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American Self-Identification: A Strategy of Maintenance

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Received November 2009
Accepted February 2010

Abstract: *The tensions of historical and cultural belonging and relations to colonialism, nationalism and racism in their diverse forms, in general, help in assuming what self-concept America takes for her self- and the way she identifies –recognizes and associates- herself through foreign relations and policies to relate herself and contribute to the rest of the world, or the ‘other’- enable us to imagine what identity America represents at certain eras. Wars for America have always played a significant role in the definition, representation and negotiation of identity and can be understood as global in scope but national in design. The present article traces the qualitative transformation of America’s identity through the study of war trilogy of Civil War, World War I and World War II.*

Keywords: Self; Other; Identity; Identification; America; Civil War; World War I; World War II

Introduction

“E pluribus unum”, Latin for “Out of many one”, is a motto found in 1776 on the Seal of the United States and adopted by an Act of Congress in 1782. The phrase originally came from *Moretum*, a poem attributed to Virgil but with the actual author unknown. In the poem text, *color est e pluribus unus* describes the blending of colors into one; suggesting that out of many colonies or states emerges a single nation; it has come to suggest that out of many peoples, races, religions and ancestries has emerged a single people and nation – illustrating the concept of the melting pot.

When Al Gore was Vice President, he explained that America’s national motto, *e pluribus unum*, means “from one, many.” “This was a sad day for knowledge of Latin among our political elite”, said Charles R., Kesler (p. 906). He continues: “Though literally a mistake, politically the comment expressed and honored the multicultural imperative, then so prominent in the minds of American liberals: “from one,” or to exaggerate slightly, “instead of one culture, many.” As such, it was a rather candid example of the literary method known as deconstruction: Torture a text until it confesses the exact opposite of what it says in plain English or, in this case, Latin.”

“After 9/11, not much was heard from multiculturalism. In wartime, politics tends to assert its sway over culture. In its most elementary sense, politics implies friends and enemies, us and them” (p. 906). Kesler continues that “the attackers on 9/11 were not interested in our internal diversity. They didn’t murder the innocents in the Twin Towers or the Pentagon or on board the airplanes because they were black, white, Asian-American, or Mexican-American, but because they were American.” Later in his lecture he recounted how Americans fortified to defend their national identity as one out of many: “In our horror and anguish at those enormities, and then in our resolution to avenge them, the American people closed ranks. National pride swelled, and national identity--perhaps the simplest marker is the display of the flag--reasserted itself. After 9/11, everyone, presumably even Mr. Gore, understood that *e pluribus unum* means: out of many, one.”

Patriotism and fear remain alive even after the war flames recede, the wrongdoer is punished, and the sentiments get cool. Post war years are not empty of agonies. The threat is always alive for the newly-stricken

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people to be worried about, and though the physical war ends, the psychological war goes on. Nations as dynamic organisms recurrently define themselves and every war calls for a fast self-redefinition. "Unless we know what about our national identity ought to command admiration and love, we are left at our enemies' mercy. We pay them the supreme and undeserved compliment of letting them define us, even if indirectly. Unsure of our national identity, we are left uncertain of our national interests too..." Kesler asserts.

Who Are We? The question posed by Samuel P. Huntington is asked times and again aiming to the challenges of America's National Identity. In Huntington's view identity crisis leads to national disintegration. Multiculturalism, trans-nationalism, and Hispanization of America are according to him the three developments in the culture that fuel the disorder and are destructive of civic unity. Huntington's argument provides a convenient starting point for thinking about the problem of American national identity, which touches immigration, bilingual education, religion in the public square, civic education, foreign policy, and many other issues.

A nation is defined as many times as waves wash off the coasts. The high tides, including national and international conflicts and wars, are recorded in the history and literature of every nation. American history is replete with records of wars and American literature is sometimes history-referential, responding to America's history. The Civil War (1861-1865), World War I (1914-1918) and World War II (1939-1945) are among the America's many fought wars selected for this study.

All societies throughout history have confronted conflict in their own way. The idea of "Perpetual Wars"- whether real, imaginary, or manufactured- is not a new concept. Finding justifications for wars is a complex matter and it differs from one society to the next. America has a history of many wars. In fact, in America war has got a pragmatic function in the American psyche in daily life so that when Americans tend to define themselves, war comes as one of the chief variables for their self-identity. Creating situations of crisis has always been one of America's methods of boundary maintenance and identity shaping: Following World War II it was the Cold War and Vietnam and today it is the threat of Terrorism. All of these conflicts have played important functions to interpret, re-interpret and portray an image of "self-identity" both to themselves and to the world.

In old societies, instruments such as folk songs, dress, humor, and in particular language and religion have served as glue that held those societies together. America as a young nation never adopted these traditional instruments; therefore, these unifying issues have never really taken deep root within the psyche of American people. Thus, what serves as the glue for this nation, a substance so strong that comes absorbing to the tastes of its immigrants from all over the world comprising the nation, which as George Santayana once observed "America is all one prairie, swept by a universal tornado"? (129) War can be a possible answer, since it calls for recognizing one's self and identity in opposition to the other's self and identity. The self-identification of a country in the context of war is necessary for its maintenance and, as well, has unifying power to make people with diversities in all aspects feel unified as a sole self. America to avoid a social identity crisis -that can happen of vast proportions- found war as an answer, a driving force that retains American identity. War for America has to be observed as an important tool for holding this group of people together who find themselves with very few things in common.

This study attempts to answer these questions:

1. How has America formed her identity through the three wars of Civil War, World War I, and World War II, supposing that America is a dynamic entity that has a developing psyche?
2. How "Manifest Destiny" and "American Dream" as bearers of American ideologies are continuously redefined to fuel American self-identification and guarantee her maintenance?

Exploring Self and Identity

A. Sociological Approach

The self emerges out of the mind, the mind arises and develops out of social interaction, and patterned social interaction forms the basis of social structure (Mead, 1934). The self is both individual and social in character. It works to control meanings to sustain itself; many of those meanings are shared and ultimately manifest themselves in the social structure.

