# Nationalism and Human Rights

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**Replication Files**:Data replication files can be found at the authors personal website: https://emiryazici.weebly.com/research.html

**Supplemental Materials**: Supplemental materials (appendix) including the sample, the robustness test results, and the data for the case study can be found at http://prq.sagepub.com and at https://emiryazici.weebly.com

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**Abstract** 

Do nationalist political parties violate human rights more than others or are they the protectors of

their people's rights when they are in power? I argue that nationalist political actors have the duty

of protecting national unity at any cost and prioritizing national interests over any other concerns.

These goals jeopardize certain types of human rights. In contrast to the view that civic nationalism

can be more benign compared to ethnic nationalism, I argue that they both have similar effects

on human rights. However, democratic institutions limiting the chief executives power can tame

nationalism and limit its effects on human rights. I test my theory by using a large-N sample

including 49 countries between 1981-2011 and supplement my findings with a short case study.

The findings show that nationalism has negative effects on certain types of human rights only in

partial democracies. This article contributes to the literature by presenting a causal mechanism

relating the core elements of nationalism to human rights practices and providing the first large-

N empirical test of this relationship. The findings of this article can help scholars, politicians, and

citizens to better understand a potentially dangerous consequence of the rise of nationalism around

the world.

**Key words:** nationalism, chief executives, human rights, democracy

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# Introduction

It is ironic that nationalism emerged as an ideology promising protection of citizens' rights against the monarchs and then turned into an ideology which has been used by political actors to justify human rights violations. This ironic history of the relationship between nationalism and human rights engendered a long-standing debate regarding the effects of nationalism on human rights. Particularly, the recent rise of nationalist political parties across the world makes the following question more important: do nationalist political parties violate human rights more when they are in power?

I argue that nationalism is inherently contradictory to human rights. It requires a specific preference ordering different than other ideologies such as liberalism or socialism. According to this preference ordering, nationalist political actors have the duty of achieving, and then protecting, national unity at any cost and prioritizing national interests over any other concerns. These goals jeopardize certain types of human rights such as freedom of assembly and association, freedom of speech, and freedom of electoral self-determination because these rights can be used to challenge the national unity. Moreover, nationalist governments are more reckless about using torture, extrajudicial killing, disappearance or political imprisonment for the sake of national security given the belief that such "liberal concerns" can be ignored if national interests are at stake. In contrast to the view that civic nationalism can be more benign compared to ethnic nationalism, I argue that these two goals are shared by any type of nationalism and likely to have similar effects on human rights. However, democratic institutions limiting the chief executive's power can tame nationalism and diminish its effects on human rights. In full democracies with strong institutions, nationalist governments should not be able to reach the means of repression whereas in partial democracies there will be less constraints on them. Hence, this article contributes to the literature by presenting a causal mechanism relating the core elements of nationalism to human rights practices. I also challenge the existing literature about civic versus ethnic nationalism and argue that it is not the type of nationalism but the democratic institutions which influence the

relationship between nationalism and human rights. I test my theory by using a large-N sample including 49 countries between 1981-2011 and supplement my findings with a short case study. As the first large-N empirical test of the relationship between nationalism and human rights, my results allow me to reach some generalizable conclusions, the foremost being that nationalism does indeed have a negative effect on certain types of human rights, at least in partial democracies. The findings of this article can help scholars, politicians, and citizens to better understand a potentially dangerous consequence of the rise of nationalism around the world.

In the next section, I start with a definition of nationalism which is followed by a brief discussion of the literature. Next, I present my theory explaining which elements of nationalism affect human rights and how the level of democracy can alter this relationship. The theory section is followed by the quantitative analysis of large-N sample and a short case study. I conclude the article with the theoretical and empirical implications of my findings for the literature.

#### What is Nationalism?

Nationalism is defined as "a political principle which holds that the political and national unit should be congruent" by Gellner (1983, p. 5). In other words, members of a nation are meant to live together in a bounded territory ruled by their national authority. Nationalism arises from either the satisfaction or violation of this principle. It is violated when all the members of a nation are not included or when there are foreigners within the political boundary. Hobsbawm (1990) adds that nationalism is a product of invented traditions by political elite to protect their own interests. Nationalism, as a principle, "implies that the political duty of the Ruritanians [refers to a fictional Central European country] to the polity which encompasses and represents the Ruritanian nation, overrides all other public obligations, and in extreme cases (such as wars) all other obligations of whatever kind." (Hobsbawm, 1990, p. 9). Hence, he points out the superiority of national interests over individuals' interest according to nationalism. Since national interest is not always equal to the individuals' interests, nationalism makes it clear which one should be the priority of the decision-makers. Similar to this conception, Tilly (1994, p. 133) states that nationalism

refers to the principle that "states should correspond to homogeneous peoples, that homogeneous peoples had distinctive political interests, that members of homogeneous peoples owed strong loyalties to the states that embodied their heritage, that the world should therefore consist of nation-states having strongly patriotic citizenries." This definition also underlines superiority of national interests and homogeneity of nation.

In sum, the overlapping themes in the earlier definitions are the centrality of nation and goals of achieving (and preserving) nation's autonomy, unity, and identity (Smith, 2010). Based on these overlapping themes, Smith (2010, p. 9) presents a basic definition of nationalism: "an ideological movement for attaining and maintaining autonomy, unity and identity for a population which some of its members deem to constitute an actual or potential nation." There are two important components of nationalism that should be underlined in light of these definitions. First, a nation is strong and legitimate as long as it remains homogeneous. In this sense, one of the primary objectives of a nationalist leader is to achieve and preserve the unity of nation. Second, national interests are always superior to the interests of the individual members of that nation. If a leader frames an issue as being in the best interest of the nation, the interests of the few can be sacrificed for the supposed betterment of the many. These two components of nationalism constitute my theoretical framework.

