

Dual Nationality Among Latinos: What Are the Implications for Political Connectedness?

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This study assesses the influence of dual nationality on connectedness to the American polity. Specifically, it examines whether first-generation dual national Latinos are less politically connected than their sole U.S. national counterparts. We define political connectedness as the skills, attitudes, and behaviors that attach someone to the political system. According to the traditional view on immigration and assimilation, dual nationality should be associated with negative consequences for political integration. Conversely, according to the transnational perspective, multiple nationalities do not preclude, and in fact may facilitate, political assimilation and incorporation. Relying on data from The Washington Post/Henry J. Kaiser Foundation/Harvard University National Survey on Latinos in America (1999) and the Pew Hispanic Center/Kaiser Family Foundation 2002 National Survey of Latinos, we investigate the influence of dual nationality on first-generation Latinos' English language proficiency, attitudinal political connectedness (specifically, their self-identification as Americans, consideration of the United States as their real homeland, and civic duty) and electoral participation. Although our results support the traditional view, we cannot rule out that generational replacement will resolve dual nationality's negative influence on political connectedness.

The theoretical debate over dual nationality¹ is decidedly conflictual. For some, dual nationality at best undermines incentives for cultural assimilation and political participation (Huntington 2004; Renshon 2000) and at worst is akin to bigamy, a fundamental betrayal of one's commitment to the United States (Geyer 1996). For others, dual nationality eases the ability of people to negotiate an increasingly global economy (Aleinikoff 1999; Escobar 2004) and may even promote cultural and political integration (Schuck 1998).² Clearly, this debate does not lack for opinion. What is missing, however, is a strong empirical foundation. With limited exceptions, schol-

ars have failed to submit their theoretical claims to serious empirical tests.³ This is particularly true of claims dealing with *political connectedness*, which we conceptualize as the skills, attitudes, and behaviors that attach a person to the American political system. Political connectedness encompasses basic skills and orientations related to identity formation and cultural assimilation, political attitudes (e.g., civic duty), and fundamental political behaviors such as voter registration and voting itself. This study assesses whether dual nationality impedes such connectedness.

We focus our analysis on first-generation Latino nationals for a number of reasons. First and foremost,

¹There is reference in the literature to both "dual nationality" and "dual citizenship." Legally, nationality defines whether a person is considered a member of a particular state, while citizenship characterizes the nature of a national's political rights and responsibilities (e.g., whether someone can vote or hold political office; Jones-Correa 2001a). Because it is highly improbable that many dual nationals are cognizant of the legal distinction between nationality and citizenship, we do not differentiate forms of dual status in our empirical analyses. What this choice means is that we will take some license with legal distinctions and treat nationals who both do and do not enjoy specific rights of citizenship as comparable. The key for us, as it seems to be in most of the related literature, is that dual status signifies that a person has two states in which she may make a home, possibly reducing her connectedness to the American polity.

²For still others, dual nationality is a fundamental human right (e.g., McGarvey-Rosendahl 1986).

³Notable exceptions include Rumbaut (1994), Yang (1994), Jones-Correa (2001a), and Escobar (2004).

Latinos constitute the largest minority group in the United States and make up the largest contingent of new immigrants (Ramirez and de la Cruz 2003). Population projections suggest that Latinos will comprise roughly 25% of the total American population by 2050 and that Latinos will be a majority in a number of states.⁴ Also, the 1990s saw a significant change in the willingness of Latin American states to sanction dual nationality. Prior to 1991, only four Latin American nations had adopted legislation recognizing dual nationality (Jones-Correa 2001a). Since then, at least seven more countries have opted to recognize dual nationality, suggesting that there is a definitive trend in the region toward more open nationality regimes.⁵ Moreover, because of the size of the current Latino immigration and the changes in Latin American nationality laws, it is largely this immigrant stock that has been the subject of the recent dual nationality controversy (Huntington 2004; Jones-Correa 2001a). Finally, we focus on first-generation Latinos for a key practical reason. We know of no currently available data source that allows us to consider how either generation or global region of origin conditions the effect of dual nationality. Unfortunately, surveys that include later generation dual nationals and/or dual nationals from other regions of the world fail to ask those respondents the questions necessary to conduct proper individual-level analysis regarding the specific elements of political connectedness we address below.

The focus on first-generation Latinos brings limitations, of course. It may be that dual nationality only weakens attachments to the United States among the first generation, and we cannot systematically address this issue with our data. Also, it may be that dual nationals from other regions of the world behave or think differently than Latinos. That said, in light of the relative paucity of empirical research in this area, coupled with the particular importance of Latino immigration, we believe that our case selection is a reasonable first cut on both practical and theoretical grounds.

The remainder of the essay is divided into four major sections. The first reviews the competing perspectives on dual nationality, outlines our treatment of

political connectedness, and justifies our empirical tests. The second introduces our data. We pay particular attention in this section to the measurement of our key independent variable: dual nationality. The third summarizes our empirical results. The concluding section assesses our findings and their implications and discusses some directions for future research.

