

HST 203: U.S. History Sp19 (Escobar)

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American Exceptionalism
by [Joe Escobar](#) - Friday, April 12, 2019, 9:40 PM

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, which clearly describes the source and questions you are addressing. Do NOT simply leave it RE: American Exceptionalism

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Trumps stance on American Exceptionalism
by [Anna McNutt](#) - Saturday, April 13, 2019, 11:36 AM

I was surprised to learn that Donald Trump rejects the phrase “American Exceptionalism.” He usually comes across as extremely confident in the Nation, and himself. When he said “perhaps that's because I have a very big ego and I don’t need terms like that” (Video: Trump doesn’t believe in American Exceptionalism) the audience laughed. We know that he has a big ego, and we know that he thinks highly of America, that’s why it was shocking to me. Of all the presidents we’ve had, of each party, none before have rejected the term.

But does he reject the **idea**? According to an article (How Trump is Making us Rethink American Exceptionalism) Trump has adopted a new phrase: America First. This new term just seems to take the place of the one he does not believe in. Both, seeming to be a patriotic idea that our Nation should be top priority, and even that we are superior.

Like anything, there are many ways to look at his rejection of American Exceptionalism. I do agree with Trump when he says “I don’t think it’s a very nice term” and “I think you’re insulting the world.” I question however, if “America First” is just a new way to say the same thing. Whatever the truth, maybe it’s a good thing that someone is rethinking the way we talk about our country.

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Re: Trumps stance on American Exceptionalism
by [Dago Franck-Nathan Kouassi](#) - Sunday, April 14, 2019, 12:54 PM

But does he reject the idea? That is a great question. I was confused when I was going through the audio material. Donald trumps really do not believe in the " "American Exceptionalism". He brought some point I really like, For him, using this expression is an insult to the other nation, he said in a video titled "*Trump does not*

believe in American exceptionalism. "M4, he does not like this expression because he thinks that it is not a good term to say. But before reading the article *How Trump Is Making Us Rethink American exceptionalism*, I was asking myself, Is Trump really do not like this expression of exceptionalism or, just trying to be to catch people attention on the type of president he is? Because he is always using the world " Amerca first" immediately, I had the thought, that might be the other way to use the expression " American exceptionalism "

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Re: Trumps stance on American Exceptionalism

by [Anna McNutt](#) - Monday, April 15, 2019, 3:31 PM

You also bring up a good point: is he rejecting such a common, patriotic phrase just to get peoples attention? He has always claimed to love America and seems to think highly of the country and the people. However, his election slogan was "Make America Great **Again**." The word "again" implies that America was once great, but is not now.

In the last paragraph of the article (Trump and American Exceptionalism) the author claims that "the doctrine of exceptionalism has traditionally led Americans to believe that their country is leading the world." So maybe Trump avoids the phrase American Exceptionalism because he does not want us to see American as "leading the world." He stated in an interview that "Germany is eating our lunch." (Trump Doesn't Believe in American Exceptionalism :24) Obviously Trump does not think we are at the top of the world at the time of the video. However, as he believes in the video, we could be one day. (Trump Doesn't Believe in American Exceptionalism)

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Re: Trumps stance on American Exceptionalism

by [Amanda Francis](#) - Friday, April 19, 2019, 8:00 PM

The video clip about Trump and his feelings about American exceptionalism is very interesting. During the video he states that he doesn't "like the term" basically because it's rude and he has a small ego, but then states that he "would like to make us exceptional" (video clip 1:16). What is it? You don't believe it is right for a country to think they are more exceptional than the other or you don't think American is exceptional currently, but you would like it to be? Those are two conflicting statements.

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Re: Trumps stance on American Exceptionalism

by [Joe Kiefer](#) - Monday, April 15, 2019, 11:56 PM

I think you all are making some good points, but I think it goes deeper than that. In the Politico article, one line stood out to me, " It's a more Trumpian way of saying what other politicians often mean."(end of third paragraph Politico article) While I have no doubt that President Trump thinks very highly of this country, his dislike of the term American Exceptionalism , in my opinion, comes from his background in business and always wanting to make a deal. He is very skilled at making deals, he has done it his whole life and built a worldwide brand on doing this. His background in business, I'm sure, has taught him how to deal with other people and other countries. It is always easier to make a deal that favors yourself if the people your dealing with think they are on a level playing field with you, which is why I think he doesn't care for the term, even though he probably does believe in American Exceptionalism. When President Trump said, " other countries are eating our lunch"(:58 into Trump interview video), to me, he is just trying to make nice with other countries to try and make better trade deals and lure companies back to the US.