#### **How Does Nationalism Affect Human Rights?**

In the literature, there are two approaches regarding the relationship between nationalism and human rights (Cheng, 2012). One approach underlines that they are inherently contradictory as nationalism always tends to prioritize collective interests over individual rights (Eagleton, 1990; Afshari, 2007); whereas the other approach underlines the emancipatory characteristics of nationalism and how it serves as the protector of human rights (Cardus, 2000). The primary negative effect of nationalism on human rights is major violent events such as ethnic conflicts and genocides. Freeman (2000) argues that leaders of ethnic groups, who know that conflict increases the solidarity among members, may instigate ethnic conflicts. One example is the ethnic conflict between the

Turkish and Greek Cypriots. Although the colonial history of Cyprus and policies of foreign powers institutionalized the ethnic hostility between these groups, it was ethnic nationalism which engendered remarkable human right violations in Cyprus (Pollis, 1979). Similarly, religious and ethnic Serbian nationalism inflamed by Milosevic culminated in the ethnic cleaning campaign against the Muslim-Bosniak minority in Sandzak (Lyon, 2008). Ethnic nationalism therefore is associated with the most violent forms of human rights violations.

In contrast to ethnic nationalism, it is argued that civic nationalism, which is not based on an ethnic identity, is compatible with universal liberal values. Some authors even argue that civic nationalism is a necessary condition to protect human rights (Cardus, 2000). However, empirical evidence shows that civic nationalist governments are not, in practice, any different than ethnic nationalist governments given the prioritization of the majority's interests at the expense of those of the individual, for the sake of national unit (Yack, 1996; Smith, 2005; Tanrisever, 2001; Harok, 1977). As Smith (2005) argues, societal divisions can lead civic nationalism to coerce other minority cultures to be parts of a homogeneous nation. This situation eventually engenders human right violations, especially violation of cultural rights of minorities.

# What is Missing in This Literature?

Case studies show that nationalism is a dangerous ideology for minority rights and likely to trigger ethnic conflicts. Yet, the primary theoretical gap in the literature is lack of a generalizable causal mechanism. We need a theory showing how nationalism, as an ideology, is translated into a political program and affects human rights practices. Second, it is not clear whose nationalism matters as far as human rights practices are concerned. Some scholars point to state-led nationalism (Breuilly, 1993), whereas some others (Tekin, 2012; Whitford, 2012) argue that bottom-up nationalism can put pressure on governments to follow nationalist policies and violate minority rights. Surprisingly, the role of political parties has been understudied despite their primary role in shaping the political programs of governments. Third, there is no large-N analysis of the relationship between nationalism and human rights due to lack of a systematic measure of nationalism. I address this issue in a novel

way by using political party manifestos as a proxy to measure nationalism across space and time. Lastly, human rights is ambiguously operationalized in most of case studies. It is important to observe the effect of nationalism on different types of human rights since nationalism does not affect all human rights in the same way. Thus, I disaggregate physical integrity rights (such as extrajudicial killing, disappearance, torture, and political imprisonment) and empowerment rights (such as freedom of assembly and association, freedom of speech, and electoral self-determination) as my dependent variables. In the next section, I address the theoretical gaps in the literature and present a casual mechanism showing how nationalism, as a political program, affects human rights practices.

# **Theory**

# Nationalism as a Political Program and Its Impacts on Human Rights

Is nationalism a "thin" ideology without comprehensive policy suggestions which emerges only in extraordinary times like nation-building or in response to existential external threats (Freeden, 1998; Kedourie, 1960) or is it a political program with applicable policy prescriptions in different areas (Smith, 2010)? I argue that the main components of nationalism (national identity, unity, and autonomy) engender specific social and security policy prescriptions by determining the preference orderings of the governments.

Two basic policy prescriptions of nationalism, among others, are inherently incompatible with human rights. First, constant pursuit of national unity leads governments to repress minorities and violate empowerment rights such as freedom of assembly and association, freedom of speech, and electoral self-determination. Through the legislative responses to social events, nationalist governments tend to be aggressive and intolerant against any group which can possibly challenge the national unity. In this sense, the primary tension between nationalism and human rights is about self-determination. Since a nationalist government seeks national unity, it is not willing to grant electoral self-determination as a right to minority groups. For example, the biggest obstacle

to self-determination for Hong Kong or the Xinjiang region of China is Chinese nationalism which considers these regions and their residents to be a part of the "united" China. Similarly, although nationalism does not necessarily oppose freedom of assembly and association or freedom of speech, it sees no harm in suspending such rights if national unity or security is perceived to be under threat. For example, in response to criticism about increasing violations of freedom of speech in India, officials of the government party (Bharatiya Janata Party, a Hindu nationalist party) stated that although they respect to freedom of speech, they will not let freedom of speech harm the national identity and unity of India (Ganguly, 2016).

Second, prioritization of collective national interests over individuals' interests increases practices like extrajudicial killing, disappearance, torture, and political imprisonment. In some cases, governments need to make a choice between "national interests" and individuals' interests/rights. For instance, security forces might use torture to gather intelligence to fight against espionage acts or terrorist threats. Similarly, in response to protest movements, they might torture the captured protesters to deter potential protesters. While a politically liberal government may prioritize human rights and avoid resorting to torture, a nationalist government is more likely to cite (their broadly defined interpretation of) national security as a reason to suspend human rights, despite any domestic or international criticism that arises. For example, Donald Trump's explicit support for bringing back torture to fight against national security threats (Nebehay, 2017), I would argue, is a part of his general nationalist rhetoric. Nationalist governments may also imprison people because of their non-violent political acts which threaten the states (broad interpretation of) national security or unity. For example, Turkeys Justice and Development Party (which has been the governing party since 2002) initially promised hope to the prospect of a democratic solution to the Kurdish issue (Efegil, 2011). More recently, however, the party's nationalistic narrative has become increasingly aggressive. In last year, the government has arrested the leaders of the pro-Kurdish political party (People's Democratic Party) claiming that they are directly linked to pro-Kurdish terrorist organization P.K.K. (Shaheen, 2016). The underlying logic of the government is that political imprisonment is a part of counter-terrorist strategy, and human rights can be suspended for the

sake of national security.

It should be noted that in some cases policymakers may genuinely believe in the necessity of human rights violations for their ideological goals. In some other cases, they can take advantage of the elusiveness of concepts such as "national security" or "national interest" to justify their actions, which are actually intended to ensure their own political survival independently from the nation's well-being. However, we cannot measure or test sincerity of political actors and instead we must assume that political actors who claim to be nationalists genuinely are nationalists. This assumption, nevertheless, does not affect the validity of the causal mechanism described above.

# **Ethnic versus Civic Nationalism: Is There Any Benign Nationalism Type?**

In the previous section, I have argued that nationalism's priorities and certain types of human rights are inherently contradictory when national unity is under threat (regardless of whether that threat is real or perceived). However, one may question whether all kinds of nationalism inherently contradict with human rights or whether there is a benign nationalism type?