Dual Nationality and Political Connectedness

Competing Theoretical Perspectives

Concerns regarding the potential political significance of dual nationality pivot around the connectedness of dual nationals to the American political system—that is, whether and to what extent dual nationals display the skills, psychological attachments, and behaviors needed to fulfill the obligations and practices of American nationality. Theoretical claims regarding the political significance of dual nationality have been for the most part articulated at a normative, speculative level.⁶ Two distinct, and opposing, perspectives on the political consequences of dual nationality are clearly discernible. First, the *traditional* view on immigration and assimilation embraces a notion of nationality as a single, exclusive formal membership in a nation-state. Accordingly, traditionalist scholars argue that dual nationality poses serious challenges for political cohesion and national identity. Traditionalists suggest that dual nationals face the unenviable task of dividing their loyalty and their responsibilities between two states (Geyer 1996; Huntington 2004; Renshon 2000); for these scholars, dual nationality encourages the splitting of loyalty, and the incentive to divide one's attachments induces real political consequences. Huntington (2004, 212) suggests that dual nationals will either focus all of their effort on political life in one state, ignoring their responsibilities in the other, or neglect their responsibilities in both. Thus if dual nationality has any effect on political connectedness, it is a negative one.

Traditional accounts also propose mechanisms through which new immigrants assimilate—mechanisms that dual nationality may impede, especially where a state's culture (in the sense of language,

⁴See U.S. Interim Projections by Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin. U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division. March 2004 (<http://www.census.gov/ipc/www/usinterimproj/>).

⁵Jones-Correa (2001a) notes that between 1991 and 1998 six nations adopted legislation recognizing dual nationality. A new addition is Bolivia, where legislation allowing dual nationality was introduced in 2002.

⁶As Schuck (1998, 234) observes, concerns of a political nature regarding dual nationality are "the most speculative and the least quantifiable," a fact that in part explains why such points of concern have provided rhetorical ammunition to both detractors and advocates of dual nationality.

practices, and values) is in flux. For example, Renshon (2000, 256–57) suggests that where culture is stable, there is intense pressure on all new nationals to assimilate, because there is social agreement over what constitutes legitimate means of communication and legitimate values. In contrast, where culture is changing, there is less pressure to assimilate, because there is social disagreement over what language and values are appropriate. In such a context, dual nationals should be especially unlikely to assimilate, because they have another state to which they may legally return and make a home. For Renshon, the United States is undergoing cultural change, and thus dual nationals in the United States should be less likely to assimilate than single nationals.⁷

Second, and conversely, the *transnational* perspective on immigration endorses the idea that multiple nationalities do not preclude assimilation or political incorporation into the new country (e.g., Guarnizo, Portes, and Haller 2003; Spiro 1997). Transnationalists argue that holding multiple nationalities is compatible with civic responsibility and a commitment to modern democratic politics. Given the frequent charges that Americans pay only minimal attention to politics, develop poorly formed attitudes, and participate in politics irregularly, their level of commitment is hardly overwhelming. Consequently, a continued link to a previous country does not necessarily preclude the fulfilling of responsibilities as a U.S. national (at least on a par with sole U.S. nationals).

According to the transnational perspective, allowing for dual nationality merely recognizes that globalization and advances in communications technology have both induced more physical exchanges of labor across national boundaries and encouraged the maintenance of ties to countries of origin (Basch, Schiller, and Blanc 1994; Portes, Guarnizo, and Haller 2002). As Spiro suggests, "Maintaining additional national attachments becomes an expression of individual identity, both a reflection of and a contribution to community ties, and a mechanism for undertaking civic participation in that sphere; and the facilitation of these virtues will . . . ultimately benefit society as well as the individual" (1997, 1416). Schuck (1998) goes further, contending that the American policy of tolerating dual nationality may communicate a wel-

coming environment to new immigrants, which both encourages naturalization and legitimates governmental authority.

Pathways to Political Connectedness

So far we have summarized the key theoretical differences between the traditional and transnational accounts of dual nationality. These differences suggest simple, yet clear empirical implications. The traditional account implies that dual nationals should be less connected to the polity than single nationals, while the transnational account predicts either a positive relationship or no relationship at all. Although substantial inroads have been made in our understanding of immigrants, and in particular of Latinos' incorporation into the American political system (e.g., Alvarez and Garcia Bedolla 2003; Calvo and Rosenstone 1989; DeSipio 1996; Highton and Burris 2002; Jackson 2003; Leighley 2001; Leighley and Vedlitz 1999; Shaw, de la Garza, and Lee 2000; Stokes 2003; Uhlaner, Cain, and Kiewiet 1989; Verba et al. 1993), it is only recently that preliminary efforts to assess empirically some of the competing claims of the traditionalists and the transnationalists have begun to appear (e.g., Cain and Doherty 2006; Ramakrishnan 2005). Systematic assessment of expectations arising from the theories about the impact of dual nationality requires that we first discuss the various paths that connect individuals to their political world. This study addresses three of the most important: assimilation, psychological resources, and political participation.

Assimilation

The literature on immigration and assimilation offers a first avenue to assess the impact of dual nationality on Latinos' connectedness to American society.⁸ The traditional perspective on assimilation sees it as a process in which psycho-social, cultural, and economic assimilation—whether occurring simultaneously or in phases—eventually leads to the abandonment of old cultural practices and political loyalties (Guarnizo, Portes, and Haller 2003, 1215).⁹ At the end point of the assimilation process newcomers should develop what Gordon (1964, 71) calls *identificational assimilation* or the "self-image of an unhyphenated American" (Rumbaut 1994, 755).

