Identity as a 'Post-9/11' Foreign Policy Variable: Examining use of Force and Patriotism Interactions in Elite Discourses and Longitudinal Public Opinion Surveys
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Abstract
The rise of constructivism has helped to theoretically facilitate studies into identity and foreign policy at the state level but few studies have tested for the effects of patriotism (Devine, 2008; Herrmann et al., 2009) at the level of public opinion on foreign policy. This paper analyses patriotism in US public opinion in the context of foreign policy, specifically 9/11, using successive decades of opinion polls in a longitudinal analysis, exploring for whom, when and why patriotism matters. This empirical baseline is complemented by a genealogical assessment of the importance of patriotism in US foreign policy elite discourses from 1980 to the present year. The results show that 9/11 - constructed as a foreign policy event directed at and suffered by the Nation - is associated with an increase in levels of being proud to be an American amongst the public and a rise in patriotism signifiers in political discourses. The effects have faded over time for most sub-populations including males, females, and all races, with the exception of party-affiliated sub-groups: the Republican party elite and people identifying with the Republican Party have retained their 9/11-induced levels of “Extreme Patriotism” whereas Democrats and Independents returned to their pre-9/11 levels of comparatively “Moderate” Patriotism. There are theoretical links between Party Affiliation, Right Wing Authoritarianism and Social Dominance Orientation that may sustain Extreme Patriotism. The paper contributes to debate on the essentially contested nature of patriotism and the growing theoretical and empirical relevance of its relationship with foreign policy, conflict and war.

Introduction
The genesis of this paper stems from the politics of patriotism in the wake of the 9-11 terrorist attacks on the United States of America, and public and political elite reaction to those events. Although merely an acronym of Uniting (and) Strengthening America (by) Providing Appropriate Tools Required (to) Intercept (and) Obstruct Terrorism, the PATRIOT Act of 2001 is a policy on combating terrorist threats from abroad that forms an association between post 9-11 foreign policy and patriotism. Political actors use cultural references and symbols as powerful tools to attempt to capture the loyalty of citizens (Kenny 2004: 25) as they seek the public’s support for themselves personally as their representative, as well as for their policies. As Martha C. Nussbaum pointed out, “the media portrayed the disaster as a tragedy that happened to our nation” and she suggests in the wake of 9-11 that “compassion for our fellow Americans can all too easily slide over into an attitude that wants America to come out on top, defeating or subordinating other peoples or nations” (2002: x-xi). Rather than the ills of capitalism or state policy being perceived as the target of the attacks, the notion of the nation was pushed centre-stage. The associated national identity being perceived as under attack, the urge to articulate and affirm its meaning is heightened, particularly against the foreign Other.
Identity politics featured prominently in public debate in the reaction of many opinion formers and commentators to the events of September 11 2001 (Kenny 2004: viii). President Bush sought support for two widely discredited and arguably illegitimate wars in Iraq and Afghanistan as part of a response to the 9-11 attacks known as the War on Terror. Mobilisation occurs around common identities (Taylor 2002: 120), and in the US in particular, the connection between culture, group identity and political outlook has emerged in mainstream discourse (Kenny 2002: 14). In a twist to the ‘Rally around the Flag’ thesis, this paper investigates the anecdotally grounded supposition that the US people have rallied around their national identity by exhibiting higher levels of pride in their national identity in response to the attacks, using data from thirty public opinion surveys conducted from 1981 to the present year. The paper also examines whether there are any group-based differences and changes detectable over time. The second strand of research for this paper investigates whether elite discourses also reflect increased references to Nation, America and fellow Americans through an empirical analysis of the prevalence of patriotism signifiers in Convention Acceptance Speeches and Inaugural Speeches from 1980 to the present year, to assess whether the impact of 9-11 in particular, and US participation in wars in general, has coincided with changes in this regard.

What is Patriotism?
Most scholarship on patriotism prefaces a definition of the concept by admitting its complexity: some scholars refuse to define it in singular terms and others proceed on the basis that there are varieties of patriotism. These range from (1) special affection for the country; (2) a sense of personal identification with the country; (3) special concern for the well-being of the country; (4) willingness to sacrifice to promote the country’s good; (5) special concern for compatriots; (6) a lively expression of collective responsibility (Keller 2007: 63). These terms can be interpreted in a number of ways. The central focus of this paper is how proud an individual feels to be an American, centred in particular on (2) above.

When presented with a list of positive characteristics of patriotism in a True Patriot sponsored Survey in 2008, the US people selected their preferred characteristics: the top three functions of patriotism offered by nearly 1 in 4 people are (a) inspiration to improve things, (b) teaching young people good values and (c) helping to unite a diverse nation. These are internally oriented and broadly enabling and progressive characteristics. Two other attributes mentioned by roughly 1 in 10 people are recalling great things about America’s past, and highlighting America’s strengths compared to other nations, with the latter portending a slightly imperious or competitive tint.

Table 1: Positive Characteristics of Patriotism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>True Patriot Survey [August 2008]</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It inspires us to improve things in America</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It teaches young people good values</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It helps unite our diverse nation</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It honors great things about our past</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It highlights America’s strengths relative to other nations</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All of these (Vol.)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of these (Vol.)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (Vol.)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know/Refused</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The meaning of national identity is fluid, and for many invokes a number of factors including ancestry, language, location of residence, location of birth, ethnicity, citizenship, etc. Others consider shared values as referents for national identity. John Kleinig argues that American...
patriotism is about “somewhat amorphous cultural glue called ‘the American way of life’.” (2007: 43) He argues that deeper roots of patriotic loyalty stem from a desire to ward off destruction of elements of a way of life an individual has come to identify with and benefit from (2007: 49). Identities are defined by the meanings held in the identity standard (Burke and Stets 2009: 175) – individuals may use any different combination of the aforementioned factors with varying degree of salience to operationalize the American identity standard. Identities provide a sense of purpose and meaning in life, integrating us with the actions and expectations of others. (Burke and Stets 2009: 146) The verification of identities makes people feel good in general, and feel good about themselves, especially; people feel worthy, accepted and part of the in-group. (Burke and Stets 2009: 171) If identities are not verified, or if individuals perceive they are not being or acting in accord with their identity standard (Burke and Stets 2009: 174), people feel bad, distressed and angry, (Burke and Stets 2009: 147) particularly if the identities are salient and committed (Burke and Stets 2009: 164). Past research has shown that strong identification, not identification per se, is most likely to promote political cohesion among group members and that an external threat enhances ingroup solidarity, the latter increasing in proportion to the degree of threat. (Huddy 2003: 525, 539) The 9/11 attacks, interpreted as an attack against the United States of America – “the Nation” - provides conditions for the enhancement of national identity at the level of public opinion, as well as opportunities for politicians to compete with each other in support of America and fellow Americans, and in the degree to which they identify as American and how they embody that identity. Politicians are also provided with an enhanced opportunity to define the meaning of American identity, and employ new in-group/out-group binaries in constructing what and who is American and is “un-American”.

