
What is Americanness?*

Polarization and Consensus in Cultural Logics of the American Creed

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Conventional wisdom suggests that political polarization has fractured the boundaries of U.S. national membership. Employing a novel empirical strategy that applies latent class modeling to conjoint data, we find evidence that both supports and complicates this narrative. On one hand, we identify five cultural logics of Americanness, three of which exhibit strong partisan alignment and represent sharply divergent conceptions of national belonging. On the other hand, we find that a majority of Americans, both Democrats and Republicans, subscribe to hybrid conceptions of Americanness that incorporate both civic-oriented norms and ethnocultural criteria. We further find that attributes such as a college education and a multigenerational family history in the U.S. are associated with greater Americanness across all five cultural logics. These findings reveal substantial cross-partisan consensus on the contours of authentic national belonging, even within a fragmented media landscape that systematically exposes partisans to divergent information environments. One implication of our findings is that contemporary partisan conflict over what it means to be American reflects not only *competing* understandings of Americanness, but also contestation over who *legitimately* adheres to the national creed.

Keywords: Cultural Logics; Americanness; Partisanship; Conjoint Experiments; Latent Class Regressions.

I Introduction

In the early 21st century, demographic and political transformations have renewed age-old contentions over the meaning of American identity (Myrdal 1962; Schildkraut 2014; Smith 1997; Tocqueville [1835] 2000). The growth of the Asian and Latino American population, as well as the secular decline of Christianity, are challenging longstanding perceptions of America as a Christian nation anchored by a Black-White racial order (Abascal 2015, 2020; Abascal and Centeno 2017; Schachter

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2016). Meanwhile, as affective polarization continues to rise and partisan politics permeates the formerly apolitical spheres of everyday life (DellaPosta 2020; Rawlings and Childress 2024), Democrats and Republicans are more likely than ever before to deride the other side as “un-American” for their position on virtually every social and political issue (Iyengar et al. 2019).

How do ordinary Americans define the contours of national membership amid these social and political transformations? In canonical work, scholars explored national belonging in the U.S. by juxtaposing two diverging, ideal-typical understandings of the American creed: an “ethnocultural” vision that set rigid, ascriptive limits on national membership based on traits including race and religion *vis-à-vis* a more permeable, “civic republican” model that emphasized elective criteria such as consecrating American democracy or engaging in hard work to achieve the American Dream (Devos and Banaji 2005; Kunovich 2009; Myrdal 1962; Theiss-Morse 2009). Recent scholarship has critiqued this binary contrast, uncovering cross-cutting nationalist belief systems that do not neatly map onto either ethnic or civic conceptions of America’s imagined community (Bonikowski and DiMaggio 2016; Bonikowski, Feinstein, and Bock 2021). These studies emphasize both the multicreedal nature of nationalist beliefs in American society and variation in the articulation of such beliefs in the U.S. population (Asbury-Kimmel 2025; Citrin, Reingold, and Green 1990; Citrin and Wright 2009; Dawkins and Hanson 2024; Schildkraut 2007; Toprakirran, Gordils, and Jamieson 2024; Wong 2010; Wright, Citrin, and Wand 2012).

We contribute to this body of research by employing a novel empirical strategy that integrates two popular approaches to survey analysis: conjoint experiments and latent class models. Our experimental survey design prompts respondents to evaluate the Americanness of hypothetical U.S. citizens along multiple randomized attributes. This design allows us to untangle correlations between attributes that hinder causal estimates (Hainmueller, Hopkins, and Yamamoto 2014), reduces social desirability bias (Horiuchi, Markovich, and Yamamoto 2022), and prompts respondents to make concrete judgments of American profiles with varying attributes as opposed to articulating abstract and generalized propositions about national identity (Abascal et al. 2025). We then analyze this conjoint data with latent class regressions (LCRs), a type of latent class model that clusters individuals into disjoint segments based on similarities in their responses to repeated measurements of a single dependent variable (Garcia-Alvarez, Katz-Gerro, and Lopez-Sintas 2007; Valentino 2021b; Vermunt and Magidson 2016). Applied to our conjoint data, LCRs uncover cultural-cognitive heterogeneity in how Americans articulate conceptions of the nation.

Employing this two-fold methodological strategy, our study yields several empirical findings. First, consistent with recent scholarship, we find that Americans articulate diverse conceptions of national boundaries that are not reducible to “civic” or “ethnocultural” models of American identity. Specifically, we find that a majority of Americans define U.S. national membership by combining both ethnocultural criteria (e.g., being White or Black relative to Latino or Asian) and civic-oriented expectations (e.g., embracing July 4th rather than “ethnic” cultural celebrations such as Cinco de Mayo or Lunar New Year).

The remaining survey respondents can be divided into three disjoint population segments bounded by more commonly recognized, clashing conceptions of the nation: (1) an *inclusive America* logic that broadly rejects most criteria, both civic and ethnic, to be considered American; (2) an *exclusive White America* logic that is more exacting about membership requirements and uniquely emphasizes the significance of race by positioning Whites as more American than Blacks, Latinos, and Asians; and (3) an *assimilationist* logic that emphasizes inclusivity but one that is broadly conditional on civic-oriented, assimilationist expectations. However, even across these disparate cultural logics, we find that markers such as a college education and a multigenerational family history are universally associated with stronger claims to American identity.

Moreover, we find that these cultural logics of Americanness are only modestly associated with respondents' partisan identities. Although there are some intuitive correlations (e.g., Democrats are more likely than Republicans to be *inclusive Americans*), each logic of U.S. national membership is articulated by similar proportions of Americans from both political parties. Indeed, a majority of Democrats, Republicans, and Independents express an understanding of Americanness that incorporates both civic and ethnic criteria for U.S. national membership. In other words, we find limited evidence of partisan sorting whereby Democrats and Republicans gravitate towards antithetical conceptions of the American creed. One optimistic interpretation of this finding is that there may be a path out of contemporary political polarization through an emphasis on underlying common grounds (Arceneaux et al. 2025; Blumenau and Lauderdale 2025). More practically, however, partisan debates over Americanness may be expressed not through *competing* models of nationhood, but through contestation over who *truly* embodies putatively shared national creeds.

Beyond these substantive contributions, our study demonstrates the utility of examining conjoint data with LCRs, especially when outcomes of theoretical interest are multivocal or open to interpretation (e.g., ideas about Americanness). As conjoints have rapidly gained traction in the social sciences as a popular method for studying multidimensional phenomena, we highlight the potential of analyzing such data with latent class techniques to find hidden cultural segments within a population of respondents.

2 Background

2.1 Conflicting Visions of American National Identity

Scholars theorizing the contours of American national identity have traditionally pointed to two diverging political traditions: civic and ethnic (Schildkraut 2014).¹ The former draws symbolic bound-

¹ Scholars sometimes identify additional political traditions of American identity (Schildkraut 2007), but these categories can typically be collapsed into the civic or ethnic dichotomy (Schildkraut 2014).

aries of American membership around civic, elective principles such as a commitment to democratic values and practices such as voting, respecting collective rights and obligations, and striving to achieve the American Dream through hard work and perseverance (Levy and Wright 2020; Tocqueville [1835] 2000). This more “inclusive” understanding of American identity is challenged by an ethnocultural vision, which sets inflexible, ascriptive limits on national group membership (Theiss-Morse 2009). In the historical extreme, ethnocultural strains of American identity granted full national membership only to White, English-speaking Protestant men of northern European ancestry (Ignatiev [1995] 2008; Roediger [1991] 2007; Waters 1990). This ethnocultural definition of the nation has evolved over time, particularly through the rearticulation of categories like “White” and “Christian,” but remains tethered to a nativist and exclusionary understanding of Americanness.

Empirical assessments of these competing traditions have relied on two types of methods: (1) descriptive and cluster analyses of large-scale survey data, and (2) aggregate and subgroup analyses of experimental data. The first approach typically draws on datasets that ask respondents to indicate the importance of select variables in determining whether someone is viewed as a “true American.” For instance, the General Social Survey (GSS) presents survey respondents with a battery of characteristics (e.g., being born in the United States, identifying as Christian, or possessing English proficiency) and asks them to evaluate the significance of each to be considered truly American. Descriptive analyses of the GSS and other similar datasets typically report major fault-lines by political party and ideology: Republicans and conservatives are significantly more likely than Democrats and liberals to agree that being White, Christian, and speaking fluent English are hallmarks of being truly American (Citrin and Wright 2009; Dawkins and Hanson 2024).

Bonikowski and DiMaggio’s (2016) influential study on the varieties of American nationalism draws on GSS data to examine clusters of respondents with similar attitudinal profiles. They ultimately find four distinct conceptions of popular nationalism in the U.S. corresponding to four distinct types of American nationalists: (1) *ardent nationalists* who score high on every aspect of nationalism under evaluation; (2) *the disengaged* who express the least nationalistic sentiments; (3) *restrictive nationalists* who combine exclusionary national membership criteria with low-to-moderate levels of national pride; and (4) *creedal nationalists* who emphasize civic criteria for national membership and report high levels of national identification and pride. These genres of nationalism appear to be strongly associated with Americans’ partisan identities: for instance, most *ardent nationalists* identify as Republicans, while a majority of *the disengaged* identify as Democrats.

A second emergent approach to examining American identity is through conjoint experimental data. In a recent study, Adem and Ambriz (2023) examine how Americans evaluate U.S. citizenship claims by immigrant groups. In their design, survey respondents evaluated hypothetical individuals who differed along a range of characteristics such as their nationality, English proficiency, and reason for migration. Adem and Ambriz (2023) find important heterogeneity between White, Latino, and Black Americans in

their views towards citizenship claims made by immigrants in the United States. In contrast, they find striking agreement in Americans' views of cultural membership when asked from a societal perspective, one marked by racially exclusionary criteria.

2.2 Combining Conjoint Data with Latent Class Regressions

The present study integrates these approaches by applying latent class methods to conjoint data. A conjoint design has three key advantages. First, existing studies on American identity that rely on public opinion datasets are constrained by data that measures one attribute of interest after another, independently, and the limited scope of the variables examined (Bonikowski and DiMaggio 2016; Soehl and Karim 2021; Toprakkiran et al. 2024). In contrast, a key feature of our experimental design is that participants are asked to consider multiple attributes associated with Americanness at the same time (Flores and Schachter 2018; Schachter, Flores, and Maghbouleh 2021). This allows us to untangle the separate effects of traits that are highly correlated in real life, such as race, nativity, and religion. For instance, being White may be associated with greater levels of Americanness, but this pattern may be driven by correlations between Whiteness and Christianity, another feature that is positively associated with American identity (Al-Kire et al. 2024; Perry 2022, 2023).

Second, a conjoint design may substantively reduce social desirability bias (Horiuchi et al. 2022). This bias attenuation could occur because survey takers are unsure which of the many attributes introduced are norm-violating or of interest to scholars, while the presence of non-sensitive items also provides respondents plausible rationalizations to engage in social norm violations (Triguero Roura 2024). In the context of research exploring U.S. national boundaries, the possibility of social desirability bias has been of nontrivial concern. Psychological disquisitions on the “America = White” association have often reported statistically significant effects only when evaluating implicit, but not explicit, outcome measures (Devos and Banaji 2005; Devos and Mohamed 2014).

We further emphasize a third, underappreciated feature of conjoint designs: while standard survey questions elicit a deliberative mode of cultural expression, conjoints simultaneously tap automatic, nondeclarative cultural knowledge (Abascal et al. 2025; Mohr et al. 2020). This distinction draws on dual-process models of cognition as developed in cultural sociology (Lizardo 2017; Vaisey 2009).² In this framework, cultural knowledge operates at two levels: (1) nondeclarative, *know-how* culture (fast,

² How are logics related to concepts like schemas? Following Valentino (2021: 6), we conceptualize the distinction in the following way: “Schemas capture *relationships between objects*, such as classifications about what constitutes jazz music versus blues music ... Logics, by contrast, capture *evaluations made about these objects*, such as preferences for particular musical genres, or attitudes toward the poor like whether or not they deserve government assistance. Logics may therefore result from both automatic and deliberative cognitive processes, as they are comprised of schemas (a ‘nondeclarative’ component of personal culture) but contain an evaluative valence (a ‘declarative’ component of personal culture, such as values, attitudes, and ideologies [see Lizardo (2017)]).” Drawing on Goldberg and Singell (2024), we treat cultural logics as categorization structures that people acquire through exposure to a shared cultural environment.

automatic, and intuitive forms of culture such as schemas, prototypes, and stereotypes that powerfully shape judgment and action), and (2) declarative, *know-that* culture (conscious, deliberative knowledge such as beliefs, values, and preferences that individuals may invoke post hoc to justify prior intuitions). This distinction is not to suggest that declarative measures are invalid; rather, the two modes map onto different data generating processes and thus capture different estimands. Conjoint responses, in part, reflect the nondeliberative, associative standards that structure national boundary judgments, while standard survey items reflect consciously articulated beliefs about national membership.³

Our study also differs from a related conjoint experiment conducted by Adem and Ambriz (2023). At baseline, their study was motivated by the question of which immigrants are deserving of *legal U.S. citizenship* and thus their stylized profiles were all noncitizens. In contrast, our present study focuses on U.S. citizens in order to explore perceptions of *Americanness* that extend beyond technical definitions that relate to formal U.S. citizenship status. While Adem and Ambriz (2023) likewise explore perceptions of cultural membership (i.e., being American), our conjoint designs further diverge in two consequential ways. First, they employ *nationality* as a key profile attribute to infer respondents' racial biases, while we directly invoke race. For instance, they find that German immigrants are perceived as "less American" relative to Canadian immigrants. However, the racial implications of such a national penalty remain ambiguous. Second, they measure cultural membership through *generalized second-order beliefs of most Americans*, whereas we focus on people's *first-order* beliefs and associations about Americanness.