⁷Empirical results testing this claim are mixed. Whereas Jones-Correa (2001a, 2001b) and Escobar (2004) find that immigrants whose states of origin allow some form of dual nationality are actually more likely to naturalize in the United States than immigrants from states that do not, Yang (1994) finds the opposite.

⁸For a review of various theoretical perspectives on immigrants' cultural assimilation see Guarnizo, Portes, and Haller (2003).

⁹This perspective reflects the conventional view of the early twentieth-century European immigration to the United States.

This literature relies on several indicators—including education, occupation and income, intermarriage, language, identity, and naturalization—to tap a person's assimilation into a new country (Huntington 2004; Yang 1994). We examine the connection between dual nationality and two of these indicators that directly speak to cultural assimilation: language use and self-identity. As Yang explains, cultural assimilation “fosters immigrants’ sense of belonging to the host society by promoting their familiarity with the language, norms, values, history, governments, and social systems; it therefore nurtures positive attitudes towards being an American” (1994, 454). Concurring with this view, we believe that cultural assimilation suggests the presence of fundamental skills and psychological attachments to the political community and, therefore, that it is a relevant factor in fostering political connectedness.

If fluency in a nation's predominant language influences a person's ability and opportunities for immersion into the nation's political culture, then those who are more proficient in the dominant language should be more likely to be politically incorporated. Thus, we assess whether dual nationality influences Latino immigrants' fluency in the English language, a measure that researchers commonly use as a proxy for cultural assimilation (e.g., de la Garza, Falcon, and Garcia 1996; Rumbaut 1994; Yang 1994). The pull of divided loyalty brought on by dual nationality may retard English acquisition. If the traditional account of dual nationality is correct, we would expect that the weakened commitment marked by the continued ties to a person's country of origin would provide a psychological disincentive to assimilate fully via English fluency. In contrast, if the transnational perspective is correct, we should not observe a relationship between nationality status and fluency.

Beyond tangible behaviors such as the development of language proficiency, a person's attitudes may also reflect cultural assimilation. Huntington enumerates criteria defining identity as a dimension of assimilation; these include “the extent to which immigrants identify with the United States as a country, believe in its creed, espouse its culture, and correspondingly reject other countries and their values and culture” (2004, 239). We examine two attitudes gauging identity with the United States: self-identification as an American and identification of the United States as the individual's real homeland. Whereas the traditional account suggests that dual nationals should be less likely than single nationals to self-identify as Americans and to conceive of the United States as their real homeland, the transnational account suggests an

absence of relationships between nationality status and attitudinal identity.

Psychological Resources

A second, related path to political connectedness involves those psychological resources, political predispositions, and orientations that affect the likelihood of a national's involvement in, and degree of connection to, the polity. In a democratic political culture, in which participatory orientations are the norm, nationals develop a sense of their own efficacy and competence as political actors, and accept the norms of civic obligation (e.g., Almond and Verba 1963; Verba and Nie 1972). The literature identifies certain political predispositions, whether considered as intangible attachments or as motivating forces shaping participatory behavior, as markers of engagement with and connectedness to the political system.

We focus our analysis on civic duty. Typically considered a product of political socialization, civic duty refers to an enduring commitment to take an active role in the political system via conventional channels of participation. Many research efforts gauge civic duty as a national's commitment to the act of voting, regardless of short-term campaign stimuli and mobilization forces (e.g., Conway 2000; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993; Teixeira 1992). The traditional view suggests that dual nationality should attenuate civic duty, while the transnational perspective suggests either a positive relationship or none at all.

Political Participation

Even more proximate (and tangible) indicators of political connectedness are measures of actual political participation. National activism and participation are at the core of democratic politics. Political participation is the mechanism through which nationals communicate their needs and preferences to decision makers and assure responsiveness. Therefore, most observers view high levels of participation as an indication of democratic vitality. Implicitly at least, theories of political participation address issues pertaining to dual nationality, but researchers have carried out little systematic analysis of the influence of dual nationality on participation (however, see Cain and Doherty 2006; Ramakrishnan 2005).¹⁰ Although political participation encompasses a wide range of activities (e.g., Verba and Nie 1972; Verba, Scholzman,

¹⁰It is worth noting that Cain and Doherty's (2006) overall finding of a negative relationship between dual nationality and participation runs counter to the conclusions of Ramakrishnan (2005).

and Brady 1995), we explore whether dual nationality affects the two critical stages of electoral participation: voter registration and voting itself. As with the other pathways to connectedness, the debate concerning the effect of dual nationality raises disparate propositions. Traditionalists, like Huntington (2004, 212), suggest that dual nationals should be less likely to participate in politics than single nationals because they have to divide their energies and dedications between two polities; whereas transnationalists, like Schuck (1998), contend that a nation's accommodation of dual nationality, which encourages naturalization, should advance the essential democratic value of political participation.

In summary, existing discussions tell very different stories regarding the political effects of dual nationality, but, with few exceptions, provide little in the way of evidence to arbitrate. Does dual nationality actually influence various aspects of political connectedness, including the assimilation of immigrants into American political culture, their perceptions regarding the U.S. political system, and their participation in the electoral process? We assess the competing perspectives below in a series of empirical tests that incorporate variables gauging each of the multiple paths to political connectedness.

