Conceptualizing American Attitudes toward Immigrants’ Dual Loyalty

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Keywords
Dual loyalty, Immigration, Attitudes, Nonimmigrant Americans

Disciplines
Sociology

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Conceptualizing American Attitudes toward Immigrants’ Dual Loyalty

Abdi M. Kusow1 and Matt DeLisi1

Abstract
The social issue of immigrants’ dual loyalty figures prominently in the 2016 U.S. presidential primaries, yet little is known about Americans’ views on the subject. Drawing on data from a nationally representative telephone survey, the authors specifically explored nonimmigrant Americans’ attitudes toward immigrants’ dual loyalty. The results show that attitudes toward this dual loyalty are informed by multiple boundary-making processes, including the extent to which respondents strongly believe that immigrants should celebrate American values and traditions and share their vision of America, that immigration should be restricted as much as possible, and that American influence in the world is important.

Keywords
dual loyalty, immigration, attitudes, nonimmigrant Americans

In a Los Angeles Times article, “Putting the Dual-loyalty Myth to Rest,” Sergio Munoz (2006) lamented the assumption that the unprecedented flow of immigrants from Mexico, the perceived widespread use of Spanish across the United States, and exaggerated Mexican flag-waving marches in Los Angeles may have collectively contributed to the prevailing perception that political loyalties among recent immigrants, particularly among Latino immigrants, are divided between their native lands and the United States.

The controversy surrounding U.S. immigrants’ divided loyalty has had a long and contentious history in American political and social discourse (Espenshade and Hempstead 1996; Ha 2010). One of the most significant anti-immigrant movements and general distrust of the foreign-born occurred during the early decades of the twentieth century, when in 1904 the level of immigration from eastern and southern Europe hit 812,870 and then reached more than 1 million in 1905 (Huebner 1906). By the 1920s, accusations of immigrants’ divided allegiances had culminated in the 1921 Emergency Quota Act, which reduced immigration from southern and eastern Europe to less than 3 percent of prewar numbers, and later in the 1924 Johnson-Reed Act, which led to even more restrictions on immigration. In fact, in deliberating the Johnson-Reed Act on the floor of the Senate, one senator went as far as to say “that the time has arrived when we should shut the door, otherwise, unchecked immigration will lead to war over resources, or that such immigrants will melt the pot in place of us being the melting pot” (Smith 1924).

During this era, concerns about immigrants’ dual loyalty and perceived lack of assimilation centered on the potential economic and cultural threats that eastern and southern European immigrants posed to traditional Anglo-Saxon American values. Ultimately, however, as a result of the Johnson-Reed Act and a later intensive Americanization processes, and with active immigrant participation in public schools, trade unions, and politics, the perceived threat associated with eastern and southern European immigrants waned significantly (Krampetsos 1995).

To some extent, Americans at different historical moments have been distrusting of what they perceive to be lower status immigrants, particularly at times when their presence threatened the political and economic status quo. When most Americans were of northern and western European extraction, for example, the distrusted immigrants were southern and southeastern European. What is different today is that immigration discourse is informed by different social and demographic forces from those that characterized the late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century European immigration wave. Prompted in part by the passage of the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act, this more recent wave of immigration has been

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relatively larger and more racially and ethnically diverse than earlier waves. The size of the foreign-born population in the United States grew from just 9.6 million in 1965 to a record high of 45 million in 2015; the population increased almost three times from 1965 to 2015, by 5 percent and 14 percent, respectively (Chisti, Hipsman, and Ball 2015; see also Figure 1).

Second, and more important, the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act contributed to a fundamental change in the source regions of immigrants to the United States, from Europe to South America and Central America, Asia, and to some extent Africa. Whereas nearly all top 10 source countries of immigration to the United States were European in 1960, none of the top 10 today is in Europe; today, the top 10 source countries of immigration to the United States are in either South America and Central America or Asia (see Figure 2). The 1965 act in effect changed the racial makeup of the U.S. population from a significantly White majority to a racially diverse society.

