

# Nationalism and Ethnic-Based Trust: Evidence From an African Border Region

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## Abstract

In diverse societies, individuals tend to trust coethnics more than non-coethnics. I argue that identification with a territorially defined nation, common to all ethnic groups, reduces the degree to which trust is ethnically bounded. I conduct a “lab-in-the-field” experiment at the intersection of national and ethnic boundaries in Malawi, which measures strength of national identification, experimentally manipulates national identity salience, and measures trust behaviorally. I find that shared nationality is a robust predictor of trust, equal in magnitude to the impact of shared ethnicity. Furthermore, national identification moderates the degree to which trust is limited to coethnics: While weak national identifiers trust coethnics more than non-coethnics, strong national identifiers are blind to ethnicity. Experimentally increasing national identity salience also eliminates the coethnic trust advantage among weak nationalists. These results offer micro-level evidence that a strong and salient national identity can diminish ethnic barriers to trust in diverse societies.

## Keywords

African politics, experimental research, ethnicity, trust, social capital, nationalism

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Existing research has documented ethnic bias among members of diverse societies in many socially relevant behaviors, including vote choice (Adida, 2015; Huber, 2012; Kasara, 2013; Posner, 2004), economic transactions (S. Grossman & Honig, 2013; Michelitch, 2015; Robinson, 2013), political responsiveness (McClendon, 2016), allocation of material resources (Franck & Rainer, 2012), altruism (Charnysh, Lucas, & Singh, 2015; Mironova & Whitt, 2014; Whitt & Wilson, 2007), and social sanctioning (Bernhard, Fehr, & Fischbacher, 2006; Habyarimana, Humphreys, Posner, & Weinstein, 2009a; Miguel & Gugerty, 2005). As a result, ethnic diversity is often characterized as an economic and political detriment to society. However, scholars have shown that such ethnic discrimination is not inevitable and can be overcome via dense social networks (Dionne, 2014), residential integration (Kasara, 2013; Mironova & Whitt, 2014), political unity (Singh, 2011), or the activation of cross-cutting social cleavages (Dunning & Harrison, 2010).

I argue that increased identification with a common national identity can also reduce the negative effects of ethnic diversity on pro-social behaviors. I focus on trust because it is important for many political and economic outcomes (e.g., La Porta, Lopez-De-Silanes, Shleifer, & Vishny, 1997; Putnam, 1993; Zak & Knack, 2001), but is demonstrably weaker in diverse states (Hooghe, Reeskens, Stolle, & Trappers, 2009; Knack & Keefer, 1997) due to ethnic trust discrimination (Fershtman & Gneezy, 2001; Kasara, 2013). I evaluate the impact of nationalism on ethnic-based trust in Sub-Saharan Africa, where states are extremely diverse (Easterly & Levine, 1997) and trust is particularly weak (Uslaner, 2008b).

Applied to the case of ethnically diverse African states, the argument is developed in two parts. First, I contend that territorially defined national identities in Africa constitute meaningful social identities with the power to facilitate interpersonal trust, despite the commonly held view that nationalism in Africa is too weak to counter salient ethnic attachments. Second, I argue that variation in identification with the nation, both across individuals and across contexts, explains the degree to which trust is ethnically bounded. In particular, I expect that an increase in national identification will reduce the degree to which individuals base their trust on shared ethnicity within a multi-ethnic nation.<sup>1</sup>

To evaluate these expectations, I carry out a “lab-in-the-field” experiment in an ethnically diverse region of Malawi near the international border with Zambia, where previous research has documented intense ethnic antagonisms (Posner, 2004). By situating the study at the intersection of an ethnic and a national border, where coethnicity and conationality are orthogonal, I am able to empirically evaluate the impact of one shared identity while controlling for the other. To assess whether national identification ameliorates ethnic trust

discrimination, the research design combines novel measures of each individual's strength of national attachment—distinguishing affective, behavioral, and cognitive forms of identification—with an experimental manipulation of national identity salience and evaluates whether these two forms of variation in national identification explain the degree to which trust is conditioned on shared ethnicity. Trust is measured within subjects, using standard behavioral economic trust games implemented in rural market settings.

Contrary to the popular image of African societies as primarily tribal, with very little loyalty tied to the territorial state (e.g., Collier, 2009), I find evidence that, on average, shared nationality is just as important as shared ethnicity for decisions about whom to trust. This suggests that national identity in Malawi, and perhaps in other ethnically diverse states, has the potential to complement weak formal institutions by facilitating the kind of interpersonal trust necessary for efficient economic and social interactions, even across ethnic lines.

Furthermore, both strength of national identification and the salience of national identity reduce ethnic trust discrimination among conationals. First, the size of the coethnic trust premium decreases slightly as strength of cognitive identification (but not affective or behavioral identification) with the Malawian nation increases, largely as a result of increased trust in non-coethnics. Second, although most respondents tend to trust coethnics more than non-coethnics, when the common national identity is (experimentally) made salient, coethnics and non-coethnics are trusted at the same rate. This effect is driven by weak national identifiers, who, in the absence of the prime, exhibit the largest coethnic trust premium.

These results suggest that ethnic-based trust discrimination may be reduced in diverse settings *either* by increasing the degree to which individuals see the nation as homogeneous, and themselves as typical members (both components of cognitive identification), *or* by increasing the salience of national identity through the ubiquitous use of national symbology such as the national flag, national anthem, or national currency, which Billig (1995) refers to as “banal nationalism.” However, these two methods of reducing ethnic trust discrimination may have different consequences for aggregate levels of trust: Strong national identification extends trust to non-coethnics, whereas national identity salience simultaneously increases trust in non-coethnics and reduces trust in coethnics. This means that although increased strength of national identification and exposure to national symbols both eliminate the coethnic trust premium, the former reflects an extension of trust across ethnic lines whereas the latter achieves ethnic trust equality, at least partially, at the expense of overall levels of trust. Although strong national identification is thus clearly beneficial for aggregate trust in diverse societies,

the value of national identity salience is less clear: Its utility ultimately depends on the relative benefits of strong but ethnically bounded trust versus weaker but ethnically blind trust. This set of findings thus motivates an important avenue for future research.

This research makes a number of important contributions to the literature on identity and trust. First, most micro-level studies on shared identity and cooperative behavior tend to consider only nominal group identities (e.g., Bernhard et al., 2006; Habyarimana et al., 2009a; Michelitch, 2015), rather than exploring variation in the degree to which individuals actually identify with a given identity. And when variation in strength of identification is considered (e.g., Miguel, 2004; Posner, 2004), it tends to be captured only through country-level differences. By directly measuring individual-level differences in strength of national identification, this project advances our understanding of when and for whom shared identities matter. Second, I theoretically and empirically distinguish between *strength* of identification with a particular identity and the contextual *salience* of that identity. Although past research has tended to assume that the two are part of the same underlying form of group identification (e.g., Akerlof & Kranton, 2011; Benjamin, Choi, & Strickland, 2010; Sambanis & Shayo, 2013), the findings reported here suggest that they may have different implications for behavior. Third, this research reports behavioral decisions by members of real ethnic groups rather than artificial groups created in a laboratory, and among rural Malawians instead of convenience samples of university students or online participants. This increases the generalizability of the findings and extends our understanding of nationalism and intergroup relations beyond industrialized countries and urban centers in developing countries.

