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A HISTORY OF THE SELF-CONTRADICTORY NATIONALISM OF THE U.S.

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Abstract: This paper constructs a genealogy of American nationalism that follows major historical events and periods, from the genesis of nationalism since the country's early state-building to the War on Terror in response to September 11th attacks in 2001. It argues that as an overarching, singular and generic term, American nationalism is paradoxical since it is a configuration of contradictory forces striving for equality and supremacy, unity and division. By organizing the discussion chronologically, the paper emphasizes how nationalism has been shaped by historical contexts. Through a critical, extensive review of relevant historiographies and scholarly research, it identifies contradictory forces that have emerged and persisted in the history of American nationalism, including civic-political nationalism and various forms of ethnic nationalism. The lens of self-contradictory nationalism contributes to nuanced understanding of American nationalism as a discourse for power struggle, meaning, and identity.

Keywords: nationalism, discourse, self-contradictory, history, American studies

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CHỦ NGHĨA DÂN TỘC TỰ MÂU THUẪN CỦA HOA KỲ

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Khoa Ngôn ngữ và Văn hóa các nước nói tiếng Anh, Trường Đại học Ngoại ngữ, Đại học Quốc gia Hà Nội, Số 2 Phạm Văn Đồng, Cầu Giấy, Hà Nội, Việt Nam

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Tóm tắt: Bài viết này xây dựng một phả hệ của chủ nghĩa dân tộc Hoa Kỳ theo các sự kiện và thời kỳ lịch sử quan trọng, từ khởi nguồn của chủ nghĩa dân tộc thời kỳ xây dựng nhà nước đầu tiên của đất nước đến "Cuộc chiến chống khủng bố" nhằm đáp trả các cuộc tấn công ngày 11 tháng 9 năm 2001. Chúng tôi lập luận rằng nếu xét chủ nghĩa dân tộc Hoa Kỳ như một hiện tượng bao quát và đơn nhất, nó là một cấu hình của những lực mâu thuẫn, cố gắng đạt được sự bình đẳng cũng như thượng đẳng, sự thống nhất cũng như chia rẽ. Cấu trúc theo trục thời gian của bài viết làm nổi bật những bối cảnh khác nhau của chủ nghĩa dân tộc Hoa Kỳ. Thông qua việc xem xét các cách viết sử và nghiên cứu học thuật liên quan, bài viết xác định những lực mâu thuẫn đã xuất hiện và tồn tại trong lịch sử của chủ nghĩa dân tộc Hoa Kỳ, bao gồm chủ nghĩa dân tộc chính trị và các hình thức khác nhau của chủ nghĩa dân tộc sắc tộc. Lăng kính của chủ nghĩa dân tộc tự mâu thuẫn góp phần tạo dựng sự hiểu biết tinh tế và sâu sắc hơn về chủ nghĩa dân tộc Hoa Kỳ, một diễn ngôn cho đấu tranh quyền lực, tạo nghĩa và xây dựng bản sắc.

Từ khóa: chủ nghĩa dân tộc, diễn ngôn, tự mâu thuẫn, lịch sử, Hoa Kỳ học

1. Introduction

Observing current events in the U.S., it appears that the so-called "American identity" is in crisis. Trump's rise and continuing popularity have brought along a divisive nationalism, weakening both American democratic ideals and the country's globalist agenda. Headlines like "Is the U.S. on the brink of civil war?" and "Could the United States be headed for a national divorce?" are unsurprising. Stokes (2024) remarks that the U.S. is experiencing its deepest ideological and political divisions since the 1850s—the period before the Civil War— with these divides evident in a wide range of contentious social issues, extending beyond electoral outcomes. Harris' candidacy carries hope, but the divisiveness has certainly not abated yet. We also notice that even before Trump came to power, the prolonged conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq, marked by increasing casualties, financial burdens, and a lack of decisive victories, fostered growing skepticism and war-weariness among Americans. U.S. forces' killing of Osama Bin Laden in 2011 briefly unified the nation in relief, joy, and pride, but this sentiment quickly dissipated. The historic election of the first Black president in the U.S. initially raised hopes for better race relations; however, by 2016, following numerous high-profile incidents of police violence against Black Americans and the resulting protests, public perception of race relations had soured. Moreover, rampant inequality driven by neoliberal policies eroded confidence in the U.S. as a beacon of democracy, paving the way for Trump's "Make America Great Again" and "America First," a form of nationalism that many people would argue un-American.

To characterize American nationalism and its uniqueness, American exceptionalism is usually invoked. Accordingly, American nationalism is unique in that it is characterized by a belief in the supremacy of democratic ideals rather than ideas of ethnic superiority, breaking from Old World nationalism. In line with this characterization, "a dual paradox in the American

psyche" has been identified as follows: "First, although the United States is highly nationalistic, it doesn't see itself as such. Second, despite this nationalistic fervor, U.S. policymakers generally fail to appreciate the power of nationalism abroad" (Pei, 2009, para. 1). These observations are valid; however, the terms of American exceptionalism tend to divert attention from the very fact that ethnic nationalism has been integral to American nationalism. American nationalism is paradoxical in its own composition and difficult to grasp.

Indeed, many nationalisms have emerged in specific contexts during the relatively short history of the U.S. They then persist, not as diversity but as forces that interact with and contradict each other. Contradictions have not impeded but constituted American nationalism. As an overarching, singular and generic term, American nationalism is paradoxical since it is a configuration of contradictory forces striving for equality and supremacy, unity and division. To illuminate the issue, this article constructs a genealogy of American nationalism that follows major historical events and periods, from the genesis of nationalism since the country's early state-building to the War on Terror in response to September 11th terrorist attacks in 2001.

In historiography, the question of periodization is undeniably important. The stop at the end of the War on Terror is justified based on what we perceive as marking a discontinuity in American nationalism. After the War on Terror, American nationalism's uniting force eroded in the face of rampant inequalities and stark divides. This situation culminated in a turning point, Trump's presidency. Trump's "Make America Great Again" and "America First" gathered his supporters together, but has divided the nation to an unprecedented extent as mentioned in the opening paragraph. Such a turning point does not imply that American nationalism ceases to be contradictory or that deep divisions have never been seen in its history. The story of contemporary American nationalism is unfolding, and we would wait till there is a moment possibly signifying another turning point. We believe that despite its limits, this genealogy of American nationalism is helpful to understand contemporary American nationalism.

