

**TOWSON UNIVERSITY
OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES**

**EMERGING NATIONAL IDENTITY IN
PRE-REVOLUTIONARY AMERICA**

by

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requirements for the degree**

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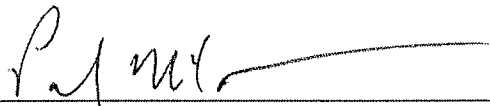
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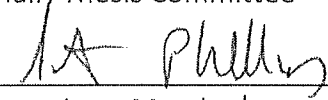
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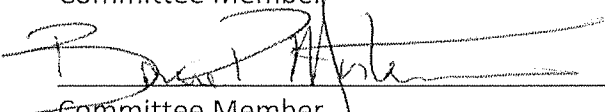
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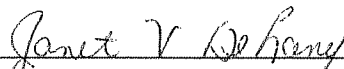
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Abstract

Emerging National Identity in Pre-Revolutionary America

Anneliese Johnson

The development of American national identity has traditionally been associated with the Revolutionary period. However, previous research fails to incorporate theories of individual identity with ideas about nationalism. This project utilizes a multi-disciplinary approach to examine the impact of individual identity formation on emerging national identity. Dramatic social shifts occurred in mid-eighteenth century colonial America, including domestic population growth, immigration, and economic development. These changes forced colonists to explore new possibilities when constructing their individual identity. The shift away from autonomous communities towards interdependence and diversity in mid-eighteenth century America laid the foundation for American national identity to emerge. Pressures created from these social changes weakened association with English identity, and highlighted perceptions of otherness between the English and the colonists, priming the population for a moment of national consciousness. Primary sources are also examined to provide evidence of an emerging unique American national identity in mid-eighteenth century colonial America.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The Revolutionary period has traditionally been viewed as an era when American identity was created. However, concentrated attention on this period ignores the individual responses to cultural changes that occurred prior to the Revolutionary War but serve as the foundation for American national identity. A new exploration of American identity formation could reveal that American national identity emerged prior to the Revolutionary period in response to increasing pressures from demographic and economic changes. If this were the case, then the Revolutionary period may have served as a crystallizing moment for national identity rather than its genesis. This paper will examine the emergence of American national identity at the individual level in response to demographic and economic changes between 1720 and 1763 as a developmental stage of nationalism.

First, the relationship between national identity and the individual will be explored via general theory and specific examples pertaining to colonial America, yielding an increased understanding of the dependence of national identity on individual identity. The second major focus of this research project will be the cultural changes that occurred during the early and mid-eighteenth century due to shifting demographics and new economic trends that influenced the emergence of a separate, uniquely American, identity. Finally, analysis of primary sources such as pamphlets and sermons will be used to provide supporting evidence of identity formation by searching for linguistic clues that American colonists' began to think of themselves as different than the English despite legal and political ties to the British Empire.

Previous research fails to address how large, cultural shifts affected an individual's sense of identity and civic responsibility. This project will examine the emergence of national identity as part of an individual's social identity, and the impact individual identity has on national identity at the collective level. The emergence of national identity occurred first on an individual level, and then at the community level where it was able to effect change in a much more dynamic way. National identity present at an individual level provides a stable foundation for the understanding and interpretation of action at a group level.

Colonists in the seventeenth century placed a large emphasis on social order and the participation of every member of the group in order to cultivate the success of a thriving colonial endeavor.¹ Communities were largely autonomous and focused on encouraging the survival and success of the colony. Population growth, immigration, and economic expansion all undermined the existing social order and introduced a broader understanding of oneself in relation to other colonists, colonies, and even Great Britain. Each of these phenomena expanded interaction with an increasingly more diverse pool of influences.

Additionally, British interaction with the colonies was also changing in the mid-eighteenth century in response to surging English nationalism and economic motivations. In the case of colonial America, 'otherness,' or the realization that colonists were no longer viewed as equal members of the British Empire may have provided the catalyst needed to spark a revolution and the creation of a new system of government. This sense

¹ Lockridge, Kenneth. "Social Change and the Meaning of the American Revolution." *Journal of Social History* 6, No. 4 (Summer 1973): 403-439. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3786509> (accessed October 10, 2012).

of 'otherness' preceded the Revolutionary War, and was an essential component of American national identity. As colonists reconciled new cultural experiences with existing concepts of individual identity, a widening of interpretation occurred, altering many colonists' understanding of what their identity actually meant.

An Overview

Subsequent chapters will address various aspects of the emerging American national identity by focusing first on broad concepts, then applying general knowledge to the specific case of colonial America circa 1750. Chapter two is devoted to understanding the relationship between individual identity formation and the construction of national identity at a societal level. First, the foundations of nationalist theory will be discussed, focusing specifically on the intangible aspects that bind groups together and support for national identity. Particular attention will be given to the importance of a common historical past. Common histories provide reference points for current and future generations to use as both identifying signatures and rallying moments that serve as focal points for national pride.² The emotional connection elicited by such stories reinforces notions of unity³ by highlighting who is and who is not a member of the group based on who does and who does not identify with the given story.

The links that create and sustain national identity manifest at the individual level as

² Renan, Ernst. "What is a Nation." Lecture at Sorbonne, March 11, 1882, also in *Becoming a National: A Reader*, edited by Geoff Eley and Ronald Grigor Suny. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996, 41-55. See also Benedict Anderson. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso, 1991, and David McCrone. *Sociology of Nationalism*. London and New York: Routledge, 1998, 52.

³ Harshbarger, Scott. "National Demons: Robert Burns, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and the Folk of the Forest," in *Sullen Fires Across the Atlantic*, edited by Lisa Marie Rhody and part of the Romantic Circles Praxis Series edited by Orrin N.C. Wang, paragraph 12. http://www.rc.umd.edu/praxis/sullenfires/harshbarger/harshbarger_essay.html (accessed December 30, 2012).

well, through mundane actions that reinforce cultural values and ideas. Individual identity is shaped in part by these daily interactions allowing nationalism to emerge. Michael Billig describes this process as “banal nationalism,” and asserts that ordinary activities such as reading the newspaper or listening to the news reinforce connections between people, even those that are separated by considerable distance.⁴ In colonial America, this was no different. The activities may change over time, but the idea that these kinds of simple interactions strengthen the sense of community and identity is applicable to many time periods.

In colonial America an increase in the usage and availability of print materials for political purposes arose in the early and mid-eighteenth century. The early usage of this kind of media made it possible for colonies to more easily communicate with one another and expanded the scope of political participation by legitimized print as a medium for civic engagement. As increasing numbers of colonists, even those previously excluded from political involvement became engaged in ideological debates and contemporary issues.⁵

In addition to an increase in pamphleteering, many colonists engaged politically by taking part in mass demonstrations and protests. Several events of the Revolutionary War were heavily influenced, if not completely reliant upon this kind of participation – participation that was legitimized prior to the Revolution. Not only did this sort of mob activity work to actively create shared experiences between participatory colonists, but it also provided colonists with opportunities to accept active political engagement as a part

⁴ Billig, Michael. *Banal Nationalism*. London: Sage Publications, 1995, 10.

⁵ Nash, Gary B. “The Transformation of Urban Politics 1700-1765.” *The Journal of American History* 60, No. 3 (December 1973): 616-617.

of colonial life.⁶ The spread of political activism and an increase in commonality allowed colonists to reevaluate the way in which they participated in and constructed their reality. As more colonists increased their participatory role in colonial society, the commitment to English identity was called into question because it no longer adequately explained the reality of colonial life.

In the second half of the second chapter, a discussion of individual identity will describe how it is formed and influenced by the surrounding environment. Jessica Fish and Jacob Priest describe identity as a series of sub-identities, each capable of being an independent idea on its own, that interacting with each other to form a collective self identity.⁷ Using Fish and Priest's model, it is easy to understand how national identity could emerge as a sub-identity and lay latent, or exert little influence in an individual until such a time that external events, e.g. increasing intergroup discrimination, stimulate the strengthening of national identity.

Urie Bronfenbrenner, among many others, offers insight into the relationship between identity formation and the environment around an individual. Bronfenbrenner imagined society as having different levels of influence on a person, and represented these levels as concentric rings around an individual. Those closest to the person, such as family members, friends, and church groups exert the most influence and farther removed persons, such as friends of friends (or even colonists from other colonies) still wield

⁶ Wood, Gordon. "A Note on Mobs in the American Revolution." *The William and Mary Quarterly* 23, No. 4 (October 1966): 607, 613-614. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1919130> (accessed July 16, 2012).

⁷ Fish, Jessica N. and Jacob B. Priest. "Identity Structures: Holons, Boundaries, Hierarchies, and the Formation of the Collaborative Identity." *The Family Journal: Counseling and Therapy for Couples and Families* 19, No. 2 (2011): 182-190.

influence, but to a lesser degree.⁸ He also asserts that as the environment influences the individual, so too does the individual influence the environment.

The reciprocal nature of the relationship between the individual and society is especially relevant for this research project. The developmental step between autonomy and national consciousness occurs as individuals come to understand and accept themselves as members of a new group of people, exclusive of others and bound together by commonalities. These bonds are often expressed through common language, histories, and societal structures that influence and are influenced by the participants of a given group. The process of moving from a group of individuals to a group of individuals who recognize themselves as collectively special is a critical step for the development of nationalism.

References and evidence from colonial America are used as support for the arguments presented in chapter two, however, chapter three provides greater insight into how these concepts manifested in mid-eighteenth colonial America. Chapter three begins with a discussion of two primary influences on colonial identity. First, an examination of Puritan beliefs and their influence on colonial experience and society is examined. Though the Puritan religion did not survive to see the American Revolution, its tenets and values exerted a great deal of influence over colonists of the time, shaping many of the arguments for independence.⁹ Strong commitments to community, purpose, and hard work combined with the belief that they were chosen by God and blessed with the abundant natural resources of the continent as proof. Together, these ideas shaped the

⁸ Santrock, John W. "Chapter 1 – Introduction." *Life Span Development*, Thirteenth Edition – International Student Edition, New York: McGraw-Hill International Edition, 2011, 28-29.

⁹ Morgan, Edmund. "The Puritan Ethic and the American Revolution." *The William and Mary Quarterly* 24, No. 1 (January 1967): 3-43. See also "People and Ideas; The Puritans," *God in America*, PBS, October 11, 2010. <http://www.pbs.org/godinamerica/people/pUritans.html> (accessed March 26, 2013).

identity of many early colonists who created tightly controlled, homogenous communities in an effort to not only survive, but pursue eternal salvation.¹⁰ Adherence to certain aspects of English culture tempered the religious differences between the colonists and their English brethren to a degree that did not yet warrant the creation of a new identity.

Subsequent social changes undermined colonists' association with Puritan and English identities. Population growth among established colonial groups and an influx of European immigrants increased communication between colonists and diluted the attachment to English identity in particular, as a unique American identity became more appropriate for understanding and interpreting the evolving environment. Population growth, immigrations, and economic development are examined in individual sections to offer specific examples and evidence of how each phenomenon contributed to a weakening of the commitment to an English identity, and a simultaneous strengthening of a new American national identity.

A dramatic surge in the population of existing colonists in the eighteenth century shifted allegiance from the community to the individual as fewer families and communities were able to provide for surviving children. Between 1700 and 1775 the colonies experienced an astonishing 756 percent increase in population.¹¹ Rising demand for land, via an enlarged population was coupled with a decreasing supply, particularly in incorporated towns that were unwilling or unable to obtain enough new land to match the

¹⁰ Morgan, "Puritan Ethic," 4.

¹¹ Price, Jacob M. "Who Cared about the Colonies? The Impact of the Thirteen Colonies on British Society and Politics, circa 1714-1775," in *Strangers Within the Realm: Cultural Margins of the First British Empire* edited by Bernard Bailyn and Philip D. Morgan. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1991, 402.

abundance of colonial men.¹² In some cultures, such as the Dutch, that previously allowed women a share of property after the passing of their husbands, new societal mores emerged whereby widows of older sons no longer received land so that it might be available for other, younger, sons.¹³ Many colonists were forced to reexamine their roles in their communities and create new opportunities for success in order to adapt to the changing reality in mid-eighteenth century America. The new opportunities allowed colonists to imagine themselves as part of a larger whole, and as more than what their fathers had been. This increase in choice and interconnectivity between groups aided the development of national identity by increasing the scope and common experience of colonists.

Likewise, immigration also created a diversity of experience for many colonists. A much more diverse group of immigrants settled in the colonies in the eighteenth century versus that of the seventeenth century. Over 300,000 European immigrants came to the American colonies between 1700 and 1775 from England, Scotland, Ireland and Germany (among others).¹⁴ An increasingly diverse composition blurred ethnic distinctions and focused exclusionary tendencies elsewhere, aided in the formation of national identity. Previously homogenous and community-centered colonies were now unable to control other influence on their colonists. Individuals were introduced to new experiences and forced to assimilate or adapt to them, fundamentally altering their

¹² Appleby, Joyce. "Liberalism and the American Revolution." *The New England Quarterly* 49, No. 1 (March 1976): 19. See also Lockridge, "Social Change," 406.

¹³ Roeber, A.G. "The Origin of Whatever is Not English Among Us: The Dutch-speaking and the German-speaking Peoples of Colonial North America," in *Strangers Within the Realm: Cultural Margins of the First British Empire* edited by Bernard Bailyn and Philip D. Morgan. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1991, 229-230.

¹⁴ Fogleman, Aaron S. "From Slaves, Convicts, and Servants to Free Passengers: The Transformation of Immigration in the Era of the American Revolution." *The Journal of American History* (June 1998): 71.

identity away from English and towards an American identity shaped by the experiences of the colonists.

Colonial growth resulting from a domestic population boom and dramatic immigration gave rise to increasing economic opportunities which also helped strengthen national identity by creating a common societal structure that required the participation of colonists that might not otherwise interact due to geographic limitations. As the economy developed, Great Britain reasserted itself in colonial affairs in an effort to offset England's burgeoning debts.¹⁵ This increased and unwanted attention highlighted the gulf between colonists and the English who were experiencing their own blossoming nationalism. Intergroup discrimination by the English against the colonists intensified the understanding that while the colonists saw themselves on equal footing with other Englishmen and women, the English did not share this view.¹⁶

Chapter three supports the hypothesis that individual's construct national identity as a part of their own collaborative identity prior to its emergence at a societal level. Using colonial America in the mid-eighteenth century as a case study, chapter three demonstrates how external stimuli, in this example, population growth, immigration, and economic interdependence, influence individual's identity formation based on responses to their surrounding environment and perceptions of exclusion. Evidence presented in chapters two and three apply contemporary intellectual models to colonial America, to

¹⁵ Engal, Marc and Joseph A. Ernst. "An Economic Interpretation of the American Revolution." *The William and Mary Quarterly* 29, No. 1 (January 1972): 11, 15, 24-25, 27. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1921325> (accessed July 16, 2012). See also Ian Christie. "British Politics and the American Revolution." *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 9, No. 3 (Autumn 1977): 205-226.

¹⁶ Breen, T.H. "Ideology and Nationalism on the Eve of the American Revolution: Revisions Once More in Need of Revising." *The Journal of American History* (June 1997): 13-39. See also Kathy O. McGill. "How Easily the World May Be Begun: British History, American Newness and National Identity." *Dialectical Anthropology* 27 (2003): 105-120.

illustrate the links between identity and external social forces. The value of this kind of research cannot be understated; however, analysis of primary source evidence provides even greater insight into the development of American identity at its infancy. Chapter four supplies further evidence of the emergence of national identity through the examination and analysis of several published pamphlets and sermons of the period.

Though many of the arguments for American independence appear after the mid-1760s, pamphleteering emerged as a legitimate method of political expression much earlier on.¹⁷ A sample of pamphlets and sermons was analyzed to determine what, if any, level of American national identity was present prior to 1763. Because of the importance of language on culture,¹⁸ passages were examined for specific phrases based on three undercurrents of American national identity: Puritan values, enlightenment thinking, and an obligation to resist oppression. In several examples, one or more of these themes was present, and, though it is clear that no actualized American national identity existed during this period, the foundations of American national identity were emerging in literature of the time.

The findings of this project's primary source research support the idea that American national identity began to form prior to the Revolutionary War. Jonathan Mayhew's sermon, *A Discourse Concerning Unlimited Submission and Non-Resistance to the Higher Powers*, is particularly useful for demonstrating the existence of Puritan values, enlightenment thinking, and a resistance to oppression within published works at that time, and how ideas were disseminated via the communication networks created by

¹⁷ Nash, 616.

¹⁸ Anderson, 44-45.

printed word to colonists that would otherwise not interact.¹⁹ His pamphlet contained similar rationale to that used for pro-independence though decades later, and was reprinted several times, in several locations.

Understanding the underlying culture of a nation is essential to understanding the identity of a nation.²⁰ Population growth, immigration, and economic development altered colonial culture while informing the individual identity of colonists. The unique experiences of colonists shaped American national identity by creating commonality among a diverse group of individuals. A variety of scholars have addressed several of these ideas in isolation, and their insight will be drawn upon to form a more collaborative approach to the formation of national identity.

Literature Review

In the 1960s and 1970s there was great scholarly interest in the American Revolution, and the social influences that may have led to the severing of ties between Great Britain and the American colonies.²¹ However, much of this research ignored early indications of national identity among the population prior to the Revolutionary period – the era traditionally associated with American identity development. Scholarship on the development of American national identity and nationalism has continued to evolve to this day, but there is a lack of application of the new interpretation of identity formation to the time in which American identity first began to develop. In order to fully understand American national identity, the field of American nationalism needs to further explore the

¹⁹ Mayhew, Jonathan. "A Discourse Concerning Unlimited Submission and Non-Resistance to the Higher Powers," 1750. In Bernard Bailyn. *Pamphlets of the American Revolution, Volume I: 1750-1765*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965, 213-255.

²⁰ McCartney, Paul T. *Power and Progress: American National Identity, the War of 1898, and the Rise of American Imperialism*. Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 2006, 24.

²¹ See also Appleby, 3-26, Lockridge, "Social Change," 403-439, and Wood, 635-642.

connection between identity formation and the beginnings of national identity.

This project attempts to bridge the gap between individual and group identity formation by examining the reciprocal nature of their relationship focusing on emerging national identity in colonial America. To begin, analysis of Ernst Renan's famous descriptions of nationalism as possessing a soul²² is supplemented with an exploration of Benedict Anderson's contributions to nationalist literature. A particular focus is placed on the importance Anderson ascribes to both print language and common history for the emergence of national identity.²³ These two themes are explored in depth with additional contributions from David McCrone, who emphasized the narrative of a nation as an essential part of the bond that unites individuals²⁴ and Helen Ting, who also recognized the importance of common historical memories.²⁵

Ernst Gellner's work is also considered as he offers an opposing viewpoint that common history was nothing more than a fabrication, and unnecessary for the development of national identity. Gellner believed that nationalism evolved as a response to certain social conditions, such as modernity.²⁶ His assessment is not without merit; however, the social conditions that he relies on are shaped by responses to commonality – driven in part by historical myths. Anthony Marx's work on nationalism in feudal Europe also is engaged to demonstrate that the truthfulness of historic accounts is not the determining factor in their ability to fuel national identity. Rather, it is the emotional

²² Renan, 41-55.

²³ Anderson, 6, 44-45.

²⁴ McCrone, 52.

²⁵ Ting, Helen. "Social Construction of Nation – A Theoretical Exploration." *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 14 (2008): 457.

²⁶ Gellner, Ernst. *Nations and Nationalism*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1983, 63, 121. See also Miriam Farhi-Rodrig. "Assessing Gellner." *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 42, No. 2 (June 2012): 287-311. <http://pos.sagepub.com/content/42/2/287> (accessed February 1, 2013), and Harshbarger, paragraph 12.

response elicited from such stories that unites populations and facilitates the emergence and strengthening of national identity.²⁷

Michael Billig provides useful insight into the development of national identity particularly because he operationalizes the way in which these ideas and interpretations find a voice in society and spread from one person to the next. His theory of banal nationalism is employed to display how national identity is reinforced through subtle, daily activities.²⁸ Contemporary nationalist study is balanced throughout with examples from colonial America. For example, Billig's theory of banal nationalism is supported by examples from Gary Nash's analysis of urban politics in colonial America. Nash provides evidence that pamphleteering and participation in mob activity contributed to expanded political participation throughout many levels of society – even those that had been previously excluded.²⁹ Gordon Wood also examined the impact of 'the mob' on political activity in the colonies.³⁰

These scholars focus on the behaviors that create and reinforce commonality among a group and consequently foster national identity formation. Equally important when developing identity is determining who does not belong, or who is 'other.' Henry Tajfel's work, along with the work of his protégé John Turner and others, is instrumental in determining the effects of intergroup discrimination on forming in-group/out-group associations.³¹ Marx and Arthur Stinchcombe provide general support for this idea, while

²⁷ Marx, Anthony W. *Faith in Nation: Exclusionary Origins of Nationalism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003, 15, 11.

²⁸ Billig, 10.

²⁹ Nash, 616-617.

³⁰ Wood, 607, 613-614.

³¹ Dumont, Kitty and Johann Louw. "A Citation Analysis of Henri Tajfel's Work on Intergroup Relations." *International Journal of Psychology* 44, No. 1 (October 2007): 47-48. See also John Turner. "Social Comparison and Social Identity: Some Prospects for Intergroup Behaviour." *European Journal of Social*

Kathy McGill and T.H. Breen yield insight into the effects of intergroup discrimination on the development of American national identity specifically.³² Taken together, general and colonial-specific examples and evidence are employed to illustrate national identity development in a comprehensive way. The same approach was also used to address individual identity development.

