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Macro-Economic Inequality and National Stereotypes in 45 Non-Western Countries

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Abstract

The assumption that people favor ingroups and disfavor outgroups is based largely on theory and research from Western countries. However, groups subjected to economic exploitation and inequality might come to favor more advantaged outgroups. The present large-scale study (N = 12,339) involving 45 non-Western countries explored ingroup stereotypes and stereotypes of relatively advantaged and disadvantaged outgroups (Western Europeans and Western Africans, respectively) and their relation to macroeconomic conditions. Compared with their national ingroup, participants stereotyped advantaged outgroups as more competent (exhibiting outgroup favoritism) but less warm; they stereotyped disadvantaged outgroups as less competent but neither more nor less warm. Nationals of poorer and more exploited countries exhibited stronger outgroup favoritism on competence and stronger ingroup favoritism on warmth. This work provides preliminary evidence for the structural origins of national stereotypes: macroeconomic inequalities can override habitual ingroup favoritism and lead national groups to exhibit outgroup favoritism.

Keywords

economic exploitation, social inequality, stereotyping, outgroup favoritism, world systems theory

> "An objective class status is only a reality insofar as it becomes a subjective reality for some group or groups, and if it 'objectively' exists, it inevitably will be felt 'subjectively.'"
>
> Immanuel Wallerstein, 1979 (p. 225)

Many social theorists have argued that social, economic, and political inequalities are, in many ways, self-sustaining, in the sense that objective disparities create dynamics of domination and subordination—or, in the cultural sphere,

hegemony and consent—that are experienced subjectively (e.g., Elias, 1939/2000; Jost, 2020; Sidanius & Pratto, 2001). One example, among many throughout human history, concerns European colonization of the Global South, which produced a lasting set of detrimental social and psychological effects on those who were colonized (Biko, 1996; Fanon, 1963; Memmi, 1957/2021). People who were colonized frequently internalized their oppression, developing distortedly negative ingroup stereotypes and beliefs about their own bodies, culture, identity, and ways of life (for a recent review, see Jost et al., 2025).

Similar observations about the internalization of inferiority were made in other areas of philosophy and social psychology throughout the middle of the 20th century (Allport, 1979). Kurt Lewin (1948), for instance, described cases of "self-hatred" among Jews, and the classic doll studies by Clark and Clark showed that African American children often preferred to play with white rather than black dolls (Clark & Clark, 1950). Several contemporary studies also support the hypothesis that members of socially devalued groups (e.g., women, minorities, people with disabilities) experience internalized oppression, which has been linked to serious mental health problems (e.g., David, 2013; David & Okazaki, 2006; Garcia et al., 2019; Graham et al., 2016; Nikalje & Çiftçi, 2023).

A seemingly related phenomenon has been observed in the study of intergroup relations, whereby members of low-status or disadvantaged groups sometimes depart from the supposedly universal norm of ingroup favoritism (e.g., Hammond & Axelrod, 2006; Romano et al., 2021; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and instead favor members of other, higher-status, or more objectively advantaged outgroups (e.g., Ashburn-Nardo et al., 2003; Axt et al., 2018; Essien et al., 2021; Jost et al., 2002; Rudman et al., 2002; Santos & Pereira, 2021). According to system justification theory, which was inspired in part by critical, anti-colonial, and social-structural theorists, and psychological evidence of what used to be called "group self-hatred," members of lower-status or disadvantaged groups may come to support and justify the existing social order (i.e., status quo), even if the consequences of their support are at odds with other personal and ingroup interests (Jost, 2001, 2020; Jost & Banaji, 1994). In the present research program, we explore the possibility that disadvantaged groups might develop or internalize stereotypes and belief systems that justify global as well as local inequalities. This is a likely possibility, given the legacy of historical oppression and the current neoliberal regime of global capitalism, under which some (mostly Western) countries are far wealthier and more powerful than other (mostly non-Western) countries.

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Indeed, a few studies investigated feelings of inferiority in the Global South, such as Puerto Rico (Capielo Rosario et al., 2019; Rivera Pichardo et al., 2022; Varas-Díaz & Serrano-García, 2003) and Ghana (Utsey et al., 2015). One of the most notable, in our view, investigated the "national inferiority complex" in Brazil, based on the idea that the "typical nature of the Brazilian people. . . is [a] type of generalized feeling of collective inferiority intrinsic to Brazilian culture, which encourages people to place higher value on those from foreign countries than on Brazilians themselves typically" (Santos & Pereira, 2021). In their studies, Santos and Pereira investigated how much money Brazilians would compensate the victim of police violence as a function of the victims' national origin. They observed that Brazilians compensated Brazilian victims more than African victims. This form of ingroup bias is in line with social identity theory, which emphasizes the tendency to favor members of one's own group over others, as well as system justification theory, which emphasizes the tendency to favor members of groups higher (vs. lower) in the social order. However, Brazilians compensated Brazilian victims *less* than European victims, thereby exhibiting outgroup rather than ingroup favoritism. This finding is in line with system justification theory: when the outgroup is the dominant group—that is, highly advantaged in terms of status, power, prestige, or privilege—members of dominated (or subordinated) groups often show a preference for the outgroup, thereby accepting and reinforcing the social status quo (Jost & Banaji, 1994; Santos & Pereira, 2021).

Whereas previous research was limited largely to a specific vision of internalized oppression based on race, ethnicity, or religion within a given country, we believe that outgroup favoritism is far from unique to these contexts. This is because the psychological and ideological legacies of coloniality, social domination, economic exploitation, and political inequality persist everywhere (e.g., Adams et al., 2015; Amin, 2014; Rivera Pichardo et al., 2022; Sidanius & Pratto, 2001). According to Wallerstein's (1979, 2004) world-systems theory, Western powers have maintained hegemonic control over non-Western countries and regions for centuries and, indeed, continue to benefit from the unequal exchange of goods and resources. For example, it is estimated that the Global North appropriated a total of US$242 trillion from the Global South over a single 25-year period from 1990 to 2015 (Hickel et al., 2021). By synthesizing insights from system justification and world-systems theories, we hypothesize that objective social and economic inequalities under global capitalism will be subjectively associated with stereotype internalization and national outgroup favoritism on the part of non-Western citizens, thereby diminishing their expression of national ingroup favoritism. As noted by Jost (2020), "Once events produce certain social arrangements, whether by historical fiat or human intention, the resulting arrangements tend to be explained and justified, often in *inherent* terms . . . simply because they exist" (pp. 83-84, emphasis in original).

