Double standards? Attitudes towards immigrant and emigrant dual citizenship in the Netherlands

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Maarten Vinka, Hans Schmeets and Hester Mennes

Department of Political Science, Maastricht University, Maastricht, Netherlands; Statistics Netherlands, Heerlen, Netherlands; Independent Researcher, Amsterdam, the Netherlands

ABSTRACT

Despite increasingly liberal practices around the world, dual citizenship acceptance is still contested. Surprisingly, few studies exist on what drives public attitudes towards political membership in two or more states. Based on data from the 2012 Dutch Parliamentary Election Study (N = 1,677) we investigate the discrepancy in negative attitudes in the Netherlands towards dual citizenship of immigrants who acquire Dutch citizenship, on the one hand, and more positive attitudes towards Dutch citizens acquiring a foreign citizenship, on the other. We find that negative views of immigrant dual citizenship are associated with strong in-group identification and out-group derogation, whereas experiencing a sense of symbolic group threat is associated with negative views of both immigrant and emigrant dual citizenship.

ARTICLE HISTORY

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Introduction

Citizenship is a legal status that indicates the relation between an individual and a state (Bauböck 1994, 23; Kivisto and Faist 2007, 1–2). Having citizenship entails legal rights, such as the right to enter your country and to live and work there without restriction, the right to vote, the right to hold political office, among others, as well as duties, such as the obligation to serve in the military. Whereas most persons are citizens of one state only, some are a citizen of none and others are citizens of multiple states. The focus of this paper is on the latter category, dual citizenship, which is traditionally viewed as an undesirable, yet at best partly avoidable anomaly to the international system. This
has to do with the premise of national autonomy in determining the rules that govern the acquisition and loss of citizenship, which makes it difficult or even impossible to coordinate rules between states.

In addition to migration, trends such as the widespread abolishment of military service and the recognition of gender equality in citizenship laws, have led to the increasing formal acceptance of dual citizenship (Vink and De Groot 2010; Spiro 2016). In the European Union, where most states nowadays no longer ask naturalizing immigrants to renounce their citizenship of origin, the majority of the around 800 thousand persons per year who acquire the citizenship of a European Union (EU) member state (Eurostat 2017) are likely to hold multiple citizenship after naturalization. Moreover, even in countries that still practice a restrictive approach, dual citizenship becomes an increasingly prevalent demographic reality.

Despite the increasing acceptance of dual citizenship, both formally and in practice, as a natural consequence of international migration and the lack of international coordination of citizenship laws, a number of “hold out” states continue to be opposed towards the principle of persons having more than one citizenship. In the EU, where most states have now removed the outdated provision of asking a naturalizing immigrant to renounce her or his previous citizenship (Denmark was the most recent to do so in 2015), there are still eight states (Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Germany, the Netherlands and Slovenia) that maintain such a renunciation requirement. Dual citizenship also arises in public debates in the wake of events involving terrorism or international diplomatic rows such as in March 2017 when Turkish diplomats reached out to diaspora communities in Europe in the run-up to the referendum on constitutional reform in Turkey (The Guardian 2017a).

Remarkably, despite the fact that dual citizenship has stirred considerable public debate in many contexts and notwithstanding a longstanding research tradition on attitudes towards immigration (e.g. Citrin et al. 1997; Coenders and Scheepers 2003; Sniderman, Hagendoorn, and Prior 2004; Hainmueller and Hiscox 2007; Verkuyten 2009), there is only limited research into what drives public attitudes towards dual citizenship (e.g. Kusow and DeLisi 2016).

In this paper, we investigate attitudes towards dual citizenship in the Netherlands, a country that has at best reluctantly accepted dual citizenship and continues to practice a restrictive policy. We investigate a discrepancy in attitudes towards dual citizenship for immigrants and emigrants. Based on the data from the 2012 Dutch Parliamentary Election Study (N = 1,677) we find that 49 per cent of respondents display intolerance towards naturalizing immigrants who retain a foreign nationality, while only 32 per cent of respondents were intolerant towards Dutch emigrants who obtain a foreign nationality. The objective of this paper is to analyse the determinants of this “double standard” in dual citizenship attitudes.
The paper is structured as follows. First, we develop an exploratory analytical framework drawing on literature on in-group/out-group dynamics in relation to migration and citizenship. In particular, we hypothesize that negative views of immigrant dual citizenship are associated with strong in-group identification and out-group derogation, whereas experiencing a sense of symbolic group threat is associated with negative views of dual citizenship among both immigrants and emigrants. After a brief introduction of the Dutch dual citizenship context, we present the data, discuss operationalization of our key variables and control variables, and clarify the empirical strategy. We then present our empirical findings, looking at determinants of attitudes towards immigrant and emigrant dual citizenship and subsequently teasing out the determinants of discrepant attitudes in further detail. We end with a summary of our findings and discuss the implications for the study of public attitudes on citizenship and migration.