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Re: American Exceptionalism

by [Dago Franck-Nathan Kouassi](#) - Saturday, April 13, 2019, 8:15 PM

Separated by over 100 years, what similarities or differences can you infer concerning this country's leaders of Chapter 22 and the leaders of today and their understanding of American Exceptionalism.

the understanding of American exceptionalism over time diverge according to each other's understanding. 100 years ago, President Willamette and Theodore Roosevelt sought to expand the influence of the United States around the world. For them, American exceptionalism or the imperialist "considered as the idea that the United States had a unique destiny to promote democracy and civilization. fight for freedom of being, human rights. the Anglo-Saxon was representative of, the hope, of the largest, liberty, the purest Christianity, the highest civilization,

However, nowadays, our leaders differ in opinion according to this expression, for certain, United is the blessed country of God, the model that all other countries must follow or have for the model, a country with law and right just, incomparable to all other countries. For Herman Cain, responded to Obama’s comments with this reply in the March 2011 issue of The American Spectator (spectator.org), a conservative website, He stated that “ America is the greatest country in the world” for him, United is unique and cannot be comparable to another country. That’s what the expression “ exceptionalism “ means for him and a lot of other people that as the same viewpoint as him.

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Re: American Exceptionalism, what simalarities and differences of past and present leaders, and do our nation's leaders still use exceptionalism the same way.

by [Joe Kiefer](#) - Sunday, April 14, 2019, 4:05 PM

The leaders of the twentieth century all felt, as much of the country did, that we were truly an exceptional nation. US foreign policy of the time felt that the “ peoples of the Philippines, Puerto Rico, Guam, Cuba, and Columbia as inferior and primitive and denied them the right to govern themselves.”(textbook p. 744). This meant that they did not feel they had what it takes to institute a decent form of government that would be able to withstand time and be able to work with the US. These leaders felt it was their duty to institute a democracy like that of the US because they felt that they were morally superior to these other nations. On the contrary, the leaders of today feel that we are exceptional because of our freedoms and rights, our ability to prosper as individuals, but not to try building democracies throughout the world. Herman Cain said, “ We see American Exceptionalism not as an empty cry for nationalism, but instead, the blessings of God that keep our nation strong, independent, and free.”(fourth paragraph Spectator.org article) President Obama, while he feels that we are exceptional, so does every other nation feels they are as well.(:25 into Exceptionalism speakers video) Evan Sayet, on the other hand, didn’t think that President Obama felt that we are exceptional as a nation.(1:07 into Exceptionalism speakers video) While Charles Murray argues that we are not as exceptional as we were in the beginning of the twentieth century (4:10 into Exceptionalism speakers video), he says we have exceptional elements, but not overall exceptional as we were. I think that todays leaders still feel we are exceptional, just not the way we were in the beginning of the twentieth century. This is probably because we have learned from the injustices of that time and the fact that the times have changed since then.

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Re: American Exceptionalism, what simalarities and differences of past and present leaders, and do our nation's leaders still use exceptionalism the same way.

by [Joe Kiefer](#) - Friday, April 19, 2019, 8:32 AM

After some reflection I thought that I would add a little detail to my original post. I did a little more research in the book and found that leaders of the twentieth century had a much more different take of American Exceptionalism than leaders today do. Roosevelt did not feel that people of smaller countries were capable of self-governing or industrial progress and were racially inferior.(pg.735 textbook) This was quite indicative of most leaders of the time. This comes from the way things were perceived at this time in world history. Jump forward to today, this is not the way leaders feel today, even though many of the leaders still believe in American Exceptionalism, it is quite different from that of the leaders of the twentieth century. Gone today is the thought that smaller countries are not capable of self-governing and being racially inferior. The racial aspect today has changed very much since the beginning of the twentieth century and is basically not existent in context of American Exceptionalism as expressed by today’s leaders. Todays leaders that talk about American Exceptionalism instead focus more on our form of government and the ability to become as successful as you want to be, based of your ability and motivation, as well as our role of being the worlds economic and military power. With the election of the current president, while many leaders still want to keep trying to build nations, he does not want the US doing this anymore and would like to end that part of our legacy. Though they are still willing to stand up for and promote Democracy throughout the world, as we have throughout our history. Let me know what you think.

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Re: American Exceptionalism, what simalarities and differences of past and present leaders, and do our nation's leaders still use exceptionalism the same way.

by [Maximillian Prentice](#) - Friday, April 19, 2019, 4:04 PM

Joe,

You made a lot of great points in your response; I just wanted to add a couple thoughts of my own. I feel like the speaker Evan Sayet summed up well what you were saying about our leaders of today, while referencing some strains of American nativism like our "Judeo-Christian heritage" and "Protestant work ethic" (1:36 – 1:45, exceptionalism video). Today it is the ideals of the country that makes it exceptional more than our will to conquer and govern other nations.

I also like how you brought up that the U.S. has learned from the injustices of the time and that has kind of changed the meaning of exceptionalism. We could not continue with the same practices of the 19th century because they just were not sustainable. I did find it funny how the speaker in the video, Charles Murray, mentioned "U.S. neighborliness" during the 19th century (4:23, exceptionalism video). I can think of a few things that took place during that time period that were not so neighborly; the hundreds of lynchings that took place during that time period come to mind. I guess what I find most interesting is the fact that American Exceptionalism has a little different meaning for everyone.

