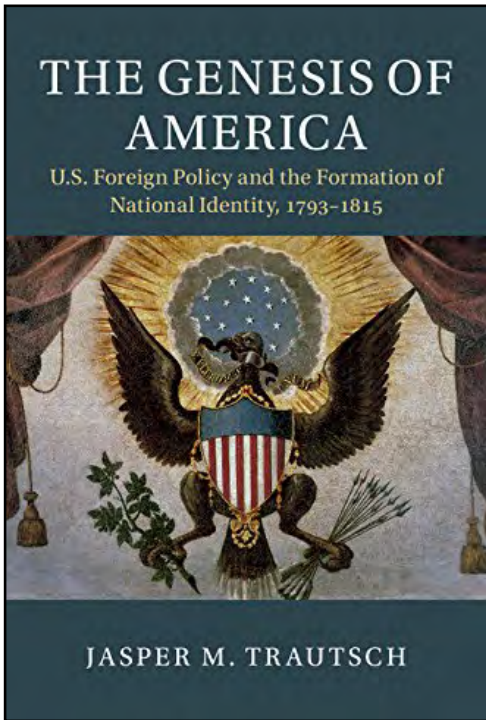




The Genesis of America:

US Foreign Policy
and the Formation of
National Identity,
1793–1815

Edited by Jasper M. Trautsch

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018. 314 pp., Paper. £42.07 (Hardback).
ISBN: 9781108428248

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Jasper Trautsch's well-researched piece sheds light on a vital period of America's political history and foreign policymaking. Since James Rosenau conceptualised linkage politics in political science in 1969, the interactions between foreign policy and domestic politics became more of an issue. In response to this, Trautsch examines the nexus between domestic and foreign policy and its role in the formation of American national consciousness.

Trautsch focuses on the origins and development of American nationalism in the aftermath of establishment of the Republic. Unlike many scholars that cover the same period, his argument is based on the idea that the national identity was "a process of external demarcation" (p. 9). The general approach that takes place in the Trautsch' piece is parallel to that of Marie-Jeanne Rossignol's *The Nationalist Ferment: The Origins of U.S. Foreign Policy, 1789-1812* (Ohio University Press, 2013). Accordingly, Americans were lacking a national identity in 1789 and had one by 1815. The division between British leaning Federalists and French leaning Republicans played a vital role in this period where both parties supported U.S.' involvement in the emerging conflict among Britain and France that started in 1793.

The piece stands out with its argument that Americans required to 'disentangle' themselves from Great Britain and France with whom it used to form dependent linkages. Thereby, the U.S. policy makers utilised its external rivals to form a consciousness on American nationalism. The author benefited two main sources besides the existing literature: 1) Newspapers of the time to extract the main discussions that led to formation of American nationalism while showing the public reactions against foreign policy developments. 2) Archival documents to analyse the motivations of the decision-makers particularly against the European prominent actors, Great Britain and France.

Trautsch' accomplishment with this mature research is worth to underline. His strong knowledge on existing literature and his capability to give out the strategies of foreign policy for domestic political ends are important. While the apparent success of the study lies in his in-depth research of the newspapers of the early Republic, it contributes to literature with solid conclusions.

Comprising six main chapters, Trautsch's book com-

prehensively analyses the critical period in American political history immediately following the War for Independence from Great Britain (1793 – 1815), which resulted in the establishment of United States of America. Given the dominance of the U.S. since the 20th century, Trautsch's book provides invaluable insights on the origins of U.S. foreign policy. The significance of the manuscript increases given that the stance of the U.S. and its interference were determining factors in both World Wars, the Cold War (initiated immediately after World War II with the U.S. containment policy), and the transition from a bipolar to unipolar world order following the collapse of Soviet Union in 1991.

