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## The Problem of Dual Loyalty

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### **Abstract:**

Dual loyalty is when a citizen or group of citizens holds political allegiance to another state or entity which could challenge their loyalty to the state. What defines dual loyalty as an accusation is the assumption that it is impossible to hold multiple political loyalties, but that, simultaneously, this multiplicity is denied any validity. This article explores the concept, locating it historically and locating the false and often racist discourse that characterizes its modern usage and meaning.

Le double loyauté est quand un citoyen ou un groupe de citoyens sont fidèles à un état ou une entité qui pourrait aller contre leur loyauté à l'état. Ce qui définit la double-loyauté comme une accusation est la supposition que c'est impossible de tenir plusieurs loyautés, mais que, simultanément, cette multiplicité est niée aucune validité. Cet article explore le concept, par localiser historiquement et localiser les discours faux et des fois raciste qui caractérise son usage et son sens moderne.

## Introduction

In this paper I examine the concept of “dual loyalty.”<sup>1</sup> Dual loyalty is when a citizen, permanent resident or group holds competing or conflicting political allegiances between states. Dual loyalty is an odd concept since as a descriptive term it says little that is not obvious: that people can have more than one political loyalty or commitment. Yet, the concept carries a specific tone that questions the justifiability of a plurality of political loyalties, primarily when they are somehow tied to one’s relationship to the state. As such, the concept suggests that this normal condition is somehow inherently questionable or problematic and the term is often used to describe the potential threat posed by diaspora or migrant communities. Indeed, citizenship or permanent residency presumes an obligation of loyalty to the state, and anything that could weaken or challenge this undivided loyalty, such as foreignness due to one’s migrant or diaspora status, can pose a variety of normative, theoretical and empirical problems to this presumption. More generally, the underlying experience of holding competing and potentially contradictory loyalties is an experience many people have in their personal and professional lives and has a history that goes beyond the modern invention of the citizen. Any person or group could face competing loyalties that will cross class, religious, ethnic, familial, political and gender lines. Thus, dual loyalty can be used to refer to the common emotional experience of being pulled in different directions, to the political challenges of choosing an overriding commitment, and/or to the religious distinction between the profane and the spiritual. The Christian injunction of “rendering unto Caesar what is Caesar’s, and unto God what is God’s” is an early indication of the variations of the dual loyalty problem.

However, as a modern political problem dual loyalty is not about the body/soul division but about potential challenges to state authority – it is this account that I am primarily concerned with exploring. Consequently, it is unsurprising that security discourses are usually involved when the accusation of dual loyalty is raised, and I argue, following recent work on security (Buzan, Waeber, & Wilde, 1998), that the security issues at stake are primarily about national identity and values.

Dual loyalty often refers to many discourses at the same time, and for this, if no other reason, it is important to explore the implications and uses of this term. Consequently, I will attempt to clarify the concept of dual loyalty. This particular intellectual exercise is important for at least two reasons. First, dual loyalty is a concept

that emerges in a variety of literatures, including those dealing with diasporas, multiculturalism, migration, political obligation and foreign policy. The issue of dual loyalty relates to both domestic and international politics. The term can suggest conceptual clarification or function as a political accusation. Adding clarity to this term would help bring additional insight to debates that take place in the literature where the term or concept finds currency. Second, the concept of dual loyalty is itself significant since it directly relates to the political foundations of the modern state and citizenship, and to the way in which identity is often understood to function both inside and between states. As such, this exploration may bring insight into the normative assumptions that exist in relevant identity politics.

There are a variety of historical examples of dual loyalty. Discourses of dual loyalty can be found during the English Reformation and featured in the trial and death of Thomas More. In this paper, I take examples from across time and space, including those of the Jewish historical experience and that of contemporary Muslim minority communities. This selection is because, first, there is significant recognition that the Jewish diaspora experience has almost archetypal characteristics (Cohen, 1997) and thus is a good example to use. Second, the example of post-9.11 conditions faced by Muslim minorities provides a particularly relevant and contemporary illustration of the issues I am addressing. Furthermore, I want to place side by side the experience of two minority groups who tend to view each other with suspicion due to the politics of the Middle East but may have similar experiences as minority populations in the West. However, before I address in more detail the issue of dual loyalty I want to first contextualize the problem of loyalty in relation to its related concept of political obligation.

### **Loyalty and Obligation**

The problem of political obligation is a sufficiently important and vague issue to have garnered derision and significant attention over the years. Generally speaking, political obligation is about the authority of the state, of the nature of law, of why anybody would obey the authority of the state and abide by the law.<sup>ii</sup> Political obligation, consequently, pertains to theories of state and legal philosophy. Political obligation is also about the subject being obliged, and as such is closely related to moral philosophy as well. In contrast to obligation, with its politico-legal referents, loyalty could refer to acts that emerge out of a set of pre-determined values. Judith Shklar (1993) suggests that the

difference between loyalty and obligation is the rational code that defines political obligation. She writes, “By obligation I mean rule-governed conduct, and political obligation specifically refers to laws and lawlike demand, made by public agencies” (Shklar, 1993: 183). On loyalty she writes,

What distinguishes loyalty is that it is deeply affective and not primarily rational.... If obligation is rule driven, loyalty is motivated by the entire personality of an agent. Political loyalty is evoked by nations, ethnic groups, churches, parties, and by doctrines, causes, ideologies, or faiths that form and identify associations (Shklar, 1993: 184).

