Patriotism and nationalism, left and right:
A Q methodology study of American national identity

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Abstract

In the current polarized US political environment, what defines a "true American" is increasingly contested. Furthermore, the extent to which the a priori measures commonly employed to account for national identity – patriotism and nationalism – capture current understandings of American national identity is unknown. In a novel application of Q methodology, this study investigates the relationship between patriotism and nationalism measures and participants' subjective understandings of their national identity. Forty-seven US citizens representing a wide range of ideological positions constructed American identity profiles by ranking 56 statements taken from patriotic and nationalistic operationalizations. The two extracted profiles revealed national identities largely along left/right ideological, not patriotism/nationalism, lines. Further analysis indicated that the political left and right also differently interpret items within patriotism and nationalism measures. These findings cast doubt on the ideological independence of patriotism and nationalism measures and whether they adequately reflect American national identity content.

Key words: nationalism, patriotism, national identity, political ideology, Q methodology

"It's not just a choice between parties or policies, the usual debates between left and right. This is a more fundamental choice—about who we are as a people…"
(President Obama at the 2016 Democratic National Convention)

In the wake of the 2016 US presidential election, pinning down who the American people are as a people, what they stand for, and what they believe is increasingly difficult. From the NFL "take a knee" protest to Donald Trump's presidency itself, it is clear that how people understand what it means to be a "true American" varies widely. National identity is a powerful and ever-present social identity, and differences in how this identity is defined can have profound implications for political behavior (Billig, 1995; Tajfel, 1974; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987). At a group level, these understandings have the potential to shape domestic and foreign policy (Lieven, 2004; O'Dwyer, Lyons, & Cohrs, 2016) and define the boundaries of the "imagined community" of a nation (Anderson, 1983). At an individual level, they can influence attitudes towards political policy, candidates and levels of civic participation.

Ever since Kosterman and Feshbach (1989) called for a 'sharp discrimination between patriotism and nationalism' (p. 273), researchers have turned to measures of these constructs to describe the content and the consequences of American national identity. Patriotism is widely described as a 'love of country', a benign, positive, beneficial, and even necessary attachment to the nation (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, & Nevitt, 1950). Patriotism's 'evil twin', nationalism, has been said to reflect an orientation to national superiority and dominance beyond a love of country (Kosterman & Feshbach, 1989). It is perceived as a negative and even dangerous attachment, evident in its extreme in Nazi Germany, but also apparent in certain

present-day anti-immigration propaganda, and even in more subtle everyday symbols and interactions in the guise of patriotism (Billig, 1995).

Scholars have sought to disentangle patriotic from nationalistic attitudes by conceptualising and measuring particular a priori dimensions of these phenomena, including *affective* (how an individual feels about their country) (De Figueiredo & Elkins, 2003; Kosterman & Feshbach, 1989), *membership* (who is considered a member of the nation) (Citrin, Reingold, & Green, 1990; Theiss-Morse, 2009) and *relational* (the extent to which the fixed authority of the group is accepted) (Rothì, Lyons, & Chryssochoou, 2005; Schatz, Staub, & Lavine, 1999) aspects. Each of these dimensions has been parsed to produce measures that differentiate between patriotic and nationalistic attitudes. The contrast between measures of patriotic and nationalistic attitudes has been shown to predict attitudes towards ethnic minorities (Li & Brewer, 2004), nuclear armament (Kosterman & Feshbach, 1989) and immigration (Citrin, Johnston, & Wright, 2012), as well as behaviours such as political involvement (Huddy & Khatib, 2007; Schatz et al., 1999).

No one measure is consensually accepted, however, and the terms *patriotism*, *nationalism* and *national identity* are used inconsistently and even conflated (Bonikowski & DiMaggio, 2016; Schildkraut, 2014; Theiss-Morse, 2009). Certain of the patriotism and nationalism conceptualisations have been criticised for their simplicity (Condor, 2001; Hopkins, 2001) and ideological conflation. Pride, chauvinism, symbolic patriotism, and blind patriotism have been found to be more common in conservatives (Billig, 1995; Huddy & Khatib, 2007; Kosterman & Feshbach, 1989), and constructive patriotism has been more often attributed to liberals (Huddy & Khatib, 2007). Ideological conflation not only suggests that the political left and right think about their American national identity in different ways,

but conflation across a number of measures may indicate that ideology is the

commonality underlying these operationalisations. Acknowledging the limitations of

current operationalisations of patriotism and nationalism, some scholars have either

expressed the need to elaborate on measures of national identity (Schildkraut, 2014)

or proposed a more ideologically neutral measure of this identity by including a

measure of identity strength (Bonikowski & DiMaggio, 2016; Huddy & Khatib, 2007;

Theiss-Morse, 2009). Yet, the question remains as to the adequacy and independence

of nationalism and patriotism measures over and above left/right political divides.

      Any effect of ideological conflation is likely to have only become more

pronounced in the time since the initial conceptualisation of the primary patriotism

and nationalism scales (Citrin et al., 1990; De Figueiredo & Elkins, 2003; Schatz et

al., 1999). In this time, the political left and right have grown in their dislike of each

other (Iyengar, Sood, & Lelkes, 2012) and ideological identity has become more

aligned with other social identities such as race and religion, producing a greater

likelihood of consistency of thought within the left and the right (Mason, 2018). This

increasingly polarized political environment warrants a re-evaluation of a priori

patriotism and nationalism measures in light of Americans' current understandings of

their national identity.

      The current study seeks to capture citizens' self-understandings of American

national identity, asking citizens across a wide ideological spectrum to relate current

measures of patriotism and nationalism to their ideas of what makes one a 'true

American'. In doing so, we are able to simultaneously explore the interrelationships

between American identity, ideology, and the various conceptualisations of patriotism

and nationalism discussed in the following section.

Conceptualisations of Patriotism and Nationalism

        Affective: Pride, chauvinism and symbolic patriotism. Affective attachment to one's nation is primarily associated with the emotions of love and pride. While love of the nation is found equally across the political ideological spectrum, pride appears to manifest differently. De Figueirdo and Elkins (2003) analysed national pride based on the assertion that the central distinction between the concepts of patriotism and nationalism is their point of reference. National *pride* (patriotism) is self-referential, a positive regard for one's country, while *chauvinism* (nationalism) stems from comparison between one's own and other countries and is almost exclusively downward. Chauvinism has been associated with hostility to immigrants (De Figueiredo & Elkins, 2003) and negative attitudes towards ethnic minorities (Bonikowski & DiMaggio, 2016). Survey items related to pride and chauvinism (along with ethno-cultural patriotism, discussed below) are included in the national General Social Survey and are therefore commonly used in American national identity research.