An analysis of ideas from prominent developmental psychologists such as Erik Erickson, James Marcia, and Jean Piaget is presented to provide a general understanding of different theories about identity development.³³ A contemporary discussion about how identity is constructed is also included. Jessica Fish and Jacob Priest's idea of identity holons is featured and describes the malleable nature of individual identity as the merging of several sub-identities within a person that at any given time exert more or less influence based on external stimuli.³⁴

Finally, a section is dedicated to the reciprocal relationship between individual identity formation and the influence of external variables. Lev Vygostky noted this link in his work, as did Urie Bronfenbrenner, who created the Ecological Systems Model to explain the various degrees of influence a variety of external stimuli have on an individual's identity development.³⁵ The reciprocal nature of the relationship between the self and the social is a critical component of this research project. External influences

Psychology 5, No. 1: 7-8.

³² McGill, 105-120. See also Breen, 13-39.

³³ Santrock, John W. "Chapter 12 – Socioemotional Development in Adolescence." *Life Span Development*, Thirteenth Edition – International Student Edition, New York: McGraw-Hill International Edition, 2011, 385. See also Martin Guhn and Hillel Goelman. "Bioecological Theory, Early Child Development and the Validation of the Population-Level Early Development Instrument." *Social Indicators Research* 103, No. 2 (September 2011): 205-207. DOI: 10.1007/s11205-011-9842-5 (accessed March 20, 2013).

³⁴ Fish, 182-190.

³⁵ Santrock, "Chapter 1," 28-29.

helped shape individual identity, and, in mid-eighteenth century colonial America, an identity crisis occurred due to the increased need to assimilate and accommodate a vast amount of new experiences. Jack Greene, Joyce Appleby, and Kenneth Lockridge provide expert analysis of the various relationships between social stimuli and the emergence of American national identity.³⁶

In chapter three, the analysis of Greene, Appleby, and Lockridge is joined by prominent scholars such as Edmund Morgan, who provides valuable insight into the Puritan ethic and its meaning in America.³⁷ Additionally, work from several scholars offers commentary regarding the level of acceptance of English identity, another significant influence in colonial life. These scholars include Jacob Price, David Cressey, and Chris Beneke.³⁸ Both Puritan values and English identity helped shape early colonial settlements. Changes in the mid-eighteenth century challenged existing constructions of colonial identity, and forced colonists to search for more appropriate notions of identity to reflect the circumstances and experiences of colonial life at that time.

Population growth among the existing population is specifically detailed by Aaron Fogleman, Ned Landsman, and Chris Tomlins.³⁹ Fogleman's research is also used extensively to approach the way in which immigration helped to shape colonial America.

³⁶ Appleby, 3-26. See also Lockridge, "Social Change," 403-439, and Jack Greene. "Search for Identity: An Interpretation of the Meaning of Selected Patterns of Social Response in Eighteenth-Century America." *Journal of Social History* 3, No. 3 (Spring 1969-Spring 1970): 189-220.

³⁷ Morgan, "Puritan Ethic," 3-43.

³⁸ Price, 395-436. See also Chris Beneke. "The Critical Turn: Jonathan Mayhew, the British Empire, and the Idea of Resistance in Mid-Eighteenth-Century Boston." *Massachusetts Historical Review* 10 (2008): 23-56, and David Cressey. "Elizabethan America: 'God's Own Latitude?'" *History Today* (July 1986): 44-50.

³⁹ Fogleman, 43-76. See also Ned Landsman. "Ethnicity and National Origin among British Settlers in the Philadelphia Region: Pennsylvania Immigration in the Wake of "Voyagers to the West."" *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 133, No. 2 (June 1998): 170-174, and Christopher Tomlins. "Reconsidering Indentured Servitude: European Migration and the Early American Labor Force, 1600-1775." *Labor History* 42, No. 1 (2001): 5-43.

Immigration data for colonial America can be somewhat difficult to interpret, and inconsistencies exist between scholars who study the phenomenon. Fogleman's estimates of immigration fall within the mean of other estimates. Many authors who contributed chapters to *Strangers Within the Realm* were also helpful in providing immigration details about Scottish, Irish, German and Dutch immigrants. These included Jacob Price, A.G. Roeber, Maldwyn Jones, and Philip Morgan.⁴⁰

Finally, several scholars provide details of how the new market economy arose, and the English response to it. Marc Engal and Joseph Ernst were particularly useful, as was Ian Christie, who discusses the English response to an increasing colonial market.⁴¹ Together, the information included in chapters two and three serves to address the themes of this research project in either broad or colonial-specific ways. Chapter four provides a different kind of analysis by employing primary source documents to support the emergence of American national identity. Documents were collected from a variety of sources including Bernard Bailyn's *Pamphlets of the American Revolution, Volume I: 1750-1765*, an electronic version of Ellis Sandoz's *Political Sermons of the American Founding Era Volume I (1730-1788)*, the *An American Time Capsule: Three Centuries of Broad-sides and other Printed Ephemera* database, and the *Early American Imprints Series I: Evans 1639-1800* database.

Printed works expanded communication between colonies and established "a new fixity to language, which in the long run helped to build that image of antiquity so central

⁴⁰ Price, 395-436. See also Roeber, 220-283, Maldwyn Jones. "The Scotch-Irish in British America," in *Strangers Within the Realm: Cultural Margins of the First British Empire* edited by Bernard Bailyn and Philip D. Morgan. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1991, 284-313, and Philip Morgan. "British Encounters with Africans and African-Americans, circa 1600-1780," in *Strangers Within the Realm: Cultural Margins of the First British Empire* edited by Bernard Bailyn and Philip D. Morgan. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1991, 157-219.

⁴¹ Engal, 3-32. See also Christie, 205-226.

to the subjective idea of the nation.”⁴² Information found in published documents between 1720 and 1763 provide clues to the emergence of national identity by illustrating the commitment of individuals to the foundations of American national identity. Sermons from Benjamin Colman and George Whitfield highlight the importance and prevalence of Puritan values in colonial discourse.⁴³ Enlightenment thinking is clearly illustrated in Elisha Williams’s 1744 sermon *The Essential Rights and Liberties of Protestants* in which he made several references to “unalienable” rights such as life, liberty, property, and religion.⁴⁴

Several publications also detail the tension many colonists felt, in trying to understand their responsibility to be good members of the English empire, while at the same time realizing the obligation to resist oppression and tyranny in order to preserve Godliness in society. Jonathan Mayhew’s 1750 sermon *A Discourse Concerning Unlimited Submission and Non-Resistance to the High Powers* illustrates all three themes, and is also useful in demonstrating the way in which ideas were disseminated throughout the colonies.⁴⁵ By the time of the Revolutionary War, Mayhew’s sermon had been re-printed in virtually every colony and directly influenced pro-independence arguments. Works from Benjamin Franklin and Joseph Galloway were also examined to

⁴² Anderson, 44-45.

⁴³ Colman, Benjamin. “Government the Pillar of the Earth.” In *Online Library of Liberty: Political Sermons of the American Founding Era Volume I (1730-1788)* edited by Ellis Sandoz, 1991. E-Book (PDF format) published by Liberty Fund, Inc., September 2011. 33-43, 36-38. <http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/816>. See also George Whitefield. “Britain’s Mercies, and Britain’s Duties.” In *Online Library of Liberty: Political Sermons of the American Founding Era Volume I (1730-1788)* edited by Ellis Sandoz, 1991. E-Book (PDF format) published by Liberty Fund, Inc., September 2011, 104-114, 114. <http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/816>.

⁴⁴ Williams, Elisha. “The Essential Rights and Liberties of Protestants.” In *Online Library of Liberty: Political Sermons of the American Founding Era Volume I (1730-1788)* edited by Ellis Sandoz, 1991. E-Book (PDF format) published by Liberty Fund, Inc., September 2011, 63-103. <http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/816>.

⁴⁵ Mayhew, *A Discourse Concerning Unlimited Submission*, 213-255.

further illustrate the impact of Mayhew's work and the psychological identity crisis many colonists were experiencing.⁴⁶

Because of the importance of print language to the development of nationalism, searching for the earliest print cues of national identity can help pinpoint the emergence of national identity within society. Publications created between 1720 and 1763 highlight the foundations of American national identity, and illustrate the difficulty many colonists had when trying to reconcile realities that no longer supported existing notions of identity. The emergence of American national identity was not a clear cut and simple process. It developed slowly, ebbing and flowing among individuals and groups, particularly as it was first being conceived in the mid-eighteenth century.

Conclusion

One of the primary complications when studying identity formation is its amorphous nature. It is important to adapt existing theories about certain phenomenon to account for advances in scholarship on a particular topic. A multidisciplinary approach to American national identity formation generates different conclusions than those based primarily in a single field. As such, this research project examines multiple aspects of colonial society, such as demography and economics, and applies a multidisciplinary framework for interpreting changes yielding a greater understanding of the first appearances of American national identity.

Identity formation is an intangible concept, and as such, evidence supporting its

⁴⁶ Franklin, Benjamin. "The Interest of Great Britain Considered, With Regard to Her Colonies." *National Humanities Center Resource Toolbox: Becoming American: The British Atlantic Colonies 1690-1763*, 2009, 1-4. http://www.docstoc.com/docs/47264597/Benjamin-Franklin_-The-Interest-of-Great-Britain-Considered_-With (Accessed March 27, 2013). See also Joseph Galloway. "A Letter to the People of Pennsylvania; Occasioned by the ...Act for Constitution the Judges...During Good Behavior," 1760. In Bernard Bailyn. *Pamphlets of the American Revolution, Volume I: 1750-1765*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965, 257-272.

development can be difficult to discern. It is necessary to look for examples within society that indicate changes in thought were present. Modern-day analysis of colonial era phenomena reveals support for the link between social changes and emerging national identity. Additional evidence was accrued via primary source materials from the mid-eighteenth century. Together, a comprehensive analysis of the link between individual identity formation and the emergence of national identity in colonial America is presented.

Chapter 2

The Relationship between National and Individual Identity

The progression from individual to group national identity exists as a developmental step between autonomy and nationalism. Culture plays a critical role in the shaping of individual identity,⁴⁷ and the same is true for national identity at the societal level. In colonial America, cultural impacts, such as immigration, population growth, and economic changes, influenced the way in which individuals thought of themselves, and their relationship with others.⁴⁸ Demographic changes increased the quantity of colonists dramatically, giving ideas a chance to spread and develop, while a diversity of immigrants led to ethnic and cultural adaptations to an identity that had previously been determined as “British in America.”⁴⁹ Increasing interaction with a market economy, and the rising importance of property also shaped American identity.⁵⁰ These, and many other cultural influences deepened the divide between England and its colonies – highlighting ‘otherness’ due to the development of national identity for citizens of both communities.

Identities are constructed in part by determining who is the same, and who is

⁴⁷ Umana-Taylor, Adriana, Ani Yazedjian and Mayra Bamaca-Gomez. “Developing the Ethnic Identity Scale Using Eriksonian and Social Identity Perspectives.” *Identity: An International Journal of Theory and Research* 4, No. 1: 9.

⁴⁸ Lockridge, Kenneth. “Social Change and the Meaning of the American Revolution.” *Journal of Social History* 6, No. 4 (Summer 1973): 403-439. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3786509> (accessed October 10, 2012). See also Joyce Appleby. “Liberalism and the American Revolution.” *The New England Quarterly* 49, No. 1 (March 1976): 3-26.

⁴⁹ Fogleman, Aaron S. “From Slaves, Convicts, and Servants to Free Passengers: The Transformation of Immigration in the Era of the American Revolution.” *The Journal of American History* (June 1998): 43-76. See also Ned Landsman. “Ethnicity and National Origin among British Settlers in the Philadelphia Region: Pennsylvania Immigration in the Wake of “Voyagers to the West.”” *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 133, No. 2 (June 1998): 173.

⁵⁰ Engal, Marc and Joseph A. Ernst. “An Economic Interpretation of the American Revolution.” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 29, No. 1 (January 1972): 3-32. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1921325> (accessed July 16, 2012). See also Jack Greene. “Search for Identity: An Interpretation of the Meaning of Selected Patterns of Social Response in Eighteenth-Century America.” *Journal of Social History* 3, No. 3 (Spring 1969-Spring 1970): 189-220. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3786589> (accessed July 16, 2012).

different.⁵¹ Differences between Englishmen and colonists were cast in sharp relief as national identity developed among both groups, enhancing ideas about who belonged and who did not based on similarities and differences. As the transmission of ideas became more prevalent due to an increased number of colonists and growing interdependence between communities that had previously been largely autonomous, individual perceptions of otherness began to appear in literature of the time such as pamphlets and sermons. These publicized works helped spread ideas of American national identity, priming the colonies for a moment of national consciousness due to the crystallization of otherness realized during the Revolutionary War.

In this chapter, a summary of general theories on nationalism and national identity will be presented and discussed. Understanding the foundations of nationalist theory is important for an erudite analysis of the influence of certain phenomena on identity formation. First, an overview of national theory will clarify the process of how a community comes to understand its national identity, and what bonds exist to help these ideas emerge. Second, an explanation of individual identity development based on theories from prominent developmental psychologists will illuminate how a person processes and integrates external influences, aiding in their own individual identity formation. Finally, the separate examinations of both group and individual identity formation will be combined to detail the reciprocal relationship between the two.

Though all of the theories emerged in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, their ideas are applicable to many time periods, including the relevant period for this research

⁵¹ Turner, John C. "Social Comparison and Social Identity: Some Prospects for Intergroup Behaviour." *European Journal of Social Psychology* 5, No. 1: 5, 7-8. See also Anthony Marx. *Faith in Nation: Exclusionary Origins of Nationalism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003, 21, 23, 24.

project, pre-Revolutionary America. Ideas and theories will be supported throughout using examples and information from colonial America between 1720 and 1763. This exploration of identity formation at both the societal and individual level will advance understanding of how demographic and economic changes altered the way in which colonists considered their world, creating a unique American national identity prior to the Revolutionary War.

Nationalism and National Identity

Nationalism is a powerful unifying concept, especially when it is created from the ground up, developing in an organic and grassroots way.⁵² Nationalism is built, from the foundation up, by the joining together of individual ideas about national identity. These thoughts mix, and merge, and become something larger than the parts of the whole. Ideas no longer exist only as parts of individuals' social identity, but become a community's collective social identity.

Traditionally, nationalism was defined and evaluated based on ethnicity and other salient features of a group perceived as 'easily identifiable.' In the late nineteenth century, Ernst Renan interpreted nationalism in a new way, drawing heavily from enlightenment ideals such as personal liberty and equality, rather than ethnographic qualities. In an 1882 speech at the Sorbonne, Renan described a nation as:

...a soul, a spiritual principle. Two things, which in truth are but one, constitute this soul or spiritual principle. One lies in the past, one in the present. One is the possession in common of a rich legacy of memories; the other is the present-day consent, the desire to live together, the will to perpetuate the value of heritage that one has received in an undivided form....The nation, like the individual, is the culmination of a long past of endeavors, sacrifice, and devotion.⁵³

⁵² Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso, 1991.

⁵³ Renan, Ernst. "What is a Nation." Lecture at Sorbonne, March 11, 1882, also in *Becoming a National: A Reader*, edited by Geoff Eley and Ronald Grigor Suny. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996, 41-55.

Benedict Anderson, a scholar of nationalism almost one hundred years later, exhibited the continued influence of Renan's speech in his own work *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* when he defined the nation as:

An imagined community...because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members...yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion The nation is imagined as limited...as sovereign...as a community...[and] always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship.⁵⁴

Anderson described a nation as an imagined community because the ties that bind it together are intangible, yet powerful.⁵⁵ Chief among such connections is the idea of shared language, with a particular emphasis on printed word, because common language makes it easy to distinguish similarities and differences between many groups. According to Anderson, language unites a group, beyond geographic locale by disseminating beliefs and mores throughout a much broader area.⁵⁶ This spread of ideas increases the scope of identity by reaching out to people previously isolated by distance or circumstance. It also provides validation by expanding access to the ideas and values associated with a given identity, allowing both people who do and do not identify with it a common understanding of what a given identity represents. In the case of colonial America, the spread of similar messages over a large area confirmed that colonists from Massachusetts to Georgia were part of something larger than themselves and their local communities.

Beginning in the 1720s, the use and distribution of newspapers and political literature in colonial America increased dramatically. From 1715-1724 there were forty two

⁵⁴ Anderson, 6.

⁵⁵ Anderson, 6.

⁵⁶ Anderson, 44-45.

published pamphlets between Boston and Philadelphia,⁵⁷ however, between 1755-1764 one hundred and fifty four pamphlets were published in Boston, Philadelphia, and New York.⁵⁸ The rise in published commentary is noteworthy, not only because of the sheer volume of publications, but also because, according to Gary Nash, “the pamphlets and newspaper creeds were intended to make politics everyone’s concern.”⁵⁹ Although these works did not directly address issues of national identity, the emergence of using the press for political purposes established the format as an accepted way to learn about and participate in current political developments.

Common language and the use of print is also an important component for forming intangible bonds between groups of people to facilitate the development of a group national identity. Language is an invaluable mechanism for spreading ideas and stories that contribute to the mythic past, strengthening the idea of exclusivity by grounding a group’s existence in history.⁶⁰ A common history provides a link from the past to the present, intensifying associations between past and present group members.

Visceral connections between members of a group (such as shared histories) are an essential component of nationalism because they foster feelings of inclusion by providing rallying points for groups to unite around. The necessity of common history is echoed throughout literature on nationalism. Renan refers to a link between the “legacy of memories” from the past, and the current consent to live together in order to “perpetuate

⁵⁷ Although New York City had published pamphlets in previous years, in the decade 1715-1724 none were recorded. From Gary B. Nash. “The Transformation of Urban Politics 1700-1765.” *The Journal of American History* 60, No. 3 (December 1973): 617.

⁵⁸ Nash, 617.

⁵⁹ Nash, 616-617.

⁶⁰ Anderson, 44-45.

the value of heritage that one has received.”⁶¹ This link is critical to the continuation of nationalism from one generation to the next. David McCrone acknowledges the importance of common experiences for the emergence of nationalism, writing:

The ‘narrative’ of the nation is told and retold through national histories, literatures, the media, and popular culture, which together provide a set of stories, images, landscapes, scenarios, historical events, national symbols, and rituals. Through these stories national identity is presented as primordial, essential, unified, and continuous.⁶²

Anthony Smith echoes these sentiments and describes national identity as possessing “a historic territory or homeland, common myths and historical memories, a common, mass public culture, common legal rights and duties for all members and a common economy with territorial mobility for members.”⁶³ Common cultural bonds are essential for the formation of national identity because of the potential to unite a group of people by forming a strong in-group association, assuming that, for the group members, those common bonds have meaning at an individual level.

However, not all scholars of nationalism impart such a high value on shared history; Ernest Gellner placed the onus of nationalist development primarily on modernity (and the movement from an agrarian existence to industrialization) and power dynamics,⁶⁴ believing that an ‘essential shared past’ was nothing more than an “arbitrary historical invention” composed of “cultural shreds and patches.”⁶⁵ While his assessment could be

⁶¹ Renan, 52-54.

⁶² McCrone, David. *Sociology of Nationalism*. London and New York: Routledge, 1998, 52.

⁶³ Ting, Helen. “Social Construction of Nation – A Theoretical Exploration.” *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 14 (2008): 457

⁶⁴ Gellner, Ernst. *Nations and Nationalism*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1983, 63. See also Miriam Farhi-Rodrig. “Assessing Gellner.” *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 42, No. 2 (June 2012): 287-311. <http://pos.sagepub.com/content/42/2/287> (accessed February 1, 2013)

⁶⁵ Harshbarger, Scott. “National Demons: Robert Burns, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and the Folk of the Forest,” in *Sullen Fires Across the Atlantic*, edited by Lisa Marie Rhody and part of the Romantic Circles Praxis Series edited by Orrin N.C. Wang, paragraph 12.

http://www.rc.umd.edu/praxis/sullenfires/harshbarger/harshbarger_essay.html (accessed December 30, 2012)

perceived as a scathing attack on identity development, there is room in nationalist theory for both the understanding of the importance of cultural heritage and the social conditions that bring national consciousness to light. Gellner postulated that nationalism forms under certain conditions regardless of cultural histories constructed by individuals to reinforce notions of belonging. He stressed that “what matters is whether the conditions of life are such as to make the idea [nationalism] seem compelling, rather than, as it is in most other situations, absurd.”⁶⁶ He correctly identified the important influence of social conditions on the development of national identity, but his dismissiveness regarding shared history overlooks its value in providing a psychological underpinning that might aid in making nationalism seem “compelling” to individuals.

Gellner believed “nationalism as a phenomenon...is inherent in a certain set of social conditions.”⁶⁷ The social conditions exist however, in part because of the accepted understanding of shared ideology. Smith points out that the emotional connections formed when individuals learn and interpret these stories provides a foundation for the development of national identity, priming society for action based upon its ideology; the ‘truthfulness’ of the stories is not important. The appeal of historical narratives “has nothing to do with their ‘innovative qualities,’ let alone their truth-content, and everything to do with the traditions of popular ethnic myths, symbols, and memories which nationalisms habitually evoke, and invoke.”⁶⁸ The emotional resonance of such stories is used to construct and strengthen the association of a group by providing a sense of purpose and belonging whether the accounts are factual or not.

⁶⁶ Gellner, 121.

⁶⁷ Gellner, 120.

⁶⁸ Harshbarger, paragraph 12.

The idea that people socially construct their reality is important because it places them as active participants in the shaping of national identity rather than passive spectators subject to biological classification. Michael Billig's theory of "banal nationalism" builds on Anderson's idea of an imagined community by focusing on the subliminal ways national identity is formed and reinforced through "banal acts, such as reading newspapers, reading literature, or listening to speeches of politicians.... Habitual use of these collectively developed signs and symbols enables them to be entrenched in our everyday life and become part of our cultural world."⁶⁹ Billig's theory highlights the formation of cultural bonds simply by the reinforcement of seemingly imperceptible actions, establishing a foundation of national identity that continues to strengthen itself as the nation becomes more and more defined. He writes, "Daily, the nation is indicated, or 'flagged,' in the lives of its citizenry."⁷⁰ William Penuel supports Billig's assertion, stating "Political speeches, radio and television news, comic strips, and other domains of public discourse all contain implicit and explicit positioning of the identities of individuals and cultural groups."⁷¹ Habitual engagement in banal acts entrench nationalist concepts into an individual's consciousness, imperceptibly reinforcing the notion of belonging to a certain group, in this case, the 'nation.'⁷²

Billig's research is focused on present day nationalism, but his ideas are applicable to the development of national identity in any era. While the banal acts may differ from generation to generation, the idea that meaning is found in the mundane is a powerful one. In colonial America, though the mundane actions of the population might have been

⁶⁹ Billig, Michael. *Banal Nationalism*. London: Sage Publications, 1995, 10.