In this understanding, what is missing from loyalty that is present in political obligation is the legal structural element that defines what one is expected to do or not to do and provides a rational basis for defining what a political obligation is. Loyalty is, in this sense, even vaguer than political obligation since it relies not on theories of state or philosophies of law but on moral expectations.

In Shklar’s terms, the problem of dual loyalty would be that one’s loyal commitments infringe on one’s political obligations to the state. In other words, that one’s emotional commitments conflict with one’s rational and legal requirements as a citizen. Here the distinction between obligation and loyalty is especially tricky, since not only is the term “dual loyalty” sometimes used in ways which do not fit into this understanding, but there are elements of political obligation that also do not fit. Indeed, Shklar’s requirement that rationality plays a role in political obligation is disputed by Hanna Pitkin (1972) who challenges the idea that rationality can explain political obligation. Moreover, the idea that loyalty is emotional, in contrast to the rationality of political obligations is difficult to accept. The basis of any political obligation requires a judgment about whether or not the obligating agent should have obligatory powers and whether or not one wants to abide by obligations demanded. Obligation involves the problem of choice, which involves the problem of agency, which involves more than any rational calculus can provide. Emotion could easily play a role in political obligation. Shklar’s definitions here are helpful but they are limited.

Consequently, I want to suggest a related but slightly different way to frame the relationship between political obligation and (political) loyalty. For the sake of analytical clarity, I will accept the argument that binds political obligation to the state and to the

law, but I want to suggest that loyalty also contextualizes and can justify political obligations. The judgments that one takes which make political obligation possible involve an account of loyalty to the state and to the institutions of the state. The strict divide between rational political obligations and possibly irrational emotional loyalties does not work. Emotional ties will contribute toward justifying one's political obligations, and as Pitkin suggests, it is possible to be obliged for irrational reasons. For the problem of dual loyalty to make terminological sense, loyalty can conflict with political obligations to the state when there are normative judgments that challenge the reasons for one's political loyalty to the state.

There is a reason for this framing of the problem of obligation and loyalty. I am not here aiming to provide an argument for political obligation, but a theory by which to analyze the problem of dual loyalty. In this regard, it is, to my mind at least, necessary to recognize, first, that loyalty involves normative claims. Second, that political obligation is justified when its normative basis can command the loyalty of the obliged. The problem of dual loyalty is when there is a tension between the first and the second.

### **Dual Loyalty in Political Thought**

At minimum, dual loyalty functions as a descriptive term referring to different and potentially competing loyalties, commitments and/or obligations. In medieval political thought dual loyalty was a problem, but it was also accepted as a basic feature of the body/soul duality that characterizes human life. St. Augustine was particularly keen on this topic (Augustine, 1998, 2001). He emphasizes that while the deeds that one carries out are important, it is more important to ensure a pure soul and thus achieve eternal salvation. Augustine takes it for granted the people will face the dual loyalties between body and soul; the problem was in understanding how the duality functioned in order to find eternal salvation.

Of course, the spiritual/temporal divide was not as clear as I am suggesting. During his own time Augustine was faced with having to address numerous cases where temporal rulers faced religious obstacles, religious leaders faced religious obstacles to their political goals, and lay people were faced with the eternal confusion between the desires of the body and the needs of the soul that characterize a life of sin made possible by Adam and Eve's folly. Moreover, and centuries later, it was the religious wars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that contributed to the conditions under which dual

loyalty could become a serious political problem. Yet, whereas previously dual loyalty was contextualized by a body/soul dualism, these wars contributed to a modern account that framed dual loyalty as a conflict between opposing political loyalties in the temporal world. Insofar as loyalty to the state or its equivalent is concerned, dual loyalty has been a consistent reality across history as rulers and religious leaders respectively tried to consolidate their authority and establish an order on the known world. However, whereas medieval Christian thought framed it as a problem emerging out of humanity's innate duality in a life of sin, modern thought frames it as a problem that leads to instability and even war.

The religious wars that led to the Peace of Westphalia “were fought around the question of political loyalty” and whether or not one can “be loyal to the state when one is not following the religion of the state (Van Der Veer, 2002: 96)?” These wars demonstrated that religious loyalties could come into violent conflict with temporal loyalties and obligations thereby suggesting that any kind of dual loyalty poses a serious problem to domestic and international stability. The proposed solution was to concentrate authority into a single locus of political sovereignty in each state. The Peace of Augsburg (1555) and of Westphalia (1648) that ended these wars and ushered in the modern state system established a system dedicated to removing overlapping hierarchies and diversity from state foundations, and institutionalizing a single locus of sovereignty in order to maintain order and prevent war. This “empire of uniformity... established in theory... the premise that the sovereign people who establish the constitution are already culturally indifferent members of one society who aim to set up a regular constitutional association with a single locus of sovereignty (Tully, 1995, p. 83).”