        Symbolic patriotism taps an individual's affective attachment to the nation and its core values through symbols (Parker, 2010). In the US, primary symbols associated with national identity include the national anthem, the American flag and the Pledge of Allegiance. Whether symbolic patriotism contributes to patriotism as well as nationalism is a matter of debate. On one hand, attachment to national symbols have been associated with nationalism in certain correlational (Schatz & Lavine, 2007; Sullivan, Fried, & Dietz, 1992), and experimental (Kemmelmeier & Winter, 2008) studies; but others have found evidence for a patriotic attachment, defined as support for free speech (Parker, 2010) and racial tolerance (DeLamater, Katz, & Kelman, 1969).

Membership: ethno-cultural, civic creedal, and civic republican. The most widely discussed conceptualisation of American national identity surrounds whether the way in which Americans define membership for their in-group is *ethno-cultural* (on the basis of the common heritage) or *civic* (on the basis of having a common purpose and shared goals) (Citrin et al., 1990; Li & Brewer, 2004; Smith, 1988). Civic membership requires only that a person espouse certain values or behave in a certain way; such membership may theoretically be acquired by anyone, and is therefore seen as patriotic. Alternatively, the endorsement of ethno-cultural membership norms indicates a nationalistic perspective.

As a 'new nation' America's national identity has historically been considered to be bound, not by a shared history or ethnicity (ethno-cultural membership), but by the 'American Creed', an agreed understanding of the ideals of freedom, democracy, individualism and equality of opportunity (Citrin et al., 1990; Huntington, 2004). The purity of this civic *creedal* basis of national identification has been challenged in recent years as certain of the creedal values (e.g. individualism) can be increasingly seen as ethno-cultural (Huntington, 2004; Lieven, 2004). Throughout the country's history, America and America's immigrants have primarily been ethno-culturally Anglo-Protestant, a culture and belief system that informed the values and constitution on which the country was founded and upon which civic membership is based (Huntington, 2004; Smith, 1988). This national identity has met with growing challenges from an increase in non-European immigrants and birth rates and the rise in popularity of the ideas of multiculturalism and diversity (Huntington, 2004). These influences affect and make salient both America's ethno-cultural and creedal bases of identity and have been the basis of much conjecture as to the impact on the future of American identity and democracy (Huntington, 2004; Lieven, 2004; Smith, 1988).

The ethno-cultural/civic conceptualisation has been criticized for its lack of dichotomy. Not only are creedal values bound with Anglo-Protestant ethno-cultural values, but scholars now agree that American identity includes both civic and ethno-cultural norms (Schildkraut, 2014). Indeed, recent work has concluded that only about half of the American population can be described as having *either* an ethno-cultural or a civic attachment to the nation, strongly suggesting that this conceptualisation is a significantly limited descriptor of national identity (Bonikowski & DiMaggio, 2016).

The civic norms of national identity may also include behavioural elements: it has been argued that both academic and popular concepts of American identity are shaped by the responsibilities of membership in the political community (*civic republicanism*) (Schildkraut, 2014). Civic republicanism requires that the polity not only be informed about and involved in public life, but also act in the best interest of the community rather than in self-interest (Smith, 1988). Civic participation is an important element of national identity in democratic countries; it is seen as the behaviour of a 'good' citizen (Conover, Searing, & Crewe, 2004). Alternatively, Bar-Tal (2000) uses the active involvement of civic republicanism not to distinguish between nationalism and patriotism, but to separate passive and active forms of patriotism, thereby excluding civic republicanism as a necessary element of patriotism.

Relational: blind or constructive. In contrast to most collective identities, national identity has inherent in it an authority (the government) that can make legal demands of its members. The way in which individuals perceive their relationship with this authority has offered yet another contrast between patriotism and nationalism.

Nationalism has been described as *blind* patriotism, characterised by an intolerance of criticism and an unquestioning positive evaluation of, and staunch allegiance to, one's own nation. Blind patriotism is juxtaposed with *constructive* patriotism which manifests as the questioning and criticism of current group practices with an intent to bring about positive change (Schatz et al., 1999). Although there is a shared ideology between blind and ethno-cultural patriotism as well as between constructive and civic patriotism, Rothi, Lyons and Chryssochoou (2005) found support for the orthongonality of each of the bilateral conceptualisations in a study of British students and have asserted the importance of looking at all four components when assessing national attachment. In addition, Parker (2010) found support for separately assessing blind patriotism and symbolic patriotism.

The Current Study

The current study presents a novel approach to re-evaluating academic measures of patriotism and nationalism as the underlying constructs of American national identity. We have employed Q-methodology, a mixed-methods approach specifically aimed at the study of subjective topics; it identifies distinct groups of individuals with similar representations. The approach is particularly appropriate for subjective and self-referent topics such as political opinion (Brown, 1980) in that it is through a tendency to share viewpoints that political opinion is constructed. It also allows us to identify patterns in the profiles of these groups of individuals, such as ideology. Whereas survey-based studies of national identity have primarily focused on a priori, unidimensional conceptualisations of patriotism and nationalism, Q-methodology will allow us to gain an understanding of national identity from the participants' perspective and simultaneously explore the interrelationships of eight

conceptualisations: pride, chauvinism, symbolic patriotism, ethno-cultural, civic

creedal, civic republicanism, blind patriotism, and constructive patriotism.

Participants in this study constructed a representation of American national

identity from current academic conceptualisations of patriotism and nationalism. By

using these measures as the source material from which participants are asked to

construct their interpretations, this study not only simultaneously considers these

conceptualisations and how they relate to differing perspectives on American identity,

but also addresses the degree to which various current academic conceptualisations of

nationalism and patriotism *account for* these interpretations. If patriotism and

nationalism as currently conceived are important differentiators in American identity,

we would expect to extract at least one factor that is distinguished from another by the

endorsement of nationalistic statements (comprised of ethno-cultural, chauvinistic,

blind patriotism [and possibly symbolic patriotism] norms). Alternatively, factors that

are divided along ideological lines would suggest that such distinctions are integral to

differing perspectives of American identity. Based on previous literature, we would

also expect to see consensus across all civic creedal values. In this way, the study uses

social psychological constructs to understand participants' perspectives on national

identity, and at the same time employs participants' constructions of national identity

to evaluate these social psychological measures.