One indirect effect of the size and racial composition of the contemporary immigration wave may be the increasing distrust of immigration and immigrants in general. This level of distrust has led to extremely restrictive immigration enforcement policies, including but not limited to the controversial S.B. 1070 (Support Our Law Enforcement and Safe Neighborhood Act), requiring police to verify the citizenship of anyone they suspect of being in the country illegally (Jones-Correa 2010). It is not a surprise, therefore, that immigration figured prominently in the 2012 national election, created a postelection narrative that the outcome hinged on the unexpected turnout of Latino/a Americans because of their concerns about immigration, and strongly influences current anti-immigration political discourses. The current political crisis in the Middle East, the ISIS-inspired homegrown terrorist attacks in San Bernardino, the spontaneous refugee crisis in Europe, and Republican Party frontrunner Donald Trump’s seemingly controversial comments about the existential danger immigration poses to the social and political fabric of the American community (Scherer 2015); all have escalated into a period of the most heightened distrust and perceived immigrant disloyalty in the history of

Figure 1. Annual number of U.S. legal permanent residents, fiscal years 1820 to 2013.
Sources: Chisti et al. (2015), Gibson and Lennon (1999).
immigration discourse in the United States. Hence, there is significant indication that the American public perceives the level of contemporary immigration as a threat to labor market stability (Borjas 1999) and to core American values (Huntington 2004).

More important, the controversy surrounding immigration has over the past few months taken a different twist, focused on immigration and divided loyalties, since Trump’s tacit suggestion that Ted Cruz, his rival for the Republican Party’s 2016 nomination, may not, after all, be eligible to hold the office because he was born in Canada to an American mother and a Cuban father. In what was dubbed the “birther issue,” Trump accused President Obama of being born in Kenya just eight years ago, during the 2008 presidential campaign, but this time, Trump is the Republican Party’s frontrunner, and he has a much larger following and greater influence; this time, constitutional scholars have weighed in on the subject of Cruz’s constitutional eligibility to be president.

As we finished the final draft of this article, Cruz had won the Iowa caucuses, despite Trump’s citizenship accusation. However, the idea of immigrants’ divided loyalties is part of a larger history of America’s contentious relationship with immigration and has over the past decade generated considerable empirical scholarship on immigrants’ divided loyalties and the supposed failure of time-honored American assimilation and political participation (Huntington 2004; Stanton, Jackson, and Canache 2007). Findings from the extant research range from authors who reject the premise that contemporary immigrants are less likely to assimilate, instead maintaining strong loyalties to their countries of origin (Rumbaut, Massey, and Bean 2006), those who support the argument that contemporary immigrants are less likely to assimilate and remain connected to American polity (Stanton et al. 2007), and finally those who suggest that the degree of immigrants’ political loyalties varies by social class and the political conditions in their countries of origin (de La Garza, Falcon, and Garcia 1996; Guarnizo 2003; Mar 2004; Pantoja 2005; Smith 2007).

With very few exceptions, existing scholarship on immigrants’ dual loyalty concentrates on the actions, activities, and attitudes of immigrants and/or their homeland governments and completely ignores what nonimmigrant Americans think about the subject. Our purpose in this study is to extend

Figure 2. Ten largest U.S. immigrant groups, 1960 and 2013. Sources: Chishti et al. (2015), Gibson and Lennon (1999).
the parameters of this discussion to include attitudes toward immigrants’ dual loyalty from the perspective of nonimmigrant Americans, that is, native persons with native parentage. We specifically ask, What are the cultural and political values, spatial and social locations, and immigration boundary-making processes that inform Americans’ attitudes toward immigrants’ dual loyalty? This question is extremely important in that unless we have a meaningful understanding of nonimmigrant Americans’ attitudes toward immigrants’ dual loyalty in the context of reception, the discussion of whether immigrants are loyal or disloyal to core American values (Huntington 2004) is conceptually and theoretically incomplete. Moreover, conceptualizing dual loyalty in immigrants from the perspective of reception is even more important in that how nonimmigrant Americans perceive or understand dual loyalty provides an important window into our understanding of the processes of cultural and political membership in American life and therefore will have a critical impact on the future conceptualization of the nature of assimilation and multiculturalism (Hartmann and Gerteis 2005).

Our ultimate aim in this research is therefore to attempt to explore a new line of conversation that can provide a preliminary understanding of what nonimmigrant Americans think of the possibility of immigrants’ maintaining dual loyalty between their home countries and the United States. In the first part of the article, we provide a brief literature review concerning the extent to which recent immigrants engage in dual loyalties between their home countries and the United States. In the second section, we provide a tentative conceptualization of the idea of immigrants’ dual loyalty in general and from the perspective of nonimmigrant Americans. In the third section, we present the data and provide a discussion of the social and cultural values and the socioeconomic and demographic factors that inform nonimmigrants’ attitudes toward immigrants’ dual loyalty. In the fourth and final section, we attempt to chart a tentative theoretical articulation of how the nature of immigrant loyalties may ultimately inform and reshape our understanding of assimilation and the extent to which undivided loyalty to core American values will remain an important criterion for cultural and political membership in American life.