The Theoretical and Normative Debates on Patriotism: Cosmopolitanism and Liberalism

The Cosmopolitan Framework: Differences between Extreme and Moderate Patriots

The theoretical and normative debates on patriotism cohere around two main theories – cosmopolitanism and liberalism. The first theme is that patriotism can degenerate into less desirable values and behaviours, such as emotional narrowness, isolationism, jingoism and ethnocentrism (Nussbaum, 2002), feeling solidarity with Americans alone and distrusting the rest of the world. Stephen Nathanson offers the notion of Extreme Patriotism: extreme patriots would fail to assist others in dire need, and would not avoid harming others in the pursuit of their nation’s goals, which is connected to xenophobia and militarism. (2007: 83) Simon Keller argues for the notion of Bad Faith: he contends that patriotism motivates people to maintain certain beliefs about a country as well as a motive to deny the influence of that first motive in nourishing those beliefs – this underpins the disposition of bad faith (2007: 71). Patriotic loyalty involves seeing one’s country as a good country. A person can be aware of the bias, but is motivated to avoid thinking impartially about the country (Keller 2007: 72-73) because an individual’s patriotism would be disingenuous if the individual’s political opinions didn’t match a characterisation of the country that is accurate. (Keller 2007: 68) Leonie Huddy and Nadia Khatib’s' concept of blind or uncritical patriotism (as opposed to ‘constructive patriotism’) reflects an unwillingness both to criticize and accept criticism of the nation, measured through response to the "my country right or wrong" indicators (2007: 64). American exceptionalism, reflecting a belief that Americas are worthy of special respect, as a Chosen People, and the constructed “Just / Good Self” against an “Unjust / Evil Other” binary are used by those who are strong on dimensions of Right Wing Authoritarianism and Social Dominance Orientation in debates about policy and reflect the views of Extreme or Uncritical Patriots.

Marc Hetherington and Jonathan Weiler (2007) define authoritarianism as "a set of interconnected beliefs animated by some fundamental underlying value orientation that is, itself, connected to a
visceral sense of right and wrong”. They suggest that after 9/11, “terrorism”, seen as an obviously grave threat to established American traditions and authority, has become much more important as a political issue, and is an issue over which authoritarians and non-authoritarians are deeply divided. With respect to the foreign policy choices between diplomacy and the use of force in the face of a foreign challenge, they find that “authoritarians favor fighting, whereas non-authoritarians favor diplomacy.” (Weiler and Hetherington, 2006) Using a 2011 YouGov Polimetrix public opinion survey, I found that patriotism is the biggest predictor in an analysis of what values and identities determine the response to a North Korean military attack on a US naval warship: increasing agreement with the statement “I am proud to be an American” (using a 7-point scale 1=strongly agree 7= strongly disagree) predicted the use of force rather than diplomacy (Devine, 2012). If authoritarianism and extreme patriotism overlap as independent variables predicting foreign policy orientations, the same characteristics that divide authoritarians from non-authoritarians may also have a role in the divide between extreme and moderate patriots. For example, Hetherington and Weiler find that non-blacks with an authoritarian worldview are gravitating to the Republican Party and people with a non-authoritarian worldview are gravitating to the Democratic Party: in this paper, I would expect that those identifying with the Republican Party would be more likely to choose the “extremely proud” response at the top of the five point scale and those in the Democratic Party to choose the “very proud” response (one unit below the top in the five-point scale) in greater numbers compared with Republicans. Independents should have the largest relative proportion of moderates, and be well-represented at the neutral mid-point of the 5-point scale.

It is argued by those who have some sympathy with cosmopolitanism that Extreme Patriotism can be avoided, counterbalanced or tempered through an equal allegiance to a worldwide community of human beings. The second theme centres on the counterargument - couched in zero-sum terms - to the aforementioned cosmopolitan notion: that individuals can only fall between the two poles, failing to feel attachment at home or to the world, and therefore kindling affection for the general can only be achieved by revelling in the particular (Barber 2002: 34-35). Benjamin Barber seeks “a civic patriotism that eschews exclusion but meets the need for parochial identities and contrived others whose exclusion (or extermination) helps draw the boundaries” (Barber 2002: 36), substituting, he argues, a healthy patriotism for a pathological one. Most scholars in this debate appear to agree on the need for a type of cosmopolitan patriotism encompassing strong common identification that gives the local an additional measure of concern but that is open to universal solidarities. (Sen 2002: 120-121, Nussbaum, 2002: 135) Nathanson also views moderate patriotism and cosmopolitanism as complimentary: “moderate patriots” are also concerned to promote their country’s interests but recognise and accept moral limits on the means by which the national interest is pursued. Special duties to one’s own country do not rule out general duties to people in other countries, such as a duty not to kill them in aggressive wars or a duty to assist them in dire need. (2007: 77) Launching aggressive wars to enhance a nation’s power or wealth is seen as wrong. Scholars argue that there are many policies that moderate patriots and cosmopolitans can agree on. (Nathanson 2007: 80-81)