Internalized oppression and outgroup favoritism have been observed not only in Brazil, Puerto Rico, and Ghana, but also in other countries in the Global South. In African and Asian contexts, outgroup favoritism often manifests itself in terms of beauty standards that favor European features over native features as well as potentially dangerous methods used to attain those standards, such as skin-bleaching chemicals (Blay, 2011; Choma & Prusaczyk, 2018). Importantly, outgroup favoritism is not limited to non-European countries. In Serbia, a broader cultural discourse sometimes labeled as "auto-chauvinism" reflects the belief that the Serbian population is inherently backward and corrupt and will never reach the level of Western Europeans (Gligorić & Obradović, 2024; Russell-Omaljev, 2016). This is also the case in other Balkan nations: the term "Balkanism" is sometimes used to characterize the supposed savagery and barbarism of people living in this region (Todorova, 2009). Other Eastern European nations are sometimes stereotyped and self-stereotyped as dirty, corrupt, and prone to stealing (Marc, 2010; Veličković, 2020). Given the history of Western and Northern hegemony in Europe, it is to be expected that people in Eastern and Southern Europe would display outgroup favoritism. By focusing on the phenomenon of "national outgroup favoritism" in this research program, we refrain from making generic assumptions about complex social psychological processes—such as whether upward social comparisons stem from negative ingroup evaluations and/or positive outgroup evaluations (Axt et al., 2018; Calanchini et al., 2022).

In the present research program, we follow recent calls to greatly expand social psychology's database beyond Western borders (e.g., Adams et al., 2015; Bou Zeineddine et al., 2022; Henrich et al., 2010; Readsura Decolonial Editorial Collective, 2022). We do so by examining national outgroup favoritism in 45 non-Western countries, a phenomenon that has yet to be explored in mainstream (Western) psychology. We measure outgroup favoritism in two ways. First, we adapted the scenario used in the study on the national inferiority complex in Brazil (Santos & Pereira, 2021), measuring perceived injustice and compensation of ingroup vs outgroup members. Second, we investigated general social evaluations (i.e., stereotypes) as pervasive and structured beliefs to detect general patterns associated with perceptions of advantaged and disadvantaged groups (Jost, 2001).

Decades of research have revealed that social stereotypes can be reduced to two major dimensions—*horizontal* (such as warmth or communion) and *vertical* (such as competence or agency)—which are thought to be largely universal across many cultures and target groups (e.g., Asch, 1946; Fiske et al., 2002, 2007). More recently, it has been shown that these two dimensions each include two facets, yielding a four-dimensional model of group evaluations or stereotypes. Thus, individuals and groups are typically evaluated on dimensions of competence and assertiveness

(the agency factor), and morality and warmth (communion factor; see Abele et al., 2016, 2021). Using these four dimensions, in the present research we examined national ingroup stereotypes as well as stereotypes of relatively advantaged (Western European) and disadvantaged (Western African) outgroups in 45 non-Western countries. Because of ongoing structural inequalities, we also investigated the role of macroeconomic conditions in these social evaluations, by examining how stereotype contents relate to gross domestic product (GDP) per capita and degree of economic exploitation. The study was pre-registered, but in this article we are focusing on only one part of a larger project; see https://osf.io/b4c38. A detailed discussion of pre-registration (and specific deviations from it) is included in the supplementary information.

Method

Participants and Procedure

To confirm that this research program complied with all relevant ethical regulations, ethical approval was obtained by the first author from the Institutional Review Board at the University of Amsterdam, covering data collection in all countries. All participants read an information letter and provided informed consent before taking part in the study. After the study, participants were thanked and debriefed. To comply with ethical regulations, participants were asked at the end of the session if they wanted to withdraw their participation because the study used deception. In total, 22 participants withdrew their participation, so their data was removed permanently.

To address our research questions, we attempted to collect data from at least 20 non-Western countries. Our collaborators were recruited through personal networks and an open call on Twitter. In total, the study, which took place from June 2023 to March 2024, included $N = 12{,}339$ participants (38% male, 62% female, $M_{age} = 33.51$, $SD_{age} = 13.83$) from 45 non-Western countries, after removing speeders (those who completed the survey in less than 60 seconds; $n = 13$). Information about the power analysis, size and composition of samples is included in the supplement. Collaborators translated materials and obtained diverse samples in terms of composition; however, recruitment was based on existing social networks or participant pools. We aimed to achieve diversity in terms of sex, age, and education (and adjusted for these variables) and compare results across various countries.

Design and Materials

Each participant completed the same study materials translated (back-and-forth) into their country's primary language. The only exception was the violence scenario, which had an alternative version in some countries (see below). The study was administered online via Qualtrics and lasted approximately 5 minutes. After reading general information and giving consent, participants completed sociodemographic questions about sex (male or female), age, and education [whether they completed (1) elementary school or less, (2) high school, are (3) currently studying, or completed an (4) undergraduate/bachelor's degree, or (5) postgraduate/master's or PhD degree].

Next, participants were presented with the violence scenario. We used a between-group design with three conditions, inspired by the study on the national inferiority complex in Brazil. Participants were presented with what appeared to be a newspaper excerpt describing a worker in a restaurant who was unjustly arrested and injured. For one-third of the participants, the victim was described as Western European; for another third, the victim was described as Western African; for the final third, the victim's nationality matched the participants' own. We selected "Western Europeans" as a target group (rather than simply "Europeans") because (a) Western Europeans are socially, economically, and politically advantaged relative to Eastern Europeans, and (b) we were especially interested in the phenomenon of national outgroup favoritism among citizens of Eastern European countries, who are historically and socio-psychologically different from citizens of Western countries (Láštičová & Kende, 2023). We selected "Western Africans" as the other target group (rather than simply "Africans") to (a) match the specificity of the "Western European" label, and (b) be more specific for African participants (two of the three African countries sampled were Eastern African). The exact phrasing of the scenario is provided in the supplement.

In some countries, researchers felt that the description of police violence raised either credibility concerns about whether participants would believe that police officers in their country would engage in unwarranted violence against foreigners or ethical concerns about the danger of discussing police violence. For these countries, we adapted the scenario so that the perpetrators were customers rather than police officers (see supplement for alternative wording). After reading the scenario, participants indicated the extent to which they believed the act was just or unjust using a 7-point scale (perceived injustice). They were also asked to estimate the amount of money the victim should receive as compensation by entering a number (in the respondent country's currency). For our primary analysis, the amount was converted to euros, based on the exchange rate of the day most participants completed the survey in a given country. At the request of an anonymous reviewer, we conducted a secondary analysis that took into account Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) for each country.

For social evaluations (i.e., stereotypes), participants rated the perceived competence, assertiveness, morality, and warmth of the three groups (Western Europeans, Western Africans, and ingroup nationals) on separate pages in randomized order. Participants were asked to think about an average member of the ingroup and

outgroup and to indicate how much they believed such a person would be competent, assertive, moral, and warm (1 = *fully disagree* to 7 = *fully agree*).

