



# AMERICAN FOUNDING VALUES STRATEGICALLY COMMUNICATED IN HISTORICAL SPEECHES

## A SOCINT ANALYSIS OF THE AMERICAN CULTURAL MATRIX

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### ABSTRACT

This study employs a sociocultural intelligence (SOCINT) framework to examine how the United States' cultural identity is encoded and transmitted through its foundational texts and major political speeches. Using the Declaration of Independence (1776) as the cultural and symbolic origin, the research explores how language functions simultaneously as identity and power, shaping national consciousness through discourse. Drawing on anthropological and intercultural theories — Geertz's interpretivism, Hall's Iceberg Model, Hofstede's six cultural dimensions, Schwartz's value theory, and Trompenaars' relational framework — the study integrates qualitative discourse analysis with quantitative cultural data to construct a "Cultural Matrix" of the United States. Findings reveal that liberty, equality, resilience, and moral exceptionalism remain enduring anchors of American identity. SOCINT demonstrates its analytical capacity to uncover the moral structures embedded in discourse while minimizing interpretive bias.

**Keywords:** *cultural analysis, sociocultural intelligence, USA cultural matrix.*

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## Introduction

Using the analytical framework of sociocultural intelligence (SOCINT), this study aims to identify a cultural matrix of the United States, understood here as a structured mapping of enduring identity values and discourse patterns. Beginning with the United States Declaration of Independence (1776) and drawing on reference speeches from 1775 to 1987, the research examines how language can simultaneously function as an expression of identity and as a tool of persuasion, shaping national consciousness through discourse.

Drawing on anthropological and intercultural perspectives – from Geertz's interpretivism and Hall's Iceberg Cultural Model to Hofstede's cultural dimensions, Schwartz's Theory of Values, and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's relational framework – the analysis combines qualitative and quantitative research methods in order to construct this U.S. cultural matrix. The results indicate that freedom, equality, resilience, and moral exceptionalism emerge as enduring beacons of U.S. identity, guiding national discourse across centuries. In this context, moral exceptionalism is treated analytically as a recurring narrative feature through which national legitimacy and civic aspiration are framed. These identity values function not only as intrinsic ideals, but also as outward-facing symbols of political legitimacy and civic aspiration. The Founders' political writings and institutional designs were not merely intended to stabilize a new state internally; they also carried an implicit transnational message directed at the Old-World order they had departed and at wider audiences living under systems perceived as arbitrary, despotic, or oppressive. Through the universal language of liberty and rights, early American political discourse positioned the republic as more than a national project – it became a normative proposition about what social and political life ought to be.

This outward communicative dimension has had enduring consequences for how the United States is perceived globally, shaping both admiration and contestation. Because these values serve as highly symbolic, externally projected reference points, they may also be weaponized in influence operations, including disinformation campaigns that seek to exploit, appropriate, or delegitimize them. Against this background, the paper confirms the role of SOCINT analysis in evidence-based analytical assessment, which is indispensable for a holistic understanding of the operational environment in the intelligence field.

## Context

Culture may be described as the foundation of human behavior and as the architecture of meaning through which societies perceive, justify, and reproduce their worldview. Within the intelligence-related disciplines, *Sociocultural Intelligence* (SOCINT) refers to the capacity to interpret the social and cultural systems that shape collective decision-making. SOCINT goes beyond the observation of facts by decoding context, including symbolic and cognitive depth that gives behavior its meaning. Culture influences perception, behavior, and decision-making (Cedru & Şaguna, 2025). From this perspective, cultural understanding strengthens analytical reasoning, enhances diplomatic effectiveness, and increases awareness of the complexity inherent in the intelligence domain.

According to Geertz (1973), the study of culture should not be understood as a global attempt to uncover a single, totalizing structure, but rather as a process of interpreting meaningful symbols that provide coherence to human experience. Culture functions as a layered system of meanings, in which understanding emerges from the analysis of these symbols and the relationships between them – true "vehicles" of perception, emotion, and thought (Geertz, 1973, p. 408). Building on this interpretive approach, the present study conceptualizes language as both identity and power: a mechanism through which societies legitimize moral and political values.

The United States of America represents a distinctive cultural case, as its foundational discourse operates as a moral grammar that continuously defines freedom, equality, justice, and the pursuit of happiness. Through a SOCINT lens, these ideals form a coherent cultural matrix that guides national development from independence to global leadership. From this perspective, cultural understanding strengthens analytical reasoning, enhances diplomatic effectiveness, and increases awareness of the complexity inherent in the intelligence domain. This study addresses how SOCINT can be applied to U.S. foundational discourse (1775–1987) to construct a cultural matrix of enduring identity values and translate abstract cultural meaning into analytically usable, potentially quantifiable parameters.

## Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research is to identify and analyze from the SOCINT perspective the cultural values that define American sociocultural identity, as reflected in the Declaration of Independence and key public speeches.

A secondary objective is to illustrate how SOCINT, as an analytical discipline, can mitigate stereotypes and deepen cultural awareness.

## Research Questions

1. What are the core values of American society that the Declaration of Independence of 1776 and the American political discourse from 1775 to 1987 uphold according to sociocultural and intercultural models?

2. How can SOCINT, as an analytical approach, mitigate prejudice and deepen understanding of national identity within political and cultural discourse?

## Research hypothesis

**B**ased on the theoretical and intercultural foundations of SOCINT, this study assumes that mainstream American political discourse encodes a stable set of sociocultural values – freedom, equality, achievement, pragmatism, action, and optimism – that correspond to the measurable intercultural dimensions identified by Hofstede (1980, 1984; 2010), Schwartz (2012), or Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2011).