The concept of self, thus, is developed from who he is to himself and who he is to others; his entity embodies content and a structure. The early views of sociologies to explore the content and the structure, connected the concept of self with self-evaluation. Self-concept often meant self-esteem -one's evaluation of oneself in affective (negative or positive) terms- (Rosenberg, 1979). To broaden this view, Rosenberg (1979) suggested

that there was more to the self-concept than self-esteem. He defined the self-concept as the sum total of our thoughts, feelings, and imaginations as to who we are. Later conceptions elaborated and refined this view suggesting that the self-concept was made up of cognitive components -given the collection of identities- as well as affective components or self-feelings including self-esteem -both worth-based and efficacy-based self-esteem (Franks & Marolla, 1976; Stryker, 1980).

In general, the self-concept is the set of meanings we hold for ourselves when we look at ourselves. It is based on our observations of ourselves, our inferences about who we are, based on how others act toward us, our wishes and desires, and our evaluations of ourselves. The self-concept includes not only our idealized views of who we are that are relatively unchanging, but also our self-image or working copy of our self-views that we import into situations and that is subject to constant change and revision based on situational influences (Burke, 1980). It is this self-image that guides moment-to-moment interaction, is changed in situated negotiation, and may act back on the more fundamental self-views.

For sociologist and social psychologists, the self-concept emerges out of the reflected appraisal process (Gecas & Burke, 1995). Although some of our self views are gained by direct experience with our environment, most of what we know about ourselves is derived from others. According to the reflected appraisal process, which is based on the "looking glass self" (Cooley, 1902), significant others communicate their appraisals of us, and this influences the way we see ourselves. In a now classic review of studies on the reflected appraisal process, Shrauger and Schoeneman (1979) found that rather than our self-concepts resembling the way others actually see us, our self-concepts are filtered through our perceptions and resemble how we think others see us.

Felson (1993) summarizes a program of research in which he has attempted to explain why individuals' are not very accurate in judging what others think of them. Among the causes of the discrepancy is the apprehension of others to reveal their views. At best they may reveal primarily favorable views rather than both favorable and unfavorable views. Consistent with other research (DePaulo, Kenny, Hoover, Webb, & Oliver, 1987; Kenney & Albright, 1987), Felson finds that individuals have a better idea of how groups see them than how specific individuals see them. Presumably, individuals learn the group standards and then apply those standards. In turn, when group members judge individuals, they use the same standards that individuals originally applied to themselves. Thus we find a correspondence in self-appraisals and others appraisals of the self.

To evaluate the self, self-esteem is the measure. According Gecas and Schwalbe two dimensions of self-esteem have been identified as efficacy-based self-esteem -seeing oneself as competent and capable- and worth-based self-esteem -feeling that one is accepted and valued (Gecas & Schwalbe, 1983). Others have labeled the distinction "inner self-esteem" -being effective- and "outer self-esteem" -acceptance by others (Franks & Marolla, 1976). As Gecas and Burke (1995) point out, the significant interest in self-esteem is largely due to assuming that high self-esteem is associated with good outcomes such as personal success while low self-esteem is associated with bad outcomes such as deviance.

Cast and Burke (1999) used identity theory as a theoretical framework for the integration of these different conceptualizations of self-esteem. They argue that self-esteem is intimately tied to the identity verification process. They pointed out that the desire for self-esteem may be what motivates people to create and maintain situations or relationships that verify one's identity. They also argue that the two components of self-esteem - worth-based and efficacy-based- are each rooted primarily in the different bases of identities. They argue that verification of group-based identities has a stronger impact on worth-based self-esteem while verification of role-based identities has a stronger impact on efficacy-based self-esteem. If worth-based self-esteem is a source of motivation, so is self-efficacy (Bandura, 1982). Self-efficacy is seeing oneself as a causal agent in one's life. As Bandura (1995) points out, efficacy is a belief about one's causative capabilities. Some have also recently linked self-esteem with efficacy by arguing that people with high self-esteem should also tend to perceive themselves as competent and, in turn, exhibit more involvement in social movements to try to effect social change (Owens & Aronson, 2000).

Because the self emerges in social interaction within the context of a complex, organized, differentiated society, it has been argued that the self must be complex, organized and differentiated as well, reflecting the dictum that the "self reflects society" (Stryker, 1980). This idea is rooted in James' (1890) notion that there are as many different selves as there are different positions that one holds in society and thus different groups who respond to the self. This is where identity enters into the overall self. The overall self is organized into multiple parts (identities), each of which is tied to aspects of the social structure. One has an identity, an "internalized

positional designation” (Stryker, 1980, p. 60), for each of the different positions or role relationships the person holds in society. Thus, self as father is an identity, as is self as colleague, self as friend, and self as any of the other myriad of possibilities corresponding to the various roles one may play. The identities are the meanings one has as a group member, as a role-holder, or as a person; what it means to be a father, or a colleague, or a friend. These meanings are the content of the identities.

Often we operate in two or more identities at a time as in being both a friend and colleague. In examining the nature of interaction between identities of different persons, we can take two different perspectives: agency and social structure. In terms of social structure, we can focus on the external and talk about actors taking a role or playing a role. Here, the social structure in which the identities are embedded is relatively fixed and people play out the roles that are given to them. Teachers do the things that teachers are supposed to do. Variations across persons taking on the same identities are viewed as relatively minor, except insofar as they impact the success (or failure) of a group or organization. Essentially, the social structure persists and develops according to its own principles; individuals are recruited into positions and individuals leave positions, but for the most part the positions remain.