**Attitudes towards dual citizenship: an exploratory framework**

Dual citizenship is a widely studied topic (e.g. Faist, Gerdes, and Rieple 2004; Sejersen 2008; Spiro 2011, 2016; Schlenker 2015). Remarkably, while few would dispute that dual citizenship is a contentious political issue, public attitudes towards dual citizenship regulation have remained severely underresearched. As far as we were able to identify, ours is the first quantitative study to explore the determinants of attitudes towards dual citizenship.

Since there is no literature that we can directly draw upon to develop expectations with regard to why some people hold more restrictive attitudes than others towards dual citizenship, and why these attitudes vary with regard to immigrants or emigrated citizens holding dual citizenship, we use this section to derive such expectations indirectly from what we consider to be the most related strands of literature. We aim to formulate a limited number of testable hypotheses that can guide our empirical analysis, yet emphasize the exploratory nature of such an analytical framework, as it is not grounded in a well-developed body of literature and, moreover, will be applied by us to the specific case of the Netherlands.

The starting point for our analytical exploration is the assumption that citizenship, as a legal status and constitutive element of political community, is an institution of social closure (Brubaker 1992). Any meaningful conception of citizenship presumes a determination of who is entitled, and under which conditions, to such status and who is not. As a result, citizenship debates often reflect on the nature of the political community and, as such, are about the symbolic boundaries of political membership. The historical extension of civil, political and social rights within communities thus reflects the evolution towards current-day democratic welfare states (Marshall 1950). International mobility, however, provides a major challenge to the
universalization of political membership within territorial borders in a world where access to citizenship is still predominantly determined by a relatively rigid birthright principle (Shachar 2009), rather than by a potentially more flexible “stakeholder” principle (Bauböck 2017). As a result, communities – and in democratic societies, this means: electorates – need to decide not just about the relative permeability of territorial borders in terms of how many and what kind of immigrants are admitted to the territory, but also about the boundaries of political membership in response to migration.

Whereas political debates about territorial admission are essentially about immigration, debates about membership inclusion are both about immigration and emigration. After all, states need to decide not only under which conditions immigrants have access to citizenship, but also under which conditions emigrated citizens can maintain their citizenship and, if at all, transmit such status to their children born outside the state territory. What debates about migration and citizenship have in common is that they are often debates about the symbolic boundaries of political membership (Wimmer 2008, 984; Heizmann 2016). Symbolic boundaries are “a means through which social actors put individuals into groups and generate feelings of similarities and differences and, ultimately, the essential means through which people acquire social status” (Kusow and Delisi 2016, 5). In the context of this paper the in-group/out-group dynamics underlying these boundary-formation processes can theoretically – we argue – be applied to debates about the political inclusion of both non-native residents (i.e. immigrants) as well as to native non-residents (i.e. emigrants). After all, debates about dual citizenship may be about the dual loyalty of immigrant groups within the context of their country of residence; yet similar debates about loyalty reflect a concerned view of emigration. Diaspora communities have often been viewed suspiciously as “abandoning” the nation and, in such a context, dual citizenship may be perceived as equally problematic in terms of the continued loyalty vis-à-vis the home country (Fitzgerald 2009), as it might do with regard to immigrant groups in their country of residence.

The literature on attitudes towards immigration is also a useful starting point, in our view, because micro-level theories about attitude formation often draw on social identity theories that go beyond the specific focus on immigration. In social identity theories, group memberships are associated with making distinctions between social groups that someone is part of – in-groups – and those to which one does not belong – out-groups (Tajfel and Turner 1986). Group membership defines someone’s identity (Brewer and Gardner 1996) and thereby one’s beliefs and behaviours. In this vein, attitudes towards membership are related to thinking on the basis of social groups. In other words, social identity formation may be driven by formulating characteristics of a group one identifies with, by formulating explicit characteristics of those who do not belong (out-group
derogation) as well as by perceived group threats that strengthen the in-
group identity and lead to greater intolerance towards out-groups (Stephan and Stephan 2000).