The Liberal Framework and ‘moderate patriotism’
Liberal theory is also implicated in discussions on identity politics and patriotism across a range of perspectives, including Kantians, liberal egalitarians, liberal republicans, ‘difference’ theorists, advocates of a politics of recognition, and proponents of political liberalism, in discussions about how to reconcile values of individuality, citizenship and diversity. (Kenny 2004: xiii) Kenny sees identity politics as a response to the hegemony of liberal culture: “Liberals’ invocation of state neutrality, and their underlying belief that their institutions and way of life are superior to others, produces alienation, frustration and anger from immigrant communities, cultural minorities and religious groups” (2004: 142). Others question whether the ‘naturally given’ priority of nationally-oriented education, socialisation, aspiration and loyalty can exist in a world with various forms of
regionalism and globalization that limit the sovereignty and autonomy of the state which acts as a basis for patriotism (Falk 2002: 54) and the proper focus of American patriotism and community in an era of individualism and privatizing markets (Barber 2004: 31). Recent work on patriotism argues that a liberal or universalist morality is consistent with a form of genuine “non-emasculated” patriotism (Keller 2007: 64) “Constructive Patriotism”, a concept developed by Schatz and Staub that is more acceptable to liberals, is defined as "an attachment to country characterized by critical loyalty" and "questioning and criticism" driven by "a desire for positive change" (Schatz, Staub, and Lavine 1999, 153 in Huddy and Khatib 2007: 64) Others debate how patriotism often challenges liberalism (Appiah 2002: 23) such that no Liberal should say “My country right or wrong,” because liberalism involves a set of political principles that a state can fail to realize: Appiah points to the fact that because Liberals value people over collectivities, the Liberal will have no special loyalty to an illiberal state. In a 2011 Pew survey, 36% of Americans felt strongly that “We should all be willing to fight for our country, whether it is right or wrong”: considered within a Conservative-Liberal binary, those 1 in 3 are more likely to be Conservatives than Liberals.

In The Righteous Mind, Jonathan Haidt identifies five foundations of morality: Care/Harm, Fairness/Cheating, Loyalty/Betrayal, Authority/Subversion, Sanctity/Degradation. (2012: 158 -161) Through an on-line survey, he found that Liberals value Care and Fairness far more than any of the other three foundations whereas Conservatives embrace all five foundations equally. Just as I speculate that authoritarianism and extreme patriotism may overlap as independent variables in response to foreign policy situations in the previous section, from these findings, one would expect Liberals to be associated with “moderate patriotism” assuming their emphasis on care and fairness translates into moderate patriotic foreign policy orientations that (1) pay due attention to the rights of others and (2) assess whether any proposed militaristic responses to foreign policy issues are justified and fair.

**Studying Patriotism: The Case of the United States of America**

The United States is an interesting case to use in a study of patriotism for several reasons: (1) American political culture and the diversity of ideals that animate American patriotism(s) and concepts of American identity. The variation runs from the ideological traditions of Puritanism and Enlightenment in countering the persecutions immigrants fled to America to avoid, to the Black Women in the Middle West who regard their history of struggle and survival in a racially segregated and oppressive social order, and the construction of individual and group identities as important as national identities, in their understanding of how they define themselves as Americans (Hine 1997: 42), to the Hispanic World in which America is the name for one continent of North and South America and Americans are those who live on the continent in the context of the arrival of the aforementioned Europeans (Chávez 1997: 49); (2) the political weakness of the federal state and its inability to eradicate inequality through redistributive policies, the provision of healthcare, etc., which can materially affect notions of solidarity; (3) the status of the US as a country of historical mass immigration for millions seeking a better life and the consequently unusual significance of ethnic and religious groupings in civil society, as well as the specific histories of colonization and enslavement of groups such as Native Americans and African Americans; (4) the separatist desires of some groups such as the Amish (Kenny 2002: 2-3) or states such as Texas.

This paper is concerned with the political psychology and critical constructivist aspects of patriotism as it relates in general terms to conflict in foreign policy and in specific terms to the responses to 9/11, exploring for whom, when and why patriotism matters, as well as the social construction of what it means to be American. The latter is an inherently qualitative project and is beyond the scope of this paper. For the purposes of integrating research on patriotism across levels of analysis (public and elite), this paper provides a very basic quantitative analysis of elite political discourses at party conventions and presidential inaugurations and addresses public opinion through some basic topline...
survey analysis – the first step in providing some empirical baselines from which to further explore quantitative and qualitative dimensions in the future.

National political culture and ideological tradition have shaped ideas about identity politics. Within a critical approach, fundamental to any discussion of allegiance is the notion of equality, and the degree to which patriotism engenders racism, exceptionalism and the dismissal of others. Is being American an inclusive, all-encompassing, non-hierarchical identity, or is it exclusive, particular and authoritarian? This paper seeks to understand who, in terms of party allegiances, race, and gender, feels more proud to be an American and in what context. This gives an idea of who is included or excluded from the in-group identity, and may shed light on what it means “to be American” for subgroups within the national population. Within political psychology, the opposite of pride is shame. In feeling pride in one’s national identity, one is open to the alternative feeling of shame. Many people may not feel pride in their national identity if they link it to the election of the ‘wrong’ leaders, the betrayal of important principles and values by those leaders, or unjustified or destructive behaviours and policies towards others outside the state, or indeed, themselves or others, inside the state. John Fleckner notes, as someone who came of age in the 1960s, how turned off he was by any discussions of patriotism, “in reaction to right-wing political forces who have wrapped themselves in “Americanism” and patriotism on behalf of such causes as the war in Vietnam, racial segregation, and English as an official language (1997: 35). Minorities suffering from structural disadvantage and racism in societies may feel less proud of their national identity or may adhere to an alternative meaning to the mainstream concept dominating their society, finding commonality based on difference. In short, (in)equality fuels differences in meanings of ‘being American’ and may underpin variation in strength of attachment or levels of pride in being American.

