



True Faith and Allegiance: Immigration and American Civic Nationalism

Noah Pickus

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True Faith and Allegiance is a provocative account of nationalism and the politics of turning immigrants into citizens and Americans. Noah Pickus offers an alternative to the wild swings between emotionally fraught positions on immigration and citizenship of the past two decades. Drawing on political theory, history, and law, he argues for a renewed civic nationalism that melds principles and peoplehood.

This tradition of civic nationalism held sway at America's founding and in the Progressive Era. Pickus explores how, from James Madison to Teddy Roosevelt, its proponents sought to combine reason and reverence and to balance inclusion and exclusion. He takes us through controversies over citizenship for blacks and the rights of aliens at the nation's founding, examines the interplay of ideas and institutions in the Americanization movement in the 1910s and 1920s, and charts how both left and right promoted a policy of neglect toward immigrants and toward citizenship in the second half of the twentieth century.

True Faith and Allegiance shows that contemporary debates over a range of immigration and citizenship policies cannot be resolved by appeals to fixed notions of creed or culture, but require a supple civic nationalism that bridges the gap between immigrants' needs and American principles and practices. It is critical reading for scholars, policy makers, and all who care about immigrants and about America.

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