

The Effects of Polarizing Elite Messaging on Nationalism, Patriotism, and Views of Immigration

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Abstract

This study examines the influence of nationalism and patriotic sentiment on attitudes toward immigration in the United States, during a period in which Americans and their political leaders are deeply divided over national identity. We evaluate a sample of likely voters drawn in the weeks before the 2016 US presidential election who supported Donald Trump or Hillary Clinton, two candidates who espoused different ideas about national pride and the impact of immigration on American society. Our analyses show that supporters of Trump and Clinton varied substantially in their level of support for immigration, but Trump backers were similarly supportive of patriotic themes and only modestly more nationalist in orientation. Although prior research assumes national pride has uniform effects on attitudes toward immigration, our findings suggest the consequences depend on the degree to which individuals' nationalism and patriotism correspond with the views espoused by their preferred political leaders.

Keywords: Political sociology, nationalism, patriotism, immigration attitudes, elite messaging

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Leader Preference and the Influence of Nationalism and Patriotism on Views of Immigration

The influence of national pride on public opinion has long interested social scientists. The pride that individuals express in their nation's core values and political institutions shapes their beliefs about social tolerance, concerns for civil liberties, and attitudes on a wide range of domestic and foreign policies (Huddy and Khatib 2007; Hutcheson et al. 2010; Parker 2010). National pride also guides individuals' preferences for political candidates and levels of support for national

leaders (Sheets, Domke, and Greenwald 2011; Sullivan, Fried, and Dietz 1992). Reflecting the fact that a citizen's feelings about the nation is a complex sociological phenomenon, researchers frequently analyze its major components separately, distinguishing between *nationalism*, the belief that one's nation is inherently superior to others, and *patriotism*, which is a more inclusionary type of national pride emphasizing persons' emotional attachments to their own nation (de Figueiredo and Elkins 2003).

Previous scholarship makes it clear that nationalism and patriotism have distinct effects on attitudes for various public policies, and both sentiments are

particularly influential on feelings about immigration issues (e.g., Ariely 2012; de Figueiredo and Elkins 2003; Pryce 2018). However, the research to date offers surprisingly little clarity as to how the influence of the different dimensions of national pride can be activated or neutralized among individuals living in the same country whose political contexts greatly diverge. Some recent work shows that the rhetoric of national leaders, over time, is a major factor in shaping how individual levels of nationalism or patriotism influence a person's policy preferences, but this research has focused on country-to-country differences in national-level political cultures and policies, limiting its ability to offer insights about why the influence of nationalism and patriotism might vary across different groups within the same country (e.g., Ariely 2017; Wright and Reeskins 2015).

While it certainly is the case that countries vary considerably from one another in the extent to which their citizens collectively embrace or reject nationalist versions of pride in the nation (Ariely 2012, 2017; Davidov 2009), many of the world's advanced democracies—including the United States—presently have highly polarized political settings marked by deep internal divisions among elites over the national identity and their country's role in the world. In recent years, we have witnessed a global surge in support for avowedly nationalist politicians and parties, and this uptick in nationalist politics is being countered by politicians who aggressively reject nationalist leaders' assumptions that their country is better than others and entitled to act aggressively in its own interests (Snyder 2019). If it is the case that individual-level influences of nationalism and patriotism reflect variations in political context, what happens when a person's national political environment is polarized, with strongly supported nationalist politicians sitting at one end of the spectrum and similarly supported patriotic leaders at the other?

Our study seeks to better understand how nationalism and patriotism operate under political contexts in which citizens are divided in their support for leaders who strongly emphasize just one the two main elements of national pride. Our expectation is that individual-levels of nationalism should be more influential among the followers of nationalist politicians than is the case among equally nationalist citizens whose preferred political leaders express their love of the nation in non-exclusionary ways. Specifically, we propose and test the idea that nationalism and patriotism vary in their influence on citizens' attitudes toward immigrants, depending on the type of national pride articulated by a person's preferred political leader. Our core proposition is that nationalism is more strongly connected to anti-immigrant attitudes among the followers of nationalist

politicians than is the case among the followers of politicians who reject nationalist expressions of pride in one's country.

To test our argument and expectations, we analyze survey data that were collected in the closing months of the 2016 U.S. presidential election. We explore how the levels of nationalism and patriotism held by individual supporters of Donald Trump—an avowed nationalist—differed in their consequences for anti-immigrant attitudes when compared to the influence of nationalism and patriotism among Hillary Clinton's supporters. We hypothesize that higher levels of nationalism will be more strongly correlated with anti-immigrant beliefs among Trump supporters than is the case with supporters of Hillary Clinton. Conversely, we anticipate that variations in a person's level of patriotism will have little impact for Trump supporters' view of immigrants, but strongly influence Clinton supporters.

National Pride, Political Context, and Attitudes Toward Immigrants

The influence of national pride on attitudes toward immigrants has been the subject of much scholarly research, dating at least to work on in-group/out-group dynamics in the early 1950s (Allport 1954; Festinger 1954; Merton 1968; Viroli 1995). One view of the relationship sees pride in one's nation as being closely related to hostile feelings toward non-nationals: higher levels of love for one's country causes increased in-group favoritism and decreased acceptance of foreigners. But other research finds that national pride can foster an acceptance of immigrants, especially in countries where citizenship is understood as being permeable and contingent mostly on the acceptance of core national values rather than descent (Feshbach 1987, 1991, 1994; Kosterman and Feshbach 1989; Sniderman et al. 2000; Sullivan et al. 1992). Especially in nations with a legal framework and political narrative that praises the historical and ongoing contributions of immigration, a deep love for one's country does not automatically trigger antagonism toward non-nationals (Citrin, Johnston, and Wright 2012; Helbling, Reeskens, and Wright 2016; Wright, Citrin, and Wand 2012).

Nationalism and Patriotism

To better understand the complex, and in some ways contradictory, relationship between national pride and beliefs about immigrants, many researchers have disaggregated love of country into its component dimensions of nationalism and patriotism (e.g., Blank and Schmidt 2003; Coenders and Scheepers 2003;

Conover and Feldman 1987; Kosterman and Feshbach 1989; Viroli 1995).¹ As de Figueiredo and Elkins (2003) demonstrate, national pride may be measured empirically and reliably by these two dimensions.

On the one hand, nationalism denotes a feeling of superiority and national power vis-à-vis other nations (Feshbach 1994). This dimension of national pride is exclusive, competitive and zero-sum: the greater the nation, the less need or benefit from others' participation in it. In this way, non-natives' gains are assumed to be at the nation's loss, and to welcome non-nationals weakens the distinction and homogeneity that make the nation exceptional and great. One should expect such positive in-group valuation and out-group devaluation to be associated with anti-immigrant sentiment among nationalists. Empirical work applying this theory demonstrates that nationalists do indeed show strong favoritism toward their own group alongside a corresponding contempt for other nations and their members, especially non-nationals living in their own country (Coenders and Scheepers 2003; Ceobanu and Escandell 2008; Jeong 2013; Kosterman and Feshbach 1989; Wagner et al. 2012).