For these reasons, we take the literature on attitudes towards immigration as a starting point for our explorative framework, especially those contributions highlighting the symbolical (i.e. non-economic) opposition to immigration. We expect that models of attitudes towards immigration should help us to understand public attitudes towards the renunciation requirement for immigrants, but do not expect that such models can be neatly translated to understand attitudes towards loss provisions for expatriates naturalizing abroad. However, we do think that the underlying in-group/out-group dynamics will facilitate comprehending the negative attitudes towards immigrant compared to emigrant dual citizenship. In the remainder of this section, we develop three testable hypotheses on characteristics associated with such discrepant attitudes.

**In-group identification**

Our first two theoretical expectations draw closely on the literature on attitudes towards immigration and essentially argue that people who view dual citizenship as problematic do so because they view immigration as problematic. Hence, such people have a selective and negative view on dual citizenship either because they strongly identify themselves with the (national) in-group (H1) and/or because they have negative perceptions of the (non-national) out-group (H2).

Strength of in-group identification in general (Terry and Hogg 1996) and with a nation specifically (Verkuyten 2009; Gieling, Thijs, and Verkuyten 2014), have repeatedly been found to relate to critical attitudes towards immigration and ethnic minorities. The stronger one identifies with one’s own particular group, the more likely it is that other groups are experienced as different, and in general, in-group members are preferred more strongly (Sides and Citrin 2007). In the context of this study, national identification should explain intolerance towards immigrants specifically: the stronger one identifies with national traditions, culture or typical customs, the stronger one also distinguishes between people who are part of the in-group and those who are not. Hence in-group identification can explain intolerance towards immigrant dual citizenship as newcomers are required to demonstrate their adherence and loyalty to the national community by renouncing their previous citizenship links with the origin country. In the case of emigrants, we do not expect stronger national identification to associate with intolerance of dual citizenship, as native citizens who decide to leave the country can be viewed seen as continuing to be part of the ethnic in-group. Hence
whether or not citizens in the diaspora acquire another citizenship is not inherently problematic from a perspective of those strongly identifying with the national community (H1).

\[ H1: \text{National identification is negatively associated with acceptance of immigrant dual citizenship but not of emigrant dual citizenship.} \]

**Out-group derogation**

In the face of anti-immigrant sentiments, prejudice and hostility, the prevalence of out-group derogation has received considerable academic attention in the western European context (Rhodes and Harutyunyan 2002). Distinctions between in-groups and out-groups have repeatedly been related to out-group derogation; discrimination, stereotyping, prejudice, depersonalization and other forms of intolerance towards out-groups have all been linked to out-group perceptions. In relation to citizenship, what is often viewed as ethnic exclusionism or ethnocentrism, questions both the formal inclusion in the sense of an equal legal status as well as the informal inclusion into a state’s society. From an ethnocentric perspective, everyone who is not a native member of the community faces conditional legitimacy as a member of the state’s social, cultural and ethnic society.

In the examination of attitudes towards dual citizenship of immigrants and emigrants, we expect strong levels of ethnic exclusionism to relate especially, and negatively, to attitudes towards immigrant but not emigrant dual citizenship (H1). Hence, we expect to observe a double standard among those groups who display high levels of out-group derogation vis-à-vis resident non-nationals. If at all newcomers can have access to national citizenship, from an ethnocentric perspective this would require them to renounce their previous attachments, including the legal link to the country of origin. Emigrated natives, by contrast, can be considered to continue to be part of the ethnic in-group, irrespective of whether or not they acquire an additional citizenship in their new country of residence.

\[ H2: \text{Ethnic exclusionism is negatively associated with acceptance of immigrant dual citizenship but not of emigrant dual citizenship.} \]

**Perceived symbolic group threat**

Our final theoretical expectation draws on intergroup threat theory (Stephan and Stephan 2000; Stephan, Ybarra, and Morrison 2009) and argues that concerns about dual citizenship do not so much reflect concerns about immigration but rather anxiety about broader patterns of societal change, such as globalization, which threaten the survival of the national group’s values and culture more generally. Hence, both the inflows of newcomers with different cultural values as well as the outflows of mobile groups who
“abandon” the nation are conceived to threaten national survival. Concerns about dual citizenship, in this perspective, reflect both anxiety about the adaptability of the in-group to the presence of new out-groups, as well as about the loyalty and continued cohesion among the in-group in the context of in-group members residing among out-groups abroad.

In relation to migration, debates on political membership often focus on the survival of the majority culture. With regard to immigrant integration, for example, a perceived irreconcilability between minority (e.g. Muslim) culture and the relatively progressive and homogeneous majority often drives prejudice and feelings of threat (Velasco González et al. 2008). In contrast with perceived economic threat, referring to competition over scarce economic resources like jobs (Savelkoul et al. 2010), cultural threat refers to symbolic threats to someone’s identity instead of tangible resources. Yet “the impact of perceived cultural threat is every bit as large” in explaining intolerance, demonstrate Sniderman, Hagendoorn, and Prior (2004, 41).