Through an in-depth analysis of the Declaration of Independence (1776) and influential American political speeches from the period 1775–1987, the research seeks to demonstrate that these values form a coherent moral architecture, consistently reflected across centuries in national discourse. In extenso, this hypothesis argues that SOCINT can serve as a reliable interpretive framework for translating abstract cultural expressions into quantifiable parameters, ideally enhancing the predictability of specific behaviors or developments in sociocultural analysis.

## 1. Theoretical Framework

SOCINT integrates anthropological theory, intercultural communication, and intelligence analysis to interpret meaning in context. According to Cedru and Şaguna (2025), SOCINT consolidates social, cultural, and psychological variables to explain collective behavior and cognitive patterns.

Despite differences in approaches and perspectives, theories addressing human needs and values share a common objective: identifying the fundamental principles that shape human behavior, decision-making, and motivation (Tay & Diener, 2011). In this regard,

the literature highlights several major theoretical frameworks, including Maslow's Hierarchy of needs (1943), Rokeach's typology of values (1973), Hall's Iceberg Model of Culture (1976), Schwartz's Universal Values Model (2012), Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory (1980, 1984), and the behavioral components of culture proposed by Edward T. Hall and Mildred Hall (1987). Together, these contributions provide a robust conceptual foundation for contemporary sociocultural analysis and for understanding intercultural differences in a global context.

### 1.1 Anthropological Perspectives

**A**nthropology provides the intellectual foundation for SOCINT, framing culture as a structured system of meanings. Durkheim (1912) and Malinowski (1944) conceptualized culture as the moral mechanism sustaining cohesion. Boas (1920) argued that cultures must be understood contextually, opposing universalist generalizations. Lévi-Strauss (1963) revealed the structural logic of binary oppositions – *freedom versus constraint, equality versus hierarchy* – while Geertz (1973) reframed culture as a 'web of meanings' accessed via thick description. Later theories (Appadurai, 1996; Hannerz, 1992) viewed culture as dynamic, adaptive, and interlinked with globalization. Together, these paradigms affirm that culture is a living web of significance, not a static artifact – precisely what SOCINT seeks to decode, as an applied analytical method.

### 1.2 Hall's Analogy for Approaching Intercultural Understanding – The Cultural Iceberg Model

**E**dward T. Hall (1976) distinguishes between visible cultural forms (symbols, rituals, language) and hidden layers (beliefs, values, assumptions). From a SOCINT perspective, the model is particularly relevant because it highlights the need to analyze the 'submerged' 85% of culture in order to interpret visible actions.

From a sociocultural analytical perspective, the Iceberg Cultural Model is essential because it enables the transition from a purely descriptive level to an interpretive and predictive one. In intelligence contexts, understanding



the invisible dimension of culture is equivalent to gaining access to the motivational mechanisms that underpin decisions, perceptions, and behaviors.

## 1.3 Intercultural Models and Quantitative Parameters

### 1.3.1 Hofstede's Six Cultural Dimensions: Concept and Illustrative Comparison (Romania vs. the United States)

Hofstede (1980, 1984; 2010; 1996) identified six dimensions of national culture: Power Distance, Individualism, Masculinity, Uncertainty Avoidance, Long-Term Orientation, and Indulgence.

**Power Distance (PDI)** measures acceptance of inequality. Low PDI societies prefer participatory decision-making and accountable authority. The U.S. score (40) indicates egalitarian expectations (flat structures, direct address, rule-of-law legitimacy). Romania's score (90) indicates a hierarchical society in which accessibility to those in positions of authority and status is limited.

**Individualism vs. Collectivism** evaluates the balance between personal autonomy and responsibility versus collective obligation. The United States' score (91), among the highest globally, reflects self-reliance, individual privacy, and moral commitment – features frequently reinforced in political rhetoric emphasizing civic duty and personal freedom. Romania's lower score (30) suggests a collectivist orientation centered on group belonging, family ties, and community cohesion, where loyalty and interpersonal relationships are prioritized over individual autonomy.

**Masculinity vs. Femininity (MAS)** – more recently, referred to as Motivation toward Achievement and Success – captures the extent to which a society emphasizes achievement, competitiveness, and goal orientation versus care, cooperation, and quality of life. The United States' MAS score (62) indicates a performance-driven and assertive environment, reflected in public appeals to courage, pragmatism, productivity, and national success. Romania's score (42) suggests a more balanced society, where success and competition coexist with concern for quality of life and cooperation. Romania is therefore not strongly competitive, but rather more relational and empathetic.

**Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI)** assesses tolerance for ambiguity and innovation. A moderately low score for the United States (46) aligns with pragmatic experimentation, entrepreneurial risk-taking, and flexible problem-solving – features reflected in discourse that values innovation and negotiation. Romania's very high score (90) indicates a low tolerance for ambiguity, with a preference for clear rules, stability, security, and planning. Change is often approached cautiously, and institutions are more likely to develop bureaucratic characteristics.

**Long-term Orientation vs. Short-Term Orientation (LTO)** balances tradition with short-term pragmatism. The United States' low score (26) suggests a preference for immediate results, action-oriented planning, and present-focused mobilization, reflected in rhetoric that emphasizes rapid response and direct action. Romania's mid-range score (52) indicates a more balanced approach between tradition and pragmatism: past values are respected, while adaptation to change remains possible when the benefits are clearly perceived.