**Brief Literature Review**

Academically, the increased controversy surrounding immigrants’ divided allegiance and political loyalties is partly fueled by Samuel Huntington’s (2004) *Who Are We? The Challenges to America’s Identity*. Huntington provided a list of postulates he claimed explain why Latino immigrants, particularly those from Mexico, are unlikely to assimilate into American core culture and therefore pose significant challenges to U.S. national identity. According to Huntington, Mexican immigrants and Mexican Americans are unlikely to assimilate because the long, uncontrolled, and contiguous border between Mexico and the United States, which allows Mexican immigrants unrestricted immigration, and their spatial concentrations within Spanish-speaking ethnic enclaves, which continuously reinforce their homeland cultures, will lead to their ambivalent allegiance to the United States. Furthermore, their identity politics represent an implicit claim to the American Southwest as historically part of Mexico (for similar arguments, see also Buchannan 2006; Fonte 2005), which is seen as affront to American national identity.

The central concern in the current literature on immigrant loyalty is the extent to which dual loyalty is perceived to foster divided allegiance between home and host countries (Baron 2009; Faist 2008; Fonte 2005; Huntington 2004; Kozak 2009; Nagel and Staeheli 2004; Stanton et al. 2007). The discussion surrounding the nature of immigrants’ dual loyalty can be divided into the “incompatibility” and “compatibility” theses. The incompatibility thesis suggests that this dual loyalty is incompatible with the American national identity and nationalism and therefore undermines incentives for cultural assimilation and political participation in the United States (Huntington 2004; Renshon 2001; Stanton et al. 2007). According to Stanton et al. (2007), Latino immigrants who maintain dual loyalties are less likely to be connected to the American polity and less likely to participate in the American political process. The compatibility thesis instead suggests that dual loyalties and political ties to homeland communities do not necessarily retard political participation or assimilation in the host community and that, in fact, the two activities are complementary (Escobar 2004; Guarnizo, Portes, and Haller 2003; Kozak 2009). More important, the compatibility thesis suggests that understanding the intersection between transnational migration and political loyalties is more complicated than just the incompatibility versus compatibility theses and involves the social contexts of exit and reception as well as individual socioeconomic characteristics (Guarnizo et al. 2003; Portes, Escobar, and Arana 2009).

An important problem concerning conceptualizing immigrants’ dual loyalty from the perspective of nonimmigrant Americans is that no research tradition has yet explored nonimmigrant Americans’ attitudes toward immigrants’ dual loyalty, so there is no specific conceptual tradition to draw upon. In other words, neither the literature that concentrates on the actions, activities, and attitudes of immigrants and/or their homeland governments nor the research tradition that addresses attitudes toward immigration can provide a direct foundation for understanding nonimmigrants’ attitudes toward immigrants’ dual loyalty.

Given that there is no established research tradition of Americans’ attitudes toward immigrants’ divided loyalties, our purpose is to start a tradition on these attitudes from the perspective of nonimmigrant Americans. This research tradition will be distinctly different from the recent scholarship that concentrates on the actions, activities, and attitudes of immigrants and/or their homeland governments (de la Garza
et al. 1996; Guarnizo et al. 2003; Mar 2004; Pantoja 2005; Smith 2007) in that it focuses on the perceptions of nonimmigrant Americans toward immigrants’ dual loyalty. This line of research is important for two reasons. First, it will enhance our understanding of which segment(s) of the American society oppose or support immigrants’ dual loyalty by way of social, political, and cultural values and economic status. This conceptual extension is based on the assumption that if nonimmigrant Americans do not think that immigrants’ dual loyalty is a problem for American political identities and global political and economic interest, then the entire discussion about immigrants’ dual loyalty is conceptually and methodologically misplaced.

Conceptualizing Dual Loyalty

Dual loyalty, according to Baron (2009), refers to “the common emotional experience of being pulled in two different directions” (p. 1025). It involves the personal challenges of choosing among different overriding moral, religious, and/or political commitments. It also involves the dilemma of not being sure if one is accepted into a particular moral, religious, or political community. In his classic essay, later published in The Souls of Black Folk, W.E.B. Du Bois ([1903] 1989) described the conflicting commitment dilemma African Americans faced in choosing between Blackness and Americanness as a state of double consciousness. Du Bois describes this dilemma as a state in which “one feels his two-ness,—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder” (p. 5).

