

Who Gives, Who Takes? “Real America” and Contributions to the Nation–State

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Abstract

Although service to the nation–state features in academic and lay understandings of patriotism, claims of patriotism are rarely examined alongside contributions to the nation–state. The present study examines four behaviors—military enlistment, voting, monetary contributions, and census response—to evaluate the claim that certain parts of the United States, and specifically the communities of “real America,” contribute more than others to the country overall. Consistent with the words of several electoral candidates, ruralness, religiosity, political conservatism, and gun culture collectively identify a distinctive set of communities where residents are both more likely to report “American” as their ancestry and to vote for Republican presidential candidates, including Donald Trump. However, visual and statistical evidence undermine the claim that these communities contribute more than other parts of the country. Instead, and in several respects, these communities make smaller contributions to the nation–state than one would expect based on other characteristics. The findings undermine divisive claims about a “real” America that gives more than its “fair share.”

Keywords

real America, nation state, polarization, nationalism, Americanness

Academic and lay understandings of patriotism stress the importance of service to the nation–state. However, empirical studies typically examine attitudinal patriotism—real

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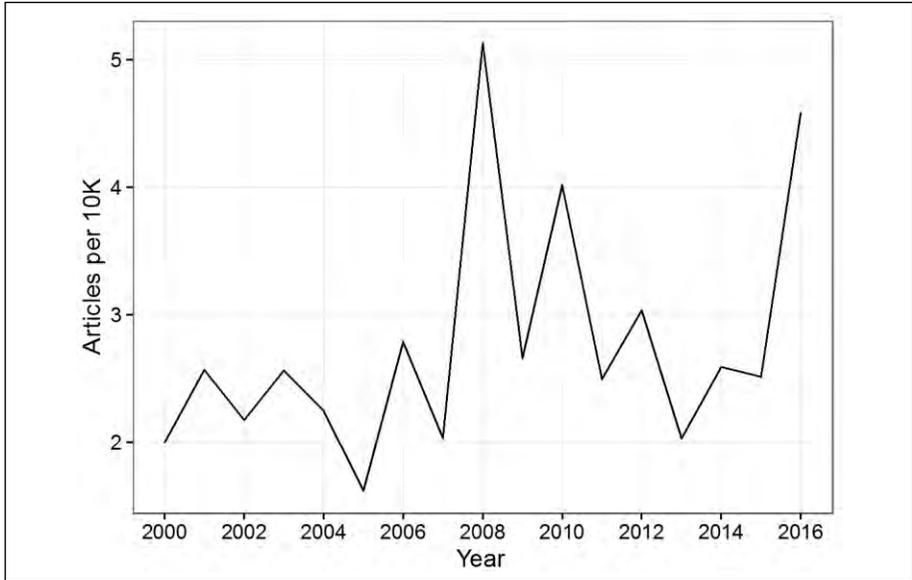


Figure 1. Relative prevalence of articles that mention “Real America/n/s.”
Source. Authors’ calculations using Factiva data for *The New York Times*, *USA Today*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *The Washington Post*.

or perceived—without reference to behaviors that maintain and reproduce the nation–state. To this end, we look to behaviors that can be examined across a variety of nation–state contexts and in relation to other, more familiar dimensions of patriotism, such as self-identification. These behaviors, which include military enlistment, voting, monetary contributions, and census-taking, represent quotidian practices through which the nation–state is reproduced literally and in the collective imagination of its citizens (Bonikowski, 2016; see also Billig, 1995).

We examine these behaviors alongside two controversial claims: first, that certain parts of the United States are more patriotic and more authentically American, in part, because they contribute more than others to the nation–state; second, that these are the same communities that voted for Donald Trump in the 2016 election. Given that “patriotism” is a rhetorical weapon—one with growing traction in the United States and abroad—establishing an empirical basis for such contentions has become increasingly important.

In the United States, regional patterns of service bear on an almost decade-long dispute about the composition and location of the “real America.” The dispute follows remarks made by conservative figures in 2008—including John McCain and Sarah Palin—about a “real America” inhabited by “real Americans.”¹ Though such rhetoric receded to the background during the 2012 election,² it again rose to prominence in 2016 (Figure 1), which witnessed the election of Donald Trump. Trump’s campaign implicitly followed such lines, prompting discussions among Trump

supporters and journalists alike about “real Americans,” who they are, what they care about, and whom they support.³

The present study also speaks to the empirical literature on the polarization of the American populace. The framework of this study implicitly recognizes that nation–states are not unitary entities, but rather “zones of conflict” (Hutchinson, 2005) where opposing actors espouse different views of the nation and its legitimate members. This perspective frees us to examine geographic heterogeneity *within* the boundaries of one nation–state as conceived and institutionalized (see Brubaker, 1994).

Background and Theory

Theorizing Patriotism

What do we mean by patriotism, and by distinction, nationalism? In this article, we take the view that patriotism represents devotion to an institutionalized state, while nationalism represents devotion to a community that is subjectively experienced as a nation (Johnson, 1997; Kashti, 1997). The fundamental distinction between nationalism and patriotism is that patriotism is “conditional upon the existence of a state, whereas a state is neither a requisite condition nor a characteristic of nationalism” (Kashti, 1997, p. 155).⁴ This framework closely resembles lay understandings of patriotism as devotion to a sovereign, institutionalized nation–state. In the next section, we illustrate how the widely publicized remarks of three conservative candidates convey this notion of patriotism.

What does patriotic devotion to a nation–state entail? Scholars stress two elements: psychology and behavior, or as Kashti (1997) puts it, “identity and action.” Regarding the psychological element of patriotism, social psychologists contend that patriotism is rooted in the universal human desire to belong to a group that is positively evaluated (Bar-Tal, 1997). Worchel and Coutant (1997) similarly regard patriotism and nationalism as products of “the individual’s quest for the enhancement of his or her identity” (p. 194). The psychological dimension of patriotism has received a great deal of attention in previous research, and patriotism is almost universally measured using attitudinal survey questions. These measures distinguish between various cognitive and affective manifestations of patriotism (Huddy & Khatib, 2007; Kosterman & Feshbach, 1989; Schwartz et al., 2012).

Discussions of patriotism also feature behavior. According to Bar-Tal and Staub (1997), for example, patriotism “implies behaviors that benefit the group” (p. 2). Worchel and Coutant (1997) similarly argue that “patriotism consists of acts and beliefs based on securing the identity and the welfare of the group without regard to self-identity or self-interest” (p. 193). For some scholars, intention alone is not enough. According to Tamir (1997), for example, behavior itself is a necessary component of patriotism:

If I have never betrayed my country but have never committed any time or devoted any efforts to support it, I can hardly be described as a loyal citizen. I might be a law-abiding citizen but not a loyal one, and I am certainly not a patriot. (p. 32)

Scholars of patriotism typically attend to behaviors with several, distinctive characteristics. First, these behaviors are systemically beneficial: they facilitate the maintenance and reproduction of an institutionalized state. Second, they entail self-sacrifice, often considerable (Bar-Tal & Staub, 1997; Nathanson, 1997; Worchel & Coutant, 1997). However, not all citizens are expected to make the same sacrifices, because perceived obligations to the state are role-specific (Tamir, 1997). For example, the expectation of military service is greater for male citizens and the expectation of tax-paying is greater for wealthy ones.

Of course, patriotic sentiments are not the only source of systemically beneficial behavior. Drafts, tax audits, and compulsory voting laws, for example, incentivize cooperation (and sanction noncooperation) without appealing to psychological attachments. Along these lines, voting may be considered a hallmark of good citizenship in the United States, but not in Australia, where it is compulsory. In short, patriotic sentiments are neither necessary nor sufficient for motivating systemically beneficial behavior, and expectations for specific contributions vary across citizens. In light of these complications, scholars have tended to study patriotic attitudes and speculate about the behaviors that stem from them.

