

Civil-Religious Ideation and American Exceptionalism: Negotiating National Identity in a Contentious Time

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***Abstract:** In this research with college students and faculty in three private religiously-affiliated schools, we undertake an examination of the contemporary relevance of civil-religious ideation to the subjective understandings Americans have about the meaning of being Americans. In one sense this project constitutes an extension of earlier studies designed to discern the range of meanings within American civil religion (McKeown and Thomas 1985; 2003). At the same time we are seeking to appraise the argument recently advanced by Huntington (2004a; 2004b) that the only hope of preserving national unity in times of trial is by renewing commitments to the American Creed. He deems this project infeasible without an energized revivification of Anglo-Protestant civil-religious culture and discourse. Crucial empirical questions lie at the heart of the larger debate over the appeals and perils of framing national identity in religious terms. Mostly these questions pertain to matters of measurement and, heretofore, have been addressed inadequately in large-sample surveys. Foremost among these is the simple yet elusive notion of national identity. Is there, in our politically and culturally polarized setting of "red states" vs. "blue states," a distinctive, non-divisive answer to the national identity question? If so, what is its relationship to civil-religious symbolism and sentiment? The present project addresses these larger questions.*

Conceptualizing Civil-Religious Ideation

It is not a novel idea that American nationalism might bear strong, subtle, and problematic affinities to religious faith in both form and fervor. While it has

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been less than four decades since sociologist Robert Bellah called scholarly attention to an explicitly American civil religion (1967), the phenomenon it designates has deep historical roots. Intellectually, these roots extend to Rousseau's examination of civil religion as the basis for a legitimating myth able to secure the allegiance of freshly-created citizen communities constituted in the wake of the *social contract*.

At the heart of social contract theory is a view of the state as *constructed*. Accordingly, if people choose to leave the state of nature and enter into a social contract, thereby constructing a society they will inhabit, it is incumbent to devise ways and means by which citizens are to be bound to their creation. Hobbes' proposed solution was a coerced obedience anchored on fear of the state. For Locke, civil society was constructed primarily through the principle of consent. Rousseau saw the motivation for contracting parties as arguably more complex, and certainly more subtle, than did his English counterparts. In his vision, the contract is a state of mind as well as a mechanism for government. While a portion of the *ties that bind* can be located in Rousseau's notions of the general will and participatory citizenship (Pateman 1971), his formulation also embraces a religious dimension conspicuously absent in the work of either Hobbes or Locke. In *On The Social Contract* (Book IV, chapter 8), Rousseau's notion of "civil religion" is laced with legitimating importance; indeed, it is conceived as providing a "sacred canopy" that protects and defends the constructed order from public realization — or even suspicion — that this particular order is anything other than authentic and ontologically beyond question.

Perhaps the logic of this argument is more brightly illuminated by Berger's (1967) assertion that the most profound forms of legitimation invoke and are enveloped by a sense of the transcendent. Cosmological considerations abound, and include this meaning of a *sacred canopy*: a religious buffer that shields the constructed reality from attack by repelling feelings of doubt, disbelief, and denial. The most powerful *political creation myths* are in some sense religious, because "religion legitimates social institutions by bestowing upon them an ultimately valid and ontological status, that is, by locating them within a sacred and cosmic frame of reference" (Berger 1967, 33). This is the essence of Rousseau's argument on the public importance of what is felt at a personal level to be a matter of individual conscience, faith, and salvation.

American history is replete with civil-religious expressions bearing strong affinities to Rousseau's notions. There is abundant evidence that "...North American Christians... employed biblical images and themes in attempting to understand the history and calling of the American nation" (Mouw 1982, 140). The refrain of Winthrop's early homily (1630) portraying the New World as *The Shining City on the Hill*, home to a *chosen people* called to serve as a beacon of freedom for those not yet so blessed by the bounty of God, echoes

three and a half centuries later in the presidency and passing of Ronald Reagan. Over the course of these centuries, the essence and evolution of American identity owed much to the interpenetration of civic and religious discourse.

This transference of religious fervor to national ideals became the heart of American civil religion. ... This shift greatly strengthened the American republic, endowing it with a new sense of lofty purpose. The nation rather than the church easily emerged as the primary agent of God's activity in history. (Noll et al. 1983, 114)

American civil religion (ACR) was seen as *extra-ecclesiastical*, because it transcended narrow sectarian identities. As such, ACR was part and parcel of what historians have since labeled *American exceptionalism* (Linder and Pierard 1978). Conjoined in this fashion, exceptionalism and civil religion literally and metaphorically *fed* on one another: As *God's New Israel*, the American *covenant nation* could boast of a history that, with few aberrations, bore living witness to the country's blessed condition. As Ronald Reagan put it on many occasions, America is a "special place set aside between the two great oceans by the hand of Providence, home to a special people, with a special love for freedom, meant to serve as a beacon of liberty for all of mankind." In this manner, Reagan functioned (as have most presidents) in the *priestly* mode of ACR (i.e. assuring, enhancing, defending), which serves as a social and moral force countering the otherwise centrifugal tendencies of an increasingly heterogeneous, hyper-pluralistic nation.

In contrast with the *priestly* mode one finds a different civil-religious posture more attuned to criticism than to celebration. This so-called *prophetic* posture utilizes religious rhetoric and symbolism as a source of standards against which to judge the nation, calling it to account for transgressions and demanding repentance. The presumption is that God's blessings will flow only as long as the nation acts in accordance with the timeless principles enshrined in the Covenant. The essence of the priestly-prophetic distinction is captured nicely by Martin Marty's observation that the former "comforts the afflicted" whereas the latter "afflicts the comfortable" (1974, 145). In the same discussion Marty makes another important contribution to our understanding of the *varieties* of ACR, *compounding* the distinction of priestly vs. prophetic when he treats it as a Cartesian axis by simultaneously considering it as "nation-transcendent" and "Nation-under-God." The resulting double contingencies generate a typology of "two kinds of two kinds" regarding ACR. Set against the axis of *modes* is a "dualistic continuum" consisting of competing ideas of *transcendence*:

1) One understanding (nation-transcendent) *separates* the secular and the sacred, partly from concern about the consequences of confusing human judgments and discretion with the will — or the wrath — of an omnipotent deity. American exceptionalism, in this view, may or may not reflect a *blessed* condition, but is more likely a function of the interaction among a whole host

of variables including unique geographical location, historical good fortune, and industrial-military might. In this discourse, God remains a profound personal presence as *The Almighty* in the spiritual lives of individual believers, but his role as a direct agent of collective political destiny is de-emphasized.