Behind this Westphalian system of uniformity was the fear that religious minorities would maintain a loyalty outside of the state where they reside. The proposed solution was the principle of *cujus regio ejus religio* (like sovereign, like religion). Consequently, “Subjects either complied with the established religion of the sovereign or migrated to another jurisdiction where their religious beliefs prevailed (Preece, 2006, p. 142).” While medieval political thought sought to reconcile the conflict between body and soul, modern political thought wanted to eradicate any such kind of conflict from politics and, for that matter, get rid of as much diversity as possible from state foundations.

Nevertheless, it remained acceptable up until the mid to late 1800s for individuals to shift their political loyalties across states. During this time it was not uncommon to

find nationals of one country serving in the military of another, but this practice became considerably more treacherous as the nation-state took over the normative conditions of political loyalty and political obligation. Yet while the idea of the modern-nation state is theoretically antithetical to nationals having justifiable yet opposing political commitments or allegiances, dual loyalty would carry no sense or weight as a term if it did not refer to a recognizable practice. In the modern era of the nation-state dual loyalty should, in theory, not exist. Consequently and paradoxically, there is something especially modern about the concept of dual loyalty, and “as Hobbes, and other political thinkers realized, it was the nature of the state that was at issue here (Van Der Veer, 2002: 96).” The modern solution, as articulated by Hobbes (1996) is that state stability requires a unified allegiance to the sovereign, and the way to achieve this common political obligation is with the social contract, out of which many equal but at risk individuals become one commonwealth.

The movement toward uniformity made dual loyalty a serious problem, since it suggested a fragmentation of the foundations of the sovereign state. This foundation is based on the idea of a single locus of political loyalty and ties this loyalty to state security. It seemed that if people had multiple loyalties authority could not be ensured and instability ensued, both in relation to domestic control and international relations. Of course, the nation-state takes for granted the fidelity of its citizens, but in the case of migrants this loyalty is questioned because of the perception that migrants are susceptible to dual loyalty. What the Peace of Westphalia termed a problem of religious faith modernity redefined as an issue pertaining to the loyalty of migrant communities (Van Der Veer, 2002). As David Miller writes,

The deeper question is how far immigrant groups can be expected to make the nation-state they move to their primary object of political allegiance. It is very common for members of such groups to retain a strong emotional attachment to the country they have left, and therefore to feel some loyalty to it... But what should we say when loyalties conflict...(Miller, 2008)?

Miller argues that citizenship is about mutual protection, and this normative goal should determine the answer to such questions. It is important not to portray a straw person here, but there is a notable history behind modern politics that premises state stability on a version of homogeneity that provide the context to Miller’s questions and his answers.



The challenge for such theorists has been to sort out how difference or pluralism can successfully find a place in the modern state which has never really been homogenous in the first place (Kymlicka, 1995; Kymlicka & Norman, 2000). Into this debate the predicament of dual loyalty poses a particularly disturbing problem because of the implication that migrant and diaspora communities will retain ties to their homeland and thus pose a threat to the perceived state homogeneity. In this modern discourse dual loyalty becomes a threat to the state itself. This discourse of dual loyalty is perhaps the most politically concerning since it relies on a variety of foundational claims that dominate political thought and modern political life and should not be taken for granted or accepted uncritically.

In conclusion, dual loyalty as a problem has a paradoxical relationship to the modern state system. Dual loyalty suggests that the state cannot necessarily take for granted the unconditional allegiance of the nation because the nation-state may actually be a group of nations with different loyalties. The paradox is that by recognizing dual loyalty, either, for example, as a challenge to state authority or as a possible reason for conscientious objection, the nation-state is accepting that it is not really a *nation*-state but a *nations*-state or pluralist state when the idea behind the modern nation-state is a rejection of this plurality. Thus the possibility of dual loyalty implies that the Westphalian solution has not resolved one of the key problems that it was supposed to: the potential for discord or violence because of multiple political allegiances.

Discourses of dual loyalty appear in a variety of guises. Sometimes dual loyalty is perceived to function as a product of one's ethnicity or religion, and other times it may be purely ideological as was the case in the United States during the communist witch hunts of the 1950s. Regardless of these different dual loyalty discourses, dual loyalty is inherently a discourse related to a variety of security concerns: state security, national security/integrity, the security of a minority group. Consequently, in the following sections I provide various examples that illustrate how dual loyalty functions as an accusation and how it is related to security discourses. The examples suggest that dual loyalty is an inherently problematic discourse, often linked to prejudice, discrimination, hierarchy and sometimes oppression.