But there is also agency. As agents, individuals can make or create a role by making behavioral choices and decisions and engaging in negotiation and compromise as well as conflict. Research finds that making roles and accumulating role identities fosters greater psychological well-being (Thoits, 2001). Furthermore, Thoits finds that the reverse is also true: greater psychological well-being allows individuals to actively acquire multiple role identities over time, particularly voluntary role identities such as neighbor and churchgoer. When individuals feel good about themselves they take on more identities. In general, therefore, examining the nature of interaction between identities means addressing both social structure and agency. We must go back and forth and understand how social structure is the accomplishment of actors, but also how actors always act within the social structure they create.

McCall and Simmons (1978, p. 65) define a role identity as “the character and the role that an individual devises for himself as an occupant of a particular social position.” They indicate that a role identity has a “conventional” dimension and an “idiosyncratic” dimension. The former is the role of role identity that relates to the expectations tied to social positions while the identity of role identity relates to the unique interpretations individuals bring to their roles. McCall and Simmons point out that the proportion of conventional versus idiosyncratic behavior tied to role identities varies across people and across identities for any one person.

B. Psychological Approach

Although the self is distinct from identity, the literature of self-psychology can offer some insight into how identity is maintained (Cote & Levin 2002, p. 24). From the vantage point of self-psychology, there are two areas of interest: the processes by which a self is formed- the "I"- and the actual content of the schemata which compose the self-concept -the "Me". In the latter field, theorists have shown interest in relating the self-concept to self-esteem, the differences between complex and simple ways of organizing self-knowledge, and the links between those organizing principles and the processing of information (Cote & Levin 2002).

A psychological identity correlates to three major divisions of self-image , self-esteem, and individuality and is defined as a person's conception and expression of their individuality or group affiliations such as national identity and cultural identity.

Self-image is the mental picture, generally of a kind that is quite resilient to any alteration, that portrays not only facet that are theoretically available to objective investigation by others, but also items that have been learned by that person about himself , either from personal experiences or by internalizing the judgments of others. Evading the abstruseness, self image is the answer to this question - "What do you believe people think about you?" Psychologically speaking, self-esteem reflects a person's overall evaluation or appraisal of his or her own worth. Self-esteem encompasses beliefs and emotions such as triumph, despair, pride and shame.

Erik Erikson's theory of psychosocial development is one of the best-known theories of personality in psychology. Erikson believed that personality or the ego identity can be charted in terms of a series of stages in which identity is formed in response to increasingly sophisticated challenges. On some readings of Erikson, the development of a strong ego identity, along with the proper integration into a stable society and culture, lead to a stronger sense of identity in general. Accordingly, a deficiency in either of these factors may increase the chance of an identity crisis or confusion (Cote & Levin 2002, p. 22).

Each stage in Erikson's theory is concerned with becoming competent in an area of life. He, too, put emphasis on cultural influences and describes the impact of social experience across the whole lifespan. Erikson believed that people face eight major crises, which he labeled psychosocial stages, during the course of their life. Each crisis emerges at a distinct time dictated by biological maturation and the social demands that people experience at particular points in life. Each crisis must be resolved successfully to prepare for a satisfactory resolution of the next life crisis. Erikson believed people experience a conflict that serves as a turning point in development. In Erikson's view, these conflicts are centered on either developing a psychological quality or failing to develop that quality. During these times, the potential for personal growth is high, but so is the potential for failure.

Psychosocial Stage 1 - Trust vs. Mistrust: between Birth and One Year of Age

The development of trust is based on the dependability and quality of the caregivers. If a trust is successfully developed, the person will feel safe and secure in the world. Failure to develop trust will result in fear and a belief that the world is inconsistent and unpredictable.

Psychosocial Stage 2 - Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt: During Early Childhood

Erikson believe that learning to control one's body functions leads to a feeling of control and a sense of independence. He who successfully completes this stage feels secure and confident, while he who does not is left with a sense of inadequacy and self-doubt.

Here there exists the opportunity to build self-esteem and autonomy as the person gains more control over his body, acquires new skills, and learns right from wrong. And one of the skills during the "Terrible Two's" is our ability to use the powerful word "NO!" It is also during this stage, however, that one can be very vulnerable. The failure is marked by feeling great shame and doubt of one's capabilities and suffering low self-esteem as a result.

Psychosocial Stage 3 - Initiative vs. Guilt: During the Preschool Years

One starts to assert his power and control over the world through directing play and other social interactions. The successful person at this stage feels able to lead others. Those who fail to acquire these skills are left with a sense of guilt, self-doubt and lack of initiative.

Psychosocial Stage 4 - Industry vs. Inferiority: the Early School Years from Approximately Age 6 to 12

Through social interactions, a sense of pride in accomplishments is developed. During this stage, often called the Latency, the person is capable of learning, creating and accomplishing numerous new skills and knowledge, thus developing a sense of industry. This is also a very social stage of development and if unresolved feelings of inadequacy and inferiority is experienced among peers, serious problems in terms of competence and self-esteem are the result.

Psychosocial Stage 5 - Identity vs. Confusion: During Adolescence

Exploring independence and developing a sense of self. He who receives proper encouragement and reinforcement through personal exploration will emerge from this stage with a strong sense of self and a feeling of independence and control. He who remains unsure of their beliefs and desires will feel insecure and confused about himself and the future.

Psychosocial Stage 6 - Intimacy vs. Isolation: the Period of Early Adulthood: When People are Exploring Personal Relationships

Erikson believed it was vital that people develop close, committed relationships with other people. Those who are successful at this step will develop relationships that are committed and secure. A strong sense of personal identity is important to develop intimate relationships. Those with a poor sense of self tend to have less committed relationships and are more likely to suffer emotional isolation, loneliness, and depression.

Psychosocial Stage 7 - Generativity vs. Stagnation: During Adulthood

To build his life, a person focuses on his career and family. He who is successful during this phase will feel that he is contributing to the world by being active in his home and community. He who fails to attain this skill will feel unproductive and uninvolved in the world. In this phase strength comes through care of others and production of something that contributes to the betterment of society, which Erikson calls generativity, so in this stage one often fears inactivity and meaninglessness. Failure in this stage leads one to become self-absorbed and stagnate.

