

To Be an American: Immigration, Hyphenation, and Incorporation



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Central to many immigration debates in the United States, past and present, are questions about what it means to be an American. In this article, I address three forms of this question: (a) What is an immigrant? (b) What is an American? and (c) What is a hyphenated American. Answers to these questions can vary, depending upon whether one is taking the perspective of the observer/host or of the immigrant himself or herself. Data suggest that neither unidimensionality nor simple dichotomy are appropriate frames for analyzing national identity.

As I look back at my career in social psychology, I can see that I have always been interested in social categories—as they are used by others to locate us on the social map and as we use them ourselves to relate to the collective groupings that constitute a society or a nation or a species. For many years, beginning in the early 1970s, gender was the focus of my interest. After I moved to New York City in 1987, other categories moved to the foreground for me—in particular, ethnicity, as it is expressed by the many immigrant groups who populate the city

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and who demonstrate in their daily lives the fluctuations, dynamics, and challenges of ethnic and national categories.

I introduced some of these issues in my presidential address to SPSSI (Deaux, 2006a). Here I continue that story, focusing particularly on questions of what it means to be an American and how immigrants are part of that larger discussion. As I noted in my 2006 paper, this is a topic in which Lewin himself was deeply interested, specifically with reference to immigration to Israel, both as a general phenomenon and as a personal possibility (Bargal, 1998). Had Lewin lived longer, I suspect that the psychological analysis of immigration would be much more developed than it now is.

The Immigration Debate: A Contemporary Version

In the United States today, it is virtually impossible to pick up a newspaper, turn on the radio or television news or talk show, or eavesdrop on conversations at local diners and coffee houses without encountering talk about immigration. During the 2007 legislative session of the U.S. Congress, an immigration bill was debated, defeated, reintroduced, and defeated again as the Senate and House of Representatives struggled to find some common ground in addressing the quagmire that U.S. immigration policy has become. The 2008 presidential campaigns have also struggled with the topic, often avoiding discussion because of the conflicting and frequently impassioned views that exist within as well as between the two major parties.

The voices of opposition and fear of immigration as a threat to the well-being of the United States appear to have gained the larger megaphone in current debates. The historian Samuel Huntington (2004) epitomized these voices of despair and his position is clearly marked in the title of his book: *Who are we? The challenges to America's national identity*. Within the covers of this book, fears of Latino immigration are particularly strong, as Huntington talks of a “demographic *reconquista*” of parts of the United States (2004, p. 221), “the possibility of a defacto split between a predominantly Spanish-speaking American and English-speaking America” (p. 243), and major threats to “the cultural and . . . political integrity of the United States” (p. 243). Scary thoughts!

Stanley Renshon (2005) developed a similar theme in deploring what he termed *The 50% American*—and adding as a politically charged subtitle, *Immigration and national identity in an age of terror*. Renshon’s focus is on issues related to dual citizenship, as it exists not only in legal status but in psychological realities; his central claim is that multiple national attachments are seriously problematic, compromising a person’s loyalty and commitment and sense of patriotism to, in this case, the United States.

The immigration debates bring out a variety of concerns, both explicit and implicit, that reflect conflicting values and assumptions about concepts such as multiculturalism and diversity, nationalism and patriotism, identity and racism

(Deaux, 2006b). Here I want to address some of the key issues that arise in this area—questions concerning what it means to be an immigrant, what it means to be an American, and whether it is possible to have loyalty to more than one culture. These are questions that require us to consider both the perspective of the immigrant and the perspective of the host, positions that are not always in synchrony with one another, as my analysis will show.

In discussing these issues, I focus primarily, but not exclusively, on the United States situation. This in no way is meant to suggest that immigration is primarily a U.S. issue. Throughout the world, the movement of people from one country or continent to another is a major phenomenon of the 21st century and issues of ethnic and national identity, as well as loyalty and patriotism, are ubiquitous. Thus one could just as easily ask what it means to be a German, a citizen of France, or a Chilean. Specific historical and political events and contexts will necessarily influence the formulation of answers to these alternative questions. Yet I would argue that the general processes that I consider here have considerable relevance to other countries as well.