Research supports the role of cultural threat in the context of attitudes towards out-groups (Velasco González et al. 2008; Verkuyten 2009). Previous research on out-group intolerance has examined the role of experienced threat. For example, Coenders, Lubbers, and Scheepers (2002) show that in European countries, 58 per cent of citizens experience a general form of collective threat as the result of immigrants. Perceiving a group as different can form a basis for hostility and threat. With regard to immigrant dual citizenship, we would expect that higher levels of perceived cultural threat are associated with exclusionary attitudes and thus with intolerance towards dual citizenship.

With regard to emigration, research on public attitudes is less systematically developed as far as we are aware. A sizeable body of literature on diaspora politics and dual citizenship addresses the broader public concerns underlying the politics of diaspora governance (e.g. Sejersen 2008; Rhodes and Harutyunyan 2010). Key concerns here are typically that citizenship reflects a “genuine link” between an individual and the state; in other words, what remains the meaning of citizenship if people can leave our country, naturalize elsewhere and still maintain their entitlement, including voting rights, vis-à-vis the home country (Turcu and Urbatsch 2015)? For this reason, we expect that public anxiety about how nations can survive in a globalizing world translates not just into sceptical attitudes towards immigrant dual citizenship, but also towards emigrant dual citizenship.

Of course, dual citizenship can be perceived as an opportunity, rather than as a threat, in the context of globalization and mobility. Whereas traditionally most states have practiced restrictive dual citizenship policies, dual citizenship policies towards expatriates are becoming increasingly inclusive, as sending states aim to “harness the diaspora” in order to capture its economic potential (Leblang 2017). In other words, dual citizenship may provide an opportunity
for states in the context of challenges posed by emigration. Hence one might argue that in the context of typical “countries of emigration” dual citizenship may take on another, less threatening connation; yet, in the context of a country, such as the Netherlands, where migration is framed in terms of immigration rather than emigration, we expect perceived cultural group threat to be negatively associated with emigrant dual citizenship toleration.

H3: Perceived cultural threat is negatively associated with acceptance of both immigrant and emigrant dual citizenship.

The Dutch context

The Netherlands is an exception to the global trend of increasing dual citizenship acceptance, as it continues to practice a broadly restrictive policy, albeit with significant exceptions. First, immigrants who wish to acquire Dutch citizenship are expected to renounce their previous citizenship. Exceptions are, among others, having a Dutch partner or coming from a country that does not allow the renunciation of citizenship. Second, Dutch citizens who voluntarily acquire another citizenship automatically lose their Dutch citizenship, unless they fall under one of the exceptions, such as having a partner from the country of which he or she acquires the new citizenship (van Oers, de Hart, and Groenendijk 2010).

Yet, despite this restrictive policy, the number of Dutch citizens who are a citizen of at least one other country has more than doubled since the mid-1990s and reached 1.3 million by 2014, or around seven per cent of the total population (CBS 2015). This de facto increase of the number of dual citizens is partly the result of a permissive policy during the mid-1990s, but also to a large extent due to children from parents with different citizenships often acquiring dual citizenship at birth, for which situation the Netherlands does not have any restrictions in place. As a result, there is a clear discrepancy between the principal rule that is restrictive and the practice that is, broadly speaking, more tolerant.

When in 2011 the Dutch government wanted to further restrict dual citizenship, by removing some of the exceptions to the renunciation requirement and the lose provision, the Dutch emigrant community exerted considerable political pressure through a successful lobby against the proposal. The diaspora convincingly argued that even though emigrants and their descendants live abroad and acquire another citizenship, this need not imply that the bond with the home country is less genuine (The Economist 2012). The proposal was eventually abandoned. More recently, the new government that entered into office in October 2017 included in its coalition agreement a provision indicating that it planned to liberalize dual citizenship, hence meeting concerns of Dutch nationals residing into the UK who consider acquiring British nationality in order to secure their status after the UK’s exit from the
EU (The Guardian 2017b). Both episodes emphasize the significant political cloud of the Dutch diaspora in dual citizenship legislation, not unlike what was seen in other European countries who moved earlier to a liberal regime, such as Sweden in 2001 (Spang 2007).