Method

Design

Q-methodology ("Q") has been selected to identify meanings that laypersons

attribute to their national identity. Q is a method of data collection and analysis aimed

at exploring alternative conceptualisations of multi-dimensional topics amongst a

broad spectrum of participants, allowing for the systematic study of subjectivity. Q

has been identified as a research methodology "capable of identifying the currently predominant social viewpoints and knowledge structures relative to a chosen subject matter" (Watts & Stenner, 2012, p. 42). The use of Q in political science was promoted by Brown (1980) and has since been used to investigate such various political topics as conceptualisations of good citizenship (Theiss-Morse, 1993), the meaning of ideological labels (Zechmeister, 2006) and democratic support profiles (Carlin, 2018).

In its most basic form, Q can be understood as an adaptation of factor analysis. Unlike R-methodology (by-variable) factor analysis, which seeks to group *variables* that may be alternative manifestations of an underlying factor, Q (by-person) factor analysis seeks to group *participants* who hold a common point of view. Q also differs in the derivation of the data subject to analysis. In R-methodology, data is derived from participants who have been subjected to a collection of tests; Q data is derived when certain items are ranked by a collection of individuals.

In Q, participants perform a ranking exercise called a "Q sort". Ranking, as compared to Likert scales, has been found to better differentiate between attitudes regarding national identity (Wright, Citrin, & Wand, 2012). Participants are presented with a set of opinion statements about a topic and asked to rank them (usually from *agree most* to *disagree most*). These rankings are then subject to factor analysis; the resulting factors represent areas of subjective agreement. Q detects statements that particularly distinguish each point of view from the others (Sullivan et al., 1992) and captures the interdependence of opinions: a respondent's evaluation of any one statement only makes sense in the context of their reactions to every other statement in the set. In addition, participants are invited to comment on their rankings. This qualitative data allows researchers to more accurately understand how participants

interpreted the Q-set statements. Q explanatory power is limited in that the statements provided by the researcher limit the participants' representations of American national identity; this analysis may therefore not have identified a full range of statements to reflect national identity content. To help mitigate this limitation, participants were asked in an open question to comment on the completeness of the statement set.

Participants

Q typically uses fairly small, diverse, and non-random groups of subjects. The studies aim to collect a diversity of heterogeneous perspectives on a subject, but do not require a large or representative sample (Watts & Stenner, 2005). Forty-seven participants were recruited who, based on their ideological identity, their geography and their age, were likely to hold divergent perspectives about the content of American identity. To encourage participation by those who may not necessarily be politically interested, participants were entered in a draw for a $100 amazon.com gift voucher.

Aiming to achieve a broad ideological distribution, the first author tapped a personal network of contacts across a wide geographical, ideological, and generational spread. Potential participants were approached via e-mail; approximately 90 per cent of those approached completed the study. Data was collected in February 2017. The participant group comprised 21 males and 26 females; 22 voted for Hillary Clinton in the 2016 presidential election, 21 for Donald Trump, two for a third-party candidate, and two didn't vote; 16 were Democrats, 11 were Independents, two were Libertarians, and 18 were Republicans. Nine considered themselves to be of moderate political ideology, 19 were liberals, and the remaining 19 were conservatives. Participants were aged between 36 and 75 ($M = 53.57$, $SD = 11.91$) and were residents of 14 different states and the District of Columbia. Two of the participants

were Hispanic, while the remaining 45 were white. The questionnaires were completed on-line using POET-Q on-line Q-sort software (Jeffares, 2016).

Procedure and Materials

Q-set. A Q-sort is required to be sampled from the same type of source (e.g. speech, literature, or other source), represent a balanced account of the concept in question, and be comprised of only subjective (not factual) statements (Stephenson, 1953). The Q-sort statements for the current study reflect conceptualisations of patriotism and nationalism as identified in the literature: affective (pride, chauvinism and symbolic patriotism), criteria for in-group membership (ethno-cultural, civic creedal and civic republican patriotism) and relational (blind and constructive patriotism). These perspectives were balanced by selecting 56 statements from current measures of patriotism and nationalism: seven statements reflecting each of the eight different conceptualisations discussed in this article's introduction (Brown, 1993). Statements for each conceptualisation were sourced as follows: pride (De Figueiredo & Elkins, 2003), chauvinism (De Figueiredo & Elkins, 2003; Kosterman & Feshbach, 1989), symbolic ('AEI Public Opinion Study', 2016; De Figueiredo & Elkins, 2003; Huddy & Khatib, 2007), ethno-cultural (Bonikowski & DiMaggio, 2016; Citrin et al., 1990; Rothì et al., 2005), civic creedal (Citrin et al., 1990; Rothì et al., 2005; Wright et al., 2012), civic republican ('AEI Public Opinion Study', 2016; Citrin et al., 1990), blind (Schatz et al., 1999), and constructive (Rothì et al., 2005; Schatz et al., 1999). Prior to data collection, statements were reviewed by American laypersons to ensure non-redundancy and completeness.

Q-sorting. Using POET-Q, participants were asked to first sort the provided statements into categories of "agree more", "agree less", and "neutral". One statement was provided at a time: the first statement from each conceptualisation,

followed by the second from each, and so on. The participant was then asked to construct a distribution grid by rank-ordering the statements in each category within an 11-point forced distribution (Figure 1).

[Insert Figure 1]

Within POET-Q, participants constructed the grid by first selecting the most agreeable statements and most disagreeable statements (the exact number depended on the quantity of statements in each "agree more", "neutral", and "agree less" category). This process was repeated until the grid was complete. Once the grid was constructed, participants had the opportunity to view and edit the grid to their satisfaction. This grid then represented the individual's unique subjective assessment of the content of American identity based on the statements provided. Finally, participants were asked to comment on their sort: general comments on the set as well as specific comments on the two most agreeable and the two most disagreeable statements. Prior to the Q-sort, participants were asked to provide demographic information to assess the ideological distribution of the sample and to assist with factor interpretation.

Findings

Factor Analysis

A principal component analysis of the Q-sorts was completed using the PQMethod software package (Schmolck, 2014). This analysis revealed six un-rotated factors with an eigenvalue of greater than 1.0. Varimax rotations of two, three, four, five and six (Brown, 1980) factors produced a loading of two or fewer participants on factors 4, 5 and 6; lacking consistency of composition under various rotations and coherent 'shared views', these factors were eliminated. Based on review of the scree plot and of the participant profiles loaded on each of the remaining three factors, only

Factors 1 and 2 were considered to represent distinct and coherent points of view. As recommended by Watts and Stenner (2012), both Varimax and manual rotation were used to arrive at a solution that maximised the number of participants included in the two factors. Varimax rotation was performed for two factors with an additional 10 degree manual rotation to arrive at the final factor loadings. Although the significance level for loading was calculated to be .34 ($p < 0.01$), the factors were highly correlated ($r = .75$). This high correlation was expected as a number of the statements employed are known to have a high degree of acceptance (e.g. "equal treatment", Citrin et al., 1990) or rejection (e.g. "would support the US, right or wrong", Bonikowski & DiMaggio, 2016) as part of American identity. A higher level of significance (.55) was therefore selected for participant profile retention to minimize confounding (participants loading significantly on both factors) while maximizing the number of loadings on each factor (Watts & Stenner, 2012). Using these criteria, 21 participants loaded on Factor 1 and 21 participants loaded on Factor 2; three participants did not load significantly on either factor, and two were confounded.