⁷⁰ Billig, 6.

⁷¹ Penuel, William R. and James V. Wertsch. "Vygotsky and Identity Formation: A Sociocultural Approach." *Educational Psychologist* 30, No. 3 (1995): 90.

⁷² Ting, 462.

different than they are today, national identity developed slowly over time, bolstered by stirring commentary and prominent displays of patriotism. “[W]hile the impassioned speeches and actions of political leaders...are important in articulating a wider sense of who ‘we’ are, it is through every day language and practices that identities gain credence.”⁷³ Published pamphlets and sermons from the colonial era helped define national identity for many colonists who incorporated these ideas into their understanding of who they were and how they fit into the world by giving voice to individual assessments of a growing sense of otherness between the English and the colonists. These individual ideas were transmitted to colonists both locally and farther away, allowing them to be introduced to others and reinforced via banal acts of the time (such as reading the newspaper and listening to church sermons). Literacy rates for mid-eighteenth century colonial America are generally estimated between 70-90 percent, excluding ethnic minorities such as African Americans and Native Americans who were largely excluded from the development of American national identity.⁷⁴ Pamphlets were often read aloud in addition to being published, ensuring the majority of the white male population was able to participate in the idea shaping of colonial America, even if just by listening.

Billig, Anderson, and Renan all stress the emergence of national loyalty as an organic process that does not rely on state action to emerge, and have thus determined literacy, urbanization, and economic development as essential for the spread of such a movement

⁷³ Skey, Michael. “The National in Everyday Life: A Critical Engagement with Michael Billig’s Thesis of Banal Nationalism.” *Sociological Review* 57, No. 2 (May 2009): 334.

⁷⁴ Schudson, Michael. “The Revolution in American Journalism in the Age of Egalitarianism: The Penny Press,” in *Discovering the News: A Social History of American Newspapers*. United States of America: Basic Books, Inc., 1978, 39. See also Kenneth Lockridge. *Literacy in Colonial New England; An Enquiry into the Social Context of Literacy in the Early Modern West*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1974.

beyond the elite of society, and into the masses.⁷⁵ Anthony Marx believes that modernity is not a necessary precursor for nationalism, but recognizes the value of the “modernizing influence of literacy, urbanization, and economic development” as “necessary for producing or making evident the diffusion of nationalism beyond a narrow elite.”⁷⁶

Though many groups were excluded from the development of an American national identity, there was an increase in the level of participation of middle and lower-class white men, and the cooperation between these groups and the ‘elites.’

Mob behavior was an essential part of the Revolutionary War, and the events leading to it. Indeed, mob influence in repealing the Stamp Act, aiding in non-importation and the boycott of British goods, and their participation in the Boston Massacre and the Tea Party was heavily felt.⁷⁷ Like national identity, the history of these crowds pre-dates the Revolutionary War, as mob violence was employed for other political and social reasons as early as the 1730s.⁷⁸ In order to gain favor and win elections, many political leaders organized groups of lower class freemen to bolster support for a particular candidate.

These previously “politically inert” members of society (free white males, such as unskilled laborers and boatmen, who owned only enough property to qualify as voters) suddenly gained a new level of importance during the mid-eighteenth century.⁷⁹ Though political leaders employed mobs to gain factional support during elections, mob activity also emerged for a variety of other reasons, illustrating the “varied composition” of those

⁷⁵ Marx, 15, 11.

⁷⁶ Marx, 11.

⁷⁷ Wood, Gordon. “A Note on Mobs in the American Revolution.” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 23, No. 4 (October 1966): 635. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1919130> (accessed July 16, 2012).

⁷⁸ Nash, 623.

⁷⁹ Nash, 607, 613-614.

who chose to participate.⁸⁰ Frances Piven's attributes this cooperation to the use of "interdependent power," or the idea that life is cooperative, and as such, people of all walks of life have power to some degree over others as even menial jobs and tasks are necessary for the functioning of society. Colonial elites recognized the necessity of the mob, and employed its power to achieve desired outcomes.⁸¹

Increased access to political participation arose out of necessity for political leaders to secure victory rather than a magnanimous awareness of the rights of an individual to participate in political exchange, but the result was the same; those who had been previously excluded from political participation were now included in it.⁸² Nash writes "That an increasing percentage of qualified voters was participating in electoral politics not only by casting their votes, but also by taking part in street demonstrations, rallies, and caucuses was emblematic of the changing political culture of the cities....which by 1765 already contained many of the changes in political style and behavior usually associated with the Revolutionary period."⁸³ The broadening of political activism increased the awareness and importance of political participation prior to the Revolutionary War, creating a cultural norm of participation and common experiences from which to draw from when referencing the past.

Common historical experiences and cultural norms are an important part of how national identity develops, providing a foundation for nationalism to adhere to as it becomes a powerful force within the community. The evolution of national identity into nationalism is often brought about by a catalyst of some kind that highlights similarities

⁸⁰ Wood, 638.

⁸¹ Pivens, Frances Fox. "Can Power from Below Change the World?" *American Sociological Review* 73, No. 1 (February 2008): 5. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2542511> (accessed July 17, 2012).

⁸² Nash, 632.

⁸³ Nash, 632.

within a group, casting the group as distinct from others. The impetus for independence in colonial America was a crystallization of ‘otherness’ in the minds of the colonists. ‘Otherness,’ a term associated with Henry Tajfel’s research on in-group/out-group behavior, centers on the idea that intergroup dynamics greatly influence our social choices, including those regarding national identity. Tajfel’s research focused on social perception, stereotyping, and prejudice in intergroup relations.⁸⁴ He wrote:

The characteristics of one’s group as a whole...achieve most of their significance in relation to perceived differences from other groups and the value connotations of these differences A group becomes a group in the sense of being perceived as having common characteristics of common fate only because other groups are present in the environment.⁸⁵

John C. Turner, Tajfel’s protégé, further refined his theories and asserted that the mere classification of people into groups was sufficient enough to create “in-group favoritism and discrimination against the out-group.”⁸⁶ In the case of colonial America, there were clear differences between the English and the colonists, but these differences did not gain importance in a reactionary sense until the colonists saw themselves as ‘other.’ The realization that the English saw the colonists as others inevitably led the colonists to sever association with one group (the British) in favor of another (Americans) more closely aligned with similar cultural and historical experiences.

The importance of intergroup dynamics cannot be overlooked. Nationalism gains its power by resonating within a large enough portion of the population so that the sentiments and beliefs associated with the ideology are recognized by both the people who accept it, and those who do not. It is naïve and incorrect to assume that all individuals within a given population will ascribe to a certain ideology in the exact same

⁸⁴ Dumont, Kitty and Johann Louw. “A Citation Analysis of Henri Tajfel’s Work on Intergroup Relations.” *International Journal of Psychology* 44, No. 1 (October 2007): 47-48.

⁸⁵ Turner, 7-8.

⁸⁶ Turner, 5.

way, however, there must be enough commonalities within an ideology that members of the group, and individuals outside of the group, have a similar idea of what a particular identity represents. National identity, like many other social identities, is not just about which group you identify with, but also, and equally important, which groups you do not identify with.⁸⁷ A sense of ‘otherness’ is critical for the formation of social identities because it calcifies boundaries between groups, and highlights attributes that are considered essential to an identity. Perceived and actual discrimination between individuals of a group can provide a powerful incentive for those members viewed as ‘other’ to break away from current associations and form a new group, effectively re-defining themselves from ‘other’ to ‘us.’

Marx documents the importance of in-group/out-group dynamics in his examination of the very earliest forms of nationalism in early modern Europe, explaining that the discrimination of one group by another provides a sense of unity and common characteristics to the group, and argues that far from being accidental, exclusion is “crucially employed in an attempt to solder core coalitions among those included.”⁸⁸ Arthur Stinchcombe also recognized the ability of national identity to be strengthened by discrimination. He wrote: “[nationalism] is on the one hand a generous spirit of identification...a love of compatriots...But it is on the other hand a spirit of distrust of the potential treason of any opposition within the group and hatred of strangers.”⁸⁹ Noting the link between individual and group, Marx believed that psychological tendencies to discriminate at the individual level provided a powerful platform for effective group

⁸⁷Penn, Elizabeth Maggie. “From Many, One: State Representation and the Construction of an American Identity.” *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 21, No. 3 (2009): 352. DOI: 10.1177/0951629809103967 (accessed July 12, 2012).

⁸⁸ Marx, 24, 21.

⁸⁹ Quoted in Marx, 23.

discrimination at the national level.⁹⁰

In the American colonies in the second half of the eighteenth century, the discrimination colonists' perceived as a result of being 'colonists' of the British Empire rather than 'Englishmen' provided a catalyst to break away from Great Britain and form a new national identity and nation. As the colonists began to understand the English viewed them as lesser-than-English 'Americans' rather than equal subjects of the British Empire, tensions escalated until there could no longer be a harmonic relationship between the two groups.⁹¹ Common historical and cultural practices emerged as uniquely American, entrenching the idea of Americans as separate from Britain. As Englishmen and women increasingly defined themselves in a more nationalistic way, that is, 'England' as a specific category with special status within the British Empire, they began to assert their superiority over other members of the British Empire, particularly the colonists.

Not only were American colonists seen as inferior, but they were also viewed as further back on a particular historical cycle in which Britain was clearly ahead. It was believed that they would never become "synchronous" with British history, implying that they would always be further behind, and consequently, less-than.⁹² T.H. Breen suggests that "The developing military strength of Great Britain, the spread of a consumer-oriented economy, the creation of a self-conscious middle class culture, and...the stirrings of a heightened sense of British national identity"⁹³ had a profound influence

⁹⁰ Marx, 24.

⁹¹ Condor, Susan and Jackie Abell, "Romantic Scotland, tragic England, ambiguous Britain: constructions of 'the Empire' in post-devolution national accounting," *Nations and Nationalism* 12, No. 3 (2006): 453-472. See also Kathy O. McGill, "How Easily the World May Be Begun: British History, American Newness and National Identity." *Dialectical Anthropology* 27 (2003): 105-120.

⁹² McGill, 114.

⁹³ Breen, T. H. "Ideology and Nationalism on the Eve of the American Revolution: Revisions Once More in Need of Revising." *The Journal of American History* (June 1997): 16.

over how the colonists saw themselves within the British Empire prior to the Revolutionary period. Breen offers evidence that even in the 1740s

English men and women of all social classes began to express a sentiment that might be described variously as a dramatic surge of national consciousness, a rise of aggressive patriotism, or a greatly heightened articulation of national identity....now sustained by a new commercial press that brought stories about the empire to urban coffeehouses and country taverns.⁹⁴

As individual perceptions of national fealty emerged, they created a latent sense of national identity that directed the actions of both the English and the colonists. The foundation of American national identity was built upon assessments of sameness and otherness, and the impact these assessments had on individual identity formation.

Individual Identity Development

Discrimination at the individual level is one example of how the cultural phenomena discussed above – shared historical pasts, printed works, banal acts, and discrimination between in- and out-groups – can impact an individual’s identity development as well as a community’s identity development. The way in which individuals process experiences from their surrounding environment informs not only their own sense of identity, but collectively shapes the identity of the environment due to the reciprocal nature of the relationship between self and society.⁹⁵

James Marcia, a noted developmental psychologist wrote “Once formed, an identity furnishes individuals with a historical sense of who they have been, a meaningful sense of who they are now, and a sense of who they might become in the future.”⁹⁶ Identity formation offers individuals a process through which they can produce a coherent sense

⁹⁴ Breen, 19.

⁹⁵ Penuel, 60. See also John Santrock. “Chapter 1 – Introduction,” in *Life Span Development*, Thirteenth Edition – International Student Edition, New York: McGraw-Hill International Edition, 2011, 28-29.

⁹⁶ Santrock, John W. “Chapter 12 – Socioemotional Development in Adolescence.” *Life Span Development*, Thirteenth Edition – International Student Edition, New York: McGraw-Hill International Edition, 2011, 385.

of self and at the same time define oneself in a broader context determined by choices and actions made by the individual.⁹⁷ Much like Billig emphasizes the importance of the mundane for strengthening the attachment to nationalist identity, William Penuel and James Wertsch suggest, “identities are built in conversation;”⁹⁸ micro-contexts and intimate interactions provide platforms of engagement for individuals to produce the support nationalism needs to spread through a community in an organic way via construction of national identity at a base level.

The development of social identities such as national identity can be understood as individual processes influenced by experiences within a specific domain or context. Parissa Jahromi interviewed several American youth to determine how adolescents today viewed nationalist concepts such as “Americanism” and “the American Dream.” She suggests that “immediate, micro-level experiences” such as “opportunities for positive political and civic participation, experiences with perceived discrimination, media coverage of political issues, family attitudes, school climate, and classroom learning” provide concrete opportunities for national identity to develop.⁹⁹ Colonists in mid-eighteenth century America had increasing opportunities to engage in these “micro-level experiences,” as political participation rose dramatically between 1740 and 1765.¹⁰⁰

Increasing political participation was evident throughout society, not only through the activation of the mob to address political grievances and the abundance of political literature published during the period, but also by the increase in the willingness of the clergy to speak on uniquely American issues and problems. Political involvement from

⁹⁷ Umana-Taylor, 9.

⁹⁸ Penuel, 91.

⁹⁹ Jahromi, Parissa. “American Identity in the USA: Youth Perspectives.” *Applied Developmental Science* 15, No. 2 (2011): 79.

¹⁰⁰ Nash, 630-631.

the clergy and other religious figures began to escalate around 1740 onward. “The common assumption that it was inappropriate for clergymen to mix religion and politics was clearly articulated in 1722.... But by mid-century church leaders were beginning to shed their anonymity and to defend their right to engage in “preaching politics,” as Jonathan Mayhew put it in Boston in 1750.”¹⁰¹ Their sermons were often diatribes and jeremiads against values that were seen as different and changed from those of their ancestors who arrived in America to create a new ‘city upon a hill.’ The accuracy of such assessments is not relevant for this research project. What is important to note is that this kind of engagement of topics meant that there was already concern about an emerging new identity – removed from promoting community above self and piety and virtue over success and luxury. For these clergymen, American colonists had already begun to explore a new identity, reaching what Erik Erikson, a twentieth century developmental psychologist, would call a ‘crisis’ point.

Erikson proposed an eight-stage theory of personality development in 1950, devoting the fifth stage to identity development via crisis and commitment. He believed that ‘crisis’ indicated an exploration of identity, and ‘commitment’ indicated the acceptance and assumption of a given identity.¹⁰² James Marcia later operationalized Erikson’s ideas and proposed his own Identity Status Theory. Marcia’s theory established four statuses an individual might experience when determining his/her identity: identity diffusion, when neither crisis nor commitment has occurred, identity foreclosure, when a commitment to an identity has been made, however, the commitment was not a result of an individual’s exploration of identity, but the result of external pressures, identity moratorium, when a

¹⁰¹ Nash, 624.

¹⁰² Santrock. “Chapter 1 - Introduction,” 23-24. See also Santrock, “Chapter 12,” 384.

lack of commitment to a certain identity occurs, and finally identity acceptance, when both crisis and commitment occur and an identity is adopted.¹⁰³ In many ways, American colonists in the mid-eighteenth century were experiencing an Eriksonian identity crisis as they sought to determine what their identity was. Were they English citizens, separated by an ocean from other members of their community, or were they something different, removed from English influences by time and space, creating a unique American identity? This crisis would reach its climax during the Revolutionary War, when it became clear to the colonists that they no longer identified themselves as ‘English,’ and instead committed to a new, unique ‘American’ identity.

‘Identity’ is not one, singular entity, rather it is composed of several pieces that work together to produce a collective identity for the individual. Jessica Fish and Jacob Priest illustrate the non-linear development of individual identity with their theory of identity holons. They propose that each part of an individual’s identity develops at different times, and together, they form the collaborative identity. Competing sub-identities, referred to as “identity holons,” are both “a whole and a part.... [E]ach facet of the identity is itself, a whole identity. It includes personal and historical experiences that pertain to that compartmentalized part of the identity,”¹⁰⁴ and emerges via Marcia’s Identity Status Theory.

An individual’s collaborative identity is constantly challenged to assimilate new data and experiences and adjust to accommodate the new information. The collaborative

¹⁰³ Marcia, James E. “Development and Validation of Ego-Identity Status.” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 3, No. 5 (1966): 551-558. See also, Umana-Taylor, 11, and Santrock, “Chapter 12,” 384-385.

¹⁰⁴ Fish, Jessica N. and Jacob B. Priest. “Identity Structures: Holons, Boundaries, Hierarchies, and the Formation of the Collaborative Identity.” *The Family Journal: Counseling and Therapy for Couples and Families* 19, No. 2 (2011): 184.

identity is hierarchical in nature, based upon interactions between holons and the statuses achieved. Holons that have achieved a level of foreclosure or acceptance are closer to the core of an individual's identity while those still in the diffusion or moratorium stages are relegated to the periphery. Facets of identity on the periphery still contribute to the collaborative identity, but not as significantly as core holons that resonate the strongest within an individual.

Strong identity holons that reside in similar hierarchical positions interact with more frequency than lesser holons due to their importance in the collaborative identity. "When an individual has made identity commitments, with or without exploration, these foreclosed or achieved holons take a core position in the identity structure."¹⁰⁵ Identity holons that assume an increased status or importance have the potential to "influence the overall process, status, and hierarchy of the collaborative identity."¹⁰⁶ Holons that have achieved a stronger level of commitment than others exert influence over not just the collaborative identity as a whole, but on the development and status of other holons as well. For example, a political holon and a nationalist holon may develop independently, but they will ultimately become interdependent and mutually reinforcing at the collaborative identity level.

The collaborative identity is presented to others simply as an individual's identity and influences decisions about whom and how to associate with a group of people. Philip Osteen interprets the function of an identity in two ways, "*Being* is a person's sense of his or her self; it is an individual's core internal identity. *Doing* is how an individual

¹⁰⁵ Fish, 186.

¹⁰⁶ Fish, 185.

manifests his or her sense of self in the social world.”¹⁰⁷ Social identity is the part of the identity that specifically deals with an individual’s membership in different groups. Much like other aspects of identity, though there may be several group memberships for any one individual, some groups are more meaningful than others when determining how one defines him or herself. Kay Deaux describes “five distinct types of social identification: ethnic and religious identities, political identities, vocations and avocations, personal relationships, and stigmatized groups.”¹⁰⁸ All five types of social identification offer members of a particular group a sense of belonging, self-esteem, and an outlet for interaction with others. A variety of societal elements can influence individual social identities such as national identity in various ways, but there is always an exchange of ideas, values and beliefs.¹⁰⁹ An individual’s identity development is dynamic and complex, and its relationship with social contexts cannot be ignored.

The Reciprocal Nature of Group and Individual Identity

The importance of the reciprocal relationship between cultural influences and individual identity has been noted by several prominent developmental thinkers. Erik Erikson argued that identity could not be understood in personal terms alone, but cultural contributions were equally important. “The social is important for affirmation/acceptance of individual notions of identity.”¹¹⁰ Lev Vygotsky, a Russian developmental psychologist in the first half of the twentieth century, also placed a high emphasis on the

¹⁰⁷ Osteen, Philip. “Motivations, Values, and Conflict Resolution: Students’ Integration of Personal and Professional Identities.” *Journal of Social Work Education* 47, No. 3 (Fall 2011): 429.

¹⁰⁸ Deaux, Kay. “Social Identity.” *Encyclopedia of Women and Gender*, Volumes One and Two, Academic Press, 2001, 1-9, 1,2.

¹⁰⁹ Andrijevskaia, Janita. “The Relationship Between Organizational Culture and Individual Values in German Organizations.” Dissertation Paper for University of Tartu, 2004, 4-10.

¹¹⁰ Penuel, 87.

impact of sociocultural factors for individual development so that the individual could experience “a unity of personal and cultural identity.”¹¹¹ Vygotsky contended that “all human mental functioning is socioculturally, historically, and institutionally situated,”¹¹² believing that “social interaction actively informs and forms individual identity” going so far as to say “the two are symbiotic in nature.”¹¹³ According to Vygotsky, identity development is “inseparable” from cultural influences and experiences because cognitive development requires the mastery of “language, mathematical systems, and memory strategies” that are creations of society themselves.¹¹⁴

Urie Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory illustrates the impact of social or external forces on identity formation by highlighting the importance of external factors in determining a person’s cognitive and emotional development.¹¹⁵ Bronfenbrenner identified five environmental systems responsible for influencing a person’s development in varying ways, and envisioned them as concentric rings around the individual.¹¹⁶ The microsystem is closest to the person and consists of family, neighbors and peers of the person. The mesosystem acts as an exchange for the microsystem and the remaining three systems: exosystem, macrosystem and chronosystem. These are comprised of friends of family and other influences slightly removed from the individual, the general attitudes

¹¹¹ Penuel, 87.

¹¹² Penuel, 84.

¹¹³ Penuel, 87

¹¹⁴ Santrock, “Chapter 1,” 25-26.

¹¹⁵ Brendtro, Larry K. “The Vision of Urie Bronfenbrenner: Adults Who Are Crazy About Kids.” *Reclaiming Children & Youth* 15, No. 3 (Fall 2006): 163-165. <http://ehis.ebscohost.com.proxy-tu.researchport.umd.edu/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=de6c89a0-594b-4338-9445-b0cffc98770%40sessionmgr114&vid=6&hid=6> (accessed March 20, 2013).