Patriotism, Foreign Policy and 9/11: hypotheses
Factors such as perceived common fate, identity strength in terms of highly valuing group membership, the importance of identity to one’s self-image, public collective self-esteem, as well as latent preference for in-group over out-group, all have a role in understanding the impact of patriotism on foreign policy. Keller attempts to analyse and separate ways of identifying: (a) a person can identify with something by empathizing with it; (b) a person can take themselves as identical to something, as a sports fan might feel shame or pride as a favoured team does badly or well, as if that fan is part of the team; (c) a person can identify with something as that is essential to their being, existence or self, i.e. a man would not really be himself if he were not American (2007: 65). He argues that in order to identify with the nation, a person must see the nation as good, and have a positive conception of the country, in order to be committed to it. He terms this ‘being loyal to America as an American’. This hyper-normative imperative is applicable to Conservatives or Right Wing Authoritarians rather than Liberals, because the latter are more resistant to bias in the face of empirical evidence to the contrary. Leonie Huddy and Nadia Khatib agree: their concept of “Uncritical patriotism” is linked to authoritarianism (2007: 64).

Public Opinion Hypotheses
One of the central traits of Conservatives and Authoritarians is hostility to the Other. The 9/11 attacks would provoke in Conservatives greater identification with the Nation coupled with intense hostility towards the Foreign Other. This is because (1) category salience shapes identity (Huddy 2004: 995): as 9/11 is framed as an attack on the Nation by Foreign Others, Conservatives will strongly identify with Nation rather than the Foreign Other, (compared with Liberals who are more cognisant and caring of Others, and more independent and concerned with fairness in their political outlook, and therefore less likely to identify as strongly with the Nation in the 9/11 context), and because (2) exaggerated hostility satisfies Conservatives’ psychological need for antagonism toward the out group, reinforces the self-esteem of the conservative base, and increases solidarity within
the ranks (Dean 2006: 24). Conservatives attain psychological benefits from strongly identifying with the Nation, perhaps to the extent of seeing themselves as the Nation, as if the Conservative him or herself was attacked on 9/11.

Conservatives are more concerned with Loyalty, Authority, and Sanctity compared with Liberals - the former meaning “soldiers and the flag”. (Haidt 2012: 179) (Haidt notes that readers from outside the United States may want to swap in the words “progressive” or “left-wing” whenever he refers to “liberal” (2012: xxiii)). Haidt points out that Republicans since Nixon have had a near-monopoly on appeals to loyalty (particularly patriotism and military virtues) (Haidt 2012: 181). There are parallels within the RWA paradigm to this perceived patriotism monopoly, in which Dean argues Right Wing Authoritarians “believe themselves the country’s true patriots” (2006: 54) and express this in symbolic and behavioural terms by wearing American flag pins (2006: 55). Indeed, Dean notes “it is not surprising that right-wing authoritarians are conservatives under almost any current definition, based on the items found in the principle tool for measuring authoritarianism, the RWA (right wing authoritarian) scale” (2005: 50) and quotes Altemeyer – “when people are “conservatives”...the odds are pretty good that they are High RWAs. That is not an opinion, but a scientifically established fact.” (Dean 2006: 51) He mentions Authoritarian Conservatism as a concept (Dean 2006: 72) and argues it has been present in American politics in some form since America’s founding (Dean 2006: 73).

Figure 1: Theoretical Overlap between RWA/SDO/ethnocentrism and Extreme Patriotism, and Egalitarianism and Multiculturalism with Moderate Patriotism, and Party Affiliation

Political context can intensify group identity: Leonie Huddy argues that the importance of identity can be conditioned by social status and perceptions of discrimination or racism, citing studies that found Black people who attended politically active churches where politics was discussed regularly had a stronger sense of identity. (2003: 543) In the political context of the 9-11 attacks, which were particularly significant because they involved direct strikes on American soil both against civilians (New York City) and state officials (the Pentagon, Washington), in response to perceived highly salient threats against the in-group from external others, the public is expected to exhibit enhanced identification with America and their American national identity. John Dean’s conception of “RWA Followers” as Right Wing Authoritarians without SDO constitute a sub-group of the public opinion level of analysis in this paper (and up to 36% of the population if one uses the ‘my country, right or wrong’ measurement to estimate the size of this group): in Dean’s typology RWAs are prone to panic easily and see the world as dangerous and threatening (Dean 2006: 57, 66) so I assume that 9/11 has a deeper resonance for RWAs. The emotional effects should be more intense and longer lasting for RWA Extreme Patriots because they will perceive the attacks as a form of discrimination, as attacks
against their values and way of life. In terms of empirical expectations, this should manifest in (a) increased numbers of members of the public reporting they are very or extremely proud to be American compared to the pre-9-11 and post-threat time phases, and (b) the expected decline over time in this 9/11-based uplift (due to the lack of repeat attacks, the shift in media attention and changes to the administration / foreign policy) will be longer and slower amongst Republicans compared to Democrats and Independents, and the general public.

**Elite Discourse Hypotheses**

Patriotic loyalty occurs when an individual comes to understand that the country and its associated way of life is valuable to the individual and part of the individual’s identity. (Kleinig 2007: 49) Patriotism is not necessarily political: patriotism can be grounded in the appreciation of the qualities of a country such as its beauty, friendliness or artistic greatness that have nothing to do with its political virtues. Keller argues that

\[
\text{when you bring your patriotic loyalty to political debate, you have a motive to see your country as one that meets a certain description, and hence to push yourself towards certain interpretations of the country and away from others. But you also have a motive to deny the influence of that first motive – to deny that your construal of your country is based on anything but an impartial consideration of the evidence. (2007: 69)}
\]

Therefore, political elites that bring patriotism into political discourses should have a notably idealised view of the US and Americans. The relationship between the quantity of patriotism signifiers and the idealised nature of descriptions of the US in such discourses should be positive: the more patriotic references, the more aggrandising are the characteristics attributed to the US. Discourses with less patriotism signifiers (expected in Democratic speech acts) should contain less grand and more ‘realistic’ images of the US, and therefore be more likely to refer to data-driven and evidence-based images and alternative conceptions.

Taking the Conservative/High-RWA literature together, I propose a set of expectations based on the assumption that these traits overlap with those who fall into the category of “Extreme Patriots”. Dean makes the distinction between RWA leaders and RWA followers. In his typology the hard right wing authoritarian Leaders are “Social Dominators” (2006: 52). They are militant, nationalistic and tell others what they want to hear. Their SDO traits mean they are hard, tough, ruthless and unfeeling towards others. (Dean 2006: 57) In terms of Leaders’ Convention Speeches, Republican candidate discourses should contain more patriotism signifiers than Democrats and the signifiers associated with patriotism should be almost exclusively Othering, Hierarchical, Superior, and Militaristic.