Data and Measurement

Dependent Variables

Our data come from *The Washington Post/Henry J. Kaiser Foundation/Harvard University National Survey on Latinos in America* (1999) and *The Pew Hispanic Center/Kaiser Family Foundation 2002 National Survey of Latinos*.¹¹ We analyze the impact of dual nationality across the three key pathways suggested by our conceptualization of political connectedness: assimilation, psychological resources, and participation. We discuss our measures of each dimension in turn.

¹¹*The Washington Post/Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation/Harvard University National Survey on Latinos in America* (1999) was conducted by telephone between June 30 and August 30, 1999, among a nationally representative sample of adults, 18 years and older, selected at random. Observations include 2,417 Latinos and 2,197 non-Latinos. The *Pew Hispanic Center/Kaiser Family Foundation 2002 National Survey of Latinos* was conducted by telephone between April 4 and June 11, 2002, among a nationally representative sample of adults, 18 years and older, selected at random. Observations include 2,929 Latinos and 1,284 non-Latinos. The 2002 survey built on the 1999 survey and, in part, was intended to be an update.

Assimilation

We measure cultural assimilation through English language proficiency and self-identification. The surveys contain several questions designed to tap respondents' language proficiency in both English and Spanish. We rely on the following question to create a 4-point ordinal *English speaker scale*, as an indicator of assimilation into American political culture: *Would you say you can carry on a conversation in English, both understanding and speaking—very well, pretty well, just a little, not at all?*¹² This language scale provides an indicator of both assimilation into American political culture and a skill-based resource with implications for a national's ability to engage American politics.

Several questions exclusive to the 2002 survey assess respondents' political self-identification and national attachment(s). Of particular importance to us are the following two questions: (1) *People choose different terms to describe themselves. I'm going to read you a few different descriptions. Please tell me whether you have ever described yourself as an American*, and (2) *Which country do you consider your real homeland—the country where I was born or the United States?* We created two dichotomous variables—*American self-identification* and *consider U.S. as homeland*, respectively—based on respondents' answers.

Psychological Resources

As noted above, we consider whether dual nationality influences a respondent's sense of civic duty. The 1999 survey includes the following question: *Voting is a waste of time—agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat, disagree strongly*. We use respondents' answers to this question to create a four-point ordinal scale of *civic duty*.

¹²The surveys enable us to consider several alternative measures of English proficiency. Toward the end of the interview, each asked the interviewer to report in what language the respondent completed the interview. This response enables construction of a five-point interview language scale, ranging from "only English" to "only Spanish." Its correlation with *English speaker* is .66. Each survey also contains a series of questions gauging a respondent's ability to speak and read both English and Spanish. These questions facilitate the construction of a 13-point English dominant scale, which is correlated at .85 with *English speaker*. More importantly, our dual nationality variables demonstrate statistically significant, negative influence on the various measures of English proficiency, controlling for other factors.

Political Participation

Finally, both surveys contain two questions that tap the foundational political behavior of electoral participation. The first asks Latino nationals whether they are registered to vote at their present address. The second asks whether they have ever voted in an election in the United States. We created two dichotomous variables—*voter registration* and *electoral turnout*, respectively—based on respondents' answers to these two questions.

Measuring Dual Status

Of central importance for us, both surveys ask the following question of Latino immigrants born outside of the United States: *As you may know, some countries allow people to be legal citizens of their country of origin even if they are also U.S. citizens—Are you a legal citizen of (country of origin)?*¹³ We consider two dichotomous *dual status* variables. The first simply reflects respondents' self-report to the survey question. As such, it indicates what people believe to be their status. Fifty-nine percent of Latino immigrant U.S. nationals self-report that they are dual nationals. However, we know that, given the legal framework in their country of origin, some respondents are (likely) misreporting their actual status. In light of the composition of our sample, most notably a large percentage of first-generation Cubans (43%) indicate that they are dual nationals, even though such a status is not legally possible. These respondents constitute 11% of our sample. Given the large number of misreporting Cubans, we present self-report models that exclude Cubans alongside the self-report models for our full sample.

Our second measure of dual status, *institutional recode*, adjusts respondents' self-report when it is inconsistent with the legal framework of their country-of-origin. This measure allows us to investigate the consequences of merely relying on self-report in dual nationality analysis. As such, it represents a genuine advance over the measures used in previous individual-level research on the effects of dual nationality. To obtain precise information regarding dual nationality legislation and regulations in respondents'

¹³As noted above (see note 1), the important legal distinction concerns whether one is a dual national. However, the wording of the available survey question, with its focus on citizenship, is not problematic, given that "dual citizenship" is the more common terminology and an extension of the rights of citizenship presupposes that someone is a national.