This paper approaches nationalism as a political issue rather than an economic issue. It occasionally touches upon but does not focus on how markets and industries have shaped American nationalism. An overall chronological structure is adopted, not (only) to show how nationalism has changed through time. Although chronology is often not the structure that makes it easiest to present an argument, it is chosen to highlight that American nationalism has been self-contradictory as it is historically constructed. Our historiography characterizes the self-contradictory nature of American nationalism by demonstrating how it, in specific contexts, has been made of democratic ideals as well as ethnic supremacy, universalist values as well as ethno-culturalism, national interests as well as globalism, benevolence as well as hostility. Through the lens of self-contradictory nationalism, this critical, extensive review of relevant historiographies and scholarly research contributes to nuanced understanding of American nationalism as a discourse for power struggle, meaning, and identity.

2. National Identity for Independence: Ethnocentrism, Democracy, and Universalist Values

The genesis of American nationalism is largely tied to the development of a national identity rooted in the pursuit of independence from the British Empire. This identity was shaped by narratives of European settlers who sought to build a nation untainted by Old World traditions, believed to be divinely favored as they endured hardships. This installed ethnocentrism in American nationalism. Also, the fight for national independence against a monarchical empire, for the first time, successfully summoned democracy and universalist values, which have defined American creedal nationalism.

The fight for independence

The main point of contention in the debate over the nature of American nationalism has been the issue of when an American nation was established (Trautsch, 2015). For a long time, the dominant school of thought on American nationalism has held that it had its origins in the colonial era and that the Declaration of Independence officially declared the formation of the United States of America on July 4, 1776 (Kohn, 1957; Smith, 2000). The widespread belief that an American identity emerged after the first European immigrants arrived on the shores of the New World is still strong today. Thanksgiving, for example, propagandizes the myth of national founding that starts with the Pilgrims who fled to build a new nation uncorrupted by the Old World institutions and were blessed by God so that they survived through the harsh times. By eating American game such as turkeys and cultivating native plants such as squash, pumpkins, beans and corn, the Pilgrims grew out of their European origin and became Americans (Pleck, 1999; Siskind, 1992). The story exemplifies the lasting ethnocentrism and religiosity in American nationalism.

Determining the existence of an American nationalism prior to the American Revolution is important, mainly because scholars feel the need to distinguish between a war of independence and an insurrection, to term secessionists "patriots" or "traitors," and from this point, one can claim whether Americans are "one people" according to the Declaration of Independence and their secession from the British Empire is accordingly legitimate (Trautsch, 2015). Some academics such as Bancroft (1834/2016) and Frothingham (1872) even promote American nationalism by conflating a centuries-long past with the formation of the American nation, claiming that an American national sense of self existed long before the American Revolution and had in fact contributed to it.

In this vein, the U.S. is recognized to have its origins back to the Thirteen Colonies founded by Britain in the 17th and early 18th century. In 1754, the Albany Plan proposed a union of the colonies. Despite its failure, it acted as a point of reference for future discussions about independence. Colonists were gradually "Americanized" due to migration, increased intercolonial trade, communications, and marriages, which were facilitated by the construction of roads, the establishment of a continental postal system, and population growth, and which led to the evolution of common perceptions and attitudes (Adams, 1932). Soon after, the colonies faced common grievances, including taxation without representation, as a result of acts passed by the British Parliament. Americans were generally in agreement that only their own colonial legislatures, not Parliament in London, had the authority to tax them. Parliament was adamant that this not be the case, and no consensus was reached. The Thirteen Colonies grouped together and organized the Continental Congress, which lasted from 1774 to 1789, after the London government punished Boston for the Boston Tea Party. Fighting erupted in 1775, and opinion shifted toward independence in early 1776, inspired in part by Thomas Paine's appeal to American nationalism. In 1776, his pamphlet Common Sense became a runaway best seller. The United States of America was established after Congress unanimously issued a Declaration of Independence declaring the formation of a new government. The Declaration of Independence by Thomas Jefferson is believed to have brought American nationalism to the apex.

The American Revolutionary War was won by the Patriots, who received generous peace terms from Britain in 1783 (Savelle, 1962). The minority of Loyalists (those loyal to King George III) had the option of staying or leaving, but the majority chose to stay and become full American citizens (Waldstreicher, 1995).

Creedal/civic/political nationalism

The Declaration of Independence in 1776 animated a particular force of American nationalism—creedal nationalism, also referred to as civic nationalism or political nationalism in this paper. The second paragraph of the Declaration is widely regarded as the most succinct, direct, and eloquent expression of the American creed. The first axiom of the American creed is natural human equality. While it has been suspected that "all men" in "all men are created equal" was meant to apply to white men only, the wording of the axiom has given rise to the interpretation that people, regardless of color, religion, sex, are born free and autonomous and cannot be governed without their consent. The second axiom of the American creed is that human beings are "endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights." Other Founding era documents say that a person possesses them by birth or by nature and any citizen is entitled to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." Tocqueville's Democracy in America (published in two volumes, the first in 1835 and the second in 1840), a classical work on American politics, emphasizes the rational and universal values of democracy, individual liberty, the rule of law, equality, and racial tolerance. Tocqueville's thesis is that America has been most shaped by the unusually free and egalitarian ideas and material conditions that prevailed at its founding.

Creedal nationalism, thus, engenders the notion that American nationalism is peculiar and exceptional, since "it is not sustained by the hatred of the other; and knows no resentment" (Kohn, 1957, p. 47). According to Kohn (1957) and Greenfeld (1995), American nationalism is not only exceptional because it is founded on universal values, but it is also morally superior because it does not include the negative aspects of nationalism such as exclusions, resentments, and wars. Greenfeld (1995) argues the American nation lacks a history of ethnic exclusion and has been free of outward hostility since it was established on the exclusive basis of civic nationalism principles. Arieli (1984) also claims that as ethnic minorities effectively invoked the principles of the Declaration of Independence to claim full citizenship, American nationalism gradually became more inclusive. He concludes that "the history of the American nation is the history of the successive integration of individuals of ethnic groups and of the group itself into the general body of American society and the American polity" (pp. 858–859).

In this sense, American nationalism is inclusive and is considered to be the "purest" form of the civic-political type. According to these authors, only the American nation is the product of a nationalism founded solely on political values (Greenfeld, 1995; Smith, 2000). The archetypal formulation of this view of American nationalism was offered by Gleason (1981, p. 62) as follows:

> To be or to become an American, a person did not have to be of any particular national, linguistic, religious, or ethnic background. All he had to do was to commit himself to the political ideology centered on the abstract ideals of liberty, equality, and republicanism. Thus the universalist ideological character of American nationality meant that it was open to anyone who willed to become an American. Although the idea that American nationalism is based on universal values is later on criticized as a narrow view, it continues to shape the public discourses about American identity and the process of Americanization as "an experience of willed affiliation."