Regardless, systemically beneficial behaviors merit empirical attention. First, behavior is central to popular understandings of patriotism, which stress the role of service to the nation–state. Additionally, any complete understanding of patriotic sentiments must take behavior into account, because such behaviors can independently influence sentiments. It is not difficult to see how identification with a national community can serve as a basis for collective action (Calhoun, 1997). Social psychologists have repeatedly shown that individuals who identify more strongly with a group are more likely to come to its aid even at their own expense (Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 1999; Turner, 1999). It is also true, however, that participation in state institutions, like the military, can strengthen identification (Leal, 1999). After all, acting on behalf of the state gives citizens the “opportunity to reflect on, reinterpret, and change patterns of behavior, practices, and beliefs” (Tamir, 1997, p. 39). In this article, we do not attempt to disentangle the causal arrows that lead from attitudes to behavior and vice versa, but rather to examine the correspondence between pro-state behaviors and regional claims to patriotism.

We also do not claim that behavioral indicators are more valid than attitudinal ones or that some American communities are more patriotic than others. In the United States, for example, tax liability is largely involuntary and highly correlated with income. To claim that monetary contributions alone represent commitment to the nation–state would be both false and dangerous. It would also be a serious misreading of this article. After all, behavior is not definitive “proof of patriotism.” However, according to scholars like Tamir (1997), *neither are attitudes*. If we stand by the claim that patriotism entails identity *and* action, we can either examine both or we can accept regional claims of authenticity and devotion at face value. This article examines the geographic distribution of service in an effort to evaluate the claim that some, presumably more patriotic, parts of the United States contribute more than others to the country as a whole.

Contributions to the Nation–State

Although specific expectations vary from citizen to citizen, scholars consistently highlight certain obligations to the nation–state. Classical citizenship theorists G. W. F. Hegel (1820/1991) and T. H. Marshall (1949/1992) identified military service and monetary contributions as the foremost obligations of citizens.

In the American context, voting also emerges as both a right and duty of citizens, an idea rooted in an ideological tradition of civic republicanism (Janowitz, 1983). Most Americans regard voting as the “most basic act of good citizenship” (Schildkraut, 2011, p. 155). In addition to expressing constituent preferences to state officials, electoral participation broadly legitimates the political system (Przeworski, 1985). Academics are not alone in making the case for these three obligations: many Americans agree that taxpaying, military service, and voting are hallmarks of a “good American” (Theiss-Morse, 2009).

In this article, we also consider a fourth behavior: census taking. Few scholars have explored regional patterns of census response. Nevertheless, census taking is a systematically beneficial behavior that—unlike taxpaying or military service—is universally expected of all households. The decision to complete and return a census questionnaire by mail involves small private costs that aggregate to substantial collective outcomes. For example, the failure to mail in a census form poses a direct cost to the state in the form of follow-up attempts and in-person enumeration. And because census figures are used to secure federal grants, an uncounted individual costs his or her community roughly 5,000 dollars over a 10-year period (Vigdor, 2004). Finally, the questions if and how Americans should respond to the census have recently become subjects of public debate, as we discuss below.

Though ours is among the first studies to consider these behaviors alongside claims of attitudinal patriotism, previous studies have examined the individual and contextual determinants of military service, voting, monetary contributions, and census taking. Race/ethnicity, socioeconomic resources, and civic skills have been identified repeatedly as important predictors of voting (Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995) and the other behaviors under scrutiny. For example, (a) household income is negatively associated with net fiscal receipts, as would be expected of a progressive tax and benefits system (Chamberlain & Prante, 2007); (b) Black Americans disproportionately serve in the active duty ranks of the U.S. military (Watkins & Sherk, 2008); and (c) non-Hispanic Whites are most likely to mail in census forms (Word, 1997). In light of these findings, our analyses control for systematic differences across communities in terms of demographic composition and resources.

A “Real America” of “Real Americans”

Service to the nation–state is central to a debate about whether some parts of the United States are more patriotic—more truly “American”—than others. In this section, we turn to recent developments in order to identify which communities are perceived as part of “real America.”

Leading up to the 2008 presidential election, presidential candidate John McCain, running mate Sarah Palin, and North Carolina congressional incumbent Robin Hayes made widely publicized remarks about a “real America” inhabited by “real Americans.” In these remarks, they claimed that certain communities are more patriotic, more authentically “American,” than others, because they contribute more to the country overall. As McCain put it, people in the “heartland . . . love their country and they serve it.” Palin agreed, but homed in on military service specifically: “real Americans,” she asserted, are “those who are fighting are wars for us, those who are protecting us in uniform.”

McCain, Palin, and Hayes’s comments marked the start an ongoing debate about whether some parts of the United States contribute more than their “fair share.”⁵ Even today, article counts suggest that the “real America” debate has endured. Articles using the terms “real America/n/s” proliferated anew in 2016. Today, the probability that an article published in one of four, major national newspapers mentions “real America/n/s” is more than three times that of pre-2008 levels.⁶

These comments were only the most recent and remarked-on manifestation of a well-worn political strategy: the monopolization of patriotism. According to Andrews (1997), representatives of the American Right have questioned their opponents’ commitment to the United States since at least the mid-20th century when the Republican Party “successfully asserted its control of the ‘patriotism industry’” (p. 274). The implications of labeling someone, or some people, unpatriotic are profound: “The identification of a person or subgroup as non-patriotic is in essence an exclusion from the nation itself” (Bar-Tal, 1997, p. 257). The present study brings empirical data to bear on the claim that certain parts of the country serve the nation–state more than others. Specifically, we examine the prevalence of pro-state behaviors in those communities touted as the “real America.”

We also examine whether communities that supported Trump (a) overlap with those portrayed as the “real America” and (b) contribute more than others to the nation–state. The 2016 election was framed as a battle between the “real people” in “real America” who supported Donald Trump, and the “coastal elites” living in a “bubble” who supported Hillary Clinton. This narrative surfaced on ABC News⁷ and on NPR⁸; it was chewed over in the opinion pages of major newspapers, like *The Washington Post* (Cohen, 2016; Robinson, 2017), and online in conservative (Minter, 2016) and liberal outlets alike (Eisenstat, 2017). The 2016 Republican National Convention was rife with references to “real” Americans, “average” Americans, and “middle” Americans (*PR Newswire*, 2016). Implicit in such remarks was a claim that “real” Americans sacrifice more than others for the good of the country. In the words of one Republican National Convention speaker, “Americans know that each of us has a duty, and [are] ready to do it”; in the words of another, being an American “doesn’t mean getting free stuff. It means sacrificing.”

Before we can evaluate contributions made by “Trump’s America” and “real America” (and the extent to which they overlap), we need to locate “real America.” From public speeches, ads, tweets, and so on, a remarkably consistent picture emerges of “real America,” even as people fiercely dispute this region’s presumed monopoly

on authenticity and patriotism. "Real America" is characterized by four defining features: ruralness, religiosity, conservatism, and gun culture.⁹ First, "real Americans" reside in small towns and rural areas, rather than large, coastal cities. According to Palin,

The best of America is not in Washington, DC. We believe that the best of American is in the small towns that we get to visit, and in the wonderful pockets of what I call "the real America."

McCain similarly sang the praises of small town America: "Western Pennsylvania is the most patriotic, most God-loving part of America." It is fitting that they gave these speeches in Western Pennsylvania (McCain) and North Carolina (Palin, Hayes), rather than urban centers or state capitals. Real Americans are also religious. According to McCain, "real Americans" "love their religion," and according to Hayes, they "believe in God." "Real Americans" share another trait: they are not liberals. As Hayes bluntly put it, "Liberals hate real Americans." His words fit Andrews's (1997) characterization of the American Right as the collective "arbitrator of what it means to be 'American'" (p. 279).