On the other hand, patriotism refers to a positive emotional attachment to one's nation-state without a corresponding contempt or devaluation of other nations and their members. Whereas nationalism is other-referential, maintaining that the nation is better than other nations, patriotism is self-referential, maintaining that the nation is great in and of itself, regardless of the standing of other nations and peoples (Blank and Schmidt 2003; Ceobanu and Escandell 2008; Jeong 2013). In this view, believing that one's country and its institutions are wonderful neither denigrates other societies, nor implies the nation's greatness is imperiled when other societies seek to be great, too. Patriotism is therefore inclusive, non-competitive and positive-sum: the greater our nation, the more we all benefit from participating in it. In this way, the non-natives' gain says nothing about the nation's well-being, and patriots welcome the non-national as a way to strengthen what makes the nation great.

Researchers have provided support for the idea that the patriot is no political enemy of the immigrant. De Figueiredo and Elkins (2003), for example, find that while American nationalists express a strong hostility toward immigrants, patriotic pride is associated with positive attitudes toward immigration (Blank and Schmidt 2003; Coenders and Scheepers 2003; Jeong 2013). Specifically, patriots whose admiration of the nation centers on its institutions and democratic values profess positive attitudes toward immigrants and policies to support them (Green et al. 2011; Wagner et al. 2012).²

Political Context and Variations in the Effects of Nationalism and Patriotism

There is a small but growing body of evidence suggesting that the extent to which different conceptualizations of national pride will correspond to xenophobia is heavily dependent on individuals' larger socio-political context. Although they have varied in their choice of labels for the key concepts, several recent cross-national studies have explored how varying countries' macro-level political contexts shape the expression and political consequences of both nationalism and patriotism. Methodologically, this work has compared public opinion across countries that differ with respect to their official policies toward immigration and the extent to which national elites collectively have voiced support or concern regarding multiculturalism's influence on national identity (Ariely 2012; Citrin et al. 2012, Hebling et al. 2016, McLaren 2017). A key finding of this research has been to highlight the extent to which citizens' perceptions of national pride and their corresponding opinions about immigration are socially constructed phenomena. Put more precisely, the influence of nationalism and patriotism directly reflects efforts of leaders to shape opinions about what it means to love the nation, and how these feelings should influence attitudes about immigration. Where leaders collectively stress nationalist views of pride in the nation, individuals inclined toward nationalism disproportionately dislike immigrants; however, where leaders stress patriotic views of the nation, individual-level variations in nationalism have little effect on a person's views of immigrants (Helbling et al. 2016; Wright and Reeskens 2015).

The general notion that pride in the nation is subject to manipulation by specific political leaders is well established. As Zaller's (1992) influential work demonstrated, the typical citizen's opinions about social issues and beliefs are shallowly rooted and thus readily influenced by exposure to their preferred leaders' discourse, especially during campaigns. Moreover, numerous scholars have shown that U.S. presidents regularly capitalize on political incentives to emphasize their love of country before and after taking political office; public declarations of a national leader's patriotism can foster support for their policies, and elites are especially effective in activating citizens' nationalist feelings in times threat or conflict (Hutcheson et al. 2010; Parker 2010; Sullivan et al. 1992). However, it remains unclear what role individual political leaders within countries may play in shaping the influence of nationalist and patriotic views among their followers, especially if competing political leaders present citizens with strikingly

different views of what it means to truly love the nation.

Hypothesizing the Effects of Nationalism and Patriotism on Xenophobia within the Context of the 2016 U.S. Election

Drawing on insights from the previous literature, we believe that analyzing the 2016 U.S. presidential election offers an opportunity to better understand how the effects of individuals' patriotism and nationalism may differ as a consequence of their support for specific political leaders. There arguably is no presidential campaign in recent memory featuring political leaders more strongly emphasizing the competing views of national pride and attitudes toward immigrants. Throughout the campaign, Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton espoused a non-competitive and positive-sum form of patriotism. In the final presidential debate of the election, she offered:

I think it's really up to all of us to demonstrate who we are and who our country is... how we want to bring our country together, where we don't want to have the kind of pitting of people one against the other, where instead we celebrate our diversity, we lift people up, and we make our country even greater. America is great, because America is good.³

Clinton's expression of national pride precisely reflects the assumptions of patriotism. It is self-referential, claiming national greatness in and of itself without comparison or deprecation of other nations. This more positive-sum form of national pride is likewise inclusive. In a 2015 speech, Clinton claimed that "[w]e are a country built by immigrants and our diversity makes us stronger as a nation - it's something to be proud of, celebrate, and defend."⁴

Conversely, the Republican candidate for president, Donald Trump, offered an insular, competitive view of national pride that closely hews to a textbook definition of nationalism. Trump articulated his exclusive, zero-sum, "America First" approach in his first foreign policy speech in April 2016 when he asserted:

Americans must know that we're putting the American people first again on trade... on immigration, on foreign policy. The jobs, incomes and security of the American worker will always be my first priority. No country has ever prospered that failed to put its own interests first. Both our friends and our enemies put their countries above ours and we, while being fair to them, must start doing

the same. We will no longer surrender this country or its people to the false song of globalism. The nation-state remains the true foundation for happiness and harmony. I am skeptical of international unions that tie us up and bring America down...⁵

From Trump's nationalist perspective, the nation loses when others win, and America's greatness requires superiority over others. In a major speech in August 2016, Trump articulated his approach to immigration, advocating for a system that "serves our needs, not the needs of others" and, in sharp contrast to Clinton, he stated that "there is only one core issue in the immigration debate, and that issue is the well-being of the American people."⁶ In Trump's definition of American pride there is no celebration of diversity or others' contribution; rather, it is imperative that:

[We] listen to the concerns that working people — our forgotten working people — have over the record pace of immigration and its impact on their jobs, wages, housing, schools, tax bills and general living conditions. These are valid concerns expressed by decent and patriotic citizens... the fact that most illegal immigrants are lower-skilled workers with less education who compete directly against vulnerable American workers and that these illegal workers draw much more out from the system than they can ever possibly pay back. And they're hurting a lot of our people that cannot get jobs under any circumstances.⁷

Aside from these starkly contrasting articulations of pride and what each candidate sees as the effect of immigration, the 2016 election was rather unique in the public's perceptions of the standard-bearing candidates' national pride. Despite a widely perceived Republican advantage in the electorate in expressions of national pride, Donald Trump had no edge over Clinton on that metric. Indeed, a poll conducted among registered voters in the weeks before the 2016 presidential election revealed that 61 percent of voters described both Clinton and Trump as "patriotic" (Pew 2016a). Methodologically, this parity is advantageous for drawing valid comparisons between public attitudes of two candidates with starkly differing views of national pride and immigration.