The most used typology of nationalism in the literature is the dichotomy between civic Western nationalism and ethnic Eastern/Southern nationalism (Kohn, 1961). Ethnic nationalism is based upon a dominant ethnic identity and aims to exclude or assimilate minorities. Thus, the boundaries of the nation is equal to boundaries of the ethnic group. In contrast, civic nationalism refers to an idea of nation which is based on a legal relationship between state and citizens regardless of ethnicity, language, race, religion or gender (Ignatieff, 1993). As mentioned before, some scholars argue that ethnic nationalism generally causes major human rights violations to ensure the hegemony of that nation, whereas civic nationalism is generally considered as a more benign and democratic form of nationalism (Ignatieff, 1993). However, Cheng (2012) points out that nationalism's homogenizing tendencies are not limited to biological differences. Any kind of political or social movement that aim to undermine national unity or national interests is likely to be repressed by a nationalist state authority (Smith, 2010; Yack, 1996; Turkmen, 2012). Moreover, "the intolerance and xenophobia exhibited in response to immigration flows in liberal Western

nations reveal that the citizens of such models of civic nationalist states in practice have not so completely abandoned their original basis in closed cultural identities." (Cheng, 2012, p. 7). Therefore, both types of nationalism are likely to undermine respect for human rights in practice even if they construct national identity differently.

#### **Role of Democracy in Taming Nationalism**

If nationalism, in any form, is inherently bad for human rights, what else can mitigate the negative effects of nationalism? I argue that institutional constraints, independently from the type of nationalism, can play an important role in taming nationalism. Strong democratic institutions increase the cost of human rights violations for the governments (Poe and Tate, 1994) which diminish the effect of nationalist ideology of the chief executive on human rights practices significantly. Empirical findings show that democracy does not decrease violation of human rights below a certain level of democracy (partial democracies), whereas there is a negative relationship between them after a certain threshold (full democracies) (Davenport and Armstrong, 2004; Bueno de Mesquita et al., 2005). In this sense, nationalist governments should be unable to reach the necessary means to restrain freedom of assembly, speech, and electoral self-determination or to use torture, extrajudicial killing or political imprisonment to fight against national security threats in full democracies. Although democracy is a significant determinant of level of respect for human rights, nationalism can explain the variation in human rights practices within partial democracies. I expect nationalist governments to violate human rights more than other governments with different ideologies in partial democracies. The hypotheses we can derive from this theoretical discussion are as follows:

Hypothesis 1: In partial democracies, nationalism levels of the governments increase violations of freedom of assembly and association, whereas it has no effect in full democracies.

Hypothesis 2: In partial democracies, nationalism levels of the governments increase violations of freedom of speech, whereas it has no effect in full democracies.

Hypothesis 3: In partial democracies, nationalism levels of the governments increase violations of freedom of electoral self-determination, whereas it has no effect in full democracies.

Hypothesis 4: In partial democracies, nationalism levels of the governments increase instances of torture, whereas it has no effect in full democracies.

Hypothesis 5: In partial democracies, nationalism levels of the governments increase instances of extrajudicial killing, whereas it has no effect in full democracies.

Hypothesis 6: In partial democracies, nationalism levels of the governments increase instances of political imprisonment, whereas it has no effect in full democracies.

Hypothesis 7: In partial democracies, nationalism levels of the governments increase disappearance, whereas it has no effect in full democracies.

# **Research Design**

# **Data and Sample**

I derived a panel data of 49 countries approximately between 1981 - 2011 by using the Manifesto Project Database (Volkens et al., 2014) and CIRI Human Rights Dataset (Cingranelli, Richards, and Clay, 2014*a*) <sup>1</sup>. My unit of analysis is country-party-year and I have 834 observations. 12 of these countries (accounting for 113 observations) are partial democracies, while 37 of these countries (accounting for 721 observations) are full democracies. I estimate a panel-corrected standard errors (PCSE) model (Beck and Katz, 1995) to test my hypotheses.

# **Dependent Variables**

To measure governments' respect for human rights, I use the CIRI Human Rights Dataset (Cingranelli, Richards, and Clay, 2014a), which covers 202 countries from 1981 to 2011. CIRI data focuses on the practices of certain categories of human rights without establishing a hierarchy among them. Operationalization of my dependent variables using CIRI data are as follows.

• Extrajudicial killings refer to "killings by government officials without due process of law."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>The list of the countries in the sample can be found in replication files available at https://emiryazici.weebly.com/research.html.

(Cingranelli, Richards, and Clay, 2014b, p. 7). It is coded as 2 if it has not occurred (or unreported), as I if it occurred occasionally, and as  $\theta$  if government practiced it frequently in the last year.

- *Disappearance* refers to "cases in which people have disappeared, agents of the state are likely responsible, and political motivation may be likely." (Cingranelli, Richards, and Clay, 2014*b*, p. 12). It is coded as 2 if there was no disappearance, as 1 if there were less than 50 disappearance cases, and as 0 if more than 50 people disappeared in the last year.
- *Torture* refers to "the purposeful inflicting of extreme pain, whether mental or physical, by government officials or by private individuals at the instigation of government officials." (Cingranelli, Richards, and Clay, 2014*b*, p. 17). It is coded as 2 if torture was not practiced at all (or unreported), as *I* if torture was occasional, and as *0* if torture was practiced frequently in the last year.
- *Political imprisonment* refers to "the incarceration of people by government officials because of: their speech; their non-violent opposition to government policies or leaders; their religious beliefs; their non-violent religious practices including proselytizing; or their membership in a group, including an ethnic or racial group." (Cingranelli, Richards, and Clay, 2014*b*, p. 21). It is coded as 2 if no one was imprisoned because of their beliefs, as *I* if there were only few people imprisoned, and as 0 if many people were imprisoned in the last year.
- Freedom of assembly and association variable measures governments' respect for citizens' right to "to assemble freely and to associate with other persons in political parties, trade unions, cultural organizations, or other groups (Cingranelli, Richards, and Clay, 2014b, p. 52). It is coded as 2 if this right is not violated by the government at all, as 1 if this right is limited for all citizens or denied for certain groups, and as 0 if it is severely violated or denied for all citizens.
- Electoral self-determination variable measures governments' respect for the right to "freely

determine their own political system and leadership" (Cingranelli, Richards, and Clay, 2014*b*, p. 59). It is coded as 2 if the government respected this right, as *1* if this right is limited, and as 0 if the government denied this right.