Finally, "real Americans" love their guns and are fearful of government attempts to control them.¹⁰ This claim underlay a recent ad campaign by the National Rifle Association. The ad features a wizened cowboy contrasting the gun loving "heartland where the people will defend this nation with their bloody, calloused bare hands" with the "fresh-faced flower child president [Barack Obama] and his weak-kneed Ivy League friends." Ironically, Obama himself voiced the notion that ruralness, religiosity, conservatism, and gun culture delineate a distinct part of the country, though he did not claim that this part of the country is more authentic or patriotic than others. In an (in)famous fundraiser speech, Obama described the residents of small town America as people who "cling to guns [and] religion."

While politicians rhapsodize about the "real America," a parallel development has been underway: millions of Americans are reporting "American" as their primary ancestry. When the ancestry question first appeared on the long-form census in 1980, 6.5% of respondents listed "American" as their "ancestry or ethnic origin"; in recent years, this number has hovered between 8% and 9%.¹¹ This development predates the 2008 election, with the largest growth between 1990 and 2000. In fact, in the 1990s, "American" was the fastest growing ancestry in the United States (Brittingham & de la Cruz, 2004).

The emergence and growth of so-called "unhyphenated Americans" immediately drew academic interest (see Alba, 1992; Alba & Chamlin, 1983; Lieberman, 1985; Lieberman & Waters, 1988). Unhyphenated Americans are all the more remarkable because this response is discouraged by the Census Bureau and heavily recoded during post enumeration, for example, among self-identified "Americans" who also report another ancestry. According to the most popular interpretation, self-identified "Americans" are simply later-generation descendants of immigrants who are "unaware" of their immigrant past (Lieberman & Waters, 1988, p. 50) and "unable" to

identify with it (Alba, 1992, p. 42). We do not dispute the claim that, for some, “American” reflects a lack of ancestral identification or information.

We suspect, however, that aggregate patterns of American identification also contain clues to the boundaries of “real America/n/s” as many people perceive them. If choosing “American” were simply a matter of inaccuracy, we would not expect reporting to vary dramatically by race/ethnicity and independently of immigrant generation. Instead, we find that non-Hispanic Whites make up over 95% of those who report “American” but only 64% of fourth-plus-generation Americans; meanwhile, African Americans make up nearly 17% of fourth-plus-generation immigrants but only 2.5% of unhyphenated Americans.¹²

These patterns are consistent with an extensive literature on dominant ethnicity, which holds that dominant groups claim ownership over the nation, its boundaries, and symbols (Kaufmann, 2004; Sidanius et al., 1997). In the United States, the dominant group consists of Whites of European ancestry, who have “successfully cast the national identity with [their] own identity (i.e., American = Anglo American or European American)” (Doane, 1997, p. 379). Accordingly, U.S. Whites consistently report higher levels of patriotism than Blacks, Latinos, or Asians (Schildkraut, 2011; Sidanius & Petrocik, 2001; Theiss-Morse, 2009).¹³ With important qualifications (Abascal, 2015; Transue, 2007), Americans continue to implicitly associate Americanness with Whiteness (Cheryan & Monin, 2005; Devos & Banaji, 2005).¹⁴

In light of the theoretical and empirical association between race/ethnicity and patriotism, we take the view that “American” is more than a “convenient label of those people who do not know or are not interested in their ethnic background” (Lieberson & Waters, 1988, p. 267). Several other facts support this reading. First, unhyphenated Americans are generally less educated and have lower incomes, challenging the notion that they are simply the later-generation immigrants to whom recent arrivals are assimilating (Lieberson, 1985). Second, the growing share of unhyphenated Americans has coincided with an *increase* in the size of the immigrant population. Third, part of this growth can be attributed to a “census-reform movement” led by conservative media personalities in the wake of the 2008 election. These figures encouraged readers and listeners to write “American” on the census’s race and ancestry questions (Krikorian, 2010; Limbaugh, 2010; Malkin, 2010) in order to signal both their status as “real Americans” and their rejection of “half-baked, liberal social policies,” presumably based on racial/ethnic enumeration (von Spakovsky, 2010).

We are not the first to argue that the decision to report “American” as one’s ancestry bears a specific, ethnic character: Alba (1992), for example, contends that the growth of unhyphenated Americans signifies the rise of a new, European-origin ethnic group. Generational considerations probably drive part of the decision to identify as “American,” but so does a privileged sense of national membership rooted in an ideology of a dominant national ethnicity (Kaufmann, 2004). Responses to the census ancestry question are, admittedly, an indirect proxy for psychological attachment to the nation–state. It is, nevertheless, the only such attitudinal measure for which reliable estimates are available at the county level. In this study, we investigate whether communities where residents are more likely to identify as “American” are also more

generous in their contributions to the nation–state. We further examine whether these are the same communities where Donald Trump performed well in the 2016 election. We begin by comparing regional patterns of “American” ancestry reporting with the location of the “real America,” as characterized by McCain, Palin, and Hayes.

The Geographic Lens

Our focus on regional—rather than individual—patterns is motivated by the “real America” debate, which hinges on whether some *parts of the country* serve more than others. This debate has coincided with mounting evidence that American communities are polarizing along social and political lines (see Evans & Nunn, 2006). The red/blue electoral maps first popularized during the 2000 election have only fueled the perception that American communities are fracturing into “communities of like-mindedness” (Bishop & Cushing, 2009, p. 12). It is in this context that scholars and pundits have proclaimed that the United States is in fact a conglomeration of multiple, distinct, potentially self-aware nations (Chinni & Gimpel, 2010; Woodard, 2011).

The ecological and cross-sectional nature of our data, however, means we cannot draw inferences about individual-level associations between identification, nation–state service, and Trump support. We also cannot interpret community-level associations causally, nor do we aim to do so. We simply wish to evaluate the dual claims that certain communities (rural, religious, conservative, and gun-loving) contribute more than others to the nation–state and that these are the same communities that supported Trump. We look forward to future work that examines individual contributions to the nation–state.

Research Questions

Our empirical analyses utilize measures of service to address five related questions. First, where is the “real America”—as imagined by McCain and Palin, among others? Do ruralness, religiosity, conservatism, and gun culture collectively identify a distinct part of the country?

Second, are people in some parts of the country more likely to report “American” as their primary ancestry? Previous research suggests that Southerners are more likely to report “American” as their ancestry, but this research dates to the 1980s (Lieberson, 1985; Lieberson & Waters, 1988). And if unhyphenated Americans are concentrated in certain communities, are these the same rural, religious, conservative, gun-loving communities touted as the “real America”? This gets at a more fundamental question: Is there a consensus regarding the location of the “real America” or do multiple regions lay claim to this distinction?

Third, do the four pro-state behaviors under scrutiny—enlistment, voting, monetary contributions, and census-taking—collectively identify an underlying tendency to behave in ways that benefit the nation–state? In other words, do communities that give more in one way, say, enlistment, also give more in other ways, say, monetary contributions?

Fourth, do the communities of “real America” contribute more than others to the maintenance and reproduction of the American nation–state? To paraphrase McCain, does “real America” serve its country more? Finally, and relatedly, to what extent does “Trump’s America” overlap with the “real America” of rural, religious gun-owners? And to what extent does it make greater (or lesser) contributions to the nation–state?

Data and Methods

To answer these questions, we employ diverse measures from multiple data sources. These measures come in three varieties: four measures that identify membership in “real America,” a measure of ancestry response, and four measures of pro-state behaviors.