3. The Early Republic (1783-1861): Sustained National Unity and Growing Ethnoculturalism

The years following the American Revolution were marked by rapid social, political and cultural transformations. The U.S. was still a young nation in 1800, less than 20 years after gaining independence. Political parties were in their infancy, and infrastructure was virtually

non-existent, and a catastrophic war with a world power such as the United Kingdom or France could have completely wiped it out. And yet, less than fifty years later, the U.S. had progressed significantly as a unified independent country, despite contradictions. Politics saw the rise and fall of two-party systems. Westward expansion revealed an imperialist disposition of American nationalism. The period before the Civil War was, however, a turbulent one that divided American people. Ethnoculturalism, a form of nationalism that emphasizes the importance of shared heritage, language, religion, traditions, and other cultural markers in defining membership and belonging within a nation, developed in tension with American creedal nationalism. Regional nationalism emerged from North-South differences. Nativism arose in response to immigration waves. The gradual weakening of national sentiments and the concurrent formation of stronger sectional identities resulted in the secession of 11 Southern states from the U.S. 1860-1861.

Invention of tradition

Notedly, during the early republic, shared experience and the sense of national unity was cultivated with the celebration of public ceremonies. The Fourth of July has succeeded in being "the American Jubilee," a "truly American Festival," overshadowing and even eclipsing local or regional patriotic observances (Travers, 1997, p. 3). A newspaper reporter boasted in 1815 that the U.S.'s entire population of "eight millions of citizens joined in one festive celebration of the National Birth Day" (Travers, 1997, p. 4). The statement was exaggerated, but July 4th definitely encouraged a large number of Americans from all walks of life to take time off work to attend the military shows, parades, public and private dinners, formal orations, and fireworks that were all part of a proper July 4th celebration. As people glorified the mythic past, hyperbolized the present, and breathlessly envisioned America's future, solemn ceremony mingled with civic abandon. The flag, with its ever-changing number of stars, validated the federal concept of an indefinitely expandable union of states on a common basis. In this way, the Independence Day ceremony not only preserved tradition but also "traditionalized" new materials and values. During times of rapid social, political, or cultural change, such as the early republic, this innovative process of "inventing tradition" is typical (Travers, 1997, p.11).

The rise and fall of two rival political parties

This period saw the rise and fall of two political parties. Conservative Americans who adhered to the classical definition of republicanism sought to secure and enshrine elitist politics through the federal establishment established by the 1787 Constitution, and hence adopted the word "federalist" to describe their stance. The federalists, advocating for a strong central government and close ties with Britain, called supporters of the "liberal" republican strain "anti-federalist," but later referred to them as Democratic-Republicans, reflecting their more populist stance. The two parties' long and bitter rivalry sparked political passions that occasionally erupted in serious social unrest and violence, especially in the 1790s (Howe, 1967). By the early 1800s, the Democratic-Republicans became the dominant political force, winning numerous elections and leading to the "Era of Good Feelings," where they faced little opposition after the Federalist Party's collapse in the War of 1812. However, the party eventually fractured in the 1820s, leading to the rise of new political factions.

The War of 1812: Renewal and reinstatement of national feelings

While political parties were dividing, the War of 1812 may be the most important event in this period when people "feel and act more as a nation" (Gallatin, 1816/1879). The War of 1812 was, in several respects, the second chapter of the American Revolution. It was between the U.S. and the United Kingdom, with the aim of restoring the U.S.'s political and economic

sovereignty once and for all. It was actually a war between several nations, each with vested interests in the land called America. The U.S., Great Britain, her colony Canada, Spain, and thousands of Native nations were all involved in this war. Former Secretary of the Treasury Albert Gallatin described the sense of American nationalism in a letter written after the War ended in 1816 as follows:

> The War has renewed and reinstated the national feelings which the Revolution had given and which were daily lessened. The people have now more general objects of attachment with which their pride and political opinions are connected. They are more Americans; they feel and act more as a nation; and I hope that the permanency of the Union is thereby better secured. (Gallatin, 1816/1879)

As partisan rivalry diminished dramatically, a new image of the generation evolved, rendering a shared "national feeling" once again (Robertson, 2001). The settlement of the crisis in the immediate aftermath of the War of 1812 owed a great deal to the widespread establishment of a national consciousness, even if it was a fragile and conditional one. Military conflict brought people together, as it had done previously in American history. The War of 1812 brought together Americans for military service, ignited anti-British sentiments comparable to those felt against the French, and, most importantly, centralized state control under James Madison, allowing for widespread infrastructure improvements. People thought they had conquered Britain, so they chose new heroes to represent their triumph. Andrew Jackson, rather than the godlike George Washington, was a better representative of the modern generation (Travers, 1997). For young Americans, the war was the "Second War of Independence," not only from Britain, but also from the tyranny of old patriotism models. The war accelerated the process of American society's democratization and the emergence of the "self-made man" conceit, which was personified by war hero Andrew Jackson.

Growing difference between the South and the North: Regional nationalism

The downside of the new partisan unity was an upsurge of sectional unrest. The identity of the South and the North was growing in difference. The southern colonies' culture had always been apart from the northern ones. Southerners were generally more faithful to British customs than their Northern counterparts prior to the period of independence. They were heavily influenced by new fashion and art trends in England, studied English architecture and literature, and were proud of England's liberal constitutionalism (Blassingame, 1968). However, the sense of difference felt in many parts of the South, bolstered by a shared desire to keep slavery alive, had yet to coalesce into a cohesive regional identity. As all of the North American colonies became increasingly isolated from England, the South's affection for Britain faded, and was replaced by a growing identification with the American nation, which was aided by increased intercolonial interaction with the North. Nonetheless, political tensions exacerbated pre-existing cultural gaps between the two regions in the post-Revolutionary period. During the War of 1812, disagreements over government policies erupted, with New England denouncing the dispute as Western and Southern expansionist insanity (Kohn, 1957). During the Era of Good Feelings, tensions subsided, but resurfaced with new vigor in the mid-1800s, as regional nationalism engulfed the American South.