TABLE 1 Overview of the Three Country-of-Origin Categories in the Institutional Recode of Dual Nationality

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- A. U.S. national immigrants from the following countries—actual legal status is sole-U.S. national: Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Cuba, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, and Venezuela.
 - B. U.S. national immigrants from the following countries—actual legal status is dual national: Colombia (beginning with those who naturalized in 1991)^a, Dominican Republic, and Mexico (beginning with those who naturalized in 1998).^a
 - C. U.S. national immigrants from the following countries may be either sole-U.S. nationals or dual nationals:
Brazil, Colombia (for those who naturalized prior to 1991), Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico (for those who naturalized prior to 1998), Panama, and Peru.
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^aDue to its greater precision regarding respondents' date of naturalization, the 1999 data set enabled us to incorporate a mid-year 1991 start date for Colombians and a March 1998 start date for Mexicans in terms of implementing dual national recodes. We do not recode any Colombians or Mexicans who naturalized prior to their country of origin's automatic legal provision of dual nationality status.

countries of origin, we reviewed national constitutions and conducted telephone interviews with various embassies and consulates (see also Jones-Correa 2001a).¹⁴ Drawing on this information, we can group respondents into three categories: (1) those whose actual legal status is sole-U.S. national, (2) those whose actual legal status is dual national, and (3) those whose actual legal status may be either sole-U.S. national or dual national. Table 1 identifies the countries of origin for each category. Any respondent who falls into one of the first two categories and incorrectly reported her status was recoded to reflect the rules of her country of origin. For example, a Cuban who reported dual nationality status was recoded as a sole-U.S. national, and a Dominican who reported sole-U.S. nationality status was recoded as a dual national. Finally, if knowing her country of origin does not tell us a respondent's actual status (because she immigrated from a country—and in the case of Mexico and Colombia also during a time period—that allows her

¹⁴We reviewed national constitutions available at <http://www.georgetown.edu/pdba/> and conducted telephone interviews with various embassies and consulates (May 12–13, 2005) to obtain precise information regarding dual nationality legislation and regulations (see also Jones-Correa 2001a). We will provide the details regarding our recodes upon request.

the *option* of retaining nationality), *institutional recode* reflects the respondent's self-report.¹⁵

Thus, with only a few exceptions (respondents from El Salvador, Colombia before 1991, and Mexico before 1998), dual status, as gauged via *institutional recode*, is determined as a matter of law. What does this variable's designation of dual status being largely outside of the personal control of our respondents imply for our analyses? As a first take at addressing this issue, suppose that our results based on the self-report measure were to reveal an inverse relationship between dual status and assimilation. Our goal is to assess *causal* theories regarding the possible effects of dual status, but, if our only empirical evidence were based on the self-report measure, we would be hard-pressed to rule out the possibility that respondents' decisions to retain dual status merely reflected their reluctance to assimilate in the United States. That is, a plausible criticism could be that we confront an endogeneity problem, making it rather perilous to derive a causal inference based on the observation of a statistical relationship between self-reported dual status and our dependent variables (however, see note 22). This concern highlights the value of considering models that assess the influence of *institutional recode* alongside those that assess the influence of the self-report measure. We view it as fortuitous that, for most of the respondents in our *institutional recode* models, the determination of their dual status is exogenous; the respondents do not choose dual status—it is instead imposed on them as a matter of law. As a consequence, if these models also were to reveal that dual status is inversely related to assimilation, to continue the

¹⁵Instead of relying on self-reports for the third group of respondents, we can conceive of the actual legal status of these respondents as missing data, again in contrast to those respondents for whom dual status is known with certainty. Viewed from this perspective, it is possible to impute or estimate dual status for these individuals via multiple imputation (King et al. 2001) or through an auxiliary instrumental variables approach, drawing on the method outlined by Franklin (1990). With these techniques, we can use all other available information—including their self-reported status as a dual national—to estimate actual status. Implementation of these alternates produced comparable results to those reported below in multivariate models. In particular, the substantive effects of dual nationality were identical to those reported below, where we use self-reports for the third category of respondents. Unfortunately, we were unable to derive multiple imputation estimates of the effect of dual nationality when dropping all observations where we were unsure about status. We were able to derive these estimates for the original data set, where the only missing values were those recorded by the survey. The robustness of our findings to this approach suggests that the estimates derived via listwise deletion were not biased due to nonrandom patterns of missingness. Additional details regarding our auxiliary instrumental variables efforts are available at the JOP website (<http://www.journalofpolitics.org>).

example above, we would be on firmer ground in deriving a causal inference. In these models, dual status (for the most part) is determined independent of respondents' predispositions and is therefore not merely an alternate indicator of those predispositions. Significant findings would reveal an impact of legal context on individuals' political attitudes and behaviors. Reassuringly, the results below reveal that our model estimates are largely invariant to measurement choice regarding dual status.

Controls

Throughout our analyses, we specify the following demographic control variables: *education*, *income*, *married*, *age*, *female*, and *black*.¹⁶ The education and income variables are 6-point and 3-point ordinal scales, respectively. *Age* is measured in years. *Married*, *female*, and *black* are dichotomous variables. Recognizing the immigrant status of our respondents, we introduce measures of their number of years in the United States (*years in U.S.*) and of their number of years as a U.S. national (*years U.S. national*). Because the influence of number of years on our dependent variables is likely subject to diminishing returns, we take the square root of actual years to create each of these variables. Finally, we also consider the following dichotomous variables to accommodate the possibility of baseline differences in our dependent variables attributable to national origin: *Mexican*, *Cuban*, *Salvadoran*, *Dominican*, *Colombian*, and *other Latino*.^{17,18}