Measures and Their Sources

“(Real) Americanness.” Our measure of ruralness is an average of Rural–Urban Continuum Codes from the U.S. Department of Agriculture for the years 2003 and 2013. Scores range from “1: Metro area of 1 million population or more” to “9: Nonmetro area with <2,500 urban population, not adjacent to metro area.” Religiosity is represented by the number of congregations per 10,000 residents in each county. The figure is an average of 2000 and 2010 estimates from the Religious Congregations and Membership Studies. Conservatism is represented by the average percentage of votes cast for the Republican candidate in presidential elections between 2000 and 2012. The data are compiled, published, and distributed by Congressional Quarterly Press, an imprint of Sage Publications. A final measure, based on October 2016 data from the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Firearms, and Explosives, captures the number of firearms dealers per total residents.

In supplementary analyses, we replicate the results of the multiple regressions using an “Americanness” factor constructed from alternative measures of ruralness and religiosity. In this case, ruralness is measured continuously, as persons per square mile (Census 2010), and religiosity is represented by the number of congregations per religious adherents as well as the relative size of the adherent population (RCMS 2000 and RCMS 2010).¹⁵

American Ancestry. This measure is based on 5-year estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey (ACS 2008–2012). The ACS question reads “What is your ancestry or ethnic origin?” and provides respondents with two blank spaces on which to record their responses. During post enumeration, census workers recode “American” in cases where more than one response was given. This measure therefore underestimates the number of people who report “American” as their ancestry.¹⁶

Military Service/Enlistment. Our measure of military service captures annual Army enlistments per 10,000 18- to 45-year-olds. U.S. Army Accessions Command

generously shared county-level recruitment data for the years 2009, 2010, and 2011. To net out random noise for a single year, we took the average of all 3 years.¹⁷

Voter Turnout. We measure electoral participation using mean voter turnout among the voting-age population¹⁸ in presidential elections between 2000 and 2016. Data for this measure come from the U.S. Census Bureau, Congressional Quarterly Press (elections 2000-2012), and David Leip's Atlas of U.S. Presidential Elections (2016 election).

Net Monetary Contributions to the Federal Government. We subtract federal expenditures from income tax liability then divide by the county population to capture net monetary contributions *from* the county *to* the federal government. Our measure of federal income tax liability¹⁹ comes from Internal Revenue Service Statistics of Income data based on individual tax returns (FY 2010).

Our measure of federal expenditure comes from the 2010 U.S. Consolidated Federal Funds Report. The figure covers aggregate federal expenditures or obligations for grants, salaries and wages, procurement contracts, direct payments for individuals, loans and loan assistance, and insurance. It does *not* include direct payments to individuals for retirement or disability, such as Social Security.

Ideally, we would measure this form of service using the incidence of tax evasion (à la Weber, 1976), rather than net contributions to the federal government. However, the relevant data are not available at the sub-national level. Tax evasion is fairly low in the United States, perhaps suggesting that variation is also low across counties.²⁰

Census Response. This is based on the mean percentage of households in each county that completed and returned 2000 and 2010 census questionnaire within 3 weeks of receiving them; after 3 weeks, follow-up efforts began. The data come from the U.S. Census Bureau.

Control Variables. We control for other county characteristics in multiple regression models. Percentage of residents with a college education or more, median household income, percentage of unemployment and the proportion of county residents who are non-Hispanic White, foreign born, or 65 years and older are based on 5-year estimates from the ACS (2008-2012). Change in the percentage of employed residents working in manufacturing from 1970 to 2010 was calculated from 1970 and 2010 County Business Practices estimates, imputing state-level values for counties coded as missing in the 1970 data.²¹ We also include a dummy indicating the presence of a military base in the county or an adjacent county, a measure we constructed using National Park Service data. We also control for U.S. region following Census Bureau convention. To facilitate the interpretation of intercepts, covariates in the regression models are centered at their means.

Table 1 presents weighted and unweighted descriptive statistics for U.S. counties. The unweighted statistics represent the average estimate for counties, while the weighted statistics represent the estimates for the county in which the average American resides.

Table 1. County Means and Standard Deviations.

	Unweighted		Population weighted		Min.	Max.
	M	SD	M	SD		
Americanness						
Rural score	5.063	2.650	2.141	1.753	1	9
Congregations per 10,000	23.058	13.279	10.276	7.092	3.832	103.900
Gun dealers per capita	58.482	12.859	48.177	13.978	10.310	91.310
% Republican votes (2000-2012)	0.001	0.001	0	0	0	0.009
% Americans	10.864	7.045	6.895	5.293	0	47.860
Nation-state contributions						
Enlistment per 10,000	28.475	15.540	23.241	11.844	1.676	148.500
Turnout (2000-2016)	57.325	9.189	54.489	9.112	15.880	100.000
Net per capita contributions to federal government (\$1,000)	-4267.74	-7002.02	-3390.804	-5782.778	-123000	16250
% Census response	70.254	10.024	74.252	6.514	19.000	89.500
County characteristics						
% Whites	78.17	19.861	63.694	21.954	1.319	100.000
% Blacks	8.855	14.505	12.223	12.782	0	86.190
% Hispanics/Latinos	8.291	13.256	16.350	16.578	0	98.320
% Foreign born	4.473	5.589	12.869	10.940	0	58.930
% Decline manufacturing	20.504	16.887	22.573	12.367	-41.910	92.940
% College and over	19.484	8.768	28.452	10.396	3.659	72.790
Median household income (\$1,000)	45.644	11.901	55.129	14.531	19.620	122.800
% Unemployed	8.631	3.768	9.389	2.626	0	27.200
% 65+ Years	16.033	4.275	13.156	3.498	3.789	44.520
Military base	0.092	0.289	0.245	0.431	0	1
Region						
Northeast	0.069	0.254	0.179	0.384	0	1
South	0.454	0.498	0.371	0.484	0	1
Midwest	0.336	0.473	0.217	0.413	0	1
West	0.141	0.348	0.233	0.423	0	1

Analytic Strategy

The analyses proceed as follows: First, we use factor analysis to extract a latent commonality between counties based on ruralness, religiosity, conservatism, and gun ownership. We provisionally refer to this factor as “Americanness,” and we evaluate the association between “Americanness” and American ancestry reporting using both bivariate and multivariate statistics. Next, we estimate spatial error models to predict pro-state behaviors using an “Americanness” factor and the proportion of county residents who report “American” as their primary ancestry. Finally, we estimate spatial error models to predict Trump’s performance in the 2016 election, using both pro-state behaviors and “Americanness.”

We proxy for “communities” using counties, because counties are the smallest geographic unit for which all of our variables of interest are available. However, counties

do not necessarily demarcate “communities” as they are perceived and experienced by people. In addition, and partly as a result, the characteristics of one county likely resemble those of neighboring counties. Our own analyses confirm this (Figure 2): Moran’s I (a measure of spatial autocorrelation) for army enlistment indicates that enlistment in a given county is significantly ($p < .001$) correlated with enlistment in adjacent counties. This is the case for all of our dependent variables ($p < .001$).

Standard linear regressions are not suited to the analysis of such data, because spatial dependency violates the assumption that values of the outcome variable are independent across observations. Accordingly, we employ spatial error models to predict the outcomes of interest as a function of county-level covariates and a spatial autoregressive error term (Anselin, 1988).²² In the model tables, λ represents the coefficient of spatial autocorrelation; it is based on a first-order queen contiguity matrix. Data were mapped and analyzed using R (3.3.1) and GeoDa (1.8.16.4).

Results

The Search for the “Real America”

We need to locate “real America” before we can evaluate its contributions to the nation–state. To do this, we turn to factor analysis to assess whether ruralness, religiosity, conservatism, and gun culture collectively reflect an underlying, unobservable commonality between counties.