**Data and methods**

In order to test our hypotheses about what drives public attitudes towards dual citizenship, we use data from the 2012 Dutch Parliamentary Election Study (DPES) (Stichting Kiezersonderzoek Nederland et al 2012). For the DPES, respondents were randomly selected. Data were collected on the basis of a face-to-face interview (computer-assisted personal interview: CAPI), shortly after Election Day of 27 April 2012. In addition, after completion of the interview, a mail questionnaire was handed over and collected on a specific day by the interviewer. This led to a number of 1,677 respondents with a response rate of 61.9 per cent. As the questions on the attitudes toward dual citizenship were included in the mail questionnaire, our sample is based on 1,490 respondents, which equals a response of 55.0 per cent. To correct for over- and underrepresentation of some subpopulations, weights were calculated based on following characteristics of the population of people aged 18+ and eligible to vote: age, gender, marital status, urbanization, region, ethnicity and voting behaviour (Schmeets 2015).

We use two dependent variables in the main part of our analysis: a first one measuring attitudes towards immigrant dual citizenship and a second one measuring attitudes to emigrant dual citizenship. We now discuss these two variables in more detail. First, regarding the **attitudes towards dual citizenship for immigrants** who acquire Dutch citizenship, the following statement was used in the survey: “If possible, a person acquiring a Dutch passport should renounce his other citizenship”. Respondents were asked to indicate their position on a five-point Likert-scale ranging from fully agree to fully disagree. Second, regarding the **attitudes towards dual citizenship for emigrants**, the following statement was used: “Dutch people [Nederlanders] who emigrate and acquire the citizenship of another country should be able to retain their Dutch passport”, with the same five-point answering scale. We recode the first question to ensure that in the answers to both questions higher scores indicate higher levels of dual citizenship acceptance. Table 1 summarizes the responses of all respondents on these two questions. The correlation between the two variables is moderate (Spearman’s rho = .63).

As shown in Table 1, the majority of eligible voters (61.5 per cent) are consistent in their relative acceptance of dual citizenship for both immigrants and emigrants (see the bolded percentages along the main diagonal). The remaining respondents are relatively more tolerant towards dual citizenship among either Dutch emigrants (34.7 per cent; all cases above the main diagonal) or,
much less frequently, immigrants in the Netherlands (3.8 per cent; all cases below the main diagonal). In order to tease out the determinants of a double standard towards dual citizenship, in a second step of the analysis we combine these two variables into a single dependent variable that measures whether someone holds (0) an equally favourable view towards dual citizenship among immigrants and emigrants, (1) a more favourable view towards dual citizenship among emigrants, or (2) a more favourable view towards dual citizenship among immigrants.

In addition, in order to check whether the findings from our main analyses are robust when looking specifically at the analytical distinction between agreeing and not agreeing, rather than the ordered variation of responses, we recode the two main dependent variables into categorical variables with 0 indicating someone does not agree with dual citizenship for immigrants, respectively emigrants, 1 indicating someone neither agrees, nor disagrees, and 2 indicating someone agrees with dual citizenship for the respective group. Note that in these operationalizations of our two main dependent variables we thus include those respondents who neither agree, nor disagree with accepting dual citizenship for immigrants and/or emigrants in a separate category in order to identify whether any specific characteristics are associated with this group.

We use a number of items to operationalize the three main independent variables in our analyses. National identification, as a measure of in-group favouritism, has been found to be best typified as an overarching concept that represents attachment to a variety of in-group characteristics (cf. Huddy and Khatib 2007). In the context of our study this concept is measured by combining the scores on five questions about respondents’ appreciation of being Dutch: proud to be Dutch, attachment to the Netherlands and the Dutch, appreciation of Dutch customs and traditions, of Dutch language, and of the Dutch anthem (Cronbach’s alpha = .74; see Annex 2, in the Supplementary materials). Ethnic exclusionism, as measure of out-group derogation, is operationalized, following Coenders and Scheepers (2003), through

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accept emigrant dual citizenship</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accept immigrant dual citizenship</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>6.6</strong></td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>22.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td><strong>15.5</strong></td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>26.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td><strong>13.6</strong></td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>19.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td><strong>19.5</strong></td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>22.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td><strong>6.3</strong></td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>32.4</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: DPES 2012 (weighted), N = 1,459.
Note: Bold values indicate respondents with equal levels of acceptance of immigrant and emigrant dual citizenship.

Table 1. Cross-tabulation of acceptance of immigrant and emigrant dual citizenship, % (1 = fully disagree; 5 = fully agree).
the combination of three statements “You can only be a real Dutchman if you are born in the Netherlands”, “Foreigners should be able to live in The Netherlands while preserving their own culture” and “The Netherlands should allow more asylum seekers”. Combining these three items results in a 17-point scale where higher scores indicate higher manifestations of ethnic exclusionism (Cronbach’s alpha = .74; see Annex 1, in the Supplementary materials). Finally, cultural threat, as a measure for perceived symbolic group threat, is operationalized by asking respondents’ position regarding the statement “The Dutch culture is threatened”, with answer categories on a five-point agreement Likert scale.