Immigration Debates of History

In contemporary immigration debates, we can hear a replay of many early 20th century themes. Renshon harks back to the Civil War for a parallel to what he perceives as a conflict between basic values, as he sees American culture being bombarded by the spectre of those who would recognize diversity rather than endorse “*E Pluribus Unum*.” And indeed, during that era, concerns about the ethnic composition of American society were often contested. These challenges more often took place at local and state levels than at the federal level, as Zolberg (2006) observed, because federal power was more constrained under the states-right norms that were part of the slavery compromises. That well-recognized chronicler of U.S. society, Alexis de Toqueville, who had originally seen the United States as a unified Anglo American people, worried later in his life about the consequences of incorporating both free Blacks and Europeans, the latter driven to the United States by “misfortune and misconduct” (quoted in Zolberg, 2006, p. 126). De Toqueville predicted that the increasing presence of these minority groups in the large cities of America (pointing primarily to New York and Philadelphia at that time) would cause the demise of the cities unless federal armed forces took control. Though violence and police intervention are surely part of the city history (though not necessarily related to immigration), by and large this De Toquevillian prediction seems to have rather badly missed its mark.

Debates about who should be allowed in this country and what laws should be formulated gained national momentum in the early decades of the 20th century. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, some restrictions were placed on the immigrant pool, for example, the adoption of a literacy requirement and the exclusion of certain categories of would-be immigrants, such as Asians and people with some

forms of mental or physical disability (Zolberg, 2006). With the immigration bills of 1924 and 1927, however, overall quotas were imposed that sharply limited accessibility across the board.

Then as now, questions as to whether immigrants should maintain distinctive cultural patterns or whether they should melt into a single American prototype were central to the debate. And then as now, underlying and precipitating many of these debates about blending were the demographic shifts in *who* was coming to the United States. Thus the study of immigration offers material for a century-long time-series analysis. Data from the earlier periods are largely archival and anecdotal, but nonetheless informative. In current times, with a highly sophisticated repertoire of theories and methods at our disposal, we are poised as a field to make major contributions to scientific understanding and policy formulation in this critically important time in history.

Basic Psychological Questions: Conceptions, Misconceptions, and Data

This discussion is framed in terms of three basic questions—questions about social categories that are fundamental to the immigration debate. These three categorically focused questions are:

- What is an immigrant?
- What is an American?
- What is a hyphenated American?

Each of these questions is central to the contemporary rhetoric of immigration. Yet like most social categories, terms such as *immigrant* or *American* are fuzzy sets with indefinite boundaries, and their definitions can fluctuate with the position of the speaker (Deaux & Philogène, 2001). In the case of immigration, the opinions of those who are themselves members of the category of immigrant, for example, can differ sharply from the views of those who were born in the country and look on from the outside (although they too may be influenced by family histories of immigration). Further, for psychologists these questions are not resolved by simple demographic facts. Often the answers lurk below the surface in a web of unstated values and unexamined prejudices that must be explored and interpreted if we are to contribute to the policy debates. In this analysis I will at various points consider the perspectives of both immigrants and native-born residents, looking at points of convergence and discrepancy as well as variability in the meanings given to these pivotal categories.

These three questions, in turn, lay the groundwork for a further discussion, one that looks beyond the categories to outcomes, to process, and to future possibilities. One way to characterize this discussion is with another deceptively simple question: Who is a good citizen? More broadly, I want to think about how we define citizenship in a globally interdependent and mobile world; how loyalties

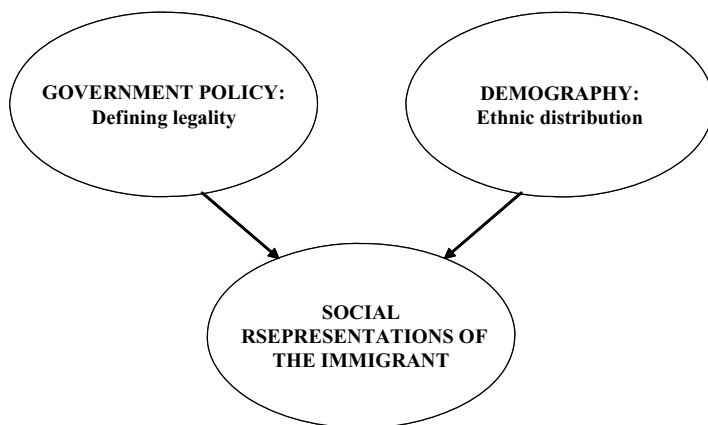


Fig. 1. Constructing the representation of immigrants.

and ties to family, culture, and country can co-exist; and what the implications of these questions are for the future—both for our societies and for the ways in which we as social scientists can contribute to the policies that define those societies.

What Is an Immigrant?

In its most basic, denotative sense, the term *immigrant* refers to someone who is born in a country other than the one in which she or he is now residing. Yet like all of the other terms that make me lose sleep some nights, when used in common discourse *immigrant* takes on a varied set of meanings and values. Such is the nature of social representations, of which immigrant and immigration surely qualify in our contemporary world.