Finally, our study employs a novel methodological approach to analyze conjoint data. Drawing inspiration from studies that apply latent class techniques to attitudinal data (Bonikowski and DiMaggio 2016; DiMaggio et al. 2018; Karim 2024; Knight and Brinton 2017; Scarborough et al. 2021), we examine heterogeneity in how respondents define Americanness by fitting latent class regressions. This approach captures systematic variation in how individuals draw symbolic boundaries around American national membership, both within and across the superordinate bounds of well-established social collectives such as race, gender, and religious affiliation. Importantly, this approach offers key advantages over conventional subgroup analyses commonly used to study treatment effect heterogeneity. Traditional approaches treat categories such as "Democrats" and "Republicans" as internally coherent, clearly bounded, and mutually exclusive social groups. Yet substantial within-group disagreement and inter-group convergence characterize understandings of national identity in the population aggregate (Baldassarri 2025). For example, some Democrats hold conceptions of Americanness that more closely resemble those of certain Republicans than those of fellow Democrats, and vice versa. Subgroup analyses

³ Beyond the affordances of the novel experiment data, our study uniquely focuses on contours of U.S. national membership (as opposed to nationalism more broadly) and is tailored to the American context. Notably, the GSS is harmonized with the International Social Survey Programme's (ISSP) national identity module to facilitate cross-national comparisons (Soehl and Karim 2021). Most concerning, however, the GSS does not measure associations between race and being truly American—a striking omission given the longstanding legacy of Whiteness as a necessary condition for national membership in the United States (Devos and Banaji 2005; Du Bois 1897).

necessarily average over this internal variation, producing aggregate comparisons that may obscure meaningful cross-cutting patterns in cultural worldviews or orientations (Brubaker, Loveman, and Stamatov 2004; Monk 2022). By contrast, latent class analysis identifies heterogeneity *along the construct of interest itself*, uncovering hidden logics or latent configurations of beliefs about what constitutes Americanness (DiMaggio et al. 2018).

2.3 Polarization and National Identity

The landscape of American politics in the 21st century is increasingly defined by deepening political polarization. Although scholars continue to debate whether this trend is driven by genuine shifts in voter attitudes (Baldassarri and Gelman 2008; Baldassarri and Park 2020; Converse 2006; Fiorina and Abrams 2008; Kinder and Kalmoe 2017), there is a broad consensus that Democrats and Republicans have become more ideologically distinct over time (Abramowitz and Saunders 2008; Kozlowski and Murphy 2021).⁴ Running parallel to these developments, scholars have documented a growing link between political polarization and competing conceptions of Americanness (Bonikowski and DiMaggio 2016; Bonikowski et al. 2021). For example, Dawkins and Hanson (2024) show that White Democrats and Republicans articulate systematically different understandings of Americanness, and that appeals to a shared identity only reduce partisan hostility when the opposing party aligns with those conceptions. When it does not, national identity appeals can conversely intensify out-party animosity, casting doubt on the proposition that invoking a superordinate “American” identity is sufficient for bridging partisan divides (Levendusky 2018). Indeed, this divide extends to perceptual reality itself: in line with Campbell et al.’s (1960) classic insight about partisanship raising a “perceptual screen,” Democrats and Republicans have been shown to hold systematically divergent factual beliefs about the same social conditions, from crime rates to economic performance, suggesting that partisan identity may shape not only what people value but what they see (Alesina, Miano, and Stantcheva 2020; Bartels 2002; Gaines et al. 2007; Jerit and Barabas 2012; McGrath 2017).

Beyond substantive divisions over policy and national conceptions, recent scholarship has highlighted the rise of *affective polarization*, which captures the extent to which partisans harbor negative feelings toward one another (Iyengar et al. 2019). Rooted in social identity processes, party affiliation increasingly functions as a basis for in-group attachment and out-group hostility. This dynamic has been theorized as a type of political sectarianism characterized by three features: *othering* (viewing opposing partisans as fundamentally different), *aversion* (disliking and distrusting them), and *moralization* (per-

⁴ A wide range of mechanisms have been proposed to explain the rise of partisan sorting, including the role of media fragmentation (Levendusky and Malhotra 2016), network-based processes of social influence (Rawlings 2022), individual-level cognitive dynamics (Jost, Baldassarri, and Druckman 2022), and the downstream effects of elite polarization on mass public opinion (Druckman, Peterson, and Slothuus 2013).

ceiving them as morally deficient) (Finkel et al. 2020). Crucially, although affective polarization is correlated with ideological sorting, it is not reducible to it: partisans may come to dislike and distrust one another even in the absence of substantial policy disagreement.

To date, however, much of what we know about the relationship between polarization and conceptions of national identity is derived from traditional survey instruments. This raises an important question: to what extent are observed partisan differences shaped by the survey measurement itself? Our proposed methodological approach builds on well-established advantages of conjoint experiment data discussed previously. We also draw on recent work by Blumenau and Lauderdale (2025), who show that apparent moral divisions among liberals and conservatives may partly reflect a design effect: traditional surveys require respondents to articulate their values in response to abstract, decontextualized prompts, which may lead them to engage in motivated reasoning. When moral attitudes are instead measured using designs that capture automatic and intuitive judgments, ideological differences narrow substantially. In this paper, we advance an analogous argument for measurements of national identity. Traditional survey instruments compel respondents to self-theorize visions of Americanness in ways that invite partisan cheerleading, eliciting declarative cultural knowledge that may not reflect latent intuitions about national belonging (Bullock et al. 2015). Our conjoint design, by prompting concrete judgments about stylized human profiles, better captures the nondeliberative standards that govern Americans' conceptions of who belongs in the nation.

3 Data and Methods

Our study draws on an original survey experiment with 3,161 Americans conducted in the fall of 2022. The sample is composed of 1,280 White, 590 Black, 650 Latino, and 641 Asian Americans quota sampled to be nationally representative within each racial category by gender, age, educational attainment, and political party. Survey participants were provided by Bovitz, a company that maintains a large, proprietary online research panel of U.S. respondents. The panel is composed of Americans who have opted in to participate in online surveys and is regularly refreshed to ensure demographic and attitudinal diversity. Part A of the Appendix provides further information regarding the sampling strategy, including quota targets.

Survey respondents evaluated eight independent profiles, described as legal U.S. citizens, on a 1-7 response scale from “low Americanness (1)” to “high Americanness (7).”⁵ The hypothetical profiles

⁵ We conditioned on all profiles being U.S. citizens in order to avoid soliciting a binary, formalistic understanding of whether someone is legally American or not (e.g., those with undocumented status, may be deemed “not American” in a purely technical sense). Instead, our goal was to explore the deeper cultural logics through which Americans evaluate authentic national belonging (i.e., *Americanness*). We also note that prior studies have examined the effects of undocumented status on being perceived as an American (Adem and Ambriz 2023; Ocampo-Roland 2025).

were randomized along nine attributes theoretically linked to perceptions of U.S. national membership: race (Devos and Banaji 2005), family background (Alba and Nee 2003), religion (Edgell, Gerteis, and Hartmann 2006), language fluency (Schildkraut 2005), educational attainment (Flores-González 2017), political ideology (Okura 2026), residential location (Abascal and Centeno 2017), and engagement with normative cultural behaviors such as voting and celebrating U.S. holidays (Bloemraad 2022). Supplementary Appendix B provides the full list of attributes and feature levels, alongside theoretical justifications for their inclusion. We randomized the row order of each attribute across respondents in order to minimize ordering effects, but the attribute rows were held constant for any given respondent (Hainmueller et al. 2014). The 25,288 rated profiles were otherwise fully randomized.

3.1 Analytic Strategy

Our analysis proceeds in three stages. First, we apply latent class regressions (LCRs) to our conjoint data. Like all latent class models, LCRs are data reduction instruments that can be used to identify hidden subsamples embedded within a broader population of observations. These subsamples are extracted based on common response patterns in the input data matrix. More technically, LCRs, like other latent class models, assume that covariation among survey responses is driven by a discrete latent variable, X , with k levels. Unlike other latent class implementations, LCRs do not partition samples based on responses to a vector of observed indicators. Rather, respondents are clustered into disjoint population segments based on repeated measurements of a single outcome variable. Moreover, while the measurement parameters of traditional latent class analyses correspond to class-specific item-response probabilities, the parameters of interest in LCRs are class-specific regression coefficients or statistical quantities associated with a set of observed predictors (for an elaboration, see Vermunt and Magidson 2016).

The statistical association between these predictors and the dependent variable is assumed to be *moderated* by the latent class a respondent belongs to (see Figure 1). In fitting our LCRs, we treat variation in responses to our Americanness scale as our outcome of substantive interest (y_{it} —with $T_i = 8$ measurements) and the nine aforementioned attributes (e.g., race, family background, civic engagement and so on) as our vector of predictors (z_{it}). Analytically, our goal is to identify latent segments, k , defined by different patterns of associations linking z_{it} to y_{it} (based on both coefficients and predictive margins). Conceptually, we assume that these subpopulations are bounded by distinct cultural logics or models of Americanness (Valentino 2021b).

We conduct two additional analyses. First, we assess the downstream or distal consequences of class membership. Specifically, we use a simple ordinal regression model to evaluate whether disparate conceptions of the American creed map onto disparate attitudes towards expansionist immigration policy. These analyses allow for a more substantive differentiation of how cluster differences correspond

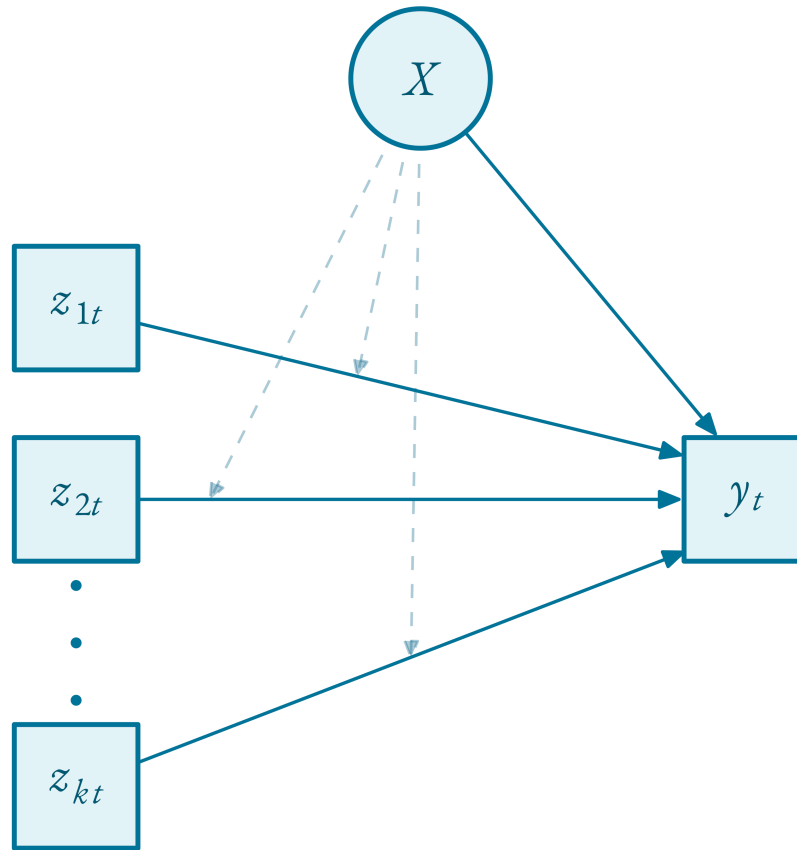


Figure 1: Structure of latent class regressions (adapted from Vermunt 2011). In the diagram, X represents a categorical latent variable. y_t represents a measurement of a dependent variable at replication or occasion t . $z_{1t} \dots z_{kt}$ represents a vector of predictor variables. Dotted arrows represent moderation effects.

with tangible attitudes and behaviors, beyond the cultural logics (i.e., patterns of association linking z_{it} to y_{it}) that define them. Second, we assign respondents to distinct latent classes before exploring the partisan foundations of class membership. To this end, we fit a multinomial logistic regression model where class membership (or logic of Americanness) is regressed on respondent's political party affiliation. In both models, we include a large set of controls on the right-hand side: race, age (quadratic), immigrant generational status, religious affiliation, a binary indicator of news consumption, educational status (binary indicator of holding a university degree), device used to complete survey, and census region fixed effects. Moreover, since our input data feature an overrepresentation of racial minorities, we weight all analyses to ensure that results reflect the racial distribution of the contemporary United

States. Descriptive statistics for all variables featured in the standard regression analyses can be found in Supplementary Appendix D. Full, tabular model results can also be reviewed in Appendix D.