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Hints of Exceptionalism in the US Part 1

by [Baylee Crowson](#) - Monday, April 15, 2019, 6:06 PM

Part 1:

The leaders used to brag a lot about the US having outstanding American Exceptionalism, because the US was much more exceptional back then. The leaders today don't really agree with that anymore, in that video, Obama said we have great American Exceptionalism and then tip toed his way around saying we aren't that much more special than any other country believes they are. (Exceptionalism video from Forum 1 materials). I'd say they don't always use it the same anymore. I hear a lot of people talk about how great America is but even our own president said that we shouldn't say we are exceptional because it would mean we are better than all these other countries. The US relies on all these other countries for getting goods to sell in the states so I don't see how we are so much better than the other countries when we are so in debt to them. I agree the most with Charles Murray. He talks about how we are exceptional because groups of people got together to agree and say certain characteristics or ideals are exceptional about the US. He also said it's easy to see how we were exceptional back then but how it's more unclear now. I think we used to have super great freedoms, or rights, but now they are being changed and limited more and more as the world goes on. I think he adds a good perspective being a scholar and having written a book about American Exceptionalism. (American Exceptionalism Speakers video).

Part 2:

I believe the survey results from the class match the barna.com results pretty well. The items that seemed the most important to the majority of the class seem to be nearly the same as what the barna.com survey people thought were the most important. My answers fit along with what the rest of the class thought was important too. I agree with the results, those all seemed to be the most important to protect. The freedom of speech and religion really standout to me. Also the right to the pursuit of life, liberty, and happiness.

Their identification on the spectrum will affect their thoughts on American exceptionalism because each side has a basic way of thinking and a general ideas of morality. The liberals tend to think that Exceptionalism is still in America while the conservatives think it has gone and we need to work back at it. Although I was mildly unclear because the video for the previous part said Obama didn't truly believe in exceptionalism still being here, and it was clear Trump doesn't like to even use the term. I would say it influences people because people will either agree with the leader and claim to be whatever they are so they can try to fit in, that could really influence some to vote one way over another. (What Trump believes of American Exceptionalism) and (Forcing us to rethink exceptionalism)

It has caused such an uproar because people are thinking Trump is anti-America and anti-patriotism. When in fact, I believe he hasn't been that way, I think he is just telling the hard truth no one wants to accept. All Americans want to believe in American Exceptionalism but I think we need to raise the bar and better America before we run around

bragging about how fantastic we are.

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Re: Part 2 reply

by [Adam Moore](#) - Thursday, April 18, 2019, 8:18 PM

I would have to disagree with most of your statements to part two of your post. The barna.com survey does not match our class survey very well. I would agree that the first point on the Barna.com survey matches our own but after that they differ greatly. Our poll rates the constitution at a lowly 7%. There are some differences in word choice but not enough to make up a 13-point difference. I would agree with you that the top three from our class survey are important to protect and rather important to our growth as a nation, where we differ however is that I do not think most take the ethic of self-government and personally responsibility seriously in this state or this country. We only give lip service in this state to freedom of speech and religion, even though those things should be guarded above most. Yet we find ourselves in an uphill battle as those on the left would love nothing more than to vote our free speech out of existence. So where as I would love to see freedoms protected in the state of Oregon and Nationally I notice that they are slowly being eroded away.

I believe you have your facts mixed up when you talk about which side of the political spectrum still views America as Exceptional.

"It is a happy finding for the GOP: A new Gallup poll reveals that 92 percent of Republicans are "extremely" or "very" proud to be an American. Things are not so fervent among Democrats on the patriotic meter: 67 percent said they were proud" (the Washington Times Article on page three of the forum materials for American exceptionalism.)

This poll clearly shows that Republican's love this country and find it exceptional. A lot on the left feel that America was never exceptional and generally share the same opinion as Obama. If you think people would Agree with Trump because they want to fit in, I am unclear as to how you feel that way. When individuals where the MAGA hat they are spit upon and physically attacked, disagreeing with this current administration seems to be the most fashionable thing to do.

Trump took a huge gamble when he said that America is not exceptional as his base would strongly disagree with that statement. I would agree with you that Trump is not anti-American and or anti-patriotic, and that America is not as exceptional as it once was, but through persistence and fiscal responsibility we can make America exceptional again. Thank you for sharing your opinions and discoveries as you were writing your post.

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Re: Part 2 reply

by [Baylee Crowson](#) - Saturday, April 20, 2019, 1:35 PM

I just want to start off this reply by saying, I'm not too into politics so I apologize if I get the facts incorrect. This stuff gets a bit confusing to me so I'm glad we are going over this in this class! I would love nothing better than to understand more about politics and the government. I looked back at the polls and I do see what you're talking about the 13% difference now that you point it out. I was saying we are close to the barna.com graph because the pursuit of happiness and the opportunity to become who you want are at the top and both surveys have that, the freedom of speech and freedom of religion all at the tops of the polls. But when you do look closer at the barna survey you can definitely see there are some differences between our class and the poll people.

I think a lot of our rights are slowly diminishing nation-wide and I 100% agree with you on that!