The retained participant profiles for each factor are merged on a weighted average basis to arrive at an idealized Q-sort referred to as a *factor array,* found in Table 1. These factor arrays, with identifying *z*-scores and Q-sort rankings (a translation of *z*-scores into the 11-point forced distribution), reflect the shared viewpoint for each factor and are central to factor interpretation. The two profiles of American identity reveal the norms that each set of participants holds or rejects and the items that discriminate between the profiles.

[Insert Table 1]

Of the 56 statements, 35 were consensus statements (the difference between *z*-scores was < 0.55), indicating a high level of agreement between the factors as to the

norms that comprise American identity—and those that do not. Twenty of the

consensual statements supported the position that nationalistic norms—blind

patriotism (all consensual), chauvinism (all consensual) and ethno-cultural (6 of 7

consensual)—were *not* important elements of American identity (all negative *z*-

scores). Only one statement (*A true American speaks English)* from the nationalistic

measures distinguished between profiles of American identity. The contested concept

of symbolic patriotism included two consensus statements, while the other five

distinguished between the two factors.

There was also general agreement that the patriotic conceptualisations *were*

important elements of American identity (had positive to neutral *z*-scores). However,

which of these conceptualisations and their component statements were important to

the identity differed significantly between factors. There was more agreement

regarding civic creedal and republican values (both, 5 of 7 statements consensual), but

the importance of constructive patriotism (all 7 distinguishing) and the affective

norms of pride (4 of 7 statements distinguishing) and symbolic patriotism (5 of 7

statements distinguishing) differed significantly.

There was a clear difference in how the identified factors used the measures of

patriotism to structure their representations of American identity. Factor 1 prioritized

constructive patriotism and equality, while Factor 2 indicated that creedal values,

symbolic reverence and pride were most important. Differences in motivations and

demonstrations of affect towards the nation were also identified. In the following

section, each viewpoint is holistically interpreted in the context of patriotism and

nationalism conceptualizations. The interpretation uses factor arrays, distinguishing

and consensus statements (Q-set statements are indicated in italics), direct quotes

from participants' comments on their rankings, and the average and range of z-scores

for the conceptualizations of patriotism and nationalism (Table 2).

Factor Interpretations

[Insert Table 2]

      Factor 1: For the People. Factor 1 had 21 defining Q-sorts with loadings

between .60 and .82 and explained 31 percent of the variance. All participants loading

on Factor 1 (seven males and 14 females) voted for Hillary Clinton in the 2016

presidential election; 16 were Democrats and five were Independents. Four

considered themselves to be of moderate political ideology, while the remaining 17

were liberals (four classifying themselves as "strong liberals"). Participants loading

on this factor were aged between 36 and 75 ($M = 55.48$, $SD = 13.45$) and were

residents of 10 different states and the District of Columbia.

      The Factor 1 representation reflected support for active and critical

involvement in the political process motivated by a desire for greater equality. A

distinctive feature was a high level of agreement with constructive patriotism, civic

republican, and civic creedal values. All seven constructive patriotism items were

distinguishing statements (z-score ranged from 1.08 to 1.54, average = 1.30). The

right to disagree with one's government was a primary value and obligation for Factor

1 as reflected in participants' comments including "I love my country primarily

because I have the right to criticize it", "dissent is the most important freedom we

have", and "it is our right and our duty". Criticism was a demonstration of affection:

"when you take the time to question policy decisions, it shows you care". Six of the

seven civic republican statements were supported (average z-score = 0.67), suggesting

an endorsement of active involvement generally.

This active political involvement appears to be related to the desire to progress towards greater equality, inclusion, and a "just society". The two statements that received the highest level of agreement were the creedal values of equality (statements 50 and 10). "We are all created equal" was a frequently cited representation in participant comments as was "with liberty and justice for all", while change for the country was seen as necessary for "growth", "to evolve", for "progress" and to "remain strong". The average z-score for civic creedal values as a whole was 1.03, attesting to the importance of this conceptualisation to Factor 1. The z-score range was wide however; agreement ranged from a high level of support for equality values to a more neutral endorsement of individualism (statement 2) and free enterprise (statement 34), both distinguishing statements. By treating each creedal statement as varying in importance, Factor 1 suggests that these values are not seen as a unitary "American Creed".

The neutral ground of the factor array was primarily populated by statements related to pride (average z-score = 0.24) and symbolic patriotism (average z-score = -0.47). The highest rated pride statement was …*proud of America's fair and equal treatment* (statement 30) at 0.84; while …*proud to be an American* (statement 6) was ranked lower at 0.20. Some questioned the very idea of taking pride in one's national identity: "pride is something that u accomplish, like having a good marrage [*sic*] or raising great children. im proud of that but im not proud to be an American but im happy and thankful that i am", suggesting a clear distinction between the individual and the nation.

Overall, Factor 1 comments suggested a perspective motivated by the desire for the government to provide greater equality for its citizens. Active involvement and change were endorsed through constructive patriotism and civic republicanism

statements. Evinced by the large *z*-score range, civic creedal values, however, were not considered to be unitarily relevant to American identity by Factor 1.

      Factor 2: For the Nation. Factor 2 had 21 defining Q-sorts (with loadings between .56 and .81) and explained 34 percent of the variance. In the 2016 presidential election, the participants loading on Factor 2 (11 males and 10 females) voted for Donald Trump (16), Hillary Clinton (one), a third-party candidate (two) or didn't vote (two). Fifteen of the Factor 2 participants were Republicans (six of whom identified as "strong" Republicans), two were Libertarians, and four identified as Independents; two considered themselves to be of moderate political ideology, two were moderate liberals, and the remaining 17 were conservatives (5 classifying themselves as "strong conservatives"). The ages of participants loading on this factor ranged from 40 to 67 (*M* = 52.15, *SD* = 9.15) and participants were residents of seven different states.