**Indulgence vs. restraint (IVR)** measures the extent to which a society encourages enjoyment, optimism, and emotional expressiveness. The United States' IVR score (68) aligns with hope-oriented, affect-rich rhetoric, the public celebration of individual happiness, and a strong belief in progress. Romania's lower score indicates a more restrained society, where social control and self-discipline are more pronounced. There is a tendency to prioritize duty, work, and responsibility over relaxation and pleasure.

#### Conclusion: Hofstede-Based Cultural Matrix (Romania vs. the United States)

Taken together, the six dimensions outline two distinct cultural profiles that can be operationalized as a SOCINT-oriented comparative matrix. The United States emerges as a predominantly low power-distance and strongly individualistic culture, oriented toward achievement, flexibility under uncertainty, short-term mobilization, and comparatively high indulgence. This configuration supports a discourse environment in which autonomy, direct legitimacy, pragmatic action, and optimism are consistently reinforced. By contrast, Romania's profile reflects high power distance, collectivist orientation, stronger uncertainty avoidance, and a more restrained sociocultural climate, alongside a more balanced long-term outlook. These patterns indicate a cultural emphasis on stability, hierarchy, relational cohesion, and the regulation of social behavior through clear norms and expectations. Within SOCINT analysis, such a matrix offers a structured way to interpret how cultural values shape decision-making, institutional behavior, and the

communication of legitimacy, providing an analytically usable foundation for contextual and predictive assessment.

### 1.3.2 Schwartz's Theory of Basic Values and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's relational framework

In *An Overview of the Schwartz Theory of Basic Values* (2012), Schwartz introduced ten basic motivational value types, whose relative importance varies depending on personal experience, culture, and other individual factors. Schwartz (2012) argues that each value reflects a distinct motivational goal derived from fundamental human needs: self-direction, universalism, benevolence, conformity/tradition, security, power, achievement, hedonism, and stimulation.

These values are integrated into a circular structure organized along two bipolar dimensions: *Self-Transcendence* versus *Self-Enhancement*, and *Openness to Change* versus *Conservation*.

Self-transcendence values (such as universalism and benevolence) prioritize the welfare of others, whereas self-enhancement values (such as power, achievement, and hedonism) emphasize personal success. The dimension of *Openness to change* includes values oriented toward innovation and autonomy (self-direction, stimulation, and hedonism), while *Conservation* encompasses values related to security, conformity, and tradition (Schwartz, 2012; Alaminos-Fernández, Alaminos Fernández, & Alaminos, 2023).

In the study *Measuring Mainstream US Cultural Values* (Burns & Littrell, 2013), statistical comparisons show that, when responses are analyzed by category (the total U.S. sample and state-level samples) against Schwartz's ten values, a coherent dominant culture emerges in the United States. The authors describe it as a “White, generally middle-class” culture, characterized by high motivational priorities for self-direction, universalism, and benevolence, and the lowest priorities for power and achievement. The study also identified significant differences between urban and rural residents, while gender-based differences were minimal (Burns & Littrell, 2013). As dominant for the United States, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2011) emphasize universalism, rule-based morality, and achievement (status through merit), reinforcing America's moral meritocracy. These models converge with Hofstede's profile, providing quantifiable parameters for quantitative analysis and SOCINT interpretation.

## 2. Research Methodology

Methodologically, the study employs a mixed-methods case study design that integrates qualitative discourse analysis with a quantitative component grounded in established intercultural models. The research corpus includes foundational political texts and representative speeches, analyzed qualitatively to interpret their symbolic and rhetorical layers and to identify the values and narrative patterns that shape cultural identity. In parallel, the quantitative strand relies on measurable indicators drawn from validated intercultural frameworks, such as Hofstede's cultural dimensions. This methodological integration enables the alignment of observable sociocultural patterns with underlying discursive and value-based structures, providing a coherent account of how culture is articulated, reproduced, and operationalized through language and social behavior.

### Research Corpus

The research corpus was selected to capture the continuity and evolution of U.S. foundational values as strategically communicated through national discourse across key historical moments (1775–1987). It includes the *Declaration of Independence* (1776) and a set of politically and culturally influential speeches that function as enduring reference points in American public memory and institutional identity: Patrick Henry's *Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death*, (1775), George Washington's *First Inaugural Address* (1789), Frederick Douglass's *What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?* (1852), Abraham Lincoln's *Gettysburg Address* (1863), William Jennings Bryan's *Cross of Gold* (1896), Franklin D. Roosevelt's *First Inaugural Address* (1933), John F. Kennedy's *Inaugural Address* (1961), Martin Luther King Jr.'s *I Have a Dream* (1963), and Ronald Reagan's *Address at the Brandenburg Gate* (1987). These texts span contexts of state formation, constitutional legitimacy, civil conflict, economic transformation, social reform, democratic leadership, and geopolitical confrontation, enabling the identification of recurring identity values and persuasive structures through a SOCINT lens.

Analytical credibility and validity were supported through the consistent application of coding categories across the corpus, theoretical cross-checking with sociocultural and intercultural frameworks, and grounding conclusions in patterns that recur across multiple texts and time periods rather than in isolated

examples. The analytical procedure followed three core steps: textual analysis to identify recurrent moral and rhetorical patterns; narrative analysis to map foundational values; and SOCINT correlation to link discursive findings with intercultural dimensions, ensuring that the resulting cultural matrix reflects a historically sustained discursive profile.