2) The alternative understanding of transcendence (Nation-under-God) holds that the nation is shaped and judged by a God whose sovereignty supercedes as well as predates that of the state. In this discourse, American history cannot be insulated from the hand of Providence. National purpose *must* acknowledge and adhere to standards no less lofty than God's. If American nationalism is largely a narrative of exceptionalism and triumph, it is because the *reality* of God's existence is repeatedly affirmed in the religious devotion and deeds of key leaders in times of trial. From Manifest Destiny (the 19th century conviction that expansion of Anglo-Protestant culture into the uncharted lands of the western North American continent was guided by the hand of Providence) to America's quasi-religious wartime crusades (including the post 9/11 period of mobilizing the nation in the *War on Terror*), national experience is repeatedly translated into terms that transcend the temporal. God's existence and presence is taken for granted in the material and political world (no less than the spiritual) as a source of both blessing and judgment.

Calibrating Civil-Religious Ideation: Moving from Surveys and Social Indicators to Operant Subjectivity

The prominence of *God talk* in American political experience has been a source of curiosity among American scholars and non-American observers. By a host of measures, religiosity readily distinguishes America from other Western societies. Compared with Europeans, citizens in the U.S. are far more likely to express belief in God and to rate the importance of God in their lives as *high* (Inglehardt and Caballo 1997). They exceed European Christians by a hefty margin as regular church-goers (Huntington 2004a). Comparisons such as these figure prominently in scholarly treatments of American exceptionalism (e.g., Kingdon 1997; Lipset 1997; Luccock 1930), but it is important to recognize that such evidence has limitations. Typically, scholars draw upon this kind of information to highlight distinctive features of American culture and national identity. Huntington (2004b), for instance, goes well *beyond the data* when he uses such documented *factual* differences to advance significant claims about matters of *subjective meaning*. Asserting that their religiosity leads Americans to “see the world in terms of good and evil to a much greater extent than other peoples,” Huntington then surmises that “(T)he leaders of other societies often find this ... not only extraordinary but also exasperating for the deep moralism it engenders in the consideration of political, economic and social issues” (p. 18). Professor Huntington may well be right. But until we have a much better understanding of how Americans *experience* their avowed *religiosity* — i.e., what civil religion *means* to the

ordinary American — such claims are best considered as contributions to the scholarly *concourse* surrounding the place of civil-religious ideation in Americans' subjective understandings of *being American*.

Huntington can hardly be faulted for failing to appreciate the role of civil religion in sustaining American national identity against an alliance of hostile forces. In the short time since its publication *Who Are We?* (Huntington 2004) has spawned a cascade of controversy reverberating well beyond the walls of Academe. The central tenet is captured by its subtitle, *The Challenges to America's National Identity*. Huntington's diagnosis is that American nationalism is facing a formidable *identity crisis*, and this does not bode well for the Republic. When set against the sense of urgency and alarm with which his case is marshaled, this is a dramatically understated — almost sedate — phrasing of the problem, for Huntington is upset and exercised by what he sees. While the author implicates many causal factors in his analysis, two secular trends emerge as prime suspects:

1) The trend of recent U.S. *immigration patterns* (particularly involving ethnic *Latinos*) poses a problem, according to Huntington, because both the scale and substance of Hispanic immigration resist cultural assimilation. Newly arrived *Latino émigrés*, encouraged in part by prevailing multicultural sensibilities, *remain* “strangers in a strange land,” retaining their linguistic, familial, and other ties to their culture of origin *without truly assimilating to an American national identity*. (Huntington eschews the term *North American* throughout the volume.)

2) Huntington claims the unrelenting onslaught of *economic globalization* has had comparable “identity-diluting” effects as elites in American society have undergone an arguably unhealthy degree of *denationalization* by adopting loyalties and values better described as *cosmopolitan* as opposed to *American*. The tone of Huntington's (2004b) assessment is encapsulated by his reference to the elite class of citizens thus denationalized as a cultural derivative of globalization using the term *dead souls* (a phrase Huntington borrows from Walter Scott's 1804 *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*).

This statement of the problem — the fixation with *these particular challenges to America's national identity* — has its detractors. In separate reviews, for instance, Fuchs (2004) and Wolfe (2004) take strong exception to the evidence and argument on which *Who Are We?* advances its diagnostic claims. However, our interest stems most directly from the remedy Huntington prescribes for the perceived ailments. Specifically, his optimum strategy for Americans bent on revitalizing authentically national commitments is a reinvigoration of “old time civil religion,” the same path Rousseau prescribed at the conclusion of *The Social Contract*. Huntington's prognosis here rests on his reading of the crucial role played by Anglo-Protestant traditions in the shaping of New American “settler culture.”

America's Anglo-Protestant culture has combined political and social institutions and practices inherited from England, including most notably the English language, together with the concepts and values of dissenting Protestantism, which faded in England but which the settlers brought with them and which took on new life on the new continent.... With adaptations and modifications, this original culture persisted for three hundred years....

Millions of immigrants and their children achieved wealth, power and status in American society precisely because they assimilated themselves into the prevailing American culture. Hence there is no validity to the claim that Americans have to choose between a white, racist, WASP-ish ethnic identity, on the one hand, and an abstract, shallow civic identity dependent on commitment to certain political principles, on the other. The core of their identity is the culture that the settlers created, which generations of immigrants have absorbed, and which gave birth to the American Creed. *At the heart of that culture has been Protestantism.* (Huntington 2004b, 17-18; *emphasis added*)

In an interesting anti-elitist twist, Huntington finds hope for recapturing the core of American exceptionalism — and hence national identity — by heeding the “patriotic public,” the vast majority of American citizens who simultaneously link their belief in and love of God with reverence for the homeland.

Americans are overwhelmingly committed to both God and country and see them as inseparable. In a world in which religion shapes the allegiances, the alliances and the antagonisms of people on every continent, it should not be surprising if Americans again turn to religion to find their national identity and their national purpose. (Huntington 2004b, 18)

Hence, if a restoration of the American Creed is to occur, the promise has its roots in the renewed vigor of civil-religious sentiment in the public-at-large. Evidence for this kind of renewal was seen in the immensely popular resurgence of “God Bless America” symbolism in the wake of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Even then a substantial segment of the nation's establishment, governmental and private, shows signs of increasing estrangement from an authentic feeling of *being American*.

Huntington's argument is clearly provocative, and among the many issues it raises are crucial empirical questions bearing on the nature of civil religion as it is *experienced* in contemporary America. In the current context, how are we to make sense of *religiously-tinged* rhetoric in the *grand concourse of American exceptionalism*? Is ACR actually *all of one piece* in the meanings it elicits in the public mind as he seems to suggest? In Marty's terms, Professor Huntington seems to assume that to the degree they are rooted in civil-religious themes, Americans' notions of who they are form a *consensual* discourse that is fundamentally priestly in character. In a recent hermeneutical examination of subjective uses and understandings of the simple yet

omnipresent phrase “God Bless America” in the aftermath of 9/11, however, McKeown and Thomas (2003) discovered that even among relatively homogenous evangelical Christian communities, there was substantial diversity in the meanings ascribed this phrase. For some, this phrase captured sentiments of unabashed, priestly patriotism. For others, though, the symbol elicited prophetic calls for the U.S. to “get its act together” in the wake of trauma and seek to invigorate an ethos of reconciliation and hope. For still others, “God Bless America” became a call to battle: an invocation to confront evil in an all-out “American *jihad*.”