First, Trautsch reflects on the radicalisation of the French Revolution and the impact of the war between Britain and France on American domestic politics. The Revolution influenced the polarisation of American politics and the creation of its national identity—two issues on which the Federalists and Republicans held conflicting views. The conservative Federalists viewed the French Revolution as a negative influence arising from an egalitarian democracy. Accordingly, the Federalists prioritised the 'moderate American Revolution', which they viewed positively and sought to distinguish from 'radical French Revolution' to avoid a similar occurrence in the U.S. The Republicans, on the other hand, regarded the French Revolution as a positive influence that also inspired their search for social equality at home. The Jay Treaty, the Treaty of Greenville, and Pinckney's Treaty all had a positive impact on Anglo-American relations which did not help the Republicans' Anglophobic nationalism. Victory for the Federalists was temporary, however, because once the commercial stipulations of the Jay Treaty ended in 1803, the Republicans subsequently utilised Franco-ophile arguments to promote democratic egalitarianism in the U.S.

Trautsch also examines the conflicting views of the Federalists and Republicans and their implications for American identity and Foreign Policy. For the most part, the Federalists agreed that the Franco-American alliance of 1778 should end, and were inclined to establish close relations with Britain to diminish and thwart revolutionary leanings. The Republicans, on the other hand, sought to align with France in its struggles with other European actors, and to block any possible Anglo-American cooperation which, in their view, would impede political and social changes in American society. It is noteworthy that U.S. foreign policy-making processes in the late 18th century were

not centralised and Presidential weight not as influential as it is today. As a result, the ambiguous policies emanating from the President, the Republican-dominated Congress and the Federalist-led administration of the time, led to conflicting foreign policies being followed simultaneously. For example, in 1794, while the Republican House of Representatives attempted to use trade barriers to undermine relations with Britain, the Federalist-dominated Administration and Senate despatched John Jay to London to resolve the conflict with its former colonizer and consolidate their policies on American identity and rapprochement. The tensions resulted in an undeclared war between France and U.S. at the start of John Adams' presidency.

The author analyses the triggering of the Quasi-War (1798-1800) and mobilization of a Francophobic American identity as well. He analyses the Federalists' attempts to halt the disputes between America and France, and Paris' interference in trading activities with Britain. Reportedly, French diplomats sought and obtained funding that allowed the Federalists to cut relations with France and engage in a military struggle. The Federalists also used the international situation to mobilize the American public against France. They used France's role in bringing down the Dutch Republic (1794 -1798) and forcing Spain to cede the eastern two-thirds of Hispaniola to France as examples of France's initial steps toward making the U.S. a satellite state.

Trautsch pays particular attention to the difficult position of Republicans during the Quasi-War. He argues that the Federalists were eager to engage in war with France to unite the divided country under a Francophobic American identity, but the armed struggle made it harder for Republicans to view France in a positive light. Remarkably, Republicans changed their stance and no longer correlated egalitarian democracy with the French Revolution, opting instead to link the concept solely with American Revolution. The Federalists, on the other hand, consolidated their anti-France stance and developed a new definition of American identity, in which only U.S.-born Caucasians (mostly Anglo-Saxons) counted as American nationals, thereby excluding the Irish, French and other immigrant communities. However, Adams' peace agreement with the French and the removal of France as a political threat bolstered suspicions of the Federalist version of American identity and subsequently led to their loss of political power.

The Republicans assumed power in the year following the commencement of peace process in 1800. This led to a deterioration in Anglo-U.S. relations. In this context, Trautsch explores the influence of the Republican peace theory on the deteriorating relations with Britain. The theory contends that, although the U.S. and France are inherently peaceful republics, monarchies were regarded as aggressive and a threat to American security. This mindset, underpinned by the aforementioned theory, impacted American foreign policymaking and led to the 1812 war between U.S. and Britain. However, contrary to tenets of the peace theory, the war in 1812 was triggered by the U.S. and not the British monarchy.

The author also provides an in-depth analysis of political perceptions after the occupation of American territory by the British armed forces, which threatened America directly. As a result of the invasion, besides their animosity towards France, Anglophile Federalists also became enemies of Britain. During this time of enmity towards Britain, Federalists and Republicans reached consensus on particular U.S. foreign policy issues. As a consequence of the war with Great Britain, The U.S. became defined by its otherness from Europe. Subsequently, James Monroe's bold policy statement, the 1823 Monroe Doctrine, steered the New World away from Europe and its affairs. This book is welcome addition to the literature on national identity formation and US foreign policy from a historical perspective drawing upon meticulous research.