Persistent political conflicts across the Mason-Dixon line intensified pre-existing tensions to the point that many Southerners began to see the North and the South as separate countries populated by two different peoples (Kohn, 1957). This new collective self-understanding was promoted by political and economic elites in order to gain support for their economic interests, especially on the issue of slavery (Faust, 1988). Due to the lack of

differences between the populations of the South and the North, Southern nationalists created new myths of dissimilarity based on race, such as viewing themselves as heirs of the Normans fighting against the Saxons in the North and regarding themselves as the true heirs of the Revolution (Faust, 1988). Religious faith legitimized the Southern cause, strongly justifying the war and its slavery system. While Southern public opinion focused on ethnic disparities and religious differences, the North defined the South's behavior in mostly civic terms as "rebels," "traitors," and "despots" (McPherson, 1999).

In general, while the North and the South were in conflict regarding political and economic issues, Southerners resorted to ethnoculturalism and advanced Southern nationalism.

The nativist movement in the face of immigration waves

The period after the War of 1812 also challenged civic nationalism as immigration to the U.S. increased dramatically, accounting for 30 percent of population growth by 1851, compared to 3 per cent in 1810 (Kaufmann, 2000). Furthermore, for the first time, the majority of the new immigrants were Catholics rather than Protestants, and they did not come from the United Kingdom. As a result of this shift in the demographics of major American cities, a common exclusionary movement led by the Know-Nothing party arose, aiming to defend Protestant Anglo-American ideals by limiting Catholics' political and social rights, whose religious affiliation was also a marker of their non-English ethnic background. This was the first of several repeated outbursts of American "nativism," a phrase coined in the 1850s to describe intense opposition to an internal minority on the grounds of its foreign "un-American" connections (Higham, 1995). Following waves of immigration, particularly from outside of northern Europe, nativist responses from groups like the Populists, trade unions, and patriotic groups, who feared that foreign influences would corrupt American culture, undermine their economic interests, or both, were inevitable. Economic downturns were often the catalyst for such responses, with immigrants serving as convenient scapegoats. The nativist movement demonstrated that the American creed was incapable of maintaining social and political cohesion in reality.

Westward expansion: the new American dream

The California Gold Rush in 1848 signified a departure from the old American dream of gradual, modest wealth accumulation towards the new dream of instant riches (Matthews, 2021). This shift redefined the American character as impatient and volatile, influencing public sentiment and economic practices. The Gold Rush accelerated industrialization, creating a brutal economy dominated by large banks and mechanized mining. It also spurred significant territorial expansion, notably through the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which added vast lands to the U.S., totaling approximately 525,000 square miles. The lands ceded by Mexico included all or parts of present-day California, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, and Wyoming. This expansion, marked by militarism, set the stage for ongoing injustices, including the genocide of Native Americans, discrimination against Chinese immigrants and Mexican Americans, and the rise of mass incarceration and racial violence. Despite California's early ban on slavery, many of these issues persist today, reflecting the darker legacies of 19th-century expansion and exploitation. Matthews (2021, para. 8) deems California's Gold Rush and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo as "together constituted an undeclared revolution, essentially re-founding the United States with different peoples, different borders, and far different aspirations."

4. Civil War (1861-1865): Creedal Nationalism Challenged by Ethnic Nationalism and the Reinforcement of National Bonds

The American Civil War, known as the War Between the States, was fought in the U.S. from 1861 to 1865, between Northern states loyal to the Union and Southern states that had seceded to form the Confederate States of America. It is a significant milestone in which the American creed and values were challenged by ethnic nationalism.

The discourse of the Civil War propagated by Northern and Southern leaders displayed how they defined the War, and what values each side believed it represented. Northern leaders argued that legitimizing the Confederacy would jeopardize not only the Union, but also the country's very foundations. In June 1861, a Philadelphia newspaper editor wrote, "We are fighting to protect our constitutional institutions... to establish the supremacy of the Constitution and laws over violence and anarchy... [and for the] great fundamental principle of republican government-the right of the majority to rule" (Mcpherson, 1999, p. 102). Meanwhile, the citizens of Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Arkansas overwhelmingly supported the Confederacy. "We must go with our Southern brothers." A North Carolina newspaper editor repeated, "Blood is thicker than water." Virginia's attorney general asserted that Virginians were "homogeneous with the [people of the Confederate] States in race," while the Northern people were an "alien race.... The cotton States swarm with Virginia's sons and her son's sons. They are bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh" (Mcpherson, 1999, p. 102).

The issue of slavery was one exception to the common citizenship that was the centered idea of American civic citizenship. Even free blacks, as descendants of slaves, were considered non-citizens in the Dred Scott decision of 1857. As a result, one-seventh of the population was not entitled to American citizenship. This breach of civic nationalism fueled the anti-slavery movement. "The monstrous injustice of slavery robs our republican example of its just power in the world," Lincoln said in 1854, and "allows the enemies of free institutions to mock us as hypocrites with plausibility" (Mcpherson, 1999, p. 104).

Nativism and exclusionary rhetoric was condemned by most mainstream Democratic and Republican leaders, who called it an organized scheme of bigotry and proscription. By 1860, a looming civil war had pushed nativism into the shadows. The true danger to American nationalism did not come from nativists or immigrants, but from Southern nationalism.

Southern whites spoke the same language as other white Americans, practiced the same Christian and primarily Protestant faith, had a predominantly British ancestry, shared a common memory of the fight for independence, and shared loyalty to the Constitution and the political institutions that grew up under it. However, the belief that Northern and Southern whites were two distinct races with increasingly hostile interests grew in popularity. By 1858, the Charleston Mercury, a prominent Southern newspaper, declared that on the issue of slavery, the South and North were not just two peoples but hostile rivals (Mcpherson, 1999). Northerners and Southerners were also believed to have diverged so much in climate, morals, and values that they could no longer coexist under the same government. Their relationship was likened to oil and water.

The Civil War helped end sectionalism and reinforce national bonds throughout the U.S. when it ended. Although the reconciliation process was contentious, it helped solidify American nationalism (Kohn, 1957). America was faced with the question of whether to memorialize the war in a way that emphasized national reconciliation or social justice. Southern elites who wanted to return to the old ethnic system repeatedly stressed the mutual exclusivity of the two

goals. While slavery was not restored, the South was able to institute a legal system of racial dominance that guaranteed the continued exclusion of blacks from full citizenship. While America had been healed, justice had been placed on hold for nearly a century (Bonikowski, 2008).