¹¹⁶ Guhn, Martin and Hillel Goelman. “Bioecological Theory, Early Child Development and the Validation of the Population-Level Early Development Instrument.” *Social Indicators Research* 103, No. 2 (September 2011): 205-207. DOI: 10.1007/s11205-011-9842-5 (accessed March 20, 2013). See also Stephen J. Ceci. “Urie Bronfenbrenner (1917-2005).” *American Psychologist* 61, No. 2 (February-March 2006): 173-174. DOI: 10.1037/0003-066X.61.2.173 (accessed March 20, 2013).

and ideologies that influence not just an individual but a large group of people, and the aspect of time related to how cohorts of individuals perceive influences based on sociohistorical conditions, respectively.¹¹⁷

Bronfenbrenner's theory was published in 1979 and is applicable to contemporary society, but his model can also be easily applied to colonial America. Obviously, some of the categories included in Bronfenbrenner's model would not have existed then as they do today, but his idea still poses a plausible understanding for how colonists' may have viewed themselves and their place in the world. In 1720, when the colonies were still mostly autonomous each 'ecological system' comprising a rings would have been filled with fewer, more homogenous influences than it would be even forty years later in 1760. As cultural changes such as rising population, increasing demographic diversity, and growing economic participation occurred, Bronfenbrenner's systems expanded, and included more elements in each respective ring of influence. As the micro and exosystems extended to include a higher volume and diversity of influences, these systems brought back different information and interpretations of how an individual fit into the world.

Bronfenbrenner envisioned the influence of each system on the individual as bidirectional in nature, that is, emphasis must also be placed on the individual as a contributor not only to his own development, but also to the systems within which he operates.¹¹⁸ By illustrating the reciprocal nature of the relationship between internal construction of identity and external influences, he highlights the importance of the

¹¹⁷ Santrock, "Chapter 1," 28-29. See also Guhn, 206.

¹¹⁸ "Longitudinal Study of Australian Children: Key Research Questions." Growing Up in Australia: The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children. <http://www.aifs.gov.au/growingup/pubs/reports/krq2009/keyresearchquestions.html> (accessed May 8, 2012).

individual on the environment, as well as the environment on the individual.

Bronfenbrenner's assessment of the power of external influences on an individual's general development can also be understood as a model for a single facet of identity development, such as national identity. If individuals construct their identities through interaction and engagement with external systems, then nationalism needs national identity present at the individual level in order to achieve a place of power in the communal collective identity. Without development in both spheres, nationalism will not emerge. Though Bronfenbrenner's model does not suggest causality, it does suggest a reciprocal relationship between the individual and the social world, indicating that nationalism cannot exist in a meaningful way without the presence of an internalized sense of national identity at an autonomous level.

Penuel and Wertsch Expanding on Vygotsky's and Bronfenbrenner's ideas, Penuel and Wertsch describe sociocultural processes on identity formation as tools for individuals to actively construct their own identity based on cultural cues around them. Cultural tools, such as language, law, and math systems, facilitate the relationship between the self and the social by providing resources that have the power to influence action.¹¹⁹ Benedict Anderson's argument for the importance of language in creating and strengthening nationalism is a topic-specific example of how cultural tools are used as mediums of exchange to facilitate the spread of ideas and values across a wide swath of people. Penuel and Wertsch view the use of cultural tools and identity formation as inextricably linked, writing "Identity formation must be viewed as shaped by and shaping forms of action, involving a complex interplay among cultural tools employed in the

¹¹⁹ Penuel, 86.

action, the sociocultural and institutional context of the action, and the purpose embedded in the action.”¹²⁰ Employing cultural tools to construct individual identity indicates its formation as an active process that engages individuals and requires their participation.

Helen Ting also places primacy on the importance of social encounters for shaping identity, noting that not only do they provide a place of engagement for identity formation, but that the social encounters themselves are shaped by historical interpretations of past events and characters, allowing perpetual social discourses to continue to influence the present.¹²¹ Philip Osteen referred to these micro-contexts as communities of practice, writing:

Social identities are simultaneously developed, maintained, and constrained through participation in a community of practice. It is in the execution of practice, the learning, the mastery, and the application that social identity is formed. It is these communities of practice (CoPs) that allow one to learn, adopt, and express a social identity through participation.¹²²

An increase in opportunities for political participation, such as reading pamphlets, listening to sermons, and engaging in demonstrations, influences the development of national identity by increasing the chances for involvement and engagement with specific notions and ideas related to national identity. Individual values have a direct impact on the level of commitment to any social action.¹²³ Thus, individual national identity of colonists informed the social actions of the time just as the actions informed identity development at an individual and group level.

John Adams understood that the emergence of identity predated action and wrote:

The American Revolution was not a common event...But what do we mean by the American Revolution? Do we mean the American War? The Revolution was effected before the war commenced. The Revolution was in the minds and hearts of the people; a change in their religious sentiments of their duties and obligations...This radical change in the principles, opinions,

¹²⁰ Penuel, 84.

¹²¹ Ting, 463.

¹²² Osteen, 425.

¹²³ Osteen, 429.

sentiments, and affections of the people, was the real American Revolution.¹²⁴

Benjamin Franklin also recognized the Revolutionary War as a crystallizing moment for colonists who saw themselves as uniquely American prior to the commencement of war. In 1787 he wrote that the Revolutionary War was “necessary for “breaking through the bounds, in which a dependent people” had “been accustomed to think, and act” so that they might “properly comprehend the character they had assumed.””¹²⁵

As young men and women construct their own identities and influence the cultural systems around them, generational identities are determined. Selective acceptance and rejection of previous generations’ ideologies marry with current beliefs and values, aiding in the continual evolution of nationalism and other ideologies, while still maintaining continuity with the past.¹²⁶ Some degree of continuity is necessary between preceding generations and current cohorts; a shared social identity such as nationalism requires the belief that an individual shares commonalities with members of a group that they will never know, both historically and spatially.

Both national identity and nationalism are ever evolving, but must also remain tied to historical events. Though nationalism is dynamic in nature, it must be grounded by some level of commonality such as language and history in order to maintain enough consistency over time to preserve a sense of continuity. Each generation must connect to their cohort’s social identity, but must also be able to connect with previous generations in order to create a strong enough historical foundation for nationalism to continue. One strategy to maintain this cohesion is the use of defining moments in a shared history to

¹²⁴ Grimes, Alan P. “Conservative Revolution and Liberal Rhetoric: The Declaration of Independence.” *The Journal of Politics* 38, No. 3 (August 1976): 7. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2129571> (accessed July 16, 2012).

¹²⁵ Greene, “Search for Identity,” 219-220.

¹²⁶ Penuel, 90.

continually draw generations back to ‘founding moments’ that serve as reminders of what national identity ‘should’ look like. Alan Grimes writes “The value propositions, the ideological statements, which emerge from a political conflict...may be of far more lasting importance...than the direct political conflict which brought them forth...heroes, parties, and movements die; but the words left behind live on; and the value these words convey hold meaning for new generations in vastly changing circumstances.”¹²⁷ Another strategy employed to maintain cohesion over generations is the continued promotion of the ‘us’ versus ‘other’ dynamic.

Without a belief and value system to latch on to, the ideology of nationalism will not be strong enough at the communal level to sustain action resulting from belief (such as a revolution or support for a governance system.) Osteen understood that “commitment to a social identity cannot exist without the support of overlapping values and beliefs at the level of personal identity.”¹²⁸ National identity at the individual level provides a launching point for the legitimacy of nationalist thinking and subsequent action in a group setting. Identity formation is shaped in part by inter-personal relationships that resonate internally, and also ripple through the community, much like the rings from a stone tossed into a pond.

Conclusion

Social processes, such as the construction of an identity, link members of a community by providing a forum for exchange of similar ideas and practices. National identity provides an individual with a way to order the world around him, fostering

¹²⁷ Grimes, 4. It should be noted that these defining moments can, and often are, utilized by political groups to advance a particular agenda, and as such, are sometimes mis-interpreted or purposefully mis-characterized to fit within ideological prescriptions of a set agenda.

¹²⁸ Osteen, 425.

feelings of belonging and intimacy even between members that may never meet. In times of crisis, such as the Revolutionary War, this social identity can coalesce around similar purpose, heightening already established views of who belongs and who does not. An increase in discrimination due to an increase in the polarity of an in-group/out-group relationship can serve as a potent catalyst to ignite passions for nationalism in a colonial setting, provided a foundation of national identity was already present among the majority of the population.

National identity is but one identity holon for any given person; and will hold more or less influence over that person's collaborative identity based on the feedback received from external sources such as family, newspapers, and Sunday sermons, in the case of colonial America. National identity also serves as a way to define an individual by indicating who is, and equally important, who is not a member of a given group, positioning the individual within a larger social context by ordering of the world based on notions of sameness and difference.¹²⁹ Simplicity, however, should not be mistaken for weakness. In group/out group relations hold powerful sway, as explained by Tajfel and others and examined earlier in this chapter.

The strength of national identity at the national level is a function of its importance at the individual level. Personal values together with social factors such as family influence, education, and political participation, all influence national identity. Nationalism's influence is spread at a grassroots level through personal interaction and affirmation of nationalist values. When national identity is constructed at an individual level through micro-contexts and engagement with social structures, a foundation is

¹²⁹ Deaux, 5.

created for collective action allowing national identity to emerge, and priming society for national consciousness expressed as nationalism.

Chapter 3:

A Case Study of the Impact of Demographic and Economic Changes on American Identity

In the previous chapter, the impact of social influences on identity formation was explained in general terms. In this chapter, specific examples of how cultural events helped create an atmosphere favorable to the development of national identity prior to the Revolutionary War will be provided. Between 1720 and 1770, population growth among already established groups of colonists in America placed strains on the expectation that families and communities would provide for all of their members. Dramatic influxes of immigrants also altered the colonial landscape by increasing the number and diversity of the colonists, weakening the notion that communities in America were like those in England. This flood of immigrants also provided a context for heightened rhetoric about otherness and liberty to emerge due to the commonality of servitude among the majority of immigrants. Additionally, new economic opportunities that resulted from rapid demographic and economic growth in the second and third quarters of the eighteenth century moved the colonists away from the “isolated, independent, and homogenous”¹³⁰ lifestyle they knew and towards a life shaped by interdependence, diversity, and change.¹³¹

Much of the independent and homogenous nature of colonial society prior to 1720 occurred due to a strong adherence to Puritan values, brought over by colonists almost

¹³⁰ Lockridge, Kenneth A. “Social Change and the Meaning of the American Revolution.” *Journal of Social History* 6, No. 4 (Summer 1973): 420.

¹³¹ Greene, Jack P. “Search for Identity: An Interpretation of the Meaning of Selected Patterns of Social Response in Eighteenth-Century America.” *Journal of Social History* 3, No. 3 (Spring 1969-Spring 1970): 195. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3786589> (accessed July 16, 2012).

one hundred years prior. Although American exceptionalism is traditionally associated with the Revolutionary and post-Revolutionary period, Puritan values also held an inherent “exceptionalist” quality. Colonists believed that God had chosen them to forge a new world closer to his image, and blessed them with the abundant resources of America to do so.¹³² John Winthrop’s famous “city on a hill” reference to New England was taken very seriously, and though many colonists still thought of themselves as English, they understood from the start that they were a different kind of English.

Colonists saw themselves as exceptional from very early on, due in part to strict adherence to Puritan values of purpose and hard work, but they still clung to an English identity with enough commitment to be ‘different’ but not wholly ‘other.’ The distinction is not merely semantics, but represents a varying degree of experience. As demographic and economic changes altered colonial experiences, colonists moved further away from a strong commitment to English identity and closer to an American identity uniquely shaped by their experiences and environmental interactions. Societal changes spurred by population growth, immigrants, and economic expansion removed colonists from their commitment to their English identity and created a crisis situation, from which American national identity was born.

Social transformations overwhelmed the ability of colonial communities to adapt to and accommodate such dramatic changes without drastically altering their identity.¹³³ As a result, differences between the English and the colonists were cast in sharp relief, particularly after the mid-eighteenth century as English nationalism coalesced in Great

¹³² “People and Ideas; The Puritans,” *God in America*, PBS, October 11, 2010.

<http://www.pbs.org/godinamerica/people/pUritans.html> (accessed March 26, 2013).

¹³³ Appleby, Joyce. “Liberalism and the American Revolution.” *The New England Quarterly* 49, No. 1 (March 1976): 9-10.

Britain. Colonists began to wonder about the “inappropriateness of British models for American society” as perceived and real discrimination from the English grew more pronounced, indicating that a unique American identity was emerging via a new set of “cultural standards and symbols”¹³⁴ well before the Revolutionary War.

Early Influences on Colonial Identity

Erik Ringmar wrote, “How we think about ourselves as a community is intimately linked to how we think about ourselves as individuals.”¹³⁵ At the start of the eighteenth century, colonial society (particularly in New England) elevated the group over the individual, restricting personal activities to traditional roles usually defined by the local church.¹³⁶ Change was frowned upon as was any deviation from unanimity, yet change and increasing contestation was unavoidable. In this section, three phenomena will be explored. First, an evaluation of the influence of the Puritan ethic on colonial society will be examined. Next, an assessment of the English contribution to colonial identity will be discussed. Finally, the relationship between the colonies and England will be highlighted. Understanding the nature of colonial identity in the early eighteenth century is necessary to understand the ways in which demographic and economic changes aided in the emergence of American national identity.

Colonists who arrived in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries emphasized social order and stability at the expense of personal freedom in order to give themselves the best chance at survival. Communities were established as autonomous entities capable of providing for the colonists contained within them, and ultimate authority over the daily

¹³⁴ Greene, “Search for Identity,” 215.

¹³⁵ Ringmar, Erik. “Nationalism: The Idiocy of Intimacy.” *The British Journal of Sociology* 49, No. 4 (December 1998): 537.

¹³⁶ Appleby, 14.

minutiae of the colony rested not with England, but within the group. Decisions were made regarding a multitude of issues such as “farming practices, religious establishments, land allocations, and social responsibilities.”¹³⁷ However, as social and economic chances in the mid-eighteenth century accelerated, these autonomous communities could no longer keep up with the rapid movement away from the controlled, independent existence to which they had become accustomed.

In the 1740s and 1750s a renewed interest by England in colonial affairs helped lay the foundations for discontent between the groups. In response to increasing English nationalism, an identity crisis on the part of the colonists began to emerge. “Two decades prior to the events that instigated the American Revolution, colonial New Englanders were busily reevaluating the extent of their obligations to distant, but increasingly intrusive, authorities.”¹³⁸ Colonial society was forced to re-examine its current identity commitment to English society and establish an identity more compatible with new realities that better rationalized its behaviors resulting from unique experiences.¹³⁹

The Puritan Ethic

One of the prominent building blocks of American identity was the prevalence and influence of Puritan thought. Even when Puritan values were not explicitly present, their influence can be seen in the colonists’ thought processes and the way in which arguments were crafted.¹⁴⁰ Edmund Morgan offers a lengthy analysis of the link between Puritan thought and the American Revolution. He explains “The values, ideas, and attitudes of

¹³⁷ Appleby, 8.

¹³⁸ Beneke, Chris. “The Critical Turn: Jonathan Mayhew, the British Empire, and the Idea of Resistance in Mid-Eighteenth-Century Boston.” *Massachusetts Historical Review* 10 (2008): 25-26. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25478696> (accessed July 16, 2012).

¹³⁹ Greene, “Search for Identity,” 198.

¹⁴⁰ Morgan, Edmund. “The Puritan Ethic and the American Revolution.” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 24, No. 1 (January 1967): 3-43.

the Puritan Ethic...clustered around the familiar idea of “calling.” God, the Puritans believed, called every man to serve Him by serving society and himself in some useful, productive occupation.”¹⁴¹ Martin Luther and John Calvin, Protestant reformers that influenced Puritan beliefs, promoted work as a calling from God, and success as a sign of salvation. These ideas led many Puritans to accept that “hard work and good deeds would bring rewards, in life and after.”¹⁴² This adherence to hard work permeated the colonial culture, and is still evident today.¹⁴³

Not only did hard work and adherence to strict morals lead to individual salvation, but, equally important, it also led to societal salvation. “The spiritual health and welfare of the community as a whole was paramount as well....The integrity of the community demanded religious conformity. Dissent was tolerated, but only within strict limits.”¹⁴⁴ Life’s purpose was centered on diligence, thrift, frugality, and productivity for the benefit of society; community was first, and self was second.¹⁴⁵

The Puritan’s focus on community embodies Ferdinand Tönnies concept of *Gemeinschaft*. Tönnies, a nineteenth century sociologist, introduced the idea of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* as two different operating systems employed by individuals to understand and order their world. *Gemeinschaft* focuses on a sense of

¹⁴¹ Morgan, “Puritan Ethic,” 4.

¹⁴² Hutson, Matthew. “Still Puritan After All These Years,” *New York Times*, August 3, 2012. http://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/05/opinion/sunday/are-americans-still-puritan.html?_r=0 (accessed March 3, 2013).

¹⁴³ Christenson, James A. “Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft: Testing the Spatial and Communal Hypothesis.” *Social Forces* 63, No. 1 (September 1984): 160-168. <http://ehis.ebscohost.com.proxy-tu.researchport.umd.edu/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=a9dbf245-d8d4-4acb-b9b3-0c81c3ffb240%40sessionmgr12&vid=8&hid=105> (accessed April 2, 2013).

¹⁴⁴ “People and Ideas; The Puritans,” *God in America*, PBS, October 11, 2010. <http://www.pbs.org/godinamerica/people/puritan.html> (accessed March 26, 2013).

¹⁴⁵ Morgan, “Puritan Ethic,” 4.

common unity brought about by “folkways and mores, commonwealth, and religion.”¹⁴⁶ *Gesellschaft*, on the other hand, is a more individualistic viewpoint, often associated with modern market societies and characterized by “rationality, negotiated order, and individuality.”¹⁴⁷ Though these concepts are often discussed as existing on a continuum, that is, societies move from *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft*, Tönnies original argument was that both exist simultaneously to varying degrees.¹⁴⁸

Both *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* can be seen within the Puritan community. The Puritan attachment to the community as the center of colonial life, *Gemeinschaft*, was a critical component of early colonial identity. The Puritan commitment to community could only be successful as long as individuals employed some sense of *Gesellschaft*, as it was their purpose, diligence, and hard work that collectively provided the community’s salvation. On a more earthly note, *Gesellschaft* kept the community functioning. The resolve to work together (under Church authority) for a greater purpose instilled a similar mindset in succeeding generations, including those ultimately responsible for the fate of the colonies.

In addition to purpose and community, the Puritan ethic also encompassed a strong belief that adversity was necessary to strengthen society. Accompanying their conviction regarding the importance of adversity was the complimentary idea that the most important aspects of the Puritan value system were always deteriorating and constantly in need of renewal.¹⁴⁹ In fact, almost as soon as the Puritans arrived, they began to

¹⁴⁶ Christenson, 161.

¹⁴⁷ Christenson, 161.

¹⁴⁸ Inglis, David. “Cosmopolitan Sociology and the Classical Canon: Ferdinand Tönnies and the Emergence of Global *Gesellschaft*.” *The British Journal of Sociology* 60, No. 4 (December 2009): 813-832, 817. DOI: 10.1111/j.1468-4446.2009.01276.x (accessed April 2, 2013).

¹⁴⁹ Morgan, “Puritan Ethic,” 7.

experience problems converting colonists and attracting new members to the church, as lofty standards for full admission into the Puritan faith required demonstrations of conversion confirmed by existing church members.¹⁵⁰ Concern that succeeding generations were moving away from their virtuous beginnings led to a series of religious revivals from 1728 to 1741 aimed at reversing the trend.

Known as the “Great Awakening,” fiery sermons and a resurgent call to commit to Puritan values of honesty, piety, and purpose were meant to awaken religious zeal in colonists and reestablish order and community focus. However, these appeals were directed at individual sensibilities, and though many colonists were pining for a return to a mythic “simpler past”¹⁵¹ the revivals did not accomplish their goal. “The dissention [the Great Awakening] aroused bred contempt for much of the church hierarchy....The aftermath of the awakening was an explicit recognition of religious pluralism.”¹⁵² Far from refocusing communities around existing Puritan churches, “converts regarded old churches as “mixed assemblies” and broke off to form new [Protestant] churches,” reinforcing the divergent nature of societal development, rather than reverting to largely homogenous colonies.¹⁵³

The demographic and economic changes of the mid-eighteenth century were insurmountable in terms of returning to the isolated and homogeneous community structure necessary for Puritanism to survive. Despite the lack of endurance of the Puritan church, Puritan values continued to play an instrumental role in colonial identity well after the organization faded from the landscape. The religion itself faded from

¹⁵⁰ Morgan, Edmund S. *Visible Saints: The History of a Puritan Idea*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992, 113, 129.

¹⁵¹ Lockridge, “Social Change,” 424.

¹⁵² Appleby, 15.

¹⁵³ Morgan, *Visible Saints*, 151.

significance, but the values and ideas remained influential in Protestant ideology, and colonial identity. Cultural norms continued to reflect the values of the Puritan ethic, and their influence is evident in many of the thought processes of the revolutionary thinkers.¹⁵⁴

The values that comprised what Morgan has termed the “Puritan Ethic” were influential not just in explicit terms, but also because these values comprised the cultural norms against which action and reaction were elicited. For American colonists who accepted Puritan values, England seemed to be in particular danger of falling completely away from the Puritan Ethic based on what the colonists’ viewed as an increasingly opulent society, and a corrupt government.¹⁵⁵ The assumption that luxury and ease led to wickedness and a fall from grace was a distinction made between England and the colonists to justify the break between the two groups. Regardless of the truth, the perception was ‘England was heading down the wrong path and we (the colonists) were not.’