The idea of dual loyalties, or “two unreconciled strivings,” has a long history; it was as much a problem in medieval political thought as it is today. However, dual loyalty was understood and accepted as part of the body-soul, or the constant contradictions between human bodily desires and religious obligations. Starting in the first half of the seventeenth century, however, the problem of dual loyalty became an inherent part of religious and political nationalism in Europe (Baron 2009) and a test against those who were considered outside the dominant social, political, and religious boundaries, particularly immigrants. One of the most significant anti-immigrant movements in America, as we noted earlier, occurred during the early decades of the twentieth century, when in 1904 the number of immigrants from eastern and southern Europe hit 812,870 and reached more than 1 million in 1905 (Huebner 1906). During this era, Americans’ attitudes toward immigration centered on the potential economic and cultural threats eastern and southern European immigrants were perceived to pose to traditional Anglo-Saxon American values. All indications are that today, we may be facing a similar historical moment of heightened immigrant distrust and a generally negative perception of immigration and immigrants’ divided loyalty to American core culture.

Because the idea of loyalty is essentially a way of constructing symbolic codes that organize and construct symbolic boundaries, we also draw on Lamont and Molnár’s (2002) discussion of the importance of symbolic boundaries as a primary vehicle whereby social actors characterize their social and physical environments (see also Edgell, Gerteis, and Hartmann 2006; Edgell and Tranby 2010; Kusow and Eno 2015). Symbolic boundaries are tools by which individuals struggle with and come to agree upon the definition of reality, a means through which social actors put individuals into groups and generate feelings of similarities and differences and, ultimately, the essential means through which people acquire social status. Once they are collectively accepted and socially hardened, symbolic boundaries become social boundaries that produce objectified social differences that manifest in the unequal distribution of resources, status, economically driven patterns of interaction and association, and, most important, identifiable patterns of social exclusion and social inequalities. We specifically articulate the extent to which attitudes toward immigrants’ perceived loyalty to both their home countries and the United States can be used as a basis to construct symbolic boundaries that exclude immigrants from the social and political boundaries of Americanness.

Data, Methods, and Variables

Data were collected from a nationally representative random telephone survey (n = 2,081) conducted in 2003 by the University of Wisconsin Survey Center as part of the American Mosaic Project. As part of the project, households were randomly selected and respondents chosen randomly from within households. African Americans and Hispanics were oversampled to provide sufficient representation for making meaningful comparisons across racial and ethnic groups. The African and Hispanic American oversampling was achieved by calling more heavily in areas with high concentrations of these populations. Sample weighting was applied so that the resulting analysis reflected the population. The survey response rate was 36 percent, which compares well with other recent random-digit-dialing samples, including the American National Election Study.

However, the data used in this study were derived from a subsample (n = 1,567) that included only U.S.-born persons with U.S.-born parents (Table 1). The purpose was to ensure that the views in question would be those of the native population with no immediate immigrant origins. In other words, because first- and second-generation Americans constitute roughly 25 percent of the U.S. population, we wanted to ensure that the views of immigrants and their immediate descendants who may maintain dual loyalties were not confounded with those of natives and native parentage, whose views on dual loyalty are the topic of this research.

To retain as many cases as possible in our final sample, we imputed the data using multiple imputation. Imputing
data must be done with care given the increasing recognition that missing data present a serious problem in surveys; indeed, it is very difficult to collect complete data from all respondents (Chinomona and Mwambi 2015; Lleras 2008; Stuart et al. 2009). Missing data can create conceptual bias and reduce and inflate statistical significance. Originally developed by Rubin (1987), multiple imputation is a flexible technique that is relatively easy to use and appropriate for a wide range of data sets (Stuart et al. 2009). Unlike single-imputation techniques, such as mean imputation and maximum likelihood, which replace a single value with each missing value, multiple imputation imputes each missing value multiple times and calculates the right value to impute by accounting for data variability and uncertainty (Chinomona and Mwambi 2015; Lleras 2008).

**Dependent Variable**

Respondents’ extent of agreement with the statement “It’s OK for immigrants to be loyal to both their home country and the U.S.” was used to gauge Americans’ attitudes toward immigrants’ dual loyalty. Responses to this question were coded on a four-point scale that ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree).