4 Results

4.1 Five Cultural Logics of Americanness

To determine the number of latent segments nested in our sample, we iteratively estimate a set of 10 LCRs using Latent GOLD 6.1. Based on fit statistics and interpretability (Bonikowski and DiMaggio 2022), we settle on a five-class solution. We provide more details on the model selection process in Supplementary Appendix C. To aid the interpretation of the five classes, we label them as follows: (1) *Moderate Hybrid*, (2) *Restrictive Hybrid*, (3) *Inclusive America*, (4) *Exclusive White America*, and (5) *Assimilationist*. Figure 2 presents the average marginal component effects of the conjoint profile features on Americanness ratings, while Table 1 presents the profile rating probabilities across the five classes.

4.1.1 Moderate Hybrid

Nearly a third (32%) of survey respondents express a cultural logic of Americanness informed by both ascribed and elective criteria for authentic national membership. For instance, they factor in ethnocultural attributes such as a person's race and religion, positioning Whites, Blacks, and Christians as more American relative to Latinos, Asians, non-Christians, and atheists. At the same time, these participants' definition of Americanness implicates civic-oriented characteristics such as a person's commitment to democratic practices (e.g., voting in elections), adherence to cultural norms (e.g., embracing July 4th), and efforts to work hard to improve their socioeconomic status (e.g., attaining more than the minimum level of education). They also perceive profiles that lean politically conservative as more American relative to those who are very liberal. In other words, survey respondents expressing *the moderate hybrid* creed convey a cultural understanding of Americanness that is, at once, shaped by attributes that are largely fixed as well as those that are malleable.

Respondents of this cultural logic further associate urban residential living as more American than dwelling in rural areas. This finding is somewhat surprising given widespread stereotypes that venerate rural life as representing the true heartland of the country with authentic American roots, while denigrating urban cities as infested with crime and cultural depravity (Abascal and Centeno 2017; Boot 2022; Lichter and Brown 2011). One explanation for the unexpected urban advantage is that our data come from a factorial survey experiment designed to untangle highly correlated traits such as urbanicity with racial minorities and left-leaning politics. In other words, conventional imagery linking residential

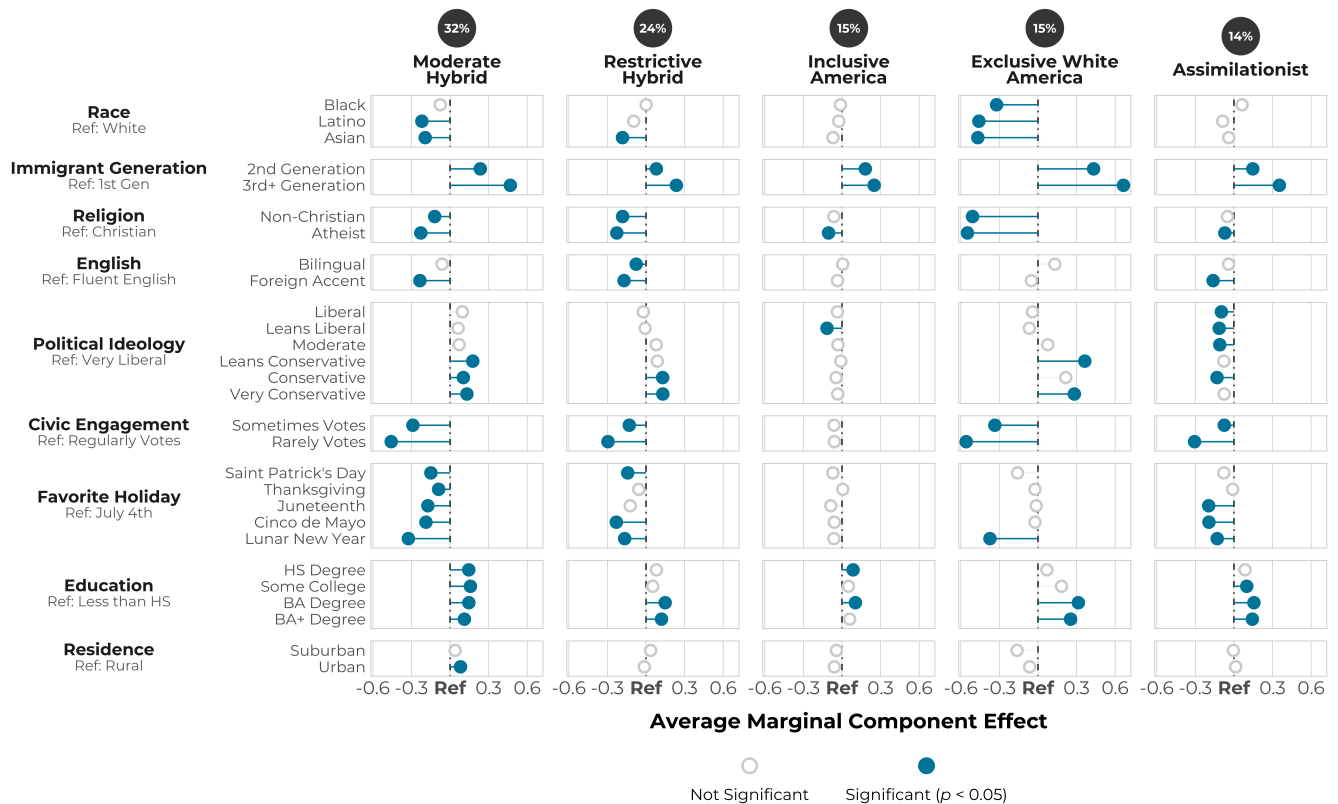


Figure 2: This figure displays the average marginal component effects (AMCEs) of various profile attributes on Americanness ratings across the five cultural logics. Filled circles indicate statistical significance at $p < 0.05$; open circles indicate non-significant AMCEs. Class proportions are displayed in bubbles on top of each cluster label.

location with diverging degrees of Americanness may primarily be driven via its correlations with race and politics. Once these traits are accounted for, urban living appears to have a *positive* effect on national membership, perhaps due to its link with American innovation and dynamism. While respondents in the *moderate hybrid* cultural segment are unique in expressing this pro-urban view, it is notable that the remaining four cultural logics likewise reject the popular trope that rural life is in itself associated with greater levels of national authenticity. In the following section, we more clearly distinguish this cluster from the *restrictive hybrid* class.

4.1.2 Restrictive Hybrid

The second largest segment of survey respondents (24%) articulates a cultural logic of Americanness that appears, at first glance, similar to the first cultural segment. Our label for the cluster acknowledges this overlap: notably, *restrictive hybrid* respondents express an understanding of U.S. national

Table 1: Class-Specific Response Probabilities

Americanness Scale Level	Moderate Hybrid	Restrictive Hybrid	Inclusive America	Exclusive White America	Assimilationist	Overall
1	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.22	0.00	0.04
2	0.02	0.05	0.00	0.15	0.00	0.04
3	0.06	0.19	0.00	0.17	0.00	0.09
4	0.18	0.52	0.03	0.14	0.02	0.21
5	0.44	0.17	0.03	0.11	0.16	0.23
6	0.23	0.05	0.06	0.07	0.61	0.19
7	0.08	0.01	0.88	0.13	0.21	0.21

membership that, too, is “hybrid”: they emphasize a wide range of both ascribed, generally inflexible traits (e.g., being White, Christian, multigeneration, and speaking English fluently) as well as elective, achievable characteristics (e.g., always voting, embracing patriotic holidays, and working to attain higher education). To be sure, there are some minor differences between the two logics: respondents in the *restrictive hybrid* class perceive Latinos as similarly American as Whites, while those advancing the *moderate hybrid* perspective understand bilinguals to be as American as fluent English speakers. However, these null findings are only marginally nonsignificant. For instance, *restrictive hybrid* respondents rate Latino profiles 0.10 points lower than White profiles, and this effect is statistically significant at the $p < 0.10$ level. Meanwhile, *moderate hybrid* respondents penalize bilingual profiles by 0.06 points relative to profiles who speak English fluently, and this difference is also statistically significant at the $p < 0.10$ level.

In order to distinguish between the two logics, we underscore the first cluster’s “moderate” affinity, especially relative to the second cluster’s “restrictive” orientation. Most notably, there is a meaningful divergence between the two cultural segments in their profile rating probabilities (see Table 1). Respondents expressing the *moderate hybrid* logic are most likely to offer profile ratings of 5 or 6 out of the 7-point scale of Americanness, while the two most frequent profile evaluations among those in the *restrictive hybrid* condition are a 3 or 4. In other words, the *restrictive hybrid* understanding of Americanness is stricter in drawing national boundaries relative to the *moderate hybrid* logic.

This differentiation between the *moderate hybrid* and *restrictive hybrid* clusters also maps onto how class membership is linked to policy attitudes. To examine this link, we estimate an ordinal logistic regression that tests whether class membership is associated with attitudes towards immigration policy, as measured by a question tapping support for immigration to the United States from Asia and Latin America. We account for classification uncertainty using Latent GOLD’s bias-adjusted three-step procedure and proportional maximum likelihood estimation.

Figure 3 presents the average marginal effects of class membership on pro-immigrant sentiment as well as marginal predicted values by cluster. Consistent with our interpretation, respondents who express the *restrictive hybrid* conception of national membership are less likely than respondents in the *moderate hybrid* class to support increasing immigration from Asia and Latin America (3.01 vs. 3.28, where the difference is statistically significant, $p < 0.05$).

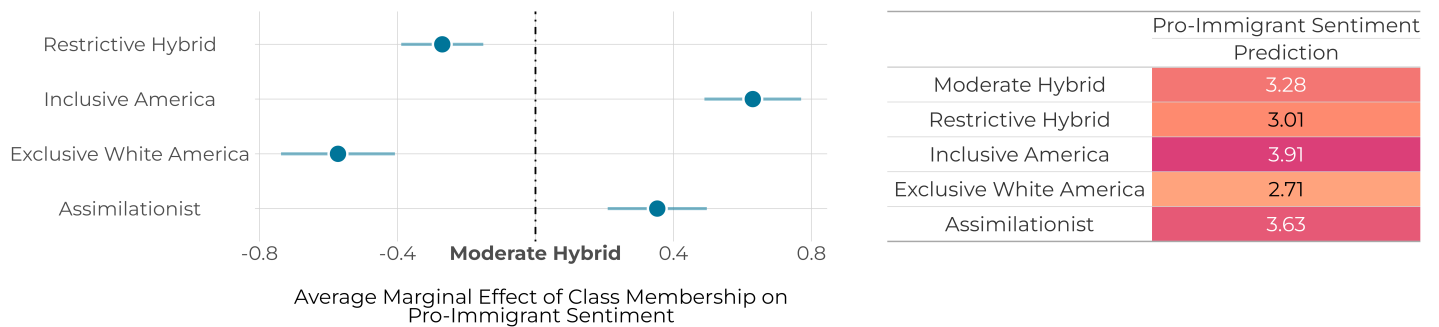


Figure 3: The panel on the left displays average marginal effects of class membership on expansionist immigration to the United States from Latin America and Asia. 95% confidence intervals are provided. The panel on the right uses a table to display mean predictions of pro-immigrant sentiment on a 1-5 ordinal scale after accounting for different ordinal cut points. Results are based on an ordinal logistic regression model that includes full suite of control variables.

4.1.3 Inclusive America

Unlike the *moderate hybrid* or the *restrictive hybrid* cultural logics, which together represent over half (56%) of our sample, the remaining three classes do not wholly articulate a broad set of civic and ethnocultural attributes in defining Americanness. One class, which we call *inclusive America* (15% of respondents), is marked by the tendency to reject *both* ascribed and elective demands for national membership. Respondents in this cluster simultaneously refute the ethno-nationalist premise that Whites are more American than racial minorities and the civic notion that electoral participation in democracy is a necessary condition for U.S. national membership. Perhaps most strikingly, respondents associated with the *inclusive America* logic are predicted to give the highest profile ratings across all five clusters, with an estimated 88% probability of assigning the maximum rating of 7 (see Table 1). This finding also corresponds with their policy attitudes: Figure 3 shows that respondents who express the *inclusive America* cultural logic are more supportive of expansionist immigration policy than their peers even after regression adjustment.

It is also worth emphasizing that a civic notion of Americanness should not *necessarily* be understood as an *inclusive* definition of national membership (Simonsen and Bonikowski 2020).⁶ Respondents who advocate for civic tenets of Americanness articulate a series of associations about what

⁶ Indeed, Simonsen and Bonikowski (2020) argue that although national identities steeped in civic republicanism are often associated with inclusivity, these aggregate associations flatten context-specific patterns of conditional exclusion: in northwestern Europe, for instance, civic nationalism is associated with higher levels of anti-Muslim sentiment than ethnocultural alternatives.

individuals must do in order to be regarded as an authentic member of the imagined community. While such demands are perhaps “inclusive” in the sense that they are achievable (in contrast to ethnocultural demands, which are either immutable like racial status or in general inflexible like religion or language), those who fail to meet such expectations are perceived as marginal to the national community. In contrast, respondents expressing the *inclusive America* logic express a more encompassing understanding of national boundaries, regardless of who they are or what they do. While there is still a perception of an Americanness penalty against atheists and the foreign-born relative to Christians and multigeneration Americans, the predicted profile ratings shown in Supplementary Appendix C reveal that such differences are marginal and that nearly all evaluated profiles receive the maximum Americanness rating, signaling full inclusion in the nation.