We were moved by Huntington’s lament over the disappearance of a particular kind of ACR, which he labels as the residual of our Anglo-Protestant culture and heritage. In order to investigate the value and validity of his lament and his preferred solution, our strategy is to query students and faculty at Protestant colleges, precisely the environs in which we would expect Huntington’s (implied, yet subjective) norm to appear with operant clarity. Because he uses “objective data,” Huntington’s subjective norm remains an ill-defined categorical target; but it does seem to have conceptual affinities with Marty’s “Priestly/Nation-Transcendent” type (also, of course, a categorical entity). At the very least, such findings counsel caution in extrapolating so ambitiously about civil-religious ideation in the absence of data-gathering strategies that allow the “believers” to speak for themselves on matters of presumed common meaning.

In earlier empirical work on ACR, McKeown and Thomas (1985; 1988) demonstrated the utility of Q technique as a hermeneutical strategy, finding three versions of the “two kinds of two kinds” of civil religion Marty (1974) identifies in his conceptual Cartesian matrix. In the present research we extend this line of inquiry by again using a hermeneutical strategy in an exploration of civil-religious components of American national identity. This approach allows us to address several questions raised by Huntington’s analysis. First, when treated as subjective operants rather than categorical designations, do the various *senses held by Americans of their own national identity and exceptionalism* bear any relationship to what Huntington and others, drawing on different data sources, assert as an ill-defined “American Creed” or “Anglo-Protestant settler tradition?” Second, are the allegiances of individual American citizens (Huntington 2004b, 18) and their willingness to maintain those allegiances affected by civil-religious themes and symbolism based on perceptions of ACR as expressed through the governing majority? Third, to what extent do religiously-tinged themes and symbols foster unity rather than division in negotiating a national identity? Fourth, how might we best proceed to capture and calibrate the differences between alternative concepts of “being American,” in order to understand the gap between actual beliefs of rival parties to the national conversation and those attributed to them by political opponents?

Methods

Concourse and Q Sample

At a conceptual level, the “being American” concourse is very broad, encompassing in principle any subjective utterance under the vast umbrella of American national identity. We used a 3×3 design (Figure 1) to balance the selection of statements in a purposive sampling of the concourse to examine the civil-religious aspects of American identity. The main effects are (a) *rhetorical domain*, divided into three levels — secular, ambiguous, religious — and (b) *valence*, also consisting of three levels — positive, ambivalent, and negative. Three or four statements were fitted to each of the nine cell possibilities, producing a Q sample of 35 statements.

Figure 1. Design for “Being American” Q Sample

Main Effects	Levels		
X. Domain	(a) Secular	(b) Ambiguous	(c) Religious
Y. Valence	(d) Positive	(e) Ambivalent	(f) Negative

Q Sorts

Each respondent performed three sorts under the same specific conditions of instruction indicating (1) the participant’s own view of America, (2) President George W. Bush’s perspective, and (3) Senator John Kerry’s perspective.

P Set

It is clearly apparent from Table 1 (Appendix) that the P-set is a *convenience sample*, comprised of students and faculty at three Protestant church-affiliated colleges in the United States. Respondents are arrayed in sequential clusters, 17 respondents in Indiana (1-17), 16 in Iowa (18-31), and 11 in California (32-42). Table 1 also contains volunteered descriptive data bearing on each participant’s gender, political party affiliation, political ideology, “Christian orientation,” and frequency of church attendance. This is a fairly religious group of respondents, who, with only one exception consider themselves Christians. The California participants uniformly report weekly church attendance.

Q Factor Analysis

Q sorts were analyzed with PQMethod (Schmolck and Atkinson 2002). Initially, the analyses were performed in waves based on site and date of completion. The 51 Q sorts from respondents in Indiana comprised Wave I. In Wave II, Iowa respondents made 48 Q sorts. In Wave III were 33 Q sorts from respondents in California. Altogether, the data-set consists of 132 Q sorts.

Notwithstanding the analysis of these sorts in site-related clusters, the results in each case were quite similar. In fact, results from the independent analyses bore a striking resemblance to one another with three strong factors from each state emerging as virtual replications of the solutions obtained from

the other sites. Accordingly, results are combined here for reasons of space and simplicity *as if* all the data were analyzed in one 132×132 correlation matrix. We say “as if” because the rotated factor matrix reported in Table 1 is actually a *composite*, generated by a series of smaller analyses, including a second-order factor analysis of factor-scores from each site as well as other *correlational* efforts to match the fit of our three analytic *waves*. A second-order factor analysis, analogous to a *reliability measure* (Thomas and Baas 1993), confirms these findings. (Results are available on request from the authors.)

Table 1 documents the adequacy of a three-factor solution: in the grand total of 126 Q sorts, 119 are loaded significantly on one or more of Factors A, B, and C. While a small number of significant negative loadings emerge on the second and third factors, there are 14 significant Q sorts at the negative end of Factor A, making this the only truly bipolar factor resulting from our analysis. Hence we have three factors, and yet we report four independent viewpoints on what it means to be American.

Results: The Factors and Their Interpretation

Factor A+. The Shining City on the Hill: President Bush’s Priestly ACR and its Critics

The positive pole of Factor A is defined by 33 Q sorts provided by 31 individuals. As indicated in Table 1, the pool of defining variates for this viewpoint consists of the *self* sorts of 10 respondents along with 25 defining *Bush* sorts. While personal sorts at the positive end of Factor A are primarily those of conservative Republicans, the sorts modeling the president’s presumed orientation come from respondents spanning the partisan and ideological spectrum. Since all (six) of the *negatively-loaded* sorts represent the personal views of liberal Democrats, it is apparent that while “blue staters” (Democrats) and “red staters” (Republicans) divide sharply on their subjective rendering of what it means to be an American, these differences shrink substantially when attention is turned to President Bush’s vision of America. If they agree on little else, partisan foes within the highly polarized world of American politics at least show some signs of concurrence in their sense of what American national identity means in the perception of George W. Bush. (There is even greater subjective concurrence among our respondents in their understanding of what “being American” means to John Kerry.)