For the purpose of these analyses, these response categories were recoded into a binary dichotomous variable, with 1 representing those who disagree that immigrants can be loyal to both their home countries and the United States and 0 representing those who agree with the central statement that it is acceptable for immigrants to be loyal to both their home countries and the United States.

**Dimensions of Boundaries against Immigrants’ Dual Loyalty**

We conceptualize boundaries against immigrants’ dual loyalty in terms of a number of dimensions: social location, spatial location, cultural and political values, immigration-related boundaries, and racial and religious friendship heterogeneity. Cultural and political values refer to qualities respondents consider important, such as the importance of American values, American influence around the world, and political party affiliation. Important American core values and influence were derived from the questions “How important are American culture and values?” and “How important is American influence in the world?” Both variables were coded from 1 (not important at all) to 4 (very important). Political party affiliation was coded 0 for Democratic or 1 for Republican. The spatial location boundary referred to the U.S. regions in which respondents resided and was measured using binary codes to designate region of residence: South (the comparison region), Northeast, Midwest, or West. Social location refers to demographic and social class boundaries. This measure was assessed by including in the model multiple variables that reflected respondents’ social classes and demographic characteristics. Age was measured in years from

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1. Descriptive Statistics.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Independent Variable</td>
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<td>-----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sociodemographic characteristics</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spatial location</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northeast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midwest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cultural/political values</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American influence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party affiliation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Immigration status</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American tradition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrant shared vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes toward immigration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Friendship heterogeneity</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial heterogeneity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious heterogeneity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: American Mosaic Project Survey (2003); 2000 U.S. census (Summary File 3).
Table 2. Responses to the Statement “It’s OK for Immigrants to be Loyal to Both Their Home Country and the U.S.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Cumulative Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>1,133</td>
<td>71.3</td>
<td>71.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>455</td>
<td>28.7</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,588</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


18 to 89. Extent of formal education was coded from 1 (some high school or less) to 6 (postgraduate). Total household income before taxes was measured using eight categories from 1 ($10,000 or less) to 8 (more than $100,000). Sex was coded as 1 (female) or 0 (male). Immigration boundary making refers to how Americans perceive and relate to immigrants and immigration in general in terms of the extent to which Americans see that immigrants share their vision of America and celebrate American values, traditions, and attitudes toward immigration through three variables. The first variable, shared vision, was derived from the question “How much do recent immigrants agree with your vision of American society?” The extent to which immigrants should celebrate American traditions was derived from the statement “Immigrants should celebrate American holidays and traditions,” and the third variable, attitudes toward immigration, was derived from the statement “The United States should do more to limit immigration.” All three variables were rated on a four-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). Finally, friendship heterogeneity referred to the extent to which one is exposed to heterogeneous racial and religious friends. Racial and religious friendship heterogeneity boundary making is premised on the assumption that individuals who have wider circles of racially and religiously heterogeneous friends are less likely to hold negative attitudes toward immigrants’ dual loyalty. Specifically, racial heterogeneity is based on the number of White, Black, Hispanic, Native American, and Asian individuals in a given person’s circle of friends. Religious heterogeneity refers to the number of Christian, Protestant, Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, and other religion friends in a given person’s friendship circle. Scores for both measures were either 0 or 1, with 0 being less heterogeneous and 1 being more heterogeneous (for an extensive discussion of these measures, see Blau and Schwartz 1984).

Univariate Analysis

To gain a baseline understanding of attitudes toward immigrants’ dual loyalty, we analyzed the distribution of the responses to our question of whether it is acceptable for immigrants to be loyal to their home countries and the United States at the same time (Table 2).

Responses to the question show that the overwhelming majority, 71 percent of respondents, agreed that it is acceptable for recent immigrants to maintain dual loyalty. The responses also show that a significant percentage, nearly 29 percent of U.S.-born persons with U.S. parentage, believe that recent immigrants should not maintain dual loyalty and should therefore hold undivided allegiance to core American identities. Given the popular views, which generally lean toward the preference for undivided loyalty, it is surprising that so many Americans appeared to accept immigrants’ maintaining dual loyalty between their home countries and the United States. The ways in which these general patterns hold across different social groups and boundaries are examined and presented in Table 3.