While the two candidates may have been perceived as being equally "patriotic," we anticipate that individual Americans at the time of the election differed both in their conceptualization of national pride and its xenophobic effects, varying according to the manner in which their preferred candidate had

framed this construct. Previous scholarship on the formation of mass political attitudes in the United States suggests that everyday citizens form, crystallize, and prioritize their political opinions largely in response to short-term elite cues from their preferred political leaders, as long as those cues are consistent with individuals' prior beliefs and big-picture social preferences (Zaller 1992). Reflecting his distinctly nationalist framing of American identity and immigrant threats, we would expect that Donald Trump's followers to be more nationalist in their own views of American national pride and immigrants' potential to contribute. Similarly, Hillary Clinton's claim that what makes America great is both inclusionary and positive sum should be mirrored in her followers' patriotism. Thus we hypothesize:

H1. Compared to Clinton supporters, Trump supporters will express greater levels of nationalist sentiment, and lower levels of patriotic sentiment.

H2. Compared to Clinton constituents, Trump supporters will report lower levels of support for immigrants.

Based on the established literature on national pride and attitudes toward immigrants discussed above, we also expect to find that nationalism and patriotism have distinct effects on anti-immigrant sentiment. Specifically, we anticipate that nationalism exerts a strong, positive influence on anti-immigrant sentiment. While the most influential study (de Figueiredo and Elkins 2003) to compare the effects nationalism and patriotism on hostility toward immigrants in the U.S. reported that patriotic individuals were no more or less accepting of immigrants than other citizens, the timing of that study coincided with a period when the leading presidential candidates for both major U.S. political parties were voicing relatively inclusive conceptions of the national identity. In contrast, we anticipate that patriotism is contributing to higher levels of support for immigrants within the current political environment, which would be consistent with recent research (Pryce 2018). Because many highly visible politicians—most notably Hillary Clinton—have explicitly attacked nationalism and linked their patriotic, inclusive vision of the national identity together with support for immigrant-friendly policies, we predict that individuals with higher levels of patriotism will be more supportive of immigrants than what the previous research on nationalism and patriotism has reported:

H3. Positive attitudes towards immigrants will be positively correlated to higher

patriotic sentiment, and negatively correlated to higher nationalist sentiment.

The opposing rhetorical positions of the two major 2016 presidential candidates offer us a context to test a final set of hypotheses and the central argument of our study. Specifically, we hypothesize that the correlation between the two elements of national pride and immigration attitudes will be contingent on the individuals' preferred national leader. Because the 2016 presidential candidates so frequently and systematically expressed opposing visions of national pride, we anticipate that their followers' views and understanding of national pride will reflect their different political contexts. More specifically, nationalistic sentiment should be a disproportionately powerful predictor of anti-immigration attitudes among Trump supporters, while patriotic sentiment should be associated with unusually pro-immigration attitudes among Clinton supporters. Conversely, we expect that patriotic sentiments should have modest or no effect on attitudes toward immigration views among Trump supporters, while nationalistic sentiments should be have marginal effects on attitudes toward immigration among Clinton supporters:

H4. Increasing levels of nationalism will be correlated with higher levels of anti-immigrant sentiment among Trump supporters, but less so among Clinton supporters.

H5. Increasing levels of patriotism will be correlated with lower levels of anti-immigrant sentiment among Clinton supporters, but less so among Trump supporters.

Data and Method

We test our hypotheses with data collected from an on-line survey administered to likely voters on October 2 and 3, 2016. The survey was written and fielded by Spencer Greenberg, a PhD mathematician, as part of a larger study on machine learning in electoral politics undertaken by the non-partisan research and education firm, ClearerThinking.org.⁸ A public-use dataset with the survey's results was published on-line after the election. The survey used a 942-subject pool that was recruited and compensated through Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk) service (Greenberg 2016b).

Although data drawn from MTurk are not random samples, social scientists using this method of data collection have published findings from a large

number of studies of ideology and attitude formation (for summaries, see Clifford, Jewell, and Waggoner 2015; Crawford and Pilanski 2014; Gerber et al. 2016). To ensure that the survey sample accurately reflected the nation's population, its administrators prescreened respondents so that the sample would mirror national polling averages of support for the leading political candidates a month before the 2016 election.⁹ It is best practice when creating representative MTurk samples to employ preliminary screens (Huff and Tingley 2015), and Greenberg reports that his procedure produced a sample with demographics closely matching larger, nationally-representative samples from the same time period with respect to gender, race, partisanship, ideology, urbanity, and religiosity (Greenberg 2016a). Nevertheless, the published dataset still overrepresented millennials and underrepresented individuals aged 45 and older; therefore, we have applied a post-stratification age weight so that results properly reflect the distribution of millennial, middle age, and older voters who cast ballots in 2016 (Schramm and Castillo 2016).

Because our study focuses on the contrasting effects of being a supporter of either nationalist or patriotic elites whose views were well known in the general population at the time of the study, we retained only individuals who said that they had decided to support Trump or Clinton. Of the 801 respondents who are the focus of this study, 361 self-identified as Trump voters while 440 reported they were voting for Clinton.

Dependent Variable

Anti-immigration sentiment. We are interested in examining how a person's level of patriotism and nationalism generally predict attitudes toward immigration, and whether these relationships may vary depending on respondents' preferences for Trump or Clinton. The survey instrument included multiple items asking respondents how much they agreed or disagreed with potential concerns about immigration. We focus on two measures. The first is a general measure of opposition to immigration: "America has too many immigrants." Since individuals provide many different reasons for objecting to immigration—e.g., concerns about illegal entry, fears of increased competition for jobs or downward pressure on wages, or worries about increased public spending—we analyze a second measure that focuses in on hostility toward immigrants simply because of where they come from and who they are. This measure asks respondents how much they agree that, "Immigrants threaten American customs and values." For both items, the survey's original

seven response categories ranged from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

In preliminary analyses (not shown), ordered regression and bivariate analyses of these immigration data produced substantively indistinguishable results from those we report below, and the latter method of analysis better facilitates straightforward interpretation and presentation of results. Accordingly, our analyses code respondents as opposing immigration if they somewhat agreed, agreed, or strongly agreed with the statement.

Independent Variables

Patriotism. Following the lead of previous researchers, we created a measure of patriotic sentiment based on respondents' level of agreement with three items that collectively measure a person's love and pride of the nation without assuming American superiority.¹⁰ Specifically, we looked at the level of agreement with three statements: "It's very important for the president to deeply love America," "America is as wonderful place," and "Freedom is what makes America great."¹¹ With three seven-point items, this initial measure varied from a potential low of seven to a high of 21 ($\alpha = 0.71$). The typical Trump supporter had score that was higher than the average Clinton supporter (16.4 vs. 15.4). This finding is not consistent with our hypothesis that Clinton's supporters would be more patriotic than Trump's, and we will explore it in detail with multivariate analyses in the next section.

Nationalism. Our measure of nationalism assesses the extent to which individuals believe that the United States is superior to other societies and has the right to impose its will on others. Specifically, we looked at the level of agreement with these statements: "All factors considered, America is the best country on earth to be a citizen;" "It's America's responsibility to topple corrupt regimes in other countries;" and "America needs to show the world that it's the strongest country on Earth."¹² Like the measure of patriotism, we first constructed an additive index from these three survey items, each having seven-point Likert scale response options ($\alpha = 0.65$). Consistent with expectations, the typical Trump supporter had a score on this initial measure of nationalist sentiment that was 2 points higher than Clinton supporters.