Psychosocial Stage 8 - Integrity vs. Despair: During Old Age

Reflecting back on life is the characteristic of this stage. He who is unsuccessful during this phase will feel that his life has been wasted and will experience many regrets. The individual will be left with feelings of bitterness and despair. He who feels proud of his accomplishments will feel a sense of integrity. Successfully

completing this phase means looking back with few regrets and a general feeling of satisfaction. Such an individual will attain wisdom so that when confronting death he accepts it as the completion of life.

According to Erick Erikson, as mentioned before, people face eight major crises, which he labeled psychosocial stages, during the course of their lives. Each crisis emerges at a distinct time dictated by biological maturation and the social demands that people experience at particular points in life. Each crisis must be resolved successfully to prepare for a satisfactory resolution of the next life crisis. Erikson believed people experience a conflict that serves as a turning point in development. In Erikson's view, these conflicts are centered on either developing a psychological quality or failing to develop that quality. During these times, the potential for personal growth is high, but so is the potential for failure.

Before going through the Erikson an reading of our novel trilogy, a brief explanation of the term "complex" seems necessary. Jung described a "complex" as a 'node' in the unconscious it may be imagined as a knot of unconscious feelings and beliefs, detectable indirectly, through behavior that is puzzling or hard to account for. To explain more, complexes protrude from the fixations of human beings. Fixation is the state in which an individual becomes obsessed with an attachment to another person, being or object. Sigmund Freud theorized that some humans may develop psychological fixation due to: a lack of proper gratification during one of the psychosexual stages of development, or receiving a strong impression from one of these stages, in which case the person's personality would reflect that stage throughout adult life.

Simply put, fixation comes from an unsatisfactory stage of psychological development. If a person does not get satisfaction in one of his/her stage of development, she/he would undergo a fixation.

American Self-Identification

America's identity is a highly contested subject. To discuss about American self-identification, it seems necessary to take part in the contest to assume a clear-cut definition of identity for America so that based on our formulated definition we can go through how this identity represents America and makes it known worldwide.

To formulate a definition many aspects must be taken into consideration. Definitions of identity vary according to time and space as the concept of self changes owing to the fact that self is a dynamic entity; hence we will have different identities as many time as self gets a new meaning. Yet, as our definition is to serve our purpose of demonstrating how America adopts self-identification as a strategy for her maintenance, our definition is important to examine how these different identities change over time and come to shape a new self-concept.

The tensions of historical and cultural belonging and relations to colonialism, nationalism and racism in their diverse forms, in general, help in assuming how America looks at her self -what self-concept she takes for her self- and the way she identifies -recognizes and associates- her self through foreign relations and policies to relate her self and contribute to the rest of the world, or the 'other'- enable us to imagine what identity America represents at certain eras. Identity, indeed, is related to self and identification is the representation. Among the many ways of representations or self-identifications, war is one. Wars have always played a significant role in the definition, representation and negotiation of identity.

To support this claim that war is a means of identification for a country, Ringmar's idea can be brought into consideration as he says in order to find out whether a particular constitutive story is a valid description of us, it must first be tested in interaction with others (Ringmar, 1996, p. 80). And again, since all stories require audiences, it follows that we cannot formulate notions of interests in isolation from other people - we simply cannot want things alone (Ringmar, 1996, p. 79). Leaving stories about actions behind and focusing on constitutive stories (where actions still play a crucial part), Ringmar goes further into how stories are confirmed. Confirmation cannot be given by just anybody, but only by those others who the self recognizes and respects as being of a kind to itself. This set of others are referred to as 'circles of recognition'.

An instance which is worthy of particular theoretical attention is of course the one where others deny recognition to the self's constitutive stories. In this case, the storied self has three options: to accept stories told about it by others, to abandon the stories which are not recognized in favor of others or to stand by the original story and to try to convince the audiences that it in fact does apply. Thus while the first two options mean that we accept the definitions forced upon us by others, the third option means that we force our own definition upon someone else (Ringmar, 1996, pp. 82 & 185). And typically, the way to do this is to act.

Therefore, according to Ringmar, when somebody defines himself to others with the hope to get confirmation for his proposed identity, he can act in three ways if he meets recognition denial by them: 1. To accept other's

definition for himself, 2. To define himself in other ways that others would accept him, or 3. He tries to convince others, one of the possibilities is to enter a war. Going to war in order to be recognized is quite convincing.

David Campbell's book *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity* argues that "For a state to end its practices of representation would be to expose its lack of pre-discursive foundations; stasis would be death" (Campbell, 1992, p. 11). Due to the role played by immigration in its genesis, the United States is presented as the imagined community par excellence, and this is seen as an additional factor which increases its need of having its representational practices recognized and confirmed. Hence, wars for America have been struggles related to the production and reproduction of identity, and can be understood as global in scope but national in design.

America's history, indeed, provides us with many examples of America's efforts to be recognized of its identity by others by means of wars. To continue our discussion, the definition of America's identity or America's identification is given in three phases of America's history when America involved in three historical war events of Civil War, World War I and World War II. In other words, the qualitative transformation of America's identity can be traced through the study of our war trilogy. Prior to define America's self-identification in each of the three wars it must be mentioned that identity formation can be studied in two main theoretical frameworks: primordial versus situational. The primordial or the essentialist perspective argues that there is an innate sense of identity, something that people are born with, is instinctive and natural, and is difficult if not impossible to change. On the other hand, the situational perspective or the constructionist or the instrumentalist states that identities are socially defined phenomena. That is, the meaning and boundaries of identity are constantly being renegotiated, revised, and redefined, depending on specific situations and set of circumstances that each individual or group encounters.

In our endeavor to define America's self-identification the situational perspective of America's identity is adopted for the simple reason that the evolution of America is to be traced in three phases marked by three important historical war events.