Multivariate Analysis

We used a binary logistic approach to estimating the effects of the independent variables on the binary outcome variable that it is acceptable for immigrants to hold dual loyalty to their home countries and the United States. We used binary logistic regression instead of ordered logistic regression because we were specifically interested in the conceptual and analytical distinction between those who agree and those who disagree with immigrants’ dual loyalty rather than the ordered variation of the responses (Edgell et al. 2006). More important, identical models (available on request) with the dependent variable in its original scale measurement level using order regression or binary coded using logistic regression revealed that collapsing the response categories resulted in no loss of explanatory power in this study or in other studies that used the same data (Edgell and Tranby 2007).

Data Analysis and Results

The results of our analysis of nonimmigrant Americans’ attitudes toward immigrants’ dual loyalty are presented in Table 3. We describe the results in terms of the following boundary dimensions: social location, spatial location, cultural and political values, immigration, and racial and religious friendship heterogeneity.

Social Location. As shown in Table 3, three of the four variables in the social location cluster (gender, education, and income) were not significant in structuring nonimmigrant Americans’ attitudes toward immigrants’ dual loyalty; age was the only factor that had an effect. As shown in the table, older respondents were more likely to disagree with the statement “It’s OK for immigrants to be loyal to both their home country and the U.S.” This finding is not surprising given that the younger generation has experienced increased exposure to different racial, cultural, social, and political groups as the result of the increased diversity in America, particularly since the 1990s. More important, perhaps, younger generations did not experience the racial controversies and conflicts of the 1960s and 1970s (Schaller 2010). Family income was marginally significant ($p = .052$) but showed an interesting finding in that...
persons with higher levels of education were less supportive of immigrants’ dual loyalty.

Spatial Location. The nature of settlement patterns is an important dimension in attitudes toward immigrants’ dual loyalty. In the case of spatial location, our results show that those who resided in the Northwest and Midwest were less likely to disagree with the statement “It’s OK for immigrants to be loyal to both their home country and the U.S.” than were residents of the South and West. Residents of the Northeast were .678 times less likely to disagree with dual loyalty than were residents of the South and West. Those who resided in the Midwest were also .684 times less likely to disagree with dual loyalty than were residents in the South and West. These findings can be alternatively interpreted as showing that residents in the Northeast are nearly 30 percent more likely to disagree with the idea of immigrants’ maintaining dual loyalty than were those who self-identified as Democrats or independents. It appears that the importance people attach to American values is not significantly related to attitudes toward immigrants’ dual loyalty. We found, however, that those who attached importance to American influence around the world were .732 times (37 percent) less likely to disagree with the statement “It’s OK for immigrants to be loyal to both their home country and the U.S.”

Cultural and Political Values. Two of the variables that formed the cultural and political values boundary were derived from items that respondents saw as core strengths that make America what it is. The first pertained to the importance of American culture and values and the second to the importance of American influence in the world. The third variable was political party affiliation. As shown in Table 3, political party affiliation was the single most important variable in structuring attitudes toward immigrants’ dual loyalty within the cultural and political boundary dimension. Those who identified as Republican were 1.63 times (60.3 percent) more likely to disagree with the idea of immigrants’ maintaining dual loyalty than were those who self-identified as Democrats or independents. It appears that the importance people attach to American values is not significantly related to attitudes toward immigrants’ dual loyalty. We found, however, that those who attached importance to American influence around the world were .732 times (37 percent) less likely to disagree with the statement “It’s OK for immigrants to be loyal to both their home country and the U.S.”

Table 3. Binary Logistic Results of Americans’ Attitudes toward Immigrants’ Dual Loyalty.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Boundary Dimensions</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>Wald</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>Odds Ratio</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social location</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
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<td>.004</td>
<td>14.008</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>1.015</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>−.065</td>
<td>.127</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>.107</td>
<td>.500</td>
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<td>Education</td>
<td>−.048</td>
<td>.043</td>
<td>1.252</td>
<td>.263</td>
<td>.269</td>
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<td>Family income</td>
<td>.069</td>
<td>.036</td>
<td>3.782</td>
<td>.052</td>
<td>1.072</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spatial location</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>−.389</td>
<td>.190</td>
<td>4.181</td>
<td>.041</td>
<td>.678</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midwest</td>
<td>−.380</td>
<td>.163</td>
<td>5.461</td>
<td>.019</td>
<td>.684</td>
</tr>
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<td>West</td>
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<td>.154</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>.962</td>
<td>.993</td>
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<td>Cultural/political values</td>
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<td>American values</td>
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<td>.107</td>
<td>2.737</td>
<td>.098</td>
<td>1.194</td>
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<tr>
<td>American influence</td>
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<td>.092</td>
<td>11.545</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.732</td>
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<td>Republican</td>
<td>.489</td>
<td>.125</td>
<td>15.338</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>1.631</td>
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<td>American tradition</td>
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<td>.062</td>
<td>18.473</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>1.306</td>
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<td>.073</td>
<td>26.317</td>
<td>.000</td>
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<td>.033</td>
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Discussion and Conclusion