I believe there are people in America that would have voted for Hillary JUST because they are democratic the same way I believe people voted for Trump because he ran as the republican party. It isn't too hard to see that happening, I know people that are exactly like that on social media and I've experienced it with friends and family. People also vote democratic or republican to fit in with the people they are around and those people typically don't know better. As silly as it sounds, I don't doubt that happened. Not everyone

that voted for Trump walks around with a MAGA hat or shirt so not everyone that voted for him would be harassed for voting for him. That would only happen if they made it known to those people doing the harassing. Just a opinion I threw into my post lol

I've been under the impression that American Exceptionalism means thinking how great America is compared to everyone else, not just simply being proud of America. I must have skipped over that in the reading because I can't remember reading that, otherwise I would have thought differently, so thank you for pointing that out! I believe I've been misinterpreting the MAGA slogan this whole time, I've believed that was him pointing out how America is not currently great and he wants to what he can to make it great again.

Thank you for the reply and knowledge! I'll take it with me into the future!

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Re: Hints of Exceptionalism in the US Part 1
by [Maclain O'Leary](#) - Saturday, April 20, 2019, 9:56 PM

Hi Baylee,

I would like to say I agree with a lot of your part one response. But also have some things to add. You make the point that certain aspects of American Exceptionalism have diminished over time due to new laws and standards we as a country are held by. While I believe this is strongly the case, it also raises the question has American Exceptionalism really diminished, or has it just evolved. Take the Paris Climate agreement for example. President Trump withdrew the United States from the the Pais Climate Agreement, and while I don't claim to know all the politics behind the decision, it in largely had to do with Trump putting Americas best interest first. Same type of idea with the Nuclear agreements falling apart with North Korea. These are decisions being made by our government because we feel what we know and want is right and above all else. While President Trump says he doesn't believe in American Exceptionalism, he does believe in "America First", which I believe is the same type of ideology.

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Re: Trump's views on American Exceptionalism compared to past Presidents of the United States
by [Alex Davis](#) - Monday, April 15, 2019, 6:23 PM

Trump seems to be one of the only presidents to disagree with American Exceptionalism. Most presidents before believe in American Exceptionalism and that America is unique from other countries. In Trump's video he says "I don't like the term, we are more outstanding than you". He talks about one example saying we are 18 trillion in debt so we can't be exceptional. I understand his point but I don't necessarily agree with it. Do you think Trump is right with his view on American Exceptionalism or the presidents before him?

What Trump Thinks About American Exceptionalism video (55-1:15 in Trump Video)

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Re: Trump's views on American Exceptionalism compared to past Presidents of the United States
by [Dago Franck-Nathan Kouassi](#) - Tuesday, April 16, 2019, 10:54 PM

I do not quite agree with Donald Trumps, because it's one thing not to like the term "exceptionalism American". But that does not mean that he does not like the definition of this term, the goal of this term, the reality that it engages. When Trumps s address about this term in the video (Trump does not believe in" American exceptionalism. "M4), it also evokes the fact of the business with other nations. I think it's a way to do not offend business associates. Because I think that Trump using "America first" is another way to show “exceptionalism American”.

Former President Barack Obama, also I'm not sure he believes in this expression, because, in audio,(former President Obama’s actual words, listen to the several speakers that follow, each with differing interpretations, as they address the issue of American Exceptionalism. (11:00 in length)) he said he believes in American exceptionalism, as British people believe in British exceptionalism. I think the president has his time, did not want to seem different from these predecessors, by saying that he does not believe in it. So I think he just said he believed in America exceptionalism because of his public image and be liked by the population.

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Re: Trump's views on American Exceptionalism compared to past Presidents of the United States

by [Joe Kiefer](#) - Thursday, April 18, 2019, 8:14 AM

I think that President Trump does believe that we can be "Exceptional" again but that for the last 20 years we have lost the luster of this term. In the Trump video he did say, "we may have a chance to say it in the not to distant future."(1;40 Trump interview video) He specifically mentioned a couple reasons why he thought we have not been exceptional through the last couple decades, 1) The rising national debt 2) the terrible trade deals 3) The loss of American manufacturing deals. I think the term "American Exceptionalism" refers to the projection of American ideals and power, which would mean , I think, that if you do not believe in this term than you would be an isolationist. In the Foreign Affairs article, it was stated very clearly, "An isolationist he is not."(end of third paragraph of Trump and American Exceptionalism) I think, as I have said in another post, he does think we are an exceptional nation but does not like to say it because he is trying to reach deals with other nations and using this term would make it harder to reach the deals that he is seeking with these nations.

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Re: Trump's views on American Exceptionalism compared to past Presidents of the United States

by [Eli Free](#) - Thursday, April 18, 2019, 12:34 PM

I'd like to say I'd agree with your stance Joe, I think that a huge part of his entire game plan is to flirt with the term of "American exceptionalism" and never directly state it. (About 1:00 into Trump video) Trump starts gracing the subject but never wants to specifically state that America is exceptional and above all other countries and yet, just look at how pompous he tries to make America look. His entire campaign is behind the saying that explains it all, "Make America great again." This even proves in the words of the slogan that he looks at America as once being "great" and even wants to bring us back to be known by connotation of such word. While he may say that he doesn't like the term of "Exceptionalism," he clearly has many ideologies that would most likely fit under the category. He avoids the term, bust most certainly believes in it, whether he states it directly or not.

