

One America?: Political Leadership, National Identity, and the Dilemmas of Diversity

Stanley A. Renshon

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With enormous numbers of new immigrants, America is becoming dramatically more diverse racially, culturally, and ethnically. As a result, the United States faces questions that have profound consequences for its future. What does it mean to be an American? Is a new American identity developing? At the same time, the coherence of national culture has been challenged by the expansion of?and attacks on?individual and group rights, and by political leaders who prefer to finesse rather than engage cultural controversies. Many of the ideals on which the country was founded are under intense, often angry, debate, and the historic tension between individuality and community has never been felt so keenly.

In *One America?*, distinguished contributors discuss the role of national leadership, especially the presidency, at a time when a fragmented and dysfunctional national identity has become a real possibility. Holding political views that encompass the thoughtful left and right of center, they address fundamental issues such as affirmative action, presidential engagement in questions of race, dual citizenship, interracial relationships, and English as the basic language.

This book is the first examination of the role of national political leaders in maintaining or dissipating America's national identity. It will be vital reading for political scientists, historians, policymakers, students, and anyone concerned with the future of American politics and society.



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