Two of the major aspects at work in the socially constructed concept of immigrant are (a) issues of legal status and government policies that affect category definition, and (b) characteristics of immigrant groups that shape the social representation of the category. Figure 1 is similar to one that I have used previously (Deaux, 2006a, 2006b), depicting the interrelationship between policy, demography, and social representations of immigration. In using this image now, I focus first on legal status as a factor that links policy to social representations, setting parameters for whom the society considers to be a member of the category. Secondly, characteristics of immigrant groups themselves—both real and perceived—are an issue in analyzing the link between demographics and representations. Let me begin with the issue of legal status.¹

¹Local context is critically important in analyzing the influence of legal status, as each country has its unique history and policies regarding immigration. This discussion centers on the United States, although with occasional examples in other national contexts.

In the United States, the concept of illegal immigration can be traced back to the mid 1920s, when the first broad-reaching restrictions on immigration were put into place. Thus immigrants arriving before the 1920s (those ancestors often held up as the “good immigrants” in contemporary debate) were in a sense neither legal nor illegal, in terms of official laws and policy, because the category itself was not particularly salient. The country was founded on the arrival of immigrants and their right to be here was not seriously questioned. After the legislation of the mid 1920s, a concern with legal status and the exercise of deportation practices became more common (Massey, Durand, & Malone, 2002) and now, at the beginning of the 21st century, the concept is central to the political debate. Although actual numbers are difficult to verify, a reasonable estimate is that 11–12 million immigrants are currently living in the United States without appropriate legal status. This represents approximately 30% of first-generation immigrants (Passel, 2005). In contrast, survey data show that Americans generally believe that a majority of immigrants have entered the country illegally. In a 1993 survey, for example, 68% of those questioned believed that a majority of immigrants in the United States were illegal (Lapinski, Peltola, Shaw, & Yang, 1997), and I suspect that number would be higher today.

This parsing of the concept of immigrant has some interesting implications. Many people who speak out strongly against illegal immigration will at the same time claim to be highly supportive of the “legal” immigrant, often pointing to ancestors who came before immigration policy had established the clear categories.² In this partitioning we can see something akin to symbolic racism, in which blatant negative evaluations are disclaimed while policies that are seen as favoring the targeted group are rejected for presumably legitimate reasons.

Another facet of the representation of immigrant concerns the different meanings attached to the terms *undocumented* and *illegal*, as they are used in the United States (Deaux & Wiley, 2007). Demographically, both refer to people who have entered the country without going through official procedures—either because they entered legally on a visa but then remained in the country after the visa had expired, or because they initially circumvented the legal entry points. The two terms have quite different connotations, however, and are used by different segments of the population to convey different political sentiments. *Illegal* suggests moral censure and invokes accusations of criminality on the part of the immigrant. *Undocumented*, a term more often used by immigrant rights groups and immigrants themselves, constrains the meaning to bureaucratic procedures, making the attribution more situational than dispositional.³ Although I have not done a content analysis, my impression is that *illegal* is the term used more often in current legislative debates, with the expected attributional connotations that we could predict.

²I thank Nida Bikmen for this observation.

³In France, there is a similar term, *les sans-papiers*.

A related example of how language can influence perceptions of immigrants comes from recent work by Victoria Esses and her colleagues, this in the Canadian context (Esses, Veenvliet, Hodson, & Mihic, 2008). Using material taken verbatim from an editorial in a Canadian newspaper, Esses et al. showed how the use of derogatory language (e.g., describing political refugees as queue jumpers, liars, and cheaters) stimulates emotional reactions such as lack of admiration and contempt, leading to a dehumanization of the refugee and less favorable attitudes toward the country's refugee policy. In contrast, an editorial constructed by the experimenters that omitted the derogatory terms and used more neutral situation-based descriptions of refugee status yielded significantly more favorable views of both immigrants and government policy. Language matters!

As the right side of Figure 1 suggests, demographic factors also shape the social representations that emerge in a society, particularly as those images are held by the resident population. In the case of immigration, a major factor is the ethnic distribution of the immigrant groups. In the early 20th century, it was the shift from a primarily English-speaking immigrant population to a southern and Eastern European base that flamed the immigration debates, eventually resulting in the restrictive policies of the 1920s. Similarly, much of the current debate can be seen as stemming from the dramatic geographical shift of sending countries. Immigrants from the developing countries of the world (defined as Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia, and Africa) have increased from approximately 43% when the 1965 immigration reform bill was passed to 75% now (Zolberg, 2006). It is Asians and Latin Americans who are the face of the new immigration, and for many native-born residents, this is a very different face from theirs or their ancestors. Not surprisingly, surveys and questionnaires repeatedly show differences in how different immigrant groups are evaluated, typically finding that white groups are evaluated more favorably and groups of color evaluated less favorably, though the strength of these differences and in some cases the patterns depend upon the ethnicity of the respondent (Deaux, 2006; Mizrahi, 2005). I will return to this point later.