The pervasiveness of religious rhetoric in statements defining Factor A is immediately evident. Defining statements for Factor A were not only given *high* scores for the factor, but scores that were significantly *higher* relative to placements of the same items in other factors. In the three distinguishing statements cited below, all ranked significantly higher in the Factor A+ array than elsewhere. The reverent imagery of the U.S. as heeding (as well as needing) God’s continued blessing as “The Israel of our time” is unmistakable:

No.	Statement	Factor Score		
		A	B	C
24	As citizens of the mightiest nation on earth, we Americans are the chosen people of our time; we bear the ark of liberties of the world.	+4	-2	-2
11	Though not perfect, America is the mightiest power God has yet seen fit to put upon his footstool. America is great because she is good.	+3	+1	-4
29	Can it be doubted that only a Divine Providence placed this land, this island of freedom, here as a refuge for all those in the world who yearn to breathe free?	+3	-3	-1

Notably, these statements come from different eras and from different speakers: Statement 24 is from Mark Twain; Statement 11 from President Dwight Eisenhower; and Statement 29 from President Ronald Reagan. What is common to these exemplars of American eloquence is the classical, priestly variant of ACR. To be American is to recognize the nation's debt to God Almighty for its freedoms and opportunities and to accept the custodial responsibility to maintain and enlarge them. This rhetorical turn rationalizes muscular American ventures in the world with religiously-rooted purpose, commitment, and obligation.

The importance of religiously-tinged legitimation in this viewpoint cannot be overstated. Even when the sense of American exceptionalism embraced by Factor A is stripped of explicitly religious language, one can still detect a strong moralistic pulse. When bound with the will of God in the minds of its proponents, this attitude serves as a strong justification to approve and condone America's institutions and sense of mission. Factor A proponents see the world in Manichean terms with Good and Evil as equal opposing forces that are apparent in the bipolar nature of the factor. More importantly, A+ sees the world as Us vs. Them, and Righteousness vs. Evil Ideology. These individuals are militant in their ideology – Onward Civil Religious Christian Soldiers, marching as (if) to war against the Evil Empire/Ideology/whatever. "America is exceptional," to be sure; and powerful, too. But we dare not forget that our very exceptionalism and our often-condemned conduct in the world have been and will continue to be perceived and resented elsewhere as imperialistic and self-aggrandizing in nature rather than "forces for good."

If there is anything approaching a prophetic tone in the "national-identity self-portrait" of Factor A+, it takes the form of a reminder or admonition that nations, like human beings, do not live by bread alone. It is accepted as an article of faith for Factor A adherents that faith itself is among life's greatest gifts and, ironically, least secure treasures. Likewise, there is a lingering

No.	Statement	Factor Score		
		A	B	C
1	We need to recognize that America is exceptional, that ours is the most successful civilization thus far in history in liberating people to pursue happiness.	+4	+2	0
23	Being American means being misunderstood by other cultures and countries. We're resented because we are so powerful despite all the good we have done in the world.	+2	-3	0

danger that the full bounty of God's blessings on this country will come to be taken for granted if not forgotten entirely. Thus, we need to recognize and express, to God and also to those who have paid the ultimate price, not just in the circumstances of the tragic proportion of 9/11, our ongoing gratitude for good fortune and the defense of our heritage.

No.	Statement	Factor Score		
		A	B	C
8	Today we see too much cynicism and too little faith. Faith is an important element in the "American spirit" that's gotten us this far, and it's being eroded by those who seem eager to find fault with America.	+2	-4	+1
22	The reappearance of "God Bless America" on bumper stickers and the like was one good thing to come out of the terrorist attacks. Before 9/11 it seems we'd forgotten just how blessed this country is.	+2	0	+3
3	We owe a continuing debt of gratitude to those Americans who have paid the ultimate sacrifice in defending our country.	+3	+4	+4

At the negative end of Factor A's composite Q sort, all six statements under -3 and -4 are *distinguishing* (i.e., receiving significantly more negative salience scores here than for any of the other factors)¹. It is clear that the claims with which Factor A+ takes strong exception all have in common a critical or skeptical stance toward some of the ambitious assertions of American exceptionalism. For subscribers to the Factor A+ version of America, there is little room for criticism or even doubt, thereby adding to the impression of an orientation where "nary is heard a discouraging word" when talk turns to what is uniquely American.

¹ Three of the statements, (nos. 7, 14, and 18) however, earn scores on Factor B that are *significantly higher*. Since these help define what is distinguishing in a positive sense about Factor B, they are cited and treated more fully in that discussion.

No.	Statement	Factor Score		
		A	B	C
16	We don't like to be reminded that America is not only the land of milk and honey. We lead the Western World in childhood obesity, gun-related homicides, and percent of our population in prison. But that stuff we ignore.	-4	0	-2
28	It's hard to judge what's uniquely American when you haven't seen what others have.	-3	+1	0
26	It's ironic, but in America we are all free to have our own opinions; yet, the vast majority of us seem not the slightest bit interested in thinking for ourselves.	-3	-1	0

Factor B. "One Nation under God? No, Not Exactly!"

Our second factor is defined by the *self* Q sorts of ten individuals, most of whom align with the Democratic Party and designate themselves as liberals. At the same time, Factor B is home to the vast majority of Q sorts that describe *John Kerry's America*, regardless of sorter ideology (approximately 69% — 24 defining *Kerry* sorts out of 35 total defining sorts on Factor B). Overall, respondents show greater concurrence in their estimates of the Kerry view of America than in their appraisal of the President's. If Factor A+ warrants consideration as *America through the eyes of its Pastor-in-Chief*, then Factor B can be viewed as tantamount to these participants' view of *our current core national identity*.

Distinguishing factor scores indicate that Factor B has a much more sober, far more secular orientation in contrast to the unabashedly *priestly* tone of Factor A. Factor B expresses more ambivalent feelings on the meaning of being an American, while Factor B does express pride in being American, its patriotic sentiments reflect awareness of a substantial gap between American ideals and current reality in our nation. Thus several things about our country trouble Factor B, not the least of which is the discomfiting distance between the egalitarian ideal of equality and the present existence of increasingly severe inequalities, under the law and in genuine opportunity.

No.	Statement	Factor Score		
		A	B	C
7	Are we truly "one nation, under God"? By any honest reckoning, it's clear that there are at least <i>two Americas</i> — one for the affluent and powerful, the other for the rest of us.	-4	+4	-3
14	America is indeed a land of great opportunities, but not that many really good ones. And the vast majority of those go to certain people only.	-4	+3	-3

The *two Americas* theme that resonated from the 2004 primary election campaign of Democratic vice presidential candidate John Edwards was couched, prophetically, in terms that challenged America to reclaim core elements of its exceptionalism by practicing what it has historically preached.

