

HST 203: U.S. History Sp18 (Escobar Meta 41002 43590)

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Forum 1 American Exceptionalism

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American Exceptionalism

by [Joe Escobar](#) - Thursday, April 12, 2018, 9:04 AM

This thread is for discussions on the American Exceptionalism topic.

To make your POSTS, click the reply link in this, MY post. To reply to another student's post, be sure to click the reply link within in THEIR post.

IMPORTANT - SUBJECT LINES

BE SURE to use an informative subject line for your post, something that describes which one of the questions you are addressing. Do NOT simply leave it RE: American Exceptionalism

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Re: American Exceptionalism or American Ethnocentrism



by [Larry Warner](#) - Friday, April 13, 2018, 12:49 AM

Do our nation's leaders still use exceptionalism, as they did at the turn of the 20th Century? If yes, in what form or way? If no (or "not exactly), what is the difference?

Yes, in its primitive form anyways. American Exceptionalism is the idea that we are different or unique among the other nation in positive or negative connotations, with respect to its ideas of democracy and personal freedom in that America was founded on the principles of life, liberty, and justice for all. But is it American Exceptionalism or American Ethnocentrism?

Presidents Mckinley and Roosevelt, pursued and established the islands of Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines in order to join the overseas markets, colonize, or for strategic military bases. Many protested this expansion and the subjugation of the peoples. (textbook p. 716 3rd paragraph) though Puerto Rico seemingly fared better than Cuba and the Philippines in that Puerto Ricans were granted U.S. citizenship and eventually won the right to elect their own governor. Left to fend for itself Puerto Rico suffered a poverty rate far exceeding the mainland. Cuba and the Philippines differed from Cuba in that they were both colonized and compelled to establish U.S. Naval stations. (textbook p. 729 2nd-5th paragraph)

President Cleveland's administration gravitated towards Hawaii as American sugar plantation owners and native Hawaiians as tensions upset the islands' economic and political stability. American plantation owners removed the Hawaiian king and put Queen Liliuokalani into power. But when she wanted to show her independence from America, the American plantation owners, along with U.S. sailors, overthrew her too. (textbook p. 720 5th paragraph)

From the way that immigrants were treated that were not "Anglo-Saxon" to the wars mentioned above one thing stands out, American Ethnocentrism, the need to see other cultures, races, or religions as less than ours! As a society, even today, many Americans see our country as better than other countries and are close minded to their cultural ideas. Today in our country we have become polarized and American exceptionalism has become based more on your financial class and political affiliation then on nationality.

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Political Identity Who?

by [Larry Warner](#) - Monday, April 16, 2018, 6:16 PM

Part 2

How does someone's identification on the right side or left side of the political spectrum influence their analysis of this issue?

In his article "Obama and American exceptionalism" published on Salon.com, three-time New York Times best selling author Glenn Greenwald advocates that it is widespread desire to believe in something more powerful. The idea that the U.S. a country with unique power, responsibilities, and moral obligations thus being the greatest country in the world should be a national sentiment. Greenwald supports his view when he writes:

It's a common human desire to believe that one is special, unique, better than all others. Few people aspire to ordinariness. We view the world — physically and mentally — from our own personal perspective, and are inherently situated at the center of it. As tribal beings, we naturally believe that our customs and the beliefs with which we were inculcated from childhood are superior to Theirs. (paragraph 6)

I think that it goes deeper than just what political party you identify with, everything from how you are raised, places you have lived, life experiences, education, to your economic and social status that contribute to how you identify politically and how you view issues that are not only in the country but in the world.

(original submission Sunday, April 15, 2018, 10:04 PM)

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**Do our nation's leaders still use exceptionalism?**

by [Jae Sun Ban](#) - Tuesday, April 17, 2018, 7:45 AM

As I understanding, "America is the greatest country in the world" is the fundamental belief of American. (1st paragraph of Spectator.org article) However, according to recently survey, three-in-ten American believed America stands above all countries in the world, but, still, most American (85%) believed the U.S is one of the greatest countries in the world along with some others. (the graph of Pew Research center article "Most Americans say the U.S. is among the greatest countries in the world", Laura Thorsett and Jocelyn Kiley, June 30, 2017) Also, President Obama told "I believe in American exceptionalism, just as I suspect that the Brits believe in British exceptionalism and the Greeks believe in Greek exceptionalism." (3rd paragraph of Spectator.org article)

Comparing the understanding of American Exceptionalism between the early 20th century and the later 20th century of the leaders of U.S, there are differences and

similarities. In the early 20th century, American Exceptionalism had two aspects that represented by Wilson's ideals and Roosevelt's Corollary.