What Is an American?

The second question addresses national identity: What does it mean to be an American (or any other nationality) and how are geographical definitions translated into psychological terms? As Reicher and Hopkins have observed, it is a "myth that there is always a single valid definition for any given identity" (2001, p. ix). Moreover, as Reicher and Hopkins argue persuasively in their account of self and nation, national identity is a dynamic project both by those who claim the identity and by those who observe the claims of others, and clear agenda are at work in both cases.

These competing claims and multiple definitions assume high profile in discussions of immigration. Both for those born in the country and for those who

Table 1. Characteristics of a “True American”

Item	Mean rating
Vote in elections	5.61
Respect America’s political institutions and laws	5.29
Treat people of all races and backgrounds equally	5.28
Try to get ahead on your own effort	5.06
Feel American	4.96
Be able to speak English	4.69
Have American citizenship	4.58
Be patriotic	3.85
Defend America when it is criticized	3.71
Have lived in America most of one’s life	3.37
Have been born in America	2.54
Believe in God	1.89
Be a Christian	1.56

Note. Ratings were made on a 7-point scale.
Adapted from Devos and Banaji (2005).

have made the typically arduous journey to come to the United States, potentially to take on American citizenship, being an American is imbued with meaning, with affect, and with behavioral implications.

Can we begin to explicate what those meanings and implications are? Devos and Banaji (2005) provided one starting point, from the perspective of a select group of American citizens. They offered students at Yale University a list of criteria and asked the students to rate the importance of each for being a “true American.” As shown on Table 1, the most highly endorsed item was voting behavior, followed by respect for the country’s political institutions/laws and equal treatment of people from all backgrounds and races. Having been born in America was rated relatively low.

These ratings represent the views of only one segment of the society—in this case, a relatively privileged, perhaps relatively liberal set of young people. Other segments of society might well show different priorities. In the Devos and Banaji data, for example, language usage—specifically, speaking English—was rated only moderately important (4.7 on a 7-point scale). Yet in the current political discourse, this attribute seems to carry much heavier weight. As a retired Navy man in Colorado told a *NYTimes* reporter:

“Portugal is Portugal because of the Portuguese language; Spain is Spanish; France is—God knows—France is French; Germany is Germany, all because of language.” (Johnson, 2007)

Holding in abeyance the fact that the United States was a country of immigrants from its inception, in contrast to the more homogeneous histories of Portugal,

Spain, Germany, and France, this line of argument suggests that not only do immigrants to the United States not speak English when they arrive in the country—an issue highlighted by Huntington (2004) in his analysis of threats to national identity—but that they are averse to learning the language and that over time, nothing changes.

Two comments are in order here, one anecdotal and the other based on more extensive empirical data. Contemporary pundits often contend that what they see as the bad traits of immigrants now are in sharp contrast to an idealized portrait of immigrants from generations back (often with reference to a hardier, more responsible immigrant stock from which they themselves are descended). Yet as Foner (2000, 2005) has so convincingly argued, then and now are often not so very different. As the anecdotal support of this argument where language is concerned, I need only to turn to memories of my own Finnish grandmother. She came to the United States at the beginning of the 20th century speaking no English, and she died in the United States 50 years later knowing very little more; her life was spent in Finnish enclaves of church and friends, resisting all initiatives to become an English-speaking American. Were the Finns of the early 1900s the Chinese and Mexicans of today?

Yet perhaps this single case is no more representative of its time than of our current times. Virtually all recent studies of immigrant language usage report a steady increase in the acquisition and practice of English over generations. Portes and Rumbaut (2001) observed that knowledge of English was nearly universal in a second-generation sample of high school students from Miami/Ft. Lauderdale and San Diego, and that preference for speaking English was extremely high as well. Similarly, López (1999) reported data from Los Angeles showing that over 90% of third-generation immigrants (both Mexican and Asian) speak English very well or speak only English. Thus, although it is certainly true that many immigrants arrive in the United States not knowing English, it is definitely not true that the majority does not want and does not learn English over time. (In our global economy, one might also want to compare these statistics to an account of how many Americans are capable of speaking a language other than English!)⁴