4.1.4 Exclusive White America

The fourth cultural segment to emerge from our data maps onto the most exclusionary boundaries of U.S. national membership. Representing 15% of the sample, respondents expressing the *exclusive White America* cultural logic offer the lowest Americanness ratings across all evaluated profiles. This can be seen both via their modal profile rating being a 1 out of 7 (Table 1), and their anti-immigration views relative to respondents associated with other nationalist logics (Figure 3). Still, we emphasize that this cultural logic is not simply exclusionary but also one that is specifically linked to a perspective that America is White. That is, respondents from this class are unique in perceiving *all* racial minorities, including Blacks, as less American relative to Whites.

While it may be tempting to portray this segment as the antithesis of the *inclusive Americans*, closer examination reveals subtleties that defy such a simplistic characterization. What is particularly notable about the *exclusive White America* cultural logic is its indifference towards key attributes traditionally linked to Americanness. For instance, respondents from this class do not regard individuals who are bilingual or speak English with a foreign accent as any less American than native speakers. This unusual view is shared by none other than the *inclusive Americans*. In fact, the two cultural segments similarly diverge from the *moderate hybrid* and the *restrictive hybrid* cultural logics in their de-emphasis of *both* ethnocultural traits (e.g., speaking English fluently) *and* civic-oriented traits (e.g., celebrating July 4th). Viewed from this lens, the *exclusive White America* logic appears most distinct in its focus on race as a criterion of exclusion from U.S. national boundaries.

4.1.5 Assimilationist

The final cultural segment, which we call *assimilationist* (14% of respondents), is characterized by two key propensities. First, respondents expressing this logic tend to give high Americanness scores,

with the modal profile rating a 6 out of 7. They are also more pro-immigration than all other clusters except those expressing the *inclusive America* cultural logic. Second, there is a broad emphasis on elective over ascribed traits. Notably, the *assimilationist* logic rejects race as a criterion for national membership, and it is more skeptical of traits like religion and language in affecting perceptions of Americanness. While this tempered view regarding ethnocultural attributes overlaps with the *inclusive America* logic, *assimilationists* unequivocally emphasize the importance of civic-oriented engagement with American cultural norms and expectations. Moreover, they penalize individuals who are inconsistent voters and those who partake in “ethnic” holidays, while rewarding those who pursue upward socioeconomic mobility through educational attainment.

4.2 Partisan Identities and Cultural Logics

Do Democrats and Republicans gravitate towards cultural logics of Americanness that are either incongruent or diametrically opposed? To resolve this question, we explore the correspondence between latent class membership and survey respondents’ political party affiliation. Given prior work, we might expect that a majority of Democrats embrace the *Inclusive America* logic, while a substantial number of Republicans invoke the *exclusive White America* logic. To subject these propositions to empirical investigation, we estimate a multinomial logistic regression model where cluster membership is our target variable. Once again, we account for classification uncertainty (i.e., the reality that respondents are not *perfectly* assigned to one of k latent clusters recovered through latent class analytic procedures) using Latent GOLD’s three-step module for bias-adjustment.

Table 2 displays adjusted probabilities of cluster membership for respondents with different partisan identities. For instance, column 1 displays the distribution of Democratic respondents associated with the *moderate hybrid* (32%), *restrictive hybrid* (21%), *inclusive America* (16%), *exclusive White America* (13%), and *assimilationist* (17%) cultural logics. Columns 2 and 3 repeat these analyses for Republicans and Independents. To simplify matters further, Figure 4 offers a visual summary of the average marginal effect of partisan identity on class membership across the five clusters (where Democrats are the reference category). Perhaps unsurprisingly, Democrats are more likely than Republicans to articulate the *inclusive America* cultural logic (16% vs. 12%, $p < 0.05$), while Republicans are more likely than Democrats to express an *exclusive White America* model of nationhood (20% vs. 13%, $p < 0.05$).

Despite these intuitive associations, Table 2 and Figure 4 point to a broader pattern of *limited* partisan sorting across the five latent classes. For instance, a similar proportion of Democrats, Republicans, and Independents are represented in the two largest clusters. Moreover, a majority of Democrats, Republicans, and Independent respondents express a *moderate hybrid* or *restrictive hybrid* understanding of the nation that emphasizes both inclusionary and exclusionary criteria for national membership. In other words, our findings suggest a meaningful degree of *consensus* regarding

Table 2: Probabilities of Class Membership by Partisan Identity

	Partisan Identity		
	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Moderate Hybrid	0.32	0.30	0.33
Restrictive Hybrid	0.21	0.25	0.24
Inclusive America	0.16	0.12	0.19
Exclusive White America	0.13	0.20	0.12
Assimilationist	0.17	0.14	0.12

Note: This table presents predicted probabilities of assignment to the five cultural logics for Democrats, Republicans, and Independents. Results are based on a three-step multinomial model regressing partisanship on class membership and a suite of controls. For legibility, estimates associated with partisan identities that fall outside the conventional triumvirate (Democrat, Independent, Republican) are not displayed.

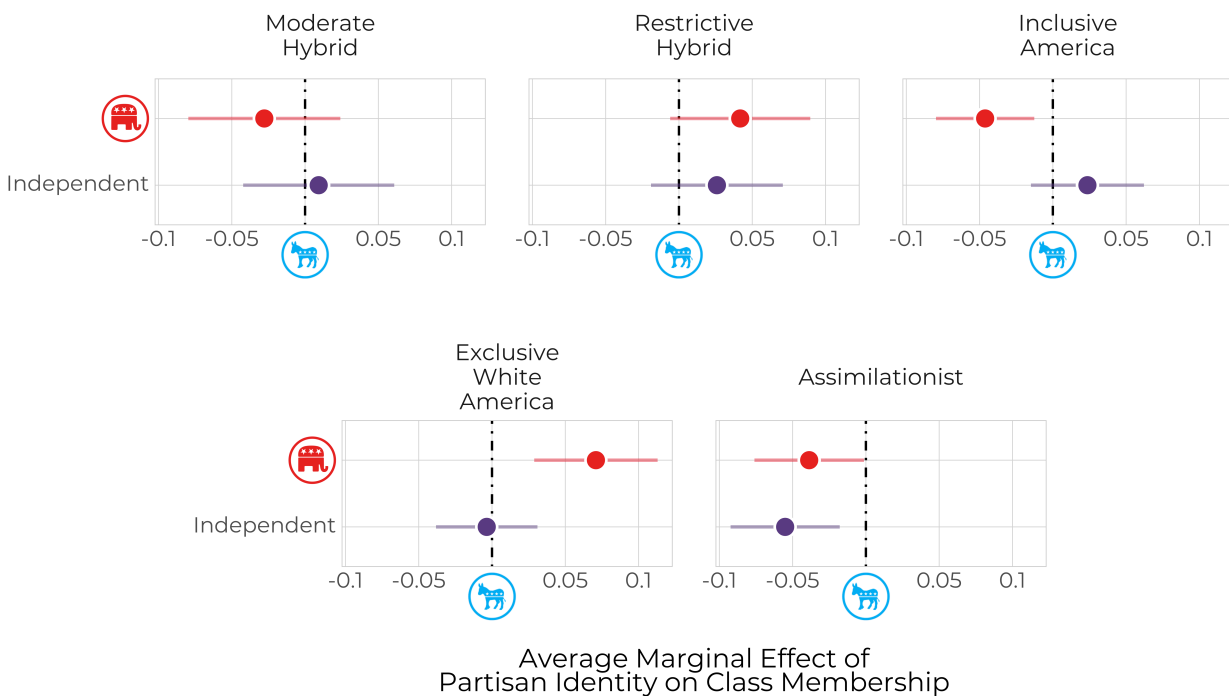


Figure 4: Average marginal effect of partisan identity on class membership Democrats are the reference category. The error bars indicate 95% confidence intervals. Results are based on a three-step multinomial model regressing partisanship on class membership and a suite of controls. For legibility, estimates associated with partisan identities that fall outside the conventional triumvirate (Democrat, Independent, Republican) are not displayed.

the boundaries of America’s “imagined community” even across seemingly insurmountable partisan divides. Moreover, these patterns are observed net of differences in respondents’ sociodemographic

characteristics, including their age, race, education, and gender, suggesting that the limited partisan sorting we observe is not simply a byproduct of compositional differences across party coalitions.

4.3 Robustness Checks

A key finding that emerges from our analysis is the limited extent of partisan sorting into the latent cultural segments we identified through our LCR procedure. That is, contrary to received wisdom, Democrats and Republicans do not appear to express highly divergent or conflicting models of national membership—at least when these models are captured via intuitive judgments rather than abstract and generalized articulations of national identity. Since latent class analyses are not “supervised” by observed target variables and require direct intervention from analysts, we also consider whether our results are artifacts of design choices. Specifically, we assess the sensitivity of our cluster solution to two potential sources of variation: (1) the number of classes, k , in our solution, and (2) individual-level heterogeneity in how respondents use scale ratings.

We estimate two alternative models. First, we select a six-cluster solution using the same clustering approach detailed in our foregoing discussion to assess whether a more granular classification alters the observed patterns linking partisanship to class membership. Second, we estimate a three-cluster solution that incorporates random effects to account for individual-level variation in scale usage.⁷ Figure E3 in Appendix E presents the partisan correlates of cluster membership under these two alternative specifications. For instance, in the six-cluster solution, 28% and 24% of Democrats are assigned to clusters 1 and 2, respectively, compared to 32% and 22% of Republicans. These probabilities of membership are not statistically different ($p > 0.05$). While there are partisan differences in membership probabilities for other classes (e.g., clusters 4 and 6), they represent a relatively small proportion of respondents. Meanwhile, the three-cluster solution with random effects reveals no significant partisan sorting into any cluster ($p > 0.05$), at least along the Democrat vs. Republican divide.

These robustness checks reinforce a key finding: even under alternative model specifications, there is little evidence that cultural logics of the American creed are strongly structured by respondents’ partisan identities. This strengthens our confidence that our results are not merely artifacts of initial design choices but instead reflect a broader empirical pattern of limited partisan sorting in conceptions of American national identity.

Finally, in Appendix E, we further examine heterogeneity by respondents’ racial background. We find that Black survey respondents are disproportionately more likely than Whites to express the *exclusive White America* cultural logic even as Republicans are also more likely than Democrats or Independents to belong to this cluster ($p < 0.05$). Figure E5 provides additional context by displaying race-specific

⁷ The three-cluster solution is the best-fitting parameterization of our latent class regression with random intercepts.

average marginal effects of class membership on support for expansionist immigration to the United States from Latin America and Asia. Across racial groups, the associations linking cultural logics to immigration attitudes tend to move in the same direction. However, for most non-White groups, these estimates are either statistically insignificant or marked by substantial uncertainty, as reflected in the wide confidence intervals. These findings raise the possibility that non-White Americans are more likely divided between descriptive understandings of how Americanness operates in practice and their own normative commitments, whereas White Americans may be more inclined to align their perceptions of Americanness with the latter.⁸

5 Discussion & Conclusions

What is Americanness? Debates over who can claim authentic membership within America's national boundaries have intensified in the face of rapid demographic changes and heightened partisan polarization. These struggles are most apparent in contemporary political rhetoric, where Americans denounce their ideological opponents as “un-American” threats who are “destroying the nation” (Gage 2017). Moreover, partisans increasingly inhabit divergent factual realities, which may contribute to systematically different beliefs about economic conditions, demographic change, and the social landscape more broadly (Alesina et al. 2020; Bartels 2002; Gaines et al. 2007; Jerit and Barabas 2012; McGrath 2017). Recent studies have affirmed these underlying partisan divisions, suggesting that Democrats and Republicans often articulate contradistinctive conceptions of the American creed (Bonikowski et al. 2021; Dawkins and Hanson 2024).

Employing a novel empirical strategy that applies latent class modeling to a conjoint experiment, the findings presented in this paper both support and complicate this conventional narrative. On the one hand, we identified several conceptions of Americanness marked by clashing conceptions of the nation: (1) an *inclusive America* logic that broadly rejects most criteria, both civic and ethnic, to be considered American; (2) an *exclusive White America* logic that is particularly exacting about national membership and positions Whites as more American than Blacks, Latinos, or Asians; and (3) an *assimilationist* logic that emphasizes inclusivity but one that is conditional on civic-oriented, assimilationist expectations. At the same time, we find that the two largest clusters representing over half of the survey sample emphasize a hybrid of both civic behaviors (e.g., voting regularly, participating in cultural celebrations, and attaining higher levels of education) *and* ethnocultural traits (e.g., being White, Christian, and multigeneration) when evaluating the Americanness of others. In other words, the dominant logics of the American creed represent a patchworked understanding of authentic national membership characterized simultaneously

⁸ Consistent with this interpretation, Figure E6 in Appendix E suggests that our key substantive finding—i.e., limited partisan sorting—is more acute among non-White respondents.

by who one *is* as well as what one *does*.

We further find that a majority of Democrats, Independents, and Republicans express this hybrid conception of the nation. While we see evidence of partisan sorting into the three smaller cultural logics, the degree to which partisans agree on the contours of Americanness is surprising in the present era defined by a hyper-fragmented media landscape that systematically exposes Democrats and Republicans to divergent information environments (Bail 2021; Levendusky and Malhotra 2016). That is, Americans today are increasingly channeled into politically siloed news ecosystems where they are introduced to alternative facts and interpretations of reality, as well as fundamentally incompatible understandings of the imagined community. Nonetheless, we find that a majority of Americans converge on a remarkably similar intuitive portrait of U.S. national membership. This suggests that some features of American national culture may be more politically cross-cutting and resilient to polarization than the current partisan climate implies.