America's Self-Identification in Civil War

The Civil War was America's defining conflict, the war that made the nation and the fulcrum for the development of American national identity in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Lincoln had to face one of the most complex challenges in the history of the country: the collapse of a world based on slavery and the emergence of another world in which a truly united United States could undergo dramatic and sustained development to become the most powerful country on the planet. At the time, it was not only the unity of the states and territories that was at stake, but also the principles on which the United States had been established. The clash of two worlds and two visions gave rise to the War of Secession, or Civil War, with the Union states of the North pitted the Confederate states of the South.

Abraham Lincoln's words cut to the marrow, beginning with an allusion to Jesus from the gospel of Mark: "A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe this government cannot endure, permanently half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved-I do not expect the house to fall-but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing, or all the other." How had the house been divided during five years when Democrats promised to end the strife over slavery? Timber did not turn into a house on its own, premised Lincoln. The frames were cut and joined by craftsmen named Stephen, Franklin, Roger, and James (Douglas, Pierce, Taney, Buchanan). Their carpentry fitted so well that it was impossible to suppose they worked without a plan. If the conspiracy was not checked, Lincoln warned, "We shall lie down pleasantly dreaming that the people of Missouri are on the verge of making their State free; and we shall awake to the reality, instead, that the Supreme Court has made Illinois a slave State."

Therefore, history placed him at a crossroads in which he had to go to war to save the nation. He knew that slavery would be curtailed and eventually suppressed only if the Union held together and, conversely, that the foundations of the Union would be undermined if slavery continued. While practically all Northerners supported the Union, Southerners were split between those loyal to the entire United States called "unionists" and those loyal primarily to the southern region and then the Confederacy (p. 924). C. Vann Woodward said of the latter group:

"A great slave society...had grown up and miraculously flourished in the heart of a thoroughly bourgeois and partly puritanical republic. It had renounced its bourgeois origins and elaborated and painfully rationalized its

institutional, legal, metaphysical, and religious defenses...When the crisis came it chose to fight. It proved to be the death struggle of a society, which went down in ruins" (p. 281).

Civil War also known as the War Between the States ended in the deaths of a half a million Americans, but also made possible the emancipation of three million black slaves. Else, it helped the nation in getting a national consciousness that was needed since American Revolution in 1776. The American Revolution initiated a series of social, political, and intellectual transformations in early American society and government; Civil War brought the second wave of consciousness for the Americans. The origins of America's national identity could only be abstract and ideological which could neither be derived from the diverse languages, religions, and nationalities of the settlers in the thirteen colonies nor defined in contrast to the political opponents but cultural ancestors in Britain. Thus, Philip Gleason rightly states that "the United States defined itself as a nation by commitment to the principles of liberty, equality, and government on the basis of consent, and the nationality of its people derived from their identification with those principles."

American Revolution gave a dependant identity to America and the Civil War was a struggle for the country to come to terms with its internal disintegration and redefining the principles of their consent. If American Revolution is the event in which America found a self for itself and a preliminary national consciousness, the Civil War as an attempt to create balance in the country gave it a second level of consciousness and by causing an upheaval of traditional social hierarchy gave birth to the ethic that has formed a core of political values in the United States.

America's Self-Identification in World War I

World War I, also known as the Great War and the War to End All Wars, involved most of the world's great powers, assembled in two opposing alliances: the Allies and the Central Powers.

The United States was unprepared for its entrance into the First World War and originally pursued a policy of isolationism, avoiding conflict while trying to broker a peace. When the European continent erupted in conflict in 1914, U.S. President Woodrow Wilson vowed, "America is too proud to fight" and demanded an end to attacks on passenger ships and declared America's neutrality. He proposed an even-handed approach towards all the belligerents that was to be maintained in both "thought and deed." The President steadfastly maintained his hope of a peaceful solution to the conflict despite the protestations of those (including former president Roosevelt) convinced that events in Europe would inevitably draw America into the war. In 1916, Wilson campaigned for reelection on a peace platform with the slogan "He kept us out of war."

Events in Europe altered Wilson's outlook. Germany's campaign of unrestricted submarine warfare, the loss of American lives on the high seas, the sinking of the *Lusitania* and other ships and the prospect that Germany would not change her policies compelled a reluctant Wilson to ask Congress for a declaration of war in April 1917. Things were not going well for the Allies at the time.

It was one of the largest wars in history and a large number of people were mobilized in it. No other war had changed the map of Europe so dramatically-four empires disappeared: the German, Austro-Hungarian, Ottoman and the Russian. By the war's end, four major imperial powers the German, Russian, Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires had been militarily and politically defeated, and the last two ceased to exist.

For America, the American nationalism spawned by the war. The United States was, in fact, never formally a member of the Allies but became a self-styled "Associated Power". The Allies looked to America for salvation with the expectation that the industrial strength of the United States would replenish the supply of war material necessary for victory. In most cases these expectations were unrealistic. For example, the US built no more than 800 airplanes prior to 1917, and yet the French premier called on the US to immediately produce 2,000 airplanes per month. Additionally, the Allies expected the United States to provide an unlimited supply of manpower they could absorb into their beleaguered divisions. America did not fulfill their wish.

America was led to a collective trauma shared by many from all participating countries. The optimism of *la belle époque* was destroyed and those who fought in the war were referred to as the Lost Generation.

America's Self-Identification in World War II

World War II was a global military conflict lasting from 1939 to 1945 which involved most of the world's nations, including all of the great powers, organized into two opposing military alliances: the Allies and the Axis. It was the most widespread war in history, with more than 100 million military personnel mobilized. In a state of "total war", the major participants placed their entire economic, industrial, and scientific capabilities at

the service of the war effort, erasing the distinction between civilian and military resources. Marked by significant action against civilians, including the Holocaust and the only use of nuclear weapons in warfare, it was the deadliest conflict in human history.