In addition, we control for a number of demographic factors: gender, education, income, age and country of origin (e.g. Coenders and Scheepers 2003 on the relevance of controlling for education and income; cf. Hainmueller and Hiscox 2007). Table A3 (included in the Appendix) presents summary statistics for all dependent and independent variables.

We use a variety of models to analyse these three dependent variables. In our main models analysing the determinants of attitudes towards, respectively, immigrant and emigrant dual citizenship, we apply linear regression analyses in light of considerations by Carifio and Perla (2008) and Norman (2010) that support the use of parametric tests for ordinal data. In a robustness check, we use categorical versions of our two main dependent variables and apply multinomial logistic regression models. In the second step of the analysis, when analysing the double standard between attitudes towards immigrant and emigrant dual citizenship based on the dependent variable that is derived from the two main variables, we also apply multinomial logistic regression. All models include the same independent variables.

**Analysis**

Results of the analyses are depicted in Table 2 for attitudes towards immigrant dual citizenship (model 1) and emigrant dual citizenship (model 2). Tables A5 and A6 (included in the Supplementary materials) present the findings for a robustness check based on the categorical variable including not only disagreement and agreement with dual citizenship, but also the category “neither disagree, nor agree”. Table 3 presents the findings for the attitudinal double standard.

Table 2 (model 1) presents the findings of our analyses of the determinants of attitudes towards immigrant dual citizenship. In line with our three hypotheses, we find that the stronger the sense of national identification (beta = −0.120; p < .001; H1), the degree of ethnic exclusionism (beta = −0.389; p < .001; H2) and the perceived level of cultural threat (beta = −0.141; p < .001; H3), the more negative the attitude is towards immigrant dual citizenship. These findings remain robust when we run a multinomial regression on a
Table 2. Ordinary least square regression of determinants of acceptance of immigrant and emigrant dual citizenship. Unstandardized coefficients (standard errors) and standardized coefficients.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Immigrant dual citizenship</th>
<th></th>
<th>Emigrant dual citizenship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b</td>
<td>s.e.</td>
<td>beta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National identification</td>
<td>−0.054</td>
<td>0.011</td>
<td>−0.120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic exclusionism</td>
<td>−0.146</td>
<td>0.010</td>
<td>−0.389</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural threat</td>
<td>−0.172</td>
<td>0.032</td>
<td>−0.141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control variables</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest completed education</td>
<td>0.043</td>
<td>0.027</td>
<td>0.040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spendable household income</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>−0.004</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>−0.060</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender (ref. = male)</td>
<td>0.277</td>
<td>0.057</td>
<td>0.108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country of origin (ref. = native)</td>
<td>0.186</td>
<td>0.104</td>
<td>0.040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Immigrant (Western)</td>
<td>0.512</td>
<td>0.113</td>
<td>0.105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Immigrant (Non-Western)</td>
<td>0.277</td>
<td>0.057</td>
<td>0.108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>5.030</td>
<td>0.230</td>
<td>1.078</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted $R^2$</td>
<td>36.6%</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: DPES 2012 (weighted), $N = 1,307$.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

*** $p < .001$.

Table 3. Multinomial regression of determinants of more favourable attitudes of emigrant and immigrant dual citizenship (reference: consistent attitudes), unstandardized coefficients (standard errors) and odds ratio’s.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>More favourable towards emigrant dual citizenship</th>
<th>More favourable towards immigrant dual citizenship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b</td>
<td>s.e.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National identification</td>
<td>0.174</td>
<td>0.026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic exclusionism</td>
<td>0.157</td>
<td>0.024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural threat</td>
<td>0.096</td>
<td>0.074</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control variables</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest completed education</td>
<td>−0.167</td>
<td>0.059</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spendable household income</td>
<td>−0.003</td>
<td>0.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender (ref. = male)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Immigrant (Western)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Immigrant (Non-Western)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nagelkerke $R^2$</td>
<td>24.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: DPES 2012 (weighted), $N = 1,307$.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

*** $p < .001$.

categorical operationalization of the dependent variable where we collapse the five Likert-scale categories into three categories measuring disagreement, neither agree/nor disagree and agreement in order to check whether the ambivalent middle category influences the results (see Table A5). In addition,
looking at the control variables, women and immigrants are more likely to hold positive views towards immigrant dual citizenship (cf. Coenders and Scheepers 2003). Note that higher educated respondents are more likely to accept dual citizenship, but that due to the association between education and the three independent variables this is no longer significant in Table 2 (see Table A4, which presents a model that only includes the control variables).