This kind of distancing made decisions about independence easier to bear (once they were realized), as colonists could justify the split as one of choosing virtue over vice.¹⁵⁶ Revolutionary-period arguments advocating rebellion from an unjust government centered partially on the premise that the government had failed to uphold Godly virtues during its rule over its subjects. Subsequently, the rejection of God by ruler created an obligation on the part of the colonists to resist oppression in order to uphold Godliness in the face of wickedness. The very early emergence of American nationalism, like many

¹⁵⁴ Ceaser, James W. “Alexis de Tocqueville and the Two-Founding Thesis.” *Review of Politics* 73, No. 2 (March 2011): 220, 237-239. DOI: 10.1017/S0034670511000052 (accessed February 15, 2013).

¹⁵⁵ Morgan, “Puritan Ethic,” 15.

¹⁵⁶ Morgan, “Puritan Ethic,” 18.

other nationalisms, was dependent upon the belief that, not only were the colonists different from other groups, but that they also had something better to offer.¹⁵⁷ Though Puritans and early colonists understood themselves as different, they still had an attachment to their English identity.

A combination of dramatic demographic changes and increasing intergroup discrimination resulting from English nationalism altered colonists attachment to English identity. Colonists were inundated by a plethora of new information that needed to be assimilated and accommodated at the individual level. As this occurred, the 'English' identity that so many of them adhered to no longer made sense as an operational system of organization. Before discussing the changes and their effects, an understanding of what English identity meant to the colonists prior to these changes is necessary.

English Influences

Despite the serious religious differences described in the section above, many aspects of British identity were evident in the colonies. The colonial 'elite,' or men who had reached the top of the social scale (through good fortune, because they came from gentry families in England, or some combination of the two) sought in many respects to emulate the best of British society and re-create it in the American colonies.¹⁵⁸ Colonists desired to create a society that was "Great Britain itself in miniature,"¹⁵⁹ in an effort to understand and order the new environment around them. Much as a parent influences the identity of a child, by providing instruction and experiences consistent with their own

¹⁵⁷ Smith, Tony. "Social Violence and Conservative Social Psychology: The Case of Erik Erikson." *Journal of Peace Research* 13, No. 1 (1976):1. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/423256> (accessed March 21, 2013). See also Paul McCartney. *Power and Progress: American National Identity, the War of 1898, and the Rise of American Imperialism*. Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 2006, 23.

¹⁵⁸ Greene, "Search for Identity," 206.

¹⁵⁹ Greene, "Search for Identity," 209.

lifestyle choices, it is natural that aspects of colonial identity would be British in origin. Urie Bronfenbrenner's most influential system is the microsystem – comprised of family, church groups, and peers, among others.¹⁶⁰ In the early eighteenth century, these influences were largely British, and thus, colonists' interpretations of their own identity were linked to British identity.

However, an attachment to existing influences does not preclude the formation of a new identity based on the assimilation and adaptation of current cultural models merging with new experiences. Jean Piaget, the renowned developmental psychologist, believed that individuals continually organize information via adaptation and assimilation as they search for equilibrium, or balance and order of the world around them.¹⁶¹ Colonists were constantly challenged to make sense of changing realities; the environment around them was not England, and the colonists' experiences were not the same as those of Englishmen and women. It is natural to attempt to create order based on learned experiences and values. For the colonists, the identity they carried with them to the colonies, was their initial influence as they created a new England.

Colonists in New England were especially eager to promulgate the best of England. They were also particularly influential in colonial America, due in part to the “dynamic print culture and the writings of its famous clergy.”¹⁶² Their “mimetic impulses” to reproduce portions of British society characterized much of colonial identity prior to the

¹⁶⁰ Guhn, Martin and Hillel Goelman. “Bioecological Theory, Early Child Development and the Validation of the Population-Level Early Development Instrument.” *Social Indicators Research* 103, No. 2 (September 2011): 205-207. DOI: 10.1007/s11205-011-9842-5 (accessed March 20, 2013). See also John Santrock. “Chapter 1 – Introduction,” in *Life Span Development*, Thirteenth Edition – International Student Edition, New York: McGraw-Hill International Edition, 2011, 28-29.

¹⁶¹ Lourenço, Orlando. “Piaget and Vygotsky: Many Resemblances, and a Crucial Difference.” *New Ideas in Psychology* 30, No. 3 (December 2012): 283, 287, 291. DOI: 10.1016/j.newideapsych.2011.12.006 (accessed March 20, 2013).

¹⁶² Hutson, paragraph 9.

Revolutionary War.¹⁶³ There was, in many respects, an unwillingness on the part of the colonists to break from the Empire for the majority of the eighteenth century; in fact many colonists went to extensive lengths to ‘prove’ their “Britishness.” Indeed, even in 1766, some prominent figures such as Benjamin Franklin continued to argue for unity believing still that Americans were equal to the English.¹⁶⁴

Kathy McGill suggests that this adherence to British cultural norms precluded the development of American identity. She asserted that the Americans had no shared historical past from which to draw on, stating that even military conflicts such as the Seven Years War were seen as enhancing the “glory and conquest” of the British Empire.¹⁶⁵ McGill argues that colonists clung to the identity group to which they felt they belonged – the British – and thus developed no unique identity of their own. While this viewpoint correctly identifies the important contributions of British identity to colonial culture, it fails to acknowledge the influence of outside forces on identity development. Idealized images of English “forms, institutions, and patterns of behavior”¹⁶⁶ were hard for American colonists to relinquish, yet societal development made it increasingly more difficult to reconcile idealized conceptions of British identity with the changing realities of colonial experiences.

Population growth, high levels of immigration, and economic development all encouraged interdependence between colonies, and will be discussed in following sections. As this interdependence increased, Jack Greene argues that a strong group

¹⁶³ Greene, “Search for Identity,” 206.

¹⁶⁴ Breen, T.H. “Ideology and Nationalism on the Eve of the American Revolution: Revisions Once More in Need of Revising.” *The Journal of American History* (June 1997): 22, 28.

¹⁶⁵ McGill, Kathy O. “How Easily the World May Be Begun: British History, American Newness and National Identity.” *Dialectal Anthropology* 27 (2003): 110.

¹⁶⁶ Greene, “Search for Identity,” 205-206.

identity developed “deriving from a set of similar experiences in the New World and manifest in a series of flattering self-images that emerged out of their own satisfaction with present achievements and a boundless optimism about future prospects.”¹⁶⁷

Colonists felt a sense of exceptionalism because they believed they were able to combine the “best” of British identity with stronger religious convictions. This notion of exceptionalism was (and still is) an integral part of American identity, and though the colonists believed their society was John Winthrop’s proverbial “city on the hill,” Great Britain remained unconvinced.

English Nationalism and what It Meant for America

Colonial America was of little importance to the average Briton during most of its existence. Though there is evidence that suggested an interest in the colonies, the curiosity remained marginal. In British society, and even in British Parliament, the colonies were largely ignored for much of their existence. It must be understood that this neglect was not malicious in intent, but merely indicated that average British citizens were consumed by more immediate concerns. Likewise, as long as the colonies “played by the rules,” British Parliament was content to let them govern themselves and their economies as they saw fit.¹⁶⁸

Prior to 1763, civil administration of the colonies was primarily left to the local assemblies in America. To be clear, Great Britain provided for the colonies in general terms, especially during times of conflict, but many aspects of colonial life were decided locally, with very little interference from Great Britain. Aside from times of war, even

¹⁶⁷ Greene, “Search for Identity,” 189.

¹⁶⁸ Price, Jacob M. “Who Cared about the Colonies? The Impact of the Thirteen Colonies on British Society and Politics, circa 1714-1775,” in *Strangers Within the Realm: Cultural Margins of the First British Empire* edited by Bernard Bailyn and Philip D. Morgan. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1991, 402.

defense spending was limited such that the British layperson, and even most members of Parliament, had very little interest in the affairs of the American colonies.¹⁶⁹ As Jacob Price points out, “One can get some idea of the relative weight of colonial offices [in relation to British] by looking at some of the manuals of officeholders published circa 1750-1775. In those published in the 1750s and 1760s, we find only two or three pages devoted to colonial posts (in volumes of 225-250 pages).”¹⁷⁰ This lack of attention reveals a disconnect between the colonies and Great Britain that resulted in increasing self reliance on the part of the colonies due to British apathy about the day-to-day administration of what one scholar has called “the new-world warehouse.”¹⁷¹

After decades of lax British involvement, the dynamic shifted in the latter half of the eighteenth century towards a much stronger managerial presence of the English over its American colonies. Rising debt due to several conflicts during the early and mid-eighteenth century worried members of Parliament. It also caught the attention of lay Englishmen and women, who, like the colonists, were now facing increased taxes partially as a result of defense spending to protect the colonies so far away. “It can be argued that every landlord, farmer, manufacturing worker, and sailor benefited either directly or indirectly from the American market. However...the benefits that were perceived tended only to be those that were direct and immediate.”¹⁷² The awareness of an increasing financial burden on English taxpayers due to the American colonies was coupled with an increase in English nationalism. The two phenomena together undoubtedly influenced the way in which the English both interacted with and thought

¹⁶⁹ Price, 396.

¹⁷⁰ Price, 396.

¹⁷¹ Cressey, David. “Elizabethan America: ‘God’s Own Latitude?’” *History Today* (July 1986): 47.

¹⁷² Price, 428.

about the American colonists.¹⁷³

As the colonists struggled with their own identity, the English were experiencing a surge in English patriotism and nationalism, at the expense of a more inclusive British identity. Particularly after the defeat of the Jacobite uprising in 1745, when Charles Edward Stuart attempted to reclaim the Scottish throne, English virtues and customs were even more prevalent throughout the empire.¹⁷⁴ Victory in the Seven Years War also bolstered English nationalism by giving English men and women additional ‘evidence’ that the English were different, and superior, to others, including other members of the British Empire.

Contrary to Kathy McGill, Chris Beneke asserted that a unique American identity was already emerging in the mid-eighteenth century. American colonists took pride in the English defeat of the French in the Seven Years War, however, Beneke notes that the American identity crisis was already agitating the relationship between England and the colonies. “Despite the sincere patriotism that New Englanders expressed in the 1740s and 1750s, a discernible strain of discontent was emerging.”¹⁷⁵ Prior to the mid-eighteenth century, colonies maintained a certain degree of latitude to operate as they wished (within the general confines of English rule). However, a perceived imbalance in the relationship between England and the colonies became increasingly more unpalatable to the colonists as England began to assert itself more aggressively into American colonial business.¹⁷⁶

Colonists had been steadily gaining not only the “rights” associated with Englishmen, but had also been strengthening their commitment to the principle of inherent rights in the

¹⁷³ Price, 432.

¹⁷⁴ Beneke, 27-28.

¹⁷⁵ Beneke, 30.

¹⁷⁶ Beneke, 35.

early eighteenth century. However, as intergroup discrimination progressed due to the strengthening of British nationalism, American colonists were increasingly viewed as the ‘other.’ The colonists would come to view their struggle with Great Britain as one to protect their rights against the perceived “genuine threat of British conspiracy, corruption, and enslavement.”¹⁷⁷ It was not until colonists began to understand that the English rejected the notion that the colonists were equal citizens that American colonists sought independence.

Jonathan Mayhew’s famous sermon *A Discourse Concerning Unlimited Submission and Non-Resistance to Higher Power* denounced outright submission to rulers, and argued instead that subjects had a right and obligation to question their leaders, and hold them accountable to the people under their sovereignty.¹⁷⁸ His sermon was not a call for revolution or independence; it was far from it, but the idea that subjects could and in some cases should challenge the absolute authority of their rulers was a powerful one, particularly in 1750 New England. Beneke cited the *Discourse* as an example of increasing colonial objections to notions of absolute obedience during critical years in New England’s development.¹⁷⁹ He described Mayhew’s work as “the most conspicuous mid century provincial call for treatment as free Englishmen and women – as equal, autonomous subjects of the British empire – rather than conquered peoples.”¹⁸⁰ In an effort to distinguish themselves from the defeated French, and even the defeated Stuarts,

¹⁷⁷ Engal, Marc and Joseph A. Ernst. “An Economic Interpretation of the American Revolution.” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 29, No. 1 (January 1972): 7. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1921325> (accessed July 16, 2012).

¹⁷⁸ Mayhew, Jonathan. “A Discourse Concerning Unlimited Submission and Non-Resistance to the Higher Powers,” 1750. In Bernard Bailyn. *Pamphlets of the American Revolution, Volume I: 1750-1765*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965, 241.

¹⁷⁹ Beneke, 45-46.

¹⁸⁰ Beneke, 48.

the American colonists called upon principles and values that would unknowingly lead them down the path of independence.

The internal struggles resulting from individuals' identity crises were also affected by the interactions colonists had with increasingly more diverse peoples. Ned Landsman suggests that although colonists with English heritage embraced their English identity, intermingling by way of settlement and marriage weakened the primary identification as 'English.'¹⁸¹ The result was large numbers of colonists willing to further explore a deviation from English identity in search of an identity that allowed more authentic participation in the colonial environment. Population growth, immigration, and the resulting emerging market all altered the way in which colonists operated within their environment. In doing so, not only was the environment altered, but identity formation at an individual level was also impacted. Colonists thought of themselves in different contexts, and due to increased interdependence as a result of these demographic changes, a broadening of identity occurred, whereby colonists envisioned themselves as not just part of a particular town, or community, but as a group of colonies with common values despite different daily experiences.

Changes as a Result of Growth within

Existing Populations

Population growth is vitally important for the sustainment and success of a colony. Problems occur however, when population growth out-paces the ability of society to provide for all members of the group. In the mid-eighteenth century, American national

¹⁸¹ Landsman, Ned. "Ethnicity and National Origin among British Settlers in the Philadelphia Region: Pennsylvania Immigration in the Wake of "Voyagers to the West."" *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 133, No. 2 (June 1998): 173-174.

identity began to emerge based in part upon the impact demographic changes had on individual identity, and the way in which people imagined their place in society. In this section, the connection between population growth among established colonial groups and emerging national identity will be explored; immigration will be discussed in detail in the following section.

In 1720, colonial society maintained a relatively low population density with immediate access to cultivable land. As a result, colonists were largely geographically immobile, socially undifferentiated by wealth or status, and independent of a market economy. National identity would be hard pressed to develop in such an environment because the elements necessary for its emergence simply did not exist. Though common language was present, and common histories were being built, the concept of ‘otherness’ was not yet realized.

However, between 1720 and 1780, growth of the white population continued to double every twenty to thirty years,¹⁸² and the black population grew at an even more astonishing rate, as nearly 300,000 slaves were forcibly immigrated to the colonies, particularly along the western shore of Maryland, and the southern coasts of Maryland and Virginia, known as the Tidewater South.¹⁸³ By the 1720s many colonies were moving towards self-sustaining growth of their populations, a trend that would accelerate over the next half century.¹⁸⁴ It is estimated that the population of Connecticut alone increased by 380 percent between 1700 and 1730.¹⁸⁵ Even more astounding is that

¹⁸² Lockridge, “Social Change,” 405, 406.

¹⁸³ Fogleman, Aaron S. “From Slaves, Convicts, and Servants to Free Passengers: The Transformation of Immigration in the Era of the American Revolution.” *The Journal of American History* (June 1998): 50.

¹⁸⁴ Tomlins, Christopher. “Reconsidering Indentured Servitude: European Migration and the Early American Labor Force, 1600-1775.” *Labor History* 42, No. 1 (2001): 32.

¹⁸⁵ Appleby, 10.

between 1700 and 1770, the population of the American colonies increased by an incredible 756 percent, from 250,000 to approximately 2.1 million.¹⁸⁶

This dramatic rise in population aided in creating an environment more conducive to the development of national identity by decreasing the level of autonomy of many of the colonies. Kenneth Lockridge summarized the different experiences of colonists in 1720 versus 1770 as follows:

Men coming of age in 1720 could typically expect to acquire sufficient land within their home counties to live out the lives of semi-subsistence farmers, as had their fathers. But the men coming of age in 1770 faced instead the typical choices of migrating and/or trying to enter more deeply into the market economy and/or accepting a lower standard of living than their fathers had. Furthermore, these typical men of 1770 were far more likely to have experienced overt religious and political disputes within their communities as they came of age.¹⁸⁷

The men Lockridge described, who matured in the mid-eighteenth century, played a role in determining the political identity of the colonies. Their experiences and attitudes influenced the search for identity, even if the men themselves were not directly involved in the severing of ties with Great Britain.¹⁸⁸ Though these social changes may not have directly influenced choices made with regard to declaring independence, they served an important function by informing the way in which colonists thought of themselves and how they fit in the world.

Increased longevity and dropping infant mortality rates brought with them different challenges for new generations. According to demography studies by Robert Wells, increases in the fertility rate of Pennsylvania Quakers “made it difficult for parents to provide for all of their adult children.”¹⁸⁹ New Englanders also experienced strains in family dynamics, as did many in rural areas north of Maryland. Considerable longevity

¹⁸⁶ Price, 402.

¹⁸⁷ Lockridge, “Social Change,” 409-410.

¹⁸⁸ Lockridge, “Social Change,” 413, 415.

¹⁸⁹ Appleby, 11.

and large families “meant that usually sons in their late twenties had living fathers still in possession of the family farms and that there was competition for land among the potential heirs.”¹⁹⁰

Dutch settlers, who until 1730 had generally included daughters and widows in inheritance proceedings, shifted the way in which property was divided. A.G. Roeber reasoned, “equal partition began to produce insufficient estate[s] to sustain all heirs...Concerned fathers naturally shifted control over diminishing resources to children earlier in their lives, even at the expense of widowed wives [of older siblings].”¹⁹¹ In fact, throughout the colonies, as fertility and life expectancy continued to increase, more and more men were faced with the realization that they would be responsible for creating their own future, rather than having it passed down to them from their parents. This reality was in stark contrast to existing expectations that a family would traditionally provide a son with land to farm or an apprenticeship in the family trade.¹⁹²

An increase in population density due to rapid population growth placed strains on the agrarian lifestyle enjoyed by so many colonists. The settlement of new land could not match the continuous growth of the population, and by the middle of the eighteenth century, many areas had exhausted some portion of cultivable land, leading to a decline in available farm acreage.¹⁹³ In addition to growing demand for land, there was a subsequent shrinking supply, despite the abundance of an entire continent to the west.

“Land resources of eighteenth-century America were controlled by proprietors or

¹⁹⁰ Appleby, 18.

¹⁹¹ Roeber, A.G. “The Origin of Whatever is Not English Among Us: The Dutch-speaking and the German-speaking Peoples of Colonial North America,” in *Strangers Within the Realm: Cultural Margins of the First British Empire* edited by Bernard Bailyn and Philip D. Morgan. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1991, 229-230.

¹⁹² Appleby, 18.

¹⁹³ Lockridge, “Social Change,” 406.

corporate bodies, and decisions about opening up land were made by the older generation.”¹⁹⁴ Hesitation to expand on the part of many colonies meant that land grew increasingly scarce as towns were unable to provide for “the bumper crop of surviving children” due to a lack of resources.

The inability of parents to provide for their children as they once had due to a decline of land availability and affordability meant that their children grew up facing different decisions than their parents. Demand for raw materials produced in the colonies grew, expanding old markets and creating new ones. Increased opportunities for wealth and self-sustainment aided in the shift in many colonists’ minds (particularly the younger generations) from a community based perspective to an individual outlook.¹⁹⁵ Increased choices altered colonial identity by encouraging an exploration of identity that included a variety of external influences. This variety allowed for a larger range of possibilities to emerge when constructing identity.

One reaction to the dramatic changes such as the booming population was an idolization of “the past,” manifest as a desire for a return to the virtue and simplicity of previous decades. It also inspired the subsequent mobilization of rural America, by increasing the political participation of common land owners through pamphleteering and mob activity.¹⁹⁶ By 1760, the earlier decades of colonial life had become so idealized by contemporaries that even moderate social changes were seen as catastrophic attacks on a simpler, and more holy, past. Because of the perceptions associated with the social

¹⁹⁴ Appleby, 19.

¹⁹⁵ Appleby, 10, 15, 16, 19.

¹⁹⁶ Nash, Gary B. “The Transformation of Urban Politics 1700-1765.” *The Journal of American History* 60, No. 3 (December 1973): 605-632. See also Gordon Wood. “A Note on Mobs in the American Revolution.” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 23, No. 4 (October 1966): 635-642. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1919130> (accessed July 16, 2012).

changes of the eighteenth century, much of rural America was eager for political mobilization that would lead them back towards the idealized myth of simplicity and Godliness they so ardently clung to.¹⁹⁷

Many colonists continued to look to the elite for guidance during the mid-eighteenth century and during the war for independence. “They looked to the elite for the wisdom which would perceive the common good and for the skill which would unite society behind that good, without unduly repressing any individual. Presumably, the experience and education which accompanies wealth would equip the elite for this difficult task.”¹⁹⁸ Educated colonists were better prepared to produce the lofty rhetoric still treasured as an essential component of American national identity today; however, it would be foolish to ascribe a level of superior intellect or wisdom to these men without also acknowledging that much of the rhetoric was designed to justify grievances and contention with socio-political realities of the time.¹⁹⁹ For much of colonial society, complaints centered on the ‘closing in’ of their society by the British, who had previously been more lax, allowing a level of autonomy within the colonies that many were reluctant to surrender.²⁰⁰

Pressure from an increase in population, a decrease in available land, and the dependence on a market economy influenced the emergence of new cultural norms, particularly by shifting focus away from the community and more on the self. The resulting experiences continued to widen the cultural gap between the British and its American colonies. Even before the Revolutionary War, towns and colonies were no

¹⁹⁷ Lockridge, “Social Change,” 423-424.

¹⁹⁸ Lockridge, “Social Change,” 428.

¹⁹⁹ Grimes, Alan P. “Conservative Revolution and Liberal Rhetoric: The Declaration of Independence.” *The Journal of Politics* 38, No. 3 (August 1976): 3. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2129571> (accessed July 16, 2012).