America like many other countries did not initially involve itself and joined the war later in response to events such as the German invasion of the Soviet Union and the Japanese attacks on the U.S. Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor. Therefore, on December 7th 1941, the United States government decided to enter the war on the side of the Allies. This support can be found in a comment made by William Fuller in the director's minutes from a meeting on 13 March 1942. The statement reads: We can't all be Marines at Wake Island. We can't all be building bombing planes and tanks or serve in the Red Cross, but all of us at Curtis are 'Marines in America's Cause' today, helping make this a stronger, braver nation and helping repel fear, disunity, discontent and the other enemies of national welfare.

The war ended with the total victory of the Allies over Germany and Japan in 1945. World War II left the political alignment and social structure of the world significantly changed. While the United Nations was established to foster international cooperation and prevent future conflicts, the Soviet Union and the United States emerged as rival superpowers, setting the stage for the Cold War, which lasted for the next forty-six years.

Different images of America were promoted nationally and globally. The emphasis was less on selflessness than on public spiritedness and more on promoting America as a unique and superior country that must save the rest of the world from tyranny. 'American Nationalist Globalism' perhaps best describes these images, a term coined by Fousek (1994) to highlight the importance of the global scale for articulating nationhood in the later stages of World War II. American Nationalist Globalism highlights the belief that American national values were globally oriented, and implies a certain national arrogance.

In short, national greatness and global supremacy are seen to go hand in hand for Americans. American global pre-eminence owes to the role of aviation. During the Second World War, global imagery was effectively exploited by the aviation industry. It was in World War II that the real test of air power was seen. Airplanes and aviation had long been associated with progress but, during the war, that technological power of flight would be harnessed by nations to fight their campaigns on a global stage, and air power thus became associated with national achievement and global supremacy. A connection between aviation (especially aviators) and godliness had been made, so the plane was seen alongside the angels and the gods. The strong links between the airplane and national status, the connection between aviation and national supremacy can be understood from Paris's (1995) argument that 'aeronautical technology and achievement increasingly became a channel through which national aggrandizement could be promoted'. Air supremacy, therefore, brought the promise of global supremacy for America and paved the way for America's imperialist domination of the world and America's international reputation as a global leader.

Indeed, World War II had strengthened the original ideological perception of America's national identity. America by behaving as a "nation above nations" and acting in its own interest imposed its hegemony on the rest of the world. It must not be ignored that this ranking is not only an outcome of the World War II. In fact, American exceptionalism that views America qualitatively superior than other developed nations because of its national credo, historical evolution, or distinctive political and religious institutions, has been existed historically far before the outbreak of World War II.

American exceptionalism, the term was first used with respect to the United States by Alexis de Tocqueville, conveying that the American idea of "nationality" was "different, based less on common history or ethnicity than on common beliefs, is close to the idea of "Manifest Destiny", a term used by Jacksonian Democrats in the 1840s to promote the annexation of much of what is now the Western United States. A vast complex of ideas, policies, and actions is comprehended under the phrase "Manifest Destiny."

The Ideological Wings of the Eagle

(a) "Manifest Destiny"

"Manifest Destiny" saw itself as extending liberty and democracy from sea to shining sea across the American continent, from the original thirteen colonies in the East, to the Pacific coast in the West. Some then suggested that this process should not stop at the coastline but continue beyond, establishing liberty wherever people lived under governments that denied democratic rights. The notion that the founding of the United States represented a break with history itself, that its citizens were making a new beginning and a new society, stands behind American exceptionalism that we touched it in the last lines of the previous section. Founded on the principles of

freedom, human rights, and rights of the people to govern themselves, America would also avoid the mistakes of other nations. Thus, America would enjoy a special status among the nations of the world; America would be a "city upon a hill" or a "beacon to the world," defending and promoting democracy and liberty, exercising only benevolent power in the world. Many linked this with belief in a divine mission or destiny; the U.S. would be tied to God's steady path". America would not "follow Europe into a historical future" in which qualitative change would take place. Rather, American progress would be a quantitative multiplication and elaboration of its founding principles.

'Destiny' is one of the main threads that run through American history, reinforcing the alternating pattern of engagement and withdrawal that has characterized America's foreign relations. The idea of "destiny" has played an important part in shaping America's attitude both toward itself and toward the rest of the world, but the idea has itself been modified over the years by attaching to it various secondary meanings related to issues of religion, money, patriotism, morality and race.

The United States was considered as preordained by God to expand throughout North America and exercise hegemony over its neighbors, to be "the city upon the hill," the shining example which would inspire all mankind. Used in this sense, 'destiny' encouraged men to migrate westward, to conquer the frontier wilderness and prepare a new home for a new race of men. Thus continental expansion was the "manifest destiny" of the American people and was given its popular justification in a slogan used by Jacksonians: "Extending the area of freedom." But like all abstractions, 'destiny' has lent itself to what have proved to be on examination less noble constructions. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century the word 'destiny' gave Americans an image of themselves as God's chosen people divinely commissioned to bring to backward nations of the world the twin gifts of Anglo-Saxon civilization and Protestant Christianity. Sufficiently strong and confident to seek leadership in world's affairs, Americans joined their Anglo-Saxon cousins across the sea in taking up what Rudyard Kipling in his poem "The White Man's Burden", which was subtitled "The United States and the Philippine Islands", called "the white man's burden."

What "Manifest Destiny" contributes to the present study is how it was interpreted and redefined in the three wars. Abraham Lincoln, Woodrow Wilson and Franklin Delano Roosevelt enjoying their presidential terms coincidental with the outbreak of the wars, were the spokesmen of America's policy and diplomacy. As "Manifest Destiny" has been given the might to work out of the geographical boundaries, it could have justified America's contribution to wars; so good a wax it was in their fists to be shaped as they like to best serve their political and diplomatic purposes.