## **The Accusation**

In Damascus in 1840 a Capuchin friar disappeared and a Jewish barber was arrested and charged with the ritual murder of the friar. The barber was tortured and after a forced confession a mob attacked the local Jewish community. The charge against this innocent Jewish barber revived the blood libel accusation common in the Middle-Ages (Mendes-Flohr and Reinhartz, 1995). The French government became involved, due to its Middle Eastern ambitions, and supported the charges against the Jewish barber. French Jews were, consequently, placed in a difficult position. As French citizens they should support France's ambitions in the Middle East, but as Jews they could not stand behind their government's support of a malicious crime against Jews. In the end, due to the involvement of a Jewish French politician, Adolphe Crémieux, the Jewish prisoners in Damascus were released. However, this victory was not without consequences. "The outcome was an apparent victory in humanitarian terms but... it was a Pyrrhic one. Thereafter, French patriots argued that love of their brethren would always be greater than the love of the French Jews for France" (Cohen, 1996: 510). At issue here was not the collective right of a group to protest, but the concern that a minority population cares more about its own kin abroad than it does about the national interests of their country of residence.

In this regard, and paradoxically, dual loyalty took on a potentially insidious turn once it became framed by the modern ideal of universal equality. The paradox of the Declaration of the Rights of Man (1789) was to simultaneously reject and emphasize human difference. This paradox is neatly summed up by Hannah Arendt who notes that, "The more equal conditions are, the less explanation there is for the differences that actually exist between people, and thus all the more unequal do individuals and groups become (Arendt, 1986, p. 54)." In a system ostensibly built on a premise of uniformity, pluralism can suggest a foundational threat to the integrity of the nation and state.

Recognizing this paradox, minority populations sometimes overemphasize their loyalty and commitment to the majority in order to stave off dual loyalty charges. Historically, minority populations have often tried to demonstrate their loyalty to the state by participating in local customs (Sarna, 1981). The Jewish minority population in the newly formed United States of America demonstrated precisely such a reaction:

President Washington himself had assured [the Jews] of "liberty of conscience and immunities of citizenship."

All that America seemed to demand in return was loyalty, devotion, and

obedience to law. Jews kept their side of the bargain. They displayed their patriotism conspicuously, and diligently copied prevailing Protestant standards of behavior. In return, they won many new rights and opportunities. Yet, they failed to receive hoped-for equality. Instead, popular anti-Jewish suspicions lived on, and reaction set in. Missionaries arose to convert Jews, and succeeded in rekindling old hatreds. Many Americans, especially those affected by religious revivals ("the Second Great Awakening") and anti-Enlightenment romantic currents, insisted anew that America was a "Christian country." (Sarna, 1981: 157)

This account clearly places the Jewish minority at odds with the Christian majority due to the prejudices of the majority.<sup>iii</sup>

However, while a majority may claim that the migrant community needs to share in the values and participate in local customs in order to demonstrate their inclusiveness, it is also up to the majority to decide when a minority has done enough to satisfy the expectations of assimilation. In this regard a minority population is always potentially suspect of not fulfilling these expectations over assimilation and are thus always subject to the possibility of a dual loyalty accusation. The Jews in America eventually overcame this prejudice, but it is noteworthy that Jean-Paul Sartre recognized a similar logic at work in racist discourse (Sartre, 1995), and this similarity provides one further characteristic of the modern account of dual loyalty. It is undeniable that the charge of dual loyalty often functions in large part in relation to racist discourse.

During the Second World War, Canadians and Americans of Japanese ancestry were deemed suspicious and potentially dangerous to the state. In 1941, the Canadian and American governments confiscated fishing boats and property of residents and citizens of Japanese origin. These policies accelerated after the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. Canadians and Americans of Japanese ancestry were required to register with their respective government and by 1942 were being interned in camps. In the United States the internment camps were not closed until 1946, although it took until 1965 to resolve all legal compensation claims. In Canada, it took until 1949 for Japanese-Canadians to regain the right to travel freely inside the country, and it was not until 1988 that a formal apology and compensation were issued. These citizens and residents were persecuted because of their ethnic origin, and that somehow their ancestry meant that during a war against the Japanese they would turn against their adoptive

country and side with the “homeland.” The liberal democracies of America and Canada acted on the assumption that ethnic identity could pose a security threat because of a potential for dual loyalty on the part of a minority population. It is noteworthy that those of German and Italian descent were not subject to the same treatment, thus further suggesting the inherent racism in this case. The treatment of this visible minority may have been pure racism, but it was dual loyalty concerns that provided the justification and security basis for their internment and persecution. This example further illustrates the racist and international character that characterizes the dual loyalty accusation.

The specter of dual loyalty often emerges out of the practices of international relations and state foreign policy. In this vein, and writing about contemporary American foreign policy, Yossi Shain notes that,

In engaging in the politics of the country of origin (home-country), diaspora activists and organizations may become entangled in conflicting allegiances. They must justify their actions in terms of American national interests and values, answer to their U.S. ethnic compatriots, and prove their loyalty to their home country (1994-1995: 813).