Regarding the attitudes towards emigrant dual citizenship, we find that – as hypothesized – in contrast to immigrant dual citizenship, national identification is not negatively associated with acceptance of emigrant dual citizenship (H1). By contrast, we find that respondents with higher levels of national identification, ceteris paribus, are more likely to accept dual citizenship for the Dutch diaspora (beta = .050; \( p < .05 \)). This indicates, in our interpretation, that persons with a stronger sense of in-group identification have more loyalty towards the non-resident natives (emigrated Dutch citizens) than the resident non-natives (immigrants).

In contrast with our reasoning in section 2, ethnic exclusionism is also associated, albeit weaker than for immigrant dual citizenship, with a negative attitude towards emigrant dual citizenship (beta = −.246; \( p < .001 \); H2). We did not expect this given that a stronger sense of out-group derogation was expected to associate negatively only with attitudes towards immigrant dual citizenship. Since relatively many persons responded in an ambivalent manner to this question (up to 23.4 per cent indicated “neither disagree, nor agree” for the question on emigrant dual citizenship, see Table 1), one could be concerned about the extent to which these respondents drive the overall results. Yet when we run a multinomial regression on the alternative operationalization of the dependent variable (Table A6), we find that this association is not driven by the sizeable group who “neither agree, nor disagree” with emigrant dual citizenship (odds ratio = .937; \( p < .05 \)). We further explore this below in a multinomial regression of the combined dependent variable designed to measure discrepant attitudes.

In line with what we expected, we find that -just as it was with immigrant dual citizenship – a stronger sense of perceived cultural threat is associated with negative attitudes towards emigrant dual citizenship (beta = −.165; \( p < .001 \); H3). This suggests that for those persons who are consistently sceptical about dual citizenship, this is associated with a sense of perceived symbolic group threat.

In terms of control variables, women and migrants hold more favourable views also on emigrant dual citizenship (so do higher educated respondents, when excluding the attitudinal questions on cultural threat, ethnic exclusionism and national identification, cf. Table A4).

Overall, the explained variance of model 2 (14.5 per cent) is substantially lower than for model 1 (36.6 per cent), which indicates that with the same
model, we are much less able to understand the determinants of attitudes to emigrant dual citizenship, compared to immigrant dual citizenship. This underlines that acceptance towards dual citizenship is inherently different in nature with regard to immigrants than for emigrants and that our exploratory framework derived primarily from the literature on attitudes to immigration is only partly suitable to cover issues related to attitudes towards political ties with the diaspora abroad. We come back to this in our concluding reflections of the paper.

To further explore these discrepant attitudes, Table 3 examines the determinants of a double standard in acceptance towards dual citizenship of immigrants and emigrants. We do this by constructing a new dependent variable, as explained above, which combines the answers on both dependent variables. In particular, we run multinomial regression models, where we analyse the determinants of those who hold either relatively more favourable attitudes towards dual citizenship among emigrants (model 3) or among immigrants (model 4) against the reference category of all respondents with “consistent” attitudes on dual citizenship (i.e. equally positive or negative about dual citizenship for immigrants and emigrants, see Table 1).

We find, first of all, in line with our theoretical expectation, that those who hold relatively more favourable views of emigrant dual citizenship (model 3) display relatively strong levels of ethnic exclusionism (odds ratio = 1.170; p < .001) and national identification (odds ratio = 1.191; p < .001). By contrast, those who hold more tolerant views of immigrant dual citizenship (model 4) display lower levels of national identification (odds ratio = .849; p < .01) but not significantly lower levels of ethnic exclusionism (odds ratio = .917; p > .05). Respondents with more favourable views on dual citizenship of immigrants, compared to those who hold consistent views on dual citizenship, do not display significantly different rates of perceived cultural threat (odds ratio = 1.150; p > .05). These findings allow us to nuance our earlier conclusion with regard to ethnic exclusionism: while respondents with a greater sense of out-group derogation are generally more concerned about dual citizenship for both immigrants and emigrants (in contrast with H2), where they display a “double standard” this is in favour of emigrants, not immigrants (in line with the reasoning behind H2).

Of the control variables, only education and age are significant: everything else constant, lower educated and older respondents are more likely to hold a double standard on dual citizenship acceptance, in favour of Dutch expats.