5. Late 19th to Early 20th Century: Manifest Destiny, Social Darwinism, and Americanization

The constitution of American identity in the period from the late 19th century to early 20th century, with World War I marking a critical period in the way certain groups of Americans viewed immigrants, centered around two main concerns: (1) Imperialism, Manifest Destiny, and social Darwinism and (2) Americanization movements. Creedal nationalism was still in currency, but violence in rooted doctrines of inequality was inscribed in the heart of American identity. The self-contradictory nature of American nationalism was emphatic.

Imperialism: Manifest Destiny and social Darwinism

American nationalism was invented to fight against the British Empire and led to the formation of the U.S., but the U.S. itself gradually became imperialist, both at home and abroad. This imperialist disposition has been characteristic of the U.S. until now, definitely a persistent force of American nationalism. The notion of an American identity created by Manifest Destiny and the colonial philosophy of social Darwinism were central to this imperialism. Manifest Destiny is a phrase coined in 1845 to denote the idea that the U.S. is destined by God to expand its dominion and spread democracy and capitalism across the entire North American continent. To justify the West's expansion into Native American territory and the colonization in the Pacific and Caribbean, social Darwinism was also used. Believers of this philosophy believed that "inferior" classes of people, unlike Americans, were incapable of self-rule.

Social Darwinism and discrimination of immigrants

Social Darwinism engendered new ways of perceiving what American identity meant. Consequently, new limits on immigration were set. Since the new arrivals were categorized under social Darwinism as "inferior," the nativists felt that the new arrivals were unfit for American democracy and society.

Between 1870 and 1920, over 25 million immigrants arrived in the U.S. Before the Civil War, most immigrants had come from Northern and Western Europe, including large numbers of Irish and Germans. New groups such as Italians, Poles, and Eastern European Jews made up a larger percentage of the arrivals after the Civil War. Many Chinese came to the U.S. as well, with most settling on the west coast. Of these groups, immigrants from Northern and Western Europe were viewed as more American, while southern and eastern Europeans and Jewish people faced some discrimination. Chinese immigrants were viewed by many as a completely foreign group, one that needed to be kept from entering the United States altogether. By the end of the nineteenth century, the focus of American nativism had changed from religion (Gleason, 1980) and republican politics (Walzer, 1996) to ethnicity and what was referred to as "race."

The First World War (WWI) contributed to a surge in parochialism, which Kallen (1998) identified as a significant factor influencing attitudes toward immigration. He noted that the war shifted concerns from property to people, with race, heritage, and attitudes (rather than legal factors) becoming perceived as threats to property and social status. This shift led to a sense of despair over the survival of American culture, which was already viewed as lacking a cohesive national identity due to the post-Civil War economic boom. This anxiety fueled the

growth of traditionalist and nativist ideologies. Immigration, once beneficial to large businesses, started to be seen as problematic. Racialist ideologies, particularly those favoring Nordic or Anglo-Saxon superiority, gained traction as some saw advancements in science and industry as threats to traditional lifestyles.

The time leading up to the U.S.'s entry into WWI provides an insight into the potential link between immigration and foreign policy. The war not only contributed to the introduction of anti-immigration laws but also created an environment that encouraged such acts. For immigrants, there was a lot of tension concerning the connections to their home countries (Gleason, 1981). For natives, the fact that immigrants could have a voice in whether or not the U.S. joined the war was a source of increased annoyance. A recommendation for a literacy test was included in the 1910–11 Congressional commission report as a way of limiting unnecessary immigration (Boissoneault, 2017). However, the bill containing this proposal was passed and rejected and eventually vetoed by President Taft and Wilson between 1911 and 1917. Their rejection was driven by concerns over economic development and cosmopolitan idealism. But once the U.S. became involved in the European war, public opinion was powerful enough to override the president's veto and pass restrictive legislation in 1917. This bill contained a ban on Asian immigrants, a literacy test, and an exclusionary clause prohibiting representatives of extremist groups from entering the country and allowing expulsion of foreigners who took radical positions. German Americans were often seen as the enemy, and they faced bigotry that sometimes escalated to mob violence. Anti-Semitism peaked in the late 1910s and early 1920s. The kind of fear that drove this highly unusual event such as lynching a Jew also motivated far more mundane activity aimed at lowering rates of immigration and limiting the rights of those already present.

Americanization and the assimilation of all immigrants

Americanization, one of the "Progressive" movements during this period, was a program aiming at rapid assimilation of all immigrants. The goal of the movement was for immigrants to become integrated into a particular kind of America with the intervention from the government. Although Americanization was not a new program at the beginning of the 20th century, it had changed from its earlier forms. Gleason (1981), in his classical essay "American identity and Americanization," argues the social movement had become more organized with a structured agenda than its antebellum predecessor. Americanization after the Civil War meant more options, whether it was forcible assimilation, or accommodation and coexistence. Since WWI, the belief that America could incorporate all newcomers gradually weakened. Other factors fueling nativism was racialism, urban issues, economic changes, and the growth and mobilization of Anglo-Saxonism. Thus, forms of Americanization became more coercive and institutionalized (Gleason, 1981).

According to Gleason (1981), the Americanization movement progressed as follows. The first phase took place during the first two decades of the 20th century. Via patriotic groups such as the Daughters of the American Revolution or social gospel churches, it sought to establish a more harmoniously integrated society in a relatively benign manner. The beginning of WWI marked the second phase, with a transition toward mobilization of the Americanization movement. State departments and local organizations joined in by 1915. The National Americanization Committee, led by Frances A. Kellor, a Progressive, was one of the most important agencies. Kellor believed in forced assimilation and, with the support of her institution, partnered with American manufacturers to provide immigrant workers with Americanization courses. This connection between industry and an organization to assimilate

new immigrants was a powerful weapon, and it was the first time that training immigrants to be workers in the industrial economy was equivalent to making them Americans. Following the war's end, the third phase of the Americanization movement arose, accompanied by a growing fear of social change, especially as embodied by the Bolsheviks. The relationship between industry and Americanization tightened during this period, as owners tried to protect their employees from what Gleason referred to as "the radical few" (1981). Groups such as the American Legion sought to expel those they saw as a threat. Immigrants were explicitly angry at how oppressive these new initiatives were during this era, and they increasingly saw the Americanization movement as hostile to their cultures and existence. The fact that the Ku Klux Klan finally embraced Americanism's rhetoric only seemed to prove their case.

The legacy of the movement is to demonize the use of the word "Americanization." The movement resulted in conflicts related to national identity, a situation in which those who were against Americanization on the practical level and used it as an idea could claim to be the "purest" Americans of all.