It is true that Lincoln belonged to the Whig party, the Conservatives, and rejected the doctrine of "Manifest Destiny" which promoted Jacksonian democracy in expanding the lands available to yeomen farmers and slave plantation owners; instead, he said that America's future was in modernization, urbanization and industrialization. He was a leading Whig who spoke out against "manifest Destiny," especially when it entangled the U.S. in a war with Mexico in 1846.

Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, in which he interpreted the Civil War as a struggle to determine if any nation with democratic ideals could survive, has been called by historian Robert Johannsen "the most enduring statement of America's 'Manifest Destiny' and mission".

Based on this quotation it can be concluded that the Civil War was considered as a laboratory that would test the correctness of the mission and challenge the maintenance of "Manifest Destiny." The concept that was used by Democrats in the 1840s to justify the war with Mexico was denounced by Whigs, and fell into disuse after the mid 1850s as territorial expansion ceased to be promoted as being a part of America's destiny.

Times had changed and in the pre-World War I years the ideologies behind "Manifest Destiny" contained elements of Darwinism and beliefs in social and climatic determinism. Most people gladly embraced the concept that they belonged to a superior culture and race, and that Providence or genetics had preordained the people of the United States for greatness. North Americans felt they had "the white's man burden" in the Americas and it was their responsibility to lead the inferior races in the south to better lives. Altered ideas of "Manifest Destiny," combined with other forces of the time, continued to determine international relations through the twentieth century. In the twentieth century, the rhetoric of national "self-determination" pervaded American discussions of foreign affairs. From Thomas Jefferson to Woodrow Wilson, the United States defined itself in opposition to the imperialism of other empires. In particular, the years after the Civil War show abundant evidence of Americans expanding their economic, political, military, and cultural control over foreign societies. The post-1865 period is

distinguished from previous decades, when the young Republic was both struggling for its survival and expanding over contiguous territory that it rapidly incorporated into the constitutional structures of the United States.

President Wilson continued the policy of interventionism in the Americas, and attempted to redefine both "Manifest Destiny" and America's "mission" on a broader, worldwide scale. Contrary to Lincoln, he believed in an American mission to promote and defend democracy throughout the world, therefore, "Manifest Destiny" continued to have an influence on American political ideology. Wilson led the United States into World War I with the argument that "The world must be made safe for democracy." In his 1920 message to Congress after the war, Wilson stated:

"...I think we all realize that the day has come when Democracy is being put upon its final test. The Old World is just now suffering from a wanton rejection of the principle of democracy and a substitution of the principle of autocracy as asserted in the name, but without the authority and sanction, of the multitude. This is the time of all others when Democracy should prove its purity and its spiritual power to prevail. It is surely the manifest destiny of the United States to lead in the attempt to make this spirit prevail" (p. 471).

Wilson's version of "Manifest Destiny" was a rejection of expansionism and an endorsement of self-determination, emphasizing that the United States had a mission to be a world leader for the cause of democracy.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Faced with the Great Depression and World War II guided America through its greatest domestic crisis, with the exception of the Civil War, and its greatest foreign crisis believing these miseries to be destiny as he said: "This generation of Americans has a rendezvous with destiny." (Quotations, Biography (1882-1945)) His presidency -which spanned twelve years- was unparalleled, not only in length but in scope. His position is that of Wilson in World War I that America has a mission to be a world leader for the cause of democracy since he put in his "Quarantine the Aggressors" speech that "the epidemic of world lawlessness is spreading" (1937) and America's democracy can be a solution to this lawlessness.

Although he comforted Americans that America will stay outside of the war "I shall say it again and again and again. Your boys are not going to be sent into any foreign wars", but the president believed that the country should help the nations that were fighting fascism and tyranny. Two months later, he made his "arsenal of democracy" speech in a radio talk Roosevelt stated that: "We must be the great arsenal of democracy" (Campaign Speech, Boston, Oct. 30, 1940) After the attack on Pearl Harbor and the German declaration of war on the U.S., American boys were in the war. "We are now in this war. We are all in it, all the way." (Message to the Nation, Dec. 9, 1941)

This speech marked the beginning of the end of U.S. neutrality in World War II. The president called upon Americans to support Great Britain with "the same resolution, the same sense of urgency, the same spirit of patriotism and sacrifice as we would show were we at war." A week later, he recommended to Congress a lend-lease act that would give him the authority to send war materials to those nations fighting fascism. The talk recalls Woodrow Wilson's appeal to Congress in 1917 to make the world safe for democracy.

(a) "American Dream"

The "American Dream," sometimes in the phrase "Chasing the American Dream," is a national ethos of the United States in which freedom includes a promise of prosperity and success. In the "American Dream," citizens of every rank feel that they can achieve a "better, richer, and happier life." (Cullen, 2004, p. 6) The idea of the "American Dream" is rooted in the second sentence of the Declaration of Independence which states that "all men are created equal" and that they are "endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights" including "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." (Kamp, 2009)

The meaning of the "American Dream" has changed over the course of history. There is no particular or single definition of the "American Dream." How does one achieve the "American Dream"? The answer undoubtedly depends upon one's definition of the Dream, and there are many from which to choose. John Winthrop envisioned a religious paradise in a "City upon a Hill." Martin Luther King, Jr. dreamed of racial equality. Both men yearned for what they perceived as perfection. Scholars have recognized widely varying conceptions of these quests for American excellence. Harold Bloom in the introduction he gave to the *American Dream* wrote:

“As a theoretician of the relation between the matter and the rhetoric of high literature, I tend to define metaphor as a figure of desire rather than a figure of knowledge. We welcome literary metaphor because it enables fictions to persuade us of beautiful untrue things, as Oscar Wilde phrased it” (Hobby, 2009).

