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American “Foreign Policy” in Film

## Abstract

This work takes David Campbell’s concept of “foreign policy,” as applied to American elite identifiers, and expands its application to sub-elite identifiers as well. As with Campbell’s analysis of American identity, the common context is international conflicts where the United States is a participant. The discourse of the elite is represented by State of the Union Addresses covering the times of the conflicts, while the sub-elite discourse is represented by major war films about those same conflicts. While Campbell’s argument implies that there should be a common resultant identification of the elite and sub-elite identifiers, this is not the case. Across time, conflicts, and administrations, the elite identifications stress hierarchy and order, as was also concluded by Campbell. Across time, conflicts, and productions, the sub-elite identifications stress proximity of experience and right action. The identifications of the two groups, while both laying claim to the identity of “America”, are in conflict with each other. Through the analyses and conclusion, this work challenges the dominant post-structuralist concept of the “inside”/“outside” of a political-identificational space (only relevant for the elite) and suggests in its place the more fluid and subjective “here”/“there” of a moral-identificational space (which encompasses both the elite and sub-elite identifications). The implication of this work is that through the democratization of media, there is also a democratization of identification, which has and is likely to continue to widen the divide between policy-makers/legitimacy-takers (the elite) and policy-takers/legitimacy-makers (the sub-elite). The result of the analyses, conclusions, and implications is that there is no single “America” upon which to place an identificational claim, that the various different “America” identifications are conflictual and exclusionary to other “America” identifications, and that thus there is no “America”.