• Freedom of speech and press variable measures to what extent the governments censor media outlets in their countries. It is coded as 2 if there was no censorship, as 1 if there was limited censorship, and as 0 if there was severe censorship.

I could also use Political Terror Scale (PTS) (Gibney et al., 2016) to measure governments' respect for human rights. However, PTS data does not disaggregate the human rights violations committed by governments and since I argue that nationalism causes the violation of certain types of human rights, using disaggregated CIRI data is the most appropriate way to test my hypotheses.

# **Independent Variable**

Whose Nationalism Matters?

There are two questions we need to answer in order to operationalize nationalism as an independent variable. The first question is: whose nationalism do we need to measure in order to be able to observe variation in states human rights practices? I argue that chief executives and their political parties are the main political actors responsible for human rights violations, and as such, by measuring these actors' nationalism levels, we should be able to analyze their effect on human rights. Mostly because of data issues, only the political parties' nationalism levels are measured in this article. Nevertheless, the relationship between political parties and chief executives can be considered as a principal-agent relationship. For instance, we can view the political party as the principle, whereas the chief executive is the agent since the chief executives are accountable to their political parties for their policies and actions. First, most of party constitutions hold chief executives, like all other party members, accountable. A legal relationship exists between the two. Second, chief executives should strictly follow their party programs to preserve their popularity within the party and in order to be nominated again in the next election. Lastly, it is also reasonable

to assume that manifests of political parties reflect chief executives' ideologies. Thus, we can consider the party's ideology as a proxy for the chief executive's ideology.

#### *How to Measure Nationalism?*

Once we identify chief executives and their political parties as the key actors for human rights practices, the next step is measuring the nationalism level of these actors. My basic coding procedure is as follows. I listed the chief executives who served at least for six months in a given year for each country. Therefore, it is plausible to hold these chief executives and their parties responsible for the human rights score of that year as they ruled the country for more than half of that year. Next, I measured nationalism levels of these chief executives' political parties based on the manifests they announced before each election by using the Manifesto Project Database (Volkens et al., 2014). This dataset includes the manifests of 977 parties from 56 countries which joined free and competitive elections from 1920 to 2013. The sentences in the manifests of political parties are coded based on 56 categories. Each variable is continuous and shows the percentage of favorable mentions of that certain issue in the whole manifest. I use three of these 56 categories to measure the nationalism levels of the chief executives' political parties: positive mentions of national way of life, positive mentions of national security, and negative mentions of multiculturalism. These categories reflect the elements of widely accepted definitions of nationalism mentioned in the literature review: superiority of national interests over individuals' interests and an emphasis on national unity. The first category, national way of life, presents "favourable mentions of the manifesto country's nation, history, and general appeals...support for established national ideas; general appeals to pride of citizenship; appeals to patriotism; appeals to nationalism; suspension of some freedoms in order to protect the state against subversion" in the manifests of political parties (Volkens et al., 2015, p. 17). For instance, in the manifest of Justice and Development Party for the 2007 elections in Turkey, the statement that "The core of our policies is one nation, one flag, one/united mainland, and one state" is coded as a positive mention of national way of life (Lehmann et al., 2015). National security category refers to

sentences mentioning "support for or need to maintain national security in all spheres of social life; policies devoted to this goal" (Volkens et al., 2015, p. 21). Negative mentions of multiculturalism present the discourse of the party regarding "enforcement or encouragement of cultural integration and appeals for cultural homogeneity in society" (Volkens et al., 2015, p. 17). For example, in the manifest of Katters Australian Party for the 2013 elections, we see the statement that "these temporary visas would also provide conditions in relation to settlement and assimilation into the Australian community, compelling a commitment to Australian culture, and compelling a productive contribution to the Australian economy." (Lehmann et al., 2015). I consider these categories as equally important pillars of nationalist ideology since they represent how much a political party is willing to sacrifice individual interests for the sake of national interests and to protect national unity. Hence, I avoid establishing a hierarchy among the components of nationalist ideology and use the average of these three scores as my indicator of the nationalism level of political parties.

I could also use the Database of Political Institutions (DPI) (Beck et al., 2001) which considers nationalism as a dichotomous variable and codes political parties as nationalist if "1) Party is listed as nationalist in Europa, Banks, Political Handbook, or 2) A primary component of the party's platform is the creation or defense of a national or ethnic identity." There several reasons why I prefer Manifesto Project Database over DPI. First, the operationalization of the nationalism variable in DPI is incomplete as it only focuses on "creation or defense of a national identity". This one-dimensional measure of nationalism excludes important elements of nationalism. For example, it does not account for party's position regarding national security or minorities and refugees. The Manifesto Project Database allows for a more flexible and accurate operationalization of nationalism based on the definitions in the literature. Second, DPI considers nationalism level of political parties as constant over time, whereas Manifesto Project Database reflects any changes in the ideological orientations of political parties which are revealed through their manifests before each election. This is an important advantage because political parties are dynamic organizations and likely to change their ideologies and policies in time in response to developments in domestic

and international level. Lastly, coding nationalism as a dichotomous variable is problematic. Political parties can be nationalist to varying degrees. Manifesto Project Database allows me to measure the nationalism levels of political parties in a continuous sense.

#### **Democracy as an Intervening Variable**

As discussed in the theory section, there is a robust and non-linear relationship between democracy and human rights. A simple increase in the democracy level does not necessarily increase respect for human rights. As Davenport and Armstrong (2004) and Bueno de Mesquita et al. (2005) found, only advanced/full democracies make a positive difference. In line with my theory, only full democracies should be immune to nationalism's negative consequences for human rights.

Epstein et al. (2006) suggest a useful tool to distinguish these two types of democracies. By using the revised combined polity score from Polity IV data (Marshall, Jaggers, and Gurr, 2016), which measures democracy based on executive constraints, political competition, and the quality of political participation, they categorize regimes as "Autocracies (Polity value -10 to 0), Partial Democracies (+1 to +7), and Full Democracies (+8 to +10)" (Epstein et al., 2006, p. 555). Although any kind of threshold between partial and full democracies is inevitably arbitrary, Epstein et al. (2006) state that countries with polity score lower than 8 fail to attain a maximum score in any of the three components mentioned above, whereas countries with polity score higher than 7 attain a maximum value in at least one of these categories. Similarly, Hadenius and Teorell (2007) and Wahman, Teorel, and Hadenius (2013) argue that a regime is a robust democracy if the mean of its Freedom House and Polity scores passes 7.5 threshold which indicates fairness and competitiveness of elections. In line with Epstein et al. (2006), Hadenius and Teorell (2007), and Wahman, Teorel, and Hadenius (2013), I consider regimes as full democracies when they pass the 7.5 threshold in their revised combined polity score, and as partial democracies if their polity score is below 7.5.