      The Factor 2 representation was primarily defined by strong agreement with civic creedal values, pride, and symbolic patriotism. There was a high level of agreement with all civic creedal values (average *z*-score = 1.24, range = 0.59). The factor array indicated agreement with the values of rule by the people (statement 18), equality (statements 10 and 50) and free enterprise (statement 34). However, in the ranking and interpretation of equality statements, Factor 2 (*z*-scores of 1.32 and 1.30) differed significantly from Factor 1 (1.68 and 1.72). The comments by Factor 2 participants revealed an interpretation that spoke less to the Factor 1 ideas of "justice" and "all are created equal", but instead to the more utilitarian and individualistic idea that "equal rights allow all Americans the opportunity to succeed" and "the right to live the American Dream". The value of a free market was linked to this equal opportunity; free enterprise "drives the creation of jobs and equal opportunity" and

"provides the opportunity for citizens to reap what they sow". The American Dream, the achievement of "your own potential and life goals", was considered to be dependent not only on equal opportunity, but also upon individualism (statement 2, z-score = 0.98). Independence and self-reliance were seen to "define the American character" and were identified as "what makes America stand apart from other countries". Comments supporting the value of treating all backgrounds equally (statement 10) noted that it was a "founding principle"; while some participants noted that it pertains to "those that have assimilated", "who are not a threat to me or my family", or "who love America", indicating a qualified acceptance of this creedal value.

For Factor 2, symbolic patriotism statements were the second highest agreed upon set of norms with an average z-score of 0.85. Although the range of z-scores of 1.28 was wider than Factor 1's range of 0.71, the disparity is primarily due to the difference in each factor's top symbolic patriotism rating: pride in the armed forces (statement 56, z-score of 0.23 for Factor 1 and 1.60 for Factor 2 – a difference in z-score of 1.37). America's armed forces were seen by Factor 2 as the defender of freedom: "our country and our Constitution and all of the freedoms we enjoy would not exist were it not for the sacrifices of our armed forces". The disparity in the factors' ranking of this single item points to the possibility of an ideological conflation with the traditional conservative support for national defence.

Beyond those symbols of the armed forces, flag, national anthem and Pledge of Allegiance included in the Q-set, additional symbolic representations emerged in the participant comments. A number of Factor 2 participant comments referred to the Constitution, the Declaration of Independence, and "founding fathers" when supporting their rankings. There was a clear reverence for the foundation of America,

reflected in statements such as "our government institutions were carefully crafted over 200 years ago" and "our country had very intelligent founders". Although previous research has connected symbolic patriotism with "externalizing one's core values" (Parker, 2010, p. 101), these symbols, considerably less available for externalizing than those included in the Q-set, are still clearly important to Factor 2, indicating an attachment to symbols beyond the need to externalise.

Although the statements based on national pride were third in the overall conceptual rankings for Factor 2 (average z-score = 0.54), the overall highest-ranking statement in the Factor 2 factor array is *... proud to be an American* (statement 6). The average z-score for the measure of pride differed only by 0.30 between the factors, but the z-score range of rankings for pride items in Factor 1 (0.84) was far smaller than the range for Factor 2 (2.52). For Factor 2, there appeared to be three distinct sources of pride: pride in the construct of the nation (statements 6 and 14, z-scores of 1.60 and 1.13); pride in the country's achievements in science, history, equal treatment and economy (z-scores = 0.25 - 0.67); and pride in America's social security system (z-score = -0.92). This single item outlier, pride in the social security system, like pride in the armed forces, is suggestive of an item which is conflated with ideology.

Factor 2's high ranking of pride in the nation indicates that national pride was not only identified as an important norm, but it was also considered to be separate from – and superior to – pride in the nation's achievements. In contrast, Factor 1 participants sorted all pride items in the middle of the factor array, indicating little differentiation between the nation itself and its peoples' achievements. There may therefore exist a difference in each factor's definition of the nation, the object with which they identify and to which they direct their affection. The importance of

affection for the nation is also reflected in the observation that Factor 2's endorsement of both pride and chauvinism was higher than Factor 1's. The key difference between the two factors was not the disparity between pride and chauvinism, but instead a difference between the level of affection for the nation generally, consistent with Billig's (1995) criticism of Kosterman and Feshbach's (1989) measure.

Constructive patriotism is another conceptualisation that, according to Factor 2, is not unitary (range of z-scores = 1.54). Factor 2 participants agreed with the more oblique statements related to "positive change" and "moving the country in a positive direction" (z-scores of 0.67 and 0.78, respectively) and were relatively neutral on questioning policy decisions and government actions (0.11 and 0.38), but they disagreed that this criticism was done for the good of, or out of love for, the country (z-scores ranged of -0.53 and -0.86). This segmentation by Factor 2 indicates that, for these participants, moving the country forward does not necessarily require criticism. And when criticism is necessary, it is not done out of affection. The narrow range of constructive patriotism scores for Factor 1, on the other hand, points to the perceived unity of criticism, progress and affection for the nation. How one expresses love of country was therefore markedly different between Factors 1 and 2. Conversely, statements that were consensual may have been agreed with for different reasons. For example, a Factor 2 participant's comments referred to "anchor babies" (who would meet the 'born in the US' membership criteria) and needing to go through the required path to citizenship (illegal immigrants may have lived in their US for most of their lives). Therefore, the low ranking of these particular ethno-cultural statements may not necessarily reflect the rejection of an ethno-cultural understanding of American identity, as is commonly interpreted.

The operationalisations of the chauvinism and ethno-cultural conceptualisations also appeared to also be combining what, for Factor 2, were dissimilar norms. Factor 2 discriminated between ethno- and cultural norms as well as between the "feeling" of being a better country and the desire to demonstrate superiority or influence, the latter reflecting the importance of affect for Factor 2, and again separating the nation from its actions.

Discussion

The contrast between nationalism and patriotism measures did not significantly differentiate between perspectives on American identity. Instead, the two identified factors were split broadly along political ideological lines, distinguished primarily by the contrast in how they differently prioritized the constructs of patriotism within the structure of their identities. The factors were further divided as to how coherent they perceived the measures of patriotism and nationalism to be.

The limited role that current definitions of the patriotism/nationalism dichotomy played in this study's factor interpretations highlights the descriptive limitations of these concepts. Nationalism, as currently defined, did not significantly differentiate the two factors, but was consensually dismissed as being unimportant to American identity. It was instead differences in the particularities of patriotism that defined the two factors. For example, civic and ethno-cultural norms did not differentiate the factors, but how civic values and responsibilities were prioritised and interpreted by each factor did. The split in presidential candidate support between the two factors is another indicator that—although widely referred to a nationalist victory—it was not nationalism as currently defined that would have predicted the 2016 US presidential election results.