Regarding social-structural variables, we selected two country-level variables. First, we selected GDP per capita for the most recently available year (2022) from the World Bank (log-scaled because of skewed distributions). Second, we selected the exploitation intensity index (EII), which measures unequal exchanges across countries in the context of imperialistic international relations (i.e., how much a country benefits or loses from taking part in the world economy; see Cogliano et al., 2024). EII is centered at $e^{\nu}_{1} = 1$, so countries with $e^{\nu}_{1} > 1$ are considered "exploited," and countries with $e^{\nu}_{1} < 1$ are considered "exploiters." Thus, higher values indicate that a country loses more than it gains when participating in the world economy.

Results

Perceived Injustice and Compensation

To analyze whether perceived injustice and compensation depended upon the victim's country, we built two multilevel linear models: the two DVs were predicted by the target group (Western European, Western African, or national ingroup) while adjusting for sex, age, and education. Both models included random slopes (effects of the conditions) to vary across countries. Contrary to predictions, the victim's national origin did not affect perceived injustice ($\beta s < .020$, $ps > .072$) or compensation either when converting national currencies to euros ($\beta s < .012$, $ps > .439$) or when using country-specific PPP-adjusted values ($\beta s < .007$, $ps > .609$). There was, instead, an overall lack of variability across countries, indicating that our use of this paradigm failed to capture either ingroup or outgroup favoritism—even in Brazil, where it was initially developed (Santos & Pereira, 2021). Thus, we do not discuss ratings of perceived injustice or compensation judgments any further.

Social Evaluations

To analyze how stereotypes varied across countries, we built multilevel linear models in which the four dimensions (competence, assertiveness, morality, warmth) were predicted by the target group (Western European, Western African, or national ingroup; national ingroup was set as a reference group) while adjusting for sex, age, and education. We allowed the random intercept and random slope (effect of the target group) to vary across countries, as well as random intercept to vary across participants. Aggregating across all 45 non-Western countries, participants stereotyped the typical Western European as more competent ($\beta = .195$, $p < .001$) and assertive ($\beta = .496$, $p < .001$) than the typical member of the national ingroup, reflecting outgroup favoritism. At the same time, they stereotyped Western Africans as less competent ($\beta = -.168$, $p < .001$) than the ingroup, but neither more nor less assertive ($\beta = .078$, $p = .119$).

As shown in Figure 1, citizens in 26 non-Western countries exhibited significant outgroup favoritism on the dimension of competence when drawing comparisons with the more advantaged outgroup (Western Europeans), whereas citizens in only one country (Chile) exhibited significant outgroup favoritism when drawing comparisons with the less advantaged outgroup (Western Africans). Conversely, citizens in 20 of these countries exhibited significant ingroup favoritism when drawing comparisons with Western Africans, whereas citizens in only 6 countries exhibited significant ingroup favoritism when drawing comparisons with Western Europeans.

As shown in Figure 2, citizens in 36 non-Western countries exhibited significant outgroup favoritism on the dimension of assertiveness when drawing comparisons with the more advantaged outgroup (Western Europeans). Citizens in 17 countries exhibited significant outgroup favoritism when drawing comparisons with the less advantaged outgroup (Western Africans). Citizens in seven countries exhibited significant ingroup favoritism when drawing comparisons with Western Africans, whereas citizens in only one country (Montenegro) exhibited significant ingroup favoritism when drawing comparisons with Western Europeans.

With respect to judgments of morality, ingroup nationals did not stereotype Western Europeans or Western Africans as more or less moral than their own group ($\beta = .074$, $p = .176$, $\beta = .104$, $p = .054$, respectively), although there was considerable heterogeneity across countries, as shown in Figure 3. Finally, participants stereotyped Western Europeans as less warm than the ingroup, exhibiting ingroup favoritism ($\beta = -.516$, $p < .001$). They did not stereotype Western Africans as more or less warm than the ingroup in general ($\beta = -.099$, $p = .102$). As shown in Figure 4, citizens in 35 countries exhibited significant ingroup favoritism on the dimension of warmth when drawing comparisons with Western Europeans, and citizens in 24 countries exhibited significant ingroup favoritism when drawing comparisons with Western Africans.

Macroeconomic Conditions and Social Evaluations

Next, we investigated the role of macroeconomic conditions, so we correlated log-scaled GDP per capita and the exploitation intensity index (EII) with ingroup/outgroup favoritism (estimated from the multilevel models described above) toward Western Europeans and Western Africans. This analysis revealed that, for stereotypes of competence, poorer (in terms of log-scaled GDP; $r = -.341$, $p = .022$) and more exploited countries (in terms of EII; $r = .335$, $p = .030$) exhibited stronger outgroup favoritism toward Western Europeans on the dimension of competence (see