²⁰⁰ Greene Jack. “The Social Origins of the American Revolution: An Evaluation and an Interpretation.” *Political Science Quarterly* 88, No. 1 (March 1973): 15.

longer isolated, independent, and homogenous; rather, they were diverse, and interconnected due in part to population growth, and also to the increasing number of immigrants arriving in the colonies.

Changes as a Result of the Immigrant Story

Much like population growth, immigration added to the total number of colonists, increasing the interconnectedness between settlements due to the sheer quantity of people. Immigration also diversified colonial life calling into question the appropriateness of an adherence to English identity. Unprecedented migration to the colonies exacerbated strains on land availability and population, as popular immigrant cities and towns were effectively made over into entirely new settlements. The introduction of so many new colonists also led to new ways of envisioning the conflict between England and the colonies, often cast in the sharp rhetoric of freedom and slavery after the mid-eighteenth century.

In the seventeenth century, primarily English immigrants settled in the colonies. As their numbers declined in the eighteenth century (though were by no means eliminated), the number of German and Irish immigrants rose.²⁰¹ Between 1630 and 1700 an estimated 378,000 British citizens (mostly English) arrived in the colonies. This level of migration to the colonies dropped dramatically after 1713, and remained well below seventeenth century levels.²⁰² Aaron Fogleman estimates that between 1700 and 1775 approximately 307,400 Europeans immigrated to the colonies, including 73,100 English/Welsh, 35,300 Scots, 108,600 Irish, 84,500 German, and 5,900 other European

²⁰¹ Fogleman, 51.

²⁰² Price, 426.

immigrants.²⁰³ Some estimates for German immigration place the figure even higher, at closer to 125,000.²⁰⁴

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania was the major port of entry for most of these immigrants. In 1730, the city's population was approximately 12,000, yet it began to see an average of 7,000 German and Irish immigrants per year, an annual average that continued for another twenty years.²⁰⁵ In fact, the dramatic increase in demand for transportation to the colonies resulted in the creation of ships built specifically for the purpose of transporting European immigrants.²⁰⁶ "By the late 1740s...Philadelphia emerged as the American *Oberamt*, a district clearing center for German religious, political-legal, printing, and kinship networks that partially replicated the pattern of life in the German territories."²⁰⁷ A decade later, Charleston, South Carolina achieved similar recognition for its regional role as a haven for German immigrants.²⁰⁸

Though these areas provided some comfort for German immigrants, their settlements were influenced by other cultures, just as other ethnic communities were similarly affected. After the first quarter of the eighteenth century, Scotch-Irish immigrants settled primarily in the Pennsylvania area, moving south and west over the next decade and branching out into parts of Maryland, Virginia, North and South Carolina and Georgia.²⁰⁹ English immigrants and colonists "increasingly settled and interacted in every discernible

²⁰³ Fogleman, 71.

²⁰⁴ Roeber, 245.

²⁰⁵ Appleby, 11.

²⁰⁶ Mageean, Deirdre M. "Emigration from Irish Ports." *Journal of American Ethnic History* 13, No. 1 (Fall 1993). Paragraph 16. <http://ehis.ebscohost.com.proxy-tu.researchport.umd.edu/eds/detail?sid=a35d1b51-875b-4d12-bcb0-57495e64256c%40sessionmgr111&vid=18&hid=105&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWRzLWxpdmUmc2NvcGU9c2l0ZQ%3d%3d#db=aph&AN=9405020017> (accessed March 2, 2013).

²⁰⁷ Roeber, 252.

²⁰⁸ Roeber, 255.

²⁰⁹ Jones, Maldwyn A. "The Scotch-Irish in British America," in *Strangers Within the Realm: Cultural Margins of the First British Empire* edited by Bernard Bailyn and Philip D. Morgan. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1991, 294.

realm with Scottish neighbors in what were essentially Scottish communities.”²¹⁰ This intermingling was not specific to the English and Scots; it was an organic response to the settling of diverse peoples in close quarters. Exposure to other cultures and ethnicities was important for the development of American identity because as commonalities emerged among immigrants, they served as bridges between ethnic groups, reframing ‘otherness’ as a colonists/imperialist distinction rather than an ethnic distinction. This helped create a foundation for a broad collective identity to develop.

Slaves, however, were excluded from this organic mixing of cultures, just as they were excluded from contributing directly to the formation of American national identity. Approximately 278,400 Africans immigrated to the American colonies – almost all as slaves.²¹¹ As early as 1710s African slaves accounted for 20 percent of the population in Maryland and Virginia, a number that would continue to grow as agricultural output increased.²¹² By 1740, both the Chesapeake Bay area and South Carolina reached a ratio of one African American for every three white Americans.²¹³ Bernard Bailyn estimates that 96,000 slaves were sent to the Chesapeake area, and of them, “all but 7 percent came directly from Africa.”²¹⁴ The tremendous increase in African slaves between 1700 and 1775 accounted for nearly half of all immigration at that time.²¹⁵ Though these numbers are striking, the numbers of African slaves imported to all of Britain’s colonies dwarfs those sent specifically to America. According to Philip Morgan, during the same period

²¹⁰ Landsman, 173.

²¹¹ Fogleman, 50, 60, 70-72.

²¹² Morgan, Philip D. “British Encounters with Africans and African-Americans, circa 1600-1780,” in *Strangers Within the Realm: Cultural Margins of the First British Empire* edited by Bernard Bailyn and Philip D. Morgan. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1991, 171.

²¹³ Appleby, 12.

²¹⁴ Bailyn, Bernard. “Considering the Slave Trade: History and Memory.” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 58, No. 1 (January 2001): 247.

²¹⁵ Fogleman, 60.

nearly 2.34 million Africans were taken from their homes and transported to British colonies in the New World, primarily in the Caribbean.²¹⁶

Only about one quarter of all immigrants to the colonies arrived free, and of these, most were German, Irish, and Scottish.²¹⁷ Approximately 54,500 of the 84,500 German immigrants were free, 25,700 of the total 35,300 Scots were free, and just under half of all Irish immigrants arrived free.²¹⁸ Many Scottish, Irish, and German immigrants had particularly large representations in southeastern Pennsylvania, the northern Chesapeake, and even as far south as North and South Carolina.²¹⁹ Irish immigrants in particular could be found in significant numbers in Maryland and Virginia.²²⁰

Both Maryland and Virginia were especially inundated with immigrants, and not just freemen. “In 1755 nearly 10 percent of the white population in Maryland was servants or convicts. In the same year in Baltimore, Charles, Queen Anne’s, and Anne Arundel counties on Maryland’s Western shore, 12 percent of productive adult laborers (a category defined as those working for others and excluding slaves too young or infirmed to work) were convicts, 22 percent were hired and indentured servants, and 66 percent were slaves.”²²¹ By 1760 their populations experienced more than an eightfold increase. Thirty eight percent of the population was black (virtually all slaves) and 80 percent of all convicts sent to the American colonies, approximately 40,000, settled in the two colonies, particularly on the western shore where the growing economy provided ample opportunities for labor.

²¹⁶ Morgan, Philip, 161.

²¹⁷ Fogleman, 57.

²¹⁸ Fogleman, 71.

²¹⁹ Tomlins, 5-43, and Fogleman, 58.

²²⁰ Mageean, paragraph 10.

²²¹ Fogleman, 58.

During the first three quarters of the eighteenth century, record numbers of immigrants from Europe and Africa arrived in the colonies, and approximately three-quarters of them arrived in some form of servitude – as slaves, indentured servants, redemptioners, and convicts.²²² Some scholars estimate the number of involuntary immigrants, meaning convicts or prisoners, at 54,500.²²³ This number obviously excludes African slaves, who were forcibly transported to the colonies in much greater numbers as discussed above. Remaining colonists who did not arrive as freemen secured passage to America via the redemptioner system or indentured servitude.

The process of redemption was not as widely employed as indentured servitude, though both processes have similar features. “Securing in North America a future purchaser for the price of passage, the Newlander [or private entrepreneur] helped invent the redemptioner contracts for the merchants whose credit they were extending. The small but successful German-speaking population already living in Pennsylvania provided the most natural market for “redeeming” the new arrivals.”²²⁴ Redemption was a fairly humane and achievable option in the early part of the eighteenth century, but as immigrants continued to flow into the country and delays in fulfilling contracts increased, the system fell apart.²²⁵

The majority of colonists who arrived in the eighteenth century, anywhere from half to two-third of the total number, did so as indentured servants (or entered into indentured servitude upon arrival in the colonies). These contracts bonded the servant to a master,

²²² Fogleman, 58, 43, 65.

²²³ Tomlins, 9.

²²⁴ Roeber, 242.

²²⁵ Roeber, 242.

often times the ship master in charge of their transportation,²²⁶ for between four and seven years, and restricted their freedom in a variety of ways. “The person who owned a servant’s contract could exercise control over a whole range of personal liberties dealing with property, selection of friends, use of free time, and supervision of behavior.”²²⁷ Though this may seem distasteful to contemporary society, the practice was often the only way a person could secure passage to America, and was commonly accepted for most of the eighteenth century.

In the mid seventeenth century a man who came to the colonies as an indentured servant and completed his term of indenture had a good chance of achieving a comfortable position in society. Less than 100 years later, the difficult and demanding journey of indentured servitude did not provide the same promise of security as it did for previous generations; “opportunities for acquiring land declined, and it grew more difficult for freed servants to succeed in the mid-eighteenth-century economy.”²²⁸ High mortality rates due in part to exposure to new diseases such as malaria presented real danger to immigrants. Scholars contend that up to 40 percent of immigrants did not survive their first two years in the colonies. Other estimates “suggest that mortality averaged 10 percent per annum and that no more than 60 percent of immigrant servants survived their terms.”²²⁹ In addition to disease risk, after the mid-eighteenth century land became progressively more difficult to obtain.

As immigrants continued to pour into the colonies, land became increasingly scarce, leading some to write home as early as the 1750s advising their friends and family not to

²²⁶ Megeean, paragraph 5.

²²⁷ Appleby, 18, and Megeean, paragraph 5.

²²⁸ Fogleman, 47, 53.

²²⁹ Tomlins, 38.

risk the difficult voyage for land that was increasingly more difficult to find.²³⁰ Land in incorporated towns and colonies continued to decrease, and available land in certain areas such as Pennsylvania's western backcountry, was regarded by many as undesirable because of its distance from markets and transportation.²³¹ Immigration was not without risks, but threats of disease and declining land availability did not deter hundreds of thousands of immigrants that made the journey to the colonies in the eighteenth century.

The incredible influx of immigrants that flooded North America in the eighteenth century dramatically altered the cultural landscape of the colonies.²³² Aaron Fogleman estimates that by the middle of the eighteenth century "people born elsewhere may have constituted a larger percentage of the American population than they did later, when the absolute number of immigrants peaked." Not only did immigration add to the total number of residents living in the colonies, but the diversity of ethnicity and experiences fundamentally altered the cultural landscape of the colonies.²³³

The diversity of heritage, language, and ethnicity influenced society by providing colonists exposure to a variety of new cultures. Immigration also influenced the ideas and language of pro-independence colonists. The experience of most colonial immigrants in the mid-eighteenth century was one that often included some level of servitude, which provided a background that influenced the way many colonists thought of themselves and their 'rights' as members of the British Empire. Many arguments for independence were crafted to portray the British as 'cruel masters' and the colonists as 'slaves' to British vice and corruption, as Joyce Appleby so aptly argued in her article "Liberalism and the

²³⁰ Fogleman, 54.

²³¹ Landsman, 171.

²³² Fogleman, 43.

²³³ Fogleman, 49.

American Revolution.”

The growing concern for individual liberty cannot be understood unless there is a social context to support its importance. Appleby explained that the idea of liberty came to overshadow all other endeavors, due to the sharp distinction between statuses of free and unfree faced by men coming of age in the middle of the eighteenth century. “By contrasting freedom to slavery the revolutionaries were giving an absolute value to freedom which it had not previously possessed, even in the intellectual tradition from which they drew.”²³⁴ The way in which colonists framed arguments for independence drew on the social context that highlighted liberty and oppression in vivid and easily understood terms.

In fact, some scholars contend that acceptance of common practices such as indentured servitude began to decline prior to American independence. Gordon Wood argues “Everywhere ordinary people were no longer willing to play their accustomed roles in the hierarchy...servitude of any sort (for white males) suddenly became anomalous and anachronistic.”²³⁵ Wood does not imply that because Revolutionary elite decided that white men should all be entitled to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, indentured servitude ended abruptly; in reality, the practice continued.²³⁶ The important take away from his assessment is that the common experience of arriving in the colonies with some level of bondage created a group of widely dispersed immigrants that were familiar with the concepts and terms associated with free and unfree.

During the mid-eighteenth century, immigration to America added to the aggregate

²³⁴ Appleby, 20-21, 7, 25, 23-24.

²³⁵ Fogleman, 61-62.

²³⁶ Fogleman, 63.

population of the colonies, and influenced the range of experiences colonists dealt with on a daily basis. Not only did this spur commonality between colonists of many ethnicities, but it also weakened ties to the motherland, particularly those with England. As the methods of immigration became engrained within the population, political and ideological arguments started to reflect the importance colonists were placing on liberty, and inherent rights. Immigration was not the only factor that weakened identification with England. Economic development during this time also played a role in how the colonists came to understand English perceptions about them.

Economic Impact

The realization that futures were no longer directly tied to familial and community obligations created new pressures for some colonists to strike out on their own and find their own path to success. The societal structure in the early eighteenth century existed due in large part to the capacity of the community to maintain control and “create new locales of community control to keep pace with growth.”²³⁷ However, during the mid-eighteenth century, population growth and immigration occurred at unprecedented rates and communities had to evolve to adapt to changing realities. Colonists were forced to find meaning and order in different ways, and many viewed individual economic opportunity not only as a path to success, but as a means for survival.

As the population continued to grow, it was clear that colonists would have to adapt to the emerging reality of individualism. Colonists placed an increased importance on the idea of personal property, relied more heavily on an emerging market economy and began to view themselves as capable of economic survival without need of British

²³⁷ Appleby, 24.

oversight and intervention. Greene suggests “colonial societies put a very high premium upon economic and social success and exerted strong pressures, especially upon young men in the middle strata of society, to...“get ahead in their careers.”²³⁸ These men were the same men that colonial elites were increasingly involving in political action through mob participation and pamphleteering.

Two swings of economic growth and expansion occurred from 1720 to 1745 and 1745 to 1775 altering the Atlantic economy.²³⁹ One of the causes of this growth was the abundant increase of the American population. Jacob Price notes “The seven- or eightfold expansion of English (or later British) exports to those colonies...was based almost exclusively on the more than nine-fold increase in the colonial population.”²⁴⁰ The burgeoning expansion of British commerce in the colonies – up to a 40 percent increase per capita in the northern colonies in the first ten years alone – produced an influx of British goods in the late 1740s. Many shopkeepers employed credit to obtain a larger quantity of goods to keep up with colonial demand, however, English merchants began to appear in the colonies and undermined colonists’ ability to profit from their ventures. These new merchants – *outsiders* – purchased items directly from auctions to sell greater quantities of goods at lower prices, creating contention among established merchants who now had increasing backlogs of merchandise that continued to decrease in value. Urban dwellers were not the only colonists affected by the rising inflow of British capital.²⁴¹

A growing number of rural colonists keenly felt the sting of planter indebtedness particularly among tobacco farmers. The established relationship between planters and

²³⁸ Greene, “Search for Identity,” 190.

²³⁹ Engal, 10-11.

²⁴⁰ Price, 419.

²⁴¹ Engal, 15.

the English was replaced by a more strict credit system managed by tobacco houses run in Glasgow, Scotland. In the early 1760s, credit shortages produced even greater strain on planters due to a decrease of short term loans to planters, along with increased pressures to repay existing debts. Economic sovereignty became an important topic for many colonists, especially in rural colonies such as Virginia.²⁴² Increasing English involvement in the American market demonstrated for many colonists increasing domination by the British, intensifying the perception that they were being treated as ‘others’ by the English.

As colonial prosperity increased, English rules became seen as more and more oppressive. At the same time, after years of apathetic neglect regarding colonial economic and political decisions, Great Britain was increasing its regulation of the American colonies in an effort to pay burgeoning war debts.²⁴³ Ian Christie examines some of the policy choices made by the British during the early years of the Revolutionary period, starting around 1763. At that time, Parliament believed they were acting in such a way as to preserve both the colonies themselves, and the British Empire. Members of Parliament simply could not comprehend the American colonies as a viable participant in the global economic market without the support of Great Britain; a testament to the influence of intergroup discrimination as a result of British nationalism on its political decisions.²⁴⁴

According to Marc Engal and Joseph Ernst “In the half century before American Independence...English capital and English decisions increasingly dominated the

²⁴² Engal, 11, 15, 24-25, 27.

²⁴³ Price, 432.

²⁴⁴ Christie, Ian R. “British Politics and the American Revolution.” *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 9, No. 3 (Autumn 1977): 208.

colonial economy.”²⁴⁵ Furthermore, as England and its American colonies were viewed as parts of the same whole, the colonies were expected to perform as a cog in the wheel for the Empire, by “providing primary products while the metropolitan country used its more developed skills and capital to produce manufactured goods.”²⁴⁶ The American colonies were still seen as the “warehouse for the old [world],” supplying natural resources for the expansion of British economic might.²⁴⁷

In addition to the colonists’ role as provider of raw materials, they were expected to comply with economic principles that favored Great Britain, especially those concerning France. Centuries of conflict between the two countries continued in the eighteenth century; eighteen out of twenty four years between 1739 and 1763 were marked by open hostility between France and Great Britain.²⁴⁸ Because of the longstanding feud, the British government sought to limit trade with France to only that which was absolutely necessary, and only under conditions that proved favorable to the British.

Parliament expected that the colonists would comprehend the potential damage of trade with France and would conduct their economic affairs within the guidelines of this understanding.²⁴⁹ These kinds of assumptions undermined the colonies’ ability to control their own economy which they had become accustomed to, due to an ongoing lack of English oversight.²⁵⁰ The colonists interpreted the new reality of increased British interference as an affront to their rights as Englishmen, but the English understood it as a measure of protection for the good of all the Empire. For those in London, foreign policy

²⁴⁵ Engal, 3.

²⁴⁶ Christie, 210.

²⁴⁷ Cressey, 47.

²⁴⁸ Appleby, 14.

²⁴⁹ Christie, 212.

²⁵⁰ Engal, 18.

and national security were inextricably linked to economic policy.²⁵¹

This kind of ‘protection’ came at a great cost to the colonists however, as urban merchants, rural farmers, and colonial consumers were negatively impacted by the economic actions of Great Britain. Economic policy decreed by Parliament during the mid-eighteenth century was influenced by an increasing sense of English nationalism, and a heightened awareness of the American colonies as different, and ‘other’ than Englishmen. Thus, even as Parliament acted in ways in which they believed benefited the whole Empire, biases against British colonies did exist, and thus, influenced the choices made.²⁵² Support for colonial grievances went largely unheard; though there were some sympathizers, opposition groups never had a majority or even enough power to be taken seriously. Christie estimates that perhaps as many as 50,000 Englishmen petitioned for disillusionment between the colonies and Great Britain in 1769, but this number made up only about one-fifth of the parliamentary electorate. There simply was not enough support for the movement.²⁵³

The population growth of the colonies gave rise to an emerging market economy in the mid eighteenth century, creating opportunities for success for many colonists. However, British involvement hindered success for some, and led to an increasing divide between the two groups. Urban merchants and rural farmers became increasingly frustrated with British involvement in the colonial economy, strengthening the belief that the colonial economy could thrive without such interference. It also solidified colonial perceptions that they were being treated differently by the British. Heightened intergroup

²⁵¹ Christie, 213.

²⁵² McGill, 105-120.

²⁵³ Christie, 224, 225.

discrimination highlighted the notion that the colonists were viewed as an ‘other’ and moved them closer to national consciousness.

Conclusion

The community was the center of colonial life in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century, and with good reason. As colonists first arrived in America, thousands of miles and an entire ocean removed from what they knew, it was critical to band together in settlements and cooperate to ensure the best chance for survival. The sheer necessity of community, along with strong religious beliefs about hard work and a commitment to the collective good reinforced its importance.²⁵⁴ However, by the middle of the eighteenth century, reliance on community was not as necessary to the survival and personal success of colonists, and no longer did the description of “isolated, independent, and homogenous” apply. An increase in new opportunities for individual choice allowed colonists to envision themselves as something more than their fathers had been. It also expanded their access to and interaction with external influences. Urie Bronfenbrenner’s environmental systems²⁵⁵ were filled with higher quantity and more diverse influences than in previous decades, forcing colonists to reimagine their position in a larger world.

Colonists in the mid-eighteenth century faced a reality of increasing population density, an influx of immigrants, pressure on the land supply, and a rising dependence on a commercial economy,²⁵⁶ all of which threatened the existence of the traditional social order. Younger generations were forced to adapt their lifestyles to these shifting cultural realities. Such changes invited divisiveness and personal gain to supplant community

²⁵⁴ Morgan, “Puritan Ethic,” 3-43.

²⁵⁵ Guhn, 205-207.

²⁵⁶ Lockridge, “Social Change,” 413.

focused living, degrading the cultural norms that placed the community's interests above personal interests. In conjunction, they spurred the formation of national identity by creating new common experiences that transcended local autonomy and previous associations with English identity.²⁵⁷

According to Paul McCartney, "Nationalism exists when a particular social group believes that it is in some way fundamentally different from all other groups of people in the world."²⁵⁸ The societal changes experienced in the mid-eighteenth century altered the way in which individuals understood the world around them. Identities that had been based on uniformity and limited choices were reassessed as colonists began to explore other possible identities, such as a unique American national identity. By the start of the Revolutionary War, Americans saw themselves not just as different, but no longer as a less-than 'other.' They defined themselves according to their cultural and historical norms, which, while similar to Great Britain, were influenced by opposing religious beliefs and diverse experiences in the colonies.

²⁵⁷ Appleby, 13, 14.

²⁵⁸ McCartney, Paul. *Power and Progress: American National Identity, the War of 1898, and the Rise of American Imperialism*. Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 2006, 23.