Because they are highly self-righteous (Dean 2006: 62), have little self-awareness (Dean 2006: 63), and demand loyalty and return it (Dean 2006: 69), I assume that elite speeches with patriotism signifiers and idealized notions of America will appeal to them. Dean reports that experiments reveal that RWA followers are particularly likely to trust someone who tells them what they want to hear, because this is how many of them validate their beliefs. (Dean 2006: 59) Therefore, Followers and Leaders both benefit from the aggrandising patriotic signifiers in political discourses. Liberals are not as susceptible to or attracted to these discourses, so Democratic Leaders will refer to patriotism signifiers less frequently and the signifiers should be Inclusive, Egalitarian, and related to a number foreign policy dimensions beyond Militaristic references.

In viewing patriotism as a two-way system of credit – politicians seek patriotic loyalty from their citizens and portraying oneself as a patriot may be electorally attractive and instigate support and loyalty from those listening - it is expected that political leaders will have to include a minimum set of patriotic signifiers in their speeches but this is variable due to other factors such as competition with political rivals and whether incumbency has allowed one to prove one’s credentials as a patriot. An incumbent who feels he (all have been male to date) had proven his patriotic credentials is likely to have a lower level of patriotism signifiers in second term campaign discourses. The rally around
the flag thesis suggests that an international incident involving the US directly that is dramatic, specific and sharply focused provides the opportunity for a president to invoke patriotism among the people because the people may support him/her because they fear hurting the nation’s chances of success (Mueller, 1970, 1973). Such incidents can unite the nation (Baker and Oneal 2001: 664) whereas domestic incidents can further divide people. Therefore, if an incumbent is in office during a period of threat or war, and remembering that those who have power normally wish to retain it, so in a close race, regardless of Party, incumbents may seek to further encourage the loyalty of their followers and supporters through appeals to patriotism (Kleinig 2007: 45) and an increase in the level of patriotism signifiers in second-round discourses is to be expected.

Data
The public opinion data were downloaded from the Roper Center and the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press (I alone am responsible for the interpretations presented and conclusions reached based on analysis of the data). The twenty-eight surveys cover the period 1981 to 2013 (Table 2). All of the surveys, except where noted (underneath the Table 2), are based on nationally representative samples of roughly 1000 respondents. The same question wording is used in each survey “how proud are you to be an American?” with a five-point response scale of extremely proud, very proud, moderately proud, only a little proud, or not at all proud, except where noted.

Table 2: Survey Data, 1981-2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>President</th>
<th>Vice President</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>President</th>
<th>Vice President</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>President</th>
<th>Vice President</th>
<th>Dates</th>
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<th>Vice President</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>President</th>
<th>Vice President</th>
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These data consist of 19 Convention Acceptances Speeches from 1980 to 2016 (Table 3) and 9 Inaugural Addresses from 1981 to 2017 (Table 4), drawn from the American Presidency Project database.

Table 4: Inaugural Addresses, 1981-2017

<table>
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<tr>
<th>President</th>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Words</th>
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<td>January</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>2427</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>January</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>2561</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Bush</td>
<td>January</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>2320</td>
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<tr>
<td>William J. Clinton</td>
<td>January</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>1598</td>
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<td></td>
<td>January</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1997</td>
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<td></td>
<td>January</td>
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<td>Barack Obama</td>
<td>January</td>
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<td>2009</td>
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<tr>
<td>Donald Trump</td>
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<td>1433</td>
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**Patriotism Signifiers in the wake of 9-11**

The United States of America adopted a new flag of thirteen stripes alternating red and white and thirteen stars in a blue field on June 14, 1777. Modified twenty-six times, Jennifer Marmo argues that “The American flag has become not only an important part of our country’s history but an integral component to being an American citizen” (2010: 49)
Some display the American flag to exhibit feelings of patriotism, nationalism, and unity; for others it represents dominance or narcissism. (Marmo 2010: 50) The central question of this paper is the impact of 9/11 as a foreign policy event on patriotism amongst the public in the US: flag display should prove to be a reasonable indicator. A September 2002 ABC poll asked people whether they displayed a flag, and if they did, whether it was displayed before or after 9/11. The results showed that roughly 1 in 3 do not display a flag, 29% of people reported displaying a flag before the 9-11 attacks, with nearly 4 in 10 people displaying a flag in the period after 9-11. This forty percentage point uplift in patriotic behaviour is a significant change – the question is whether this effect was sustained in the years to follow? A Public Religion Research Institute Race, Class and Culture Survey showed that the proportion flag-bearers had dropped from 69% in 2002 to 58% in 2012 (see Appendix). Nonetheless, the 9/11 effect had been substantially sustained ten years later: the event had virtually doubled the proportion of US people displaying flags, from 29% to 58%.

Are those that display the flag more proud to be an American than those that do not display the flag? If flag display is a patriotism signifier, we should expect a positive relationship. The 2002 ABC data shows a clear and positive relationship: nearly 4 in 5 of those who are ‘extremely proud’ to be an American display the flag compared to roughly 3 in 5 of those who are ‘very proud’ and 1 in 5 of those ‘moderately proud’. The respective proportions displaying the flag before 9/11 were 3 in 10 of those Extremely Proud, 2 in 10 of those Very Proud and 1 in 10 of those Moderately Proud. Just 1 in 5 Extremely Proud patriots do not display a flag compared to 4 in 5 of Moderately Proud patriots.
Recalling that Right Wing Authoritarians “believe themselves the country’s true patriots” (Dean 2006: 54) and express this in symbolic and behavioural terms by wearing American flag pins (Dean 2006: 55), and given their overlap with Extreme Patriots and identification with the Republican Party, Republicans should have higher levels of flag display than Democrats and Independents. White people should also have a higher propensity compared to Black people, given the latter’s comparative structural inequality and hypothesised lower levels of patriotism. Figure 2 shows that Democrats are less likely to display the flag (1 in 3) compared with Republicans (1 in 4) (statistical significance 0.004) whilst 45% of Black people do not display the flag compared with 30% of White people (sig. 0.006), confirming these expectations.