This period also saw intellectual discourses on assimilation, which offer an insight into how intellectuals have considered the best way or ways to deal with new arrivals as a nation, namely Anglo-Protestantism, American melting pot and multiculturalism (Anderson, 2016). They envisioned America by making assumptions about who is or is not assimilable, how the process should work, and most importantly, what people should be assimilating towards. Anglo-Protestantism is a conservative view of the U.S., founded on a national identity rooted in the past. It demands that America be restored to its former glory. Supporters of this perspective see danger and loss over the course of the twentieth century. As a result, the ideology ascribes a particular type of American identity. In comparison, the melting pot shows that what it means to be American will still be fluid when immigrants arrive. The original sense of the melting pot, in contrast to its neutral, non-threatening media image, was that national identity changes everyone; and thus, it is more dynamic and forward-looking. Multiculturalism, on the other hand, argues that the American population is diverse and thus, should live side by side.

6. World War II: Revival of American Creeds and American Greatness to Lead the World

The period during and after World War II (WWII) witnessed the Civil Rights Movement to integrate people into the U.S., demonstrating the revival of American creeds. After the war, the role of the nation in world affairs changed, engendering new ideas and understanding of the nation's foreign policies. American globalism/internationalism could be seen as a reinvention of imperialism that mitigated the ideological violence of Manifest Destiny and social Darwinism. However, within a framework of nationalism, it remained imperialist.

Revival of American creeds: Fair representation for minorities and rejection of ethnocentrism and bigotry

Following WWII, the Civil Rights Movement started a long and arduous journey to ensure fair representation for minorities. Albeit the National Origins Act of 1924 marked the end of an era of significant European immigration to the U.S., it did not mark the end of controversies over what it meant to be an American or who qualified. There was a sense of relief when the number of immigrants fell from nearly a million per year from 1902 to 1915, to hundreds of thousands in the 1920s, and then to the tens of thousands from 1931 to 1946 (Patterson, 1996). Catholics, Jews, blacks, and others were starting to fight for fair access and a role in American society prior to the founding of groups such as the Southern Christian

Leadership Conference in 1957. Catholics and Jews, it seems, were the first to make serious demands for community recognition while respecting the existing political and legal structures (Schultz, 2011). One of the consequences of defeating Hitler, Mussolini, and the Japanese was that the social Darwinism that characterized most of WWII lost its sense of validity. Groups of citizens will no longer be excluded or discriminated against deliberately and lawfully on the grounds of "inferior blood."

Following WWII, minor adjustments were made to the 1924 Immigration Act. These included allowing entry for "war-brides," spouses of veterans, and a limited number of immigrants from India, the Philippines, and Chinese wives of Americans. However, Roosevelt and Truman faced challenges in addressing the refugee crisis due to the restrictive 1924 quotas. The Displaced Persons Act of 1948 allowed over 400,000 Europeans to enter, though it contained anti-Semitic provisions that excluded many Jews.

The war also led to a strong rejection of ethnocentrism, and bigotry, with efforts to foster national unity and intergroup understanding. Initiatives like the Progressive Education Association's "Education for Democracy" campaign and the "Americans All... Immigrants All" radio series promoted tolerance and diversity. The ideological revival post-war emphasized a common American identity based on shared ideals of freedom and liberty rather than ethnicity or pluralism.

American greatness to lead the world

For many Americans, the end of WWII arrived sooner than predicted, with the massive, mushroom-like clouds that descended over Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Despite worries and concerns about the atomic bomb, most Americans felt relieved and proud of their country when the war ended. For them, the American way of life had withstood the war with totalitarian enemies. Nationalist sentiments pervaded all aspects of American public life at this time of triumph, including widespread talk of foreign cooperation. The moment of victory was nationalistically constructed, setting a pathway for public understanding of the U.S. foreign policy after the war.

Truman shaped the moment by announcing the war's end and the events that led up to it, as well as by proclaiming national days of celebration and prayer. The victory symbolized the glory of the U.S., the righteousness of its cause, and the guidance that God bestowed upon the people, according to Truman's public pronouncements. The victory was interpreted by the Truman administration and the media as solely belonging to the U.S. rather than to all of the Allies equally.

After visualizing the image of Europe being destroyed by the war, the president expressed gratitude to God for the country's safety and expressed urgency about the need to protect the country from future wars:

> How glad I am to be home again! And how grateful to Almighty God that this land of ours has been spared! We must do all we can to spare her from the ravages of any future breach of the peace. That is why, though the United States wants no territory or profit or selfish advantage out of this war, we are going to maintain the military bases necessary for the complete protection of our interests and of world peace. (Truman, 1945/2024)

This passage represents key elements of American "internationalist" thinking in the 1940s, and it also expresses strong nationalist sentiments. Truman expressed the love of the country that is central to war talk in any nation-state by declaring his joy at returning home, particularly against the bleak European backdrop he had drawn. He offered a classic formulation of "holy nationalism," claiming that God has chosen to spare America from the

destruction of war. More importantly, the nationalism Truman expressed here was self-consciously benign and "disinterested," or selfless, qualities that are indicative of American nationalism, though not unique to it.

The central themes, including national glory, global duty, and the victory of freedom, were touched on by almost every writer and speaker in public debate about WWII's end in 1945, and about America's position in the world after the war had ended. Even before the actual moment of triumph, the construction of the meaning had begun, and it had continued long after the moment had passed. However, in the prevalent discourse of the day, it meant that the U.S. had matured into a great nation capable of leading the world. Even before the Hiroshima bombing, a Gallup poll found that 63 percent of Americans thought the US would have more impact in world affairs after the war than any other nation (Freeland, 1972). From late 1945 to early March 1947, the president and the media framed U.S. global duty in terms of American national greatness. The U.S. was undeniably the most powerful country in the first year after the war ended. The prevailing discourse held that the dominant role in world affairs meant more global duties, not only to Europe or Asia but to the world. These duties included feeding the hungry and restoring the global economy, providing moral leadership in the name of American democratic ideals to a world that had clearly lost its bearings, and maintaining a permanent peace. The postwar world meant a new, smaller planet, and the U.S. was both its economic steward and its moral leader. Nevertheless, the actual reach of American power was more constrained in reality. The self-aware assumption of global responsibility was due to America emerging from the war not only unscathed but also strengthened, particularly in comparison to the prewar Depression period, when much of Europe and Asia was destroyed.

7. Cold War: Red Scare and American Nationalist Globalism

The discourse that shaped the Cold War period was built on three main pillars: national greatness, global obligation, and anticommunism—elements that keep shaping American nationalism until now.