The empirical implications of the traditional and transnational arguments suggest simple statistical tests; however, given the six measures of political connectedness, our two measures of dual nationality status, and our choice to reestimate these models without the Cuban respondents, there are 18 models to estimate. In the interests of space, we will only highlight the results for our dual nationality measures. The full results of the

¹⁶In our models of English speaking proficiency, we specify the variable *age at immigration* rather than *age* (see Table A.2 at the JOP website). The psychological linguistic literature (e.g., Hakuta, Bialystok, and Wiley 2003) indicates that age at the time of immigration rather than age itself is the key to language proficiency, and we find that those who immigrated at a later age are much less likely to be proficient English speakers, controlling for other factors. Our results for the influence of *dual national* are all but identical regardless of which age variable we specify, no doubt in large part because *age* and *age at immigration* are highly correlated ($\rho = .72$).

¹⁷We isolate these five national origin groups because they are the largest ones in our data.

¹⁸Descriptive statistics on our variables are available in the web appendix.

TABLE 2 Summary of Statistical Influence of Dual Nationality Status on Political Connectedness

Pathway to Political Connectedness	Dual Nationality Measure		
	Self-Report	Self-Report (excluding Cubans)	Institutional Recode
Assimilation			
English speaker scale (ordinal)	-.715* (.178)	-.824* (.218)	-.723* (.239)
American self-identification	-.374 (.246)	-.276 (.288)	-.603* (.299)
Consider U.S. as homeland	-.499* (.226)	-.534* (.268)	-.471 (.299)
Psychological Resources			
Civic duty scale (ordinal)	-.528* (.239)	-.860* (.287)	-.685* (.301)
Political Participation			
Voter registration	-.450* (.220)	-.527* (.246)	-.622* (.262)
Electoral turnout	-.534* (.199)	-.685* (.227)	-.825* (.249)

Note: Cells display logit and ordered logit coefficient estimates from the multivariate models in the online appendix for each of our measures of political connectedness and dual nationality; robust standard errors in parentheses below. The two ordinal variables—*English Speaker Scale* and *Civic Duty Scale*—take on values from 0 to 3, indicating increasing fluency and civic duty, respectively. An asterisk (*) indicates statistical significance at $p < .05$ (two-tailed).

multivariate models are available in a web appendix at <http://journalofpolitics.org/articles.html>.

To summarize, then, for each measure of political connectedness, we estimate the following simple model, which specifies a measure of dual nationality and a vector of control variables.¹⁹

$$\text{Political Connectedness} = \beta(\text{Dual Nationality}) + \gamma X + u$$

Since our measures of connectedness are either binary or ordinal, we estimate these models with logit or ordered logit.

Empirical Results

Tables 2 and 3 summarize the empirical results regarding the influence of dual nationality on the various pathways to political connectedness for our first-generation Latinos.²⁰ All 18 of the coefficient estimates in Table 1 are negative in sign, and 15 are statistically

¹⁹In addition to the control variables we indicate here, we estimated a number of additional specifications, the results of which are reviewed in notes 20–26 and in the online appendix.

²⁰When an identical dependent variable was available in both surveys, we pooled together the data from both years. In addition

significant. The summary conclusion is clear: dual nationality attenuates political connectedness, controlling for other factors. Furthermore, Table 3 conveys that the statistically significant coefficients in Table 2 translate into substantively impressive effects.²¹

Assimilation

According to the self-report models and the institutional recode model, dual nationals are much less likely than their sole-U.S. national counterparts to be proficient in English. They are almost 20 percentage points less likely to be located at the high point of the *English speaker scale* (see Table 3). It is worth reiterat-

to the additive models that we present (relying on the pooled data), we also estimated fully interactive multiplicative models in which *1999 dummy* was interacted with the remaining independent variables. Within the context of this study, of particular importance across these models are the interactions between *1999 dummy* and our measures of dual nationality—interactions that assess whether the influence of dual nationality on the dependent variables differs significantly between the samples/years. The only statistically significant interaction (between *1999 dummy* and a measure of dual nationality) is a negative one operating on the interaction between *1999 dummy* and *institutional recode* in a model of registration status. This result indicates that *institutional recode* has a significantly larger negative effect on registration likelihood in the 1999 data (relative to its effect in the 2002 data).

²¹*S-Post* was used to calculate these predicted probabilities (see Long and Freese 2003).

TABLE 3 Summary of Substantive Influence of Dual Nationality Status on Political Connectedness