Two qualitatively distinct viewpoints on American identity were identified. The first was a view that greater protection and support of the equal rights of citizens is necessary—an objective that is to be achieved through a critical relationship with government, through whom this equality will be achieved. A second viewpoint reflected a more central psychological and classically affective attachment to the concept of the nation and its symbols, as well as a desire to return to America's founding values from which the country has strayed too far – values that were seen to support a system that allows everyone a chance at success. Each factor's representation appeared to be underpinned by motivational content, each with their own primary goal: to spread equality (Factor 1) and to maintain founding values (Factor 2). These factors' characteristics are broadly in line with noted differences between liberals and conservatives such as advocating/resisting social change and acceptance/rejection of inequality (Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway, 2003); they are also congruent with Webster and Abramowitz's (2017) finding that social welfare issues are now the significant dividing line between parties.

The interrelationship between creedal values, pride, and symbolic patriotism as well as between constructive patriotism and the value of equality, suggests that certain of these conceptualisations are measuring different aspects of an underlying construct. The finding that the factors were distinguished by their level of support for constructive and symbolic patriotisms resonates with certain elements of earlier national identity research. The inverse relationship found in this study between support for symbols and support for constructive patriotism is in line with Sullivan et al.'s (1992) Q-methodological study. That study's *iconoclastic* patriotism factor (in contrast to its symbolic patriotism factor) rejected symbols, was motivated by economic justice and saw the related critical and active political engagement as

patriotic. Although Sullivan et al.'s Q-set was drawn from a different source (contemporary political discourse) and sought to explore patriotism (not national identity) these factors closely mirror the factors found in the current study, an indication of the existence of persistent profiles regardless of source material. Factors 1 and 2 also bear a close resemblance to the two types of attachment identified by DeLamater et al. (1969) and further developed by Kelman (1997). DeLamater et al. defined national attachment according to an individual's *functional* or *symbolic* role relationship with the nation. DeLamater and colleagues' functionally committed individual defines their role according to political and social responsibilities and shows low affect for national symbols; while a symbolically integrated individual has a strong affective attachment to the nation and its values and gives a high priority to his or her role as an American. Kelman continued this line of reasoning, distinguishing between *sentimental* and *instrumental* motivations for an individual's loyalty to the nation. According to this theory, and in keeping with the social identity framework (Tajfel, 1974; Turner et al., 1987), individuals who are sentimentally attached see the nation as a representative of their personal identity and are motivated to protect the group's traditions and defining values (similar to Factor 2). Those who are motivated by an instrumental attachment perceive the purpose of the nation as meeting the needs and interests of the individual and those of fellow citizens (like Factor 1). This attachment that differs between the nation in the abstract (Factor 2) and the nation as people (Factor 1) is also in line with our findings.

An underlying ideological national attachment is congruent with the endorsement of certain patriotism and nationalism constructs. For example, an endorsement of criticism (constructive patriotism) may be seen as being synonymous with the liberal position that government needs to "do more", in line with the Factor 1

outlook, while "doing less" is in keeping with Factor 2's emphasis on smaller government and individualism. Likewise, "moving forward" may require an instrumental relationship with one's government, while "getting back" to revered values may reflect a sentimental attachment. The identification of differing motives for national attachment may also offer explanation for previously identified relationships between current measures of patriotism and nationalism and political behaviour. For example, constructive patriotism has been linked to political participation and interest without clear explanation (Huddy & Khatib, 2007; Schatz et al., 1999). The current study's findings suggest that those who score highly on a constructive patriotism scale may also be committed to increasing social justice through government intervention. Such a motivation would be expected to require political participation and interest, thereby offering an explanation for the association. Equally, the findings lend themselves to other avenues of potential explanation for civil disobedience including a lack of reverence for the nation's symbols and creed. This intertwining, along with the differing conceptualisations endorsed by liberals and non-liberals, suggests that certain current measures of patriotism and nationalism are conflated with political ideology.

Not only did Factors 1 and 2 differently prioritize the conceptualisations of patriotism and nationalism as currently operationalised (based on average z-scores, and discussed above), but there was also a disparity in the interpretation of these operationalised statements and conceptualisations (based on the range of each conceptualisation's z-scores and qualitative comments). With the notable exception of civic creedal values described below, Factor 1 appeared to agree with the academic operationalisations of these conceptualisations, while Factor 2 found more discontinuity. The findings provide insight into the subjective interpretations of

current operationalisations of patriotism/nationalism while also pointing to their weaknesses of ideological influence and lack of granularity.

As evidence of the stability of the American political system, political studies often point to the widespread consensus on the American Creed. In their seminal 1990 study, Citrin and colleagues found ideological consensus on the endorsement of the principle of equal treatment—a result they described as "striking" (Citrin et al., 1990, p. 1134). In line with Citrin et al.'s finding, the current study found that this creedal norm was endorsed across the ideological divide. However, the differing rankings and interpretations of equal treatment by Factor 1 and Factor 2 suggest that such a consensus may be more superficial than previously assumed – there may be a significant ideological divide in what previous literature has considered a consensus belief and a core American value. The differing interpretations of equality also offer alternative explanations for seemingly incongruous results in previous literature. Studies have observed a lack of connection between endorsement of the value of 'equal opportunity' and policies such as affirmative action (Theiss-Morse, 2009). This disconnect was hypothesised to be due to an individual's application of a creedal value other than equal opportunity (namely, individualism) to their policy preference. The current study suggests that the perceived incongruence between value endorsement and policy opinion—as well as the ideological consensus identified in Citrin's study—may be explained by a difference in the interpretation of the equality values. For Factor 1, the motivation to see "justice for all" connects directly to the endorsement of governmental programs such as affirmative action; while for Factor 2, no such government intervention may be required if equality is provided by the nature of the American free economy and the absence of interpersonal bias.

This study identified a number of sub-components of current conceptualisations that were identified by Factor 2 but not Factor 1. These included: pride in the nation in the abstract, pride in the nation's accomplishments, the *feeling* of as opposed to the *act* of superiority, and the act of criticism for the purpose of progress as distinguished from the act of criticism as a demonstration of love. The study also revealed the extent and the nature of the affective content of Factor 2's attachment. How Factor 1 and Factor 2 express affection for their country differs, and symbols of the country are important to non-liberals beyond a need to 'externalize'. The pronounced difference in the relationship with symbols between the factors indicates that the nature of attachment to representations of the country may be a rich area for further national attachment study. Research related to symbolic patriotism has primarily focused on the flag and the anthem (Huddy & Khatib, 2007; Parker, 2010; Schatz & Lavine, 2007), but little work has explored the significance of non-externalising symbols (e.g. the founding fathers, the Constitution) to this concept. The measures appear to warrant further granulation if non-liberal attitudes and perceptions are to be accurately captured. For example, additional insight may be gained if pride in the construct of the country and pride in the actions of the country, ethnic norms and cultural norms, and belief in the superiority of the country and support for international intervention were all separately measured. The awareness of these differences and of the areas of consensus identified in this study may offer opportunities for negotiation and compromise in the increasingly polarised political US environment.

