal inequalities goes in line with a recent reevaluation of the notion of class in the sociology of social stratification and inequality, where class is understood as a constellation of various forms of capital (social, cultural, economic), locality, age, and other characteristics (Savage 2015). Income alone is no longer relevant in addressing horizontal inequalities, be they understood as ethnic inequalities or defined differently. Moreover, because class becomes a territorial characteristic (closeness to centers of cultural and financial capitals becomes crucial to assess prestige) and territory becomes a significant dimension of class in almost any society today (highlighting the importance of place of origin and educational background that is inherently linked to the scale of prestigious and less prestigious places, as well as preferable locations for spending holidays, etc.), it is necessary to engage with the research on social stratification that suggests that social mobility often correlates with spatial mobility (Friedman and Laurison 2019, 299, 312). This approach will help the analysis both of territorial inequalities that

overlap with various horizontal inequalities and of substate politics that focus on center–periphery tensions. The latter are usually understood as underrepresentation in politics, manifesting mainly as a lack of power to define economic policies (Barrio, Barberà, and Rodríguez-Teruel 2018; Massetti 2018; Béland et al. 2020). In recent years, this has become a two-way road because scholars of social inequality criticize scant scholarly attention to subnational social inequalities and propose a shift from measuring interpersonal inequality to focusing on territorial disparity, which challenges the ideas of formations of inequality (Otero-Bahamon 2019). This goes in line with Mike Savage's argument about the increasing overlap between spatial, economic, and cultural inequalities and his idea that categorical inequalities must be analyzed together with distributional inequalities because of the long-lasting effects of imperial legacies.

The Transformative Force of the Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has undoubtedly changed ideas and practices of nationalism and nationhood, simultaneously strengthening both (inter)national solidarity and xenophobic attitudes. Some researchers stress new ways to express national solidarities through wearing masks in a particular way, spreading useful tips, support apps, cheerful videos, and psychological support for conationals (Goode, Stroup, and Gaufman 2022). Others focus on nationally bounded policy responses stimulated by COVID-19 (Bieber 2020), including "vaccine nationalism" as another reason for national pride and soft power (Rutschman 2020) or medicine nationalism as a result of health securitization (Woods et al. 2020). However, researchers also highlight that the pandemic has facilitated international dialogue because the virus is a global threat requiring a global response. All these transformations demand posing new questions about the relationship between nationalism and inequality. Localized measures and contestation over the rights to impose own restrictions on the subnational are of particular interest for scholars of nationalism because these developments highlight the limits of the nation states in dealing with crises. On the other hand, blame-shifting mechanisms enacted through decentralization are also important new research areas where cases territorially determined and geography acquires new meaning.

A general argument about the direct link between national belonging and global inequality was made by Branko Milanovic (2013) even before the pandemic. He argued that national citizenship is the main determinant of global economic inequalities due to national location being the major factor behind differences in individual incomes across the globe. Considering the different national approaches of support for the poor and vulnerable, it can be argued that the pandemic has strengthened this correlation. On the other hand, before the pandemic, some scholars of cosmopolitan citizenship and its effect on social inequalities highlighted the diminishing role of national citizenship versus the growing role of human and social rights at the global level (Aneesh and Wolover 2017). Others centered on the diminishing role of national boundaries and the central role of class and various local relations of capital for biopolitics and border politics (Glick Schiller and Salazar 2013). How has the pandemic affected these domains? Have populists won or lost to the pandemic? How did pandemic-driven biopolitics affect perceptions of nationhood and national belonging? How will phenomena such as transnationalism and circular migration have transformed themselves during the pandemic and in turn transform nationalism and nation-states? How should scholars reevaluate the role of territory for national policies in relation to a borderless disease? Why has the common experience of the pandemic resulted in the rise of national solidarities in some societies but not in others, and how is it related to internal economic inequality? These are questions that are waiting to be answered.

Conclusion

The researchers of inequality have shifted their attention from poverty to capital accumulation and their focus from income inequality to wealth inequality consequently. This has led to an

understanding of the role of the historical process and imperial legacy in the reproduction of inequality and its rapid growth in recent years and also to the recognition of that any type of capital can be converted from one form to another. However, these significant turns in inequality research still have little influence on the understanding of the role of inequality in nationalism today: the rise of nationalist politics around the world is more often explained by the growth of economic inequality within countries, understood as interpersonal income inequality. Recent studies of inequality show that capital accumulation—that is, the accumulation of wealth which is often converted into other types of capital—occurs in certain spatial zones. That is, different forms of capital are always geographically concentrated. Therefore, we propose to pay attention to the role of territory and territorial politics in particular, to scrutinize the relationship between inequality and nationalism. Overall, we show that it is necessary to take into account the current literature on inequality and recognize the broader implications of rising inequality in wealth for various manifestations of nationalism. Our review has also shown that, although there are many intersections and interrelations between various areas in nationalism studies that concern inequality in one way or another, there is still little dialogue between them. Our review reveals that research on interrelations of nationalism and inequality often overlooks, and barely engages with, the growing role of territorial politics and territorial dynamics for economic and political inequalities as such. This is, however, a promising direction of future research in nationalism studies because, despite the digital revolution that facilitated transnationalism, territorial dynamics and location are becoming increasingly important for explaining various phenomena related to nationalism.

Disclosure. None.

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