### 3. Case Study: United States Cultural Matrix

#### 3.1 Fundamental Values in the Declaration of Independence

The Declaration of Independence (1776) constitutes the moral charter of the American nation. Its key values—freedom, equality, divine providence, justice, and collective moral agency—form the conceptual core of the American cultural matrix. Thomas Jefferson’s rhetoric positions freedom both within Enlightenment rationalism and within theological legitimacy.<sup>2</sup>

The performative structure “We hold these truths...” constructs collective conviction as a moral duty. Linguistically, its declarative verbs – *declare, dissolve, entitle, assume* – transform abstract principles into political action, reflecting Hofstede’s (1980, 1984) high Individualism and Schwartz’s Autonomy. Equality likewise embodies Trompenaars’ Universalism, affirming that moral rules are universally applicable. The text functions as *cultural DNA*: a socio-moral code that later speeches continually reactivate.

#### 3.2 Continuity of Values in American Discourse

Subsequent political oratory reinterprets Jefferson’s values for new generations:

Patrick Henry (1775): “Give me liberty, or give me death!” (Avalon) - the sacred valorization of autonomy and sacrifice, echoing high Individualism and Masculinity.<sup>3</sup>

In 1775, through his speech “Give Me Liberty, or Give Me Death!”, Patrick Henry transforms liberty into an

absolute and unconditional moral principle, asserting that an honorable death is preferable to life without freedom. The speech seeks to break the political hesitation of Virginia’s elite and to redefine loyalty – not to the Crown, but to the founding principle of liberty. From a SOCINT perspective, Henry anchors emerging American values in a culture of self-determination, consistent with high individualism, and in an ethic of courage and action characteristic of an achievement-oriented, competitive, and pragmatic profile (high masculinity). He frames independence not merely as a political option, but as an identity imperative, while any form of compromise is equated with “slavery.” The speech’s dominant themes – patriotism, sacrifice, and liberty versus submission – construct a mobilizing narrative in which defending freedom becomes a collective duty and the sacrifice of life is presented as a legitimate price for protecting the foundational values of the American political community.

■ George Washington (1789): “The preservation of the sacred fire of liberty... is finally staked on the experiment entrusted to the hands of the American people.” (Avalon). Liberty fused with collective stewardship (low Power Distance, Universalism).

In his First Inaugural Address (1789), George Washington reaffirms the moral foundation of the new state, emphasizing that the preservation of the sacred fire of liberty represents a historical experiment entrusted to the American people. This metaphor – liberty as a precious fire that must be protected – expresses a republican vision in which political sovereignty becomes a collective responsibility rather than the privilege of a governing elite. Washington thus places freedom at the core of American political identity, linking it to civic stewardship and the duty to sustain it for future generations. From a SOCINT perspective, this rhetorical positioning reflects values associated with low power distance (institutional egalitarianism) and orientation toward the common good (universalism), suggesting that governmental legitimacy derives from the active and responsible participation of all members of the political community.

■ Frederick Douglass (1852) “This Fourth of July is yours, not mine... You may rejoice, I must mourn.” (TAH). Equality becomes a moral indictment, pressing universalism to include the excluded (Egalitarianism).

<sup>2</sup> We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness (Declaration of Independence, 1776).

<sup>3</sup> In 1775, American independence remained uncertain. Although Massachusetts had already witnessed escalating tensions and resistance, no coordinated revolutionary movement had yet consolidated across the colonies. Virginia – among the largest, wealthiest, and most populous territories—was therefore perceived as decisive to the cause. In this context, Patrick Henry (1736–1799) deploys forceful rhetoric to persuade influential and affluent Virginia landowners, who had much to lose, to move beyond diplomatic opposition to British aggression and embrace the next step: open military preparation, an act widely understood as tantamount to treason.



Frederick Douglass (c. 1818–1895), born into slavery and largely self-educated, escaped to the North, where he quickly became a remarkable orator and an uncompromising critic of slavery. In his speech delivered on July 5, 1852, to the Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society in Rochester, New York, Douglass explains why Independence Day cannot be a cause for celebration for former or current slaves. For them, July 4 represents a moment of pain and indignation, as it constantly recalls the contradiction between the ideals of freedom and equality expressed in the *Declaration of Independence* and the lived reality of oppression (Douglass, 1852). This appeal to the Declaration's unfulfilled promises remained a central element of the African American civil rights struggle through the 1960s.

Douglass's 1852 speech stands as one of the most powerful rhetorical challenges to American national identity from within. From a SOCINT perspective, this act of dissociation reveals that the United States' founding cultural values – freedom, equality, and human dignity – were unevenly distributed and conditioned by social and racial status. Douglass also exposes the selective nature of the national narrative: the very symbols that provide the majority with unity and pride function, for the enslaved population, as instruments of humiliation and alienation. Through morally charged irony and disciplined outrage, he compels his audience to confront the cultural incoherence between the ideals proclaimed in the Declaration of Independence and their denial in practice, transforming communication itself into a form of identity-based resistance and a claim to fundamental rights.

■ Abraham Lincoln (1863): “Government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth.” (LOC) - a linguistic manifestation of egalitarian Power Distance (40) and civic morality (low PDI; Autonomy + Egalitarianism).

