The American Dream as the Cultural Expression of North American Identity

The concept of the American dream was first used in 1931 by James Truslow Adams in The Epic of America. Later, Martin Luther King Jr. spoke about a dream of freedom, equality, and justice and Peter Freese about a society in which people had control over their lives. This paper analyses the American dream, as a cultural narrative that founded and shaped the American mentality. Moreover, it starts from the hypothesis that the American dream is the cultural expression of North American identity and develops the multiple avatars that constitute this collective American identity from a Cultural Studies perspective. There is no unique American dream, but different immigrant stories, developed in time, and space, revealing the cultural complexity of the United States, being regarded as meaning in movement, always in search for its originality.