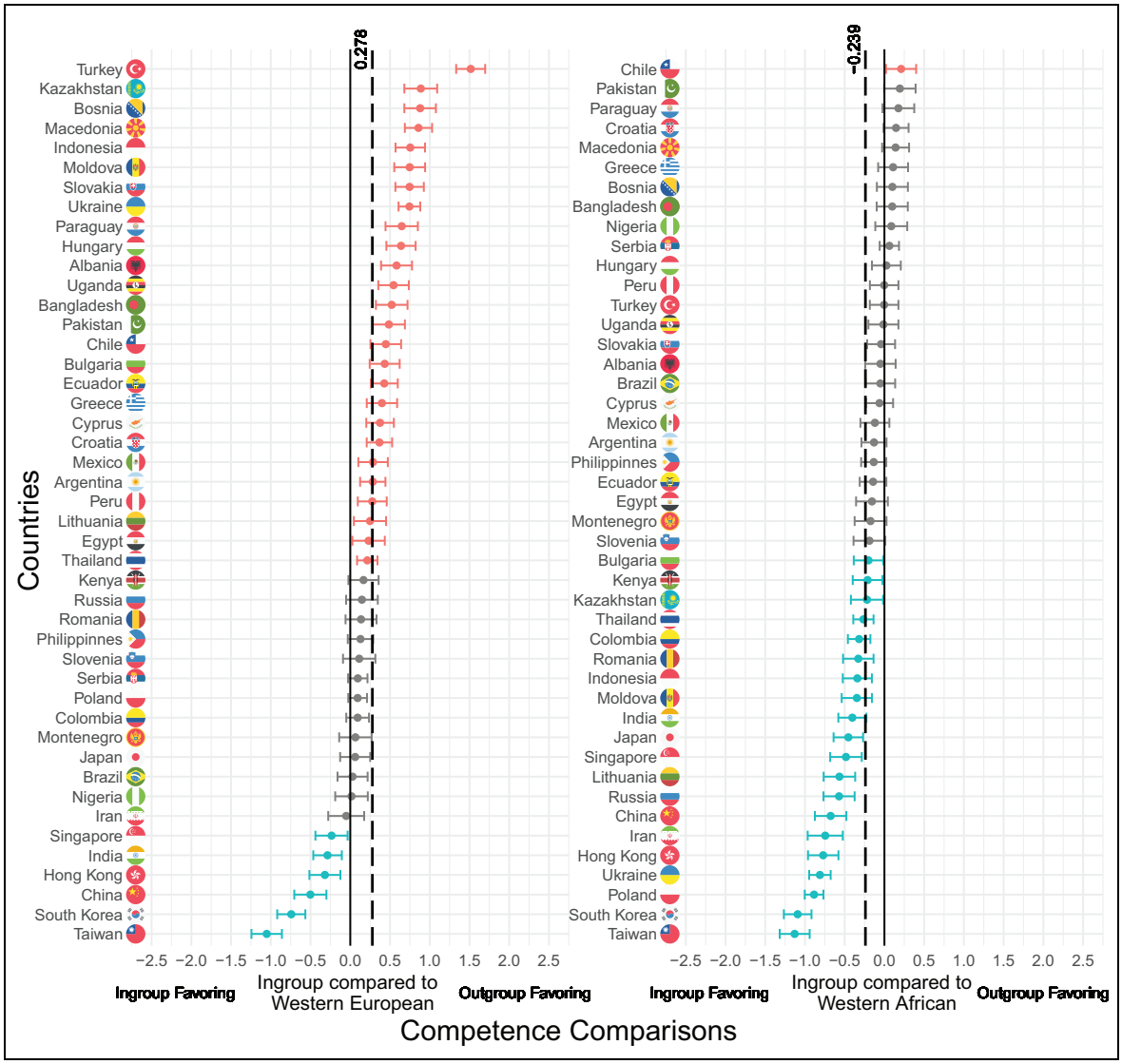

Figure 1. *Mean Levels of National Ingroup and Outgroup Favoritism on the Dimension of Competence Exhibited by Participants From Each Country, Compared with Western Europeans (Left) and Western Africans (Right).*

Note. Positive values (in red) denote outgroup favoritism, while negative values (in blue-green) denote ingroup favoritism. Difference scores by country are estimated from the multilevel model (dashed lines and corresponding values reflect average differences across all countries).

Figure 5A and B, respectively). Respondents from most of the non-Western countries stereotyped Western Europeans as more competent than the ingroup, but respondents from poorer and more exploited countries were especially likely to do so. Likewise, respondents from non-Western countries tended to stereotype Western Africans as less competent than the ingroup, but respondents from poorer (r = –.372, p = .012) and more exploited (r = –.372, p = .048) countries exhibited weaker ingroup favoritism (see Figure 5C and 5D).

For stereotypes of warmth, however, respondents from poorer (r = .454, p = .002) and more exploited (r = –.371, p = .016) countries exhibited stronger ingroup favoritism when drawing comparisons with Western Europeans (see Figure 6A and B). A similar pattern was observed for comparisons with Western Africans; respondents from poorer (r = .517, p < .001) and more exploited (r = –.450, p = .003) countries again showed stronger ingroup favoritism (see Figure 6C and D). It is possible that these respondents compensated for social identity threat arising from comparisons on the dimension of competence (see Jost, 2001; Van Bezouw et al., 2021).

Unlike stereotypes of competence and warmth, macroeconomic conditions were not significantly associated with country-level differences in ratings of assertiveness (rs < .267, ps > .05) or morality (rs < .094, ps > .05). Figures for these analyses are included in the supplement (Figures S1 and S2).