**Expressions of Patriotism before and after 9/11**

Figure 3 presents data from nearly thirty public opinion surveys conducted from 1981 to 2016. The timing and frequency of the data collection suggests a trend itself: how proud an individual felt to be an American was not a topic of much interest before the 1980s: three surveys asked this question in 1981, thereafter one in 1995 and one each in 2000 and 2001 respectively. After 9/11, the frequency of asking this question increased exponentially: three surveys asked the question in 2002, and it is asked in at least 2 surveys a year on average, peaking with four instances in 2008. Measuring patriotism seems to matter more post-9/11. The anecdotally grounded supposition that the US people have rallied by exhibiting higher levels of pride in their national identity in response to the attacks is confirmed. There are six surveys conducted in January 1981, April 1981, May 1995, November 2000, August 2004 and April 2008 that have a four-point scale (highlighted on Figure 3 with red circles), whilst all other surveys other - than March 1981 - have a five point scale. Noting that the scales are not directly comparable, I compare the highest level on the four point scale with the two highest levels on the five point scale. Roughly 8 in 10 people reported to be extremely or very proud to be American prior to the attacks. After 9/11 (indicated by the horizontal line) this figure jumped to 9 in 10 people.
The six surveys prior to 9/11 showed that an average of 15% of Americans were moderately proud to be American, and after 9/11 this figure dropped to 5% - in other words, the moderates migrated up a level or two to very or extremely proud. The tiny proportion of those not at all proud to be American did not waver much over the same time period. The up-lift lasted until the summer of 2004, roughly three years, with the return to pre-9/11 levels of patriotism coinciding with a Presidential election campaign.

Although we know that the moderates migrated up the scale, the question arises whether 9/11 increased the number of “extreme” patriots rather than “moderate” patriots. Because the data are not panel data, we cannot tell if people increased patriotism intensity at the level of the individual, i.e. whether moderates jumped up one level to “very proud” or two levels to “extremely proud”, but it is possible to track the increase or decrease of the proportion of people occupying the “very” and “extremely” categories over time. Figure 4 shows a relationship between “very proud” and “extremely proud”: broadly speaking, as one rises, the other falls, although the relationship is not absolute. The high point of patriotism was 2002, with roughly 3 in 4 Americans feeling extremely proud to be an American. The levels of ‘extreme’ are in a slow but steady decline since that point, whilst those who are ‘very proud’ are slowly and steadily rising in terms of percentage points, from the low to high 20s.
Another way to look at the trend is to separate out the four point scale and five point scale questions and to compare the trends of those choosing the highest point on the scale for each – did both rise after 9/11 and are they both in overall decline since that three year period post-9/11? Figure 5 shows an overall decline for each, but a faster decline for the highest of the five point scale.

Figure 5: Very Proud (4-pt scale) 1981 – 2008 vs Extremely Proud (5-pt scale) 2001-2013 to be American
Figures 6-8 show evidence favoring the hypothesis that Republicans reflect a higher profile of extremely proud patriots compared with others. Interestingly, the effect has not diminished over time (note: 1995 and 2000 have a 4-point scale) compared to the general public, perhaps due to the elite-validated, self-sustaining ultra-patriotic self-concept associated with RWAs.

Figure 6: Patriotism (Proud to be an American) by Party Affiliation - Republicans, 1995 - 2011

The difference between the Democrats and the Republicans boils down to the defection of the moderates to the very/extremely proud cohort on a more or less permanent basis within Republicans, whereas the moderates only temporarily defected to the higher levels within the Democrats (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Patriotism (Proud to be an American) by Party Affiliation - Democrats, 1995 - 2011
The male and female cohorts are virtually indistinguishable from each other. Prior to 9/11, men had proportionally higher levels of “extremely/very proud” patriots, and after 9/11 women have marginally higher levels of the same group, but the differences between the men and women are small. In absolute terms, the proportion of extremely/very proud patriots has expanded amongst women whilst the proportion of moderates has decreased. (Figure 9)
Race is associated with variation in patriotism: White people have less moderates and more ‘very/extremely’ proud patriots (Figure 10) compared with Black people (Figure 11). The 9/11 uplift is present among both cohorts, but the moderates have recovered more of a pre-9/11 status amongst Whites than amongst Blacks. Overall, the latter appear to exhibit more volatility over time, particularly at the ‘very/extremely proud’ levels compared to Whites but this could be due error associated with small samples sizes for Blacks, as well as Black people’s struggle to establish their own definition of American in relation to, and deal with their inclusion/exclusion from, the majority White-defined concept of what it means to be American. 

**Figure 10: Patriotism (Proud to be an American) by Race – White, 1995 - 2011**

**Figure 11: Patriotism (Proud to be an American) by Race – Black, 1995 - 2011**
Hispanics show the same pattern of 9/11 uplift and subsequent return to more moderate levels of patriotism across a smaller number of surveys. (Figure 12) What is interesting about the “Other” category is not that this cohort also share the pre- and post-9-11 trends, but the presence of a substantial ‘don’t know’ category (excluded from the other Figures because of a lack of presence) that has an inverse relationship with the “not very/not at all” category. For example, in the 2009 Pew survey, nearly 1 in 10 responded as “don’t know/not applicable” and in the 2011 CBS survey, the same proportion chose the “not very/not at all” category whilst the “don’t know/not applicable” was zero. There is a higher likelihood that recent immigrants constitute a larger part of “Other” races compared to White or Black, and they may or may not be considered by the State (i.e. have citizenship) or themselves as “American” at the time of the survey and even if they do acquire citizenship, they are more likely to experience life as an outgroup in the United States of America which will trigger feelings of ambivalence. Notably, the definition of “Other” is variable across surveys, i.e. at times it includes Hispanics, at times it includes Asians, and it appears that only recently Native Americans, the original people of North America, have started to be included in any number in the sampling process. Also, the sample sizes are small, which can partly explain the volatility. Nonetheless, it is clear that this group is characterised by activity in the “not very/not at all” and “don’t know/not applicable” categories that is distinct from the other races in the analysis. (Figure 13)
The Party Convention Acceptance Speech