As an accusation, dual loyalty can originate not only in the state where one resides but also from one’s country of origin (Shain, 1994-1995), which can pose additional complications for diaspora groups. There are a variety of ways that dual loyalty functions as an accusation. Consequently, the modern accusation of dual loyalty can refer to racist ideology or racial prejudices in society, the logic of the nation-state and its security interests, and/or the practices of international politics that pertain to diaspora and migrant community relations to their kin or homeland.

This variety of dual loyalty discourses, nevertheless, all relate to various security issues, be it in regard to territorial integrity, national values, foreign policy or national identity. For dual loyalty to make any kind of sense (however problematic or morally disturbing) it is to the extent that there is a sense that security is based on a kind of homogenous patriotism and national identity, where migrant communities, ethnic minorities or diaspora populations are faced with having to prove their loyalty to the state. Consequently, dual loyalty is, I think, primarily an accusative phrase. While it should be obvious that people have many loyalties during the course of their lives and these will most likely come into conflict at various points during their lives, insofar as

loyalty to the state is concerned, there is a severely limited tolerance for such conflicts expressing themselves in public life. The accusation of dual loyalty is primarily framed as a security issue, although, as I will now argue, it forms a security debate that is really more about racism than any actual security risk.

### **Dual Loyalty and Security**

Dual loyalty can function as a security risk in at least two ways. The first is the minority community fearing the accusation of dual loyalty, the second is the state or the majority perceiving a minority to be guilty of dual loyalty or posing a risk of dual loyalty. Briefly in the 1980s American Jews were concerned about the dual loyalty threat arising in relation to the espionage of Jonathan Pollard, an American Jew who was recruited by Israel to spy on the United States. “This scandal was deeply embarrassing to American Jewry. It demonstrated on the part of some Israeli officials a lack of sensitivity to the U.S.-Israel relationship and to the susceptibility of U.S. Jews to false charges of ‘dual loyalty’ (Eizenstat, 1990-1991: 97).” Many American Jews viewed him as a pariah and traitor to his country.<sup>iv</sup> By this time there was little chance of the Jewish community falling under the accusatory shadow of dual loyalty, but the embarrassment of the scandal was because it provided a tangible case of perceived dual loyalty, something that Jews have historically been sensitive to.

The second security discourse is based on the perception of a minority posing a security risk. It is irrelevant whether or not the minority poses an actual security risk, since at issue is the perception of one. Indeed, threats are always based on perception (Jervis, 1976), and ultimately, if frustratingly, it may not make much difference if the threat is “real” or “imagined” so long as it is perceived. It is the second security discourse that is more troubling, since the possibility of a minority feeling a looming shadow of dual loyalty accusations functions only to the extent that a majority can make such an accusation with consequences to follow. In this regard, dual loyalty discourse presumes that a minority should be loyal to the state but then rejects this presumption or expectation of loyalty because of the simultaneously held belief that minorities cannot be counted on in this way. Therein lies how dual loyalty is particularly concerning, because it illustrates a condition whereby the minority is made to suffer by the actions of a majority that refuses to recognize the harassing and hierarchical nature of its actions. Consequently, by their self-perception as a controlling majority they make it possible to

perceive the potential of a minority to become disloyal, subversive and possibly even treasonous against the society they live in. As such, any practices that are seen to be different from those of the majority could constitute a potential indicator of dual loyalty. Consequently, the differences of minority groups are easily construed to pose various kinds of security risks. Multiple examples of this kind of discourse have prevailed in British debates over Muslim communities, new immigrants and British values.

In relation to immigration and security, Sita Bali writes that,

Immigration is... perceived to have an impact on a nation's security. Immigrant communities tend to maintain a strong connection with their home countries, and turbulence or instability in those societies can find expression within the immigrant community as well, thereby bringing external problems into host societies (2001, p. 182).

The security dynamic at work here is with how identity itself is perceived to pose security risks. Consequently, the language used to address these perceived security threats invariably refers to some of the key features identified by Albert Memmi (2000) as racist, primarily discourses of xenophobia and thus exclusion and prejudice due to perceptions of difference made possible by hierarchical relations. Indeed, "Any attempt to classify types of threats from immigration quickly runs into distinctions between "real" and "perceived" threats, or into absurdly paranoid notions of threat or mass anxieties that can best be described as xenophobic and racist (Weiner, 1992-1993, p. 104)."

Currently, the ostensible empirical reason for this fear is the "home-grown" terrorist. The "home-grown" terrorist label is controversial. Its usage is often connected to minority communities and thus suggests a misguided linkage to immigrants and often Muslims. Indeed, the Canadian security pundit David Harris has specifically targeted Muslims as a threat and questioned why security officials have refrained from referring to Islam or Muslims as threats (Frum, 2006). To put this kind of rhetoric in perspective, however, we should recall that the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995, in which 168 people were killed and over 800 wounded, was perpetuated by white supremacists, not Muslim terrorists as was initially claimed (Halliday, 2003). Here was an instance of a "home-grown" terrorist attack, and the initial response was to claim that Muslims were behind it, thereby suggesting that it is somehow easier to view visible minorities to be threats.