#### **Control Variables**

Poe and Tate (1994) point out that conflict, development, and population have significant effects on human rights practices. Domestic or international conflict is likely to decrease respect for human rights whereas it can also increase nationalism level overall. I use "Incidence of conflict" variable of UCDP Monadic Conflict Onset and Incidence Dataset (Gleditsch et al., 2002) to control for the effect of conflict. An armed conflict is defined as "a contested incompatibility that concerns government and/or territory where the use of armed force between two parties, of which at least one is the government of a state, results in at least 25 battle-related deaths in one calendar year" (Gleditsch et al., 2002, p. 1). The variable is coded as 1 if there is at least one active conflict. Secondly, economic development level is associated with better human rights scores. To control this effect, I use logged version of GDP PPP (constant 2011 international dollar) variable from World Development Indicators (WDI), which refers to "gross domestic product converted to international dollars using purchasing power parity rates" (World Bank, 2014). Thirdly, countries with larger populations are expected have less respect for human rights. I use population in a given country-year according to the National Accounts Estimates of Main Aggregates Database of the United Nations (United Nations, 2014) to control for the effect of population. Lastly, refugee population in a country may affect level of nationalism given stronger "us versus them" perception and human rights practices given social instability in case of high rates of refugee flows. In this sense, I control for the effect of refugee flows in a given year by using a logged version of "refugee population by country or territory of asylum" variable from World Development Indicators (WDI) (World Bank, 2014).

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of all the variables described above.

[Insert Table 1 here]

# Methodology

The appropriate models for the test of my hypotheses are random effects ordered probit model, fixed effects model, random effects model, panel-corrected standard errors model, generalized

least square model, and Driscoll and Kraay estimator. The diagnostic tests show that my data suffers autocorrelation, heteroskedasticity, and group-wise heteroskedasticity problems. In other words, error processes in panels do not have the same variance; errors for a unit at time t is not independent from errors at other times; and errors for a unit are not independent from the errors of other units. Under these conditions, estimating OLS (ordinary least squares) would give biased results (Beck and Katz, 1995). Also, the coefficients of the fixed and the random effects models are systematically different which suggests that a fixed effects model would be more reliable. However, my independent variable (Nationalism) does not vary significantly over time and a fixed effect model would remove this temporal variation. It would be "curing a cold with chemotherapy" as "including fixed effects means that any independent variable that does not vary temporally cannot be used as an explanatory variable." (Beck and Katz, 2001, p. 492). In sum, random effects ordered probit model, fixed effects model, and random effects model are either unreliable or do not allow me to fix the autocorrelation and panel-level heteroskedasticity problems. I use a panel-corrected standard errors model (with options to fix autocorrelation and panel-level heteroskedasticity) (Beck and Katz, 1995) to test my hypotheses. I also use generalized least square (Greene, 2003) and Driscoll and Kraay estimator (Hoechle, 2007) for robustness test as these two models also allow me to fix the problems mentioned above.

# **Results**

My theory is that in partial democracies, nationalism decreases respect for human rights (such as freedom of assembly and association, freedom of speech, electoral self-determination) and increases human rights violations (such as torture, extrajudicial killing, disappearance, and political imprisonment). So, in the tables below, I expect *Nationalism* variable to be statistically significant and negative in partial democracies since the lower values of dependent variables represent higher rates of violation of these rights. In contrast, in line with the earlier empirical findings in the literature, I expect nationalism to not significantly affect human rights practices in full democracies.

Table 2 shows the effect of nationalism on human rights in partial democracies. First, *Nationalism* 

has a statistically significant effect on Freedom of Assembly and Association at 95 percent confidence level in the expected direction. One-unit increase in the nationalism level of the chief executive's political party decreases level of respect for freedom of assembly and association by 0.114. Second, Nationalism has a statistically significant effect on Freedom of Electoral Self-Determination at 99 percent confidence level in the expected direction. One-unit increase in the nationalism level of the chief executive's political party decreases level of respect for freedom of electoral self-determination by 0.159. Third, *Nationalism* significantly decreases respect for *Freedom of Speech* at 95 percent confidence level in the expected direction. One-unit increase in the nationalism level decreases level of respect for freedom of speech by 0.089. Lastly, *Nationalism* has a statistically significant effect on *Political Imprisonment* at 95 percent confidence level in the expected direction. One-unit increase in the nationalism level of the chief executive's political party decreases level of respect for the right to not to be imprisoned because of political beliefs by 0.131. As Table 3 shows, however, Nationalism does not have any statistically significant on any of the human rights (at 90 percent confidence level) in full democracies. It should be noted that these results based on democracy level do not merely reflect the effect of democracy level on human rights. Table 2 shows the variation within partial democracies which are less respectful to human rights in general whereas table 3 shows the variation within full democracies which are typically more respectful to human rights. These results provide empirical strong support for the first, second, third, and sixth hypotheses.

[Insert Table 2 here]

[Insert Table 3 here]

Nationalism does not have any statistically significant effect (at 90 percent confidence level) on Disappearance, Extrajudicial Killing, and Torture in either partial or full democracies, although the signs of the coefficients are in the expected direction. It means that there is no support for the fourth, fifth, and seventh hypotheses. One explanation of the lack of support for these hypotheses is that disappearance, extrajudicial killing, and torture are physically violent and visible acts as they draw more attention from domestic and international media. It increases the likelihood of backlash

because of immediate negative reactions in both domestic and international level. As Conrad and DeMeritt (2014) find, when governments are named and shamed by international organizations for torture, they substitute visible repression tactics like torture with relatively less visible repression tactics like violating freedom of speech and freedom of assembly and association. Hence, even nationalist government may refrain from using visible repressive tools to avoid domestic unrest or international pressure.