To promote ease of interpretation of the study's results, both of the aggregate measures of national pride were rescaled into indices that vary in value from zero to one. In light of previous research, it is not surprising to observe a moderate level of correlation

between our measures of nationalism and patriotism ($r = .53$). We performed standard tests to check for problems of multicollinearity, but none were found.

Additional Controls. In addition to holding constant the influence of several demographic factors that have been linked to disproportionate support for one of the two major-party candidates, we also control for partisanship, ideology, and religiosity, since all of these have been linked to attitudes about the national identity and immigration policy preferences. With respect to partisanship, Republicans and conservatives regularly have used campaign messaging hoping to capitalize on a perceived patriotic advantage over Democrats and liberals (Kalmoe and Gross 2016; Leege et al. 2002; Mockabee 2007; Parker, Sawyer, and Towler 2009; Tesler 2010). Also, a few recent studies find that exposure to the American flag, symbolic of American patriotism, increases public support for Republican candidates and issue positions (Carter, Ferguson, and Hassin 2011; Kalmoe and Gross 2016).

We control for conservatism as well. While immigration politics have never fit neatly onto a left-right ideological spectrum, present-day American conservatives are more likely to oppose immigration because of concerns about the negative fiscal impact of newcomers, apprehension about increased burdens on social services and crime rates, and perceived threats posed to national identity and values from increased diversity (Chandler and Tsai 2001; Espenshade and Hempstead 1996).

Finally, we control for religiosity because individuals who are particularly devout have been found to be disproportionately proud of America, although previous research confirms that being religiously active is methodologically distinct from a person's national pride (Sheets et al. 2011).

For partisanship and several other controls, we created dichotomous indicators (1 = yes; 0 = no) to distinguish respondents who said they were *Republican, male, white, aged 30-to-44*, and *aged 45 and older* (individuals aged under 30 are the reference category). The survey measured how *ideologically conservative* individuals were by asking their self-placement on two five-point items (varying from "very liberal" to "very conservative") on their views on "economic" and then "social issues." The scores for these items were averaged to create a single measure. The controls for *religiosity* and living in a *rural area* are derived from 7-point Likert items, asking respondents how much they agreed with statements: "Religion is important to me" and "I live in a rural (rather than an urban) area." All of our independent variables were rescaled to range from zero to one, and our regression results thus compare respondents with

lowest values for each of our controls to those with the highest.

Findings and Analyses

We begin by producing descriptive statistics for our dependent and independent variables. We also examine these variables to determine whether statistically significant differences are observed between Trump and Clinton supporters. The data in Table 1 reveal that approximately one-in-three respondents overall expressed at least some agreement that the U.S. has too many immigrants; a similar proportion believe that immigrants threaten American customs and values. As expected, Trump's supporters were much more inclined than Clinton's backers to express hostility to immigration on each measure. The table also reports demographic, ideological and social differences between likely Trump and Clinton voters that are consistent with several post-hoc analyses of the 2016 presidential electorate (Kennedy et al. 2018; Pew 2016b; Schramm and Castillo 2016).

The results in Table 1 also offer evidence contrary to expectations. Our hypotheses proposed that, compared to Clinton backers, Trump supporters would express greater levels of nationalist attitudes, but lower levels of patriotic sentiment. In fact, Trump supporters reported higher levels on both constructs, respectively—likely Trump voters, on average, expressed more nationalist attitudes and more patriotic sentiment than Clinton supporters.

It is plausible that this unexpected finding may be explained by other factors such as the disproportionately conservative or highly religious inclinations of Trump's voting base, since these qualities have previously been linked to anti-immigrant beliefs and to higher levels of national pride, broadly conceived. To consider this possibility, we performed a set of statistical tests to evaluate support for nationalist and patriotic sentiment, and hostility to immigration, where additional demographic and attitudinal controls are included along with the respondents' preferences for a particular presidential candidate. The results of these analyses are reported in Table 2.

The first two columns in the table are results from linear regression models that estimate a person's level of nationalism and then patriotism; binary logistic regression models estimating the two types of hostility toward immigrants are contained in columns 3-4. Each model includes control variables and an indicator for a respondent's support for Trump or Clinton (with Clinton supporters as the reference category). These test our first two hypotheses, which anticipate that Trump supporters should be exceptionally nationalist and anti-immigrant, while Clinton supporters should

be disproportionately patriotic and pro-immigrant, in both cases reflecting their leaders' views of what it means to be a true American patriot.

While religiosity and conservatism do in fact predict levels of nationalism and patriotism in our sample, the results reported in Table 2 continue to refute our initial expectations: after taking into account the influence of other relevant predictors, Trump supporters were only slightly (i.e., about five percent) more nationalist than comparable Clinton supporters, and there is surprisingly no difference at all in the

Based on previous research, our second set of hypotheses anticipates increasing nationalist pride leads to animosity toward immigrants, while increasing patriotism corresponds to greater acceptance of non-natives. We assume that the power and direction of patriotism's influence will fluctuate across different types of environments and depend on elite messaging. Because the current social environment in the U.S. prominently features political leaders linking strongly nationalist views to anti-immigrant rhetoric and policy proposals, we

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

	All	Trump	Clinton		
	Mean	Supporters	Supporters	Min	Max
		Mean	Mean		
Too many immigrants in US	0.379	0.632	0.167***	0	1
Immigrants threaten US values	0.367	0.625	0.150***	0	1
Nationalism	0.575	0.641	0.520***	0	1
Patriotism	0.829	0.861	0.801***	0	1
Aged 45 or older	0.574	0.589	0.562	0	1
Aged 30 to 44	0.225	0.231	0.219	0	1
Republican	0.312	0.631	0.045***	0	1
Ideologically conservative	0.455	0.682	0.265***	0	1
White	0.789	0.882	0.712***	0	1
Male	0.456	0.500	0.419	0	1
No 4-yr college degree	0.479	0.577	0.396***	0	1
Rural	0.395	0.479	0.324***	0	1
Religiosity	0.512	0.622	0.420***	0	1
Trump supporter	0.457	---	---	0	1
Clinton supporter	0.543	---	---	1	1

Note: Sample size for all respondents is 801; for Trump likely voters 361; for Clinton likely voters 440.

Significance stars reflect instances where the means for Clinton supporters differ from those for Trump supporters. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

typical level of patriotism for the two groups. On the other hand, Trump supporters were clearly more anti-immigrant: his supporters were more than twice as likely (around 51% versus 21%) as Clinton's supporters to at least somewhat agree that there are too many immigrants in the U.S., and they were even more likely to at least somewhat agree with the idea that immigrants threaten American customs and values (54% versus 18%). In other words, while Trump and Clinton supporters possess opposing views on immigrants, their differences cannot be explained simply by the fact that Trump supporters are substantially more nationalist or that Clinton's backers are unusually more patriotic.

hypothesized that nationalism would be a particularly powerful predictor of anti-immigrant attitudes at the moment. Similarly, we anticipated that the current social context—one in which inclusive, patriotic politicians are explicitly emphasizing immigrant contributions to society and the national identity—would lead to an unusually stronger connection between patriotic types of national pride and a rejection of anti-immigrant views.