Pathway to Political-Connectedness/ Dual Nationality Measure	Predicted Probability Dual Nationality Status		Probability Difference [95% confidence interval]
	Single National	Dual National	
Assimilation			
English Speaker Scale ^a			
Self-Report	.64	.46	-.18 [-.26, -.09]
Self-Report (excluding Cubans)	.71	.52	-.19 [-.29, -.10]
Institutional Recode	.62	.44	-.18 [-.29, -.07]
American Self-identification			
Self-Report	(n.s.) ^b	(n.s)	(n.s)
Self-Report (excluding Cubans)	(n.s)	(n.s)	(n.s)
Institutional Recode	.73	.60	-.13 [-.26, -.01]
Consider U.S. as Homeland			
Self-Report	.63	.51	-.12 [-.23, -.02]
Self-Report (excluding Cubans)	.63	.50	-.13 [-.26, -.01]
Institutional Recode	(n.s.)	(n.s.)	(n.s.)
Psychological Resources			
Civic Duty Scale ^c			
Self-Report	.77	.66	-.11 [-.20, -.01]
Self-Report (excluding Cubans)	.79	.62	-.18 [-.28, -.07]
Institutional Recode	.76	.62	-.14 [-.27, -.02]
Political Participation			
Voter Registration			
Self-Report	.88	.82	-.06 [-.11, -.004]
Self-Report (excluding Cubans)	.86	.79	-.08 [-.14, -.01]
Institutional Recode	.88	.80	-.08 [-.15, -.01]
Electoral Turnout			
Self-Report	.84	.76	-.08 [-.14, -.02]
Self-Report (excluding Cubans)	.81	.68	-.13 [-.21, -.05]
Institutional Recode	.86	.73	-.13 [-.21, -.05]

Note: For single and dual nationals, predicted probability of high English language proficiency, American self-identification, considering the United States as homeland, high civic duty, voter registration, and turnout (other independent variables set at their means). The last column displays the difference in the predicted probability of interest (dual national - single national) associated with a discrete change in the dual nationality measure, followed by the 95% confidence interval for that difference in brackets.

^aPredicted probability is for the highest category of *English Speaker Scale*.

^bN.s. indicates that underlying coefficient or probability difference is not significant statistically ($p < .05$).

^cPredicted probability is for the highest category of *Civic Duty Scale*.

ing that these are *ceteris paribus* results—controlling for such factors as education, income, and age at immigration, dual nationals are markedly less likely to have the personal capacity to follow the political discussion and debate taking place in the dominant language of politics (at least as it is conducted on most stages across the United States). Furthermore, it follows that they are less able, on average, to make claims on the political system in English.

Dual nationals are also less likely to identify with the United States. Although attaining statistical significance only in the institutional recode model, dual nationality appears to be associated with a negative influence on American self-identification; that is, dual

nationals are less likely to describe themselves as “American,” controlling for other factors. Similarly, dual nationals are less likely to consider the United States to be their homeland. On average, dual nationality attenuates the likelihood of this psychological attachment by approximately 12 percentage points—a consequential effect.²²

²²Especially in regard to our self-report measure of dual nationality, the possibility of simultaneous relationships with the measures of psychological attachment rears itself. Revisiting the model of *consider U.S. as homeland* that specifies the self-report measure of dual nationality as an independent variable, we implemented a bivariate probit model approach suggested by Greene (1998; 2003,

On balance, dual nationals are less assimilated than sole-U.S. nationals into the American political system. With a language barrier and weaker psychological connection to the United States hampering their civic skills, many would appear to be on the outside looking in when it comes to conventional politics. That is, when it comes to the capacity (and perhaps desire) both to make demands on and to provide support for the political system, an "assimilation deficit" hinders dual nationals.

Psychological Resources

The national identification measures available in the 2002 survey have enabled us to gain some initial insight into the political psychological profile of first-generation Latinos. Containing a measure of civic duty, the 1999 survey data provide us with an opportunity to build on this discussion. The multivariate results reveal that dual nationals are markedly *less* likely to disagree strongly with the statement that "voting is a waste of time." In other words, across the dual nationality measures, dual nationals are significantly less likely than their sole-U.S. national counterparts to be located at the high end of the *civic duty scale*. Table 2 indicates a double-digit attenuation effect on the probability of being located at the highest point of the scale. The only other factor that demonstrates a noteworthy effect on civic duty is education, with highly educated immigrants revealing a stronger commitment to voting.

Political Participation

Moving from the realm of psychological connections and resources to that of actual political behavior, we again find that dual nationality attenuates political connectedness.²³ Controlling for other demographic

715–19) as an appropriate way to estimate a simultaneous equations model involving two binary choice variables. The results of this exercise indicate that *dual national* indeed demonstrates a significant, negative influence on *consider U.S. as homeland*, but that *consider U.S. as homeland* also demonstrates a significant, negative influence on *dual national*. In the context of the models that we present, the relationships between our self-report measure of dual nationality and the measures of psychological attachment are more safely interpreted in a correlative than a causal sense. However, a cautious interpretation does not eliminate the capacity of our results to arbitrate between the traditional and transnational views on immigration and assimilation.

²³We also considered dichotomous U.S. state variables in the registration and turnout models. These variables accommodate the possibility of baseline differences in registration and turnout likelihood from state to state, controlling for other factors. These differences could be a product of such things as state-to-state

factors, dual nationals are significantly less likely to be registered and to turn out to vote—the impact of this status on registration likelihood is 6–8 percentage points and almost twice that on turnout likelihood. Furthermore, the substantive influence of dual nationality on registration rivals that of age—the other major explanatory factor in the registration models. Similarly, its effect rivals, or even overshadows, that of other prominent independent variables, including education, age, length of residency in the United States, and number of years an American national, in the models of electoral participation.^{24,25}

Summary of Results

Our empirical results lend strong support to the argument that dual nationals are less connected to the American polity than their sole-U.S. national counterparts—and thus to the traditional view.²⁶ In terms of participating in elections, dual nationals are less likely to have a strong sense of civic duty, to be registered, and to have voted in a U.S. election. Furthermore, they

variability in registration closing date, the level of mobilizing stimuli from electoral contests, and even state political culture. However, none of the state dummy variables approached statistical significance; furthermore, their introduction has basically no effect on the coefficients operating on the other independent variables.