Less often explicit in discussions of what it means to be American, but no less relevant, I would argue, are issues of color. Like obscenity, people claim to know an American when they see one—and what they see is often color-coded. Referring again to the Devos and Banaji (2005) work, students in their study explicitly expressed beliefs that all groups of Americans are equal. At the same time, however, they showed evidence of variable standards for inclusion. Asian Americans and African Americans, although described as being born in the United States, living in the United States, and having U.S. citizenship, were judged on

⁴As Zolberg (2006) notes, the concerns about Mexicans on the basis of language differences echo some of the religious-based fears expressed about Irish immigration 150 years ago.

both explicit and implicit measures (but more strongly on the latter) to be less American than were whites. The strong conclusion that the authors draw from their work is that “To be American is to be White” (2005, p. 463).

Yet the Devos and Banaji (2005) data also show that perspective is important when one attempts to define the prototypical American. For White Americans, the criterion seems most clear and reflects hegemonic values, whereby to be American is to be White. The Asian Americans that Devos and Banaji included in one study appeared to adopt a similar criterion. In contrast, African American students were not willing to use color as the basis of inclusion and associated American with Black and White equally. The Devos and Banaji study did not deal specifically with impressions of immigrants, although a substantial proportion of their Asian American and a few of their African American participants were first-generation immigrants. Their results might suggest, however, that some immigrants would also use different criteria for defining who is most American. Reaffirming the words of Reicher and Hopkins (2001), there is surely not a single valid definition for national identity.

What Is a Hyphenated American?

Thus far, my argument may suggest that I am pitting two categories against each other—American versus immigrant. Such a dichotomy echoes much of the current debate, not only in the United States but in many countries of the world as well. Often in Europe, for example, the dichotomy is framed in terms of a national identity versus a Muslim identity, again with the implication that it is difficult if not impossible to have allegiance to both (Verkuyten & Yildiz, 2007). Yet while I believe that such zero-sum thinking does not accurately characterize the internal state of the immigrant, it is often characteristic of the views from outside.

Often an apparent need for simplicity drives people to demand one category or another in their attempt to position others. Multiplicity between different types of categories—for example, seeing another person as both a man and a Republican, or as an accountant and a Catholic—is somewhat easier for observers to envision than is multiplicity within a single category. Yet even in the former case, stereotypical beliefs about the required attributes of a particular category can cause discordance in the observer, as in the perceived conflicts between work and family, particularly for mothers (Biernat, Crosby, & Williams, 2004), or doubts as to whether members of certain religious groups are able to be president of the United States, raised by John F. Kennedy’s candidacy 50 years ago and Mitt Romney’s presidential aspirations in 2008.

The outsider’s acceptance of multiple identities when two are in the same or closely related categories, as is raised in the case of ethnicity, nationality, and immigration, is more contentious. Here many take the position that an either-or decision is the only acceptable resolution. For Stanley Renshon, as a contemporary example, the “50% American” is oxymoronic and dangerous, just as it was for

Theodore Roosevelt some 100 years ago when he said, “There is no room in this country for hyphenated Americanism. . . . There is no such thing as a hyphenated American who is a good American. The only man who is a good American is the man who is an American and nothing else” (Roosevelt, October 12, 1915). Or consider the words of another U.S. president, Woodrow Wilson (as quoted by Sanchez, 2005): “Any man who carries a hyphen about with him carries a dagger that he is ready to plunge into the vitals of this Republic.” These beliefs in intractable dichotomies have a long history, suggesting a pervasive aspect of human thought.

Biracial or multiple identity is not just an issue of immigration: intermarriage between native Americans and early white settlers, for example, set the stage for this issue in the United States, and the sociological interest in intermarriage across the Black–White divide, as well as among other ethnic groups, have kept the issue salient over generations. And indeed, the sociological realities of multiple lineages led the U.S. Census bureau to allow people to check multiple ethnic categories in the 2000 Census. Thus, there is some inconsistency in the discourse, between those who would require unidimensionality and those who acknowledge more fluidity.

Combinations of two ethnic strains, while troublesome to some, are not the major source of volatility and contention where immigration is concerned, although immigration is a source of mixed ethnicity in the society. Rather the concern relates to beliefs about *national* identity: what does it mean to be an American and what is expected of those who are, or who wish to be, citizens of the country? Here is where issues of patriotism and nationalism come to the fore, as flags are waved and flag pins are displayed. One cannot be loyal to two masters, it is argued by some, and any evidence of adherence to a culture of origin is assumed to mean disloyalty to the country of residence.⁵

The argument goes deeper than just the relative importance of two identity categories, however. Beyond the belief that greater importance of one means lesser importance of another lies a meaning system that often defines the two identities as incompatible. That is, from the observer’s perspective what it means to be Chinese or Mexican or Dominican is sometimes seen as qualitatively different and perhaps incompatible with what it means to be American. Thus a person’s allegiance to the country of origin is threatening not just because one is more important than the other, but also because one is thought to hold values that are incompatible with American standards.