## Nationalism and the Coethnic Trust Premium

Generalized trust within a society is associated with better economic performance (Knack & Keefer, 1997; Whiteley, 2000; Zak & Knack, 2001), less corruption (Uslaner, 2008a), better governance (Alesina & Zhuravskaya, 2011; Knack & Zak, 2003; La Porta et al., 1997; Putnam, 1993), and greater capacity for collective action (Levi, 1998; Nannestad, 2008; Uslaner & Brown, 2005). However, generalized trust is markedly weaker in ethnically diverse states (Alesina & La Ferrara, 2002; Hooghe et al., 2009; Knack & Keefer, 1997; Putnam, 2007), presumably resulting from low levels of inter-ethnic trust (Fershtman & Gneezy, 2001; Kasara, 2013; Tanis & Postmes, 2005). The existing scholarship has thus concluded, as Whiteley (2000) puts it, that “some societies, particularly those deeply divided by ethnic or racial divisions, may have strong ties and high levels of ‘thick’ trust within

particular communities, but this does not generalize to society as a whole” (p. 449).<sup>2</sup> This characterization of the negative impact of diversity on trust has been particularly applied to African states, which are among the most ethnically diverse in the world (Easterly & Levine, 1997) and exhibit the lowest levels of generalized trust across regions (Uslaner, 2008b).<sup>3</sup>

When faced with the reality of a multi-cultural society, how can trust be generalized to society as a whole? I argue that increased identification with a common, overarching national identity can form the basis of a trust community in African states, even amid ethnic diversity. However, this claim is at odds with the general perception that national identities in Africa are too weak to meaningfully impact behavior.<sup>4</sup> Africanists have long been skeptical of the power of the territorially defined nation as an “imagined community” (Anderson, 1983) in Africa, mostly because of the colonial origins of African states (Davidson, 1992). The borders of modern African states were determined by colonial partition of the continent without regard for existing patterns of group identification (Herbst, 1989; Jackson & Rosberg, 1982), resulting in the amalgamation of many cultural groups into a single state and the partition of other groups into multiple states (Asiwaju, 1985; Englebert, Tarango, & Carter, 2002). As a result, at independence, most African states lacked a common language, history, and cultural traditions, the basic building blocks of territorial nationalism (Gellner, 1983; Horowitz, 1985). Furthermore, the processes of “modernization” that allowed European states to surmount sub-national attachments and engender national identification (Bendix, 1964; Deutsch, 1953) are the same forces that are blamed for the supposed failure of African nations and their fragmentation along ethnic lines (Bates, 1983; Calhoun, 1993; Connor, 1972; Melson & Wolpe, 1970).

Thus, existing literature paints a pessimistic picture of the (lack of) impact national identities are likely to have on everyday behavior in African states. However, historical accounts of the rise of widespread national identification in Europe document that many of the problems purported to block territorial nationalism in Africa also existed in pre-national Europe, including partitioned cultural groups (Harp, 1998; Sahlins, 1989; Zahra, 2008) and culturally diverse states (Weber, 1979). It is not clear how these hurdles were overcome in Europe, but are assumed to be insurmountable in post-colonial Africa. For this reason, Young (2004) has called into question the weakness of nationalism in African states, referencing its understated power as an explanation for the persistent unity of many fragile states.

Consistent with this skepticism of African exceptionalism, some empirical evidence suggests that national identities are, in fact, relevant to regular people in African states. Miles and Rochefort (1991) looked at the relative importance of multiple identities among the Hausa of Niger and Nigeria, and

found that for this particular ethnic group, national identity was more important than ethnic identity in both countries. More recently, Robinson (2014) finds that processes of modernization across African states are associated with stronger national relative to ethnic identification, resulting in a net increase of national unity with modernization. However, both these findings are based on self-reported, attitudinal measures of national identification rather than its impact on behavior.

To make the case that national identification can promote interpersonal trust within a nation, it must first be shown that shared nationality is relevant for behavioral trust. Thus, I expect the following:

**Hypothesis 1 (H1):** Conationality, along with coethnicity, will be associated with greater levels of trust.

My central argument, however, goes beyond the claim that territorially defined national identities are relevant for trust. I suggest that increased identification with that nation can actually reduce the degree to which trust is conditioned on sub-national ethnic identities. Although not explicitly focused on trust, Miguel (2004) similarly posits that strong nationalism in Tanzania helps explain high rates of interethnic cooperation, Singh (2011) demonstrates that a common Malayali identity fosters collective action in the diverse Indian state of Kerala, and Charnysh et al. (2015) find that priming the Indian national identity increases altruism across religious lines. The expectation is also consistent with Putnam's (2007) insistence that diverse societies must "dampen the negative effects of diversity by constructing new, more encompassing identities . . . a broader sense of 'we'" (p. 139). In the context of ethnically diverse African states, I argue that the territorially defined nation can offer just such a pan-ethnic sense of "we."

This argument builds theoretically on two key findings in the social-psychological study of intergroup relations. First, individuals tend to perceive members of their own in-group to be more trustworthy than members of out-groups and thus to trust in-group members more than out-group members (Brewer & Kramer, 1985; Kramer & Brewer, 1984; Tanis & Postmes, 2005). This in-group favoritism results from the psychological desire to see groups to which one belongs as favorable to other groups, a central tenet of social identity theory (Brown, 2000; Tajfel, Billig, Bundy, & Flament, 1971; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). This trust bias generally results from *positive* in-group bias rather than *negative* out-group bias (Allport, 1954; Brewer, 1999). Thus, in the context of ethnically divided societies, observed trust differences between coethnics and non-coethnics should result from a "trust premium" for coethnics rather than reduced trust in non-coethnics (relative to some baseline

context in which no groups are relevant). In contrast to strategic explanations of the coethnic trust premium (e.g., Habyarimana, Humphreys, Posner, & Weinstein, 2009b), this psychological mechanism does not require that coethnics are *actually* more trustworthy, only that they are perceived to be when ethnic differences are salient.

Second, positive in-group bias, including greater perceived trustworthiness, can be extended to former out-group members by creating or emphasizing a common, superordinate identity group (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000). In the lab, increased national identity salience has been shown to reduce intergroup bias (Riek, Mania, Gaertner, McDonald, & Lamoreaux, 2010) and increase support for out-group-favoring policies (Transue, 2007). This effect is almost always the result of social recategorization (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000)—reclassifying previous out-group members as in-group members—rather than social decategorization and the loss of original group distinctions (Brewer, 1979; Brewer & Miller, 1984; Wilder, 1981). The territorially defined nation in Africa provides an inclusive in-group comprising individuals of different ethnicities: Thus, as individuals identify more with the national identity, they should come to trust members of other ethnic groups at the same rate as members of their own ethnic group.

My argument is, thus, not just about nominal group membership, but instead about the degree to which individuals identify with that group. In other words, I treat *identification*, rather than just identity, as a variable. I focus in particular on two sources of variation in group identification: interpersonal differences in strength of identification and the situational salience of an identity within a particular context. Hale (2004) similarly characterizes these two forms of group identification as “chronically accessible” versus “situationally accessible,” whereas Sniderman, Hagendoorn, and Prior (2004) refer to them as “predisposing factors” and “situational triggers” (Sniderman et al., 2004).

I define *strength* of identification as comprising three different ways in which individuals identify with social groups (Henry, Arrow, & Carini, 1999).<sup>5</sup> *Affective* identification is associated with the literature on social cohesion and emphasizes emotional attachment to the group and its other members (Piper, Marrache, Lacroix, Richardsen, & Jones, 1983). Affective nationalism is the most commonly studied component of national identification, especially the focus on national pride or patriotism (e.g., De Figueiredo & Elkins, 2003; Huddy & Khatib, 2007). *Behavioral* identification is central to the linked fate literature and focuses on the interdependence of members as a source of group identification (Brewer & Gardner, 1996; Dawson, 1995). Thus, behavioral identification with the nation should increase the more an individual perceives her fate to be dependent on the nation’s fate as a whole.

*Cognitive* identification comes from social identity theory and stipulates that individuals categorize themselves as a member of a group based on shared attributes and perceived homogeneity of characteristics (Simon & Pettigrew, 1990; Tajfel et al., 1971; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1986). Thus, the more homogeneous an individual perceives the national group to be, and the more he sees himself as a typical member of that group, the stronger he should identify with the nation (Castano, Yzerbyt, & Bourguignon, 2003; Pickett & Brewer, 2001). Research shows that strength of identification can be fairly stable within individuals across time, resulting from long-term processes like socialization and social embeddedness (Abrams, 1999; Markus & Kunda, 1986). Based on the theory outlined above, I thus expect the following:

**Hypothesis 2 (H2):** The more strongly individuals identify with the nation, the more likely they will be to trust coethnic and non-coethnic members of the nation equally.