The relationship between educational attainment and perceived Americanness helps to illustrate how partisan conflict can co-exist with consensus. In recent decades, higher education has emerged as a central fault line in American politics: the Democratic Party has become the political home of the credentialed elites, while Republicans have positioned themselves as champions of voters without college degrees who harbor deep skepticism toward universities (Grossmann and Hopkins 2024). Yet despite this divide, our findings reveal a striking point of consensus: higher education is uniformly associated with national identity. In other words, higher education can function simultaneously as a polarized social boundary *and* a shared feature of Americanness.

One caveat of this study is that we do not precisely identify *why* individuals express a particular cultural logic. Whether classification reflects normative commitment, perceptual recognition, or lived experience is a meaningful question, but a separate one from whether the logic itself can be reliably identified and studied. Our paper addresses the latter, and tracing the distinct pathways through which people arrive at shared logics is a natural extension of this framework. Indeed, most existing survey-based approaches to studying national identity, including those that draw on the GSS or ISSP (Bonikowski and DiMaggio 2016; Soehl and Karim 2021), face the same interpretive challenge: they cannot easily distinguish potentially divergent underlying sources of nationalist beliefs within the population. Disentangling these underlying mechanisms remains a fruitful direction for future work.

5.1 Implications for U.S. National Boundaries and Polarization

We offer several additional theoretical and empirical implications. For instance, the broad consistency between the nationalist logics we identify and those uncovered in prior work drawing on data from 2004 to 2016 suggests that Americans' conceptions of national membership are relatively stable over time. This finding is notable given the rapid demographic and political transformations in

the United States over the past two decades. At the same time, our findings depart from prior work in several ways. For instance, we identify a fifth distinct cultural segment—the *exclusive White America* logic—characterized by its emphasis on non-White racial status as the primary marker of exclusion from the symbolic boundaries of nationhood. We also note that most Americans do not position Black Americans as significantly less American than Whites. Indeed, to the extent that race structures nationalist evaluations, Asian and Latino Americans appear to be uniquely disadvantaged. This finding lends empirical weight to scholarship challenging the Black-White binary as the master framework for understanding contemporary race relations (Kim 1999; Zou and Cheryan 2017).

Why do most Americans express a conceptualization of Americanness that is significantly more measured than contemporary polarization narratives would predict? For example, one might expect more Democrats to gravitate towards an *inclusive America* logic that decouples national identity from both civic and ethnic norms. In reality, however, few citizens view national membership as entirely unconditional. Many Democrats (and Republicans) associate behaviors like voting, education, and going to Church with being culturally American. In this sense, these findings echo the notion that many Americans are “ideological innocents” (Converse 2006; Kinder and Kalmoe 2017). That is, rather than being tethered to extreme ideological poles, a substantial portion of the American public gravitate toward more “intuitive” or “common sense” understandings of national membership.

What are the practical implications of our findings? One optimistic reading is that Americans may share more common ground than implied by contemporary political polarization (Levendusky 2018). If Democrats and Republicans converge on similar conceptions of national membership, this latent consensus might offer a basis for cross-partisan dialogue. Indeed, just as research on moral foundations has shown that liberals and conservatives share broadly similar moral intuitions (Blumenau and Lauderdale 2025), our findings raise the possibility that political conflict over the American creed may be more surmountable than it outwardly appears (Kinder and Kalmoe 2017).

At the same time, such an interpretation is, in our view, naively sanguine. Partisan polarization can remain intense and operate independently of whether individuals nominally express similar conceptions of the nation (Finkel et al. 2020; Iyengar et al. 2019). A growing body of work underscores this dynamic. For instance, Americans routinely apply partisan double standards when evaluating public policies and executive actions, shifting their support depending on whether they are associated with in-party or out-party actors (Bernstein et al. 2023). Moreover, ostensibly shared beliefs are often interpreted in antagonistic ways. This is clearly seen in contestations over national icons like Martin Luther King Jr.: although revered across the political spectrum, conservatives often invoke King as a symbol of individualism, Christian morality, and colorblindness, whereas liberals emphasize his critique of structural racism and white supremacy (Yazdiha 2023).

Taken together, our results suggest that partisan debates over U.S. national boundaries may therefore reflect not only *competing* definitions of Americanness but also who is seen as *legitimately*

adhering to shared national understandings. For instance, both Democrats and Republicans explicitly embrace civic participation, such as voting in elections, as a core marker of Americanness. Yet each side regularly denounces the other of undermining this very principle: Republicans criticize Democrats for opposing “common sense” voter identification laws that have broad public support (Nadeem 2024), while Democrats condemn Republicans as vote suppressors over their attempts to purge voter rolls and ban the provision of food and water at the polling line (McKay 2021). In other words, the fact that many Democrats and Republicans express similar underlying cultural logics of Americanness is not in itself at odds with the rise of affective polarization in America (Iyengar et al. 2019). This paradoxical reality underscores the need for scholarly research to examine how putatively shared national understandings can nonetheless serve as sites for symbolic struggle and conflict.

In closing, we return to the methodological contribution of this study. Conjoint designs have become one of the most widely used tools in the social sciences, yet most applications report population-level averages that can obscure meaningful variation in how different segments of the population evaluate various hypothetical profiles or scenarios. Meanwhile, traditional latent class analyses applied to standard survey items often rely on respondents’ explicit, self-reported attitudes, which may be shaped by social desirability and the need to articulate coherent, deliberative positions on abstract questions, inviting “partisan cheerleading” and similar forms of bias. However, combining conjoint data with latent class regression offers a richer picture of social reality than either method would yield alone. We hope this paper both inspires new research using this two-pronged approach and opens the door to reanalyses of existing conjoint data in ways that are certain to yield important new findings.

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Supplementary Appendix

A Sample Selection

Bovitz is an online research panel with nationally representative capabilities in America. Although *Bovitz* does not employ probability sampling, their recruitment was structured to approximate White, Black, Latino, and Asian Americans' U.S. population in terms of gender, age, educational attainment, and political party (i.e., within-race quota sampling). Prior studies have shown that opt-in samples in survey experiments perform similarly to population-based samples (Coppock and McClellan 2019; Mullinix et al. 2015). Moreover, samples obtained from *Bovitz* better approximate probability samples on demographics and attitudes than samples procured from virtually all other recruitment firms (Stagnaro et al. 2024).

Table A1: Sample Characteristics — Target Quotas in Brackets

	White	Black	Latino	Asian
Gender				
Men	48% [49%]	46% [48%]	53% [50%]	49% [48%]
Women	52% [51%]	54% [52%]	47% [50%]	51% [52%]
Age				
18–24	7% [10%]	13% [14%]	16% [16%]	25% [11%]
25–44	42% [30%]	45% [37%]	48% [43%]	38% [40%]
45–64	37% [33%]	33% [32%]	30% [30%]	24% [32%]
65+	15% [26%]	9% [17%]	6% [12%]	13% [17%]
Education				
High School or Less	33% [34%]	40% [43%]	46% [56%]	28% [26%]
Some College	34% [30%]	37% [32%]	32% [25%]	25% [17%]
College Degree or More	33% [37%]	23% [25%]	22% [20%]	46% [56%]
Political Party				
Democrat	30% [27%]	67% [67%]	48% [44%]	43% [45%]
Republican	39% [41%]	5% [5%]	21% [18%]	20% [22%]
Independent	29% [29%]	25% [24%]	30% [33%]	35% [31%]
Other	2% [3%]	2% [3%]	2% [5%]	2% [2%]
Sample Size (<i>N</i>)	1280	590	650	641

Note: Due to rounding, some columns may not add up to 100%.

The quota target estimates for gender, age, education, and party are derived from the 2021 American Community Survey (ACS) and 2020 American National Election Survey (ANES). Overall, 96% of our survey respondents identified as U.S. citizens or legal residents.

B Details on Conjoint Experiment

B.I Profile Attributes

Table B1: Conjoint Attributes and Levels

Attribute	Levels
Race/Ethnicity	(i) White (ii) Black (iii) Latino (iv) Asian
Immigrant Generation	(i) U.S.-Born; Parents or Prior Family U.S.-Born (ii) U.S.-Born; Parents Foreign-Born (iii) Foreign-Born; Became Legal U.S. Citizen
Religion	(i) Christian (ii) Non-Christian Religion (iii) Atheist
Language Fluency	(i) Speaks Fluent English (ii) Speaks Fluent English and a Foreign Language (iii) Speaks English with a Foreign Accent
Political Ideology	(i) Very Conservative (ii) Conservative (iii) Leans Conservative (iv) Moderate (v) Leans Liberal (vi) Liberal (vii) Very Liberal
Civic Engagement	(i) Regularly Votes in Elections (ii) Sometimes Votes in Elections (iii) Rarely Votes in Elections
Favorite Holiday	(i) July 4 th (ii) Thanksgiving (iii) Ethnic Holiday (a) Saint Patrick's Day [<i>White Only</i>] (b) Juneteenth [<i>Black Only</i>] (c) Cinco de Mayo [<i>Latino Only</i>] (d) Lunar New Year [<i>Asian Only</i>]
Educational Attainment	(i) Less Than High School Degree (ii) High School Degree (iii) Some College (iv) College Degree (v) Graduate Degree
Residential Location	(i) Rural (ii) Suburban (iii) Urban

B.2 Attribute Selection Rationale

Race

Whiteness has played a central role in defining American national boundaries since the foundation of the country (Du Bois [1903] 2016). We examine the importance of being White relative to the three largest racial minority groups in the United States (i.e., Black, Latino, and Asian).

Immigrant Generation

Despite the ostensible reputation of the United States as a “nation of immigrants,” longer historical roots in the United States are generally associated with a stronger claim to American identity (Alba and Nee 2003). Nativity also represents one of the most obvious explanations for why Latino and Asian Americans are perceived to be foreign. We include three attribute levels to respectively represent first, second, and third or more generation Americans.

Religion

Much like race, religion—specifically Christianity—has played a foundational, albeit contested, role in the origins and development of U.S. society and remains strongly associated with Americanness (Gorski 2019). In contrast, atheist and non-Christian Americans maintain a fraught claim to national membership (Edgell, Gerteis, and Hartmann 2006). Religion may also help explain previously observed relationships between race and U.S. national boundaries to the extent that Asian Americans are less likely to be Christian than White or Black Americans. We do not specify non-Christian religions (e.g., Muslims, Hindus) to maintain the plausibility of possible profiles (e.g., Latino Hindus).

Language Fluency

There is broad consensus that English fluency is a fundamental and necessary component of being American (Citrin and Wright 2009). Relatedly, the increasing visibility of Spanish first-language speakers has aggravated nationalist beliefs that English should be declared the official language of the United States (Schildkraut 2005). Bilingualism and accented English are therefore likely to be negatively associated with perceived Americanness. We do not include profiles with no English proficiency because all profiles are U.S. citizens, among whom speaking no English at all is exceedingly rare.

Political Ideology

Liberals and conservatives today ruthlessly denounce individuals on the other side as “un-American” and “destroying America” (Gage 2017; Tavernise 2021). This characteristic is also important to account for because racial minorities are stereotypically assumed to be more liberal relative to White Americans. While prior research indicates that political ideology and party are not interchangeable, counter-stereotypic ideological labels can offset these effects of political party (Theodoridis, Goggin, and Deichert 2023). Related research also finds that the political effect of partisan animosity is substantially reduced when policy positions are simultaneously introduced, suggesting that party signals function, in no small part, as a heuristic for underlying ideological commitments (Orr, Fowler, and Huber 2023; Orr and Huber 2020).

Civic Engagement

Prior research has consistently shown that exercising civic duties is strongly linked to being perceived as truly American (Bloemraad 2022; Citrin, Reingold, and Green 1990). Voting is arguably the quintessential and most visible form of American civic engagement. We therefore included profile attributes that described profiles as regularly, sometimes, or rarely voting in elections.

Favorite Holiday

Many Americans associate their national identity with a range of normative cultural behaviors, such as watching the Super Bowl and liking Apple Pie (Hoffmann, Falk, and Manning 2013). In the same vein, we examine whether respondents associated greater levels of Americanness with those who celebrate July 4th or Thanksgiving in contrast to racial/ethnic holidays such as Saint Patrick’s Day, Juneteenth, Cinco de Mayo, and Lunar New Year.

Educational Attainment

We invoke education for two reasons. First, education is a proxy for social class, and high socioeconomic status may be associated with more Americanness. Second, the American Dream is one of the hallmarks of the U.S. national ethos, and it espouses the idea that anyone in the United States can achieve upward social mobility through individual hard work and effort (Devos, Gavin, and Quintana 2010). In this survey, we invoke educational attainment as both a proxy for a person’s socioeconomic status and one’s commitment to the American Dream.

Residential Location

Prior research has explored how the rural-urban community split in the United States relates to perceptions of American identity (Lichter and Brown 2011). For instance, there is a popular belief that rural Americans are unique in retaining their “authentic” American roots (Boot 2022). Racial minorities are also often assumed to live in urban areas.

B.3 Instructions and Instrument Design

B.3.1 Survey Instructions

What does it mean to be an American? On the one hand, there is a technical or legal response to this question, one that emphasizes being born in the United States or obtaining American citizenship through the immigration process.