Against this backdrop of assumed dichotomies and unidimensionality, we need to look very carefully at the view from inside. Particularly for those of us

⁵It is interesting to compare the United States to Western Europe in this regard. As Foner and Alba (2008) have cogently discussed, the key question for most Western Europeans is the perceived incompatibility between religion, and in particular Islam, and national identification. In the United States, in contrast, religious commitments and differences are more readily tolerated and not considered inconsistent with national identification.

who are interested in identity as it is subjectively experienced, it is clear that a great many people in this country embrace two or more identity categories, combining them in some form in the same living body. What is the experience of biculturalism? Do people move back and forth between sides of the hyphen, enacting a human form of teeter totter as they respond to different identity domains and influences? Or is there a more complicated pattern at work, both structurally and dynamically, for people who have the capacity to draw from more than one identity field?

A mounting body of work from a number of investigators suggests that people are creating new forms of identity that are internally complex but still coherent, and that are at the same time highly tuned to situational demands and opportunities (Wiley & Deaux, 2008). Phinney and Devich-Navarro (1997) offered an early version of this view with their discussion of two forms of integrated identities (building on Berry's earlier framework), namely blending and alternating. A classic statement of blending can be seen in this interview conducted by Wiley (2005) with a second-generation immigrant whose father is Mexican and mother is American. "For me, it's kind of like a blending. . . Cause I am mixed, I feel like I am half and half, like I have this part of me that is very Americanized and I have another part of me that is actually seeking the Mexican." Yet as Wiley (2005) and an increasing number of other investigators have shown (e.g., Itzigsohn, *in press*; Itzigsohn, Giorguli, & Vasquez, 2005; Verkuyten & DeWolf, 2002), this static choice does not really capture the dynamic nature of bicultural identities. A more accurate depiction is one that allows for the person to draw upon available resources as the situation demands or allows. By this view, identities are, as Verkuyten and DeWolf (2002) described, "interactional accomplishments that are sensitive to potential criticisms and justifications."

A statement from a second-generation Dominican immigrant interviewed by Jose Itzigsohn (*in press*) is illustrative: "Depends on who I am talking to, who the audience is. If my audience are Government officials, I am Latino. If I am talking to a friend, I am Dominican. If I am talking to my neighbor who happens to be Caucasian, I tell him I was born in New York City and that I am also a citizen. So it depends on who I am relating to."

A solid body of research on bicultural identity has developed in recent years, showing both the ways in which two identities may be combined (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005) and the ways in which specific situations can activate one or another identity, often termed frame switching (Hong, Morris, Chiu, & Benet-Martínez, 2000). Westernized Chinese students in Hong Kong, for example, make more situational attributions when Chinese culture is primed than when American culture is primed (Hong et al., 2000). Bicultural people of Greek descent living in the Netherlands were less positive about personal traits and more positive about family integrity and friendship when Greek, in contrast to Dutch, culture was made salient (Verkuyten & Pouliasi, 2006).

These alterations in perspective are not totally dependent on circumstances, however. Rather, as Verkuyten and Pouliasi (2006) have shown, strength of ethnic identification is a partial mediator of the relationship between cultural frame and attitudes, a finding that alerts us to the important variations among bicultural people in their ways of dealing with multiplicity. Further complexity can be anticipated if we deconstruct the concept of identification, recognizing the multiple aspects that may not always covary (Ashmore, Deaux, & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004; Wiley & Deaux, 2008). Thus, a simple measure of strength of identification with one or another ethnic group may not be fully informative of the degree to which social networks are distinct or integrated, or the degree to which the person engages in behaviors typically associated with one group or the other. Clearly, the zone of the hyphen for the hyphenated American is a territory rich in meaning and dynamic in process, belying efforts to impose simple categorical systems.

Cultural Combinations and National Loyalties

It appears that immigrants are able to deal, either simultaneously or sequentially, with more than one category of membership. The question thus shifts from one of whether to one of how—how can multiple identities be managed? Further, taking into account the outside as well as the inside view, how can the immigrant identity be managed in such a way that it is accepted by those in the host country whose categorical perspective is less flexible? Although no single formula can be applied to the immigrant experience, two general conditions can be said to shape the experience and the resolution of multiple loyalties. One is the broad context in which the immigrant lives; the second is the specific characteristics of the group itself, vis-a-vis the dominant group.