*Situational* identification with the nation, however, is defined as the salience of the national identity relative to other social identities in a particular context. When the national identity is made salient in a given context, individuals should identify more strongly with their national in-group in that moment (Akerlof & Kranton, 2011; Benjamin et al., 2010) and will thus be more inclined to use that identity in making decisions about whom to trust. Billig (1995) has argued that the most consequential form of national identification is “banal nationalism,” in which the national identity is made salient in a subtle way across many everyday contexts through the ubiquitous display of national symbols, support for national sports teams, routinized national practices, and the use of first-person plural pronouns that imply togetherness in the national media. The more aware someone is of a common identity, the less their trust should depend on differences along other identity dimensions. This suggests a third observable implication:

**Hypothesis 3 (H3):** If the national identity is made contextually salient, individuals will be less likely to condition their trust on coethnicity.

Although I differentiate strength of identification from salience of the national identity conceptually, I also evaluate how these two components of group identification interact. There are three possibilities. First, strength of national identification and national identity salience may each improve inter-ethnic trust independently, but not interact. If so, national identity salience would reduce the size of the coethnic trust premium for everyone, with weak



nationalists still exhibiting a larger coethnic trust premium than strong national identifiers. Second, a positive interaction would imply that national identity salience impacts strong national identifiers more than weak. Work in cognitive psychology suggests just such an additive effect—The more strongly one identifies with a group, the more cognitively accessible that identity is, and thus the more sensitive an individual is to its contextual salience (Bargh, Bond, Lombardi, & Tota, 1986; Bargh & Pratto, 1986). Consistent with this expectation, Butz, Plant, and Doerr (2007) found that experimentally increasing the salience of the American national identity had a strong negative impact on hostility toward minorities, but only among strong national identifiers. Third, a negative interaction would mean that national identity impacts weak national identifiers more than strong. This could occur if strong national identifiers are already so cognizant of their national identity that there is no added effect of increased salience, while that same increased salience reminds weak national identifiers of their national identity and mobilizes them to “catch up” with strong national identifiers. Consistent with this possibility, Sniderman et al. (2004) find that experimentally priming the Dutch national identity has a larger effect on concern for national cultural preservation among citizens with weak national identification.

Given these three possibilities, what should we expect in the context of ethnically diverse African societies? It is difficult to predict because the differential impact of identity salience across different degrees of national identification depends on the baseline relationship between national identification and ethnic-based trust. For example, if, contrary to H2, the coethnic trust premium is similar across levels of national identification, then we may very well expect a bigger impact of increased salience on strong identifiers due to cognitive accessibility (positive interaction). However, if the coethnic trust premium is very small or non-existent among strong national identifiers, consistent with H2, then the marginal impact of increasing the salience of that national identity will necessarily be smaller than the impact on weak national identifiers (negative interaction). Thus, a priori it is not clear how the interaction between strength and salience of national identification will impact interethnic trust, but the research design, discussed below, allows me to evaluate this relationship empirically.

## **Data and Methods**

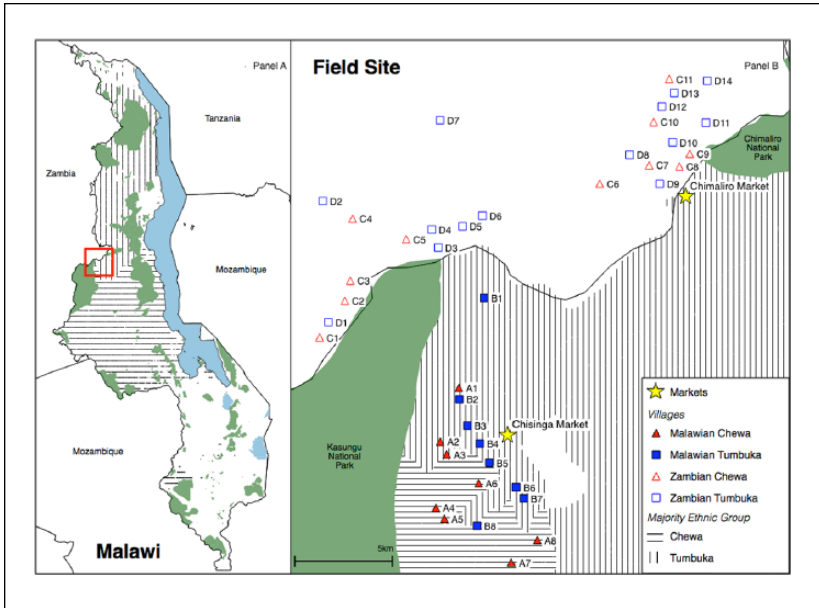
To assess the claims laid out above, I carried out a “lab-in-the-field” experiment (Grossman, 2011) in an ethnically diverse border region of Malawi in October and November of 2011. The research design included measures of national identification strength, an experimental manipulation of national

identity salience, and a behavioral measure of trust, collected in two stages (in the village and at the market). I describe the context, research design, and implementation below.

### *Field Site*

Malawi is home to at least 10 ethnic groups, though processes under colonialism reinforced three main ethno-regional identities—the Tumbuka in the North, the Chewa in the Center, and the Yao in the South (Kaspin, 1995; Vail & White, 1991)—which have remained politically salient under multi-party democracy (Ferree & Horowitz, 2010; Posner, 2004). Like many African states on the eve of independence, Malawian elites attempted to consolidate this diverse population into a coherent national citizenry (Forster, 1994). However, the language and cultural traditions of one ethnic group—the Chewa, who are the largest group in Malawi and the ethnic group of the first president, Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda—were favored in the construction of the Malawian national identity (Kaspin, 1995). Such “Chewaization” of Malawian nationalism may have proven more divisive than unifying (Sidanius, Feshbach, Levin, & Pratto, 1997), resulting in weak territorial nationalism overall. Indeed, public opinion data show that nationalism in Malawi is relatively weak,<sup>6</sup> but that this weakness is not driven by minority groups alone.<sup>7</sup> In addition to weak territorial nationalism, interpersonal trust in Malawi is strongly circumscribed by ethnicity: 29% of Malawians surveyed expressed greater trust in their coethnics than Malawians from other ethnic groups, the fourth highest rate across 16 Sub-Saharan African countries (Afrobarometer, 2006).<sup>8</sup> Thus, Malawi well represents the popular image of African states, with weak territorial nationalism and ethnically bound trust.

Within Malawi, data were collected in Traditional Authority Chulu in Kasungu District. This field site was selected because it is located at the intersection of the ethnic boundary between the Chewa and the Tumbuka and the national boundary between Malawi and Zambia (see Figure 1, Panel A). This simple fact lends great power to the research design by allowing me to vary common ethnic group membership and common national group membership independently within a very localized context. This allows for a within-subject measure of trust based on coethnicity and conationality within a realistic setting. For example, for Malawian Chewa respondents living in this border region, I am able to measure trust in four different types of individuals: a Chewa from Malawi (same nationality, same ethnicity), a Tumbuka from Malawi (same nationality, different ethnicity), a Chewa from Zambia (different nationality, same ethnicity), and a Tumbuka from Zambia (different nationality, different ethnicity). This design is part of a long tradition of



**Figure 1.** Panel A shows the distribution of members of the Chewa and Tumbuka ethnic groups within Malawi and the location of the field site. Panel B provides greater detail of the field site, including the approximate location of all study villages, their ethnic make up, and the location of the two weekly markets. Source: 2008 Malawian Census.

studying ethnic groups partitioned by national boundaries in Africa (McCauley & Posner, 2015; Miles & Rochefort, 1991), including previous work on the same border showing that the Chewa–Tumbuka divide is particularly divisive in Malawi because of national political competition (Posner, 2004).