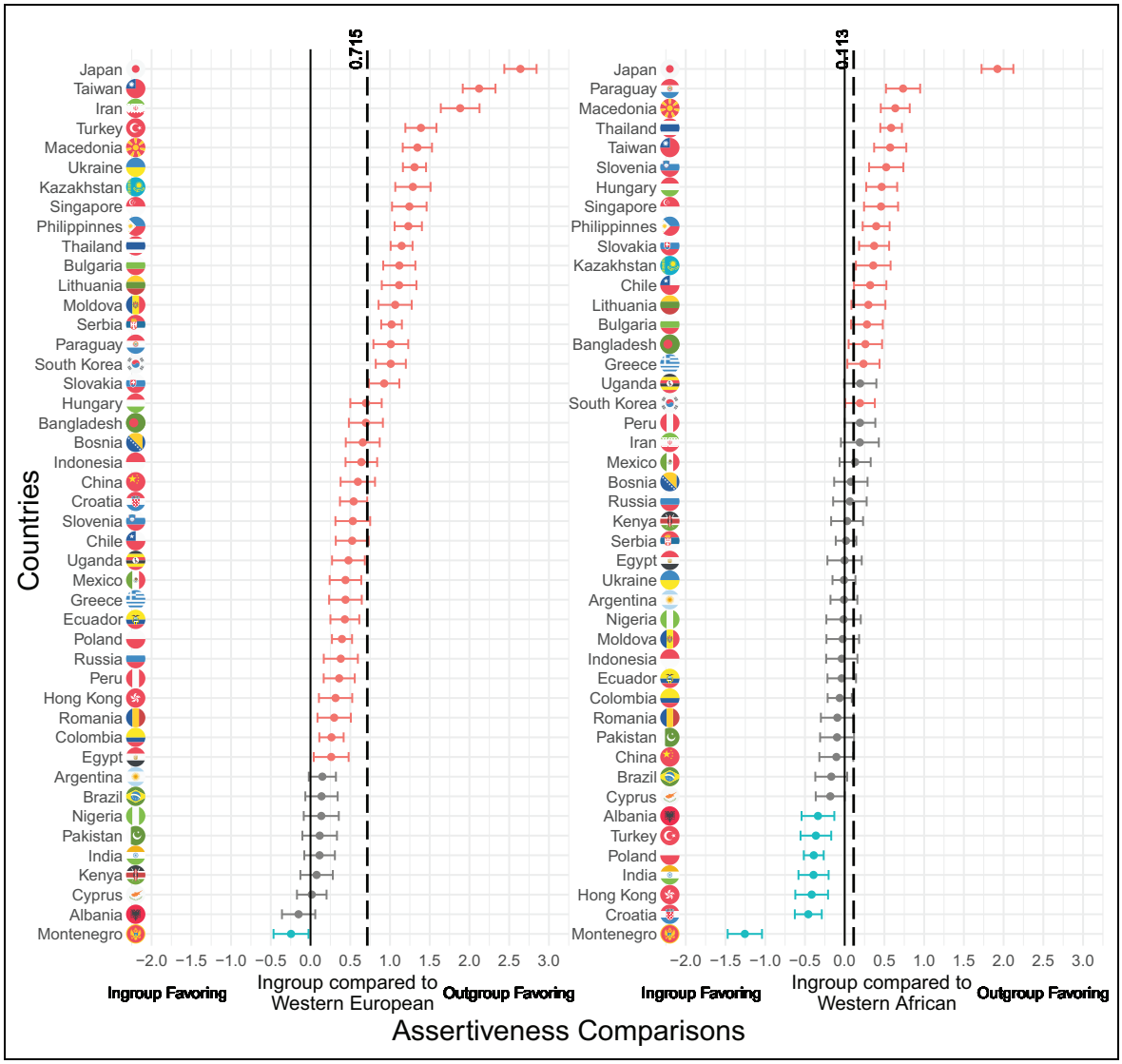

Figure 2. *Mean Levels of National Ingroup and Outgroup Favoritism on the Dimension of Assertiveness Exhibited by Participants From Each Country, Compared with Western Europeans (Left) and Western Africans (Right).*
Note. Positive values (in red) denote outgroup favoritism, while negative values (in blue-green) denote ingroup favoritism. Difference scores by country are estimated from the multilevel model (dashed lines and corresponding values reflect average differences across all countries).

At the recommendation of an anonymous reviewer, we examined the robustness of results after excluding outliers. The pattern of findings did not substantially change after removing outliers at participant or country levels of analysis (see supplement).

Discussion

Mainstream psychology and social sciences have been criticized as Western-centric and hegemonic, effectively excluding the majority of the world population (Adams et al., 2015; Bou Zeineddine et al., 2022; Henrich et al., 2010; Quijano, 2000; Readsura Decolonial Editorial Collective, 2022). In the present research program, which aimed to overcome this limitation, we investigated the phenomenon of national outgroup favoritism in 45 non-Western countries.

While the scenario developed to measure perceived injustice and compensation did not yield any significant effects, we did obtain evidence of simultaneous outgroup favoritism (on dimensions of competence and assertiveness) and ingroup favoritism (on dimensions of warmth) with respect to stereotypes or social evaluations. Specifically, non-Western nationals stereotyped the more advantaged outgroup (Western Europeans) as more competent and more assertive but less warm, compared with their own

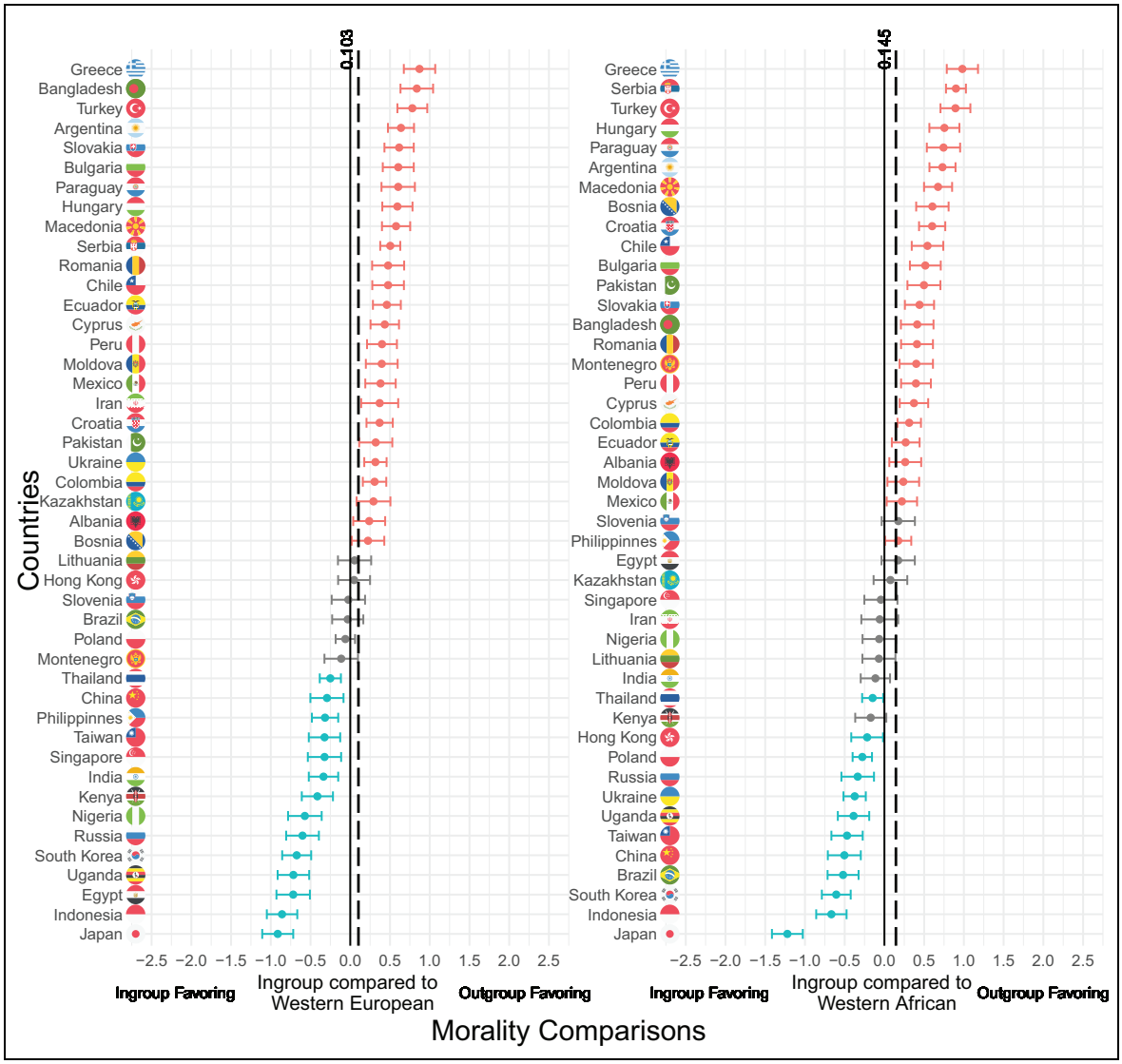

Figure 3. *Mean Levels of National Ingroup and Outgroup Favoritism on the Dimension of Morality Exhibited by Participants From Each Country, Compared with Western Europeans (Left) and Western Africans (Right).*

Note. Positive values (in red) denote outgroup favoritism, while negative values (blue-green) denote ingroup favoritism. Difference scores by country are estimated from the multilevel model (dashed lines and corresponding values represent average differences across all countries).

group. Conversely, they stereotyped the relatively disadvantaged outgroup (Western Africans) as less competent (but not less assertive, moral, or warm) than the ingroup. Cross-national variations in these stereotypes were partially explained by macroeconomic factors: people in poorer and more exploited countries showed stronger outgroup (or weaker ingroup) favoritism for stereotypes of competence, and stronger ingroup (or weaker outgroup) favoritism for stereotypes of warmth. In summary, then, this research program provides some of the first global evidence that aspects of the world economy predict stereotypical comparisons involving outgroups that are objectively more vs. less economically advantaged in comparison with the national ingroup.