Adopting an international perspective on context, we know that countries differ in their histories and policies with regard to immigration. Some countries, such as the United States and Canada, have their foundations in immigrant movement; for others, as is the case in many European countries, immigration is a more recent phenomenon. Research by Berry, Phinney, Sam, and Vedder (2006) found that the correlations between self-reported ethnic identity and national identity differ in these two contexts. In societies that have traditionally been a site for large-scale immigration, the association between ethnic and national identity tends to be positive or to approach zero; in contrast, the relationship is largely negative and seemingly incompatible in countries in which immigration has fewer historical roots.

Even within a single country, the conditions for combination can vary substantially. In some cities in the United States, New York City being one, the term “majority minority” is being used to describe the demography of a place in which nonwhite groups outnumber the traditional white population (Kasinitz, Mollenkopf, & Waters, 2002), a condition that now characterizes almost one third

of the most populous counties in the United States and nearly one in 10 of all counties (Roberts, 2007). Accordingly, the normative position in these cities may be to consider a combination of ethnicity and Americanism as standard operating practice, consistent with the variability expressed by the Dominican immigrant quoted earlier.

A second important factor is group specific and concerns the degree to which members of a particular group are more or less accepted by the receiving society. Here experiences of discrimination and the insidious color line are key elements. I again refer to the work of Jose Itzigsohn. In his work with Dominican immigrants, Itzigsohn finds that "being American is consistently associated with the themes of rights, freedom, and opportunity." (Itzigsohn, in press). As elaborated by one of his respondents, a man who served in the U.S. army: "Being American is being proud of the freedom we have. . .It's just being able to do things that a lot of people can't. . .Here, everybody complains, but we have it so easy compared to other countries so I'm glad we have it that way, and I'm proud of that." At the same time, while expressing these patriotic views of the country in which he was born and in whose army he served, this same man identifies himself primarily as Dominican. At issue here, as it is for many immigrants from the Caribbean, Africa, and parts of Latin American, is color. Many Dominican immigrants, as a case in point, believe that most Americans see them first as black, and as a result they feel that they "can't claim Americanness because they are not white." (Itzigsohn, in press, p. 24 of chapter "Identity and Incorporation").

Portes and Rumbaut (2001) found that experiences with discrimination can strengthen an immigrant's ethnic identification. In a study of second-generation teenagers, these authors pointed to a phenomenon that they call *reactive identification*, wherein the teenagers became *more* strongly identified with the ethnic or national origin of their parents. It is notable that this shift occurs in spite of the increased facility with and use of English. Whereas language may be functionally useful, it is experiences with discrimination, the authors posit, that intensify the identification with ethnic origin.

As the Portes and Rumbaut (2001) data suggested, generation is an important part of the immigrant story, and a factor that operates in more complex ways than earlier straight-line assimilation models predicted. Here is a place where psychology has much to contribute in terms of elucidating the processes and mechanisms that underlie these more complex pathways. Generation, in this case, should not be considered only in developmental terms that might compare children to their parents or grandparents. In our own work, we are finding significant differences between groups who are equivalent in age but who differ in their immigration history, either being born in the United States to immigrant parents (second generation) or being immigrants themselves (first generation). We have observed differences in performance on academic tests in stereotype threat conditions (Deaux et al., 2007), in patterns of self-esteem (Wiley, Perkins, & Deaux, 2008), and in the endorsement

of political ideology and orientations to collective action (Deaux, Reid, Martin, & Bikman, 2006). In each case, we see evidence that second-generation immigrants are responding to the context in which they live with a different set of strategies and beliefs than are those who have arrived in the country more recently. These are not differences that can be explained by historical immigration patterns or by the inherent motivation of immigrants (given that the first generation in our studies typically came as children and had limited input in the decision to migrate). Rather, they are vivid evidence of the ways in which people respond at a more immediate, micro level to the obstacles and opportunity structures that they encounter. We also find numerous differences between immigrant generations that are associated with ethnic group, particularly as those groups are characterized by color of skin. Again, these differences signal not inherent characteristics, particularly as they differ noticeably between generations, but rather they serve as markers for what we must assume are very different experiences, often involving discrimination and limitations to opportunity.