**Conclusion**

Although the considerable controversy around dual citizenship has been widely reported, reasons for supportive or negative attitudes on dual citizenship are underexposed. This study provides first insights into the question
what drives public attitudes towards the acceptance of both immigrant and emigrant dual citizenship. The analyses drew on data from the Netherlands, a case where dual citizenship has been subject to political controversy and continues to be restricted in Dutch citizenship law. Based on an exploratory framework drawing on literature on immigration attitudes and social identity theories we argued that an understanding about attitudes towards dual citizenship should be framed in the context of perceptions of national in-groups (emigrants) and out-groups (immigrants). We hypothesized that national identification and ethnic exclusionism are associated specifically with intolerance towards immigrant dual citizenship while a greater sense of perceived cultural threat drives intolerance towards both immigrant and emigrant dual citizenship.

The empirical evidence from our analyses partly, but not fully supports these tentative expectations. First, as hypothesized, the perceived cultural threat did play a role in the acceptance of both immigrant and emigrant dual citizenship: higher levels of perceived threat relate to intolerance towards dual citizenship for both groups. Hence, for groups with greater anxiety about national in-group survival, it is not so much who holds the second citizenship, but the phenomenon of dual citizenship in general that is considered problematic, in the context of Dutch culture being endangered more generally. This finding was strengthened by the analyses of the double standard: whether one has an elevated perception of cultural threat does not relate to favouring emigrants over immigrants in tolerance towards dual citizenship. For discrepant attitudes to dual citizenship, both ethnic exclusionism and national identification are relevant, when looking at more favourable attitudes towards emigrants; respondents relatively favouring immigrant over emigrant dual citizenship are characterized only by significantly lower levels of national identification. This discrepancy reflects the observation that identification with Dutch culture and norms relates to intolerance towards dual citizenship for immigrants, but to tolerance of such a status among Dutch natives abroad. By contrast, persons characterized by high levels of ethnocentrism are intolerant towards dual citizenship among both groups, but where they show discrepancy this is in favour of those perceived as part of the native in-group: emigrants.

These findings that strong out-group derogation and in-group favoritism are negatively associated with attitudes to dual citizenship status among the non-national out-group, but less or not at all among the national in-group may perhaps seem self-evident. But given that attitudes towards dual citizenship have remained largely unstudied, to our best knowledge, the evidence in support of this claim so far has been essentially non-existent. Moreover, by adding research on the politically controversial yet under-researched topic of attitudes towards dual citizenship our study contributes to existing research on political membership in the context of international
migration, on the one hand, and psychological research on out-group intolerance on the other (cf. Scheepers, Gijsberts, and Coenders 2002). Based on the exploratory analysis reported in our paper and emphasizing the tentative character of our analytical framework, we invite further research into the underlying mechanisms of social identity formation in relation to attitudes towards (dual) citizenship. In particular, we see fertile ground for experimental designs, such as vignette studies, to explore the relevance of racism and discrimination. Such experimental studies are also better suited to investigate the relevance of the order and direction of survey questions on attitudes towards immigrant and emigrant dual citizenship by randomising these questions among respondents. Finally, the survey data we use in this paper do not allow us to empirically test the relevance of personal traits like ambiguity tolerance, which may help understand the presence of a double standard towards dual citizenship among some groups; exploring the relevance of such traits would also provide a useful avenue for further research.

Since this study zoomed in on the single case of the Netherlands we refrain from claims about the extent to which the patterns found among the Dutch electorate are generalizable to voters in other (European) countries. What we can observe, however, is that dual citizenship liberalization elsewhere is often decisively pushed not by the non-citizen category of immigrants residing in a country, but rather by expatriate citizens who wish to maintain a link to “their” origin country while naturalizing abroad. If reports are to be believed about the Dutch diaspora in the UK successfully campaigning for dual citizenship in the post-Brexit era, our findings help understanding such political dynamics. After all, electorates may be sceptical about dual citizenship for immigrants, but they are more susceptible to allowing dual citizens for co-ethnics abroad; moreover, politicians have an interest in picking up the concerns of this enfranchised group. In this sense, if these dynamics would be reflected beyond the case of the Netherlands, this would help understanding the political dynamics driving the broader European and global trend towards dual citizenship acceptance.

Note

1. Both questions were asked to all respondents in the same order and with the same phrasing, with v468 (immigrant dual citizenship) asked before v469 (emigrant dual citizenship). In order to avoid acquiescence response bias (e.g. Holbrook 2008), the directionality of the phrasing was contrasted between these two questions. The data and codebook can be retrieved from https://easy.dans.knaw.nl/ui/datasets/id/easy-dataset:57353.

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