Individually, ruralness, religiosity, conservatism, and the concentration of gun dealerships are highly correlated across counties, and the correlation of each measure is greater than 0.360 with at least one other measure (see Table A1 in the appendix). Ruralness and religiosity, in particular, are very highly correlated ($r = .687$). Together, the four measures exhibit fairly high internal consistency: Cronbach’s alpha for the standardized measures is 0.760, which meets the conventional threshold. Accordingly, we use a maximum likelihood approach to extract factors from the four measures. One factor alone explains 60.4% of all variance; this factor meets the Kaiser criterion according to which a factor must explain at least the equivalent of one variable’s variance (eigenvalue = 1.554). This is consistent with the interpretation that ruralness, religiosity, conservatism, and gun culture collectively distinguish some counties from others on the basis of *one*, underlying commonality. We provisionally refer to this latent commonality, or factor, as the “(real) Americanness” of counties. Presumably, however, these counties are more “American” because they contribute more than others to the nation–state. This claim has yet to be evaluated.

Extracting this factor gives us purchase on what “real America” looks like and where it is located. Figure 3a presents the distribution of “Americanness” scores across U.S. counties. The map reveals that counties that score high on “Americanness” tend to be located outside the Northeast, particularly in the Upper Midwest, Great Plains, and, to a lesser extent, the Southeast. Large cities, such as New York, Washington, DC, Chicago, Los Angeles, and San Francisco, exhibit low “Americanness” scores.

We have identified which counties fall under the rubric of “real America,” as depicted by several candidates, though of course, their claims to “realness” are heavily

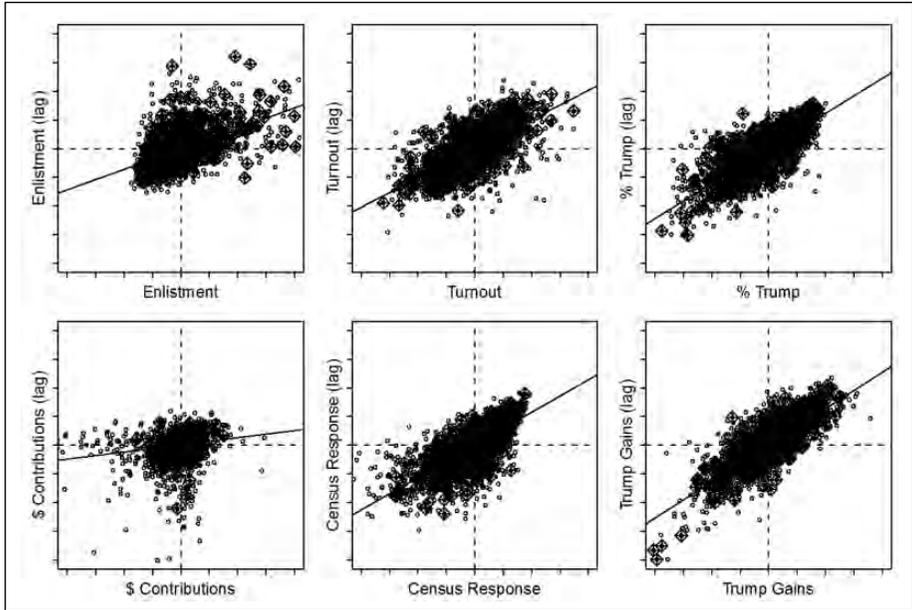


Figure 2. Moran scatter plots for dependent variables. Note. Scales report standardized distance from mean value (= 0).

contested. The next step is to assess whether the residents of these counties identify as “American” to a greater extent than others. The evidence on this score is mixed. The proportion of unhyphenated Americans is positively, though weakly, correlated with that county’s “Americanness” score ($r = .146$, Table 2). This correlation remains significant even after controlling for other county characteristics ($r = .106$, see Table A2 in the appendix).

To visualize these patterns, compare the geographic distribution of “Americanness” with that of American ancestry reporting (Figures 3a and 3b). Each has a distinct, but overlapping, regional locus. In the case of American ancestry reporting, there is a strong and unambiguous southern bias. This is consistent with earlier work on American ancestry reporting (Lieberson, 1985; Lieberson & Waters, 1988). High Americanness scores are also concentrated in the Southeast, but they are more heavily concentrated in the Upper Midwest and Great Plains.

On the one hand, the overlap between “Americanness” and the prevalence of unhyphenated Americans supports our suspicion that American ancestry reporting contains clues to the perceived location of “real America,” and not simply information about immigrant generation. On the other hand, the overlap is modest, which implies that there may not be a consensus surrounding the boundaries of “real America.” Statistically, this means that “Americanness” and the share of unhyphenated Americans cannot be reduced to a single factor. In subsequent analyses, we therefore treat them as separate indicators.

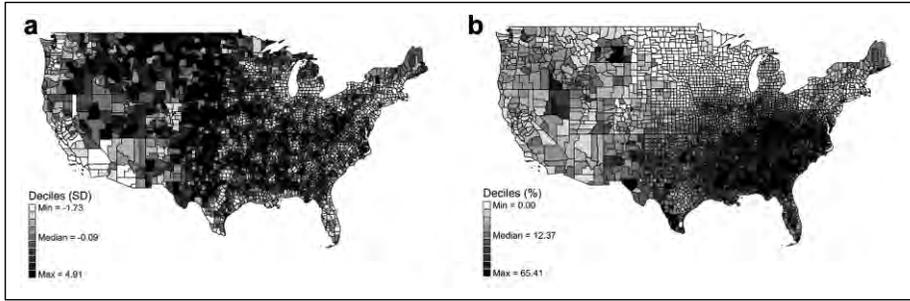


Figure 3. “Americanness” across U.S. counties (a) “real Americanness” scores and (b) unhyphenated Americans as per 100 non-Hispanic Whites (2000, 2010).

Table 2. Correlations Between % Americans, Americanness, Nation–State Contributions, and County Characteristics.

	% American	Americanness
% Americans		0.146
Americanness	0.146	
Rural score	0.064	0.846
Congregations per 10,000	0.170	0.944
% Republican votes (2000-2012)	0.304	0.453
Gun dealers per capita	-0.087	0.719
Nation–state contributions		
Enlistment per 10,000	0.086	0.075
Turnout (2000-2016)	-0.293	0.190
Net per capita contributions to federal government (\$1,000)	-0.010	0.136
% Census response	-0.062	-0.376
County characteristics		
% Whites	0.226	0.247
% Blacks	0.078	-0.161
% Hispanics	-0.261	-0.132
% Foreign born	-0.295	-0.369
% Decline manufacturing	0.255	-0.154
% College and over	-0.384	-0.425
Median household income (\$1,000)	-0.364	-0.443
% Unemployed	0.220	-0.259
% 65+ Years	0.018	0.585
Military base	0.000	-0.174
Region		
Northeast	-0.181	-0.229
South	0.540	-0.022
Midwest	-0.274	0.143
West	-0.269	0.006