So-called “home-grown” terrorists have appeared in Canada, Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States. In each case the state became concerned with how its residents were finding loyalties to constituencies in distant countries, and, crucially, that these commitments involved a fundamental and violent clash against the country in which they lived. With echoes of an extreme form of alienation, these isolated cases have contributed to a concern over the enemy within our midst, of minority groups posing security risks not just to the national value system and national identity, but to the state’s ability to control acts of violence inside its borders. These cases suggest not so much examples of dual loyalty as of extreme and violent antagonism toward one’s home state. Nevertheless, it is within the context of dual loyalty fears that such “home-grown” threats are addressed.

It is in this context that Lord Goldsmith, the former attorney general of England and Wales, proposed that upon graduation all students should participate in a citizenship ceremony involving a pledge of allegiance to the Queen (Goldsmith, 2007; Pupils "To Take Allegiance Oath'," 2008; Ryan, 2008). Furthermore, in his related Report migration is mentioned as an issue of concern for British values and security (Goldsmith, 2007). Goldsmith also proposed a new national holiday to celebrate “Britishness,” which would replicate a similar day in Australia and in Canada. What is interesting about Goldsmith’s proposal is not that a Scottish representative did not support the idea, but that it does not seem to be tied to a founding moment of the United Kingdom but to a normative principle that involves an obligation to the values and protection of the state/nation. Goldsmith also relates this oath that students should take to the one taken by newly naturalized citizens. However, other than xenophobia and/or racism, whether there are empirical grounds for concern over a weakening of “British values” and “British identity” due to population diversity is questionable.

An examination of the last UK census (conducted in 2001) does not support the claim that the UK is a multicultural society at risk of a demographic calamity threatening the majority’s identity. 71.6% of England, Wales and Scotland remain Christian. 92.1% of the population is white. 5.2% of the population classify themselves as members of religious minority groups comprised of 6 different religions – the largest of these was Muslim at 2.7%.<sup>v</sup> 7.9% of the population is made up of minority ethnic groups.<sup>vi</sup> 45% of the minority ethnic population resides in London. The distribution of the UK’s minority population is highly uneven, with the cumulative effect that the rest of the UK has minorities but can hardly lay claim to being much of a multicultural society outside of

London. Indeed, the UK would have at best an ambivalent and uncertain commitment to multicultural values (Kymlicka, 2003).

This data is not as recent as I would like and the next census may have a different result. Nevertheless, taking the government's data it is odd that there is concern over the loyalty and political self-identification of the general public when the minority is less than 10% of the population and just under half of the minority population resides in one city – an empirical situation that I suspect has not changed much since this data was produced. The fact that, according to the last census, Muslims make up less than three percent of the British public would indicate that the threat of Muslims to the British nation is very low, if indeed there even is such a threat. Nevertheless, due to domestic and international events, there are increasing concerns over linkages between identity, obligation and security. Goldsmith's report was in response to a concern over public loyalty and national identity, particularly in light of the London bombings in July 2005 and an attack in 2007 at Glasgow airport by so-called "home-grown" terrorists.

These attacks are terrifying but they do not suggest a threat to the national identity or value system. Consequently, the danger must be one of ideas about and perceptions of the possibility that citizens may find loyalties to communities outside of the UK, thus posing a form of security risk to the nation, and in the case of Muslims in the UK the discourse has been shown to be heavily racist (Kyriakides, Virdee, & Modood, 2009). It can be difficult to get one's head around the logic of this kind of security discourse since the perceived threats are of generally law abiding and productive members of society who happen to be minorities. The discourse functions as a security concern precisely because of the perception that minority groups are not loyal enough to the hostland, that they share some of the common political obligations to the state (they obey the law, for example), but they cannot be counted on to become 100% committed residents (whatever that would mean) due to loyalties they have to their non-Christian religion or homeland or kin abroad. That government officials seem to be constantly claiming and that Muslims are not the target is, more than anything else, an indication that they are.

These issues are often framed in terms of pluralism or multiculturalism, with dual loyalty referred to by euphemisms that suggest a path toward national homogeneity. In the liberal vernacular the problem of dual loyalty is addressed in debates over cultural assimilation and minority rights. The multicultural/assimilation literature is often about



the problem of dual loyalty, and this debate emerged in precisely dual loyalty terms in officially multicultural Canada:

...Multiculturalism as a policy was denounced for many of the same reasons assimilationists have always raised against the maintenance of ethnicity. It would breed "double consciousness" – loyalty to more than one country; it would contribute to turning immigrant quarters into permanent ethnic ghettos; it would slow the process of overcoming an ignorance of English and French that made the immigrants exploitable in the past (Wilson, 1993: 626).