Recognizing that issues of identity and citizenship need to be understood against this background of differential experience, I'd like to turn to the more general question of multiple loyalties and the relationship between individual identity and what is termed transnationalism, that is, activities that cross the boundaries between country of residence and country of origin (see Levitt & Waters, 2002). Here the acceptability of multiple categories, from the perspective of the observer, becomes more charged with issues of national loyalty and patriotism and the question of who can be a good citizen of the country.

As discussed earlier, many people appear to hold a zero-sum belief that it is not possible to identify with or be loyal to two groups simultaneously (and even short-term sequentiality is somewhat suspect). Stanley Renshon states the position in the following way: "Consider [a model] in which sending money 'home' represents the lowest level of American community attachment" (2005, p. 9). Clearly, this statement suggests a unidimensional, bipolar model in which one must choose to be loyal to one or the other group. Samuel Huntington expresses a belief in this same model when he says that "The ultimate criterion of assimilation is the extent to which immigrants identify with the U.S. as a country . . . and correspondingly reject loyalty to other countries and their values and cultures" (Huntington, 2004, p. 241; emphasis added).

In both statements, the either-or position is clearly articulated and implies that transnationalism in any form would be undesirable. But do these statements have grounding in scientific fact? Does devotion to one's country of origin preclude loyalty to the nation of residence (and in many cases citizenship)? Although the evidence is still emerging, there is much to suggest that a zero-sum model does not fit the data.

Consider the following examples. A study of first-generation immigrants from Colombia, El Salvador, and the Dominican Republic found that those who have

more exposure to U.S. society are *more* likely to engage in transnational activities such as participating in a home country association or sending money for projects in their town of origin (Itzigsohn & Giorguli-Saucedo, 2005). In another study of African Americans and Latinas in two cities on the West Coast of the United States, beliefs that one's ethnic group is valued in and of itself was associated with *more* rather than less loyalty to country (Huo & Molina, 2006). Thus, those who felt that their subgroup is more respected by the American majority were *more* likely to identify as American and were more likely to trust the American justice system than those who did not perceive that positive regard. Similar work in the Netherlands has shown that when the positive characteristics of a minority group (in this case Muslim women) are recognized, members of that group are *more* motivated to perform well in domains that are identified with the majority status group, a process that the authors call "double valuation" (Derks, van Laar, & Ellemers, 2007).

The behavioral manifestations of blended loyalties take many forms and play out in different domains. A person can send remittances to a home community of origin or can become active in group-relevant activities in the country of residence. With regard to the latter, it may well be that loyalty to both cultures is actually necessary for some forms of political action. Recent work in Germany, for example, finds that Turkish immigrants who identify both as Turkish and as German are *more* likely to be politically active in Germany, working within the system to change policies (Simon & Ruhs, 2007).

Findings, such as these, clearly argue against the more simplistic positions espoused by Renshon and Huntington, which suggest that loyalty to home country cannot co-exist with commitment to one's present locale. Yet they also point to the critical role played by the reactions of others toward one's group. Discrimination and rejection are likely to foster the kind of oppositional identity that Renshon and Huntington speak of; in contrast, acceptance of diversity and respect for the contributions of various cultures can create stronger commitments to the country in which the immigrant resides.

Being a 21st Century American

Questions about assimilation and incorporation of immigrants into the fabric of a nation have always been central to the discourse of countries whose doors have been opened to others. Indeed, assimilation theory has been the dominant model within social science investigation for nearly a century (Alba & Nee, 2003; Gordon, 1964; Park & Burgess, 1921). In varying degrees, perhaps most notably in the underappreciated multidimensional model of Milton-Gordon, these models showed some awareness of the different positions that host and immigrant can occupy. Now, with a clearer understanding of the operation of social categories

and the negotiation of social identities, social psychologists stand ready to add their voices to the immigration discussions.

A central question in these current discussions is whether immigrants can maintain their values and experiences and aspirations and still be full citizens of the new country. Can cultural loyalty and newly formed patriotism co-exist? Some recent polemics would suggest that the answer to this question is no and that one model—a model that assumes common lineage and often European roots—must work for all. But the data suggest otherwise. As social psychologists, we know that situations are rarely simple, that complex person–situation interactions are likely to be the rule, and that interpersonal dynamics can change a situation from one moment to the next. By charting the terrain and revealing the variations and dynamic possibilities, we are in a position to explicate the alternative paths that a society and its individual citizens and citizens-to-be can choose, clarifying both the options and the likely consequences of different alternatives. We do this not by pointing fingers at immigrants or by building longer fences to impede their entry. Rather, we can (or at least the optimist in me always hopes we can) use our knowledge and tools to inform and enlarge what it means to be an American—and perhaps to be a citizen of the world as well.

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