Chapter 4

Primary Source Research in Support of American National Identity

During the mid-eighteenth century the foundations for American national identity began to emerge as individuals re-imagined their participation in the world based on new external cultural cues. Drastic social changes in the size and composition of colonial society, along with resulting economic expansion, weakened ties to existing associations with the English identity and created a psychological crisis moment for colonists as they considered commitment to a unique, American national identity. This process of identity exploration serves as a developmental step between autonomy and national consciousness and is critical for the emergence of nationalism. Without an acceptance of nationalist values and concepts at an inherent, individual level, nationalism has no foundation, and much less power as a unifying concept, among a population.

Several intangible bonds aid in the spread of national consciousness throughout a given population. Benedict Anderson and others highlight the importance of printed language and common histories for creating national identity.²⁵⁹ Language, particularly print language, is a medium for the transmission of cultural ideas and messages over great distance. It also serves as a reference point of commonality. The availability of forums for political discussion strengthens national identity by providing a way for a large number of colonists to reinforce their commitment to a given identity. Michael

²⁵⁹ Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso, 1991. See also Ernst Renan. "What is a Nation." Lecture at Sorbonne, March 11, 1882, also in *Becoming a National: A Reader* edited by Geoff Eley and Ronald Grigor Suny. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996, 41-55, and David McCrone. *Sociology of Nationalism*. London and New York: Routledge, 1998.

Billig's theory of banal nationalism refers to the "daily flagging of the nation"²⁶⁰ through "mundane exchanges" that continually reinforce commonality among a population.

William Penuel and James Wertsch's research on micro-contexts supports Billig's theory. They argue that conversations enhance national identity by providing opportunities for engagement and participation with the social realm.²⁶¹

By the mid-eighteenth century in America, colonists already understood the importance of printed word as a tool for political engagement. Pamphlets, newspapers, and sermons were published in great number, giving colonists increased access to current events and encouraging civic participation.²⁶² Though these pamphlets did not directly reference colonial independence, they were used to address other relevant political events. Speeches by prominent figures, decisions about court cases, and even land charters were all publicly published. Political commentary was also printed and available for colonists to read and hear. Both political reporting and commentary became engrained in colonial culture as legitimate methods of communication through their repeated and prolific use. The establishment of such a vivacious network of communication proved invaluable during the revolutionary period as new ideas travelled existing and socially accepted paths of communication to reach other colonists as quickly as possible.

This phenomenon has been examined from a contemporary viewpoint throughout this project. Evidence from contemporary scholars has been presented and applied to the colonial period, yielding valuable insight into the way in which external influences created a fertile environment for national identity to emerge. Chapter four approaches the

²⁶⁰ Billig, Michael. *Banal Nationalism*. London: Sage Publications, 1995, 6.

²⁶¹ Penuel, William R. and James V. Wertsch. "Vygotsky and Identity Formation: A Sociocultural Approach." *Educational Psychologist* 30, No. 3 (1995): 91.

²⁶² Nash, Gary B. "The Transformation of Urban Politics 1700-1765." *The Journal of American History* 60, No. 3 (December 1973): 617, 631, 632.

development of national identity in colonial America from a different perspective to provide additional support for the argument that the foundations of national identity emerged prior to the Revolutionary period. While contemporary research contributes greatly to insights about particular issues, including primary resources provides a richness and depth to intellectual pursuits that cannot be achieved by studying current literature alone. Examination of published primary resources from mid-eighteenth century increases understanding of the emergence of national identity at that time.

Resources

A variety of published material appeared in colonial America between 1720 and 1763. Newspapers continued to multiply in major cities,²⁶³ and broadsides, leaflets, and pamphlets were also widely employed to disseminate information. Broadsides are defined as “Single-sheet notices or announcements printed on one or both sides, intended to be read unfolded.” Leaflets are slightly longer pieces of literature and classified as “unbound volumes with fewer than five pages.” Pamphlets are more in-depth, “published, non-serial volumes with no cover or with a paper cover; usually five or more pages and fewer than forty-nine.”²⁶⁴ Each of these formats, along with sermons, advertisements, and other forms of print communication was published and/or distributed to a wide audience in colonial America, reinforcing commonality, establishing the legitimacy of communication networks, and encouraging the participation of an increasing number of colonists.

Primary resources were collected from Bernard Bailyn’s seminal work, *Pamphlets of*

²⁶³ Nash, 617.

²⁶⁴ “Genre Terms.” *Library of Congress, American Memory*.
<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/rbpehtml/pegenre.html> (accessed March 5, 2013).

the American Revolution, Volume I:1750-1765, an electronic version of *Political Sermons of the American Founding Era Volume I (1730-1788)* edited by Ellis Sandoz, the *An American Time Capsule: Three Centuries of BroadSides and other Printed Ephemera* database, and the *Early American Imprints Series I: Evans 1639-1800* database. Bailyn's *Pamphlets* contain copies of some of the most influential published pieces of the time. Fourteen pamphlets are presented in total, three of which were published between 1720 and 1763; of those three, two provided support for the appearance of the foundations of American national identity.²⁶⁵

The collection edited by Ellis Sandoz, *Political Sermons of the American Founding Era Volume I (1730-1788)*, contains information similar to Bailyn's work. In total, thirty three pieces are included in Sandoz's volume, and seven of them were published between 1720 and 1763. Of these seven, three contained evidence of emerging American national identity. Twenty nine documents were also selected from the *Early American Imprints Series I: Evans, 1639-1800*, a digital collection of published materials that includes over 36,000 pamphlets, leaflets, and broadsides over a 160 year period.²⁶⁶

In addition, twenty three leaflets and seven pamphlets were selected from the Library of Congress' database of primary references included under their Rare Book and Special Collections Division. Part of this division is the American Memory project's Printed Ephemera Collection, which includes *An America Time Capsule: Three Centuries of BroadSides and other Printed Ephemera*, a collection of 28,000 primary sources spanning

²⁶⁵ Bailyn, Bernard. *Pamphlets of the American Revolution, Volume I: 1750-1765*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965. Only John Alpin's 1763 work, "Verses on Dr. Mayhew's Book of Observations," was not useful for the purposes of this research.

²⁶⁶ "Early American Imprints, Series I: Evans, 1639-1800: An Invaluable Resources for Exploring 17th- and 18th-century America." *Readex: A Division of NewsBank*. <http://www.newsbank.com/readex/product.cfm?product=247> (accessed March 15, 2013).

the seventeenth through the twenty-first centuries and incorporating broadsides, pamphlets, leaflets, and other kinds of printed material; 17,000 of which are available online.²⁶⁷ Three more pamphlets were selected from additional sources. Selection of documents was based on date of publication.

Published works were chosen as the focus for this project due to their greater potential to affect national identity on a widespread scale. The importance of printed language to the development of national identity has been clearly elucidated in previous chapters. Anderson and Billig's arguments have been detailed to demonstrate that not only do printed works promote unity by spreading ideas that strengthen commonality, but they also serve as a reinforcing mechanism due to the mundane nature of the action.²⁶⁸

Findings

The initial assumption was that a pattern of increasing uses of descriptive terms such as 'America' and 'American' as well as possessive language such as 'our,' 'we,' and 'their' showing an attachment to the American colonies (as separate from England) would indicate an emerging national identity. However, no such patterned appeared in the data collected. Of the literature reviewed, none demonstrated a clear indication of the aforementioned terms or possessive language. A reassessment of the hypothesis was necessary. Further analysis revealed more subtle connections to American national identity in a handful of the papers. In nine of the seventy two works examined, evidence of the foundations of American national identity was recognized. These sources will be discussed chronologically, spanning from 1730 through 1760, below. Each work offers

²⁶⁷ "An American Time Capsule: Three Centuries of Broadsides and other Printed Ephemera." *Library of Congress, American Memory*. March 9, 2008. <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/rbpehtml/> (accessed March 5, 2013).

²⁶⁸ Anderson, 44-45, Billig, 10. See also Helen Ting. "Social Construction of Nation – A Theoretical Exploration." *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 14 (2008): 462.

insight into the spread and development of three major aspects of American national identity: Puritan ethics, enlightenment values, and an obligation to resist oppression and tyranny.

First, Puritan ethics are present in nearly every example. Puritan values were an integral part of colonial identity from very early on. Nearly one hundred and fifty years separated the first Puritan settlers from colonists of the mid-eighteenth century, yet Puritan values and attitudes were influential in the formation of arguments for independence.²⁶⁹ Second, enlightenment thinking reveals itself in discussions of the rights of all Englishmen (colonists included). Enlightenment values of liberty and unalienable rights influenced colonists in much the same way as Puritan beliefs. Finally, the argument that citizens have an obligation to resist a government when it no longer serves the purpose or interests of those being governed is prominent in several of the works that match the criteria described above. The notion of absolute submission to the ruler was heavily debated during this time, and often concluded with the assumption that blind obedience was a violation of an individual's responsibilities as one of the governed.²⁷⁰ Each of these elements provides evidence of an emerging American national identity.

The first prominent idea found in nearly all nine samples was a reliance on Puritan values as socially accepted norms of behavior. By the mid-eighteenth century, the Puritan ethic of hard work, humility, and serving God and society through a specific calling²⁷¹ was a major influence in colonial life. Benjamin Colman referenced these values in his

²⁶⁹ Morgan, Edmund. "The Puritan Ethic and the American Revolution." *The William and Mary Quarterly* 24, No. 1 (January 1967): 3-43.

²⁷⁰ The best example of this is the debate inspired by Jonathan Mayhew's 1750 sermon, "A Discourse Concerning Unlimited Submission and Non-Resistance to the High Powers," which can be found in Bernard Bailyn. *Pamphlets of the American Revolution, Volume I: 1750-1765*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965, 213-255.

²⁷¹ Morgan, "Puritan Ethic," 4.

1730 sermon, *Government the Pillar of the Earth*, which espoused the virtues of government as ordained by God. In it, he made several references to a ‘just’ government and included discussions of integrity, uprightness, faithfulness, knowledge, patience, resolution, humility, and wisdom.²⁷² Colman also drew on the importance of community and wrote about “A publicked and enlarged spirit for the common wealth and a single regard thereunto, without suffering our selves to be misled by private and selfish views.”²⁷³ It is expected that sermons of this period would be rife with Puritan values and a call to Godliness, as the Great Awakening was unfolding at the time the sermon was published. In addition to the expected however, there is another passage that bears further investigation.

Towards the end of his sermon, Colman addressed his parishioners directly as “fathers of our country” and referred to “the first planters of New-England” as ancestors.

He wrote

Fathers of our country, let me freely say to you, that the devotion and virtue of our humble, but illustrious ancestors (the first planters of New-England), laid the foundation of our greatness among the provinces: And it is this that must continue and establish it under the divine favour and blessing. Emulate their piety and godliness, and generous regard to the publick, and be acknowledged the pillars, the strength and ornament of your country.²⁷⁴

This acknowledgement does not preclude English identity, specifically. There are numerous references to the relationship between God and the appointment of kings, and it would be premature to assume that in 1730 Colman thought of himself, or the colony of Massachusetts, as American rather than English. However, his rhetoric suggests that there was a sense of identity that was influenced in part by the unique circumstances and

²⁷²Colman, Benjamin. “Government the Pillar of the Earth.” In *Online Library of Liberty: Political Sermons of the American Founding Era Volume I (1730-1788)* edited by Ellis Sandoz, 1991. E-Book (PDF format) published by Liberty Fund, Inc., September 2011, 36-38. <http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/816>.

²⁷³ Colman, 37.

²⁷⁴ Colman, 42.

experiences of Puritanism and colonial life. His use of the possessive pronoun ‘our’ in reference to the colony (or in his terms ‘country’) and its ancestors (not English citizens, but “the first planters of New-England”), along with the employment of ‘your’ when addressing “the publick”²⁷⁵ suggests a collective understanding of the colonists as something not entirely English, but more complex.

Another prominent theme that appeared in primary sources at this time is the use of enlightenment thinking when crafting and rationalizing arguments. Elisha Williams’s 1744 sermon *The Essential Rights and Liberties of Protestants* drew heavily on enlightenment influences over two decades before similar language appeared in the Declaration of Independence. He wrote “That the greater security therefore of life, liberty, money, lands, houses, family, and the like, which may be all comprehended under that of person and property, is the sole end of all civil government.”²⁷⁶ Further along, Williams’ referenced “the right of private judgment in matters of religion” as “being unalienable,”²⁷⁷ again using language similar to that employed in support of the revolution two decades later. However, to read too much into these statements would be foolish.

References throughout *The Essential Rights and Liberties of Protestants* mention loyalty to the king, Great Britain, and its laws. In fact, Williams’ also used enlightenment language when promoting inherent rights for Englishmen as well. He argued “The writes of the Magna Charta depend not on the will of the prince, or the will of the legislature;

²⁷⁵ Colman, 42.

²⁷⁶ Williams, Elisha. “The Essential Rights and Liberties of Protestants.” In *Online Library of Liberty: Political Sermons of the American Founding Era Volume I (1730-1788)* edited by Ellis Sandoz, 1991. E-Book (PDF format) published by Liberty Fund, Inc., September 2011, 63-103. <http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/816>.

²⁷⁷ Williams, 101.

but they are the inherent natural rights of Englishmen: secured and confirmed they may be by the legislature, but not derived from nor dependent on their will.”²⁷⁸ The referencing of enlightenment ideas alone does not indicate American national identity. What it does illustrate is that even as early as 1744, ideas supporting the notion of unalienable rights, ordained to an individual by God himself, and not by man (not even the king) were legitimized in colonial society. Arguments such as these reframed the relationship between king and subject, or motherland and colony. The intellectual space created from such a distinction provided a place for new ideas to grow and emerge. Social changes and perceived discrimination exploited this gap, producing an even larger wedge between Great Britain and its colonies.

Much like the work of Colman and Williams, George Whitefield’s 1746 sermon, *Britain’s Mercies, and Britain’s Duties*, is full of Puritan values and references to the Great Awakening. Whitefield used an argument often saved for the British treatment of the colonists against the colonists themselves in a scathing attack on the perceived licentiousness of colonial behavior. His oration focused on God’s judgment of the colonists due to a turn away from piety and towards wickedness, an argument often reserved for the English.

Who dare say, He will not deal in the same manner with us? Has he not already given some symptoms of it? What great numbers upon the Continent tell what further judgments are yet in store? However, this is certain, the rod is yet hanging over us; and, I believe it will be granted, on all sides, that if such various dispensations of mercy and judgment, do not teach the inhabitants of any land to learn righteousness, they will only ripen them for a greater ruin.²⁷⁹

Whitefield’s focus on the degradation of colonial culture was a call to reaffirm the

²⁷⁸ Williams, 103.

²⁷⁹ Whitefield, George. “Britain’s Mercies, and Britain’s Duties.” In *Online Library of Liberty: Political Sermons of the American Founding Era Volume I (1730-1788)* edited by Ellis Sandoz, 1991. E-Book (PDF format) published by Liberty Fund, Inc., September 2011, 114. <http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/816>.

Puritan ethics that had once been even more prominent and influential in society. By this time, the Great Awakening was declining in influence and effectiveness, and many of the pamphlets were focused on very different arguments, including an anonymous pamphlet from Boston in 1747.

In 1747, a pamphlet surfaced in New England arguing that the sacrifices of the colony in terms of men and economic production for Great Britain's war effort during King George's War (1743-1748) were not being properly acknowledged and compensated by England. Worried that the colonies would be treated like conquered lands rather than equal partners, an author who identified himself simply as 'Quincius' asked if "New England Men, whose Achievements for the Crown...have been truly glorious [might] be the first victims destined to be sacrificed to Arbitrary and illegal power?"²⁸⁰ His concerns were echoed in 1748 by two essays originally published anonymously, but now attributed to Samuel Adams. Adams invoked the 'natural rights' argument when he "suggested that if the governor and the provincial legislature would, or could, not "protect" the people's "natural right" against the impositions of imperial officials, the people would have to protect themselves."²⁸¹ These examples suggest that by the middle of the century, questions were already being asked about the appropriateness of the English/colonial model.

This does not imply that American national identity existed at this time, but it does support the idea that the foundations of American national identity were beginning to emerge via discussions regarding the obligations and responsibilities of men and their

²⁸⁰ Quoted in, Beneke, Chris. "The Critical Turn: Jonathan Mayhew, the British Empire, and the Idea of Resistance in Mid-Eighteenth-Century Boston." *Massachusetts Historical Review* 10 (2008): 30. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25478696> (accessed July 16, 2012).

²⁸¹ Quoted in Beneke, 33.

participation in the world around them. The rationale behind arguments regarding the relationship between a government and its subjects is the same as that which shaped rhetoric calling for American Independence decades later. Nowhere is this link more evident than in Jonathan Mayhew's 1750 sermon, *A Discourse Concerning Unlimited Submission and Non-Resistance to Higher Powers*.

Mayhew's sermon was delivered in response to his alarm over observing Anglican homage to the late King Charles I in almost saint-like proportions and the resulting preaching of "passive obedience" and divine-right theory. "England appeared to him increasingly as "a nation where infidelity, irreligion, corruption and venality, and almost every kind of vice seems to have been increasing all the time."²⁸² His perturbation led him to deliver three sermons, the last being the aforementioned *Discourse*.²⁸³ Historian Chris Beneke summarizes the importance of Mayhew's work as "too late to claim originality and too early to qualify as a statement of revolutionary properties. Yet the *Discourse* represented a decisive expression of increasingly strident colonial opposition to the theory and practice of absolute obedience at a pivotal moment in New England's imperial history."²⁸⁴ Almost instantly, Mayhew's *Discourse* became a classic argument for the virtues associated with resistance to total submission and the resulting oppression it caused.

Years later, John Adams said of the *Discourse* that it was "read by everybody, celebrated by friends, and abused by enemies."²⁸⁵ Although, 'everybody' was certainly an overgeneralization, Adams' statement was not without some merit. Within two years,

²⁸² Mayhew, *A Discourse Concerning Unlimited Submission*, 210.

²⁸³ Bailyn, *Pamphlets*, 206.

²⁸⁴ Beneke, 45-46.

²⁸⁵ Quoted in Bailyn, *Pamphlets*, 209.

ideas similar to Mayhew's began to appear in New York and other colonies, and by the 1760s, the idea that resistance was not only necessary, but an *obligation* of the people when a ruler failed to uphold the public's trust was a central debate in every colony. By the time Mayhew's *Discourse* was reprinted again in 1775, it was virtually indistinguishable from other pamphlets at the time which contained similar language and views.²⁸⁶

Mayhew argued that obedience to God was the only necessary form of obedience. "For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God."²⁸⁷ He reasoned that rulers that act in incongruous ways to God, are therefore acting on the devil's behalf, and, submission to their will indicates submission to the will of the devil, rather than the will of God.

If it be in our duty, for example, to obey our King merely for this reason, that he rules for the public welfare...it follows by a parity of reason that when he turns tyrant and makes his subjects his prey to devour and to destroy instead of his charge to defend and cherish, we are bound to throw off our allegiance to him and to resist....Not to discontinue our allegiance, in this case, would be to join with the sovereign in promoting the slavery and misery of that society the welfare of which ourselves as well as our sovereign and indispensably obliged to secure and promote as far as in us lies."²⁸⁸

Mayhew's argument made use of several of the Puritan values that so many colonists identified with, particularly the obligation of a community to work together to achieve salvation at both individual and collective levels, directly referencing inclusive language such as "their common good."²⁸⁹ He also relied on enlightenment thinking, particularly when producing an abundance of evidence against the adulation of Charles I.

Among the grievances listed against Charles I was, "He levied many taxes upon the

²⁸⁶ Bailyn, *Pamphlets*, 209.

²⁸⁷ Mayhew, *A Discourse Concerning Unlimited Submission*, 229.

²⁸⁸ Mayhew, *A Discourse Concerning Unlimited Submission*, 232.

²⁸⁹ Mayhew, *A Discourse Concerning Unlimited Submission*, 232.

people without the consent of Parliament...”²⁹⁰ Furthermore, Mayhew called Parliament’s resistance to Charles I’s many infractions “...a most righteous and glorious stand made in defense of the natural and legal rights of the people against the unnatural and illegal encroachments of arbitrary power.”²⁹¹ By crafting his arguments within the framework of Puritan and enlightenment ideas, Mayhew not only made use of commonalities that were already present among the colonists, but he structured his thoughts in such a way that distinguished the colonists as possessing their own cultural influences, unique of the English.

Mayhew concluded by reminding colonists of the duties and responsibilities to be good, loyal subjects, and not use liberty as an excuse to cause havoc and chaos. “Let us all learn to be free and to be loyal. Let us not profess ourselves vassals to the lawless pleasure of any man on earth. But let us remember, at the same time, government is sacred and not to be trifled with....It becomes us, therefore, to be contented and dutiful subjects. Let us prize our freedom but not use our liberty for a cloak of maliciousness.”²⁹² To be clear, Mayhew did not directly endorse independence. In fact, even nine years later he specifically wrote of the colonies as possessing the potential to become a “mighty empire” but clarified, explicitly, “I do not mean an independent one.”²⁹³ However, the tension present in his and others’ work in the mid-eighteenth century is indicative of the tension felt by colonists attempting to reconcile existing identification with English identity and an emerging new identity, one that was uniquely American.

With regard to this particular research project, Mayhew’s sermon is important for two

²⁹⁰ Mayhew, *A Discourse Concerning Unlimited Submission*, 239.

²⁹¹ Mayhew, *A Discourse Concerning Unlimited Submission*, 241.

²⁹² Mayhew, *A Discourse Concerning Unlimited Submission*, 247.

²⁹³ Mayhew, *A Discourse Concerning Unlimited Submission*, 210.

reasons. First, it demonstrates that the foundations for American national identity were evident in the mid-seventeenth century. Second, it illustrates the way in which established networks of communication spread ideas quickly. His ideas highlighted differences between the English and the colonists. As Mayhew's pamphlet was re-printed and spread throughout the colonies, it led to an increased questioning of the responsibilities of colonists to obey what they perceived as a progressively more tyrannical and unjust English government.

