



Who Are We?: The Challenges to America's National Identity

By Samuel P. Huntington

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In his seminal work *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, Samuel Huntington argued provocatively and presciently that with the end of the cold war, “civilizations” were replacing ideologies as the new fault lines in international politics.

Now in his controversial new work, *Who Are We?*, Huntington focuses on an identity crisis closer to home as he examines the impact other civilizations and their values are having on our own country.

America was founded by British settlers who brought with them a distinct culture, says Huntington, including the English language, Protestant values, individualism, religious commitment, and respect for law. The waves of immigrants that later came to the United States gradually accepted these values and assimilated into America's Anglo-Protestant culture. More recently, however, our national identity has been eroded by the problems of assimilating massive numbers of primarily Hispanic immigrants and challenged by issues such as bilingualism, multiculturalism, the devaluation of citizenship, and the “denationalization” of American elites.

September 11 brought a revival of American patriotism and a renewal of American identity, but already there are signs that this revival is fading. Huntington argues the need for us to reassert the core values that make us Americans. Timely and thought-provoking, *Who Are We?* is an important book that is certain to shape our national conversation about who we are.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

In his seminal *The Clash of Civilizations*, Huntington anticipated the United States' battle with militant Islam. Here he turns his laser on America-or, rather, America as he thinks it ought to be. Despite its clinical tone, this book is an aggressive polemic whose central argument-that America, at heart, has been and in many ways should remain a Christian, Anglocentric country-wouldn't be out of place on many a conservative radio station. The author seeks at length to prove that the American Creed, which he defines as a Protestant-influenced ideology modeled on the British system, was the founders' original intent and remains America's best course. He then turns to many of the usual subjects-the imperiled primacy of English, the dangers of immigration and multiculturalism-to make his case. He argues that a growing divide between the patriotic working class and "denationalized elites" will lead to internal fissures. Where those findings can lead is another question. For instance, he predicts a movement of white nativism. This movement while not "advocating white racist supremacy" would still believe that the "mixing of races and hence culture is the road to national degeneration." The book is also marred by a number of self-contradictions; for example, Huntington draws heavily on the founders to make a nationalist case even as he acknowledges that notions of Americanism (as opposed to allegiances to individual states) became popular only after the Civil War. Exhaustively researched and occasionally inspired, this polemic remains more often filled with colorless and ineffectual writing that will provide evidence for the converted but do little to persuade the doubters. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

From [Booklist](#)

Perhaps best known for *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (1996), the us-against-them polemic that inspired many international relations dissertations, prolific political scientist Huntington aims his latest book at domestic affairs. America, he argues, is in the midst of an identity crisis. Immigration, multiculturalism, secularism, and the end of the cold war have led to a watering down of what it means to be American, and at an especially crucial time, when Americanism is under attack worldwide. The solution? Americans need to get in touch with their English-speaking Anglo-Protestant roots, defined in what he calls the "American Creed" and demonstrated through 300 years of cultural salience. September 11 marks, for the author, an opportunity for Americans to come together in reinvigorated nationalism and reinvented American culture. Armed with statistics and historical analyses, Huntington performs significant contortions to successfully avoid seeming racist or intolerant. He remains, however, highly polemic, with sharp jabs at multiculturalism and bilingualism sure to alienate many readers. *Brendan Driscoll*
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Review

"Samuel P. Huntington has written a book that poses some of the critical questions facing our nation...[and] tackles these questions with passionate intensity."

-- Tamar Jacoby, *The Washington Post*

"Huntington has written a compelling book on the virtues that make America what it is."

-- William McGurn, *The Wall Street Journal*

Users Review

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Daryl Church:

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