First, Wilson wanted to be a supporter of democracy. He wanted U.S foreign policy to advance democratic ideals and institutions in Mexico. (2nd paragraph of chapter 22, article "Woodrow Wilson, Struggling Idealist", page 742) He declared the U.S entered the World War I, because "the world must be made safe for democracy." (3rd paragraph of chapter 23, article "German Escalation", page 752) Wilson's understanding of American Exceptionalism is that American must recreate the world in American values and democratic institutions by force if necessary.

On the other hand, Roosevelt declared the U.S had a right to intervene the domestic affairs of nations of Western Hemisphere in his corollary. (chapter 22 article "The Roosevelt Corollary", page 735) and he build a military force to influence in oversea. (chapter 22 article "The Roosevelt Geopolitician", page 734) Roosevelt's understanding of American Exceptionalism is that the U.S appointed itself as the policeman in the world, because he believed that "Americans were a racially superior people destined for supremacy in economic and political affairs." (chapter 22 article "The Roosevelt Geopolitician", page 734).

After 9/11, Bush administration declared "War on Terror" based on Bush Doctrine and started war with Iraq to replace the regime and establish democratic institutions. Bush's understanding of American exceptionalism seemed to be mixed to Wilson's ideals and Roosevelt's Corollary.

Everything is changed. Reagan quoted in his essay, "Standing on the tiny deck of the Arabella in 1630 off the Massachusetts coast, John Winthrop said, 'We will be as a city upon a hill. The eyes of all people are upon us, so that if we deal falsely with our God in this work we have undertaken and so cause Him to withdraw His present help from us, we shall be made a story and a byword throughout the world.' Well, we have not dealt falsely with our God, even if He is temporarily suspended from the classroom." ("The Shining City Upon a Hill", Ronald Reagan, 1974) John Winthrop might announce idea of American Exceptionalism at first time having his own thought, but, currently, the leaders of the U.S might understand using their own views through the history. It might be made different understanding about American Exceptionalism.

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Re: Do our nation's leaders still use exceptionalism?

by [Larry Warner](#) - Tuesday, April 17, 2018, 2:40 PM

You did a really good job supporting your claims.

There is a difference between exceptionalism and ethnocentrism, going to war because you believe your nation is racially superior is not the correct expression of exceptionalism. Currently most American's do not know what the true meaning of exceptionalism is, most believe it is that America is the strongest nation in the world via economical or militarily. Forcing the rest of the world to live our way whether by replacing a regime or occupation, has been a long time doctrine. Presidents Mckinley and Roosevelt, pursued and established the islands of Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines in order to join the overseas markets, colonize, or for strategic military bases. Many protested this expansion and the subjugation of the peoples. (textbook p. 716 3rd paragraph) though Puerto Rico seemingly fared better than Cuba and the Philippines in that Puerto Ricans were granted U.S. citizenship and eventually won the right to elect their own governor. Left to fend for itself Puerto Rico suffered a poverty rate far exceeding the mainland. Cuba and the Philippines differed from Cuba in that they were both colonized and compelled to establish U.S. Naval stations. (textbook p. 729 2nd-5th paragraph)

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American Exceptionalism regarding current and past leaders

by [Peyton Tooze](#) - Wednesday, April 18, 2018, 1:18 PM

There are a lot of similarities between the leaders of 100 years ago and the leaders today. "The promise of America"(Exceptionalism speakers video 11:10) Ted Cruz was emphasizing what the United States is all about and why we are so successful as a country in the first place. The opportunity and freedom of our country is second to none. We can now look back and realize that our success is largely due to our way of government and democracy. Our potential success was recognized 100 years ago by Woodrow Wilson. "Wilson wanted U.S. foreign policy to advance democratic ideals and institutions in Mexico."(Textbook ch.22 pg.742) Wilson could see how superior our way of government was and how it was a large success in the public's standard of living. Barack Obama, on the other hand, saw American exceptionalism as American nationalism. "I believe in American exceptionalism, just as I suspect that the Brits believe in British exceptionalism and the Greeks believe in Greek exceptionalism."(spectator.org paragraph 3) He was meaning that American exceptionalism is what we believe because we happen to live here and we see our country as the best just like most countries, especially European countries, would believe their country is best. In actuality, what he was explaining was nationalism. "It's

not our constitution he finds exceptional, it's not our judeo-christian heritage he finds exceptional, it's not our protestant work ethic he finds exceptional, he just happens to live here. It's like being a Chicago Cubs fan.”(Exceptionalism speakers video 1:30) The way our leaders have run our country have led it to be the strongest and most influential country in the history of the world. To say our country is better, isn't to be condescending, but it is evident in how our country has been successful and how our citizens have thrived.