No.	Statement	Factor Score		
		A	B	C
2	There is nothing wrong with America now that can't be fixed by strengthening what's right with America.	+1	+3	-1
6	To be an American is to believe the future can be better than the present, and that each of us has a personal, moral responsibility to make it so.	+1	+4	+4

Perhaps Statements 2 and 6 figure so prominently in the subjective characterization of America as seen by John Kerry because they are oft-repeated lines from Bill Clinton's presidency. But for our purposes the meaning of these assertions is more important than its lineage; and their common appeal arguably lies in the skillfully affirmative coupling of change with what is quintessentially American. In this way, the scarier uncertainties of change are somewhat blunted, as is the premise that America has flaws that deserve both acknowledgment and action. Still, it is clear that Factor B is *not* the 43rd President's version of American uniqueness and virtuousness. The contrast appears in the more sober accounting of America's actual achievements by Factor B, and in the role generally accorded religious ideation and rhetoric. The Factor A view of America was richly adorned in the religiously-tinged imagery of the Shining City on the Hill. Factor B's understanding was expressed either in almost exclusively secular terms or in language that indicates a sense of unease with talking about God and Country in nearly interchangeable terms. Statement 18 makes clear that it is the partisan-political exploitation of commitments of faith that is the problem and not religion *per se*.

No.	Statement	Factor Score		
		A	B	C
18	As a Christian who is also an American, I resent the efforts of some politicians to make public spectacles of their religious convictions. Faith in God is admirable, but should not be exploited for partisan gain.	-3	+3	-1

Explicitly religious references in the Factor B array are encountered at the negative end of the sort, where many of the faith-based affirmations of Factor A are robustly rejected:

No.	Statement	Factor Score		
		A	B	C
20	We would do well to remember that our founders, in America's most sacred political documents, speak of man as being created, of a Creator, of ours as a nation under God.	+2	-2	+2
35	In the current time of trials — defined by massive mistrust, fueled by endlessly fault-finding politicians and media, we'd do well to reflect on four simple words: "In God we Trust."	+1	-2	+3
4	The United States was founded not by men and women who came for gold but mainly in search of God and the freedom to worship without interference from the State.	0	-1	+1

Factor B takes strong exception to some distinguishing statements for Factor A (particularly 8, 23, 29). These same three statements are also distinguishing for Factor B, but at the negative end:

No.	Statement	Factor Score		
		A	B	C
8	Today we see too much cynicism and too little faith. Faith is an important element in the "American spirit" that's gotten us this far, and it's being eroded by those who seem eager to find fault with America.	+2	-4	+1
23	Being American means being misunderstood by other cultures and countries. We're resented because we are so powerful despite all the good we have done in the world.	+2	-3	0
29	Can it be doubted that only a Divine Providence placed this land, this island of freedom, here as a refuge for all those in the world who yearn to breathe free?	+3	-3	-1

Factor C. "Feeling American"

Our third factor was defined by 34 significantly-loaded Q sorts. More than half of Factor C definers (18) were self sorts, making this the personal view of America shared by the largest plurality of individuals comprising our college communities P-set. Individuals whose *self* sorts define Factor C are primarily, but not exclusively, conservative and Republican. Other defining sorts for Factor C were among those describing Bush's perspective. Some of these were from Democrats; many were from Republicans, including twelve from individuals whose self sort was also a Factor C definer.

Seemingly dissonant elements appear in the salient statement scores for Factor C. There is a strong embrace of President Bill Clinton's view of the future as "better than the past" but requiring application of American "can-do"

spirit to make it so. Statement 6 is the highest-ranked item in the Factor C array, just as it was for Factor B, and both factors couple forward-looking hopefulness with anxiety about America's present. However, unlike the anxieties defining ambivalence for Factor B — particularly threats posed by pressing public policy questions — Factor C worries are more diffuse and cultural in nature. Such concerns are less susceptible to remediation by policy engineering.

No.	Statement	Factor Score		
		A	B	C
6	To be an American is to believe the future can be better than the present, and that each of us has a personal, moral responsibility to make it so.	+1	+4	+4
2	There is nothing wrong with America now that can't be fixed by strengthening what's right with America.	+1	+3	-1
19	It is troubling, but America is suffering from moral decay within as well as the more obvious threats posed by our terrorist enemies abroad.	-1	-3	+2
17	It's sad but true nonetheless that a large part of the younger generation takes being American for granted.	-2	-2	+1

Factor C is indeed distressed that *some Americans* appear all too willing to turn a blind eye to the reality of evil in the world, not only in the guise of threats from abroad but from moral decay at home. On the other hand, Factor B, does not see America as problem-free, but is appreciably less distressed by fellow Americans' refusal to see and stand up to evil within, excluding that from its inventory of problems on the domestic front:

No.	Statement	Factor Score		
		A	B	C
32	Some Americans seem to close their eyes to the presence of evil in the world. And others still seem never to tire of carping about our own so-called misguided priorities. Maybe those Americans should consider living elsewhere.	0	-4	+1
19	It is troubling, but America is suffering from moral decay within as well as the more obvious threats posed by our terrorist enemies abroad.	-1	-3	+2

But in a context of overall American optimism toward the future is the conjunction of these concerns, especially between Factors B and C, really so serious as to be labeled a narrative of *dissonant elements*? A different story begins to emerge when seen through the prism of Factor C's civil-religious ideation. It is a much more *prophetic* view than the *priestly* Factor A

attitude, where hardly a single imperfection could be countenanced in the reconstruction of America's identity.² Note the -3 scores Factor C gives both statements 7 and 14. Statement 7 sees "two Americas, rather than one nation under God," and Statement 14 dismisses as outdated and inaccurate the idea that genuine equality of opportunity still defines America. Often Factor A participants express feelings toward their Country in religious terms. Factor C is concerned that this way of thinking will result in a failure of *some* to recognize the civil boundaries between God and Country; and that in so doing they might come to revere their Country as much or more than they do God. Factor A might be seen to be in danger of *displacing* the reverence they properly owe to God onto their Country, thus putting God in second place:

No.	Statement	Factor Score		
		A	B	C
7	Are we truly "one nation, under God"? By any honest reckoning, it's clear that there are at least <i>two Americas</i> — one for the affluent and powerful, the other for the rest of us.	-4	+4	-3
14	America is indeed a land of great opportunities, but not that many really good ones. And the vast majority of those go to certain people only.	-4	+3	-3
11	Though not perfect, America is the mightiest power God has yet seen fit to put upon his footstool. America is great because she is good.	+3	+1	-4

While Factor C promotes greater awareness of the "God vs. Country boundary," it is unwilling to risk drawing the line of separation so sharply that

No.	Statement	Factor Score		
		A	B	C
35	In the current time of trials — defined by massive mistrust, fueled by endlessly fault-finding politicians and media, we'd do well to reflect on four simple words: "In God we Trust."	+1	-2	+3
22	The reappearance of "God Bless America" on bumper stickers and the like was one good thing to come out of the terrorist attacks. Before 9/11 it seems we'd forgotten just how blessed this country is.	+2	0	+3

² There are limits to the self-effacing tendencies of Factor C relative to A in this regard. Factor C is more humble, recognizing that America does not always live by and fulfill its promise, and therefore judgmental toward Factor A+, whose wishful thinking fails to effectively address imperfection. President George W. Bush has yet to admit to making any mistakes.

faith-based considerations of any sort might be banished and excluded completely from the Kingdom of Power. The *theological* language that distinguishes Factor C argues a more *austere* and *prophetic* invocation of the Almighty; i.e., “the situation is very bleak and, therefore, hopeful.”