²⁴We also considered the quadratic terms *age*² and *education*² in our models of registration and turnout to accommodate the possibility of curvilinear relationships, but neither provided statistically significant leverage.

²⁵We also considered models of registration and turnout that specified our measure of civic duty as an independent variable. Surprisingly, controlling for other factors, it does not demonstrate a significant influence on either registration or turnout likelihood in our multivariate models.

²⁶Our final empirical tests involved estimating a series of multiplicative interaction models, in which we evaluated whether *years in U.S.* or *years U.S. national* attenuates the differences between dual and single nationals. These models' specifications were identical to those in the appendix, except that we introduced interactions between the relevant dual nationality measure and both *years in U.S.* and *years U.S. national*. We found no support for a conditional effect of time in any of the models of assimilation and civic duty. We found two results of note. *Years in U.S.* appears to attenuate the negative effect of dual nationality in the voter registration model when using the *self-report* measure. The effect of dual nationality is negative and significant up to around 16 years in the United States (just below the mean level), yet beyond 16 years, the effect is indistinguishable from zero. Unfortunately, this conditional result was not robust to the institutional recode measure of dual nationality. We also found that *years in U.S.* attenuates the negative effect of dual nationality in the vote model using the *self-report* measure. As above, the effect of dual nationality is negative and significant up to roughly 16 years living in the United States, and indistinguishable from zero for all values above 16. Again, we found no support for this result when using the *institutional recode* measure.

appear to be less connected psychologically to the United States. Not only are dual nationals associated with a lower level of civic duty, they are less likely to think of themselves as "American" and to consider the United States to be their homeland. Also, dual nationals lag in their English speaking ability, which likely impairs their ability to follow and take part in the ongoing American political dialogue.

For five of the six dependent variables, the substantive effect of dual nationality is at least as large in the institutional recode model as in the self-report model (full sample). This suggests that dual status *as determined by legal context* matters for an individual's political attitudes and behaviors. Were results significant only for the self-report models, we might conclude, perhaps almost tautologically, that dual status as a state of mind is at odds with political connectedness in the United States. However, the strong results for the institutional recode models reveal that the power of dual status to shape attitudes and behaviors is exogenous to the individual: context matters.

We should reiterate some basic points about the nature of our sample and the implications for what this study does (and does not do). We are examining first-generation Latino nationals only. Thus, we are comparing first-generation dual national Latinos to first-generation sole-U.S. national Latinos. We are not advancing (and cannot advance) any claims about these Latino immigrants relative to Anglo nationals or to immigrants from other parts of the world. On the one hand, our sample limits the study, but it also puts in place rigorous controls that enable us to isolate and focus on the influence of dual nationality in a meaningful manner. Furthermore, we should acknowledge that our sample does not enable us to complete the story of Latino immigration and its implications for the connectedness of the citizenry to the American polity. Thus, we cannot speak to the possibility that subsequent generations of Latino nationals may assimilate more fully into the American political system, diminishing, and possibly eliminating, the negative influence of dual status on political connectedness. With the aforementioned caveats in mind, our results consistently support the traditional view on immigration and, conversely, provide no support for the transnational perspective.

Conclusions

Our analyses represent an effort to bring data to bear on the contemporary debate regarding dual nationality and its implications for the American polity. Hun-

tington's provocative treatment and the vitriolic responses of his numerous critics have moved this debate under a hot spotlight. Notably missing has been the jury of empirical evidence. Whereas Huntington and other traditionalists are pessimistic about the implications of the institution, those who adhere to a transnational perspective are much more optimistic. Our findings regarding political connectedness support the traditional view. Present results reveal dual nationals to be less connected to the American polity—they are less assimilated, not as attached in terms of attitudinal identification, and less likely to fulfill the basic civic obligation of voting.

In building on the finding that dual status limits political connectedness among first-generation Latino immigrants, three questions are of particular importance. First, does the negative influence of dual nationality extend beyond the first generation? The first-generation effects we observe may have minimal implications for the subsequent integration (or the lack thereof) of the second generation and, even more so, of the third and fourth generations into the American polity. Conversely, dual status at the time of immigration may solidify a weakening of political attachments that endures for multiple generations. Second, do these same effects of dual status emerge for non-Latino immigrants? If dual nationality is an impediment to political connectedness, we perhaps should expect it to operate as such regardless of the immigrant's nation of origin, but this question cannot be answered absent empirical scrutiny. Third, *why* does dual nationality impede political connectedness? For instance, is there something about dual status that inherently and unflinchingly limits attachments to the immigrant's new nation, or are there viable policy options to combat these effects?

In detailing these questions, we seek to suggest some of the routes by which future empirical research on the consequences of dual nationality can be illuminating. As we have noted, much of the discussion to date has been more noteworthy for the power of its verbiage than the strength of its empirical evidence. The present study highlights the utility of putting competing claims about dual nationality to the empirical test and the vital need for multifaceted research efforts that can assess the full implications of dual nationality.

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