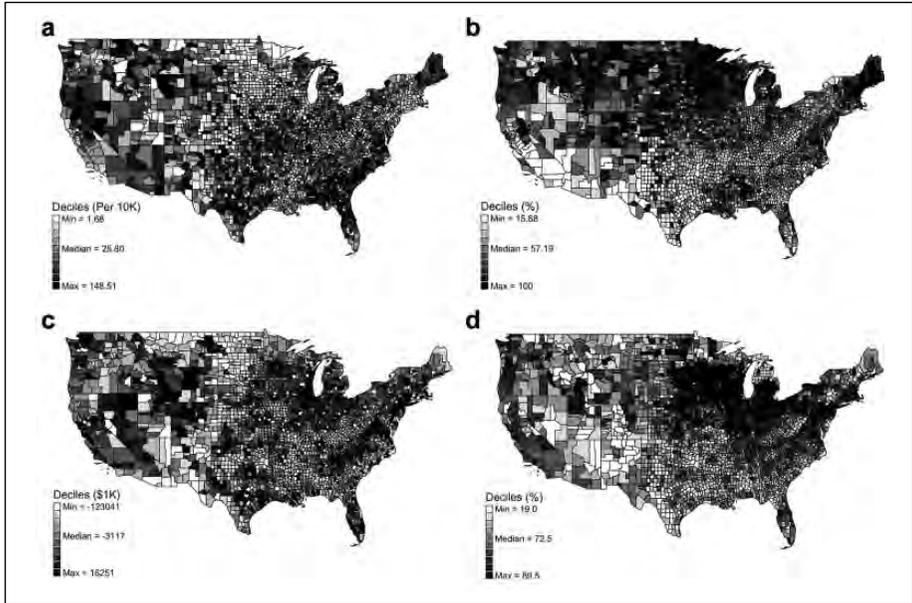


Figure 4. Contributions to the nation–state across U.S. counties (a) average annual Army enlistment per 10,000 service-age residents (2009-2011), (b) average voter turnout in general elections (2000-2016), (c) net monetary contributions to federal government (FY2010), and (d) census mail-in response rates (2000, 2010).

“Where People Love Their Country and They Serve It”?

Do those counties that symbolically lay claim to “Americanness” contribute more in terms of enlistment, turnout, monetary contributions, or census response?

First, we investigate whether these behaviors collectively reflect some form of latent patriotism in the same way that ruralness, religiosity, conservatism, gun ownership reflect one, underlying commonality. A correlation matrix reveals they do not: overall, individual correlations are weak or even negative (see Table A3 in the appendix), and a Cronbach’s alpha of .050 suggests low internal consistency. Theoretically, this implies that contributions to the nation–state are multidimensional and cannot be accurately captured by any one of our four behavioral measures. Accordingly, we analyze each behavior separately.

By mapping the four expressions of service, we can begin to assess (a) whether some communities contribute more than others to the nation–state and (b) whether these are the same communities that make up the “real America” and/or where residents report “American” as their primary ancestry.

Figure 4a depicts the geographic distribution of average annual Army enlistment between 2009 and 2011. We do not observe strong regional patterns in terms of enlistment. The Upper Midwest is underrepresented, but this probably has more to do with

demographics than with any proclivity to serve. There is some evidence for a “military belt” running from southern North Carolina through southern Alabama, but other parts of the South are underrepresented. Another belt stretches from northern Texas through Ohio.

It is important to note that we only have data for one branch of the military, and thus the regional distribution might be skewed. For example, the well-known overrepresentation of Black Americans in the Army (lower in other services) may produce local pockets of higher enlistment. Similarly, educational attainment and employment opportunities also vary regionally. Most important, we note a strong military base effect, wherein new recruits are concentrated near “base counties.” To address these issues, we control for a host of county characteristics, including racial composition and proximity to a military base, in subsequent models.

Figure 4b, which illustrates the regional distribution of voting in presidential elections, indicates that this behavior is not evenly distributed throughout the country. Voting-age citizens in the Upper Midwest and Northeast are more likely to vote, while those in the Southeast and Southwest are less likely to do so. This fits with observed variation across states: Minnesota and Maine, for example, regularly have over 70% turnout for presidential elections, while turnout in Georgia, Mississippi, and West Virginia is often 20% lower.

To be sure, regional variation is largely due to demographic differences between counties. Whites vote more than non-Whites, the wealthy vote more than the poor, and elderly citizens vote more than young ones (Verba et al., 1995). Again, we take these differences into account in subsequent regressions.

Our third measure of pro-state behavior, monetary contributions to the federal government, is the most controversial. We certainly do not argue that those who pay most and receive least are more patriotic than others. After all, behavior is not a sufficient condition for patriotism: resources and intentions matter. We nevertheless insist that fiscal flows are critical to building a complete picture of the geographic distribution of contributions to the nation–state. This is especially true at a time when such contributions have become a salient political issue. Figure 4c reveals that the distribution of monetary contributions is fairly uniform across U.S. counties. The only discernible pattern favors urban centers: cities such as Chicago, New York, Miami, and Washington, DC contribute more per capita than other areas.

Finally, Figure 4d reveals a stark regional pattern in terms of census response. Parts of the two coasts and the traditional Midwest are characterized by relatively high census response rates. The South and the West, however, are characterized by relatively low rates. In 2010—as in other years—U.S. counties varied considerably in terms of census response rates: from 37% in rural Georgia and Mississippi to 86% in suburban Minnesota and Wisconsin.

None of the four expressions of nation–state contributions neatly maps onto “real America.” Bivariate correlations confirm this: “Americanness” scores and American ancestry reporting are only weakly associated with a county’s contributions to the nation–state (Table 2). “Americanness” scores are weakly, positively associated with turnout enlistment, and net-capita contributions, but negatively associated with census response. In short, the counties that lay claim to “Americanness” do not at first glance

Table 3. Spatial Error Models for Pro-State Behaviors.

	Enlistment	Turnout	Net \$ to fed.	Census response
Americanness	-1.192*	1.842***	-1.256***	-4.516***
% Americans	-0.082	-0.039	0.001	0.012
% Whites	-0.031	-0.029**	0.074***	0.099***
% Foreign born	-0.413***	-0.530***	0.118***	0.025
% Decline manufacturing	0.002	0.015**	0.013†	0.000
% College and over	-0.257***	0.244***	-0.088***	-0.051*
Median household income (\$1,000)	0.147***	0.336***	0.099***	0.106***
% Unemployed	0.539***	0.044	-0.085†	-0.316***
% 65+ Years	0.629***	0.850***	0.145***	-0.259***
Military base	3.639***	-0.069	-0.316	0.043
Northeast (ref.)				
South	7.262***	-0.199	1.552*	-0.150
Midwest	2.578	4.027***	0.862	4.278***
West	7.274***	4.504***	1.905**	-2.859*
Constant	22.910***	55.409***	-5.300***	69.362***
λ	0.474***	0.702***	0.306***	0.657***
R ²	0.272	0.770	0.147	0.623
Log likelihood	-11,500	-8,480	-9,237	-9,473
N	2,881	2,909	2,943	2,910

Note. fed = federal government.
 †p < .10. *p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001 (two tailed).

appear to contribute more. The pattern for American ancestry reporting is somewhat different: it is weakly, positively associated with enlistment, but negatively associated with turnout, net contributions, and census response. Table 2 also shows that “Americanness” and the proportion of unhyphenated Americans are moderately to strongly associated with other county characteristics—such as percentage of Whites, educational attainment, and median household income—that are in turn associated with the propensity to enlist, vote, mail in a census form, and contribute money to the federal government. Thus, systematic differences across U.S. counties might underlie bivariate associations between Americanness and pro-state behaviors. Accordingly, we replicate the bivariate analyses using spatial error models that account for differences across counties as well as their distribution across space (Table 3).