A recent Los Angeles Times editorial titled “The Problem of Dual Citizenship” may have hinted at what we believe to be the question that may inform the next generation of scholarship on immigrant assimilation, perceived lack of loyalty among individuals with immediate immigration background: “How can a person be equally loyal to two countries?” The question of whether individuals with recent immigration background can be assumed to be loyal to core American values, read patriotism, has figured prominently in the past three presidential election cycles, starting in 2008, and has been reignited by Donald Trump’s assertion that Ted Cruz, his rival for the Republican Party’s nomination, may not be eligible to hold office because he was born in Canada to an American mother and a Cuban father.

Trump’s comments have over the past few months led to a series of articles in the Washington Post by both journalists and constitutional scholars to provide arguments for (Adler 2016; Barnett 2016; Katyal and Clement 2015; Marcus 2016) and against (McManamon 2016) Cruz’s status as a natural-born citizen and therefore his eligibility for the presidency. In a recent article in the Harvard Law Review, Katyal and Clement (2015) noted that “someone born to a U.S. citizen parent generally becomes a U.S. citizen without regard to whether the birth takes place in Canada, the [Panama] Canal Zone, or the continental United States” (p. 161) and concluded that

Senator Cruz has been a citizen from birth and is thus a ‘natural born Citizen’ even under the Naturalization Act of 1790. (p. 162)

In contrast, McManamon (2016), another constitutional law expert, suggested that Ted Cruz is ineligible to be president, arguing that the definition of a natural-born citizen must not be derived from the Constitution but from the British common law, upon which it is based. Quoting the eighteenth-century English jurist William Blackstone, McManamon wrote that natural-born citizens are “such as born within the domains of the crown of England, while aliens are: such as born out of it” (p. 1). This controversy may not significantly affect Cruz’s eligibility status, but the suspicion has been planted, as shown by a recent Monmouth University poll in which nearly a third of Republican voters said that Cruz is a not a natural-born citizen or were not sure. This division and controversy, according to McManamon, “is the assumption of allegiance to one’s country of birth” (p. 1), which implies that individuals who are born outside the domains of the United States may not have the necessary allegiance and loyalties to lead the country patriotically.

The problem with all this media conversation is that it is merely as such, a debate, it lacks any empirical foundation, and most important it completely ignores what nonimmigrant Americans think about immigrants’ dual loyalty. We set out to extend the parameters of this discussion to include attitudes toward immigrants’ dual loyalty from the perspectives of nonimmigrant Americans, that is, native persons with native parentage. This new research question is extremely important in that unless we have a meaningful understanding of how nonimmigrant Americans perceive dual loyalty, the discussion of whether immigrants are loyal to American political and core values (de La Garza et al. 1996; Guarnizo et al. 2003; Huntington 2004; Pantoja 2005; Smith 2007; Stanton et al. 2007) is methodologically and theoretically incomplete. Conceptualizing immigrants’ dual loyalty from the context of reception provides an important window into the future conceptualization of two of the most important sociological issues in immigration research: the nature of assimilation and multiculturalism (Hartmann and Gerteis 2005) and political participation in and connectedness to the American political system.

Our analyses reveal that certain boundary processes appear to be more important in structuring nonimmigrant Americans’ attitudes toward immigrants’ dual loyalty. First, we found that social location variables such gender and education did not affect one’s attitudes toward immigrants’ dual loyalty. Income was marginally significant ($p = .052$) but showed an interesting direction such that individuals with higher income levels are less supportive of immigrants’ dual loyalty. This finding, although not significant, may point to the fact that attitudes toward immigrants’ dual loyalty may be empirically different from attitudes toward immigration. It also appears that the younger generation is more likely to support dual loyalty than their parents and grandparents.
Second, our analyses reveal that spatial location appears to structure nonimmigrant American attitudes toward immigrants’ dual loyalty, such that those who live in the Midwest and Northeast oppose immigrants’ dual loyalty compared with those who live in the South. Residing in the West is not significantly related to attitudes toward immigrants’ dual loyalty. This finding is quite interesting in that it speaks to the possibility that the significant size of the Hispanic immigrant population in the western United States does not influence nonimmigrant Americans’ attitudes toward immigrants’ dual loyalty, thus casting doubt on Huntington’s (2004) argument that Latino immigrants, particularly those from Mexico, are unlikely to assimilate core American values.