American Dream is a metaphor that Americans live with. This national dream has been always upheld in the history of America though American history has been sometimes edged by the ill omens of financial and economic disaster both at home and abroad. Bloom asserts that like so many potent social myths, the American Dream is devoid of clear meanings, whether in journalistic accounts or in academic analyses. “The major American writers who have engaged the dream-Emerson, Whitman, Thoreau, Mark Twain, Henry James, Willa Cather, Robert Frost, Wallace Stevens, Ernest Hemingway, Scott Fitzgerald, Hart Crane-have been aware of this haziness and of attendant ironies. And yet they have affirmed, however ambivalently, that it must be possible to have a nation in which all of us are free to develop our singularities into health, prosperity, and some measure of happiness in self-development and personal achievement.”(xv)

The Other Side of the American Dream is called by Bloom the ‘American Nightmare,’ “from Poe, Hawthorne, and Melville through T.S. Eliot and Faulkner onto our varied contemporaries such as Cormac McCarthy, Thomas Pynchon and Philip Roth. Between Faulkner and these came Nathanael West, Flannery O’Connor, and Ralph Ellison. Dreamers of nightmare realities and unrealities, these superb writers are not altogether in Emerson’s opposing camp, the Party of Memory because, except for Poe, Eliot and O’Connor, they shared the American freedom from dogma. But they dwelled on our addiction to violence, endemic from Moby-Dick’s Captain Ahab through Blood Meridian’s Judge Holden, and on our constant involuntary parodying of hopes for a more humane life.” (xvi)

Bloom points to the war and the financial panic and evaluates the position “American Dream” holds in the current situation:

“What are we to believe about our nature and destiny in the sea of history that has engulfed so many other nations? We make terrible blunders, of which the Iraqi War and our current financial panic are merely the most recent, and only rarely can they be mitigated. Our American Dream always is likelier to bring forth another Jay Gatsby than a reborn Huck Finn. Our innocence is difficult to distinguish from ignorance, a problematical theme throughout the novels and stories of Henry James, our strongest novelist even as Walt Whitman remains our more-than-major poet. What Whitman discerned (in Emerson’s wake) was the American Adam, unfallen and dazzling as the sun. ... A country without a monarch and a hereditary nobility must find its heroes in the American Presidency, an absurd ground for such a search ever since the murder of Abraham Lincoln in 1865, almost a century and a half ago. Emerson’s Party of Hope trusts for a reversal, in the name of the American Dream” (xvi).

Conclusion

America is taken as an entity that has gradually formed an identity for her self. In this sense, the history of America was not read as the record of the Americans’ actions that had left a trait in the history of the nation, but as a biography of the evolution of America as a dynamic entity. If ‘self’ is recognized in juxtaposition with ‘other’ and in its interaction with society, America’s self appeared in her relation with other countries and in their global relations. The few pages limit of this article could not respond to review the history of America with the new lens; therefore, the three wars of Civil War, World War I, and World War II were taken as three landmarks in the history of America’s psychological growth. Each of the selected wars were depicted as the events that sponsored for America’s self-identification in the sense that America was taken as a deciding self that to maintain her self and her identity, she defined and redefined her self.

The answer to the first question is that in Civil War America came to know her self by looking inward to solve issues like industrialization and slavery. This knowing about her self and checking the values she defined for her self during Revolution was the preliminary stage of American self-identification since self-recognition is prior to other-recognition. The identity America formed for her self in World War I was that of a meddling country that could decide which side would be the winner of the war; America took side with the Allies and eventually the Allies won. In World War II American self-identification stressed on her supremacy not only on earth but also in the air owing to the progress America had made in aviation. In short, America evolved throughout her history of wars: firstly by achieving a balance in her self-concept in the Civil War, secondly by increasing awareness of American nationalism by stepping into World War I as a self-styled associated power, and thirdly by promoting a national and global image, unique and superior to other nations and able to save the rest of the world. Psychologically, America evolved up to the fifth stage in Civil War, to the sixth stage in World

War I and got her maturity in World War II. American identity formation was closely related to the level of psychological growth she had achieved. The psychological growth of protagonists were shown as parallel to America's psychological development. Henry achieved a balance in his self-concept as well as the opportunity to build self-esteem. Gatsby unsure of his beliefs and desires felt insecure and was confused about himself and the future, whereas Nick got identity and could get to the 6th stage. The two characters of Gatsby and Nick were complementary in the novel if the novel had to represent America's psychological evolution. Yossarian proud of his accomplishments, with a general feeling of satisfaction, felt the sense of integrity which is the achievement of the 8th or the last stage of Erikson's paradigm.

As an attempt to answer the second question, the two ideologies of "Manifest Destiny" and "American Dream" -the two flexible ideologies that sponsor the changing essence of American self-identification over time and give a situational perspective to it- were explored of their impact on America's defining of her self. They were introduced as enjoying the capacity to be framed in different ways at different times to serve different ends. Manipulation –rejection or adoption- of these ideologies by the three presidents, Lincoln, Wilson, and Roosevelt, who took their oath of office coincidental with the three wars of Civil War, World War I, and World War II and brought changes to American self-identification was targeted in this study to see that Lincoln's rejection of "Manifest Destiny" invited Americans to look inward to the domestic affairs rather than expanding the borders and conquering new places. Issues like industrialization and slavery had to be solved and if America had a claim to extend democracy Lincoln put the ideals of democracy in the crucible of the Civil War. Wilson and Roosevelt went for "Manifest Destiny" and furthered its causes by entering America in the World War I and II, believing that America can promote the practice of democracy to the whole world. The transformation in interpreting "American Dream" was also discussed as it upheld the ideals of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness during the Revolution, lost its effect in Civil War, was observed as a mission of Americans to save the world in World War I and helped America identify her self as a broker of peace. American Dream, which was preserved of its essence during World War I, was, as well, preserved to pursue American excellence in World War II.

Since World War II, "Manifest Destiny" and "American Dream" have strategically undergone many more definitions and interpretations to serve America's maintenance as a world power and the eagle is still flying high, the eyes of the world upon her.

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مقاله نویسی علوم انسانی



اصول تنظیم قراردادها



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