Macroeconomic Conditions and Social Evaluations

Because our datasets are cross-sectional in nature, we cannot draw causal conclusions about the effects of GDP and economic exploitation on stereotyping per se. However, it is certainly more plausible that the direction of causality runs from macroeconomic conditions to social evaluations than vice versa. This direction of causality is also more consistent with existing theoretical and empirical work

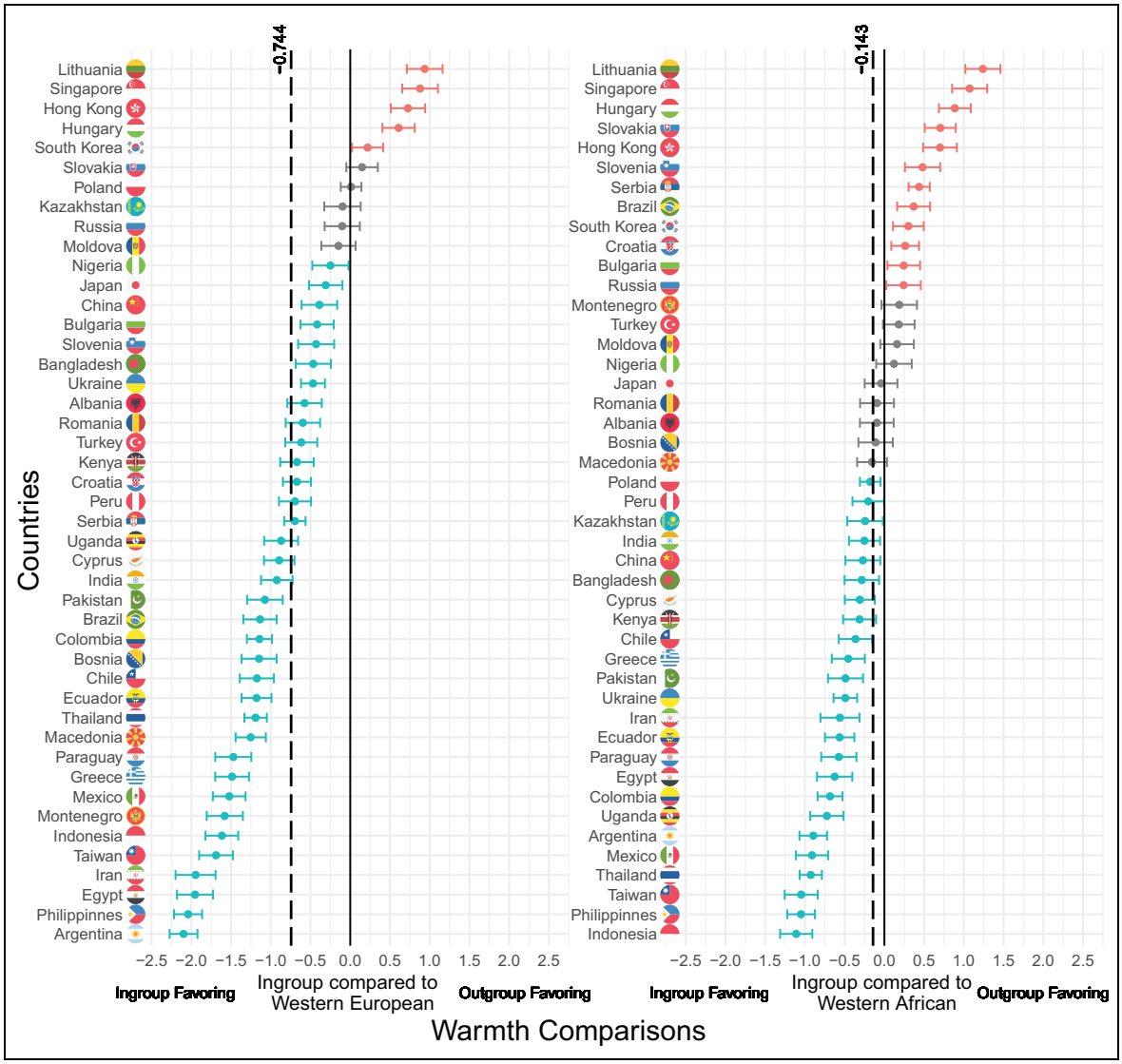

Figure 4. *Mean Levels of National Ingroup and Outgroup Favoritism on the Dimension of Warmth Exhibited by Participants From Each Country, Compared with Western Europeans (Left) and Western Africans (Right).*
Note. Positive values (in red) denote outgroup favoritism, while negative values (blue-green) denote ingroup favoritism. Difference scores by country are estimated from the multilevel model (dashed lines and corresponding values represent average differences across all countries).

(Durante et al., 2017; Jost, 2020; Koenig & Eagly, 2014). For example, research on social role theory, including experimental research, suggests that stereotypes of men as competent and assertive and women as warm and communal stem from the gendered division of labor (Eagly & Koenig, 2021; Koenig & Eagly, 2014, 2019) Likewise, Jost (2001) manipulated university students' perceptions of economic success vs. failure (compared with students from a rival university) and demonstrated that those students who were led to believe that their rivals were more economically successful came to stereotype themselves as less competent but warmer than the high-status students. Many other objectively disadvantaged groups, such as African Americans and Roma people, are stereotyped in a complementary (or ambivalent) way as incompetent but warm (Fiske, 2012; Jost, 2020).