Lastly, all the control variables have effects in the expected direction. *Population* is statistically significant in all models (except *Disappearance* model) with at least 90 percent confidence level in the sample of full democracies. The bigger the size of the population, the lower the respect for human rights in full democracies. In the sample of partial democracies, it is statistically insignificant in most of the models. GDP is also statistically significant with at least 95 percent confidence level in all models, except *Disappearance* model, in the sample of full democracies. It means that wealthier full democracies are more respectful to human rights in overall. In the sample of partial democracies, GDP has a statistically significant effect, at 99 percent confidence level, on respect for self-determination right, whereas it is not statistically significant at 90 percent confidence level in other models. We can conclude that wealth is not enough to increase respect for human rights in the absence of full democracy. Interstate or intrastate conflict in full democracies significantly (at 95 percent confidence level) increases only the practices of extrajudicial killing and political imprisonment. In the sample of partial democracies, on the other hand, it decreases respect for self-determination, and increases practices of disappearance, extrajudicial killing, and political imprisonment. Hence, full democracy partially mitigates the negative consequences of conflict, whereas the consequences are more severe in partial democracies. Lastly, Refugee population has inconsistent effects on human rights. In full democracies, it has a statistically significant and positive effect on the level of respect for the right to not to be tortured and imprisoned because of political beliefs. It does not have any statistically significant effect on human rights in partial democracies.

#### [Insert Figure 1 here]

[Insert Figure 2 here]

[Insert Figure 3 here]

[Insert Figure 4 here]

We can make several inferences based on these findings. The primary inference is that nationalism, regardless of the type (ethnic or civic), decreases respect for certain types of human rights that can be used by minorities to challenge the national unity (freedom of assembly and association, electoral self-determination, and speech) in partial democracies. Also, nationalist governments do not see any harm imprisoning citizens because of their political beliefs for the sake of national security. On the other hand, nationalist governments do not excessively practice disappearance, extrajudicial killing, and torture probably because such physically violent acts draw more attention from media, become more visible, and bring immediate negative reactions in domestic and international level.

# **Robustness Tests**

I estimated several other models to test the robustness of my findings. First, in addition to panel corrected standard errors model (*xtpcse*), I used generalized least square (Greene, 2003) and Driscoll and Kraay estimator (Hoechle, 2007) to test my models. As tables 5-8 in appendix show, the results are robust across all models <sup>2</sup>.

Second, I estimated separate models for coalition governments in which the effect of chief executives' ideology on human rights practices might be weaker. I used the *number of other government parties* variable from the Database of Political Institutions (DPI) (Beck et al., 2001) for these models. 157 of 834 observations in my dataset are coalition governments. 28 of these 157 observations are partial democracies whereas 129 of them are full democracies. Table 9 and 10 in appendix show that the results are the same for both coalition and single party governments. It implies that the effect of the nationalism level of the chief executives' parties are not significantly

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Results can be found in the supplemental materials available at http://prq.sagepub.com or at https://emiryazici.weebly.com/research.html.

limited by other parties in governments.

Third, it might be argued that the relationship between the chief executives and their political parties can vary in different political systems. However, my dataset does not allow me to test my theoretical model in different political systems because 94% of the parliamentary democracies in my dataset are full democracies. Only 39 observations (out of 624 parliamentary country-year observations) are partial parliamentary democracies. Since my argument depends on democracy level, the low number of observations does not allow me to conduct a robustness test. Nevertheless, it is plausible to assume that chief executives represent their political parties' ideologies in all political systems.

Lastly, table 12 and 13 show the results when I use the nationalism variable of Database of Political Institutions (Beck et al., 2001) rather than the index I created based on the Manifesto Project Database (Volkens et al., 2014). I do not expect DPI's nationalism variable to produce similar results since it is not a valid measure of nationalism according to my criteria (see the discussion in the research design section). In fact, it produces different and inconsistent results. It decreases some human rights violations (such as extrajudicial killing, torture, political imprisonment) whereas it increases disappearance rates. As such, I argue that these results based on DPI's nationalism variable do not provide a reliable robustness test given the problematic operationalization of nationalism.

# Nationalism and Human Rights in Turkey Between 1999 - 2016

I explore the relationship between nationalism and human rights in Turkey between 1999-2016 in more detail in order to illustrate my causal mechanism. Although it is not an in-depth case study, it allows us to observe how the nationalism level of the same political party varies across time and affects human rights practices. Also, I collected data on chief executives' speeches to supplement Manifesto data to measure nationalism level. As a result, this case study allows a closer examination of my causal mechanism and an alternative measure of nationalism based on speeches of chief executives in addition to party manifests.

Turkey was ruled by a coalition government between 1999-2002. Since 2002, the same party (Justice and Development Party) has been in power. I measured nationalism level of each government based on the chief executives' speeches and party manifests. <sup>3</sup> Table 9 in appendix shows the key variables regarding the governments' nationalism and human rights scores between 1999 - 2016. <sup>4</sup> As my theory suggests, we should observe a decrease in respect for certain human rights when the government's nationalism level increases and democratic institutions are weak. According to the CIRI data (Cingranelli, Richards, and Clay, 2014a), between 1999 - 2011, Turkey had the worst human rights scores during the years 2008, 2009, 2010, and 2011, as respect for freedom of assembly and association, electoral self-determination, freedom of speech, disappearance, and extrajudicial killing had significantly decreased compared to previous periods. In line with my expectation, this is the time period when the nationalism level of the government had significantly increased and reached its highest level since 1999. Turkey's democracy level during this period was 7 according to Polity data (Marshall, Jaggers, and Gurr, 2016). So, it was a partial democracy with a nationalist government which significantly and negatively affected human rights practices. The nationalism level of the government has declined between 2012 - 2014 and the democracy level had increased. In contrast to my expectation, human rights practice in Turkey got worse. Although the CIRI data does not cover the time period after 2011, Turkey's Civil Liberties Score, according to Freedom House reports (Freedom House, 2018), has declined by 1 point despite the decrease in nationalism level and increase in democracy level. However, government's nationalism level has reached its peak in 2015 and 2016. During these two years, Turkey's Civil Liberties Score has felt to its lowest level since the beginning of Justice and Development Party era. Also, Turkey's democracy level has significantly declined during 2015 and 2016. As Figure 5 shows, the significant increases/decreases in the nationalism level and the level of respect for human rights are correlated.