Holding other county characteristics constant, the share of unhyphenated Americans is not significantly associated with enlistment, turnout, net contributions, or census response. “Americanness,” however, is associated with contributions to the nation-state, albeit in varied ways. Holding other county-level characteristics constant, enlistment, net contributions, and census response rates are significantly lower in counties that make up the “real America.” For example, a 1 standard deviation increase in the

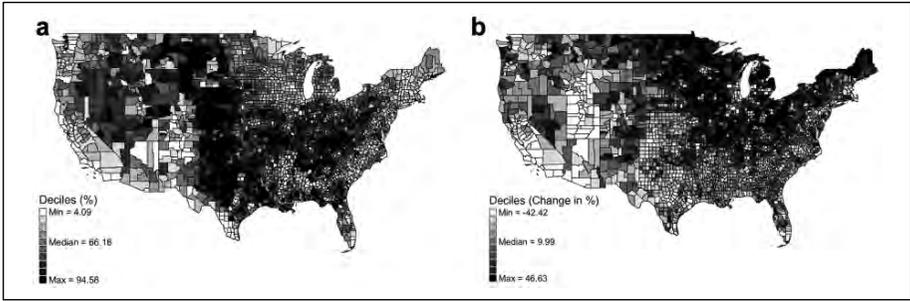


Figure 5. Trump support across U.S. counties (a) percentage of total votes cast for Donald Trump (2016) and (b) gains in Trump's margin (2016) over Romney's margin (2012).

“Americanness” factor is associated with \$1,256 less in per capita contributions to the federal government. On the other hand, turnout among voting age residents is significantly higher. Specifically, a 1 standard deviation increase in the “Americanness” factor is associated with 1.842% higher average turnout in recent general elections.

Looking at our other control variables, we briefly note that percentage foreign born is (as expected) negatively associated with both enlistment and turnout, but positively associated with net contributions to the federal government. Counties with more college graduates also yield fewer army recruits (again, as expected), but turnout in these counties is higher. Enlistment is higher where unemployment is higher and in counties with a military base nearby. Finally, in counties where senior citizens are overrepresented, turnout is higher, net contributions are higher, and census response rates are lower.

Is “Trump’s America” the “Real America”?

The contest between Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton was framed as a battle between “real Americans” and “coastal elites.” Where was Trump support concentrated? Do these communities overlap with those that fit the bill for the “real America,” and do they contribute more than their “fair share” to the country overall? We briefly consider these questions in this section. Our goal is not—cannot be—to explain Trump voting at the individual level, which is the subject of other studies (e.g., Tyson & Maniam, 2016). We are simply interested in shedding light on the characteristics of those communities where Trump support was highest.

For these analyses, we rely on two measures: percentage of total votes cast for Trump and Trump’s margin over Clinton minus Romney’s margin over Obama. The first measure captures Trump support in 2016, the second captures shifts toward Trump since the last election. Figures 5a and 5b depict the distribution of these measures across counties. Trump’s margin was largest in the Great Plains (Figure 5a), with secondary loci in the Midwest, Appalachia, and along the Gulf. However, relative to Romney’s performance in 2012, Trump made the biggest gains in the Upper Midwest, particularly along the Rust Belt, followed by Appalachia.

Table 4. Spatial Error Models for Trump Support.

	% Trump	Trump gains
Americanness	2.534***	-0.083
% Americans	0.248***	-0.009
% Whites	0.578***	0.095***
% Foreign born	0.303***	-0.186***
% Decline manufacturing	0.001	-0.008
% College and over	-0.786***	-0.599***
Median household income (\$1,000)	0.297***	-0.050***
% Unemployed	-0.247***	0.129***
% 65+ Years	-0.181***	0.003
Military base	0.548	0.329
Northeast (ref.)		
South	8.916***	-3.317**
Midwest	5.413**	1.592
West	4.600*	-2.871*
Constant	54.861***	11.817***
λ	0.857***	0.816***
R^2	0.896	0.833
Log likelihood	-9,160	-8,620
N	2,944	2,944

† $p < .10$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$ (two tailed).

To what extent do areas of Trump support overlap with “Americanness” or nation-state contributions? Table 4 reports the results of spatial error models predicting Trump percentage and gains. Holding other differences constant, “Americanness” and percentage reporting American ancestry are significantly, positively associated with Trump voting. This corroborates the narrative that “Trump’s America” is the “real America,” at least by one, controversial definition. In addition, in counties with greater Trump support, residents are more likely to identify as White and less likely to be college educated, which fits the standard narrative of the Trump phenomenon (e.g., Tyson & Maniam, 2016). However, these counties are also characterized by significantly lower unemployment and significantly higher median incomes; in addition, manufacturing decline is not associated with Trump support once other county characteristics are held constant.

Shifts toward Trump are not associated with either measure of “Americanness,” which suggests that “real America” supports Republican presidential candidates in general, not Trump in particular. In a related vein, Republican candidates may have maxed out support in these communities by 2012. We explore this possibility by replicating both models from Table 4 using separate measures for percentage of Republican in past elections and “Americanness” (constructed without percentage of Republican). In this case, “Americanness” was significantly, positively associated with Trump’s performance

relative to Romney's; this suggests Trump did not gain ground in "real America," because these counties were already voting overwhelmingly Republican.²³

In counties where Trump gained ground, residents are more likely to identify as White and less likely to be college educated; unemployment is significantly higher and median household income significantly lower. Ultimately, however, Clinton counties were characterized by still higher unemployment and lower incomes. It is hard to gain additional purchase on these patterns without data on Trump support at an individual level.

Finally, we replicated the models predicting four forms of support for the nation–state (Table 3), now controlling for Trump support and gains. The results are summarized in Table A4 in the appendix. In counties where Trump support was high, though not where Trump outperformed Romney, army enlistment is significantly higher. However, in counties where Trump support was high *and* in those where Trump outperformed Romney, voter turnout and census response rates are significantly lower. Finally, per capita contributions to the federal government are lower where Trump outperformed Romney. There is some evidence that "Trump's America" contributes less in terms of turnout, net contributions, and census response and some evidence that it contributes more in terms of recruitment. A generous interpretation of these results holds that "Trump's America" does not give more than its "fair share" to the country overall.

Summary of Findings

The "real America"—as described by McCain, Palin, and others—is located in the Upper Midwest, Great Plains, and Southeast. There is considerable overlap between counties that score high on "Americanness" and counties where residents are more likely to report "American" as their primary ancestry; in addition, Trump support is higher in these counties. However, both our measures of "Americanness" and Trump support perform inconsistently as predictors of nation–state contributions. Different regions contribute in different ways to the maintenance and reproduction of the nation–state; no one region holds a monopoly on service.

Conclusion

Recent elections, including that of Donald Trump, have witnessed the (re)emergence of twin claims: (a) that rural, conservative, religious, communities with strong gun cultures make up a "real America" and (b) that these communities contribute more than others to the country as a whole. Insofar as these communities' claims to "realness" rest on more generous contributions to the nation–state, these claims are unfounded. Communities that make up the so-called "real America" *do* overlap significantly with communities where Trump performed well, in part because Republican presidential candidates in general perform well in these communities. Importantly, the communities of "real America" *do not* consistently give more in terms of military enlistment, voter turnout, net monetary contributions to the federal government, or

census response. In several cases, they give significantly less than other community resources would lead us to expect.

Our findings do more than challenge popular conservative rhetoric; they also speak to important academic debates on the relationship between patriotic attitudes and behavior and on the polarization of the American populace. Regarding the first, popular and academic understandings of patriotism stress the role of attitudinal patriotism for motivating self-sacrificing, pro-state behavior. The empirical record, however, is dominated by studies of patriotic sentiments, such as self-identification, pride, and chauvinism, in isolation from behaviors. An important goal of the present study has been to evaluate claims of regional authenticity and patriotic devotion alongside contributions to the nation–state. Our findings suggest that, in this case, such claims are unfounded; they mischaracterize not just the contributions of communities inside an imagined “real America” but also the contributions of communities outside it.