Panel B of Figure 1 shows a detailed map of the field site, including 16 villages in Malawi from which the main participants were randomly sampled,<sup>9</sup> villages in Zambia that contributed participants for some components of the study, the location of two weekly markets where study sessions were held, and the spatial distribution of the two ethnic groups within the field site.

### *In Each Village*

Within each of the 16 Malawian villages, 32 residents were randomly selected using point sampling, a random walk, and a random draw within each household. If the selected household member agreed to participate,<sup>10</sup> he or she was privately interviewed by a research assistant.<sup>11</sup>

*Measuring strength of national identification.* Strength of national identification was measured by agreement with six original first-person statements expressing affective, behavioral, and cognitive identification with the national group, adapted from Henry et al. (1999). The components of the measure of national group identification are listed in Table 1, along with the proportion of respondents who gave the response coded as more nationalist for each item.

To construct a composite measure of national identification, I averaged over all six items on the scale, and standardized the resulting measure.<sup>12</sup> Figure A.1 of Appendix A shows that this novel measure is consistent with the most commonly used existing measure of national identification in African survey data.<sup>13</sup> I similarly construct independent measures of the different components of national identification—*affective*, *behavioral*, and *cognitive*—by averaging the two constituent items on each scale and then standardizing. *Affective* national identification is weakly correlated with *behavioral* national identification across participants ( $r = .14$ ), but unrelated to *cognitive* national identification ( $r = .00$ ). *Behavioral* and *cognitive* forms of national identification are the most strongly correlated, but the relationship is still quite modest ( $r = .19$ ). These weak correlations suggest that the different subscales are indeed capturing distinct forms of identification with the nation. Summary statistics for all three measures of strength of national identification can be found in Table B.2 of Appendix B.<sup>14</sup> After being interviewed, each participant was randomly assigned to an experimental session to be held during a market day the following week.<sup>15</sup>

### *At the Market*

The market-based portion of the study was used to experimentally prime the national identity and measure trust in different types of individuals behaviorally. Each session was held in a building within the public market on the weekly market day. Each market session involved 60 individuals from four villages: 15 Malawian Chewa, 15 Malawian Tumbuka, 15 Zambian Chewa, and 15 Zambian Tumbuka. For example, assume that the following four villages from Panel B of Figure 1 were invited to an experimental session at Chisinga Market: A4, B4, C4, and D4. Two of the four villages, A4 and B4, were those that the research team had visited in the previous week to conduct household surveys (one Malawian Chewa village [A4] and one Malawian Tumbuka village [B4]). The other “convenience participants” were invited from a Chewa village [C4] and a Tumbuka village [D4] just across the border in Zambia.

**Table 1.** National Group Identification Measures.

Affective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We all belong to many different types of groups. Which of the following statements is closest to your view? While I am proud of my Malawian identity, there are other groups that I feel more proud to belong to. <b>While I am proud of many of the groups to which I belong, I am most proud of my Malawian identity.</b></li> </ul>	83%
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Imagine that a story in the international media criticized Malawians. Which of the following statements is closest to how you would feel? I would not like it, but it would <i>not</i> feel like a personal insult. <b>I would not like it, and I would feel personally insulted.</b></li> </ul>	68%
Behavioral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Which of the following statements is closest to your view? How well other Malawians are doing does not really affect how well I am doing. <b>How well I am doing really depends on how well other Malawians are doing.</b></li> </ul>	68%
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Which of the following statements is closest to your view? <b>Malawians from different regions of the country cannot manage without help from Malawians in other regions.</b> Malawians from different regions of the country do not really have to rely on one another to manage.</li> </ul>	74%
Cognitive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Which of the following statements is closest to your view? <b>I see myself as quite similar to most Malawians.</b> I see myself as quite different from most Malawians.</li> </ul>	84%
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Which of the following statements is closest to your view? <b>Even though there is a lot of cultural variety among Malawians, we are more the same than we are different.</b> Because there is a lot of cultural variety among Malawians, there is very little that makes us the same.</li> </ul>	56%

Note. Bolded items coded as 1 (stronger national identification). The final column shows the percentage of respondents who were coded as 1 for each item.

Source. Household survey, N = 508.

At the beginning of each session, the behavioral activity was explained in detail to the entire group of participants in both local languages (Chichewa and Chitumbuka). It was publicly noted that the group included both Zambian and Malawian individuals and both Chewa and Tumbuka individuals from each country. Appendix C provides the scripts used.



**Figure 2.** National identity prime: Discussion of the symbolism of the 1964 Malawian national flag (left) and the 2010 Malawian national flag (right).

*Experimental manipulation of national identity salience.* Respondents were called one at a time into a private room with a research assistant where the rules of the trust game were explained again, and informed consent was obtained. Then, a short survey, with an embedded experimental prime, was conducted. The survey included questions on demographic characteristics, market participation, and current events. For a randomly assigned half of the participants, the survey included two extra questions about the Malawian national flag, described below, which served as a prime for national identity.<sup>16</sup> The use of the national flag as a salience prime builds on work in both political science (Sachs, 2010) and social psychology (Butz et al., 2007; Hassin, Ferguson, Shidlovski, & Gross, 2007).

In July 2010, the Malawian national flag was officially changed (see Figure 2).<sup>17</sup> Because there was an ongoing debate about which flag should be used at the time data were collected, it was not odd to ask respondents their opinion on the two flags.<sup>18</sup> Research assistants displayed large images of each flag in front of the participant and explained the symbolism of each flag (they are very similar in meaning) and then asked the respondent which flag they thought best represented the Malawian nation. Although the respondents' actual preferences were not of particular interest, simply asking respondents to consider the historical symbolism of the flags served to increase the salience of their Malawian national identity.<sup>19</sup> The flags were left on the table after the completion of the survey and remained there for the duration of trust decisions.

*Measuring trust.* After completing the short survey, each respondent played the first round of a trust game 4 times, with four anonymous partners, one from each of the four different villages present. The trust game is a two-player behavioral economic game in which a Trustor is given a sum of money and asked to decide how much money to send to a Trustee. Any money transferred from the Trustor to the Trustee is tripled by the experimenter, and the Trustee then decides how much of the tripled money to return to the Trustor. The amount of money

transferred from the Trustor to the Trustee in the first round is interpreted as the degree of trust that the Trustor holds in the Trustee and is the focus of all analyses here.<sup>20</sup> Originally designed for the lab (Berg, Dickhaut, & McCabe, 1995), the trust game has been increasingly used in the field as a behavioral measure of trust (Ashraf, Bohnet, & Piankov, 2006; Barr, 2003; Karlan, 2005).