For these participants from Protestant church-related colleges, the most distinctive feature of Factor C seemingly has little to do with considerations of civil religion or even American exceptionalism and more to do with the *nature of what being American feels like*. As scores for the pair of statements below indicate, Factor C’s notion of what it means to be American is decidedly more emotive and *instinctive* — perhaps even *visceral* — in nature than the features of either Factor A or B would suggest.

No.	Statement	Factor Score		
		A	B	C
5	American pride can’t be summed up in a few words. But if you’re an American, you’ll know it by the feelings you get when Lance Armstrong wins the Tour de France or one of our athletes captures a gold medal.	-1	+2	+3
30	The way I feel about my country has little or nothing to do with complicated ideas. It’s very deep, emotional and nearly instinctive — like how a parent feels about an infant or how that child feels about that parent.	0	0	+2

Among the many implications of this notion of “being American,” is that, as one respondent put it in a post-sorting interview: “You either get it (this sense of what it’s like to be American) or you don’t. ... If you don’t (get it), there’s not much you can do to explain it to someone who doesn’t understand.... It’s like *being born again*. People who’ve not experienced it will have a hard time understanding it when listening to others talk about it. Those who’ve been saved themselves ... know exactly what it means.” If accurate, what this implies, is that folks not on Factor C will inevitably encounter frustration in seeking to make sense of a phenomenological state that is only superficially conveyed verbally. Of course, the “emotional” quality of the Factor C view of America poses no less a challenge to *subjective science*. It is to the challenge of this implication that we turn in our concluding discussion.

Discussion: Negotiating National Identity in a Contentious Time

That we found four versions of Americanism-infused with civil-religious ideation among our participant sample; that only one bears strong apparent resemblance to the Huntington *desideratum*; and that in the context of a partisan political setting in which the religious issue was a lively, if not always explicit valence subtext, it is remarkable how durable the locations of the two

candidates were in our final solution. That discovery may or may not be generalizable to all voting members of the US public (Thomas and Baas 1993). But the character of these “attributed identities” is arresting. They shed light on unexamined dynamics in the current American political imbroglios, and they at a minimum serve as yet another indication that social science eschews methodology that can give expression to often-latent meanings (“problems” in Stephenson’s terminology) that confuse or evade otherwise-careful observers of the political scene.

How do these findings relate to our four research questions, drawn principally from Professor Huntington’s recent assessment of the “challenges to American national identity?” We initially sought to determine whether Huntington’s hope of reclaiming and revitalizing a unified and uniquely American identity is realistic at this juncture in U.S. political history. Our Q sorts from students and faculty point us toward a rather skeptical verdict. While it may be unfair or naïve to expect that being American is tantamount to all *being on the same factor* in Q-methodological terms, it is clear that, in subjective respects, some college age Americans and their faculty mentors are not even on the same page with regard to their perceptions of national identity. Our results point to the presence of four distinct variants of American national experience. When we searched the contents of these narratives, no single statement in our Q sample emerged as a consensus item across the four viewpoints.

In light of this lack of consensus, it is not surprising to find a deep sense of skepticism when we then asked our participants whether civil religion can serve in a unifying role in rekindling a distinctively *American* national identity. When we take into account the nature and purpose of religiously-tinged language in the four views of American identity discovered here, it is clear that civil-religious ideation itself is an issue of contention rather than a source of consensus. Respondents at opposing ends of Factor A are locked in a bitter Manichean dispute about Good vs. Evil centered precisely on the wisdom of invoking linguistic frames for American national identity that are anchored in religious themes and imagery. Following Huntington’s hope, Factor A+ students and faculty see America’s past through the prism of a divine providence with a special role in mind for God-fearing Americans in *keeping faith* with our sacred commitments. On the other hand, Factor A- could hardly be more hostile to the conflated *interpenetration* of patriotic and theological “pretensions” (Lincoln 2003) which appear to be at the core of the Factor A+ viewpoint.

The viewpoints expressed by Factors B and C hardly elevate the prospects for mutual understanding, let alone subjective harmony. Factor B sorters are convinced that religious conviction, if not quite the “opiate of the masses” Marx had decried, inadvertently provided the seed-bed for a fear-based, messianic form of Americanism that was not an instrument of peace and

reconciliation. Moreover, participants on Factor B felt that after 9/11 the preoccupation with “transcendent evil” blinded Americans to the presence of real problems in the world while exacerbating debilitating divisions at home, particularly economic ones.

Our participants who define Factor C enter the national-identity conversation with a far less strident religious and civil-religious vocabulary than Factor A, but with a sense that engenders little hope for a genuine dialogue. Indeed, by Factor C’s reckoning, none of this is truly accessible to “left brain” communication in any case; instead of enhanced prospects for mutual understanding, we are left with a disquieting message: When it comes to deciphering and ultimately harmonizing the inner workings of the participants’ understanding of the rival accounts of American identity, we may well founder on our collective inability to comprehend what those with different viewpoints are actually seeing and saying. Thus, Factor C adherents believe that the secular left simply cannot understand their beliefs, because those individuals have not experienced Factor C’s world. Thus literally, either you “get it or you don’t.”

The third research question asked whether the subjective variants of ACR constitute forces for unity or division. The answer is found in the locations in factor space of the Q sorts expressing the Bush and Kerry views of America. With respect to the meaning of being American, the Republican and Democratic standard bearers were seen as “not on the same factor.” Our respondents expressed strong skepticism about ACR variants acting as a unifying force. Rather there appears to be affirmation of the divisive tendencies among the variants. The statistical reliability of our results through confirmatory appearance in replicated samples of similar sorters supports our acceptance of this as an accurate picture of the feelings of this subset of students and faculty as they sought to make sense of the candidate viewpoints on the subtext issue of what it means to be an American. The Bush attitude was found either on Factor A+ or Factor C. The less-well-known Kerry view was more uniformly centered on Factor B, but there were a few exceptions when the perception of Kerry was significantly loaded negatively on either A or C. The results of this study clearly reveal the extent to which these students and faculty believe American national identity has been tied to divisive partisan fissures in the recent presidential campaign. *Red* and *blue* states can be not viewed simply as geo-electoral blocs, but should also be seen as antithetical states of mind. Hence, the possibility of reclaiming one *subjectively united* view of America seems remote in the absence of an overwhelming national issue having the order of magnitude of the September 11 attack on our country.