These issues have been raised again in response to the seventeen Muslims in Toronto who were arrested in June, 2006, on charges of plotting to bomb areas in and around Toronto. This debate has also taken place in the United States and Europe, often in relation to the threat posed by terrorism:

The impact of terrorism inside the United States, Spain and Britain has led both to a crisis in multiculturalism as a principle for organizing modern democratic societies and to the fear that the old notion of ‘the enemy within’ (given full rein in the Cold War, but in fact harking back via the European wars of religion to the wooden horse of Troy) now applied to communities whose loyalty to a transnational religion might lead them into acts of violence against their own fellow citizens. (Aggestam and Hill, 2008: 106)

Since there are so few instances of minorities turning violent against the majority, one would presume that such communities provide no real threat to the state or nation. Yet, for many people too much cultural difference inside the state is a problem, and debates on these issues tend to speak to an often imaginary but comfortable ideal of uniformity and familiarity. It is difficult to find another reason why the debate in the UK over the Archbishop of Canterbury’s remarks about Sharia law became so heated. The issues contained in such debates were especially apparent in a series of exchanges during the Presidential election over Barack Obama’s faith. First, there was the “accusation” that Obama was Muslim and that this could jeopardize his commitment to the state (Luttwak, 2008). Second, there was John McCain’s response that Obama is not a Muslim

but “a decent family man.”<sup>vii</sup> The correct answer, as Colin Powell stated when he endorsed Obama, should have been: what does it matter if he is Muslim.<sup>viii</sup>

Powell was right, and these debates are odd. It should not be taken for granted that dual loyalty has to be a problem and that minorities are threats. Surely the state is strong enough to manage the possibility of some of its citizens being in difficult moral dilemmas about where to place their political loyalty? Indeed, the fact that such identity conflicts have rarely weakened the state is an indication of how this problem is primarily over normative assumptions and not state stability. As Anthony D. Smith argues,

Conflicts between loyalty to a national state and solidarity with an ethnic community, within or outside the boundaries of that state, may lead to accusations of 'dual loyalties', and families may find themselves torn between the claims of competing communities and identities. There is in fact always the potential for such identity conflicts. That they occur less often than one might expect is the result of a certain fluidity in all processes of individual identification. (1992: 59)

The problem of dual loyalty should be not a great problem since individual identification is fluid, and often individuals and groups can sort out the moral challenge of dual loyalty without it becoming too serious a problem or challenge to state solidarity. Nevertheless, it would appear that the fear of dual loyalty is real and that in the short-term at least, it is easy for significant segments of the majority population to turn to easy but false generalizations, often racist, that contextualize the accusation of dual loyalty.

However, could dual loyalty function simply as a descriptive term and not as an ominous accusation? I am unconvinced that dual loyalty can disassociate itself from the perception that the state demands unconditional loyalty and any moral obligations that challenge this loyalty are a challenge to the state. Nevertheless, assuming for a moment that it is possible to recognize the term to have a purely descriptive usage, dual loyalty might simply be a basic feature of modern life. For example, in the wake of Kosovo declaring its independence from Serbia on February 17, 2008, the Serbian diaspora reacted by condemning the independence declaration. In Canada, there were protests by Serbian-Canadians in Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, Montreal, Toronto, and Ottawa. At the Toronto rally, protestors condemned the American government's recognition of Kosovo as an independent state, and demanded that the Canadian government not

recognize Kosovo. The protestors suggested that recognizing Kosovo would be against international law, but also that “it could have ramifications on this country’s unity (Thomas, 2008).” Drawing a connection with Quebec separatists, the Serbian-Canadian protestors held placards stating: “Kosovo = Quebec.” In this instance, the protestors suggested that as good Canadians they could not support Kosovo’s independence. There is no dual loyalty here since what exists is simply a minority constituency stating a political argument. Indeed, I am not sure that dual loyalty as a descriptive concept carries much weight – people always have multiple loyalties. The term’s power is in its discriminatory implications.

It is obviously true that people will have multiple and overlapping loyalties that may come into conflict at some point during their lives. Consequently, it may be worth asking why dual loyalty is treated as anything other than the usual conflict of commitments that characterize politics. Dual loyalty is clearly a problem about commitment, and commitment is, as Judith Shklar points out, a complex concept that relates to politics, law, philosophy and morality. However, as Socrates suggested, being a good citizen involves uncovering hidden contradictions, and consequently, it makes little sense to presume that political life and moral values will not come into contradiction at some point (Arendt, 2005).

## **Conclusion**

Immigrant communities are particularly vulnerable to accusations of dual loyalty, since they are often perceived to,

...destroy the isomorphism between people, sovereign and citizenry. Immigrants are perceived as foreigners to the community of shared loyalty towards the state and shared rights guaranteed by the state. Trans-national migrants presumably remain loyal to another state whose citizens they are and to whose sovereign they belong, as long as they are not absorbed into the national body through assimilation and naturalization. (Wimmer and Schiller, 2002: 309)

Yet, no state is homogenous and there are always minority populations. To presume that an absence of minorities is a pre-requisite to stability and unity is empirically unfounded

and morally questionable. Furthermore, it is mistaken to think that only minorities will be susceptible to dual loyalty. Having a shared history does not mean that a population will join together and stay together, regardless of whether they are a minority (Clifford, 1994). Why a minority cannot be counted on but a member of the majority can is blatantly fallacious. Everyone is susceptible to a crisis of conscience, or a political decision to face. Moral quandaries are the stuff of human existence.

