

Testing the contradictory effect of nationalism on mental health: A country-level observation

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Abstract.

Nationalism has led to various adverse outcomes globally during the coronavirus pandemic. This paper derived country-level data from the World Value Survey (2017–2020) and the Global Health Data Exchange (2019) to investigate the effect of nationalism on the prevalence of mental health problems, including major depressive disorder and anxiety disorder. To address the causal relationship between nationalism and mental health outcomes, we use constitutional protection to non-citizens as an instrumental variable. Our study shows that nationalism, interacting with economic development is positively associated with a higher prevalence of anxiety disorder within a country. Also, after applying the instrumental variable for our examination, we found a positive association of nationalism and mental health problems, although the effect is not significant, there is a big rise of coefficient, suggesting that nationalism could be responsible for a higher prevalence of mental health problems within the country.

Keywords: nationalism; depressive disorder; anxiety disorder; economic development; constitutional protects