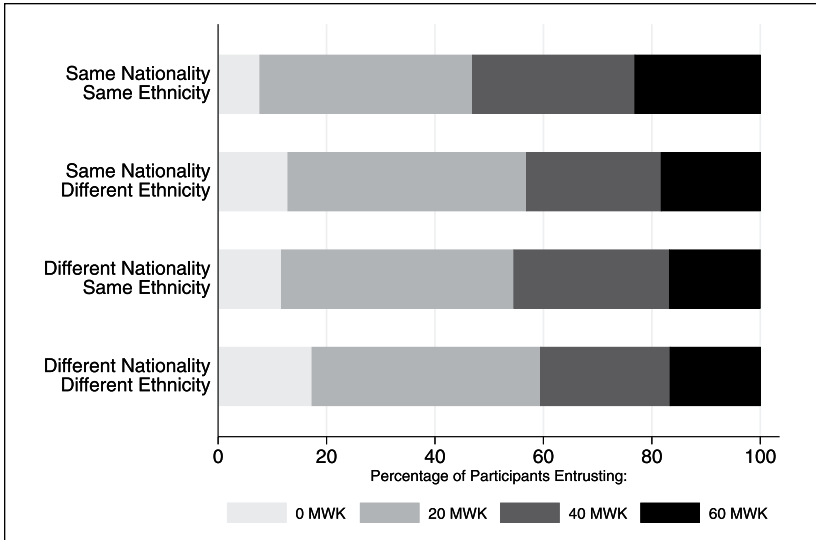
In addition to the standard trust game instructions, participants were also given an explicit frame for understanding the game. In particular, we framed the game as analogous to the decision about whether to sell one's surplus maize (Malawi's staple crop) locally versus sending the maize with a virtual stranger to be sold in the capital for a much higher price (see Appendix C for the exact language used). The frame was included for two reasons. First, because of its abstract nature, the trust game can be difficult to understand. By framing the trust game as an economic transaction that most participants had engaged in, the trust game became both more familiar and easier to understand. Second, existing scholarship has shown that the way in which a game is understood vis-à-vis different cultural or economic frames affects the way in which individuals behave within that game (Burnham, McCabe, & Smith, 2000; Cronk, 2007; Ensminger, 2000, 2004; Tracer, 2003). Thus, explicitly providing a frame with which to understand the game reduced the likelihood that different individuals used different frames in making behavioral decisions.

Respondents made four trust decisions, each time with a different "type" of partner: a conational coethnic, a conational non-coethnic, a non-conational coethnic, and a non-conational non-coethnic. To obscure my interest in shared identity, information about the partners' ethnicity and nationality was conveyed indirectly by referencing each partner's home village.<sup>21</sup> There were four different orders in which game partners were presented to each participant and use of these four order sets were balanced across participants. Importantly, each participant made all four trust decisions before learning the outcomes of any of their partners' decisions about how much of their transfer to return.

For each trust decision, the participant was given an endowment of 60 MWK in the form of three 20 MWK bills.<sup>22</sup> For each trust game, the participant decided privately how much of that endowment to entrust to their anonymous partner about whom they only knew village of residence. Across all trust decisions, the average amount entrusted was 30 MWK. Nothing was entrusted in 12% of decisions, whereas 20, 40, and 60 MWK were entrusted in 42%, 27%, and 19% of the games.

## Empirical Models and Results

To model the impacts of conationality, coethnicity, national identification, and national identity salience on conditional trust, I construct a data set that includes multiple trust games per individual—thus, the unit of analysis is the



**Figure 3.** Contributions entrusted to different partner types.

individual-trust game. Although the measure of trust—the amount entrusted to an anonymous partner—is a four-level ordinal variable (0, 20, 40, 60), I treat it as continuous for ease of interpretation. All analyses are replicated using ordered probit in Appendix D.

### *Shared Identity and Conditional Trust*

H1 postulates that shared nationality, along with shared ethnicity, will influence interpersonal trust. Figure 3 shows the percentage of participants entrusting each of the possible amounts (0, 20, 40, or 60 MWK) for each of the four types of partners. The figure shows that, on average, there is indeed an increase in trust from sharing neither identity to sharing both identities: Individuals trust conational coethnics the most ( $x = 34$  MWK), conational non-coethnics and non-conational coethnics at similar rates ( $x = 30$  MWK), and non-conational non-coethnics the least ( $x = 28$  MWK). These averages suggest that conationality and coethnicity are given roughly equal weight in decisions about whom to trust.

These averages, however, pool decisions over individuals and do not account for the within-subject component of the research design.<sup>23</sup> To identify the within-subject effect of these shared identities on trust, I estimate the following model with participant random effects:



$$\text{Trust}_{ij} = \alpha_i + \beta_1 \text{CoNational}_{ij} + \beta_2 \text{CoEthnic}_{ij} + \mathbf{X}'_i \gamma + \mathbf{Z}'_j + \varepsilon_{ij},$$

where  $\text{Trust}_{ij}$  is the amount of money sent in trust game  $j$  by respondent  $i$ ,  $\text{CoNational}_{ij}$  is an indicator of whether the partner is a conational in that game,  $\text{CoEthnic}_{ij}$  is an indicator for whether the partner is a coethnic,  $\mathbf{X}_i$  is a vector of individual-level covariates,  $\mathbf{Z}_j$  denotes a vector of fixed effects for the round in which a particular game was played (first, second, third, or fourth),  $\alpha_i$  is the individual random effect, and  $\varepsilon_{ij}$  represents the game-specific error term. The individual-level random intercept,  $\alpha_i$ , accounts for individual-level differences in trust, allowing me to focus on changes in trust induced by the identity of one's partner.<sup>24</sup> The model is specified with and without individual-level covariates that may be related to levels of trust ( $\mathbf{X}_i$ ), including gender (Buchan, Croson, & Solnick, 2008), level of education (Glaeser, Laibson, Scheinkman, & Soutter, 2000), and ethnic identity (Fershtman & Gneezy, 2001). I also include an indicator for market location to account for any differences across the two markets and a measure of an individual's frequency of market attendance, a proxy measure of market integration, which previous research has shown to be correlated with "fair" play in other behavioral economics games (Ensminger, 2000, 2004). The results of these estimations are reported in Table 2.

Consistent with H1, Table 2 shows that individuals are conditioning on shared nationality—with an additional 2.6 MWK entrusted, on average—to the same degree as shared ethnicity (3.0 MWK).<sup>25</sup> Although the effect sizes are clearly very modest (only 4%-5% of the total endowment), such small amounts of money represent real decisions among the sample population, 99.5% of whom are subsistence farmers without reliable access to cash income. For reference, basic necessities such as salt and cooking oil cost approximately 3.5 and 7 MWK at the time, respectively, to cook one meal for an average sized family. In addition, these average effect sizes do not take into account underlying differences in national identification or the experimental variation in national identity salience, both of which impact conditional trust, as I show below.

That nationality would be just as important as ethnicity in decisions about whom to trust in a rural region of Sub-Saharan Africa goes against conventional expectations. The result is even more surprising given the context in which it appears. First, all participants are members of an ethnic group partitioned by colonial, and subsequently state, borders—a condition that is expected to make national identification less likely due to the perception that the states resulting from such partitioning are illegitimate (Asiwaju, 1985; Bienen, 1983; Englebert, 2002).<sup>26</sup> In addition, the border

**Table 2.** The Effect of Shared Nationality and Shared Ethnicity on Trust in an Anonymous Partner.

	Amount entrusted (MWK)	
	(1)	(2)
Conational	2.59 (0.67)	2.59 (0.67)
Coethnic	2.95 (0.66)	2.95 (0.66)
Constant	26.15 (1.03)	23.26 (2.09)
Round fixed effects	Yes	Yes
Controls	No	Yes
Decisions ( $N_i$ )	1,700	1,700
Participants ( $N_i$ )	428	428

Note. Generalized linear models estimated with participant random effects and the following control variables: gender, education, ethnicity, frequency of market interaction, and market location. Participant-clustered standard errors in parentheses.

between partitioned coethnics in this region is quite porous, with more than 70% of participants having close friends or family across the international border and around a third of them having crossed the border in the month preceding the study. The fact that this particular population is considering the nationality of their partner with equal weight as ethnicity, then, is an important indication that the identity group defined by the territorial nation is more important to interpersonal relations in rural Africa than previously appreciated.