We test these assumptions with the logistic regression models reported in Table 3, which examine the two measures of hostility toward immigrants. Consistent with our expectations, our results demonstrate that both types of national pride exert a powerful influence on anti-immigrant attitudes.

Moreover, the results also demonstrate that the direction of the influence for different types of national pride are in line with our assumptions about the current political environment.

To illustrate these dynamics more clearly, Figure 1 plots the results from Table 3's models, showing the changes in the predicted probability of agreeing with each of the anti-immigrant statements when shifting each predictor from its minimum to maximum value and holding all other variables at their average effect. The probability that a respondent with the lowest level of nationalism at least somewhat agreed that there are too many immigrants or that immigrants threaten

American culture and values was 11 percent and 9.4 percent, respectively, while the same probabilities for an otherwise similar respondent possessing the highest levels of nationalism were 59.1 percent and 59.2 percent, respectively. Comparing respondents at the weakest and strongest levels of patriotism, we conversely observe over a 40 percent-point reduction in the probability of holding anti-immigrant sentiments. The magnitude of these effects, furthermore, dwarf the predicted probabilities associated with all other control variables except for being ideologically conservative.

Taken as a whole, our findings so far are puzzling. Consistent with some of our hypotheses, we see that

Table 2. The Influence of Trump Support Control Variables on Nationalism, Patriotism, and Anti-Immigration Attitudes (Linear and Logistic Regression)

	Nationalism (OLS)	Patriotism (OLS)	Too Many Immigrants (Logistic)	Immigrants Threaten (Logistic)
Trump supporter	0.05* (0.02)	-0.01 (0.02)	1.39*** (0.28)	1.67*** (0.28)
Aged 45 or older	-0.02 (0.02)	0.04* (0.02)	-0.22 (0.24)	-0.08 (0.25)
Aged 30 to 44	0.00 (0.02)	0.02 (0.01)	-0.27 (0.21)	-0.28 (0.22)
Republican	-0.02 (0.02)	0.01 (0.02)	-0.26 (0.28)	-0.59* (0.29)
Ideologically conservative	0.10** (0.04)	0.07* (0.03)	2.10*** (0.49)	2.06*** (0.47)
White	0.02 (0.02)	0.04** (0.02)	0.02 (0.28)	0.24 (0.28)
Male	-0.03 (0.02)	-0.03* (0.01)	-0.22 (0.22)	-0.12 (0.22)
No 4-yr college degree	0.02 (0.02)	0.02+ (0.01)	0.35 (0.22)	0.45* (0.22)
Rural	0.02 (0.02)	0.02 (0.02)	0.35 (0.27)	0.29 (0.28)
Religiosity	0.13*** (0.03)	0.08*** (0.02)	0.63* (0.28)	0.42 (0.28)
Observations	801	801	801	801
R^2 /Pseudo R^2	0.18	0.15	0.23	0.24

Entries for columns are logistic regression coefficients. Standard errors in parentheses. + $p < .1$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Table 3. The Influence of Nationalism, Patriotism, and Control Variables on Anti-Immigration Attitudes (Logistic Regression)

	Too Many Immigrants (Logistic)	Immigrants Threaten (Logistic)
Nationalism	2.47*** (0.64)	2.64*** (0.64)
Patriotism	-1.79** (0.67)	-2.25** (0.73)
Aged 45 or older	-0.06 (0.24)	0.10 (0.24)
Aged 30 to 44	-0.18 (0.21)	-0.17 (0.22)
Republican	0.25 (0.26)	0.03 (0.26)
Ideologically conservative	2.91*** (0.47)	3.05*** (0.47)
White	0.18 (0.28)	0.43 (0.28)
Male	-0.10 (0.21)	0.02 (0.22)
No 4-yr college degree	0.44* (0.21)	0.57** (0.21)
Rural	0.42 (0.27)	0.38 (0.27)
Religiosity	0.47+ (0.28)	0.28 (0.27)
Observations	801	801
Pseudo R^2	0.22	0.22

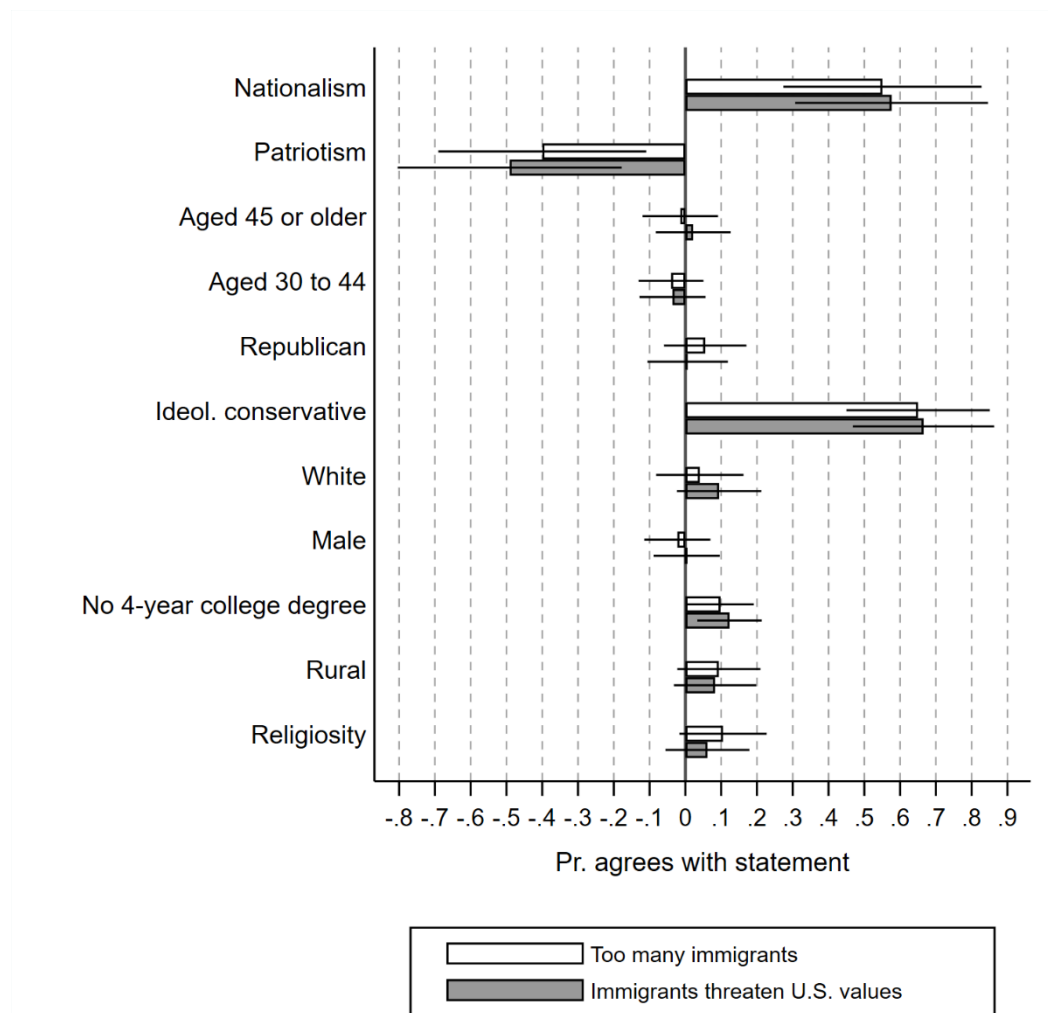
Entries for columns are logistic regression coefficients. Standard errors in parentheses. + $p < .1$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