At the same time, many Americans have a deeper understanding of “Americanness” such that it is possible to have legal U.S. citizenship with different degrees of associated Americanness. The purpose of this survey is to explore these more nuanced ideas of who is more or less viewed as an American.

In the following pages, you will be presented with eight profiles describing American individuals who are **all legal adult U.S. citizen** but differ in many important characteristics. For each profile, please look at the information carefully and imagine the person in your head. You will receive the following kind of information:

Respondents were shown the first profile they would be asked to evaluate on the following page.

B.3.2 Example of a Randomized Profile and Associated Questions

Please review the profile below and picture them in your mind.

Individual <i>i</i>	
Immigrant Generation	U.S.-Born; Parents or Prior Family U.S.-Born
Favorite Holiday	Thanksgiving
Language Fluency	Speaks Fluent English and a Foreign Language
Educational Attainment	Some College
Race	White
Religion	Christian
Political Ideology	Very Liberal
Civic Engagement	Regularly Votes in Elections
Residential Location	Urban

What degree of “Americanness” do **you** associate with Individual *i*?

Low Americanness							High Americanness
(1)	2	3	4	5	6	(7)	
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

What degree of “Americanness” do you think **most Americans** would associate with Individual *i*?

Low Americanness							High Americanness
(1)	2	3	4	5	6	(7)	
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

In total, each survey respondent rated eight randomized profiles.

C LCR Selection and Profile Ratings

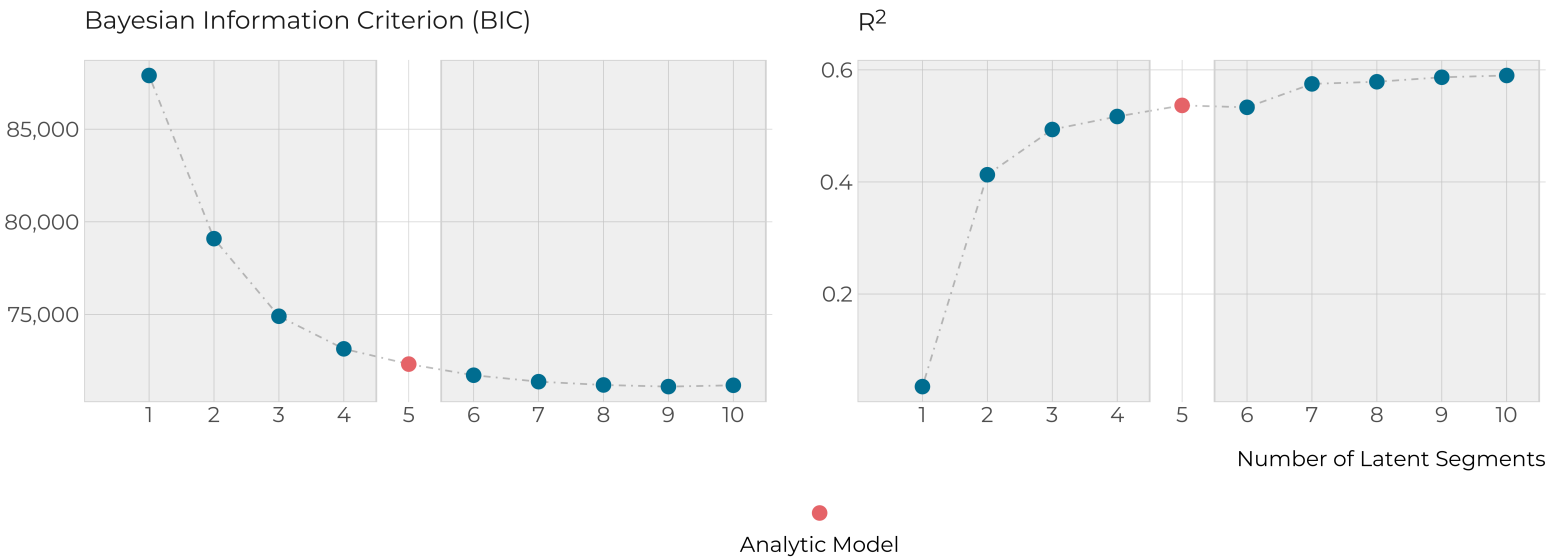


Figure C1: Bayesian information criteria and R^2 values associated with different cluster solutions (k_1 to k_{10}).

Following Bonikowski and DiMaggio (2016; 2022), we use relative fit criteria to adjudicate between 10 different latent cluster solutions. A five-cluster solution fits the data well, corresponding to a partition of the sample space where each segment represents at least 14% of the target population. More granular cluster solutions provide only a modest improvement in model fit, and lead to smaller cultural segments that represent minor permutations of existing clusters. Still, to ensure that our analytic choices are not responsible for our main substantive finding—i.e., limited partisan sorting—we perform robustness checks which are summarized in Figure E3.

Table C1: Five Cultural Logics of Americanness (*Average Marginal Component Effects*)

	Moderate Hybrid (32%)		Restrictive Hybrid (24%)		Inclusive America (15%)		Exclusive White America (15%)		Assimilationist (14%)	
	AMCE	z	AMCE	z	AMCE	z	AMCE	z	AMCE	z
Race										
White	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Latino	-0.22	-4.42	-0.10	-1.89	-0.03	-0.50	-0.46	-3.79	-0.09	-1.69
Black	-0.08	-1.61	0.00	0.01	-0.01	-0.25	-0.32	-2.62	0.06	1.26
Asian	-0.19	-4.10	-0.18	-3.50	-0.07	-1.39	-0.47	-3.87	-0.04	-0.80
Immigrant Generation										
1 st Generation	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2 nd Generation	0.23	6.63	0.08	2.27	0.18	4.92	0.43	5.02	0.15	3.91
3 rd + Generation	0.47	12.85	0.24	6.01	0.25	7.17	0.66	7.59	0.35	9.72
Religion										
Christian	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Non-Christian	-0.12	-3.64	-0.18	-5.09	-0.06	-1.95	-0.51	-5.89	-0.05	-1.56
Atheist	-0.23	-6.66	-0.23	-6.07	-0.10	-3.23	-0.55	-6.26	-0.07	-2.18
English										
Fluent English	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Bilingual	-0.06	-1.90	-0.08	-2.20	0.01	0.16	0.13	1.52	-0.04	-1.29
Foreign Accent	-0.23	-7.04	-0.17	-4.88	-0.03	-1.06	-0.05	-0.59	-0.16	-4.68
Political Ideology										
Very Liberal	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Liberal	0.10	1.89	-0.02	-0.40	-0.04	-0.76	-0.04	-0.32	-0.10	-1.97
Leans Liberal	0.06	1.21	-0.01	-0.13	-0.12	-2.34	-0.07	-0.52	-0.11	-2.30
Moderate	0.07	1.40	0.08	1.50	-0.03	-0.65	0.08	0.57	-0.11	-2.22
Leans Conservative	0.18	3.51	0.09	1.60	-0.01	-0.20	0.36	2.79	-0.08	-1.61
Conservative	0.10	2.01	0.13	2.31	-0.05	-0.96	0.22	1.66	-0.13	-2.63
Very Conservative	0.13	2.55	0.13	2.32	-0.03	-0.67	0.28	2.23	-0.08	-1.54
Civic Engagement										
Regularly Votes	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Sometimes Votes	-0.29	-8.71	-0.13	-3.59	-0.06	-1.88	-0.34	-3.86	-0.08	-2.32
Rarely Votes	-0.46	-13.06	-0.30	-7.94	-0.06	-1.77	-0.56	-6.32	-0.31	-8.40
Favorite Holiday										
July 4 th	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Saint Patrick's Day	-0.15	-2.40	-0.14	-2.24	-0.07	-1.01	-0.16	-1.06	-0.08	-1.25
Thanksgiving	-0.09	-2.68	-0.06	-1.61	0.01	0.19	-0.02	-0.28	-0.01	-0.30
Juneteenth	-0.17	-2.74	-0.12	-1.87	-0.09	-1.15	-0.01	-0.09	-0.20	-2.72
Cinco de Mayo	-0.19	-3.13	-0.23	-3.72	-0.06	-0.88	-0.02	-0.14	-0.19	-3.05
Lunar New Year	-0.32	-5.27	-0.17	-2.63	-0.06	-1.12	-0.37	-2.44	-0.13	-2.28
Education										
Less than HS	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
HS Degree	0.15	3.36	0.08	1.82	0.09	2.01	0.07	0.63	0.09	1.91
Some College	0.16	3.76	0.05	1.19	0.05	1.09	0.18	1.67	0.10	2.26
BA Degree	0.15	3.33	0.15	3.27	0.10	2.39	0.31	2.80	0.16	3.46
BA+ Degree	0.11	2.55	0.12	2.66	0.06	1.36	0.25	2.32	0.14	3.22
Residence										
Rural	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Urban	0.08	2.42	-0.01	-0.37	-0.06	-1.81	-0.06	-0.74	0.01	0.39
Suburban	0.04	1.18	0.04	1.04	-0.04	-1.28	-0.16	-1.88	-0.00	-0.14

Note: Highlighted cells signal that an average marginal component effect (AMCE) is significant at an α of 0.05.

Table C2: Five Cultural Logics of Americanness (*Marginal Mean Ratings*)

	Moderate Hybrid	Restrictive Hybrid	Inclusive America	Exclusive White America	Assimilationist
Race					
White	5.13	4.06	6.79	3.83	6.00
Latino	4.91	3.97	6.76	3.37	5.92
Black	5.05	4.06	6.78	3.51	6.07
Asian	4.94	3.88	6.72	3.37	5.96
Immigrant Generation					
1 st Generation	4.77	3.89	6.62	3.16	5.82
2 nd Generation	5.01	3.97	6.80	3.60	5.97
3 ^{rd+} Generation	5.24	4.13	6.87	3.83	6.17
Religion					
Christian	5.12	4.13	6.82	3.87	6.03
Non-Christian	5.00	3.95	6.75	3.36	5.97
Atheist	4.90	3.90	6.71	3.32	5.95
English					
Fluent English	5.11	4.08	6.77	3.49	6.05
Bilingual	5.05	4.00	6.78	3.62	6.01
Foreign Accent	4.87	3.90	6.74	3.44	5.89
Political Ideology					
Very Liberal	4.91	3.94	6.80	3.40	6.07
Liberal	5.01	3.92	6.76	3.36	5.98
Leans Liberal	4.98	3.93	6.68	3.33	5.96
Moderate	4.99	4.02	6.77	3.48	5.96
Leans Conservative	5.09	4.02	6.79	3.77	5.99
Conservative	5.02	4.07	6.75	3.62	5.94
Very Conservative	5.05	4.07	6.77	3.68	6.00
Civic Engagement					
Regularly Votes	5.26	4.13	6.80	3.82	6.11
Sometimes Votes	4.97	4.00	6.74	3.48	6.03
Rarely Votes	4.80	3.84	6.74	3.26	5.80
Favorite Holiday					
July 4 th	5.11	4.07	6.78	3.58	6.04
Saint Patrick's Day	4.96	3.93	6.71	3.42	5.96
Thanksgiving	5.02	4.01	6.79	3.55	6.03
Juneteenth	4.93	3.94	6.70	3.56	5.85
Cinco de Mayo	4.92	3.84	6.72	3.55	5.85
Lunar New Year	4.78	3.90	6.72	3.20	5.91
Education					
Less than HS	4.89	3.91	6.70	3.36	5.89
HS Degree	5.04	4.00	6.79	3.43	5.97
Some College	5.05	3.97	6.75	3.54	5.99
BA Degree	5.04	4.06	6.81	3.67	6.04
BA+ Degree	5.00	4.03	6.76	3.61	6.03
Residence					
Rural	4.97	3.99	6.79	3.60	5.98
Urban	5.05	3.97	6.74	3.53	6.00
Suburban	5.01	4.02	6.75	3.44	5.98

D Descriptives, Bias-Adjusted Regressions

Table D1: Descriptive Statistics for Variables in Three-Step Regressions (*Weighted*)

	<i>Mean or Share</i>
<hr/> Attitudes Towards Immigration <hr/>	
Pro-Immigrant Sentiment	3.31 ($\sigma = 1.28$)
<hr/> Partisan Identity <hr/>	
Democrat	38.98%
Republican	30.14%
Independent	28.95%
Other	1.93%
<hr/> Race <hr/>	
White	62.41%
Black	12.56%
Latino	18.95%
Asian	6.08%
<hr/> Sex or Gender <hr/>	
Man	48.98%
Woman	50.77%
Other	0.24%
<hr/> Age in Years <hr/>	
Age	44.41 ($\sigma = 15.37$)
<hr/> Religious Affiliation <hr/>	
Protestant	23.06%
Catholic	22.45%
Atheist/Agnostic	14.76%
Spiritual	17.04%
Other	22.68%
<hr/> Immigrant Generation <hr/>	
1 st Generation	10.06%
2 nd Generation	14.84%
3 rd Generation	16.13%
4 ^{th+} Generation	58.97%
<hr/> University Status <hr/>	
No University Degree	69.52%
University Degree	30.48%
<hr/> News Consumption <hr/>	
Not Daily	51.48%
Daily	48.52%
<hr/> Device <hr/>	
Laptop/Desktop	29.12%
Phone/Mobile	65.64%
Tablet	5.23%
<hr/> Region <hr/>	
Northeast	17.26%
Midwest	20.90%
South	43.06%
West	18.78%

Table D2: Three-Step Ordinal Logistic Regression Predicting Pro-Immigrant Sentiment

	AME	z
Cultural Logic		
Moderate Hybrid	—	—
Restrictive Hybrid	-0.27	-4.45
Inclusive America	0.63	8.81
Exclusive White America	-0.57	-6.80
Assimilationist	0.35	4.82
Partisan Identity		
Democrat	—	—
Republican	-0.82	-14.49
Independent	-0.54	-9.88
Other	-0.24	-1.62
Race		
White	—	—
Black	0.09	1.33
Latino	0.11	1.51
Asian	0.15	1.05
Sex or Gender		
Man	—	—
Woman	0.04	0.88
Other	0.53	1.29
Age		
Age in Years	-0.01	-9.21
Religious Affiliation		
Protestant	—	—
Catholic	-0.21	-3.18
Atheist/Agnostic	0.13	1.73
Spiritual	0.17	2.43
Other	-0.08	-1.23
Immigrant Generation		
1 st Generation	—	—
2 nd Generation	-0.04	-0.38
3 rd Generation	-0.06	-0.56
4 ^{th+} Generation	-0.33	-3.57
University Status		
No University Degree	—	—
University Degree	0.11	2.28
News Consumption		
Not Daily	—	—
Daily	0.09	1.96
Device		
Laptop/Desktop	—	—
Phone/Mobile	0.05	0.94
Tablet	-0.03	-0.33
Region		
Northeast	—	—
Midwest	0.31	4.46
South	0.19	3.05
West	0.28	3.95

Note: Table displays average marginal effects (AMEs) of respondent attributes on supporting more immigration from Asia and Latin America. Highlighted cells signal that an AME is significant at an α of 0.05. As noted in the main text, Latent GOLD produces mean marginal effect estimates for ordinal logistic regressions that account for different ordinal cutpoints.