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Re: Trump's views on American Exceptionalism compared to past Presidents of the United States

by [Maclain O'Leary](#) - Saturday, April 20, 2019, 10:03 PM

I believe President Trump does believe in American Exceptionalism, he just doesn't want to call it that. He has the strong ideology of "America First". The Mexico border wall, the pull out of the Nuclear treaty with North Korea, these are examples of our government holding other countries to standards that we set because we feel it is our God given right to do so. To make a parallel between then and today, the Mexican American War and the Nuclear Treaty talks with North Korea. 100 years ago we went to war with Spain, and when we won, we felt it was our right and duty to "civilize" those other countries. Fast forward to today, Trump tried to make a deal with North Korea concerning all nuclear weapons, and when the plans weren't going the way we wanted them to, our government backed out. These are both cases of our country having a standard they want to live by and believing the rest of the world should live by those standards. I believe American Exceptionalism is very alive and well today, we may just call it other things.

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American Exceptionalism v. Imperialism (Pt. 1)

by [Maximillian Prentice](#) - Monday, April 15, 2019, 8:02 PM

I feel like American exceptionalism of today and American imperialism during the early 20th century are similar, but the times have changed. I think the similarities lie in the idea that America is a great, and even special nation; presidents from Theodore Roosevelt to Barack Obama would probably agree on that. In the days of Roosevelt and

Wilson, there was room for expansion, and that is what imperialism was about to them, “their desire to control ports and territories beyond the continental borders of their own country” (Text, p. 720). They were looking to expand trade, expand the U.S. foreign policy and share our ideas with the world. These efforts were sometimes successful, like when Theodore Roosevelt, “invited representatives of Japan and Russia to Portsmouth, New Hampshire, and prevailed to negotiate a compromise” (Text, p. 736) that ended the Russo-Japanese War.

While those same ideas are still in play today, I feel like our recent leaders are more focused on the idea of control, or mediation in other countries affairs. There is less room for America to expand and grow, so it is more about being involved in more issues around the world. I also feel like Evan Sayet and Charles Murray, featured in the video about President Obama, really took Obama’s framing of his answer the wrong way. Mr. Obama was trying to be political and avoid offending anyone when responding to a tough question, and they seemed to take it as saying America wasn’t special.

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Similarities in today's American Exceptionalism and the 19th century

by [Tiffanie Chapman](#) - Monday, April 15, 2019, 8:10 PM

Even though they are separated over 100 years, the general understanding of American Exceptionalism from our leaders of today and our leaders back then is very similar. William Mckinley and Theodore Roosevelt, along with Alfred Thayer Mahan all believed that our Freedoms in our country are “God-given rights” along with today’s Senator of Texas, Ted Cruz. Ted Cruz who spoke in our Speakers on American Exceptionalism video states, “our rights do not come from man, they come from God Almighty”. Which is the same belief as it was in the 19th century. The belief that our freedoms are “God-given” is one of the foundations of what makes up our country’s ideology of American Exceptionalism and no matter what political party our leaders come from, I believe they all have the mindset of keeping America the “Land of the Free.”

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American Exceptionalism v. Imperialism (Pt. 2)

by [Maximillian Prentice](#) - Monday, April 15, 2019, 8:24 PM

I think that President Trump rejecting the idea of American exceptionalism makes sense. There was a time that America was the superpower of the world; we were building things that couldn’t be built, we had a progressive and successful system of government, and we expanded more rapidly than most other countries. I feel as though we have reached a point now where it is unfair to look at America as so much better than any other place. Personally, I would not want to live anywhere but the United States, but that does not mean that there are no other exceptional countries out there. That is all Trump is saying. We used to live in a time where America was looked to by other countries as somewhat of an example, but right now we are on a fairly level playing field with some other counties, and powers of the world.

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Re: American Exceptionalism

by [Dago Franck-Nathan Kouassi](#) - Monday, April 15, 2019, 8:48 PM

Of the arguments and differing points of view expressed by the five speakers in the video clip, who do agree and/or disagree with most? What perspectives or depth do they add to the discussion (or where are they mistaken)?

of the 5 speakers of the audio, I agree more with Andrew Bacevich. I share his point of view that the united state must rest the question on the fact of exceptionalism, as the speaker could say the war of Iraq was not necessary. Where is the difference between Iraq and the united state if the united state leaves its country and fights a war that does not have theirs in another country? united become like every other country. and the expression exceptionalism loses all its value. The mission was to show to the rest of the world how they supposed to behave, be the model. But no to win or having a war

However, I do not agree with Sen Ted Cruz about the promise of America that gives the immigrant the opportunity to come to this country with nothing and become someone, and to have to be free. This is also done in other countries such as Canada, China, France and many other countries where immigrants are often lucky enough to get a job and flourish. this is not achieved only by coming united. So speaking of laws that do not come from men but from God. I think these laws were not written by God but not by men who think and think about what might

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American Exceptionalism Then and Now
by [Maclain O'Leary](#) - Monday, April 15, 2019, 10:00 PM

American Exceptionalism seems to be a different definition to different people. To some, as the quote by former President Obama infers, it is simply a "romanticism of patriotism.* Meaning it is nothing more than the belief that our country is the greatest country in the world, which I believe most people think of their country as the greatest country. To others, and what I want to focus on, American Exceptionalism is the God given right to lead, to progress, and to intervene in other countries in the world.