In Gettysburg Address (1863), Abraham Lincoln reaffirms the democratic essence of the American nation through his emblematic formulation: “Government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth.” The speech reframes Civil War sacrifice as an act of national renewal, arguing that the bloodshed on the battlefield must secure the continuity of a form of governance legitimized by citizens and oriented toward their common good. From a SOCINT perspective, Lincoln reactivates foundational American values such as equality, civic responsibility, and collective solidarity, associated with low power distance and an inclusive

democratic orientation (Universalism—Schwartz). The address, therefore, reinforces the sacred character of political participation and transforms the memory of fallen soldiers into a cultural mechanism to strengthen national identity and mobilize the political community around the promise of a durable and equitable democracy.

■ William J. Bryan (1896): “You shall not press down upon the brow of labor this crown of thorns, you shall not crucify mankind upon a cross of gold”. (History Matters). Moralized economy; justice and solidarity (Egalitarianism, Universalism).

In his Cross of Gold speech (1896), William Jennings Bryan challenges the economic dominance of America's financial elites, denouncing the gold standard as an instrument of oppression against workers and farmers. Through intensely moralizing rhetoric, Bryan transforms a technical monetary debate into an ethical and identity-driven confrontation, arguing that the American people *should not be crucified on a cross of gold* for the benefit of a privileged minority. From a SOCINT perspective, the speech reveals a structural tension between values of self-assertion and economic power (associated with elites) and values of equality, social justice, and the dignity of labor (attributed to rural communities and popular classes). Bryan legitimizes their political claims by re-anchoring them on an American ethos of solidarity and democratic participation, proposing a cultural redefinition of the nation in favor of those economically marginalized. In this way, *Cross of Gold* becomes not only an economic address but also a symbolic moment of collective identity reconfiguration, in which politics is narrated as a struggle to protect the ‘true’ values of the people.

■ Franklin D. Roosevelt (1933): “The only thing we have to fear is fear itself... This Nation asks for action, and action now” (Miller Center). Resilience and immediacy (MAS; low LTO; moderate UAI).

In his First Inaugural Address (1933), Franklin D. Roosevelt assumes national leadership at a moment of profound economic crisis, shifting the public mood from collective anxiety to mobilizing confidence through his famous assertion that *the only thing we have to fear is fear itself*. He frames the Great Depression as an unprecedented challenge to democracy and promises a program of decisive – indeed innovative – action to achieve economic recovery and restore public hope. From a SOCINT perspective, the speech activates cultural values characteristic of American society – resilience,

optimism, pragmatism, and solidarity – functioning as a discursive ritual that reconfigures national identity around collective responsibility. Roosevelt reframes governance as a shared public mission, reinforcing a model of cultural leadership in which political legitimacy derives from the state's capacity to protect social dignity and restore the community's confidence in its own resources and ideals. In this way, the address not only diagnoses the crisis but realigns the American narrative around the foundational values of action and civic courage.

■ John F. Kennedy (1961): “Ask not what your country can do for you – ask what you can do for your country... Let us never negotiate out of fear, but let us never fear to negotiate” (JFK Library), a call to civic responsibility within a collectivist moral frame, duty, achievement, pragmatic diplomacy (MAS; UAI).

In his Inaugural Address (1961), John F. Kennedy advances a renewed vision of civic responsibility, encapsulated in his famous appeal: “Ask not what your country can do for you – ask what you can do for your country”. Against the backdrop of Cold War tensions at their peak, Kennedy calls for active commitment to the defense of freedom and emphasizes the necessity of shared engagement for progress, while also affirming, “Let us never negotiate out of fear, but let us never fear to negotiate”. From a SOCINT perspective, the speech reactivates core American cultural values such as action, courage, active civic participation, and responsibility toward the common good – elements associated with constructive individualism, achievement orientation, and a universalist vision of freedom. Kennedy thus reframes patriotism as a collective moral obligation, in which citizens become active participants in shaping national destiny, while diplomacy is grounded in a balance between firmness and openness. In this sense, the address functions as a civic ritual of democratic identity renewal, mobilizing the political community around a shared project of peace and global progress.

■ Martin Luther King Jr. (1963): “I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed. Now is the time to make justice a reality for all of God's children”. (NARA) – the prophetic revival of equality and faith in moral progress. (Egalitarianism; low LTO).

In his landmark speech “I Have a Dream,” delivered in 1963 on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial during the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom,

Martin Luther King Jr. demands the concrete fulfillment of the principles embedded in the Declaration of Independence, declaring in prophetic terms that “Now is the time to make justice a reality for all of God's children”. The speech reactivates the United States' founding egalitarian vision and mobilizes national conscience around the ideal of a society in which citizens are judged not by skin color, but by character. From a SOCINT perspective, King places equality, fraternity, and faith in moral progress at the center of American identity, reflecting values associated with egalitarianism (Schwartz) and a temporal orientation favoring immediate action over delay (low LTO). By articulating a moral narrative with universal resonance, King transforms the address into an act of symbolic national redefinition, in which liberty becomes inclusive, and democracy is framed as an ongoing project of collective completion.

■ Ronald Reagan (1987): “Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall! and Freedom is not the sole prerogative of a chosen few” (Reagan Library) – a global articulation of liberty as universal mission and moral courage (Universalism; MAS; IVR).

In his 1987 speech at the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin, President Ronald Reagan delivered one of the era's most emblematic political demands: “Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!” Through this direct challenge to the Soviet Union, Reagan transforms the Berlin Wall into a global symbol of oppression and the gatekeeping of freedom. He further asserts that “Freedom is not the sole prerogative of a chosen few”, extending the American concept of liberty beyond national borders and presenting it as a fundamental right of all people. From a SOCINT perspective, the speech reaffirms central values of American culture – moral exceptionalism, civic courage, and the universal mission of freedom – elements associated with universalism, action orientation and performativity (high masculinity), and social optimism (high indulgence). Reagan thus deploys the rhetoric of liberty as an instrument of identity construction and geopolitical influence, framing the dismantling of the Wall as a moral affirmation of a global democratic order.