Table D3: Three-Step Multinomial Logistic Regression Predicting Class Membership (AMEs)

	Moderate Hybrid		Restrictive Hybrid		Inclusive America		Exclusive White America		Assimilationist	
	AME	z	AME	z	AME	z	AME	z	AME	z
Partisan Identity										
Democrat	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Republican	-0.03	-1.05	0.04	1.71	-0.05	-2.70	0.07	3.30	-0.04	-2.03
Independent	0.01	0.35	0.03	1.13	0.02	1.20	0.00	-0.20	-0.06	-2.90
Other	0.12	1.46	-0.04	-0.74	-0.03	-0.65	-0.04	-0.89	-0.01	-0.10
Race										
White	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Black	0.00	0.13	0.00	-0.14	-0.02	-1.17	0.08	2.92	-0.06	-2.64
Latino	0.11	2.89	-0.01	-0.21	0.00	-0.02	-0.01	-0.64	-0.09	-4.10
Asian	0.09	1.32	0.03	0.54	-0.03	-0.78	-0.02	-0.44	-0.07	-1.99
Sex or Gender										
Man	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Woman	-0.01	-0.61	-0.03	-1.52	0.01	1.01	0.00	0.14	0.02	1.64
Other	0.07	0.29	-0.13	-0.59	0.05	0.29	-0.14	-12.81	0.16	1.12
Age										
Age in Years	-0.00	-0.52	-0.00	-0.93	0.00	0.35	-0.00	-1.77	0.00	3.40
Religious Affiliation										
Protestant	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Catholic	0.04	1.13	0.00	0.02	-0.04	-1.88	-0.01	-0.50	0.01	0.50
Atheist/Agnostic	-0.03	-0.90	-0.10	-3.29	0.11	4.10	-0.04	-1.61	0.06	2.09
Spiritual	-0.00	-0.13	-0.04	-1.45	0.04	1.55	-0.02	-0.92	0.03	1.27
Other	-0.06	-1.87	0.03	1.19	0.02	1.16	0.02	0.78	-0.02	-1.00
Immigrant Generation										
1 st Generation	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2 nd Generation	-0.01	-0.24	0.00	-0.01	-0.01	-0.31	0.03	0.80	-0.01	-0.21
3 rd Generation	0.08	1.64	-0.04	-0.83	0.01	0.37	0.00	0.01	-0.01	-1.34
4 ^{th+} Generation	0.03	0.75	-0.02	-0.37	0.02	0.78	0.02	0.53	-0.06	-1.56
University Status										
No University Degree	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
University Degree	0.07	2.95	-0.06	-3.09	0.02	1.48	-0.07	-4.38	0.04	2.56
News Consumption										
Not Daily	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Daily	-0.05	-2.27	-0.07	-3.62	0.08	5.44	-0.01	-0.43	0.04	2.71
Device										
Laptop/Desktop	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Phone/Mobile	0.02	0.79	0.02	0.85	0.00	-0.25	0.01	0.60	-0.04	-2.56
Tablet	0.07	1.44	0.03	0.72	0.00	-0.05	-0.05	-1.38	-0.06	-1.77
Region										
Northeast	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Midwest	0.02	0.51	-0.05	-1.50	0.00	0.13	0.00	0.00	0.03	1.21
South	-0.03	-0.93	-0.05	-1.86	0.00	0.04	0.04	1.56	0.04	2.24
West	-0.04	-1.05	0.00	0.02	0.02	0.84	-0.03	-1.24	0.05	1.97

Note: Table displays average marginal effects (AMEs) of respondent characteristics on cluster membership. Highlighted cells signal that an AME is significant at an α of 0.05.

Table D4: Three-Step Multinomial Logistic Regression Predicting Class Membership (*Marginal Probabilities*)

	Moderate Hybrid	Restrictive Hybrid	Inclusive America	Exclusive White America	Assimilationist
Partisan Identity					
Democrat	0.32	0.21	0.16	0.13	0.17
Republican	0.30	0.25	0.12	0.20	0.14
Independent	0.33	0.24	0.19	0.12	0.12
Other	0.44	0.17	0.13	0.09	0.17
Race					
White	0.30	0.23	0.16	0.14	0.17
Black	0.31	0.23	0.14	0.22	0.11
Latino	0.41	0.23	0.16	0.12	0.08
Asian	0.40	0.27	0.13	0.11	0.10
Sex or Gender					
Man	0.33	0.25	0.15	0.14	0.13
Woman	0.31	0.22	0.16	0.15	0.16
Other	0.40	0.11	0.20	0.00	0.29
Age					
20 Years Old	0.35	0.24	0.13	0.16	0.12
40 Years Old	0.31	0.24	0.16	0.16	0.13
60 Years Old	0.32	0.23	0.16	0.13	0.17
Religious Affiliation					
Protestant	0.33	0.25	0.13	0.15	0.14
Catholic	0.37	0.25	0.10	0.14	0.15
Atheist/Agnostic	0.30	0.15	0.24	0.11	0.19
Spiritual	0.33	0.21	0.17	0.13	0.17
Other	0.27	0.28	0.16	0.17	0.11
Immigrant Generation					
1 st Generation	0.29	0.25	0.14	0.13	0.20
2 nd Generation	0.27	0.25	0.13	0.16	0.19
3 rd Generation	0.37	0.21	0.15	0.13	0.14
4 ^{th+} Generation	0.32	0.23	0.16	0.15	0.14
University Status					
No University Degree	0.30	0.25	0.15	0.17	0.13
University Degree	0.37	0.19	0.17	0.10	0.17
News Consumption					
Not Daily	0.34	0.27	0.12	0.15	0.12
Daily	0.29	0.20	0.20	0.14	0.17
Device					
Laptop/Desktop	0.30	0.22	0.16	0.14	0.18
Phone/Mobile	0.32	0.24	0.15	0.15	0.13
Tablet	0.38	0.25	0.16	0.10	0.12
Region					
Northeast	0.33	0.27	0.15	0.14	0.11
Midwest	0.35	0.22	0.15	0.13	0.14
South	0.31	0.21	0.15	0.17	0.16
West	0.30	0.27	0.17	0.11	0.16

Note: Table displays marginal probabilities of cluster membership as a function of respondent characteristics.

E Additional Analyses and Robustness Checks

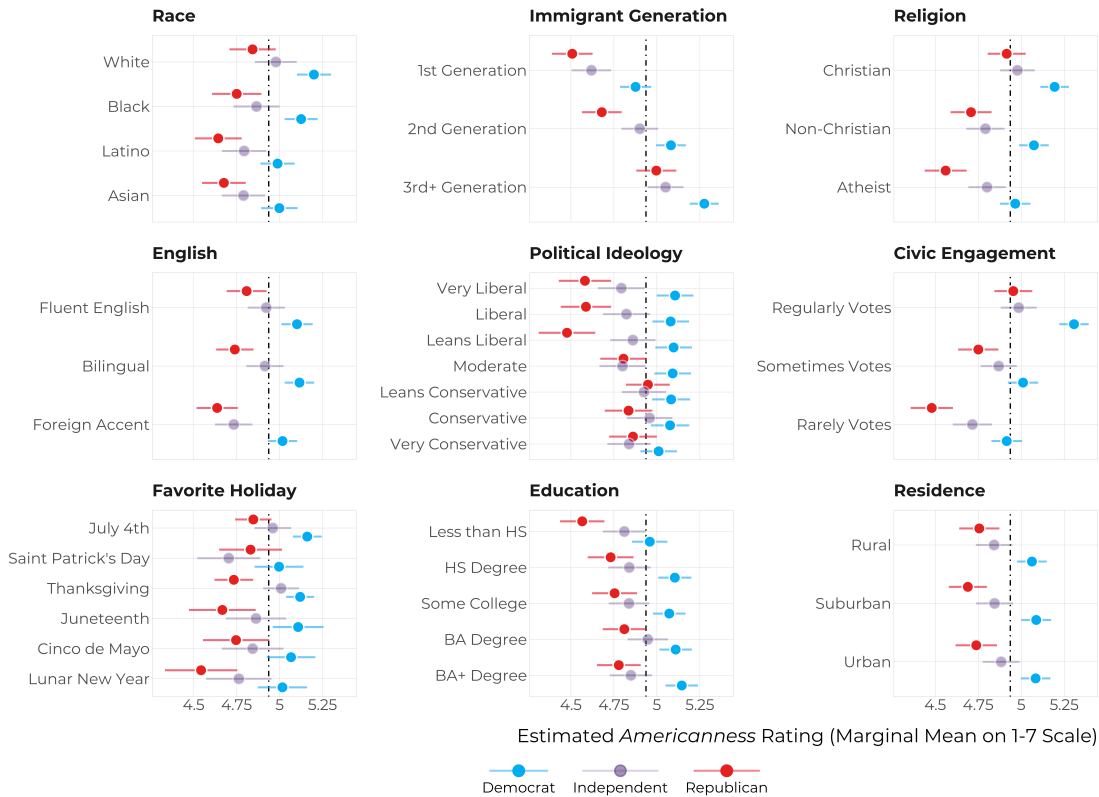


Figure E1: Marginal means of *Americanness* on a 1-7 scale by respondent’s party affiliation, estimated on a balanced grid of attribute profiles. Dots and whiskers represent point estimates and 95% confidence intervals, respectively. Results are based on a fully interacted (and implicitly *one-class*) model, with partisanship conditioning means for each attribute featured in the conjoint experiment. Vertical lines in each panel represent the estimated grand mean of *Americanness*. Respondents who do not identify as Democrat, Republican, or Independent are omitted from the plot to improve legibility.

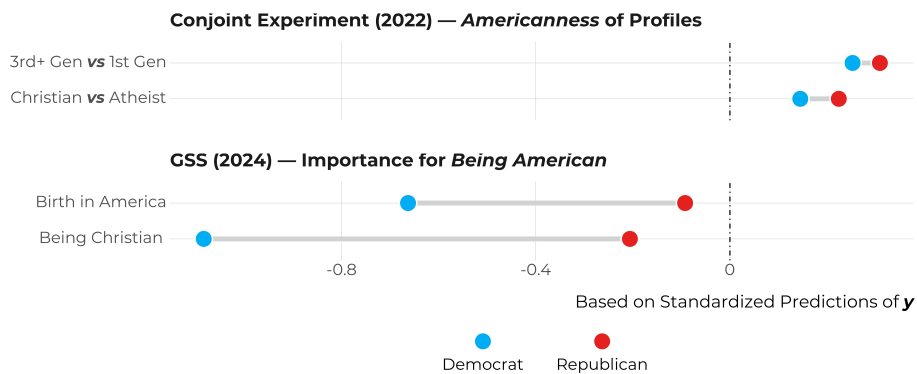


Figure E2: Partisan differences in understandings of America’s national boundaries across two survey contexts. To facilitate cross-study comparisons, the top panel re-estimates the model from Figure E1 using a standardized outcome and highlights contrasts between select attribute levels by party. The bottom panel draws on the 2024 *General Social Survey* (GSS), where respondents rated the importance of five criteria for being “truly American” on a 4-point scale. The two highlighted GSS items (see *y-axis*) clearly correspond to attributes in our conjoint (*Immigrant Generation*; *Religion*); bottom row estimates are derived from a linear model regressing standardized importance scores on an interaction between GSS boundary indicator and party identification. Only Democrat *vs* Republican differences are shown.