### *National Identification, National Identity Salience, and Ethnic-Based Trust*

The results above provide evidence that the national identity in Malawi is not, as is so often assumed, irrelevant for social decisions, such as whom to trust. However, these results only show that Malawians trust other Malawians more than they trust Zambians, controlling for coethnicity: It does not tell us anything about the impact of territorial nationalism on *interethnic* relations within the nation. In this section, I evaluate the impact of national identification and national identity salience on the degree to which trust is conditioned on shared ethnicity among conationals (i.e., Malawians trusting other Malawians).<sup>27</sup>

To do so, I estimate the following model, which includes a triple interaction term:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Trust}_{ij} = & \alpha_i + \beta_1 \text{CoEthnic}_{ij} + \beta_2 \text{NatID}_i + \beta_3 \text{Flag}_i \\ & + \beta_4 \text{CoEthnic}_{ij} \times \text{NatID}_i + \\ & \beta_5 \text{CoEthnic}_{ij} \times \text{Flag}_i + \beta_6 \text{CoEthnic}_{ij} \times \text{NatID}_i \times \text{Flag}_i \\ & + \mathbf{X}'_i \boldsymbol{\gamma} + \mathbf{Z}'_j + \boldsymbol{\varepsilon}_{ij}, \end{aligned}$$

where  $\text{NatID}_i$  is the standardized composite measure of strength of national identification and  $\text{Flag}_i$  is a dichotomous indicator for whether an individual was exposed to the national flag prime or not. The model also includes their pairwise interactions, as well as the triple interaction. The results of this estimation are reported in Model 1 of Table 3. This specification is repeated for each sub-measure of national identification—*affective*, *behavioral*, and *cognitive*—in Models 2 to 4.

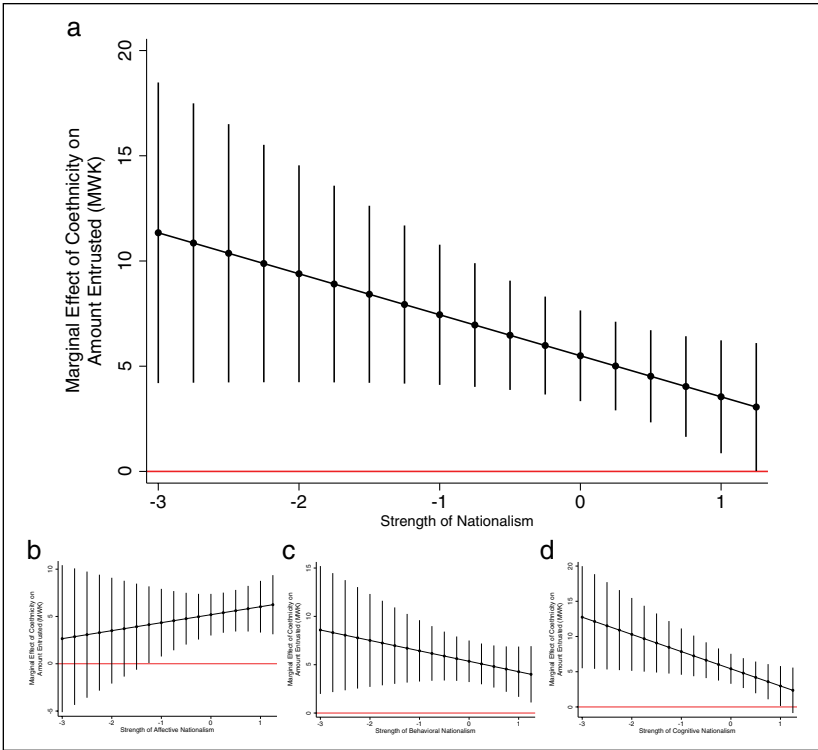
First, does increased identification with the national identity reduce the degree to which interpersonal trust is ethnically based, as predicted in H2? To answer this question, I focus first on the individuals who were randomly assigned to not see the national flag prior to making trust decisions. At average levels of national identification ( $\text{NatID} = 0$ ), coethnics are entrusted with 5.5 MWK more, on average, than non-coethnics. However, consistent with expectations, identification with the nation is positively correlated with trust in non-coethnics (a 1.77 MWK increase in the amount sent to non-coethnics for each standard deviation increase in national identification), although this effect is not statistically significant at conventional levels ( $p = .15$ ). Because there is no similar extension of trust for coethnics (the negative coefficient on  $\text{CoEthnic} \times \text{NatID}$  interaction washes out the positive coefficient on National Identification), this results in an overall reduction in the size of the coethnic trust premium with increasing nationalism. This can be seen graphically in Figure 4a: Among weak nationalists—those who do not identify very strongly with their Malawian identity—coethnics are trusted at a higher rate than non-coethnics, while among the strongest nationalists in the sample, ethnicity is essentially irrelevant for trust.

I next evaluate the effects of the different components of the national identification measure—*affective*, *behavioral*, and *cognitive* national identification—separately. Models 2 to 4 of Table 3 show striking differences in the degree to which the different types of national identification are related to ethnic-based trust. Emotional attachment to the Malawian nation (*affective* national identification) is unrelated to trust in coethnics, trust in non-coethnics, or the size of the coethnic trust premium (Figure 4b). Perceptions of linked fate and behavioral interdependence among members of the nation—reflected in the measure of *behavioral* national identification—show the same patterns as the composite measure, but smaller and statistically insignificant effects (Figure

**Table 3.** The Effect of National Identification, National Identity Salience, and Their Interaction on the Size of the Coethnic Trust Premium Among Conationals.

	Amount entrusted (MWK)			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Composite national identification	Affective national identification	Behavioral national identification	Cognitive national identification
Coethnic	5.50 (1.31)	5.19 (1.34)	5.35 (1.31)	5.41 (1.30)
National identification	1.77 (1.25)	-0.25 (1.41)	0.64 (1.31)	2.12 (1.18)
Coethnic × National Identity	-1.95 (1.29)	0.84 (1.40)	-1.08 (1.18)	-2.44 (1.34)
National identity prime	0.36 (1.85)	0.24 (1.87)	0.22 (1.86)	0.32 (1.85)
Coethnic × Prime	-2.92 (1.99)	-2.57 (2.02)	-2.80 (1.99)	-2.84 (1.99)
Prime × National Identity	-3.20 (1.89)	1.26 (1.95)	-2.52 (1.82)	-2.92 (1.85)
Coethnic × Prime × National Identity	4.63 (1.67)	0.30 (1.85)	2.43 (1.72)	3.88 (1.82)
Constant	25.13 (2.61)	25.61 (2.60)	25.33 (2.59)	25.22 (2.58)
Round fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Decisions ( $N_i$ )	855	855	855	855
Participants ( $N_i$ )	428	428	428	428

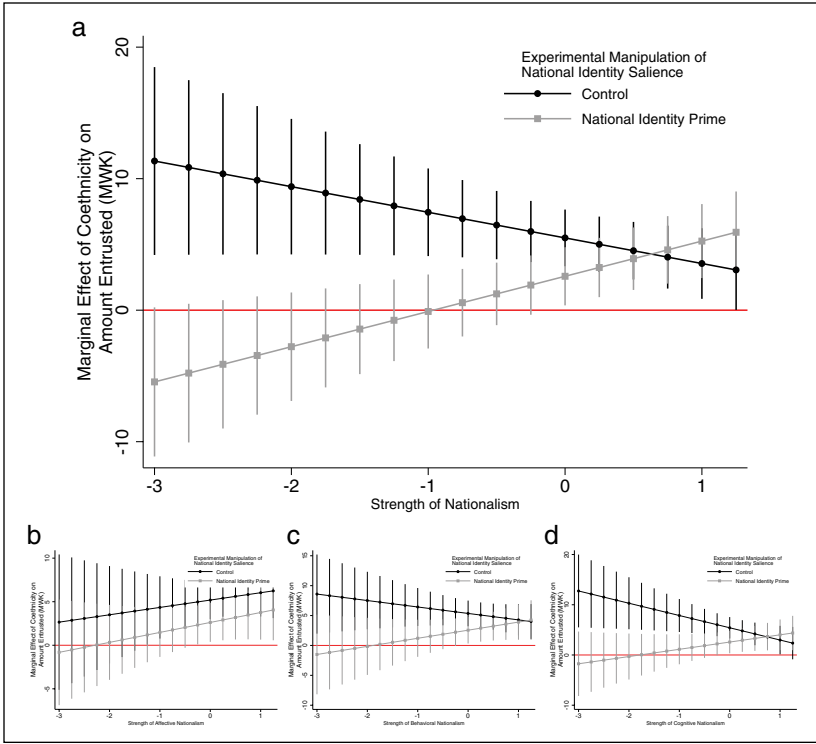
Note. Generalized linear models estimated with participant random effects and the following controls: gender, education, ethnicity, frequency of market interaction, and game session location. Participant-clustered standard errors in parentheses.