the typical nationalist holds anti-immigrant attitudes while patriots powerfully reject these views. We reported in Tables 1 and 2 that Trump supporters are much more hostile toward immigrants than Clinton supporters; however, once other factors are taken into account, these supporters are barely more nationalist than Clinton supporters, and the two groups are indistinguishable with respect to their typical level of patriotism. If Trump and Clinton supporters do not differ much in their levels of nationalism and

patriotism, why are these groups so far apart in their beliefs about the contributions of immigrants?

Our final set of hypotheses offers a potential solution to this puzzle: perhaps the effects of a person's nationalism and patriotism vary as a function of how closely these views of national pride align with their preferred leader. In other words, we have hypothesized that the specifics of the socio-political environment catalyze nationalist and patriotic feelings differently, depending on which political leader an individual prefers. A rich body of previous research on

Figure 1: Change in Predicted Probability of Agreeing with Anti-immigrant Statements as Predictors Shift from Minimum to Maximum Values



Note: Bars represent differences in the predicted probability that a person in the relevant group somewhat agreed, agreed, or strongly agreed with the anti-immigration statement when compared to the reference groups with all other variables held constant at their mean marginal effect. The lines denote 95% confidence intervals for the estimates.

issue ownership and issue framing emphasizes the extent to which citizens rely on their favored political elites to help them contextualize and link generalized viewpoints to stances on specific issues. As such, we have anticipated in our fourth and fifth hypotheses that individual-level differences in nationalism and patriotism should have contrasting effects on support for immigrants among Trump and Clinton supporters. Specifically, we assume that immigration-related attitudes of supporters of nationalist leaders like Trump should be strongly influenced by increases in their nationalism, but less so by variations in their

patriotism. Conversely, supporters of patriotic politicians like Clinton should express increasingly supportive views of immigrants as their levels of patriotism increase, but be less swayed by individual-level variations in their nationalism.

The logistic regression results reported in Table 4 and plotted in Figure 2 isolate the effects of nationalism and patriotism on hostility toward immigrants for Trump and then Clinton supporters. Regardless of who the respondent supported, being more nationalist consistently corresponds to increased hostility toward immigrants. However, the effects of patriotism are

Table 4. The Influence of Nationalism, Patriotism, and Controls on Anti-Immigrant Views for Trump vs. Clinton Supporters (Logistic Regression)

	Too Many Immigrants (Trump)	Too Many Immigrants (Clinton)	Immigrants Threaten (Trump)	Immigrants Threaten (Clinton)
Nationalism	9.33** (7.49)	9.83* (10.16)	8.61** (7.13)	16.28** (17.12)
Patriotism	0.25 (0.23)	0.12* (0.12)	0.23 (0.25)	0.04** (0.04)
Aged 45 or older	0.65 (0.23)	1.26 (0.46)	1.13 (0.38)	1.13 (0.46)
Aged 30 to 44	0.56+ (0.17)	1.09 (0.35)	0.66 (0.19)	1.24 (0.44)
Republican	0.81 (0.27)	0.38 (0.30)	0.60 (0.19)	0.56 (0.42)
Ideologically conservative	13.28*** (9.06)	4.78* (3.22)	6.58** (4.17)	8.54** (5.70)
White	1.13 (0.49)	0.95 (0.35)	1.28 (0.52)	1.60 (0.63)
Male	0.77 (0.23)	0.94 (0.32)	0.82 (0.25)	1.03 (0.36)
No 4-year college degree	1.46 (0.43)	1.35 (0.45)	1.81* (0.52)	1.26 (0.43)
Rural	1.29 (0.46)	1.61 (0.68)	1.36 (0.51)	1.20 (0.49)
Religiosity	1.32 (0.52)	2.22+ (0.96)	0.87 (0.34)	2.58* (1.09)
Observations	361	440	361	440
Pseudo R^2	0.09	0.10	0.07	0.13

Entries for columns are logistic regression coefficients. Standard errors in parentheses. + $p < .1$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

statistically significant only for Clinton supporters. Fully testing hypotheses 4 and 5 requires an examination of the consequences of varying level nationalism and patriotism for both politicians' supporters, which we provide in Figure 2. As the plots reveal, among Trump supporters, going from being a minimally nationalist respondent to being a strong nationalist increases the probability of agreeing that there are too many immigrants by 51 points, from 30.4 percent to 80.3 percent. Similarly, for the response that immigrants threaten American customs and values,