The Party Convention Acceptance Speech is considered to be the most important speech a politician can make because s/he can talk for to up to thirty minutes to 40-50 million people and get the candidate’s Presidential campaign off to a strong start. Thus, Party Convention Acceptance Speech serves several functions: (1) It is a vehicle to identify the candidate, to introduce him or herself; (2) It is also the first chance to introduce a more bipartisan quality to the campaign, because the candidate is reaching out to people in other parties and independents as well; (3) It is used as a vehicle to forward the campaign strategy: it is comprised of content from past speeches of the candidate but is also used for setting the stage for the campaign; (4) It is used to inspire people because people like to hear an inspirational ideal and; (5) It is used to change the party, to bring it in another direction or to appeal more to the others. (White House Speechwriters Symposium, 2008)

Hetherington and Weiler (2008) argue that patriotism and its symbols became central concerns in the 1984 presidential election campaign after Timothy Johnson burned an American flag outside the Republican National Convention, and in the 1988 campaign, whether to require children to say the Pledge of Allegiance was an issue. They also note differing party perspectives on post-9/11 foreign policy: the Democrats advocated a multilateral diplomacy-oriented position after 2004, whereas Republicans opted for “the concreteness of armed conflict over the subtleties of diplomacy” (2008: 10) If, as they argue, issues emerge because one set of elites think the issues will help them win elections, and Republicans make use of the issue of maintaining security in the post-9/11 world for electoral gain (2008: 11), it is also reasonable to assume that Presidential candidates, and in
particular, Republicans, will attempt to work in patriotism signifiers into their post-9/11 foreign policy worldview. It is likely that the parties will have different signifiers associated with patriotism in their speeches but this question must be left aside for another paper. For the purposes of this research paper, the following base-line counts of the number of patriotism signifiers in each speech, as well as the proportion of sentences that refer to the Nation, American, fellow Americans, and the flag, will provide an indication of the trends in relation to patriotism in political elite speech acts.

Figure 14: Convention Acceptance Speeches 1980 – 2012
Word Count (n) + Mentions of Patriotism Signifiers (n) + Sentences with Patriotism Signifiers (%)

Figure 14 shows that Democrat candidate Jimmy Carter used more patriotism signifiers overall in his Convention Acceptance Speech (CAS) compared to Republican Ronald Reagan, but taking into account the word count and sentence count, there is little to choose between them because each presidential candidate used a patriotism signifier in roughly 1 in 3 sentences (Reagan 32%; Carter 34%). Democrat Walter Mondale maintained this rate in 1984 in his CAS, but Reagan’s dropped to just 18%, perhaps indicating less of a need to include them given his incumbency status. Republic George H Bush maintained Reagan’s rate in 1984, whereas Democrat candidate Michael Dukakis used more patriotism signifiers than any other Presidential candidate in the time period covering 1980-2012 – 1 in 2 sentences contained a signifier. However, this rate (49%) must be understood in the context that his speech was the second shortest in the same time period at roughly 3000 words. Democrat Bill Clinton edged in slightly more signifiers (29%) per sentence than George H Bush (25%) in 1992 and Bob Dole (27% vs 25%) in 1996, the latter being the longest speech of the time period examined at roughly 7000 words.

Prior to 9-11, George W. Bush’s and Al Gore’s speeches had a similar number of signifiers, 60 and 58 each, in the year 2000. After 9/11, the number of signifiers in both parties’ candidate speeches rose to 87 (George W. Bush - Republican) and 121 (John Kerry - Democrat) respectively, as did the proportion per sentence from 1 in 5 sentences in 2000 to more than 1 in 3 in 2004, indicating an association between 9/11 and increased patriotism signifiers. This mirrors the patriotism uplift in public opinion after 9/11.
John Kerry, as the Democrat candidate, clearly felt the need to increase the patriotism signifiers in his speech in order to win the nomination and to compete in the Presidential election against the incumbent Republican President Bush who had been in office at the time of the attacks and had launched the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars. Kerry’s past military service that included several tours in Vietnam may also have contributed to this record number of patriotism signifiers in a CAS during the time period under examination.

By 2008, the overall number of signifiers had returned to pre-9/11 levels of 57 (John McCain) and 68 (Barack Obama) although McCain had just 1 in 5 sentences containing a signifier compared to Obama’s rate of 1 in 3 sentences - again the Democrats have proportionally more patriotism signifiers than Republicans. In 2012, Mitt Romney had the second highest number of mentions at 106 in the period under examination, with 40% of his sentences containing a signifier compared to the incumbent Barack Obama, who had just 41 signifiers overall that appeared in less than 1 in 5 sentences.

Figure 15: Convention Acceptance Speeches 1980-2012: Incumbent Patterns
Mentions of (n) + Sentences with Patriotism Signifiers (%)

Figure 15 examines the patterns for incumbents and includes wars in the timeline to contextualise the numbers, because speeches made within a year or two of a new war are likely to have more patriotism signifiers than speeches made at the end of a long war or in an inter-war period, assuming a positive relationship between the use of patriotism signifiers and war-foreign policy. Clinton and Obama, as the only Democrat presidents in the analysis, have proportionally reduced numbers of sentences containing signifiers the second time around. Ronald Reagan is the only Republican to follow this pattern. George Bush Senior and George Bush Junior both increased their patriotism signifiers significantly in their second Convention speeches - both second speeches coincided with the wars that each man had launched during his first term in office.
The Inaugural Address
Inaugural Addresses are of a different type to Convention speeches. Ted Sorensen, John F. Kennedy’s primary speechwriter, argues that an Inaugural Address should set the tone and the theme of the next four years of Presidential leadership and should not be a campaign speech attacking the other, nor a State of the Union message with a laundry list of legislative proposals. The audience is more global: to quote Sorensen, the Inaugural Address is an opportunity for a President to “stamp his identity on global thinking for the next four years”, such that he recalls John F. Kennedy’s line “Fellow citizens of the world, ask not what America can do for you but what together we can do for the freedom of man” and points out “that means he’s saying I’m a citizen of the world. Nobody noticed that.” (Steigerwald 2009) The identity of the President, then, is part of the Inaugural Address, perhaps more so than the Convention Acceptance Speech which is a competitive, party campaign vehicle, which makes patriotism an interesting variable to examine. Secondly, Inaugural Speeches are shorter - between 1500 and 2500 words - with less variation in length across the Presidents in the period examined. This quality should help provide a better indication of the relative strength of patriotism signifiers in a comparative context.