The Cold War commenced after WWII, as the Soviet Union and the U.S. were unable to see eye to eye on either particular global concerns or the ideological ones. The Truman Doctrine, which was declared in 1947, crystallized the tension with the Soviets. The U.S. would then openly support those seeking to free themselves from communist regimes. Later that year, Secretary of State George C. Marshall outlined a proposal to help Europe's recovery, which became known as the Marshall Plan. The Marshall Plan's central argument was that if Europe's economy could be strengthened, capitalist European governments would be able to survive. Economically and politically, the Plan was a huge success on both sides of the Atlantic. It also widened the gap between the West and the Soviet Union. The U.S. formally joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1949, signaling yet another indication of the American alliance with Western Europe. On the domestic front, the Cold War sparked a Red Scare. The House Un-American Activities Committee went out looking for communist sympathizers, inflaming public fears. The political left's vulnerability, combined with the rise of "Cold War fears" tempered the optimism that followed WWII.

Anticommunism was hardly a new concept in American politics in 1947. However, with the Soviet Union astride Eastern and Central Europe, global anticommunism became a defining feature of public discourses in the U.S. With the "loss" of China to Mao's army and the Soviet Union's first atomic device explosion in 1949, the belief that the communist threat was global grew significantly. Anticommunism justified why the U.S. was having such a difficult time

fulfilling its global commitments and simultaneously reinforced the nation's claims to greatness. Thus, the core philosophy was American nationalist globalism rather than anticommunism.

During the Cold War, the world was divided into "free" and "unfree" in the dominant discourses, not "free" and "communist." In the official discourse of the Truman administration and in the majority of the commercial mass media, freedom was embodied by capitalism, and communism was considered a new slavery. The foreign-policy elite did not have exclusive control over the newly expansive, global vision of U.S. security interests. The globalist outlook was based on a concept of national mission, which had deeper origins in American nationalism. The foreign-policy elite had always shared with the general public and taught them about the country's new global obligations. This sense of mission arose from American Protestantism, primarily New England Puritan values, but its reach extends beyond its theological roots. By the end of WWII, most American liberals agreed that the U.S.'s foreign policy should be focused on achieving human dignity, democracy, and justice around the world. Such responsibilities were often couched in paternalistic language. For example, after WWII, the American media often referred to Germans as "our subjects" and "our Germans," while stressing U.S. attempts to instill democratic ideals in a culture that had devolved into barbarism.

The U.S.'s national greatness during the Cold War also manifested in its power of science and technology. After pulling itself out of the Great Depression and scoring a technology-intensive victory during WWII, the country was eager to enter a new age of science and technology—the Space Age. The explosion of science and technology energized the American economy and touched the lives of Americans everywhere in the country. Armed with ever-increasing expertise and resources to harness the awesome power of the atom, Americans had high hopes that they would positively remake the planet, take control of the planet's far reaches, forcing Antarctica and outer space to do their bidding, and serve the rising aspirations of humankind. Public leaders repeatedly proclaimed the U.S. the necessary leader of the "Free World," promising that the country's benevolent leadership and wellspring of science and invention would deliver a better world for all humanity.

Actually, the Cold War period witnessed many hot wars around the world involving American intervention. The Vietnam War stood out since the U.S. lost in the War. On one hand, the war fueled a sense of patriotic duty. On the other hand, the war led to widespread disillusionment and a profound questioning of American values and policies. The anti-war movement became a powerful force, with large-scale protests and civil disobedience challenging the government's actions and contributing to a broader critique of American imperialism and military interventionism. This division highlighted the fragility of national unity and the complexities of American identity. The War led to a more cautious and restrained U.S. foreign policy, with a reduced commitment to internationalism and interventionism

The Vietnam War had far-reaching and lasting consequences for the U.S. However, as the Cold War era ended with the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, most Americans were certain that their country won the Cold War and that they were citizens of the world's most powerful country.

8. The War on Terror: Chauvinist Nationalism

On September 11, 2001, al Qaeda terrorists launched a vicious attack on the U. S., placing the country into a new age in its history. When the World Trade Center crumbled into a dusty heap and the center of the American military might have burned with a passenger jet

stuck, a generation of Americans, who had not yet been born when President John F. Kennedy was assassinated, had their tragic defining moment. Terrorist attacks offered a remarkable moment in the nation's collective consciousness, where both American national identity and U.S. foreign policy were revived independently and in relation to one another, and a national emphasis and sense of purpose, which had been missing since the end of the Cold War, emerged once again.

September 11th was the most recent case, similar to WWII or the Cold War, when Americans turned to their leaders to help them understand what they were going through and what it meant for them as a nation. In such times, the president was able to restore control of the national agenda and shape the country's foreign policy strategy. President Bush had achieved both goals by putting nationalism and foreign policy in support of one another.

Freedom is one of the Founding Fathers' ideals which reemerged in Bush's rhetoric. Freedom and democracy are arguably the most esteemed principles of the U.S. Americans prize these ideals as universal and self-evident. As early as September 12th, President Bush began referring to the terrorist attacks as an attack on freedom. He expanded on this theme two days later at the National Cathedral during a civil-religious ceremony commemorating the National Day of Prayer and Remembrance, which was one of the healing activities that followed any major national disaster, charged with religious and nationalist imagery. Bush (2001a, para. 18) proclaimed in this political sermon: "In every generation, the world has produced enemies of human freedom. They have attacked America, because we are freedom's home and defender. And the commitment of our fathers is now the calling of our time." Terrorists "can't stand freedom; they hate what America stands for," he said in a subsequent press conference (Bush, 2001b, para. 20). These examples can be found easily in his speeches, and his repetition that the U. S. was attacked because it reflects freedom soon became ingrained in Americans' perceptions of their enemies.

Alongside freedom, Bush highlighted compassion and tolerance as key elements of the American national identity, noting that terrorists aimed to undermine these values. In his speeches, he asserted that the nation's greatness prevents evildoers from damaging its spirit, praising the country as magnificent due to the decency, strength, and compassion of its people.

These demonstrations of American essence were meant to reaffirm Americans' sense of worth and to encourage proper behaviors during a chaotic time. In tandem with his nationalistic rhetoric and identification of the enemy as evils who not only lacked American virtues but specifically attacked the US because of them, his consistent association of America with virtuousness dichotomized the world between those who are good and bad, as he put it "Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists" (Bush, 2001d, para. 30). The patriotic narrative spread the mythology that America is a great country with a divine role and it is never wrong in its domestic and international affairs.