# [Insert Figure 5 here]

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>See the codebook for the detailed coding procedure and the original speeches. It can be found in the supplemental materials and replication files available at http://prq.sagepub.com or at https://emiryazici.weebly.com/research.html.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Table 9 can be found in the supplemental materials available at http://prq.sagepub.com or at https://emiryazici.weebly.com/research.html.

Of course, such a correlation is not enough to conclude that it was nationalism which caused human rights violations in the absence of strong democratic institutions. However, when we take a closer look at the human rights reports about Turkey, we see that major violations of the rights (especially freedom of assembly and association, freedom of electoral self-determination, and freedom of speech) are mostly related to nationalist policies of the government. For example, 2008 Freedom House Report mentions prosecution of journalists because of "crimes like insulting the armed services and denigrating 'Turkishness' " (Freedom House, 2008). So, government's sensibility about national pride caused violation of freedom of speech. Although the government has passed legislations improving cultural rights for the Kurdish population, Freedom House Reports in 2008 and 2009 state that the practices were not promising (Freedom House, 2009). Numerous Kurdish newspapers were closed own and their websites were blocked. Any allegation regarding collaboration with the PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party- the Kurdish terrorist organization-) was used to justify arrests of Kurdish journalist, academics, and politicians. As my theory implies, concerns about national security led the government to violate cultural rights. Despite the promising peace negotiations between Turkish government and the PKK in 2009, the positive political environment for human rights did not last long when the peace initiative was shelved by the government later. In 2010, 151 suspects were put on trial because of their ties to the PKK (Freedom House, 2010). The court did not allow defendants to present their defense in Kurdish although there was not any law against it. This example reflects how the government's sensitivity about the cultural unity of the nation leads to the violation of minority language rights. Freedom House reports also mention limited academic freedom in Turkey especially when it comes to sensitive topics like Kurdish rights, the allegations of Armenian genocide in 1915, and Ataturk (the founder of the Republic of Turkey) (Freedom House, 2009, 2010, 2011). It indicates how the concerns about national unity and history can cause limitation of freedom of speech. According to 2011 Freedom House Report (Freedom House, 2011), "The government has since stepped up nationalist rhetoric and cracked down on alleged PKK collaborators." Thousands of people with ties to Kurdish political organizations were arrested in 2011. Again, increase in the concerns about national security

increased violations of human rights like political imprisonment.

In conclusion, a short analysis of Turkish governments between 1999-2016 shows that significant increases in the nationalism levels of governments affects human rights practices when the democratic institutions are not strong enough to tame nationalist governments. In line with my findings from the large-N quantitative analysis, this Turkish case provided supplemental qualitative evidence to support my theory. It should be noted that my analysis of the Turkey case is more of an illustration of my theory and a supplemental empirical evidence rather than a proper case study to test my theory. Yet, there is still a clear pattern pointing out a negative relationship between nationalism and human rights.

# **Conclusion**

I argue that nationalist governments violate human rights more than others given the inherent incompatibility between the two main elements of nationalism (goal of achieving and preserving national unity, and prioritization of national interests over any other concerns) and human rights. I test this argument with a large-N dataset including 49 countries between 1981-2011. The results show that as the nationalism level of the chief executive's political party increases, respect for freedom of assembly and association, freedom of electoral self-determination, and freedom of speech decreases. Also, nationalism level of the chief executive's political party increases the rate of political imprisonment. However, this is the case only in partial democracies. The negative consequences of nationalism disappear in full democracies given consolidated democratic institutions and practices which prevent governments from reaching the means of repression.

This article contributes to the literature in several ways. First, I establish a coherent causal mechanism between nationalism and human rights and test it with a large-N data. Even though some of the earlier studies have showed the incompatibility of nationalism and human rights in general, this is the first systematic analysis showing which human rights are in danger and why when a nationalist government is in power. Nationalism, differently from other ideologies such as liberalism or socialism, increases violation of human rights by prescribing a certain preference

ordering for the practitioners which inherently contradicts with human rights. Human rights is not a moral concern for nationalism when national unity and security are at stake, whereas human rights can triumph other political objectives for other ideologies like liberalism.

Second, I show that institutional constraints on the chief executives, rather than the type of nationalism, determine the consequences of nationalism. In partial democracies, nationalist governments have access to means to violate human rights for the sake of national unity and security with less costs given unconsolidated democratic institutions. Yet, in full democracies, consolidated democratic institutions (such as fair and competitive elections, independence of judiciary, and constraints on chief executive's power) prevent nationalist governments from sacrificing human rights for ambiguously defined "national interests". The finding that full democracies can be immune to negative consequences of nationalism points out the crucial role of democratic institutions in preventing a possible increase in human rights violations due to rise of populist nationalist political parties around the world. In line with Mitch (2012), therefore, I argue that taming nation-states and nationalism is possible. Although we cannot prevent rise of nationalism, strengthening democracy can limit nationalist governments' ability to reach repressive tools.

Third, I demonstrate that human rights scholars should pay attention to ideologies of the decision-makers to understand the motivation behind the human rights violations. In addition to regime type, wealth, conflict or other institutional and structural factors, I underline the impact of ideology on human rights practices.

Lastly, I suggest a simple but useful measure of nationalism. Identifying the chief executives and their political parties as the primary actors in the relationship between nationalism and human rights allows us to use party manifests to measure nationalism quantitatively across time and space. Such a systematic tool can be used to test the effect of nationalism on other social and political phenomena (e.g. international conflict, government spendings, distribution of wealth) or to understand the rise and fall of nationalism.

The main limitation of this research is the limited data. In future research, the data should be updated by including the countries from developing or under-developed parts of the world which would allow us to reach more generalizable results. Second, one may plausibly argue that the focus should be the ideology of the chief executive, rather than his/her political party. So, individual chief executives and their personal ideologies, instead of their political parties, can be analyzed to measure their nationalism level. Third, some additional factors, which can interact with nationalism and affect the relationship between nationalism and human rights, can be identified. For example, dynamics of coalition governments in parliamentary democracies, foreign-aid affect, political culture, and historical experiences can possibly affect nationalism-human rights relationship.