Skepticism may well be in order when appraising Professor Huntington’s best-case scenario for revitalizing commitments to the American Creed through a civil-religious route. However, it is also possible to view that

skepticism as a basis for hope. Our results raise serious questions about the feasibility of cultivating a single narrative in the present context of the American experience to which all segments of society can profess unswerving allegiance. Should it be desirable that we *all* appear “on the same factor” with respect to what being an American means? We doubt it. As we see it, the fact that there are striking disparities in expressing the meaning of being American is grounds for celebration rather than disappointment.

There were substantial differences in the views of this nation that our respondents associated with candidates Kerry and Bush. And there is strong evidence that the 2004 political season displayed not only contending philosophies of governance, but also fundamentally different notions of America. Our findings contain a seed of hope in the discovery that there is not an exact fit between the images of American exceptionalism embraced by our students and faculty, as proxies for ordinary Americans, and the major Presidential contenders. There are noteworthy exceptions to the oft-voiced pattern that Republicans are more apt to find common ground between their personal vision of being an American and President Bush’s, while Democrats are more closely aligned with that of John Kerry. The most striking case is the sizeable number of Republican respondents’ self sorts loaded on Factor C, and surprisingly some of their Bush sorts also were on C, while others were on Factor B. The same kind of viewpoint separation was also found among the Q sorts made by Kerry supporters. Overall, many sorters of both parties see Kerry squarely in line with Factor B’s image of America, while they subscribe either to Factor A- or to C. This is where we detect grounds for hope that genuine communication can occur across the varying viewpoints to the likely benefit of all who are daring enough to even try to explore deep differences. In direct opposition to the fatalistic “either you get it or you don’t” attitude of Factor C, is the fact that participants loaded on Factor C see themselves as possessing an “inscrutably emotional” sense of being American, thus making for the surprisingly clear emergence of raw emotion as a distinct viewpoint in this investigation.

When feelings such as these can be shown to have operant form and structure, there is hope that America’s self-analytic conversation will continue in health undiminished, but with a greater chance that all parties to that conversation will understand one another. Pending progress on the ambitious agenda of follow-up research this project stimulates, it is feasible to suggest: What is arguably most hopeful from the foregoing is that the true American identity remains an open question. This will be the case forever, because that identity is rooted in a *feeling*. To expect otherwise is to confuse *statements of fact* (“I am an American”) with *statements of problems*³ (“There are really two

³ Stephenson (1984) defines “problems” as variations on meanings that can be explored and explicated, hypotheses, scientific or empirical problems — are there two Americas?

America's"). This distinction made by Stephenson (1984) two decades ago is still lost on the many who are bent on bringing "sound methods of science" [R-based, of course] to bear in the perhaps futile hope that nomothetic measures will, somehow, deepen our understanding of human preferences.

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Appendix

Table 1. Rotated Factor Matrix

Q Sort No.	Factor Loading ¹			Sex	Political Party ²	Political Ideology ³	Religious Identity ⁴	
	A	B	C					
01Self	-X							
01Bush	X			M	SD	VL	P	1/yr
01Kerry		X						
02Self		X						
02 Bush	X			M	D	M	RC	1/yr
02 Kerry	X							
03 Self	-X							
03 Bush	X			F	D	L	ELCA	1/wk
03 Kerry		X						
04 Self		X						
04 Bush		-X		M	D	M	RC	1/mo
04 Kerry		X						
05 Self	-X							
05 Bush	X			M	SD	VL	J	1/yr
05 Kerry		X						
06 Self								
06 Bush				M	D	L	P	1+/wk
06 Kerry			X					
07 Self		X						
07 Bush	X	X		F	SD	L	ELCA	1/wk
07 Kerry		X						
08 Self			X					
08 Bush	X			F	TD	M	RC	1/yr
08 Kerry	-x	x						
09 Self		X						
09 Bush	X			M	SD	M	LMS	1/mo
09 Kerry		X						
10 Self	-X							
10 Bush	X			M	D	VL	LMS	1/wk
10 Kerry		X						
11 Self			X					
11 Bush	x		x	F	TR	M	ELCA	1/yr
11 Kerry		X						
12 Self			X					
12 Bush			X	F	R	C	LMS	1/wk
12 Kerry	-X							

¹ X indicates a *defining* factor loading; x indicates significant loading, but not a definer.

² Political Party Self-Identification: (D) Democrat, (I) Independent, (R) Republican, (S) Strong, (T) Trending

³ Political Ideology Self-Identification: (C) Conservative, (L) Liberal, (M) Moderate, (V) Very

⁴ Religious Self-Identification and Frequency of Attendance: (C) Christian, (EC) Evangelical Christian, (E) Episcopal, (J) Jewish, (ELCA) Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, (LMS) Lutheran -Missouri Synod, (M) Methodist, (ND) Non-denominational Christian, (P) Pentecostal, (Presb) Presbyterian, (RC) Roman Catholic

Table 1. Rotated Factor Matrix (continued)

Q Sort No.	Factor Loading			Sex	Political Party	Political Ideology	Religious Identity	
	A	B	C					
13 Self 13 Bush 13 Kerry	x -X		X x	M	SR	C	RC	1+/wk
14 Self 14 Bush 14 Kerry	X		X	F	TR	C	ELCA	1/mo
15 Self 15 Bush 15 Kerry	X		X	M	SR	C	EC	1+/wk
16 Self 16 Bush 16 Kerry	X		X	M	TR	C	C	1/mo
17 Self 17 Bush 17 Kerry	X X -X			M	SR	C	RC	1/mo
18 Self 18 Bush 18 Kerry	X	X		M	SD	VL	ND	1/yr
19 Self 19 Bush 19 Kerry	-x X	x X		F	SD	VL	ELCA	1/yr
20 Self 20 Bush 20 Kerry	X	X X		M	SD	VL	ELCA	1/wk
21 Self 21 Bush 21 Kerry		x	X -x X	M	SD	VL	RC	1/yr
22 Self 22 Bush 22 Kerry	X	X X		F	SD	VL	ELCA	1+/wk
23 Self 23 Bush 23 Kerry	x	X -x X		M	D	L	ELCA	1/mo
24 Self 24 Bush 24 Kerry	X		X	M	D	L	M	1/yr
25 Self 25 Bush 25 Kerry	x		X x	M	R	C	RC	1/wk
26 Self 26 Bush 26 Kerry			X X	M	TD	L	RC	1+/wk
27 Self 27 Bush 27 Kerry		X	X X	F	R	C	ELCA	1/wk

Table 1. Rotated Factor Matrix (continued)