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Reply to Peyton

by [Shane McClintock](#) - Thursday, April 19, 2018, 6:11 PM

I agree with a lot of the points that you made. I appreciate your explanation of Barack Obama's response as being more closely related to nationalism than exceptionalism. I also agree that there are many aspects of our nation that make it exceptional. However, I disagree with you pertaining to how successful our country is and how our citizen's have thrived. Our nation is twenty-two trillion dollars in debt and has an extreme wealth gap amongst citizen's. We rank low on a global scale in many aspects. Health care for example has been the topic of heavy criticism over the past few years. According to the World Health Organization Ranking, the United States is ranked thirty-seven in healthcare around the world. (thepatientfactor.com/canadian-health-care-information/world-health-organizations-ranking-of-the-worlds-health-systems/)

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American Exceptionalism: the connotative meaning, and how a term changes throughout history

by [Shane McClintock](#) - Wednesday, April 18, 2018, 7:17 PM

The title of chapter 22 in our book is, “Becoming a World Power, 1898-1917” (116, Textbook). The title alone suggests imperialism. The Spanish-American War occurred in 1898, American-Filipino War from 1899-1902, in 1903 the U.S. signed the Hay-Bunau-Varilla Treaty and gained control of the Panama Canal Zone, in 1907 Roosevelt's Great White Fleet began to circle the world; 1898-1917 was an action-packed decade that required nationwide unity. (717, Textbook) The term exceptionalism seems to best represent times of territorial, economic, or political advancement. In the third paragraph of, “In Defense of American Exceptionalism” Former president Barack Obama was

quoted saying, "I believe in American exceptionalism, just as I suspect that the Brits believe in British exceptionalism and the Greeks believe in Greek exceptionalism." This quote can also be found twenty seconds into the video that was supplied for this forum. This seems to be a reasonable response, especially since the United States is not the only nation in the world. The speakers in the video seemed to have split opinions depending upon the party that they affiliated with. A quote made in the article also follows and has a blunt explanation of the differing opinions, "At its very core, progressivism rejects American Exceptionalism." (6th paragraph, In Defense of American Exceptionalism). Whether the previous statement is true or not, Ted Cruz and Evan Sayet were very reactionary to the topic of American exceptionalism in the video. They seemed to be focused on religion more than anything. The second paragraph of the article also touches upon the topic of religion, "American Exceptionalism is the standard that our laws reflect the understanding that we are afforded certain God-given rights that can never be taken away. We know that God, not government, bestows upon us these inalienable rights. . ." (2nd paragraph, In Defense of American Exceptionalism). Personally, I believe that Charles Murray had the best explanation for American exceptionalism. When asked whether America is an exceptional Country, he responded, "Well, we use to be." (2:47, video). Our current time in history seems to be focused on global unity rather than the advancement of territory. The concept of American exceptionalism is still prevalent throughout our country, but it cannot be secluded from the accomplishments that other nations have made, or the role that they play on a larger scale.

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Re: Similarities and Differences

by [Sydney Plaza](#) - Friday, April 20, 2018, 8:47 AM

I think that at the turn of the century with America being a new world power achieving it's autonomy and independence from Britain and Spain at a very young age helped to create this idea of exceptionalism. The idea that We know "that God, not government, bestows upon us these inalienable rights, and because of that, they must not be compromised by the whims of man. This makes us a unique nation, a nation that remains, as President Ronald Reagan once said, "a model and hope to the world."" (In Defense of American Exceptionalism) I liken this to the optimism felt for white protestants described in Chapter 22. This article would have pleased these early politicians because of the strong bond associated with religion and American core values. The definition of American Exceptionalism is that it "refers to the special character of the United States as a uniquely free nation based on democratic ideals and personal liberty." (Wikipedia: American Exceptionalism) So the argument being

and personal liberty. (wikipedia American Exceptionalism) So the argument being made about Obama's 'casual' use of the word to describe other nations feelings of exceptionalism are not necessarily incorrect. Great Britain maintains its monarch family but has a democracy. Greece is a democracy all the way down to it's early roots as being the fathers of democracy. Progressivism in the US in the early 1900's was a movement for which I don't agree with how everything was done, but it was done. Acts to protect the mass public were passed. The belief that government should not have total power is an ideal that I think we have lost today. Today with Donald Trump I see him as being more forcing with his beliefs, infringing upon the personal freedoms people in this country uphold. Such as, the right to abortion, the right to public sexual health care, the right to be born in this country from illegal immigrant parents and grow up to pursue their American dream, the right for our country to be accountable for securing our economic and national security by taking action to reduce our contribution to global climate change and so forth. I see similarities within the progressive movement and our current president-elect Donald Trump when I look at the perspective of minorities, women and those who are not top 1% or middle-class. I see similarities between the fear of immigration in the early 1900's and today. I see the fear of women's autonomy today as being similar to the early 1900's as multiple laws and political systems are currently being rolled back.

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