Assuming that the split between Factors 1 and 2 is broadly ideological, the clarity of Factor 1's perception of the operationalisations compared to the fractured rankings found in Factor 2 indicates that liberal ideology may be more accurately

reflected in the current social psychological measures of patriotism and nationalism.

The potential for embedding liberal values in social psychological theory and

operationalisations is a recognized issue (Duarte et al., 2015). The concept of

nationalism may also be particularly prone to the tendency of liberal academics to

construct theories that explain conservative attitudes (Brandt & Spalti, 2017): the

weakness of the term *nationalism* is that it is subject to "value-laden interpretations"

(DeLamater, 1969, p. 320). The conceptualisations and operationalisations in this area

may therefore reflect a tendency by academics to bifurcate what Billig (1995) referred

to "our" patriotism from "their" nationalism. Such an embedded liberal bias in

academic concepts and operationalisation can render these measures useless and lead

to misunderstandings of conservative attitudes and behaviours.

These observations are limited in that the Factor 1 and Factor 2 groups being

compared were broadly, but not exclusively, comprised of participants identifying

with the respective left or right, although the comparison could instead be understood

to be between national identity types. Further work comparing purposely constructed

ideological groups may be required to confirm these findings. In addition, and

although the participant group in this study can in many ways be considered a

strength—this study was able to tap into an older and wider geographic sample than

many non-survey studies—the range of opinion might have been larger in a more

diverse participant group in terms of socio-economic status, age and ethnicity.

Conclusion

Our findings suggest that in the current political environment, political

ideology may underlie current operationalisations of patriotism and nationalism,

therefore limiting the descriptive and predictive values of these measures. When

participants considered eight of these conceptualisations together, they freely

constructed their American national identities along left and right ideological lines, with differing interpretations of patriotism conceptualisations as the most distinguishing feature. These findings extend and connect previous work on national identity, patriotism, nationalism, and ideology.

This work has underscored the value of employing qualitative or mixed methodologies, and Q methodology in particular, to draw out distinctions not anticipated by a priori, quantitative measures. Insights gained into the subtleties of meaning espoused by the right and left may be used to better inform quantitative approaches to the assessment of political attitudes and behaviours. For example, measures that contrast understandings of the American Creed, or attachment to the nation in the abstract, hold possibilities for more refined analyses. Understanding that the political left and right may be more or less attached to different facets of the nation and that they are equally attached to others, should allow for more nuanced communication to both the in-group and the outgroup. And finally, appreciating that the ideological divide may not be simply down to a difference in particular political issues or the support for certain candidates, but in how citizens understand their American identity, their relationship to the nation and its people, allows for a more precise study of American national identity and its implications in a changing national society.

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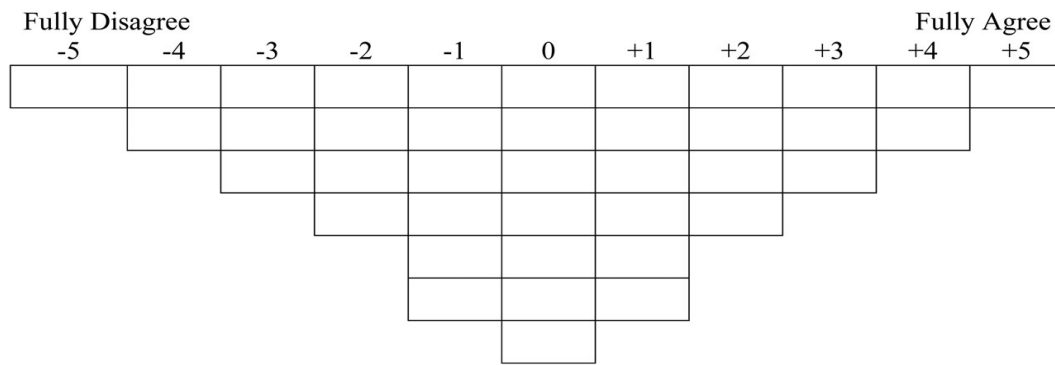# Figures

Fully Disagree   Fully Agree

| -5 | -4 | -3 | -2 | -1 | 0 | +1 | +2 | +3 | +4 | +5 |

Figure 1. representation of Q-sort distribution similar to that used in this study