# **Tables and Figures**

Table 1: Summary Statistics

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.	N
Freedom of Assembly and Association	1.577	0.656	0	2	1329
Electoral Self-Determination	1.67	0.59	0	2	1329
Freedom of Speech	1.402	0.597	0	2	1324
Disappearance	1.826	0.49	0	2	1329
Extrajudicial Killing	1.681	0.596	0	2	1324
Torture	1.107	0.758	0	2	1329
Political Imprisonment	1.554	0.726	0	2	1329
Average Nationalism Score	0.774	1.149	0	8.614	1111
Population	16.135	1.613	12.348	19.568	1331
GDP	25.596	3.761	0.04	30.374	1042
Conflict	0.098	0.297	0	1	1361
Democracy	7.825	4.295	-9	10	1288
Refugee Population	9.030	3.601	0	26.376	989

Table 2: Nationalism and Human Rights in Partial Democracies

			<u> </u>				
	Freedom of Assembly and Association	Electoral Self-Determination	Freedom of Speech	Disappearance	Extrajudicial Killing	Torture	Political Imprisonmen
Average Nationalism Score	-0.114**	-0.159***	-0.089**	-0.039	-0.042	-0.026	-0.131**
	(-2.25)	(-4.57)	(-2.10)	(-0.74)	(-1.08)	(-0.71)	(-3.25)
Population	-0.255	-0.425***	-0.121	-0.315	-0.114	-0.496**	-0.274
^	(-1.34)	(-3.40)	(-0.75)	(-1.57)	(-0.68)	(-2.92)	(-1.11)
GDP	0.155	0.313**	0.016	0.130	-0.014	0.275**	0.057
	(1.00)	(3.03)	(0.13)	(0.85)	(-0.10)	(2.10)	(0.32)
Conflict	-0.183	-0.296**	-0.093	-0.295**	-0.363**	-0.094	-0.393**
	(-1.25)	(-2.45)	(-0.68)	(-2.17)	(-2.51)	(-0.94)	(-3.15)
Refugee Population	0.047	-0.019	0.027	-0.005	-0.018	0.029	0.020
	(1.54)	(-0.77)	(1.25)	(-0.21)	(-0.66)	(1.20)	(0.66)
Constant	1.168	0.609	2.418**	3.677**	3.663**	1.290	4.014***
	(0.83)	(0.59)	(2.28)	(2.49)	(3.21)	(1.42)	(3.32)
Observations	113	113	113	113	113	113	113

t statistics in parentheses

<sup>\*</sup> p < 0.10, \*\* p < 0.05, \*\*\* p < 0.001

Table 3: Nationalism and Human Rights in Full Democracies

	Freedom of Assembly and Association	Electoral Self-Determination	Freedom of Speech	Disappearance	Extrajudicial Killing	Torture	Political Imprisonment
Average Nationalism Score	-0.005	-0.011	-0.015	-0.009	-0.005	-0.040	0.020
	(-0.30)	(-0.44)	(-0.86)	(-1.36)	(-0.37)	(-0.18)	(1.08)
Population	-0.308**	-0.301***	-0.312***	-0.135	-0.329***	-0.639***	-0.267***
^	(-3.28)	(-4.90)	(-4.01)	(-1.39)	(-5.43)	(-11.18)	(-4.29)
GDP	0.263**	0.307***	0.303***	0.055	0.271***	0.456***	0.196**
	(2.52)	(4.51)	(3.68)	(0.57)	(4.28)	(7.03)	(2.73)
Conflict	-0.161	-0.068	0.044	-0.048	-0.408**	-0.091	-0.857***
	(-1.03)	(-1.11)	(0.30)	(-0.42)	(-2.43)	(-0.68)	(-5.01)
Refugee Population	0.020	-0.003	-0.026	0.015	-0.012	0.057***	0.031*
	(0.89)	(-0.21)	(-1.55)	(1.29)	(-0.97)	(3.44)	(1.83)
Constant	-0.357	-1.322	-1.218	2.511**	0.114	-0.986	0.671
	(-0.28)	(-1.60)	(-1.24)	(2.45)	(0.16)	(-1.18)	(0.73)
Observations	721	721	721	721	721	721	721

t statistics in parentheses

<sup>\*</sup> p < 0.10, \*\* p < 0.05, \*\*\* p < 0.001

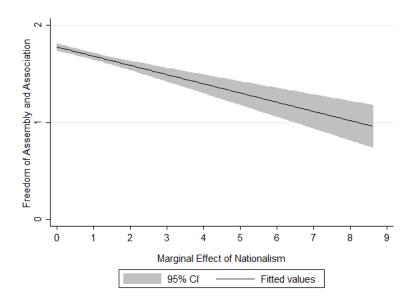


Figure 1: Nationalism and Freedom of Assembly and Association

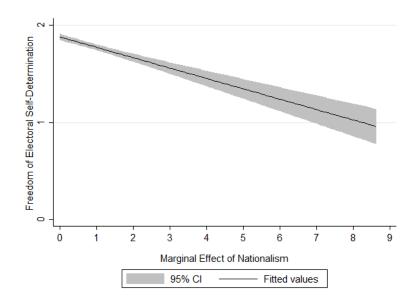


Figure 2: Nationalism and Freedom of Electoral Self-Determination

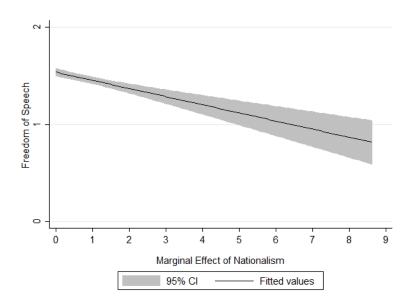


Figure 3: Nationalism and Freedom of Speech

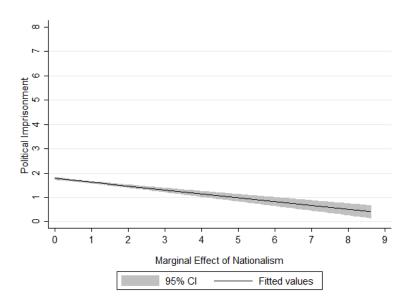


Figure 4: Nationalism and Political Imprisonment

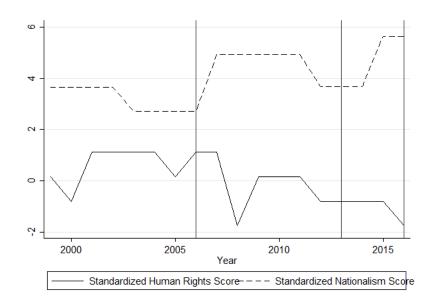


Figure 5: Nationalism and Human Rights in Turkey (1999-2016)

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