According to system justification theory, people are motivated to explain and justify the overarching social system in such a way that their underlying needs for certainty, security, and social acceptance are met (Jost, 2020). This can lead members of disadvantaged groups to internalize beliefs and stereotypes that serve to legitimize and rationalize the status quo, even if those beliefs and stereotypes are potentially detrimental to themselves and their groups (e.g., see Jost et al., 2004). We extend these observations by demonstrating that the same general stereotypes of

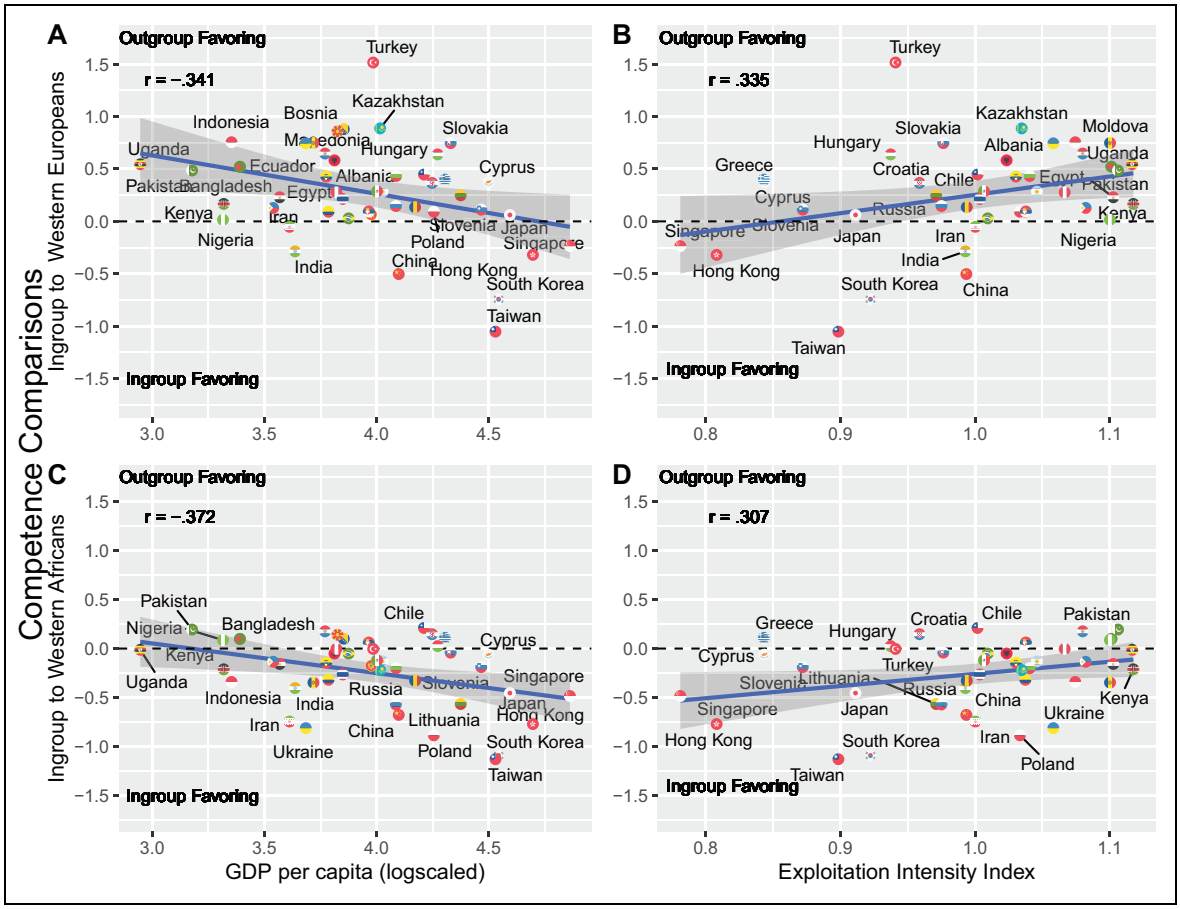

Figure 5. *Mean Levels of National Ingroup and Outgroup Favoritism on the Dimension of Competence as a Function of Macro-Economic Conditions for Each Country, Compared with Western Europeans (Top, A and B) and Western Africans (Bottom, C and D).*
Note. Poorer and more exploited countries exhibited stronger outgroup favoritism (or weaker ingroup favoritism). Difference scores by country (on the Y axis) are estimated from the multilevel model.

relatively advantaged and disadvantaged groups are endorsed across dozens of non-Western countries and are linked to those countries' positions in the world economy.

Why did macroeconomic conditions predict stereotypes of competence and warmth, but not assertiveness and morality? One possibility is that people care more about assessing competence and warmth in others, which may be more closely tied to biological survival, compared with other dimensions of social judgment (Fiske, 2018; Fiske et al., 2007). It is also possible that stereotypes about assertiveness and morality are more strongly influenced by cultural factors. Morality judgments, in particular, draw on variegated conceptions and may be associated with specific traditional or religious values, as well as culturally embedded notions of freedom and equality, care for others, and so on (e.g., Atari et al., 2023; Cameron et al., 2015).

Country-Specific Patterns of Social Evaluations

Whereas the primary focus of our research program was to document general patterns of stereotyping that characterize respondents from many different non-Western countries, we do not mean to diminish the importance of country-specific patterns. There were six countries, for instance, in which participants exhibited ingroup favoritism on the dimension of competence when drawing comparisons with Western Europeans: India, China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Korea, and Singapore. Five of these are East Asian countries with strong and growing economies, and four of them are known as "Asian Tigers." According to rankings published by the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), these countries are known for their highly competitive educational systems and work cultures, which could also contribute to heightened feelings of national competence.

It is not entirely clear why evidence of outgroup favoritism on the dimension of competence was relatively weak in certain countries that suffered greatly during the colonial period and that remain highly disadvantaged under the current global economic order (e.g., Nigeria, Kenya, and India). This suggests that national stereotypes about competence might not be straightforwardly determined by