Table 1

Factor Arrays

No.	Statement	Concept	Factor 1 z-score	Factor 2 z-score
1	*A true American has been born in America*	EC	-1.46	-1.99
2	A true American is independent and self-reliant	CC	0.15	0.98
3	*A true American votes in elections*	CR	1.20	1.22
4	A true American would support an important American policy if another country disagreed with it, even if he or she knew little about it	B	-0.81	-1.05
5	A true American questions policy decisions	CP	1.15	0.11
6	A true American is proud to be an American	P	0.20	1.60
7	*A true American feels that generally, America is better than any other country*	Ch	-0.54	-0.04
8	*A true American feels good when they see the American flag flying*	Sym	0.17	0.61
9	*A true American is a Christian*	EC	-1.96	-1.93
10	*A true American treats people of all races and backgrounds equally*	CC	1.68	1.32
11	*A true American serves on jury duty if called*	CR	0.71	0.70
12	*A true American would support America right or wrong*	B	-0.94	-0.98
13	A true American says when they think America's actions are wrong	CP	1.42	0.38
14	A true American is proud of the way democracy works in America	P	0.52	1.13
15	*A true American feels that generally, the more influence America has on other countries, the better off they are*	Ch	-0.80	-0.85
16	A true American feels good when they hear the national anthem	Sym	0.11	0.83
17	A true American speaks English	EC	-1.13	-0.57
18	A true American believes in rule by the people	CC	1.09	1.55
19	A true American pays his or her fair share of taxes	CR	1.11	0.50
20	A true American would support American policies for the very reason that they are the policies of his or her country	B	-0.98	-0.69
21	A true American believes that simply accepting the actions of America when he or she disagrees with them is not good for the nation	CP	1.08	-0.53
22	*A true American is proud of America's economic achievements*	P	0.47	0.47
23	*A true American believes that the world would be a better place if people from other countries were more like the Americans*	Ch	-1.14	-1.25
24	A true American stands when the Star Spangled Banner is played	Sym	-0.03	0.93
25	*A true American has lived in America for most of their lives*	EC	-1.26	-1.61
26	A true American respects the country's democratic institutions	CC	1.17	1.25
27	A true American stays informed on current events	CR	0.73	0.35
28	A true American accepts all the decisions made on our behalf by our government	B	-1.49	-1.13
29	A true American works hard to move America in a positive direction	CP	1.41	0.78
30	A true American is proud of America's fair and equal treatment of all groups in society	P	0.84	0.67
31	*A true American believes that there is nothing about America today that makes him or her feel ashamed of America*	Ch	-1.24	-1.16
32	A true American believes that it is important that the American flag be folded neatly and carefully when it is taken down	Sym	-0.13	0.32
33	A true American believes in God	EC	-1.35	-0.92
34	A true American believes in free enterprise	CC	0.67	1.32
35	A true American volunteers on political campaigns	CR	-0.09	-1.32
36	A true American supports America's leaders even if they disagree with their actions	B	-1.01	-0.52
37	A true American criticizes America out of love of country	CP	1.13	-0.86
38	A true American is proud of America's history	P	-0.20	0.59
39	*A true American believes that, in view of America's moral and material superiority, it is only right that America should have the biggest say in deciding United Nations policy*	Ch	-1.00	-1.10
40	A true American believes that children should say the Pledge of Allegiance in school	Sym	-0.48	0.68
41	*A true American adheres to a traditional American way of life*	EC	-1.02	-0.64
42	*A true American values freedom of choice, unrestricted by the government*	CC	0.76	0.96
43	*A true American would report a crime that has been witnessed*	CR	0.57	0.23
44	*A true American believes that people who do not wholeheartedly support America should live elsewhere*	B	-1.08	-0.98
45	*A true American opposes some American policies because he or she cares about America and wants to improve it*	CP	1.39	0.59
46	*A true American is proud of America's scientific and technological achievements*	P	0.63	0.25
47	*A true American believes that other countries should try to make their government as much like America's as possible*	Ch	-0.84	-1.30
48	A true American would not burn an American flag in protest	Sym	-0.35	1.00
49	*A true American resists changes to traditional American culture*	EC	-1.16	-0.84
50	*A true American believes in equal rights and opportunity*	CC	1.72	1.30
51	A true American participates in their community by donating time or money	CR	0.42	-0.07
52	A true American believes that there is too much criticism of America in the world, and that therefore American citizens should not criticise it	B	-0.82	-0.84
53	A true American supports efforts at positive change	CP	1.53	0.67
54	A true American is proud of America's social security system	P	0.08	-0.92
55	*A true American believes that it is really important that America be number one in whatever it does*	Ch	-1.02	-0.78
56	A true American is proud of America's armed forces	Sym	0.23	1.60

Note: Consensus statements (difference between z-scores < .55) in italics. CC = civic creedal, CR = civic republican, EC = ethno-cultural, P = pride, Ch = chauvinistic, Sym = symbolic, B = blind, CP = constructive

Table 2

z-score Range and Average by Conceptualisation/Factor

	CC1	CC2	CR1	CR2	EC1	EC2	P1	P2	S1	S2	Ch1	Ch2	CP1	CP2	B1	B2
High	1.72	1.55	1.20	1.22	-1.0	-0.5	0.63	1.60	0.23	1.60	-0.5	-0.0	1.54	0.78	-0.8	-0.5
Low	0.15	0.96	-0.0	-1.3	-1.9	-1.9	-0.2	-0.9	-0.4	0.32	-1.2	-1.3	1.08	-0.8	-1.4	-1.1
● Average	1.03	1.24	0.67	0.23	-1.3	-1.0	0.24	0.54	-0.0	0.85	-0.9	-0.9	1.30	0.16	-1.0	-0.9
Range	1.57	0.59	1.29	2.54	0.95	1.42	0.84	2.52	0.71	1.28	0.70	1.26	0.46	1.64	0.68	0.64

Conceptualisation and Factor
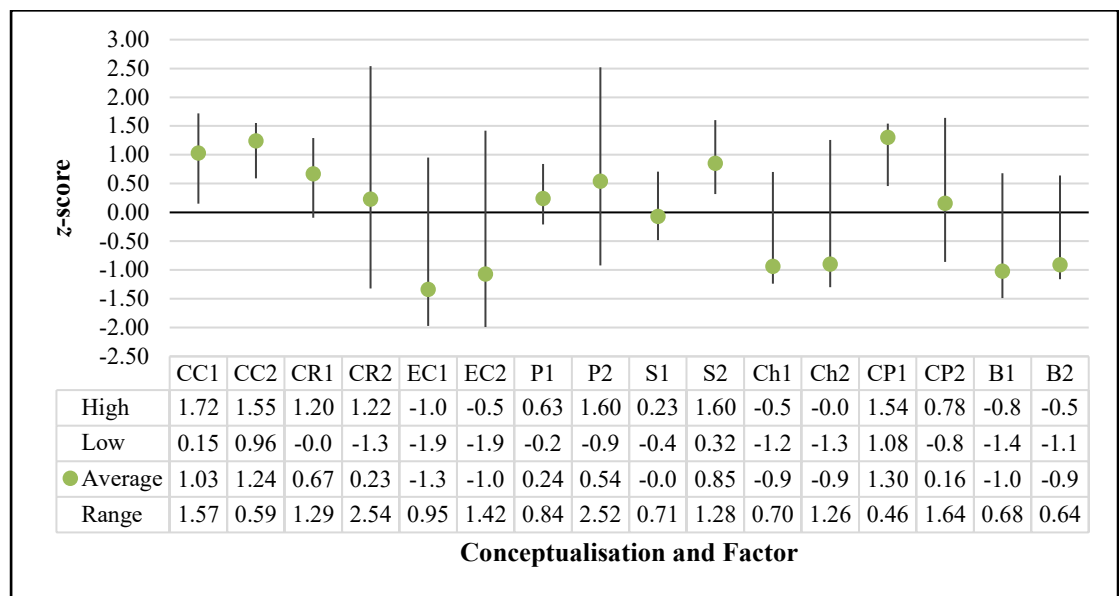
Note: CC=civic creedal, CR=civic republican, EC=ethno-cultural, P=pride, S=symbolic, Ch=chauvinism, CP=constructive, B=blind. CC1=civic creedal, Factor 1; CC2=civic creedal, Factor 2; etc.