Furthermore, it is worth recalling that the modern project of the nation-state with its idea of a homogenous population may serve to dictate much contemporary political discourse, but it is also contingent on a specific political project. However, this project and its “discovery” of the uniform nation-state at Westphalia was a fiction and was known to be so at the time.

This was a fiction of the early modern theorists, as Hugo Grotius exposed in his survey of the diversity of existing constitutions, designed to ensure in theory the consolidation of early modern states that they wished to promote in practice. Leibniz replied to Hobbes and Pufendorf in 1677 that no known political society exhibited the cultural and institutional uniformity that they took for granted.... But these voices, barely heard today, were drowned out by the ascendancy of uniformity (Tully, 1995, p. 83).

In other words, the suggestion that uniformity is necessary for state stability was an argument rendered for political purposes, and which succeeded due to an assumption that diversity was a cause of war.

While this kind of logic suggests that dual loyalty is a serious problem, it does not have to be. Some historical perspective might be in order here. For example, during the presidential election, John F. Kennedy succeeded in overcoming the perception that being a Catholic might mean that his loyalty to the United States would be in tension with his loyalty to the Vatican. Moreover, many countries allow their citizens to carry dual citizenship. Indeed, since the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century it has become increasingly common for states to allow dual citizenship.<sup>ix</sup> The dual citizenship phenomenon most likely is allowed since the state does not consider it to threaten the state’s ability to demand the loyalty of its citizens. Moreover, the chances of an individual being a citizen of two countries that are at war with each other is low, although the chances of them having foreign policy conflicts is high. Often, such conflicts will matter

little. Dual citizens of the UK and Canada, for example, probably will not find themselves morally torn because of debates in economic trade talks and any such differences would hardly be referred as a case of dual loyalty.

Dual loyalty functions as a political term when it is tied to discrimination, fear and often racism, such as when liberal societies start accusing minorities of having dual loyalties. Often those accused will be targeted because they do not conform in some way to whatever the nation is presumed to be. Yet, dual and indeed multiple loyalties are quite common and they rarely pose much of a threat. Many of us have multiple political loyalties that come into conflict. That this kind of discourse becomes a discriminatory accusative one is dubious. What is required in response to such accusations is a deeper engagement with our inherent pluralism, to what Fred Halliday refers to here as internationalist:

The internationalist tradition may have chalked up many illusions; most political traditions do. But faced as we are with the complacency of national pride and the automatic loyalty claimed by the nation-state, the ever-recurrent waves of nationalism and the grip of institutions associated with it, an element of internationalist intransigence, intellectual and moral, may well be in order. (1988: 198)

There are many normative challenges involved in the dual loyalty discourse, challenges that are not by themselves new, but are surely worth reflecting upon seriously as religion, immigration, and diaspora relations become increasingly important for modern politics and international relations. Contemporary politics should be based on discourses that recognize pluralism to be a *fait accompli*, to recognize change and for migrants and hosts to respect the diversity of populations. This is easier said than done, but I suggest that future debates and government policies relating to identity, security and the insidious nature of the dual loyalty discourse take into account that homogeneity is not a security solution, and dual and indeed multiple loyalties are the norm. It may even be possible for minority groups who view each with suspicion to at least empathize with each other's experience as minorities.

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## Endnotes

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<sup>ii</sup> The literature on political obligation is vast, but two good advanced introductions are, Klosko, 2005; Simmons, 1980.

<sup>iii</sup> It is worth pointing out here that while it is common to view the United States as a Christian country, the United States Constitution does not privilege any religion and states that all established religions shall be respected. As it is written in the First Amendment: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.”

<sup>iv</sup> In an interview with David Twersky, current Senior Advisor to the Executive Director for Policy, International Affairs and Communication at the American Jewish Congress, Twersky mentions how at the time there was some anxiety about the Pollard Affair becoming a dual loyalty issue. The issue of dual loyalty, however, emerged primarily in debates within Jewish communities, and of whether or not to get involved either on behalf of Pollard or against him. He recalls heated debate at the time on having loyalties to both Israel and the United States, but in the end the general decision was not to get involved. Interview conducted by the author in New York City, September 2, 2008.

<sup>v</sup> <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cgi/nugget.asp?id=293> Accessed on March 11, 2008.

<sup>vi</sup> [http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cgi/nugget\\_print.asp?ID=273](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cgi/nugget_print.asp?ID=273) Accessed on March 11, 2008.

<sup>vii</sup> <http://edition.cnn.com/2008/POLITICS/10/13/campbell.brown.obama/index.html>, accessed January 14, 2009.

<sup>viii</sup> <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/27265369/>, accessed January 14, 2009.

<sup>ix</sup> This change may provide an indication that the modern-nation state is coming to terms with the inherent diversity of its population, although it does not demonstrate that states are less concerned about dual loyalty problems. It is telling that it is often illegal for anyone of dual citizenship to enter into a country in which they are a citizen using their other passport.

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