The dichotomy colonists faced as they attempted to maintain some form of English identity while reconciling new evaluations of their uniqueness is evident throughout literature of the mid-eighteenth century. Samuel Dunbar referred directly to the colonies as the "British American provinces and colonies"²⁹⁴ in his 1760 pamphlet *The Presence of God with His People*. He writes "So God saved England in former days from the formidable Armada of the Spaniards, and the last year from the threatened, and perhaps really intended, invasion of the French: and but a few years ago, he saved New-England from the powerful armament of their French enemies, who came into these American seas."²⁹⁵ While Dunbar is clear about British ownership of the American colonies, others were not so convinced. Even those who ardently attempted to remain connected to Great Britain still revealed tensions between competing ideas about the appropriateness of the English identity for American colonists.

Benjamin Franklin's 1760 work *The Interest of Great Britain Considered, With Regard to Her Colonies* provides evidence that there was still recognition of the

²⁹⁴ Dunbar, Samuel. "The Presence of God with His People," 1760. In Online Library of Liberty: *Political Sermons of the American Founding Era Volume I (1730-1788)* edited by Ellis Sandoz, 1991. E-Book (PDF format) published by Liberty Fund, Inc., September 2011, 159-174. <http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/816>.

²⁹⁵ Dunbar, 164.

identification with Great Britain. His work is a response to another author who argued that at the conclusion of the French and Indian War, Britain should take possession of French holdings in Canada instead of the island of Guadalupe in the Caribbean.²⁹⁶ In *The Interest of Great Britain Considered*, Franklin made several possessive references such as “our planters,” “our colonies,” and “our settlements.”²⁹⁷ However, it appears he associated “our” with Great Britain, in opposition to the French, rather than referring to the colonies as separate from England. When describing the military superiority over the French he wrote “...the sea-coast will be easily protected by our superior naval power...”²⁹⁸ a clear reference to Great Britain.

In fact, he spent a great deal of time explaining that unity among the colonies was a futile endeavor, calling it “not merely improbable...[but] impossible.”²⁹⁹ To explain the unlikelihood of colonial rebellion against the British, he relied on the commonalities between America and England that link the two together, implying the importance of shared cultural stories and mores. Franklin argued

...can it reasonably be supposed there is any danger of [the colonies] uniting against their own nation, which protects and encourages them, with which they have so many connections and ties of blood, interest and affection, and which ‘tis well known they all love much more than they love one another? [I]n short, there are so many causes that must operate to prevent it, that I will venture to say, an union amongst them for such a purpose is not merely improbable, it is impossible....³⁰⁰

This passage could be interpreted as outright support for English identity; due to a clear sense of possessiveness when talking about Great Britain, and the blatant denunciation of even the possibility of separating from the British Empire. However, in a moment of

²⁹⁶ Franklin, Benjamin. “The Interest of Great Britain Considered, With Regard to Her Colonies.” *National Humanities Center Resource Toolbox: Becoming American: The British Atlantic Colonies 1690-1763*, 2009, 1-4. http://www.docstoc.com/docs/47264597/Benjamin-Franklin_-The-Interest-of-Great-Britain-Considered_-With (Accessed March 27, 2013).

²⁹⁷ Franklin, 1, 3.

²⁹⁸ Franklin, 2.

²⁹⁹ Franklin, 4.

³⁰⁰ Franklin, 4.

unrealized foreshadowing, Franklin qualified his assessment of colonial loyalty based on Mayhew's arguments, illustrating the presence of a potential identity crisis.

By adding a caveat to his argument, he indicated an acceptance of Mayhew's ideas that stressed loyalty to the crown, but not blind obedience. Franklin explained

When I say such a union is impossible, I mean without the most grievous tyranny and oppression. People who would have property in a country which they may lose, and privileges which they may endanger; are generally dispos'd to be quiet; and even to bear much, rather than hazard all. While the government is mild and just, while important civil and religious rights are secure, such subjects will be dutiful and obedient. The waves do not rise, but when the winds blow....³⁰¹

Franklin's ardent support for Great Britain is indicative that English identity was still a part of colonial identity. His subsequent explanation behind such inspired loyalty is telling because rather than absolute obedience to the king, Franklin argued for obedience in times of justness and righteousness. In doing so, he inadvertently implied that in times of "tyranny and oppression," a break from the mother country is warranted. 'Tyranny,' 'oppression,' and other similar terms would be employed to describe English actions with increasing frequency and intensity in the years leading up to independence.³⁰²

A second pamphlet from 1760 reveals similar tensions between English and colonial identity. In *A Letter to the People of Pennsylvania*, Joseph Galloway³⁰³ penned a response to the 1759 Pennsylvania Law that revised the way in which judges were able to carry out their tenure. Until that point, judges throughout the colony were appointed and served their terms based upon the Latin phrase *durante bene platico*, or "as long as it pleases [the prince]." The law however, challenged the power of the king to appoint and remove justices from office based on his own personal or political agenda and stated

³⁰¹ Franklin, 4.

³⁰² Appleby, Joyce. "Liberalism and the American Revolution." *The New England Quarterly* 49, No. 1 (March 1976): 20-25.

³⁰³ According to Bernard Bailyn in *Pamphlets*, Galloway is the likely author, 249.

instead that judges and justices “shall have, hold, enjoy and exercise their several and respective commissions and offices aforesaid, *quamdiu se bene gesserint...*”³⁰⁴ *Quamdiu se bene gesserint* is translated to mean “as long as they conduct themselves properly.” The distinction between the two phrases is vast; the new law granted officials relief from being unjustly removed from their positions at the whim of the king. The 1759 Law was swiftly disallowed in England, igniting a dramatic cross-Atlantic debate that ultimately contributed to one of the prominent arguments for American independence.³⁰⁵

Though the focus of this pamphlet is on the defense of this law, and in no way argues for breaking away from England, there are clear undercurrents present which suggest an increased perception of unequal treatment by the English towards the colonists. All possessive language refers to colonists as a part of the British Empire, and mentions of America are largely place-referential rather than indicative of some special quality. However, towards the end of the pamphlet, the author directly addresses the idea that American colonists should, by right, enjoy the same protections and privileges as other Englishmen, and questions whether or not this is in fact a reality.

Galloway reasoned “Consider, my countrymen, farther, are the Pennsylvanians men of more independent fortune or of greater abilities? Do they inherent a greater share of inflexible virtue? And are they less liable to influence and corruption than the people of England?”³⁰⁶ Continuing the logic that men in both Pennsylvania and England were subject to similar influences of power over sensibility, he argued that by disallowing the law in England, the English were denying their American counterparts the same rights to

³⁰⁴ Bailyn, *Pamphlets*, 249.

³⁰⁵ Bailyn, *Pamphlets*, 249.

³⁰⁶ Galloway, Joseph. “A Letter to the People of Pennsylvania; Occasioned by the...Act for Constituting the Judges...During Good Behavior,” 1760. In Bernard Bailyn. *Pamphlets of the American Revolution, Volume I: 1750-1765*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965, 270.

protection against abuses of power they sought for themselves.³⁰⁷

Galloway asked

Is it because you have left your native land at the risk of your lives and fortunes to toil for your mother country, to load her with wealth, that you are to be rewarded with a loss of your personal privileges? Are you not of the same stock? Was the blood of your ancestors polluted by a change of soil? Were they freemen in England and did they become slaves by a six-weeks' voyage to America? Does not the sun shine as bright, our blood run as warm? Is not our honor and virtue as pure, our liberty as valuable, our property as dear, our lives as precious here as in England? Are we not subjects of the same King, and bound by the same laws, and have we not the same God for our protector?³⁰⁸

His indignant harangue continued

What, then, can you think of those abject Americans, those slaves by principle, those traitors to their own and posterity's happiness, who, plunging the dagger into the vitals of their own liberty, do not blush at declaring that you are not *entitled to the same security of property, the same rights and privileges of the freeborn subjects* of England? Let me ask those enemies to your welfare, how much thereof are you entitled to? Who will measure out and distribute your poor pittance, your short allowance? Is a tenth, an hundredth, or a thousandth part to be the portion of your liberty? Abject, detestable thought!³⁰⁹

The entirety of this passage has been used to demonstrate the high level of rhetoric used by the author to provoke questions about the unequal treatment of colonists by the English. Seven times he asks questions of the English to illustrate similarities between the colonists and the English. Four more questions are offered to imply the arbitrary and unjust nature of inscribing fewer rights to colonists than to Englishmen.

Such fiery language demonstrates the passion already generated by colonists who were feeling the sting of perceived inequality and mistreatment by the English. This theme of otherness is critically important for the development of American national identity because it forced colonists to examine their place in the world based on the information that the English saw them differently, as 'others.' If, as Galloway's pamphlet suggests, the colonists perceived England as offering only a portion of due rights to

³⁰⁷ British Parliament was also trying to establish that judges and justices should maintain their positions based on "good behavior" and "independent of the crown." Bailyn, *Pamphlets*, 270.

³⁰⁸ Galloway, 270-271.

³⁰⁹ Galloway, 271.

colonists, then this realization was a direct assault on colonists' understanding of their association with an English identity. As a result, colonists were forced to re-examine their commitment to English identity, because their belief that colonists were imbued with the same rights as Englishmen in England was no longer being externally reinforced.

Conclusion

By the mid-eighteenth century in America, a variety of print mediums existed to disseminate information and ideas across the colonies. Political reporting and commentary were already vibrant aspects of these communication networks, and colonists understood published documents as a part of the common heritage of the colonies. Published works were chosen as the focus of this chapter, and several documents were evaluated from a variety of sources. Initial assumptions about the kind of evidence that would present itself were unfounded. There was no discernible pattern that displayed an actualized American identity. Possible reasons for the lack of evidence include: a lack of national identity; many of the documents were administrative in nature, which would be unlikely to yield information of individual identity affirmation; declaring a unique American identity could be perceived as treasonous, and therefore would make authors unlikely to reveal their thoughts; and finally, perhaps the 'evidence' was the wrong kind of evidence to support the claim of emerging national identity.

If American national identity was emerging at this time, it would still be in its infancy, and thus, unlikely to appear as a fully realized concept in literature of the time. For example, an identification as 'American' would only appear after such a time as the individual writer felt more committed to that identity than any others in his collaborative identity. Possessive terms such as 'our' and 'we' would likewise appear in support of a

strongly realized American identity. The absence of these markers in the pamphlets of this time period do not necessarily suggest that national identity was not present, but that it was not yet fully realized. Therefore, interpretation of the documents was refocused.

Examining the primary sources for arguments that support the foundations of American nationalism – Puritan values, enlightenment thinking, and an obligation to resist oppression – reveals some support that these ideas were present in the publications of the mid-eighteenth century. In nine of the seventy two documents examined, or approximately 12.5 percent, evidence of one or more of these three themes appear in the text, suggesting that American national identity was emerging at this time, though it was not yet fully realized.

Additional research is needed to fully examine the presence of an emergent American national identity in this time period. Possible avenues for this continued effort include examination of newspapers, both in the way they report news, and the editorial pieces they published, a complete account of pamphlets, leaflets, and broadsides rather than a sample, and examination of personal correspondence. Personal correspondence could yield potentially relevant material, as authors might be more inclined to openly discuss struggles with the appropriateness of English identity and their acceptance of a unique American identity in a private exchange with trusted associates.

Primary sources provide a complexity and deepening of intellectual pursuits because of their ability to transport a scholar back to the time of study to reveal what was most important to those who were living through a given moment. If primary sources are not incorporated into the research and evaluation of a given topic, analysis will suffer a lack of depth and honesty. Published works from the mid-eighteenth century provide an

increased understanding of how major aspects of American national identity interacted to create an intellectual space for its emergence. Arguments based on Puritan ethics and enlightenment values in response to increasing perceptions of discrimination by the English created an environment primed for nationalism – an environment that appeared in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, driving the colonies to fight for independence as a unique, American nation.

Chapter 5

Conclusions

The foundation of American national identity was laid prior to the Revolutionary War, built upon reactions to unique social changes and perceptions of otherness. American national identity emerged in mid-eighteenth century colonial America in response to the influence of external factors on individual identity development. Dramatic cultural shifts, such as population growth, immigration, and economic development, weakened ties to existing conceptions of identity as primarily English. In addition, perceived discrimination by the English of the American colonists widened the gap between the two groups. Commonality was replaced by ‘otherness,’ eventually leading to cries for independence.

Evidence to support the theory that American national identity began to form prior to the Revolutionary war was systematically discussed in the preceding three chapters. First, general theories of nationalism and national identity were presented, followed by recognized theories of individual identity development. Both were supported with colonial evidence and examples. Next, an in-depth discussion of two of the dominant influences on colonial identity was undertaken. Puritan values, what Edmund Morgan called the “Puritan ethic”³¹⁰ informed the decisions of many colonists coming of age in the mid-eighteenth century. These men would later be responsible for the choices about American independence. In addition to Puritan influences, the role of an English identity among colonists was also explored.

Many colonists were influenced by English identity, especially in the seventeenth and

³¹⁰ Morgan, Edmund. “The Puritan Ethic and the American Revolution.” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 24, No. 1 (January 1967): 4.

early eighteenth centuries prior to large influxes of immigrants from other European countries and Africa. Both Puritan ethics and English identity were challenged due to remarkable social changes between 1720 and 1763, creating a moment of psychological crisis as colonists were forced to examine the appropriateness of their current identity for defining meaning and purpose in their lives.³¹¹ Population growth, immigration, and economic development were each discussed individually to offer concrete examples of how external events influenced colonists' individual identities.

In the case of colonial America, all three phenomena weakened the bonds associated with the English identity, by increasing commonality among colonies and decreasing commonality with England. The deterioration of the attachment to English identity allowed colonists to imagine different ways of 'being' in the world, as opposed to being 'British colonists in America.' Concurrently, rising English nationalism and economic realities also influenced interactions with the colonies as an increased British involvement in colonial affairs led many colonists to the conclusion that they were not being treated fairly, as equal Englishmen.

Finally, primary sources were evaluated to provide supporting evidence for the theory that American national identity emerged prior to the Revolutionary War. The original goal of including primary resources was to demonstrate a pattern of increased references to 'America' as well as increased possessive language regarding America among the literature. However, no such pattern was evident among the sample of literature published

³¹¹ See Appleby, Joyce. "Liberalism and the American Revolution." *The New England Quarterly* 49, No. 1 (March 1976): 3-26, Kenneth Lockridge. "Social Change and the Meaning of the American Revolution." *Journal of Social History* 6, No. 4 (Summer 1973): 403-439. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3786509> (accessed October 10, 2012), and Jack Greene. "Search for Identity: An Interpretation of the Meaning of Selected Patterns of Social Response in Eighteenth-Century America." *Journal of Social History* 3, No. 3 (Spring 1969-Spring 1970): 189-220. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3786589> (accessed July 16, 2012).

between 1720 and 1763. A re-evaluation of the hypothesis focused on finding evidence of the foundations of national identity (i.e. Puritan values, enlightenment thinking, and a resistance to oppression) in works published at that time, rather than evidence that would support an established American identity. Using this premise, nine of the seventy two documents examined showed links to one or more of the markers of American national identity discussed above.

Not only were Puritan ethics, enlightenment thinking, and a resistance to tyranny present in these pamphlets, but they also showed a link between the flow of ideas from the colonial to the Revolutionary period – particularly with Jonathan Mayhew’s 1750 sermon *A Discourse Concerning Unlimited Submission and Non-Resistance to Higher Powers*. The logic behind political arguments in the mid-eighteenth century was the same logic used to craft arguments for American independence only a few decades later.³¹² Together, contemporary and primary source research yielded an increased understanding of identity in colonial America, and how a unique American national identity began to emerge in the mid-eighteenth century.

Potential Implications

The current study of nationalism and American national identity exist as autonomous subjects within their respective fields. Often times, even research that incorporates other disciplines does not adequately address overlapping concerns. It is unrealistic to expect that every study would be able to incorporate every aspect that influences identity development; indeed, this is impossible. However, the interconnectedness of cultural

³¹² Mayhew, Jonathan. “A Discourse Concerning Unlimited Submission and Non-Resistance to the Higher Powers,” 1750. In Bernard Bailyn. *Pamphlets of the American Revolution, Volume I: 1750-1765*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965, 213-255.

phenomena cannot be ignored. Population growth, immigration, and economic development were chosen for discussion in this project precisely for this reason. There are a myriad of influences that altered colonial experiences in mid-eighteenth century America, however the increase in population (from both inherent growth and immigration) was particularly dramatic, and also largely responsible for the economic development of the time.³¹³ As such, all three trends needed to be addressed to realize the complex ways in which cultural shifts alter individual identity development and the development of an American national identity at the collective level.

Multi-disciplinary approaches have not been fully utilized when studying national identity. Contributions that include the psychology discipline have been particularly lacking. National identity at a collective level exists because it is a part of the individuals of that group, yet the individual impact of nationalism has been under-studied. This project attempted to create an intellectual dialogue that marries the psychological and nationalist disciplines in order to better understand the strength national identity receives at an individual level. Benedict Anderson and other constructionists uphold the importance of individuals in shaping their communities and beliefs and Michael Billig's theory of banal nationalism operationalizes the way in which nationalism spreads via mundane activities.³¹⁴ However, neither theory seeks to explain *why* individuals choose to identify themselves with a given group, and the impact that individual identity choices has on shaping larger notions of social identity.

³¹³ Price, Jacob M. "Who Cared about the Colonies? The Impact of the Thirteen Colonies on British Society and Politics, circa 1714-1775," in *Strangers Within the Realm: Cultural Margins of the First British Empire* edited by Bernard Bailyn and Philip D. Morgan. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1991, 419.

³¹⁴ Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso, 1991 and Michael Billig. *Banal Nationalism*. London: Sage Publications, 1995.

Psychological insights that describe how identity is constructed and the reciprocal relationship between self and social help answer the question of ‘why.’ Jessica Fish and Jacob Priest’s theory that an individual’s collaborative identity is composed of separate and complete sub-identities³¹⁵ offers insight into how national identity might manifest within a person, but remain in the periphery. Urie Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems model explains the relationship between external influences and identity development and offers a method by which external events might awake latent sub-identities and bring them closer to the core of an individual,³¹⁶ as happened in colonial America. Exploring the relationship between individual identity formation and the emergence of national identity allows the very earliest beginnings of national identity to be observed.

The foundations of American national identity were present prior to the Revolutionary period. Puritan values, enlightenment thinking, and an obligation to resist oppression were integral parts of colonists’ identities. These ideas manifest in publications in the half-century before the war, illustrating that the concepts were strong enough among the population to warrant discussion. Though an actualized American national identity was not yet present in the mid-eighteenth century, its roots were already working themselves deep into colonial consciousness. The process by which this foundation blossomed into a collective sense of national identity has not been adequately addressed in present nationalist scholarship.

³¹⁵ Fish, Jessica N. and Jacob B. Priest. “Identity Structures: Holons, Boundaries, Hierarchies, and the Formation of the Collaborative Identity.” *The Family Journal: Counseling and Therapy for Couples and Families* 19, No. 2 (2011): 182-190.

³¹⁶ Guhn, Martin and Hillel Goelman. “Bioecological Theory, Early Child Development and the Validation of the Population-Level Early Development Instrument.” *Social Indicators Research* 103, No. 2 (September 2011): 193-217. DOI: 10.1007/s11205-011-9842-5 (accessed March 20, 2013). See also John Santrock. “Chapter 1 – Introduction,” in *Life Span Development*, Thirteenth Edition – International Student Edition, New York: McGraw-Hill International Edition, 2011.

A critical developmental step exists between individual identity and a collective national identity. The process of moving from individual to collective must be understood in order to better understand the manifestations of national identity within a population. Examining mid-eighteenth century external influences on colonial America yields a better understanding of how shifting cultural realities such as population growth, immigration, and economic expansion impacted identity development at the individual level. Individual interpretations of identity spread throughout the colony, and provided a latent sense of commonality among the group.

Though differences existed between the colonists and the English, these differences were not seen by the colonists as large enough to warrant independence or any break from the British Empire. In fact, many colonists were content, and even proud, to be a part of Great Britain. However, as Henry Tajfel's work demonstrated, otherness is a powerful concept, and in some cases, distinctions between groups are all that is necessary for discrimination to occur. Growing English nationalism (in response to unique circumstances and events) altered English treatment and perceptions of the colonists.

In the mid-eighteenth century, colonists began to perceive an increase in English discrimination based on the assumption that colonists were not equal members of the British Empire, but 'less-than' the English. This realization made colonial commonality, fostered by their unique experiences as American colonists, increasingly more important, particularly when perceptions of discrimination became too great to ignore. The realization that the English saw the colonists as 'others' rather than equal members of the British Empire acted as a catalyst for independence, igniting latent national identity within individuals. Individuals were able to share their thoughts to colonists near and far

via established pathways of communication such as published literature, and national identity at a collective level began to coalesce.

Conclusion

Contemporary analysis and primary source research produced an explanation of how American national identity formed, what American national identity meant, and how it was expressed in its infancy, prior to achieving prominence at the societal level. Understanding the very beginnings of how national identity is constructed starts with explaining how people interpret and comprehend national identity as part of their individual identities. National identity is reinforced on a personal level through bonds of language and common history. These attachments can remain on the periphery of a collaborative identity until such time that external influences cause them to gain prominence within an individual's understanding of how they participate in the world around them.

As more and more individuals associate an increased importance with the common bonds that link them to others, national identity at the societal level emerges. This process awakens national consciousness and provides justification for actions that might otherwise have not been undertaken, such as declaring independence. By the start of the Revolutionary War, colonists understood that the way they had identified and imagined their participation in the world no longer served their interests. Colonists were not content to be just a part of Great Britain. A new identity was essential to achieve meaning and purpose, and it compelled colonists to form a new nation that better represented the cultural values and mores forged from their experiences as Americans.

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