Third, we find that the importance one attaches to American cultural and political values and American influence in the world affect nonimmigrant Americans’ attitudes toward immigrants’ dual loyalty in important ways. Specifically, we find that those who self-identify as Republicans are significantly more likely to oppose immigrants’ dual loyalty as opposed to those who self-identify as Democrats or independents. This finding is quite interesting in that it mirrors the prevailing ideological differences between self-identified Republicans and self-identified Democrats in terms of issues that pertain to immigration. The most interesting finding within this boundary cluster pertains to the importance one attaches to American influence in the world. Those who see American influence in the world as very important are also significantly more likely to support immigrants’ dual loyalty than those who do not see the importance of American influence in the world. We are not aware of prior empirical research that links these two variables, but it is possible for people to think that having Americans who maintain dual loyalty with their countries of origin may help contribute to America’s influence in the world, as casual American ambassadors, perhaps.

The fourth and most important finding pertains to our immigration-related boundary dimension. Those who agree that the United States should limit immigration as much as possible and that immigrants should celebrate American culture and tradition are significantly more likely to oppose immigrants’ dual loyalty. The most fascinating finding within the immigration boundary dimension is the revelation that those who believe that immigrants share their vision of America are significantly more likely to support immigrants’ dual loyalty.

We hope that this exercise provides an important starting point for future directions to broaden our understanding of the nature and dynamics of nonimmigrant Americans’ attitudes toward immigrants’ dual loyalty. A more comprehensive articulation of the implications of nonimmigrant Americans’ attitudes toward immigrants’ dual loyalty, however, requires more robust data, a further specification of the conceptual model provided here, and more theoretically conceived variables than the items from the survey from which we extracted our data. Future research should consider creating multiple-item, scale-based measures that can capture attitudes toward immigrants’ dual loyalty. More important, a more robust understanding of dual loyalty requires both historical and contextual variables that can address the different social, economic, and political contexts that inform America’s perceptions and attitudes toward immigrants’ dual loyalty.

The findings indicate that gaining a better understanding of the American people’s acceptance of dual loyalty is important for two reasons. First, to the extent that immigrants’ engagement of dual loyalty is informed by the context of the host environment, an understanding of the social climate of the host community is extremely imperative. More important, without a full understanding of the American people’s perception of immigrants’ dual loyalty, the controversy over whether immigrants’ dual loyalty is either incompatible with or complementary to core American values is theoretically incomplete (Escobar 2004; Huntington 2004; Kozak 2009). What is clear from the findings is that immigrants’ dual loyalty also influences nonimmigrant Americans’ understanding of the increasing level of global interdependence. That is, as immigrants become more engaged with their countries of origin and the United States at the same time in their activities and behavior, the American people might become more open in their attitudes toward immigrants’ dual loyalty as well. Consequently, instead of solely concentrating on the ways in which contemporary immigrants maintain dual loyalties, further understanding of how nonimmigrant Americans react to immigrants’ dual loyalty will provide an important insight into our understanding of the nature and implications of immigration on America’s national identity and core values and the ways in which immigrants and nonimmigrant Americans have been and continue to reflect on each other in the making and remaking of American social, economic, and political values.

Our discussion of nonimmigrant Americans’ attitudes toward immigrants’ dual loyalty brings back issues of assimilation in all its forms—cultural, social, economic, and even health—in that like all other immigrant behaviors, dual loyalty may also be tied to general patterns such that later generation will leave it behind. There is in fact an increasing amount of research showing that later generations start to resemble the mainstream American population even in anti-social behavior such that nativity as a protective factor against criminological tendencies wanes with each successive generation (Vaughn et al. 2014). Given these findings, it may be the case that the tendency for immigrants to maintain dual loyalty with their home countries and the United States may wane with successive generations, and therefore, the recent sociological concerns about lack of loyalty among immigrants may not even be a social issue.

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