

A nation symbol

Government



A symbol that we occasionally see, are familiar with and slightly know about. To say of its importance would be cliché. How it became popular, eventually universal and now essential, most won't know. Though indeed its significance has gradually risen through history.

That symbol is the flag, specifically the flag of a nation. A nation of course being a body of people with a government head, with focus here on the United States of America (USA or US), and nationalism being the system promoting that nation's interest.

But what is it about these two variables – flag and nationalism – that make them relatable?

More so, how closely associated is the national flag with a nation's nationalism? And to be specific, is the US flag most closely associated with its nation's nationalism?

Nationalism, is the ideology that one specific nation is better than the rest. The most obvious example, that first comes to mind, is what happened to Germany in the 40s and the extent to which that ideology went to. Thus because of that result, today, nationalism is usually linked with extremism, militarism, fascism etc.

And is therefore seen as a bad thing that is to be, or tries to be, be avoided; due to its destructible effects when given to its full potential. It is a hard thing to suppress it though; as it is also about one's identification with that nation and their support for whatever it does – even if it means affecting other nations wellbeing.

When thinking, of the other variable, the word flag: the most prominent variant of that symbol that usually comes to mind first is, the flag of a nation and or in other words one's national flag. The most famous ones being of course the British, French and American flags.

A national flag represents a nation e. g. historically in use of military (its origins being in naval warfare), more so recently in sports (e. g. the Olympics and World Cup) and importantly in the use of identification – as in identifying the nation or a citizen from that nation. The methodology for this hypothesis is a qualitative study, and its case-type – a 'case study'.

The reason for this is due to finding out whether the flag of a nation (keyword being 'a') most correlates with that nation's nationalism – the nation here, being the US. Therefore, the study and research of one specific country would be appropriate enough to fill the criteria. Research on the specific nation of how closely its citizens identifies with their national flag, will need to be looked at.

If the citizens of that country aren't or are nationalistic then the research material is able to be established, thus answering the hypothesis. The reason for this case-type is because with a specific nation one can make a more direct conclusion on the hypothesis and analyse how effective and true it is.

As questioned if the US flag is most closely associated with its nation's nationalism, one must first look at the symbolic meaning of it. Historically, between 1777 and 1960 the US government changed the design and arrangement of the flag, 28 times, to make it possible for each new state to be represented.

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As known, the US national flag has metaphorical meaning: such as the 50 stars – which represent the 50 states; and the 13 red and white stripes – which represent the 13 original states that created/founded the US. Each star though is more than just a state, it's as if each person (individually) has a place within that star/state and furthermore the flag/nation as a whole, with the star/state being a component of it and thus the person's connection to the rest of the nation.

More so the colours of the flag are symbolic as they symbolize valour – red, purity – white, and justice – blue. Today uses of the American flag can be seen everywhere from government and public-service buildings, to restaurants and retail, etc, showing the extent to which Americans are willing to go to display their flag, but more so its importance to them.

As well the flag is often seen in the US military, representing the honour and sacrifice of those who served under it: a notable example of this being in funerals, where the coffin of a soldier is often draped with the US flag on it. Therefore, with these symbolic meanings and examples which express the importance of the American flag and what it means to its citizens.

More so the flag is needed, as it creates a bond and reminds one of their citizenship to the nation, thus producing ideas and feelings that its citizens should have (though how strong those ideas and feelings can get is to be of concern). As it is a flag's function, when people see it they are more likely to think and behave in a more nationalistic way.

Because of this the flag thus reinforces the connection between a nation and its citizens. Secondly as mentioned, the American flag is a famous icon and is <https://assignbuster.com/a-nation-symbol/>

known for being related to values such as liberty and freedom, both major components in the American national identity. Besides other meanings connected with the flag including unity, loyalty and sacrifice to one's nation.

This is due to American history which is about and embodies these values in their struggle for freedom – the American Revolutionary War; defence of freedom – the American Civil War; and more recently that the US military is seen as guaranteeing force for this freedom wherever it goes (for example Afghanistan).

This thus produces a sense of commitment to the flag and the nation's values it represents. Thirdly on a more wide and in-depth level, Americans perceive themselves, as superior over the rest of the world. In relation to the American flag; this can be seen in one's contact with it which increases one's attachment to the nation (as said the flag embodies the nation), a basis for nationalist superiority.

In simplistic terms, the flag serves as a reminder of this perception and produces a sense of nationalism in Americans. Thus, the flag promotes the view that the US is superior to other nations and should be a world power.