Q Sort No.	Factor Loading			Sex	Political Party	Political Ideology	Religious Identity	
	A	B	C					
28 Self			X					
28 Bush	X			F	SR	C	RC	1/wk
28 Kerry			X					
29 Self			X					
29 Bush	X			F	SR	M	ELCA	1/wk
29 Kerry	-X							
30 Self	X							
30 Bush	X			F	SR	C	ND	1/mo
30 Kerry		X						
31 Self			X					
31 Bush			X	M	R	VC	M	1/mo
31 Kerry			-X					
32 Self		X						
32 Bush	X			M	SD	L	E	1/wk
32 Kerry		X						
33 Self		X						
33 Bush	X			F	D	L	EC	1/wk
33 Kerry		X						
34 Self	-X							
34 Bush	X			M	TD	L	EC	1/wk
34 Kerry		x	x					
35 Self			X					
35 Bush	X			M	R	M	EC	1/wk
35 Kerry			X					
36 Self			X					
36 Bush	X			M	R	M	ND	1/wk
36 Kerry		x						
37 Self			X					
37 Bush				M	R	C	P	1/wk
37 Kerry		X						
38 Self			X					
38 Bush			X	M	SR	VC	EC	1/wk
38 Kerry	-X							
39 Self								
39 Bush				F	SR	VC	EC	1/wk
39 Kerry			-X					
40 Self	X							
40 Bush			X	F	R	C	EC	1/wk
40 Kerry		X						
41 Self			X					
41 Bush			X	F	SR	C	EC	1/wk
41 Kerry	-X							
42 Self	-X							
42 Bush	X			F	TD	L	Presb	1/wk
42 Kerry		X						

Table 2. Factor Scores for "Being American" Q Study

No.	Statement	Factor Score		
		A	B	C
1	We need to recognize that America <i>is</i> exceptional, that ours is the most successful civilization thus far in history in liberating people to pursue happiness.	4	2	0
2	There is nothing wrong with America now that can't be fixed by strengthening what's right with America.	1	3	-1
3	We owe a continuing debt of gratitude to those Americans who have paid the ultimate sacrifice in defending our country.	3	4	4
4	The United States was founded not by men and women who came for gold but mainly in search of God and the freedom to worship without interference from the State.	0	-1	1
5	American pride can't be summed up in a few words. But if you're an American, you'll know it by the feelings you get when Lance Armstrong wins the Tour de France or one of our athletes captures a gold medal.	-1	2	3
6	To be an American is to believe the future can be better than the present, and that each of us has a personal, moral responsibility to make it so.	1	4	4
7	Are we truly "one nation, under God"? By any honest reckoning, it's clear that there are at least <i>two Americas</i> — one for the affluent and powerful, the other for the rest of us.	-4	4	-3
8	Today we see too much cynicism and too little faith. Faith is an important element in the "American spirit" that's gotten us this far, and it's being eroded by those who seem eager to find fault with America.	2	-4	1
9	We are a nation of immigrants, and a veritable rainbow of multicultural diversity. Here we are free to celebrate our differences while not forgetting that we love the same country.	0	2	-1
10	Reason and experience are reliable grounds for doubting that meaningful morality can prevail in the absence of religious principles.	1	-1	-2
11	Though not perfect, America is the mightiest power God has yet seen fit to put upon his footstool. America is great because she is good.	3	1	-4
12	What makes America special? Who knows? Maybe it's baseball, apple pie, Chevrolets... Maybe it's something else. I wouldn't want to be any place else.	-1	2	2
13	I worry about America's defenses in this time of trial. Not enough young people are volunteering to serve in the armed services, and we might have to reinstate the draft.	-1	-4	-4
14	America is indeed a land of great opportunities, but not that many really good ones. And the vast majority of those go to certain people only.	-4	3	-3

Table 2. Factor Scores for "Being American" Q Study (continued)

No.	Statement	Factor Score		
		A	B	C
15	Americans never seem satisfied with what they have. That can be a good thing or a bad thing, and it has definitely cut both ways in our history.	-2	1	1
16	We don't like to be reminded that America is not only the land of milk and honey. We lead the Western World in childhood obesity, gun-related homicides, and percent of our population in prison. But that stuff we ignore.	-4	0	-2
17	It's sad but true nonetheless that a large part of the younger generation takes being American for granted.	-2	-2	1
18	As a Christian who is also an American, I resent the efforts of some politicians to make public spectacles of their religious convictions. Faith in God is admirable, but should not be exploited for partisan gain.	-3	3	-1
19	It is troubling, but America is suffering from moral decay within as well as the more obvious threats posed by our terrorist enemies abroad.	-1	-3	2
20	We would do well to remember that our founders, in America's most sacred political documents, speak of man as being created, of a Creator, of ours as a nation under God.	2	-2	2
21	We Americans are a practical lot. We have a knack for finding things that work even while we are suspicious of grand theories and schemes.	-2	0	-2
22	The reappearance of "God Bless America" on bumper stickers and the like was one good thing to come out of the terrorist attacks. Before 9/11 it seems we'd forgotten just how blessed this country is.	2	0	3
23	Being American means being misunderstood by other cultures and countries. We're resented because we are so powerful despite all the good we have done in the world.	2	-3	0
24	As citizens of the mightiest nation on earth, we Americans are the chosen people of our time; we bear the ark of liberties of the world.	4	-2	-2
25	As a rule, we are friendly people: We accept all nationalities.	1	1	-1
26	It's ironic, but in America we are all free to have our own opinions; yet, the vast majority of us seem not the slightest bit interested in thinking for ourselves.	-3	-1	0
27	We're more individualist than people in other countries. Nobody does things for us: We all pay our own way.	0	-1	-4
28	It's hard to judge what's uniquely American when you haven't seen what others have.	-3	1	0
29	Can it be doubted that only a Divine Providence placed this land, this island of freedom, here as a refuge for all those in the world who yearn to breathe free?	3	-3	-1

Table 2. Factor Scores for "Being American" Q Study (continued)

No.	Statement	Factor Score		
		A	B	C
30	The way I feel about my country has little or nothing to do with complicated ideas. It's very deep, emotional and nearly instinctive—like how a parent feels about an infant or how that child feels about that parent.	0	0	2
31	America didn't get to be the land of the free and home of the brave by leaving our national defense to toothless international organizations or well-meaning allies. When forced to, we'll protect our freedoms with ferocity.	4	-1	4
32	Some Americans seem to close their eyes to the presence of evil in the world. And others still seem never to tire of carping about our own so-called misguided priorities. Maybe those Americans should consider living elsewhere.	0	-4	1
33	I sometimes fear for the soul of America: not that we've turned our backs on God so much that we seem to have forgotten the sense of unity that pulled us through so many tough times in the past. A nation divided against itself cannot stand forever.	-1	0	0
34	In America, it used to be that you either made it on your own or you didn't — and you'd have no one to blame but yourself. Nowadays, though, our fates are so affected by Big Business and Big Government that we're losing our sense of self-reliance.	-2	1	-3
35	In the current time of trials — defined by massive mistrust, fueled by endlessly fault-finding politicians and media, we'd do well to reflect on four simple words: "In God we Trust."	1	-2	3