What can we make of the mismatch between “Americanness” and American identification on the one hand and military service, turnout, monetary contributions, and census response on the other? It is difficult—and even dangerous—to interpret ecological patterns in terms of individual-level associations. Perhaps people who feel a patriotic attachment to their country are precisely those who have fewer resources to contribute to the nation–state? Or perhaps for some Americans, the boundaries of the subjectively experienced nation do not correspond with those of the institutionalized state? Among these Americans, the federal government may not especially demand loyalty (see Hochschild, 2016). The point is that we cannot infer pro-state behaviors from claims of authenticity or patriotic devotion (or vice versa).

It’s worth emphasizing that we find very little overlap between the different pro-state behaviors. For example, those counties that tend to contribute more men and women to the U.S. Army are not necessarily those where residents are more likely to vote. Like patriotism itself, contributions to the nation–state capture more than one dimension. We recommend that future research consider the various ways individuals and communities can contribute to the maintenance and reproduction of a nation–state, rather than reducing them to a synthetic factor, or, worse, ignoring them.

Finally, our findings are mixed regarding the disconcerting claim that the United States is geographically polarizing as Americans sort into “communities of like-mindedness.” On the one hand, there is almost no evidence that swaths of the country contribute more than others to the maintenance and reproduction of the nation–state, when the four behaviors are taken together. On the other hand, we do find evidence that people in some parts of the country are more likely to identify as unhyphenated Americans and that politicians rhetorically back their claim to more authentic “Americanness.” That these communities do not actually contribute more to the nation–state makes the divisive rhetoric of “realness” especially troubling.

Appendix

Table A1. Correlations Between Features of “Americanness.”

	Rural score	Congregations per 10,000	% Republican votes (2000-2012)	Gun dealers per capita
Rural score	1.000			
Congregations per 10,000	0.687	1.000		
% Republican votes (2000-2012)	0.260	0.370	1.000	
Gun dealers per capita	0.522	0.561	0.367	1.000

Table A2. Partial Correlations Between % Americans, Americanness, and County Characteristics.

	% Americans	Americanness
% Americans		0.106***
Americanness	0.106***	
% Whites	0.589***	-0.059**
% Foreign born	0.116***	-0.107***
% Decline manufacturing	0.125***	-0.056**
% College and over	-0.182***	-0.201***
Median household income (\$1,000)	-0.159***	-0.266***
% Unemployed	0.198***	-0.434***
% 65+ Years	-0.296***	0.416***
Army base nearby	0.051***	-0.029
Northeast (baseline)		
South	0.453***	0.078***
Midwest	0.026	0.110***
West	0.066***	0.194***

† $p < .10$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$ (two tailed).

Table A3. Correlations Between Nation–State Contributions.

	Enlistment	Turnout	Net \$ to fed.	Census response
Enlistment	1.000			
Turnout	-0.031	1.000		
Net \$ to fed.	-0.109	0.112	1.000	
Census response	-0.153	0.178	0.110	1.000

Note. fed = federal government.

Table A4. Spatial Error Models for Pro-State Behaviors, Controlling for Trump Support and Gains.

	Enlistment	Turnout	Net \$ to fed.	Census response
Trump votes (%)	0.236***	-0.205***	0.022	-0.007***
Trump gains over Romney (%)	0.011	-0.077***	-0.062**	-0.099***
Constant	24.754***	54.025***	-4.924***	69.652***
λ	0.451***	0.683***	0.290***	0.661***
R^2	0.279	0.783	0.146	0.626
Log likelihood	-11359	-8384	-9133	-9465
N	2,852	2,909	2,909	2,910

Note. fed = federal government. Models include controls for: "Americanness," % Americans, % Whites, % foreign born, % decline manufacturing, % college and over, median household income, % unemployed, % 65+ years, military base, and region.

† $p < .10$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$ (two tailed).

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Notes

1. The very existence of a "real America" and, by implication, an "unreal America," is the subject of contentious debate. We have chosen to signal this by enclosing instances of "real America/n/s" and "Americanness" in quotations.
2. Though see Corn (2012).
3. For example, see Cohen (2016), Eisenstat (2017), Minitier (2016), Robinson (2017).
4. There are certainly other perspectives on patriotism and nationalism, though we agree with Worchel and Coutant (1997) that arbitrating between them quickly devolves into "semantic quicksand." Social psychologists, for example, regard patriotism as love of country and nationalism as feelings of superiority over other countries (Citrin, Wong, & Duff, 2001; de Figueiredo & Elkins, 2003; Feshbach & Sakano, 1997; Sidanius & Petrocik, 2001). According to another perspective, patriotism is love of and devotion to one's group (Shaw

- & Wong, 1989), while nationalism is a manifestation of patriotism in the context of modern nation-states (Bar-Tal, 1997; Kelman, 1997).
5. Almost immediately, their comments touched off a flurry of (often indignant) editorial responses, such as “Excuse Me, But Didn’t McCain and Palin Just Say That the Victims of 9/11 Weren’t ‘Real Americans’?” (Eskow, 2008).
 6. As of July 2017.
 7. Cunningham, B. (2017, April 23). Interview with George Stephanopoulos on *This Week. ABC News*.
 8. Gibson, B. (2016, November 22). Interview with Asma Khalid on *Morning Edition. NPR*.
 9. For a compelling portrait of such communities, see Hochschild’s (2016) ethnography of Tea Party supporters in rural Louisiana.
 10. Mike Huckabee’s *God, Guns, Grits, and Gravy* (St. Martin’s Press, 2016) is one amusing expression of this sentiment. But also see sites such as <http://www.gunssavelife.com>.
 11. This question asks “What is your ancestry or ethnic origin?” The 2000 census was the last to include the ancestry question on the long-form questionnaire. The long-form questionnaire has since been discontinued and replaced by the annual American Community Survey (ACS), which continues to ask about ancestry.
 12. Authors’ calculations based on Integrated Public Use Microdata data (IPUMS) from the 2012 ACS. These figures are similar pooling responses to the ancestry question from 1980 to 2012.
 13. Generally, attitudinal patriotism is associated with negative attitudes toward subordinate groups (Sidanius & Petrocik, 2001).
 14. When asked explicitly, Americans largely disavow the view that “being White” is important to being “truly American” (see, e.g., the 2004 Twenty-First-Century Americanism Survey, as reported in Schildkraut, 2011). We suspect that social desirability pressures are largely to blame for these discrepant findings. Experimental studies, such as Cheryan and Monin (2005) and Devos and Banaji (2005), utilize between-subjects designs, random assignment, and implicit measures to mitigate such pressures.
 15. Results available on request.
 16. Postenumeration procedures should not bias our estimates, however, if respondents who reported “American” along with some other ancestry are randomly distributed across counties.
 17. The correlation between county enlistment rates for individual years was very high ($r > .98$ in all cases).
 18. Although this is the most widely used measure of voter turnout, it overestimates turnout in areas with high concentrations of noncitizens. The U.S. undocumented population makes it difficult to accurately estimate the size of the voting-age noncitizen population for counties.
 19. Form/line: 1040:60/1040A:37/1040EZ: 11. *Note*. This excludes Social Security tax.
 20. Among Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development countries, the United States has the lowest tax evasion as a share of GDP (Buehn & Schneider, 2012).
 21. Missing manufacturing employment figures for counties account for a small share of total state employment in 1970 (0.71%, on average).
 22. Relying on Lagrange multiplier test statistics and the procedure outlined by Anselin (2005, p. 198), we determined spatial error models to be the most appropriate modeling approach for our outcomes.
 23. These supplementary analyses also reveal that percentage of votes cast for Trump (Table

4, Model 1) remains significantly associated with “Americanness,” even when the “Americanness” factor is constructed without percentage of Republican in past elections. In other words, the overlap between “Trump’s America” and “real America” is not simply an artifact of the region’s conservative record. Results available on request.

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