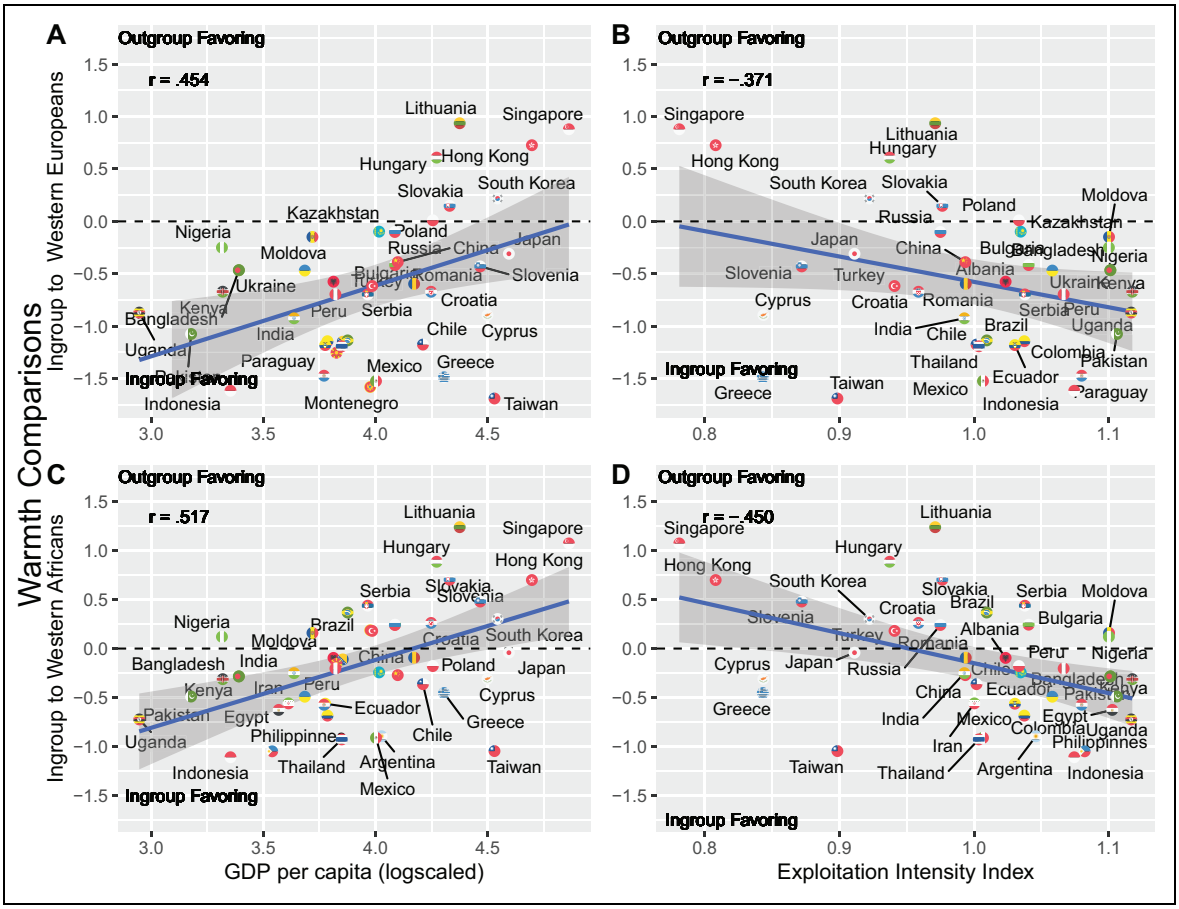

Figure 6. *Mean Levels of National Ingroup and Outgroup Favoritism on the Dimension of Warmth as a Function of Macro-Economic Conditions for Each Country, Compared with Western Europeans (Top, A and B) and Western Africans (Bottom, C and D).*
Note. Poorer and more exploited countries exhibited stronger outgroup favoritism (or weaker ingroup favoritism). Difference scores by country (on the Y axis) are estimated from the multilevel model.

economic factors in all cases. In some cases, for instance, decolonization and nationalist movements may have increased national pride. Likewise, strong intellectual traditions and cultural successes (e.g., such as Bollywood in India and Nollywood in Nigeria) could attenuate, and even reverse, outgroup favoritism.

Accuracy of National Stereotypes

One of the thorniest questions in social science is about whether group-based stereotypes are correct. Previous research suggests that some social stereotypes are reasonably accurate when it comes to describing central tendencies: on average, young people are indeed more impulsive, rebellious, and open to experience than older people (Chan et al., 2012); and, in general, women are more open, agreeable, conscientious, and emotionally reactive than men (Löckenhoff et al., 2014). However, *national* stereotypes—beliefs that people in certain countries possess more pronounced personality characteristics (e.g., Germans are conscientious, Italians are extraverted)—are often quite inaccurate (McCrae et al., 2013; Terracciano et al., 2005). We found that ingroup and outgroup stereotypes were correlated with a nation's position in the global economic order. This is in line with the idea that complementary stereotypes ("poor but happy", "incompetent but warm")—whether true or false—serve to explain and justify inequality (in this case, macro-economic inequalities between countries under global capitalism), thereby maintaining support for the world economic order (e.g., see Durante & Fiske, 2017; Jost, 2001, 2020; Wallerstein, 1979, 2004).

Limitations and Future Directions

Our study is not without limitations. For one thing, the scenario designed to elicit differences in perceived injustice and compensation did not capture either ingroup or

outgroup favoritism. Thus, we failed to replicate previously published findings from Brazil (Santos & Pereira, 2021). While there are probably several possible reasons why we detected no significant effects, including the fact that our scenario was not identical to the original Brazilian one, we believe that future studies should develop other methods to capture more subtle behavioral forms of outgroup favoritism (e.g., see Jost et al., 2002). One possibility would be to home in on the dimension of competence and investigate preferences for more advantaged outgroup members when competence is especially relevant (e.g., when selecting a doctor or airplane pilot).

Another limitation is that we used the four-facet model of stereotypes (Abele et al., 2021), which was developed in Western psychology and may not adequately capture social evaluations in other parts of the world (e.g., see Adams et al., 2015; Readsura Decolonial Editorial Collective, 2022; Stanciu et al., 2017). At the same time, our study takes an important step in advancing the psychology of the majority, insofar as it investigates an overlooked, yet readily observable phenomenon in non-Western countries, as well as its connection to macro-economic conditions and the global world order. Because this project was inspired in part by decolonial perspectives and world systems theory, we focused on non-Western countries. However, it would be useful to investigate national ingroup and outgroup favoritism in Western countries as a function of macro-economic conditions.

Conclusion

To our knowledge, this research program represents the first systematic investigation of the phenomenon of national outgroup favoritism. As such, it offers global evidence that historically embedded aspects of macro-economic structure, including the degree of exploitation in the world economy, relate to (and possibly shape) national stereotypes, with a majority of non-Westerners exhibiting outgroup favoritism toward higher-status groups, coming to believe that they are themselves less competent than the citizens of other, more economically successful nations.

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Author Contributions

Vukašin Gligorić dev the initial idea, conception, and research design; led and managed the project; conducted data analyses and interpretation; and drafted the article and revised it critically for intellectual content.

John T. Jost worked on the research design; project supervision; data interpretation; drafted the article and revised it critically for intellectual content.

Iva Mićanović supported project conception and interpretation.

Odeta Tase supported project conception and management.

Jessica Schaff supported data analysis and interpretation.

All other authors (including V.G., I.M, O.T) translated materials and collected data in their respective countries (see the supplement to see contributions by country). These authors were sorted alphabetically.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

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Data availability

Data associated with this article is available at the Open Science Framework (https://osf.io/29q3k). The shared dataset includes all variables necessary to reproduce the analyses and findings reported in the article. Data on two additional variables—political ideology and national system justification—were also collected as part of the broader survey, but they are neither analyzed nor discussed in this article and are therefore not included in the dataset.

Code availability

R code used for analyses is archived by the Open Science Framework (https://osf.io/29q3k).

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Supplemental Material

The supplemental material is available in the online version of the article.

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