A perfect example of this view point is the Spanish-American War. Peoples "rights" in that country were being trampled on by military leaders. We saw images in the videos of children being malnourished and living conditions that rival those of the concentration camps of WWII. In many's viewpoint in America, along with wanting a "splendid little war", it was our job to liberate the Spanish from themselves, and bring our culture to them. Not only was it our job, it was our God given right to do this. All anyone needed was an excuse to start the war, and the supposed attack on the Navy ship Maine gave people that excuse. And Teddy Roosevelt, not even president at the time, led America into that splendid little war they wanted, and demonstrated their American Exceptionalism. By the time the war was over, we had brought liberation to the Spanish, but also then expected them to appropriate our culture and become more "civilized" by our standards.

I believe American Exceptionalism is still in full effect today, just maybe not to as an extreme degree. Take the war on terror as an example. We were fighting a war overseas to help liberate people of Afghanistan and defend the world from further acts of terrorism. And when we withdrew troops in 2014, we then didn't expect for the people we defended to appropriate our culture. We defended people of Iraq and Afghanistan because we felt it was our God given right to do so, but it stopped there.

American Exceptionalism can also be applied to industry. At the turn of the century, industry was booming. But we in order for industry to explode in the rate it was, people had to cut some corners, especially in the safety aspect of things. People were using child laborers, as well as overworking most employees for little pay, and owners of business felt that it was their right to do so, that they were free to run their business however they felt they wanted to. Some even felt it was their patriotic duty to do so. But as time went on, and people learned from mistakes, business changed. There were laws put into place, laws prohibiting child labor and long work days. And these laws still apply today, While America still has huge business and a booming economy because people of industry have the right to create business, we now live by different standards to hold us accountable. So the idea of American Exceptionism is still there, it has just changed and evolved.

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Class/barna.com Survey Response
by [Daniel Quirk](#) - Monday, April 15, 2019, 11:53 PM

Question: The class took a poll on what makes America great. How do the results compare to the barna.com survey? Did your own choices coincide or differ from the class (as a whole) and/or from the barna.com poll results of over 1,000 people (a much larger sample size than our class)? Do you agree with the results, or not? Do any items in either list of freedoms or positive traits stand out to you more than others?

My response will be about barna.com's survey. The answer I chose was the most popular answer. Many people believe this to be one of the greatest characteristics of our country, but a few do disagree. Since there's no one telling you who you are or who you have to be, the decision is completely up to you. This can cause a multitude of problems. First and foremost, there can easily be an overwhelming amount of people not wanting to work specific jobs, especially those that are needed (like construction workers, truck drivers, garbage pick-up, plumbers,

electricians, etc), and also too many people wanting jobs that are already full in the job market (this isn't supposed to be a shot at psych majors 😊). This issue can easily ~temporarily~ hurt the job market and leave (more than necessary) people out of work.

Something about the poll that surprised me was how many people voted for free speech/free press and freedom of religion. Over the past few years, this has been a HUGE problem in our nation. How many times a week do you hear about people getting discriminated against, arrested, sometimes even shot because of their opinions (freedom of speech) and race/color/religion? This has been an ongoing problem that needs to find a legal and ethical solution.

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American Exceptionalism?

by [Adam Moore](#) - Tuesday, April 16, 2019, 9:32 PM

If we took a snap shot of the leaders from the early 20th century and our leaders today I think we would find some differences in how they view American Exceptionalism. The presidents in our textbook in Chapter 22 believed in American Exceptionalism. Todays leaders differ greatly, those on the right side generally still feel that America is exceptional and some on the left think we never were.

In the 20th century leaders used exceptionalism in a much different way then they do today. Most of Americans leaders today are more concerned with a global point of view than that of the American people. The early 1900's nations leaders where fledgling's where international politics are concerned. They viewed America as a shiny beacon of independence and freedom. Compared to politicians today that have gone on an international apology tour.

I would agree most with the views of Charles Murphy (2:48 into exceptional speakers' video). "The best government is that which governs least" (David Thoreau "civil disobedience") What made America so exceptional was our limited government in the early 20th century. By todays stand7ards there is not a party that believes in limited government. Does that mean that America is not exceptional today? No, America is still exceptional, but it is starting to blend in with other nations rather than being that shiny beacon.