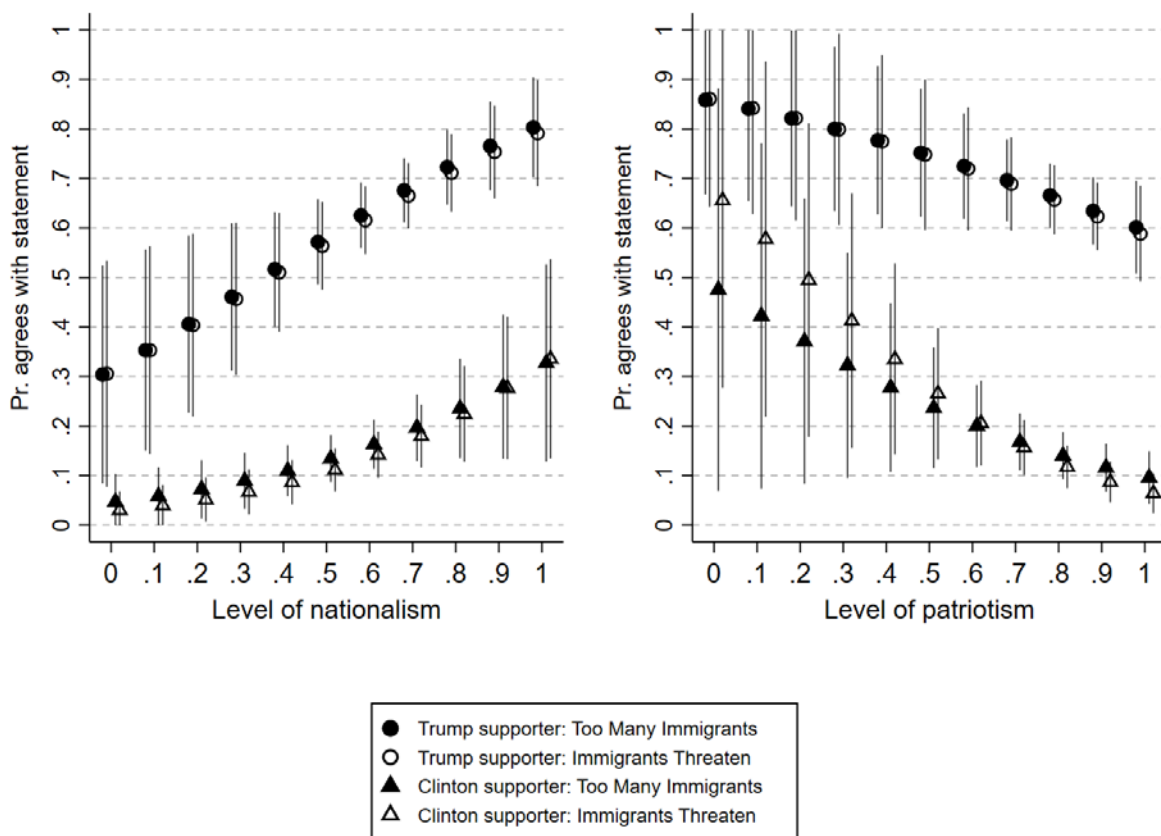
there is a net increase of approximately 50 points (30.5 percent versus 79.1). Consistent with our expectations, the gaps between minimally nationalist and fully nationalist Clinton supporters on both measures are significantly smaller (+28.8 and +27.4 percentage points, respectively). At the weakest levels of nationalism, Clinton supporters hardly register any agreement with the measures (predicted probabilities of 4.7 and 3 percent, respectively). In other words, the predicted probability of agreeing with anti-immigrant sentiments among Clinton's most ardent nationalist

supporters barely reaches the predicted probability of such agreement among Trump’s least nationalist supporters. In contrast, the probability of holding anti-immigrant sentiment among Trump’s most nationalist supporters is twice the level of Clinton’s most ardent nationalists.

How do the effects of patriotism differ across the followers of nationalist and patriotic politicians? As we see from Table 4, the estimates for the patriotism variable are much smaller among Trump supporters than they are for the Clinton supporters, and patriotism is not a statistically significant predictor for whether or not a Trump supporter thinks that immigrants threaten American values. In comparison, varying levels of patriotism exert a powerful, statistically significant influence on attitudes toward immigrants among

probability of agreeing that there are too many immigrants in the U.S. falls from 47.5 percent for non-patriotic Clinton supporters to just 9.6 percent for Clinton’s most ardent patriots. On the question of whether immigrants are threatening American values, the probability of having anti-immigrant views plummets from approximately 65.6 percent to roughly 6.4 percent probability among otherwise similar Clinton supporters at the lowest and highest levels of patriotism. The gap between the two politicians’ followers is statistically insignificant for individuals at the lowest levels of patriotism; however, at the highest levels of patriotism, Clinton’s supporters are more than 50 percentage points less likely to hold hostile views of immigrants than Trump supporters with same degree of patriotism.

Figure 2: Predicted Probabilities of Agreeing with Anti-immigrant Statements across Levels of Nationalism and Patriotism



Note: Dots represent the predicted probability that a Trump/Clinton supporter agreed with the anti-immigration statement at different levels of nationalism and patriotism with all other variables held constant at their means. The lines denote 95% confidence intervals for the estimates.

Clinton’s backers. Per Figure 2, the predicted

Conclusion

Our study has explored the effects of individual differences in nationalism and patriotism for anti-immigrant sentiment within the context of a U.S. presidential contest that pitted a textbook nationalist against a political opponent whose rhetoric and policy proposals embodied the core ideals of patriotic pride. Both politicians assertively appealed to voters' love of country, but they offered starkly contrasting visions of American exceptionalism. Trump's nationalist appeals and his vision of what makes America great emphasized a zero-sum vision of the national identity to which immigrants have nothing to contribute. Clinton's view of what makes America exceptional argued that what makes the nation remarkable can and should be emulated by other societies and also that this greatness will be expanded over time with the assistance of immigrants.

Collectively, our findings indicate that the relationship between nationalism, patriotism, and immigration attitudes is neither neat nor straightforward, but instead seems to be heavily dependent on socio-political contexts and the type of political leaders contesting power. On the one hand, we partially replicate the finding of most previous research in this area, which has reported that high levels of nationalism typically correspond to disparaging beliefs about non-nationals. On the other hand, our work suggests that the effect of patriotism on immigration preferences is contingent on the specifics of the social environment and how different leaders are talking about the nation's greatness. When political leaders are deeply divided over how inclusive the national identity should be, as presently is the case in the U.S. and many other advanced democracies, citizens appear to take cues from their preferred leaders' conceptions of national pride and their corresponding relationship to specific policy choices. Thus, Clinton supporters who shared her inclusive, patriotic view of what makes America great were nearly six times more likely to reject the idea that immigrants threaten American values than were her supporters with the lowest levels of patriotism. In contrast, Trump expressed highly nationalist views of the national identity, and we find that most of his supporters see immigrants as a threat regardless of their personal level of patriotism.

The statistical tests in our study offer robust support for most of our hypotheses, but perhaps our most important findings extend from two hypotheses for which we find no backing. Specifically, despite the opposing messages about national pride determinedly conveyed by Trump and Clinton, there is no evidence that one leader's supporters were particularly more nationalist or patriotic than the other in the final weeks

of the 2016 election cycle. After controlling for demographic differences and several other factors transcending the specifics of the current social environment, we find that supporters of Donald Trump were barely more nationalist than Clinton backers, even at the most intense moments of the presidential campaign season. Moreover, the backers of both candidates were similarly patriotic going into the 2016 election. In sum, the differences we report in the two groups' attitudes toward immigrants cannot be explained by any gaps in nationalism or patriotism. Instead, we provide robust evidence that the key difference between Trump and Clinton followers is the disparate effect that nationalism and patriotism have for each group's attitudes. While previous research on the consequences of national pride has assumed that nationalism and patriotism have uniform effects across different types of individuals, we find that both types of pride inconsistently influence beliefs about immigration. How and how much national pride shapes views heavily depends on the degree to which persons' nationalism or patriotism corresponds with the views of their preferred leaders.