Each of these speeches performs the same symbolic function: reactivating foundational values through discourse. SOCINT identifies recurring linguistic features – imperatives, binaries, and moral appeals – that align with cultural dimensions such as autonomy, equality, and achievement.

## 4. Results

The American Cultural Matrix: Correlations between Core Values, Cultural Dimensions, and Representative Discourse

**Table 1**  
The American Cultural Matrix

Model and SOCINT Dimension (score)	Values and directions	Reference text (quotes)	SOCINT Interpretation
Hofstede – Individualism vs. Collectivism (91)	Freedom and Moral Virtue	- Henry (1775): “Give me liberty or give me death!” - Jefferson (1776): “We consider these truths to be self-evident...”	Independence as a moral virtue and a political identity.
Hofstede – Power Distance (40)	Equality and responsible authority, participatory governance	- Lincoln (1863): “The government of the people, by the people, for the people...” - Douglass (1852): “This 4 July is yours, not mine.”	Egalitarian norms; moral standards; moral pressure for inclusion, accountable leadership
Hofstede – Masculinity vs. femininity (62)	Achievement, courage, resilience, pragmatism	- Roosevelt (1933): “The only thing to fear is fear itself”. - Reagan (1987): “Tear down this wall!”	Performance and courage as legitimacy. Civic action and heroism as moral imperatives.
Hofstede – Uncertainty Avoidance (46)	Pragmatic flexibility	- JFK (1961): “Never negotiate out of fear... never be afraid to negotiate”.	Rational optimism, adaptive diplomacy, and problem solving.
Hofstede – Long-term vs. short-term orientation (26)	Call for immediate action Moral Emergency	King (1963): “Now is the time to make justice a reality for all God's children”. - FDR. (1933): “The Nation asks for action, and action now”.	Immediate decisions with immediate expectations; Changing the status quo, moving towards progress
Hofstede – Indulgence vs. Restraint (68)	Optimism, the search for happiness, openness, emotional expressiveness, orientation towards success and material achievement	- King (1963): “I have a dream - Jefferson (1776): “certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness”.	Orientation towards goals, hope as a collective feeling, serenity, belief in good and moral values

Schwartz’ Autonomy	Free, independent thought and Creativity Safety Self-mastery	- Jefferson (1776): “unalienable Rights; We consider these truths to be self-evident”.	Moral reasoning and self-determination.
Schwartz’ Egalitarianism	Justice and collective responsibility	- Lincoln (1863): “by the people (...) for the people” - Douglass (1852): “...not mine”.	Social justice and civic equality as ambitions and ongoing projects.
Trompenaars’ Universality	Rule-based moral order	- JFK (1961): “We shall pay any price, bear any burden...”. - Reagan (1987): “Freedom is not the sole prerogative of a chosen few”.	Principles before persons; belief in universal justice, active virtue, civil debt.
Trompenaars’ – Success/ Achievement	Merit and performance	- Reagan (1987): “Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!” - Jefferson (1776): “liberty, and the pursuit of happiness”.	The link between action and success as moral evidence. Achievement as moral legitimacy.

## 5. Discussions and Reflection

### 5.1 Answers to the Research Questions

Q1. What are the core values of American society that the Declaration of Independence of 1776 and the American political discourse from 1775 to 1987 uphold, according to sociocultural and intercultural models?

The political rhetoric analyzed (American political discourse from 1775 to 1987) operates like a ritual of identity. Each speech reactivates the moral framework of the *Declaration of Independence*, the founding values, and the ideals that formed the basis of American society, with the hope that these are, and will remain, obvious truths. Liberty, equality, justice, and providence emerge as cultural constants – via assertive syntax and universal claims (“self-evident truths”). This cultural DNA, socio-moral code, stimulates the constant desire to live in a better world, activating the awareness of universal human needs. It reveals the matrix of a society built on the hope of a better world, on the desire to believe in the better, to evolve, and to respect fundamental values such as freedom of thought and expression, human dignity,

morality, equality, justice, and providence.

The SOCINT approach reveals that these values are highlighted linguistically and rhetorically by imperatives (“tear down this wall”), antitheses (“ask not...”), and moral binaries (liberty/death; justice/injustice), appeals to divine or universal law, or anaphora (“I have a dream”), antithesis (“ask not...”). At the same time, it proves that these rhetorical techniques have no artistic, ornamental purpose. They are actually carrying cultural knowledge that consistently corresponds to the SOCINT analytical parameters, revealing a society that values freedom, autonomy, action, progress, and optimism (dimensions with low PDI/high Hofstede's IDV scores, Schwartz's Autonomy/Egalitarianism, and Trompenaars' Universalism/Achievement).

Q2. How can SOCINT, as an analytical approach, mitigate prejudice and deepen understanding of national identity within political and cultural discourse?