By framing the attack as one driven by hatred of democracy and compassion, Bush was able to stress that America would attack those who did not follow its moral values, not Islamic countries. He declared, "We don't view this as a religious war in any way, shape, or type." "And for those who try to pit religion against religion, our great nation will stand up and reject that kind of thought – We're going to lead the world to fight for freedom, and we'll have Muslim and Jew and Christian side by side with us" (Bush, 2001c, para. 11).

Nonetheless, one of Bush's own comments, "This crusade, this war on terrorism is going to take a while" (Bush, 2001b, para. 17) added to the suggestion of holy war. Given the importance of civic religion in America's nationalist mythos, it is understandable that Muslims

and many non-Muslims, including Europeans of all colors, believe America's war on terrorism had a Christian dimension to it. Muslim and Arab Americans were attacked by some white, Christian compatriots who appeared to believe that September 11 marked the start of a religious war. As Bush talked of the "unfurling of flags" in his speech, he put it in the context of "the lighting of candles, the offering of blood, and the saying of prayers" (2001d, para. 4). These three other practices are all linked to faith and mirror Christian religious behavior: the light of Christ, Jesus' sacrifice and blood, and prayer, which is how one communicates with God. Bush invoked the U.S.'s and Americans' messianic position and mission in the world. His remark served as a subliminal reminder to Americans that they are divinely chosen to propagate Christian values.

Following these presidential discourses, Bush waged wars on Iraq and called it a war against terrorism, which some have called "the monstrous crime" and others say it left Iraq a better place. The Iraq war has killed hundreds of thousands of people, displaced over four million people, sparked ethnic cleansing, and destroyed the country's already shattered economy.

As can be seen, mobilizing nationalist symbolism was an effective way for Bush to promote foreign policy objectives. This is both beneficial and problematic, because while American national identity has proven to be resilient, the ensuing Islamophobia and terrorism suggests that Bush's rhetoric was dangerous to humanity. It reflects chauvinist nationalism, an extreme form of nationalism marked by the belief in the superiority of one's own nation often coupled with contempt or hostility towards others. Chauvinist nationalism fostered xenophobic attitudes and policies, leading to increased suspicion and discrimination against Muslims and immigrants, who were frequently viewed as threats to national security. Bush's rhetoric and the Global War on Terror ultimately contributed to the emergence of terrorist groups like ISIS. The Iraq War was a key factor in the rise of ISIS. After the 2003 invasion, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, a Jordanian leader of a small radical Islamist group, transformed it into an Al Qaeda affiliate and took advantage of the instability in Iraq to expand its influence. ISIS and Al Qaeda recruiters often cited U.S. policies, such as drone strikes, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the imprisonment of Muslims in Guantánamo, as evidence that the West was waging a war against Islam.

Americans' views on the War on Terror have been mixed and have evolved over time. Initially, there was widespread support for the military actions in Afghanistan and Iraq, driven by a strong desire to combat terrorism and protect national security after the 9/11 attacks. However, as the wars dragged on and the human and financial costs mounted, public opinion shifted, with many Americans becoming increasingly skeptical about the effectiveness and justification of these prolonged conflicts. Concerns about civil liberties also grew, particularly regarding the government's expanded surveillance powers under the Patriot Act, leading to ongoing debates about the balance between security and individual rights.

The September 11th attacks once again testified the existence of different strands and discourses of nationalism in the US. This is what Lieven (2004) terms the thesis and antithesis of American nationalism. American civic nationalism stemming from the Creed dominates official and public political culture and has a natural tendency to rise to the surface in times of crisis and conflict. For Lieven (2004), it looks forward to the nation's future and distinctive greatness. The antithesis to the American Creed, on the other hand, continuously looks backward, to a vanished and idealized national past. This "American antithesis" is populist and sometimes chauvinist nationalism. It sees America as a closed national culture and civilization

under attack from a violent and barbaric outside world. The Republican Right, and particularly the Christian Right, with their rhetoric of restoring an older, purer American society is the representation of American radical conservatism. According to Lieven (2004), America has a self-correcting mechanism that has kept the country from collapsing into authoritarian rule or a permanent state of militant chauvinism, and has restored a tolerant and pluralist equilibrium after periods of extreme nationalism. It prevented ethnocentrism and chauvinism from becoming the norms.

9. Conclusion

The nation-building history of the U.S. has been characterized by the tension and coordination between contradictory forms of nationalism, which constitute a distinct American identity.

American creedal nationalism, which emerged during and as a result of the fight for independence from the British Empire and has persisted since then up to now, is defined by universalist values such as democracy, liberty, and equality. On the basis of creedal nationalism, the U.S. was shaped as a modern democratic republic, widely recognized as the first one in the world. This form of political nationalism has also facilitated the successive integration of individuals and various ethnic groups into the general body of American society and polity.

American creedal nationalism has been challenged by forms of ethnic nationalism, divisive and exclusionary. When there are political and economic conflicts between groups of people, ethnic nationalism is often invoked. For example, before and during the Civil War, Southern nationalists contended that the North and South were distinct nations, inhabited by two groups with different racial backgrounds and religious beliefs. The nativist movement, particularly strong in the 1850s, opposed immigrants and promoted the interests of native-born Americans, reflecting a recurring theme in U.S. history.

American nationalism also has an outward dimension. Creedal nationalism embraces equality, but it has also engendered the ideas of American exceptionality and superiority. Thus, paradoxically, it has joined Manifest Destiny, social Darwinism, and then the victory of the U.S. in WWII to fashion and strengthen American exceptionalism, a form of nationalism that has been used to justify the westward expansion of the country, imperialist acts abroad, and the world leadership of the U.S. In the Cold War, U.S. globalism, fueled by the spirit of national greatness, acquired a strong anticommunist element. American nationalist globalism has become part of American nationalism. In response to the September 11th attacks, the U.S. launched the Global War on Terror. Chauvinist nationalism arose, not only assuming the nation's superiority but also animated contempt and hostility towards others, especially the Islamic world.

The self-contradictory nature of American nationalism has led to an identity fraught with challenges. U.S. failures in international interventions, along with domestic inequalities and divisions, highlight the country's numerous issues. Donald Trump leveraged these internal rifts and dissatisfaction with U.S. foreign policy to propel his "Make America Great Again" campaign, which amplified divisive nationalism and garnered significant support from nearly half the electorate. Today, the various strands of nationalism discussed in this paper continue to thrive, leaving uncertainty about how the deepening divisions will unfold and whether the "self-correcting mechanism" mentioned by Lieven (2004) will function effectively.

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