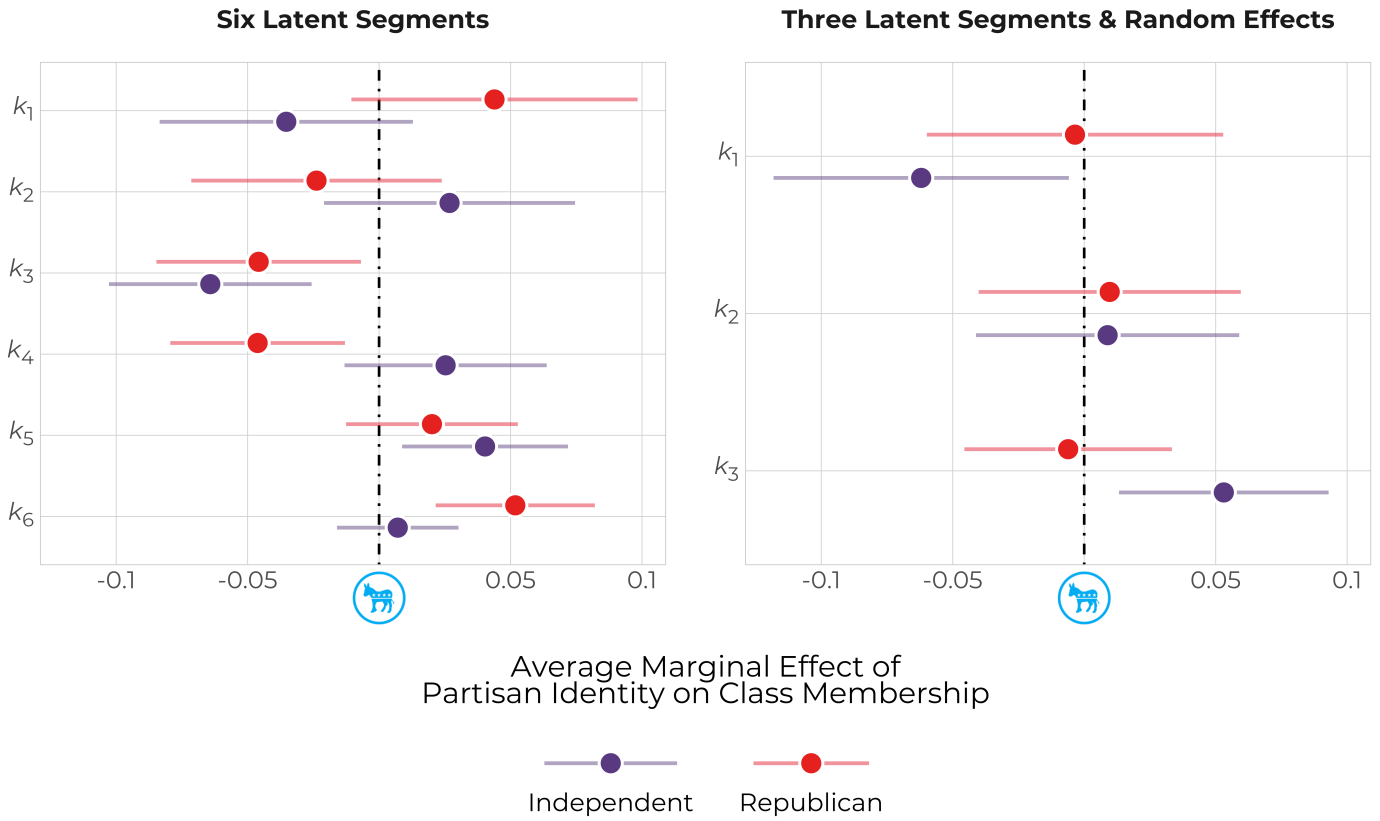


Figure E3: Average marginal effect of partisan identity on class membership based on two alternative latent class regression models: (i) a more granular six-class specification, and (ii) a three-class model that introduces individual-level random intercepts to account for variation in scale usage (the three-cluster solution is the best-fitting parameterization of our latent class regression with random intercepts). Dots and whiskers represent point estimates and 95% confidence intervals, respectively. For legibility, estimates associated with partisan identities falling outside the conventional triumvirate (Democrat, Independent, Republican) are not displayed.

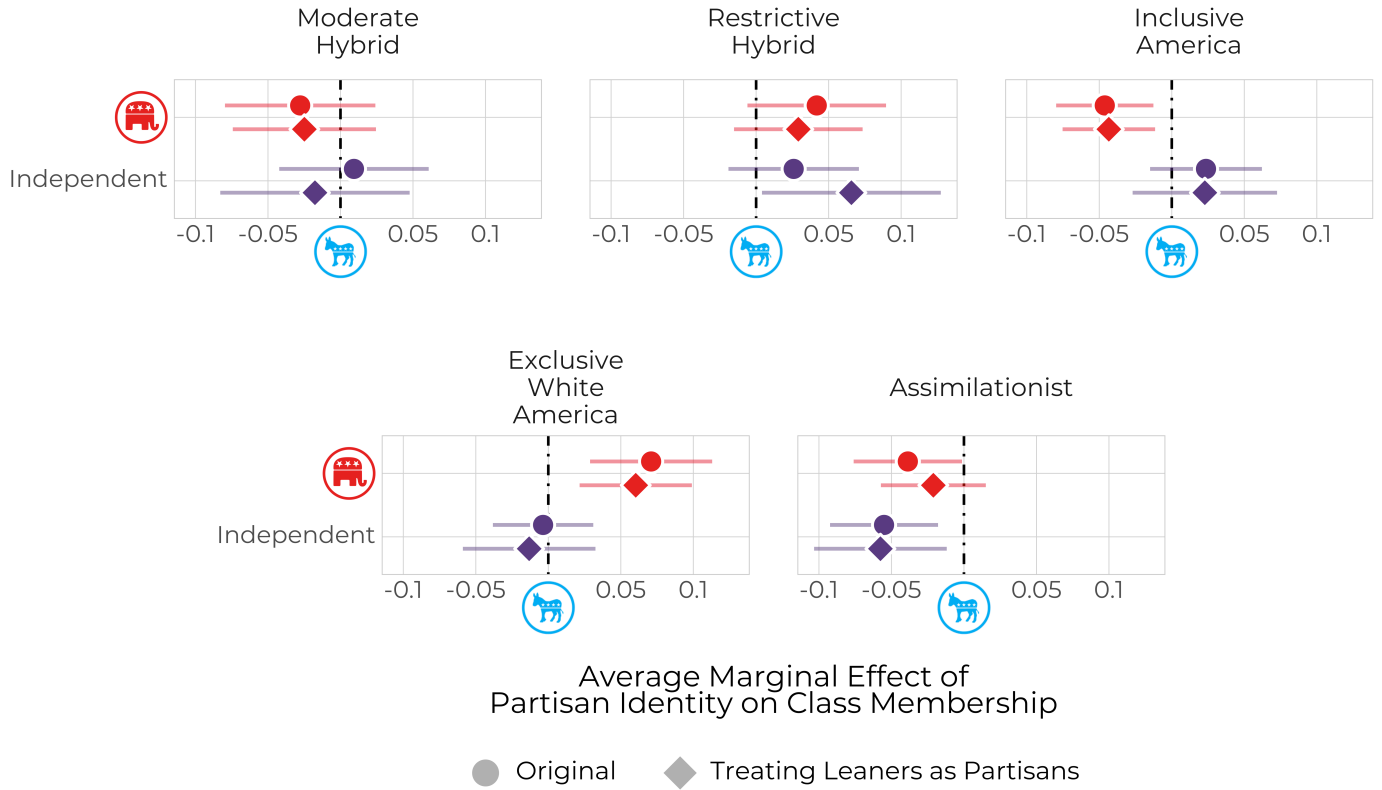


Figure E4: Average marginal effect of partisan identity on class membership for two models: (i) the original, three-step specification featured in the main text, and (ii) an alternative three-step model where *leaners* (i.e., Independents who prefer one of the two parties) are treated as partisans. Dots and whiskers represent point estimates and 95% confidence intervals. For legibility, estimates associated with partisan identities falling outside the conventional triumvirate (Democrat, Independent, Republican) are not displayed.

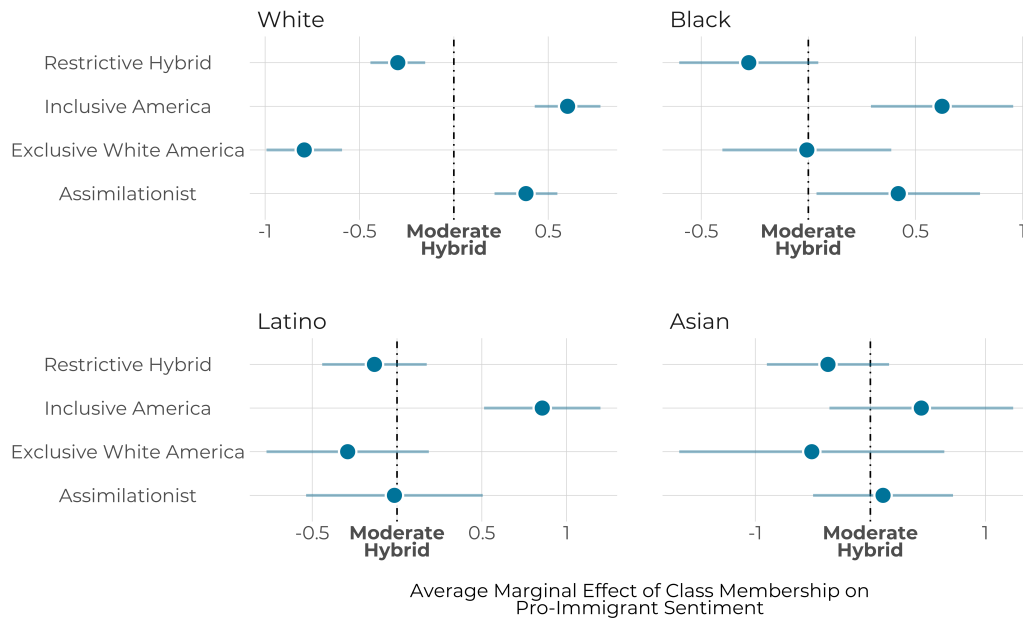


Figure E5: Race-specific average marginal effects of class membership on support for expansionist immigration to the United States from Latin America and Asia. 95% confidence intervals are provided. Estimates come from a three-step model interacting respondent race with cluster membership, with the same set of covariates detailed in the main text.

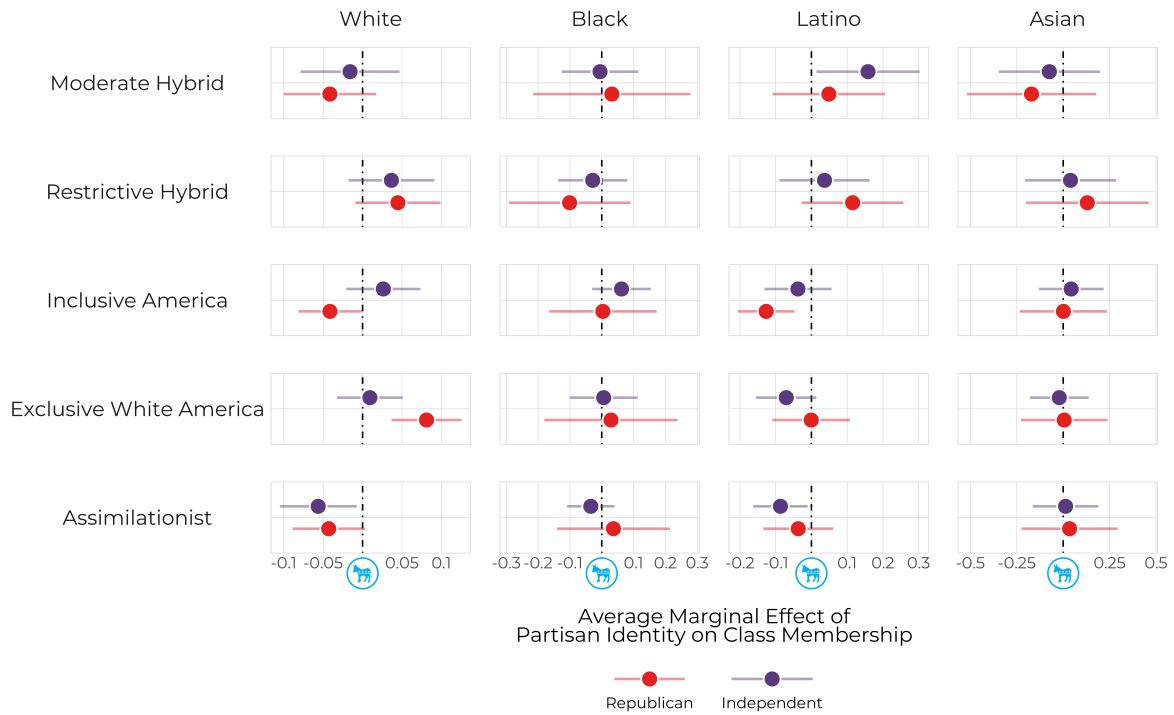


Figure E6: Average marginal effects of partisan identity on class membership—by race. 95% confidence intervals are shown. Estimates are derived from a three-step model interacting respondent race with partisanship on the right-hand side, along with the covariate adjustment set detailed in the main text.

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