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America is still an exceptional nations

by [Levi Savage](#) - Wednesday, April 17, 2019, 2:33 PM

Is America an exceptional country I would argue yes we are for our time. Just as the British Empire was for their time they controlled at their heights a quart of the world's people and land. Then as they began to recede and their colonies gained independence they fell out of the spotlight of being # 1 in the world. The USA then took their place but not by outright conquering or directly controlling the world but by creating allies from former enemies and encouraging new countries to be like us and adopting our ways and values. We adapted the world to the US and her values by encouraging them with economic benefits and protection from their enemies. That's important in remembering we did not force all of the world to conform but instead offered these benefits if they did. We did force some countries to conform especially during the cold war and the fear of communism was the rise and the red scare that happened in the 1920s. Will America continue to be an exceptional country in the future. In this rapidly changing world that is seeing the rise of a whole new set of ideas and beliefs, we are starting to fall behind we are no longer the promising country that new governments look to when crafting their governing rights and protections of their people. But the likes of Canada and other countries are surpassing us in adopting these rights and guarantees to their people are becoming more appealing to this new generation of countries and their ideals. Every exceptional nation in human history had their time and effect on the world how long that last is up to that nation and her people of whether or not they want to continue being the champion of the world and whether or not the world is willing to follow also plays a critical role. In the end, America was and still is an exceptional nation but whether it will last is up to us the people once we stop believing in ourselves how could we expect the world to believe we are still an exceptional nation.

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Difference In Exceptionalism: Then And Now

by [Eli Free](#) - Wednesday, April 17, 2019, 8:26 PM

"And yet so many fear that that promise is today unattainable," (Ted Bundy, 11:00 in exceptionalism clip) here Ted Bundy is even making note of what so many people find to be a problem in today's society. The "American Dream" is far harder to achieve in today's day in age than it was in the turn of the 1900s. Back then it was so much easier to attain the "rags to riches" storyline. It was as simple as getting on a boat and heading to the promise land. After arriving you basically are allowed to do whatever you want. Starting businesses back then was ridiculously easier than it is today. Taxes are far greater today than 100 years ago. All signs are pointing south in our current age. The government simply has the American people by the throat, and the American people cannot do anything with our government's say so.

Now. although I used what Ted Bundy said as an example to support the case of American exceptionalism being less prevalent today than a hundred years ago, that doesn't quite mean I agree with what he is saying. He is basically stating all throughout his speech that America is a fantastic place and anything is possible here. He states that we are supposed to be "reigniting the promise of America" (11:17 in video clip), his whole stint is to glorify American exceptionalism and bring back the glory and pride that it means to be an American. Personally, I think even he knows that that will most likely never come to fruition. The government controls way too much and has so much say in who does what, that these days, it's purely a joke to look at America with a straight face and say "Oh yes, America! The most unique and above-all country in the world, the gold standard for countries everywhere!"

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Re: Difference In Exceptionalism: Then And Now

by [Amanda Francis](#) - Friday, April 19, 2019, 7:40 PM

I think you meant to say Ted Cruz not Ted Bundy although some people might find some similarities. 😊

Nevertheless, I also found issues with Ted Cruz's speech from the video clip. From the video, I couldn't tell if he was trying to sell us on the "American Dream" or pointing out issues with the current state of things, but working two jobs, acquiring \$100,000 worth of school debt which he states he just paid off a few years ago doesn't sound like an idyllic society to me. He went on to say that "these are all of our stories...these are who we are as Americans" (video clip 9:30) which leads me to think that his story was supposed to be a selling point for American exceptionalism.

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Re: American Exceptionalism

by [Dago Franck-Nathan Kouassi](#) - Thursday, April 18, 2019, 10:03 PM

part 2

Somebody identifiable himself in the The Right, which represents the Republicans,they tend to favor policies in which the power of the government is extremely limited, when it comes to promoting the general well-being of the people, while devoting sufficient resources to the common defense of the nation, such as the military and the people the implementation of international trade agreements, that's in how that influences their analysis, acceptance, or rejection of the "exceptionalism" issue.

But be in the left side, means somebody identified himself as Democrats, liberals and favor a stronger government with policies which benefit the general population at the expense of those in positions of power. the left side believes that the most important government's function is to provide for the general welfare of its citizens paid for by taxing the populous.

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Modern Times

by [Amanda Francis](#) - Thursday, April 18, 2019, 11:20 PM

Barack Obama got backlash from conservatives in regard to his answer to a question about American exceptionalism. He stated that he believes "in American exceptionalism just as [he] suspects that the Brits believe in British exceptionalism and the Greeks believe in Greek exceptionalism" (video clip 0:22). This statement was interpreted by conservatives to mean that Obama thought America was "nothing terribly special" (Herman Cain).

It's interesting that Trump's campaign slogan seven years later, was "Make American Great Again" which could be interpreted as America was once great but is no longer. Conservatives had no issue with that concept- in fact the contrary. Trump's campaign slogan almost accidentally confirms what Charles Murray simply states it in the video clip that "we were in fact exceptional during the 19th century, but it's much less clear now" (video clip 3:20). Regardless of which president you agree with more, I think it's a clear representation that the concept of American exceptionalism has changed vastly over the span of 100 years. Our textbook describes Teddy Roosevelt as someone who "believed that Americans were a racially superior people destined for supremacy in economic and political affairs" (p. 734). Roosevelt's ideas of American exceptionalism would be considered majorly problematic by today's standards, so the shift from American exceptionalism in modern times has been for the better.