**Figure 4.** The effect of shared ethnicity on amount entrusted to an anonymous partner as a function of four different measures of national identification (when national identity is not primed). Bands represent 90% confidence intervals.

4c). Finally, viewing members of the nation, including oneself, as homogeneous—measured as cognitive national identification—is the most strongly related to the extension of trust to non-coethnics. A one standard deviation increase in cognitive national identification is associated with an increase in trust in non-coethnics of 2.1 MWK, an effect that is statistically significant at conventional levels. Because there is no equivalent increase in trust for coethnics, cognitive national identification is negatively related to the overall size of the coethnic trust premium, with that trust premium eliminated among the most nationalist (Figure 4d). In sum, consistent with H2, the more strongly one identifies as Malawian, especially in terms of cognitive identification, the more strongly one trusts Malawians from other ethnic groups, ultimately eliminating ethnic trust discrepancies among the strongest nationalists.

Finally, I evaluate the impact of experimentally increasing the salience of the national identity, which is expected to reduce the size of the coethnic trust



**Figure 5.** The effect of shared ethnicity on amount entrusted to an anonymous partner as a function of four different measures of national identification and the experimental priming of the national identity. Bands represent 90% confidence intervals.

premium (H3). Based on estimates from Model 1 of Table 3, Figure 5 graphs the size of the coethnic trust premium by identity salience treatment and underlying national identification. It shows that the national identity prime did indeed significantly reduce (and even eliminate) the coethnic trust premium among weak national identifiers, who, in the absence of the national identity prime, demonstrate the largest coethnic trust bias. Again, the effects differ by sub-component of national identification: Although there is no statistically significant effect of the national prime at any level of affective or behavioral national identification, the flag prime reduced ethnic trust discrimination among weak cognitive national identifiers.

The effect of the national identity prime is thus analogous to what Sniderman et al. (2004) call a “mobilizing” effect: The presence of a national flag “mobilized” Malawian citizens who would otherwise be inclined to base

their trust on coethnicity to ignore ethnic differences. This effect among weak nationalists is not only driven by an increase in trust in non-coethnics, as theory predicts, but also by a reduction in trust in coethnics (Figure E.1 of Appendix E shows predicted amount entrusted).

Together, these results suggest two important conclusions. First, under conditions in which the national identity is not made contextually salient, an individual's preexisting strength of cognitive national identification is negatively related to the size of the coethnic trust premium—The more strongly one identifies with the nation, the less he or she discriminates between other members of that nation based on sub-national ethnic differences. As a result, there is a subset of people who identify very strongly with the Malawian nation and who trust coethnics and non-coethnics equally. Second, national identity salience also reduces the ethnic trust gap among weak national identifiers, who otherwise trust coethnics more than non-coethnics. The absence of a treatment effect among participants with stronger national identification could be because their national identity is already so salient that priming it has no additional effect, or because their coethnic trust premium is already so small that there is little room for improvement.

Because these results are based on a single field site in rural Malawi, it is important to consider the scope of their generalizability. Consistent with the findings reported here, in nationally representative survey data from 17 Sub-Saharan African states (Afrobarometer, 2006), the average degree to which respondents prioritize their national identity vis-à-vis their ethnic identity is negatively associated with the average degree to which coethnics are trusted more than non-coethnics (Figure F.1 of Appendix F). Furthermore, national relative to ethnic identification is also negatively related to the size of the coethnic trust premium *within* countries (Figure F.2 of Appendix F). Although these data are attitudinal rather than behavioral, they suggest that the micro-level findings reported here are not unique to the specific location in which the data were collected.

## Discussion

This study applies social-psychological theories of intergroup relations and historical accounts of nationalism to the study of a central question in comparative political science: “How can trust be facilitated in diverse societies?” Three principal findings offer important insight on the effect of nationalism on ethnic-based trust. First, *conationality is just as important as coethnicity in decisions about whom to trust*. This finding runs counter to the general image of African states as being almost exclusively organized around tribal loyalty, with little credence given to the power of territorial nationalism (e.g., Collier, 2009; Connor, 1994; Smith, 1983). Instead, the evidence is consistent with an alternative view in which territorially defined national identities in Africa are

meaningful and consequential for at least some portion of the population. For those who have argued that national forms of group identification should be considered alongside ethnic and tribal identification (e.g., Miles & Rochefort, 1991; Young, 2004), this finding provides empirical support.

Second, *individual-level variation in preexisting strength of national identification is negatively related to the degree to which coethnics are trusted more than non-coethnics*. Among weak national identifiers, coethnics are trusted at a higher rate than non-coethnics, but among strong national identifiers, this coethnic trust premium all but disappears, and non-coethnics are trusted almost as much as coethnics. This relationship, however, is driven by a particular form of national identification, namely, seeing the nation as homogeneous and oneself as a typical member. This is significant because it suggests that deep emotional attachments and overt nationalist pride—what we tend to picture when we think of nationalism, and what nation-building efforts tend to emphasize (Lentz, 2013)—is not conducive to bridging the ethnic trust gap. It also suggests a broader theoretical takeaway, namely, that group identification may facilitate trust among group members because it leads individuals to see other members of their group as more similar to themselves. Future research should therefore address the importance of perceived similarity on interpersonal trust and the role of common group identification in fostering such perceptions of similarity amid cultural diversity.

Third, *when the national identity is made contextually salient, the coethnic trust premium is eliminated entirely among weak nationalists*. This finding is consistent with past research (e.g., Sniderman et al., 2004) that finds that priming the national identity has the largest effect for those for whom the national identity is not chronically salient. However, this finding is driven, at least in part, by the fact that strong national identifiers already trust coethnics and non-coethnics at roughly the same rate, and thus the national identity prime has less room to improve interethnic trust. Nevertheless, these results demonstrate that national identity salience can improve interethnic relations, even when underlying strength of national identification is relatively weak.

These findings contribute to scholarship on intergroup relations in general by identifying the impact of an overarching, common identity outside the traditional lab setting, using real ethnic groups nested within a diverse nation, an approach that has proven surprisingly rare (see Charnysh et al., 2015, for a recent exception). They also contribute to our understanding of nationalism in Africa, which has previously relied on country-level differences without measuring national identification directly or manipulating it experimentally (e.g., Miguel, 2004).

These findings may also have important implications for nation-building policies in ethnically diverse African states by suggesting two different ways to



build a nation in which all citizens, regardless of ethnicity, are part of the same trust community. The first is to foster widespread identification with the national group such that average citizens' primary allegiance is to the nation, above and beyond their loyalty toward other groups. This form of nation-building has been most often tied to strong, centralized states and the centripetal pull of modernized economies (Anderson, 1983; Breuilly, 1994; Gellner, 1983; Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983; Robinson, 2014; Tilly, 1975; Weber, 1979). The second way to engender nationalism is to activate the national identity in everyday contexts through the ubiquitous presence of national flags, mundane exposure to national symbols on currency, and the creation and promotion of national sports teams, among other things. Billig (1995) has argued that such "banal nationalism" is an effective form of nation-building in that it serves as a subtle but constant reminder of the common national identity. The results of this study suggest that either form of nation-building can be effective at not only reducing the degree to which ethnicity impacts trust in multi-ethnic nations, but they also raise a number of new questions to be addressed in future research.