Comparing, firstly, the percentage of sentences with patriotism signifiers in the Convention Acceptance Speeches of the successful candidates’ Inaugural Addresses, Figure 16 shows that Presidents Bill Clinton and George W Bush substantially increased the level of patriotism signifiers per sentence in the Inaugural addresses compared to their Convention Acceptance Speeches. Before 9/11, just 1 in 5 sentences of Bush’s CAS has patriotism signifiers compared with one in two in his Inaugural Address. After 9/11, the difference was not as great, Bush increased the level of patriotism signifiers per sentence in his 2004 CAS and also marginally in his 2005 Inaugural Address, achieving the highest proportion of all of the speeches in the analysis. Barack Obama’s CAS had more signifiers (1 in 3 sentences) than his Inaugural Address (23%), whilst his second CAS had half the number of his first (17%), and the Inaugural had 1 in 3 sentences. Only one other President in the period examined, Ronald Reagan, had more signifiers (1 in 3 sentences) in his CAS than his Inaugural Address (1 in 4 sentences), in 1981. His 1984/1985 speech acts had virtually the same
levels – 1 in 5 sentences – as did George H. Bush’s in 1988/1989 at 1 in 6 sentences, the lowest levels of all Presidents’ speech acts.

Figure 17: Inaugural Addresses: 1981-2013
Word Count (n) + Mentions of Signifiers (n) + Sentences with Signifiers (%)

Figure 17 shows that the inaugural speech with the highest number of signifiers (49) and percentage of sentences with signifiers (50%) turned out to be the first Address after 9/11, made by George W. Bush. The prevalence of Patriotism signifiers declined throughout the 1980s since Reagan’s 1981 speech. Breaking with this trend, Bill Clinton roughly doubled the percentage of sentences with signifiers in the 1990s and George H. Bush continued the rising trend in the 2000s. President Obama’s first inaugural address had roughly the same number and proportion of signifiers as Reagan had in 1981, his second address contained more signifiers overall, from nearly 1 in 4 sentences in 2009 to more than 1 in 3 sentences in 2013, more than Reagan and Bush in the mid- to late-1980s.

Conclusions
A number of conclusions can be drawn from the study of this public opinion and political elite data, gathered to assess the role of patriotism in the context of US foreign policy, particularly in the wake of 9/11. The successful construction of an understanding of the 9/11 events as attacks on America as Nation, Americans as people, and Freedom as a way of life by the political elite, (Bush Administration) and media (especially the conservative media) rather than the more empirically obvious targets such as the locus of financial capitalist power or US foreign policy and intelligence activities – the targets were not directed at ‘ordinary’ Americans going about more typical leisure activities in their daily lives, e.g. attending a sports event or going to the mall – has had a significant impact on how patriotism has varied amongst public opinion and political elites. The highest levels of patriotism found in public opinion occurred in the three year period immediately after 9/11, when the moderate cohort disappeared and migrated to be a part of the “very” / “extremely” proud
behaviours such as displaying the American Flag show a clear and positive relationship to levels of being proud to be American: 40% of US people displayed the flag after 9/11 happened compared to nearly 1 in 3 who displayed the flag prior to 9/11. Ten years later, the event appears to have sustained a doubling of the proportion of US people displaying flags, from 29% before 9/11 to 58% in 2011. Overall, levels of patriotism have moderated since 9/11 and the size of the ‘extremely proud’ cohort at the top of the traditional 5-point scale has declined from a high of 3 in 4 four people in 2002 to just 1 in 2 people in June 2013.

Race and Party Identification are associated with variation in levels of patriotism amongst the public: white people have less moderates and more ‘very/extremely’ proud patriots (Figure 10) compared with black people whilst those in the ‘other’ race category show substantial activity in the more ambivalent categories, such as “don’t know/not applicable” or appear in “not very/not at all” category – at times, up to 1 in 10 people. Democrats have lower levels of extremely proud members overall compared to the Republicans who are 97-98% extremely proud. Republicans are the only subgroup to maintain their extraordinary levels of ‘extremely proud’ identifiers, recording 97% in 2002 through to the same figure in 2011. Independents exhibit the most volatility over time within all three levels of pride – “extremely/very”, “moderate”, and “not very/not at all”. Gender does not matter, in that men and women are virtually indistinguishable in their levels of being proud to be an American.

After 9/11, the number of signifiers in both Democratic and Republican parties’ candidate acceptance speeches rose, mirroring the uplift in the general public in numbers being proud to be an American. By 2008, the overall number of signifiers had returned to pre-9/11 levels, just as public opinion had settled back to its pre-9/11 levels by 2004. Several Democrat candidates used more patriotism signifiers than their Republican counterparts in the Convention Acceptance Speeches – Jimmy Carter vis Ronald Reagan, Walter Mondale vis Reagan, Michael Dukakis vis Bush, and Bill Clinton vis Bob Dole and Bush. George W. Bush’s inaugural speech had the highest number of signifiers (49) and percentage of sentences with signifiers (50%), which was the first Address after 9/11.

Clearly, at the level of public opinion and political elites, 9/11 is associated with increased levels of being proud to be an American and the rise in patriotism signifiers in elite discourses. The effects have faded over time, but the Republican party elite and those members of the public that identify with the party identify more proudly with their American identity compared to the more moderate Democrats. Right Wing Authoritarianism overlaps somewhat with the traits of Extreme Patriots, which would include a substantial proportion of those reporting to be ‘extremely proud’ to be an American. Further qualitative research will determine the nature of these varying patriotic identities and the qualitative differences in terms of associated values and signifiers.

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**Appendix**

Do you display the American flag at your home, in your office, or on your car, or not?

![Flag Display Chart]

No (42%)

Don’t know/Refused (0.5%)

Yes (58%)

Public Religion Research Institute Race, Class and Culture Survey, [Aug, 2012]