While we find strong support for our central argument, it is our hope that this study will constitute but a first step toward better understanding how nationalism and patriotism influence anti-immigrant sentiments in societies marked by deep social divisions. On the one hand, understanding the effects of national pride in polarized political settings is an area of research with widespread practical implications. The U.S. is not the only advanced industrial democracy that is witnessing an uptick in the political fortunes of nationalist, xenophobic political leaders, and most recent national elections in Europe have pitted national elites expressing their love of the nation in avowedly nationalist terms against political elites who reject this view of national pride. Indeed, across the globe, the liberal ideal that modern nations are best served by working together is an increasingly contested notion. On the other hand, there are obvious shortcomings to our study that should be addressed in future work. To state the obvious, had the data been available, we would have preferred to test our hypotheses with a nationally representative random-participation survey that included the exact questions used to measure patriotism and nationalism in previously published studies. Most importantly, using survey data in post-hoc analyses, as we have, limits the ability of researchers to identify any specific mechanism that differentially activates nationalism and patriotism among the followers of different types of leaders. Ideally, these mechanisms will be identified in future experimental survey work.

Notes

1. These two dimensions of nationalism and patriotism are related to the distinction between ‘blind patriotism’ and ‘constructive patriotism’ made by Staub (1991). The former denotes “an attachment to country characterized by unquestioning positive evaluation, staunch allegiance, and intolerance of criticism” and is positively associated with strong nationalist sentiment, clearly delineated group boundaries between us and them, and the perception of foreign threats (Schatz, Staub, and Lavine 1999, 151; see also Finell and Zogmaister 2015).
2. These findings are consistent with broader findings within the literature emphasizing the role of national identity, ethnocentrism, and in-group cultural threat for explaining attitudes toward immigration. For a review of this literature, see Hainmueller and Hopkins (2014) and Schildkraut (2014). Though not directly tested in this article, these findings are also consistent with another body of work examining the relationship between blind patriotism, constructive patriotism, and attitudes toward immigration, where blind patriots have been shown to report less support for immigration generally (Spry and Hornsey 2007; Willis-Esqueda, Delgado and Pedroza 2017).
3. Hillary Clinton, during the October 19, 2016 Presidential debate (Blake 2016).
4. Statement made during an online forum sponsored by Telemundo and quoted in the *Washington Post*, http://wapo.st/1XpbW9u?tid=ss_mail&utm_term=.cff342e0c2ed.
5. *The New York Times*. Transcript: Donald Trump’s Foreign Policy Speech. April 27, 2016. <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/28/us/politics/transcript-trump-foreign-policy.html>
6. Statement made during a campaign speech in Phoenix, Arizona and reported by NPR. <http://www.npr.org/2016/08/31/492096565/fact-check-donald-trumps-speech-on-immigration>.
7. Ibid.
8. Before opting to use a non-representative sample, we reviewed codebooks for the 2016 General Social Survey, the American National Election Study, the Cooperative Congressional Election Study, DFVSG’s 2016 Voter Survey, and numerous surveys fielded by the Pew organization in the hopes of locating a survey that had been fielded to a nationally-representative, random sample and that contained suitable measures of nationalism, patriotism, and anti-immigrant attitudes. The methodology used to create the opt-in sample we use is explained in Greenberg 2016b (see study 2’s explanation). Greenberg publicly released the survey’s original results, and they were used in this study with his permission. Further details on the survey’s methodology and the manner in which its respondent pool was matched to and verified against national RDD surveys are noted in Greenberg 2016a; more details about the data collection were obtained by the authors in direct correspondence with Greenberg.
9. Using MTurk samples to reliably examine public opinion typically requires researchers to oversample certain populations and use post-stratification weighting (Clifford and Waggoner. 2015). Specifically, MTurk samples need to be adjusted to account for the fact that they typically over-represent urban, younger respondents. They also consistently and heavily over-represent liberals, Democrats, and non-religious Americans (Levay, Freese, and Druckman 2016). While demographic and political discrepancies from the U.S. population as a whole can be addressed by post-hoc weighting to match the sample to Census Bureau and representative national population surveys, under-representation in MTurk samples is best tackled by oversampling and prescreening surveys (Huff and Tingley 2015; Levay et al. 2016).
10. We use multiple survey items to create separate aggregate measures of nationalism and patriotism, following the dichotomy empirically established by Kosterman and Feshback (1989). Most studies published before and after Kosterman and Feshback’s pathbreaking study have relied on larger, more-representative samples than these authors, but have employed at most a handful of items to capture the key elements behind the patriotism/nationalism dichotomy. For example, Adams and Gay (2017) use just one item to tap patriotism: “How well does the description ‘a patriotic person’ describe you?” Similarly, Davidov (2009) uses just two items to capture nationalism: “The world would be a better place if people from other countries were more like the [Country Nationality of the Respondent]; and, “Generally speaking, [Respondent’s Country] is a better country than most other countries.” To date, there is no consensus on what specific survey

items are best suited for either measure, and the most common approach has been to group survey questions that appear to have obvious face validity. This has led to a diverse range of measures that vary widely in the number and type of indicators being incorporated into published research (Meitinger 2018).

11. Scholars have operationalized individual-level measures of patriotism in many different ways. Some have asked individuals directly about their degree of patriotism, while others have operationalized the concept by mostly focusing on how proud a person is about various elements American life, such as “the way democracy works here” and the nation’s “economic” achievements (e.g., de Figueiredo and Elkins 2003; Huddy and Khatib 2007; Davidov 2009). Still other researchers tap patriotism by looking at a person’s level of agreement with ideas like “flag burning should be illegal” or that “school days should begin with the Pledge of Allegiance” (Kimmelmeier et al. 2008). One of the three items that we use asks respondents to rate the importance of the president’s patriotism, which is similar in emphasis to Kosterman and Feshbach’s item asking how much a person is bothered when children are asked to display their patriotism. In both cases, the respondent is being asked to weigh in on the relative importance of others being patriotic. While many studies have relied on items that directly ask respondents about their own level of patriotism, we see the presidential patriotism measure as superior because it should be less likely to provoke social desirability bias in responses, which is a concern for some scholars (Meitinger 2018). Our index for patriotism also includes an item asking respondents how much they agree that America is a “wonderful” place. We see this item as comparable to similar items in other studies of patriotism asking respondents in various ways about how emotionally attached they are to their country or how proud they are of its accomplishments in the sciences, arts, etc. Finally, the item examining a person’s belief that “freedom is what makes America great” is similar to various items used in other published studies on patriotism, including Figueiredo and Elkins’s, that see a deep appreciation for American democracy as a key and distinct element of patriotism in the U.S. context (see also Huddy and Khatib 2007; Davidov 2009).

12. The three items we use to measure nationalism all tap the belief that America is superior to other nations. This is the key distinction made by

Kosterman and Feshbach (1989) as well as in more recent studies, which collectively suggest that effective measures of nationalism should tap both an assumption of moral national superiority as well as an acceptance of the idea that the U.S. is justified in using force against other countries when doing so serves their own national interest. Thus, our measure that assesses a respondent’s agreement with the statement, “It’s America’s responsibility to topple corrupt regimes in other countries,” is comparable to Kosterman and Feshbach’s question, “In view of America’s moral and material superiority, it is only right that would should have the biggest say in deciding United Nation’s policy,” or Kimmelmeier et al.’s (2008) item, “Sometimes it is necessary for our country to make war on other countries for their own good.”

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