First, why does strength of national identification appear to extend trust to non-coethnics while national identity salience both extends trust to non-coethnics *and* retracts the trust premium previously afforded to coethnics? Most models of social identification (e.g., Akerlof & Kranton, 2011; Benjamin et al., 2010; Sambanis & Shayo, 2013) conceptualize salience as capturing the marginal effect of strength of identification. However, the results reported here instead suggest that strength and salience of the common identity, at least in Malawi, may activate different mechanisms for alleviating ethnic-based trust discrimination. This could be a result of the particular national symbol chosen to increase national identity salience—the Malawian national flag—or a more fundamental difference between those for whom a stable, strong sense of national identity has shifted their definition of the in-group and those for whom a temporary reminder of the shared national identity serves to eliminate sub-national differences altogether.

Second, and relatedly, the ultimate value of increased national identity salience depends on our assessment of the trade-off between higher levels of particularized trust and lower levels of generalized trust. In other words, is it better for diverse states to have high rates of trust that are circumscribed by ethnicity or lower rates of trust that are ethnically blind? If low *levels* of trust are the main impediment to development in Africa, then perhaps ethnic-based trust is actually an improvement over more limited, personalized trust. However, if the segmentation of trust along ethnic lines is more detrimental than absolute levels of trust, then national identification could improve outcomes, even if this means a loss of ethnic-based trust premiums. This is ultimately an empirical question, and one that can and should be addressed as the

amount of public opinion data on both generalized and particularized trust across societies continues to grow.

Finally, we must consider other implications of increased nationalism beyond its impact on intergroup trust. Theoretical work has suggested that nationalism may directly engender both economic development (Greenfeld, 2001) and civil peace (Sambanis & Shayo, 2013), but these claims call for empirical evaluation. Increased nationalism may also have more pernicious effects. For example, it has long been claimed that nationalism, at least in certain forms, can foster interstate hostilities and war (Herrmann, Isernia, & Segatti, 2009; Schrock-Jacobson, 2012; Van Evera, 1994). In addition, increased nationalism in multi-cultural settings often exacts a toll on the preservation of diversity over the long run (Kymlicka, 2001; Laitin & Reich, 2003; Weber, 1979). How should these costs be weighed against the potential benefits of stronger nationalism for intergroup relations? These are difficult questions that require additional empirical research and serious normative evaluation.

Although many questions remain to be answered, the results of this study offer some cause for optimism. They provide micro-level evidence that territorially defined nations in post-colonial Africa can form the basis of a trust community. Furthermore, increasing the relevance of the common national identity in the lives of citizens could help to reduce the degree to which co-ethnicity dictates interpersonal trust, ultimately breaking the link between ethnic diversity and low levels of interpersonal trust.

### **Author's Note**

Supplemental materials are available at <https://u.osu.edu/robinson.1012/research/>

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## Notes

1. By nation I mean the territorially defined, state-based identity group. Thus, the national in-group is defined by citizenship.
2. Putnam (2000) characterizes in-group trust as “bonding” and out-group trust as “bridging.”
3. In addition to diversity, low levels of generalized trust in Africa have also been attributed to the long-term effects of the slave trade (Nunn & Wantchekon, 2011).
4. When nationalism is depicted as powerful in African states, it is typically portrayed as a divisive and violent force waged against “outsiders,” as in recent spates of xenophobic violence in South Africa (Landau, 2006; Rusinga, Maposa, & Tobias, 2012) or the social exclusion of refugees across the continent (Zhou, 2014).
5. Shayo (2009) similarly conceives of group identification as comprising both affective and cognitive components.
6. Only 28% of Malawians identified as Malawian more than as a member of their respective ethnic group in 2005, which is lower than any other African country except Lesotho (25%) and Nigeria (17%; Robinson, 2014).
7. Across three rounds of data collection (2005, 2008, and 2012), only 33% of Chewa identified more nationally than ethnically, while 42% of Tumbuka and 48% of Yao did so (Afrobarometer, 2012).
8. Questions about trust in coethnics and non-coethnics were only asked in the Afrobarometer Round 3 Survey administered in 2005.
9. The 16 study villages were selected to meet the following criteria: officially registered with the National Statistics Office, ethnically homogeneous (either Chewa or Tumbuka) based on the 2008 Malawian Household Census, and within walking distance to the weekly market site.
10. The response rate for this portion of the study was greater than 99%, with only two potential respondents declining to be interviewed out of the 510 sampled.
11. Five research assistants were employed in this study, one supervisor and four enumerators.
12. I also create an alternative measure of national identification by combining all six questions into a single indicator using principal components analysis. The main results are replicated using this alternative measure in Appendix D.
13. The main results are replicated using the Afrobarometer measure of national relative to ethnic identification in Appendix D.

14. Contrary to what we might expect given the “Chewaization” of Malawian national identity, Tumbuka respondents expressed slightly stronger national identification than Chewa respondents (Table B.4 of Appendix B).
15. Of the 508 individuals interviewed, 428 (84%) attended the market session and completed the behavioral component of the study: A summary of their demographic characteristics, compared with those who did not complete the second component of the study, can be found in Table B.1 of Appendix B.
16. Because assignment to treatment was randomized, treatment status should be orthogonal to all participant characteristics and, in fact, treatment and control groups were balanced in terms of strength of national identification, education, gender, ethnicity, and frequency of market engagement (Table B.5, Appendix B).
17. In 2012, after the death of President Bingu wa Mutharika and the installation of the new president, Joyce Banda, the national flag was changed back to its original design.
18. Using questions about the flag change, rather than simply exposing participants to the image of the national flag, reduced the likelihood that they were aware of the intention to prime national identity.
19. No manipulation check was included in the design. However, the prime was pre-tested on a similar sample of respondents and showed that individuals exposed to the prime ranked their national identity higher than other identities in a post-survey task.
20. Some scholars have questioned whether trust games really measure trust, or whether they instead capture altruism, cooperation, or risk acceptance (e.g., Cook, Hardin, & Levi, 2005; Cox, 2004; Schechter, 2007). This concern is partially allayed by the explicit framing of the game as a trust problem.
21. Village of residence is a clear signal of both nationality and ethnicity. Within the very localized setting, it is common knowledge as to which side of the international border a village lies. Similarly, the 16 villages in the sample were chosen precisely because they are ethnically homogeneous: Every single Malawian participant reported their ethnicity as the one associated with their village and only two of the 363 Zambian participants reported their ethnicity as something other than the one associated with their village.
22. The official exchange rate in 2011 was roughly 1 USD = 140 MWK. The endowment per decision is a meaningful sum of money in the local context, where *ganyu* (or day labor) is the only source (albeit irregular) of cash income for the vast majority, and pays 30 to 140 MWK per day (Goldberg, 2015; National Statistics Office of Malawi, 2004).
23. There is significant variation in the amount entrusted both across ( $s = 14.6$  MWK) and within ( $s = 11.7$  MWK) subjects.
24. Such individual-level differences account for almost half of the variation in trust behavior ( $\rho = .49$ ). Modeling  $\alpha_i$  as an individual fixed-effect results in virtually identical results; Hausman Test:  $\chi^2(5) = 0.32$ ,  $p = .99$ . I use random effects in the main analyses because this allows me to include individual-level predictors, such as the measure of national identification, in subsequent analyses.

25. Given that the monetary denominations were not continuous, no one could actually give 3 MWK more to one partner than another. Based on the ordered probit estimation in Appendix D, Table D.2 shows predicted probabilities of entrusting 0, 20, 40, or 60 MWK by partner type. The results show that both shared ethnicity and shared nationality reduce the probability of entrusting 0 or 20 MWK, and increase the probability of entrusting 40 or 60 MWK.
26. One might expect that national identity would instead be *more* apparent in a border region than in the interior of the country (Miles & Rochefort, 1991). However, the Malawians in this study sample have even weaker national identification than a nationally representative sample from across Malawi (Afrobarometer, 2006) using the same question wording, even when the comparison is restricted only to demographically similar respondents.
27. Thus, there are two observations per participant, one when deciding how much to trust a conational *coethnic* and one when deciding how much to trust a conational *non-coethnic*.

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