The SOCINT analytical framework limits interpretative biases by linking the analysis of cultural values and symbols to the dimensions of sociocultural models to identify a cultural matrix. Specifically, limiting cultural prejudices can be achieved by increasing cultural awareness and sensitivity. The discipline SOCINT responds to these training needs within a scientific

framework, applied and adapted to social changes and developments. Where purely hermeneutic readings risk subjectivity, SOCINT's linkage to quantified dimensions introduces replicable standards – an analytic check against stereotype or anachronism (Cedru & Şaguna, 2025). It situates language within measurable frameworks (Hofstede, Schwartz, Trompenaars), linking national discourse to underlying cognitive structures. Thus, intelligence analysis transcends opinion and becomes a method of moral cognition.

The American SOCINT Matrix is an integrated analytical construct that maps the relationships among linguistic expression, cultural values, and measurable sociocultural dimensions within the United States. It translates qualitative discourse – found in founding texts and landmark speeches – into quantifiable cultural indicators derived from Hofstede (2010), Schwartz (2012), and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2011).

Functionally, the Matrix is both a diagnostic and interpretive model:

As a diagnostic tool, it identifies how recurring lexical and rhetorical patterns (e.g., “freedom,” “equality,” “dream,” “duty”) encode enduring national values such as liberty, justice, resilience, and moral exceptionalism (Geertz, 1973; Hall, 1976; Cedru & Şaguna, 2025).

As an interpretive framework, it links these linguistic manifestations to empirical cultural metrics – individualism, egalitarianism, achievement orientation, and optimism – thus bridging symbolic anthropology and quantitative intercultural models (Durkheim, 1912; Hofstede, 1980, 1984; Schwartz, 2012; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 2011).

## 5.2 Main Findings

**T**his analysis stems from immersion in works and debates that remain central to contemporary American political identity, public discourse, and institutional self-understanding. It aims to provide a comprehensive explanation of how American values – particularly constitutionalism, civic liberty, institutional balance, and democratic legitimacy – continue to function as both a foundation of national cohesion and a contested symbolic resource in times of crisis. Examined in historical context, these values do not appear as abstract slogans, but rather as durable political commitments that generations have invoked, defended, and reinterpreted for almost 250 years.

A key finding of this study is that surface-level readings of events may obscure the deeper cultural and normative structures that continue to shape American

cohesion and strategic self-understanding. Such interpretations risk treating the most visible moments of tension as the totality of political reality, the tip of the iceberg as the whole of it, thereby misleading audiences about how governance actually functions beneath the surface. In fact, much of the country's democratic resilience is expressed through the continuity of its foundational values and institutional legitimacy, which persist beneath polarized rhetoric and episodic crises. The evidence examined in this research indicates that American public discourse remains anchored in enduring ideological reference points – such as freedom, constitutional legitimacy, and civic equality – that continue to serve as stabilizing cultural foundations even amid heightened political friction. Therefore, arguments or conflict shouldn't be interpreted as dysfunction, but as an ongoing contest over values that remain central to American identity. Democratic conflict, although sometimes intense and rhetorically harsh, can simultaneously indicate democratic vitality. The beauty of this democratic society lies precisely in its openness to confronting its own problems. Even in moments of severe polarization, public disagreement often reflects a persistent, sensitive concern for protecting fundamental values, especially those tied to constitutional order, civic rights, and political accountability. In this sense, it is not only a symptom of political pressure but can also be interpreted as evidence of resilience and continued normative investment in the American project. Yet beneath this rhetorical turbulence, there remains a sustained public awareness of the importance of the constitutional principles enshrined by the Founders.

## Research Limitations

**N**evertheless, the study has several limitations. First, the research relies on a limited corpus and is primarily grounded in public discourse and widely accessible political narratives. As a result, it cannot capture the full complexity of closed decision-making processes, classified assessments, or behind-the-scenes diplomatic communication. Second, the analysis focuses on rhetorical and ideological dynamics rather than on quantitative measures of narrative spread, platform behavior, or algorithmic amplification. Third, interpretations of cultural values risk overgeneralization, especially when the object of study is a highly diverse and internally plural society such as the United States. Even if this study does not claim to address every implication of the theories examined, it seeks to provide a great deal more grist for reflection by highlighting both the salience of the works analyzed and the limitations

of their application in modern contexts. In this sense, it is essential to recognize that foundational texts and political concepts were formulated under extraordinary circumstances. They bring a wide variety of perspectives to bear on the relationship between governance, legitimacy, and national purpose, both inside and outside the United States. The continuing relevance of these works is evident in the way Americans still invoke their values, demonstrating ongoing civic attachment to democratic ideals.

## Future Research

**F**uture research should therefore expand the corpus, integrate systematic SOCINT datasets, and compare discourse patterns across platforms and audiences. Further studies could also examine how American values are perceived in different cultural regions, identifying the interpretive filters through which external publics assess US legitimacy, stability, and credibility. In addition, deeper interdisciplinary work combining political theory, strategic communication, computational analysis, and cultural intelligence could provide more precise tools for identifying disinformation mechanisms and evaluating resilience indicators in democratic societies.

## 5.3 Implications for SOCINT

**T**he implications of these findings for SOCINT are particularly significant, especially in the assessment of external perceptions of the United States, the analysis of contemporary strategic discourse, and the design of counter-disinformation strategies. To begin with, sociocultural intelligence is essential in combating disinformation because it explains why certain narratives persuade specific audiences, how cultural identity, historical memory, beliefs, and group dynamics shape reactions, and why simple fact-checking often fails. Applied to the United States, sociocultural intelligence helps interpret cultural meaning and clarify why disinformation succeeds by exploiting polarization, distrust, identity politics, moral symbolism, and social belonging. A key challenge for analysis is that disinformation frequently presents itself as “authentic patriotism,” borrowing national symbols and constitutional language. This is strategically relevant: adversarial narratives rarely attempt to replace American values; instead, they seek to weaponize them by turning ideals such as freedom and constitutional integrity into instruments of hostility, suspicion, and delegitimization.