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Re: Modern Times
by [Amanda Francis](#) - Friday, April 19, 2019, 7:18 PM

After watching the video clip with Donald Trump about American exceptionalism, it's even more clear that the idea of American exceptionalism does not exist as it did 100 years ago. Trump essentially says the same thing as Obama. Trump claims that believing in American exceptionalism is "insulting the world" because "if you're German or if you're from Japan or from China, you don't want to have people saying that" (video clip 1:24). The difference between the two presidents is that Obama said he believed in American exceptionalism in a way that showed American pride but not elitism. Trump, on the other hand, rejected the term all together. It's interesting that although Trump rejects American exceptionalism, the article about the Gallup poll shows that 92% of Americans are "extremely" or "very" proud to be an American. Maybe it just shows that you don't have to think your country is the best in the world or most unique to take pride in it. American pride can exist without believing in American exceptionalism.

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We haven't even BEGUN to peak
by [Christopher Bischoff](#) - Saturday, April 20, 2019, 2:53 PM

In the video about American Exceptionalism Charles Murray talked about American neighborliness and how it was one feature that made America unique "Very few cultures have had people living in physical proximity to each other who have cooperated the way americans did". Which is true, "immigrant men and their male children constituted 70 percent of the workforce in 15 of 19 leading U.S. industries." (Murrin 667). However, history has also shown that Americans had their growing pains while people from different cultures interacted with one another. An example of this would be the cartoons drawn about Germans and Irish people when they first immigrated. Another example would be when the Chinese were prohibited from immigrating due to the Chinese Exclusion Act. In addition, there were also laws in place that made Chinese, Japanese and other Asian people ineligible to become American citizens (Murrin 665).

The other thing that Charles Murray said that caught my attention when he was talking about American Exceptionalism was " The unique setting is gone, the unique ideology is gone, there is nothing limited about american government now...Still have exceptional elements today but not nearly as much as we use to". I can't help but think that Charles Murray is somehow stuck in the past, comparing the modern U.S. to the 18th and 19th century U.S.. Charles claims that the unique setting is gone because we no longer have the frontier, the buffer of the Atlantic ocean, or the East, which he says had profound affects on American ideology. Which is true, we no longer have the Western Frontier, and the buffer that was the Atlantic ocean is no more as technology has improved. However, there is a new frontier he has dismissed or simply not talked about, which is space. Space is the new frontier people have been exploring and getting prepared for. I believe humans are still in their infancy regarding space exploration, and I think in the 21st and 22nd centuries humans will be utilizing resources from space.

Charles Murray says the unique ideology of the U.S. is gone because we no longer have a small government that has very little presence in American life and that it is no longer limited. I would have to agree with him. The government has gotten much bigger over time, especially during war times. And the amount in which the government intrudes on people's lives is increasing. In some instances government intervention and regulation is a good thing. Like the Federal Meat Inspection Act and the Pure Food and Drug Act supported by President Roosevelt (Murrin 706). The downside of having such a large government is that there is often oversight and overspending, which has contributed to our vast deficit.

Charles Murray also says "...Still have exceptional elements today but not nearly as much as we use to" which I just have to disagree with. The information age has uncovered a lot of problems the U.S. is facing, many of which have been fixed or are currently in the process being fixed. People today are so much more aware of what is going on in the U.S. and in the world than in years past, and we are so much harder on ourselves than we used to be. The world we live in is full of problems, issues and suffering, however it is progressing in a positive and unprecedented way. It is easy to look at the microcosms of history and conclude that we were better people in the past, but I don't think that is the case. If you take a step back, and look at humanity as a whole then I think it is quite easy to see how much we have progressed as human beings.

It is difficult to objectively look at the world today and conclude that we are better off than in the past because of our incredibly high standards that we have attained from living in the 21st century combined with our poor understanding of history. I think the American ability to question and reason is the hallmark of American Exceptionalism. "We recognize the times we have stumbled but are assured that it is not due to weakness of our foundation, but instead, the imperfection of mankind." (American Spectator)

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Re: American Exceptionalism

by [Joe Kiefer](#) - Saturday, April 20, 2019, 4:10 PM

So, on my last post in this week's forum, I would like to point out why President Trump uses the phrase "Make America Great Again". I was going through the President Trump interview and I picked out a few moments where he kind of spelled it out quite clearly, The first one is, "Germany is eating our lunch"(:23 into Trump interview), where he is talking about the trade deficit that we have with Germany. The next one is where he says, "you've been eating our lunch for the last 20 years"(1:02 into Trump interview), again talking about trade deficits and possibly about NATO nations not paying their share of their GDP into NATO. The third one is, "and we're dying, we owe 18 trillion in debt"(1:12 into Trump interview), and I think he is talking about the amount of debt we have racked up over the last two decades plus, witch would include the last three Presidents. This next quote, I think, shows that he does believe in American Exceptionalism, "WE may have a chance to say it in the not too distant future, but even then, I wouldn't say it."(1:41 into the Trump interview. If you put all this together, it shows quite clearly that he does think we are an exceptional nation, but that we have lost some of our luster in the last couple decades and he wants to fix all that, or at least get us back on the right track.

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