From a SOCINT perspective, this has direct analytical value for assessing external perceptions of the USA. Foreign audiences often interpret American public conflict through the lens of their own cultural expectations about order, unity, and authority. In some contexts, democratic disagreement appears as instability rather than openness. Therefore, understanding the cultural matrix matters because it helps explain how and why certain interpretations emerge and attain prominence. The cultural matrix is not merely background – it shapes what external observers find credible, shocking, or persuasive. Moreover, SOCINT analysis benefits from attention to the interplay between ideas and the machinations of power, the relevance of social mores and conventions, and the impact of technique and invention. Digital technique – algorithms, amplification patterns, platform incentives – interacts with older human dynamics such as status competition, group loyalty, and moral panic. The result is that narratives become not only communicative artifacts but also tools for strategic mobilization.

This combination of sociocultural insight and SOCINT monitoring is vital for counter-disinformation work. When narratives spread through moral outrage or identity-based messaging, an effective response cannot rely solely on correcting facts. Instead, it requires anticipatory analysis, culturally tuned messaging, and careful use of credible messengers who can communicate without escalating symbolic conflict. In diplomacy, the same logic applies: losing awareness of one's counterpart and being influenced by negative press reflects a failure of professional discipline, lack of sociocultural intelligence, and weak awareness – meaning poor emotional control, biased judgment, and inability to manage the symbolic and strategic impact of communication. Ultimately, SOCINT must evolve beyond “what is trending” toward strategic interpretation: not only tracking discourse, but understanding why it persuades, what cultural assumptions it activates, and what institutional vulnerabilities it seeks to exploit.

## 5.4 Practical Reflection

**S**ociocultural intelligence offers practical analytical value by enabling a deeper interpretation of American contemporary strategy. It helps identify the enduring cultural foundations that continue to shape U.S. identity and strategic outlook – values for which generations have struggled, sacrificed, and fought over nearly two and a half centuries. This approach strengthens the analyst's capacity to distinguish between episodic and long-term normative continuity, while also supporting more accurate judgments about

the significance of contemporary debates within their historical context. As a practical illustration of this argument, the interpretive framework developed in this chapter is reinforced by the U.S. National Security Strategy released in December 2025, which frames the contemporary security environment as a contested arena defined by strategic rivalry, vulnerabilities, and the imperative to protect democratic legitimacy and national cohesion (The White House, 2025). From a sociocultural intelligence perspective, such a strategy functions not only as an operational policy document but as a formal reaffirmation of the American cultural matrix, communicating internally and externally that national security remains inseparable from the defense of foundational democratic principles and institutional resilience (European Parliamentary Research Service, 2025; The White House, 2025).

In SOCINT terms, such strategic texts also provide measurable discourse indicators – keywords, moral frames, identity markers, and legitimacy claims – that can be monitored to assess internal and external perceptions, detect manipulative reframing, and counter disinformation efforts that aim to erode trust and democratic credibility. In this broader perspective, contemporary strategic discourse does not negate the endurance of American values; rather, it confirms that those values remain central enough to fight over.

## Conclusions

The American identity emerges as a coherent sociocultural matrix grounded in liberty, equality, resilience, and moral exceptionalism. The Declaration of Independence established these principles as enduring cultural codes, continually renewed through national rhetoric and political oratory. Through its integrative lens, Sociocultural Intelligence (SOCINT) reveals how language operates as both a symbolic and strategic medium – performing identity, legitimizing values, and shaping collective decision-making.

By transforming cultural symbols into analytical structures, SOCINT turns interpretation into actionable intelligence, linking discourse to behavior and values to strategy. The American SOCINT Matrix demonstrates that cultural understanding is not only interpretive but operational – an instrument of foresight and stability in complex environments.

This study examined how American values are expressed, contested, and operationalized within public and political discourse from 1775 to 1987, and how these transcendent values shape domestic debates and external

perceptions. The research has shown that American political culture is deeply anchored in constitutional ideals, civic rights, and institutional legitimacy, despite the heightened visibility of polarization and rhetorical conflict. Indeed, one of the central conclusions is that intense disagreement should not automatically be interpreted as democratic failure; in many cases, it reflects democratic openness and a continued sensitivity to protecting fundamental principles. Considering that disinformation thrives in environments where identity-based divisions, distrust, and symbolic politics can be exploited, cultural intelligence is indispensable, as it helps explain why narratives resonate beyond their factual content, linking persuasion to historical memory, group belonging, moral urgency, and cultural interpretation. It provides a robust framework for monitoring strategic discourse, evaluating narrative influence, and supporting counter-disinformation efforts.

In conclusion, this work reveals the American Sociocultural matrix and argues that American values remain resilient precisely because they allow dissatisfaction and disillusionment to manifest through social criticism and political change, while being backed by institutions, civic traditions, and historical consciousness. The enduring relevance of these values is confirmed not only by their invocation in public discourse but by the continued struggle to define and defend them – an ongoing democratic process that remains central to the American experience. In a century defined by cultural polarization, disinformation, and cognitive warfare, SOCINT provides policymakers, diplomats, and intelligence professionals with a structured method of cultural reasoning. It transforms understanding into strategic awareness – bridging analysis, empathy, and informed action in defense of democratic values.

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