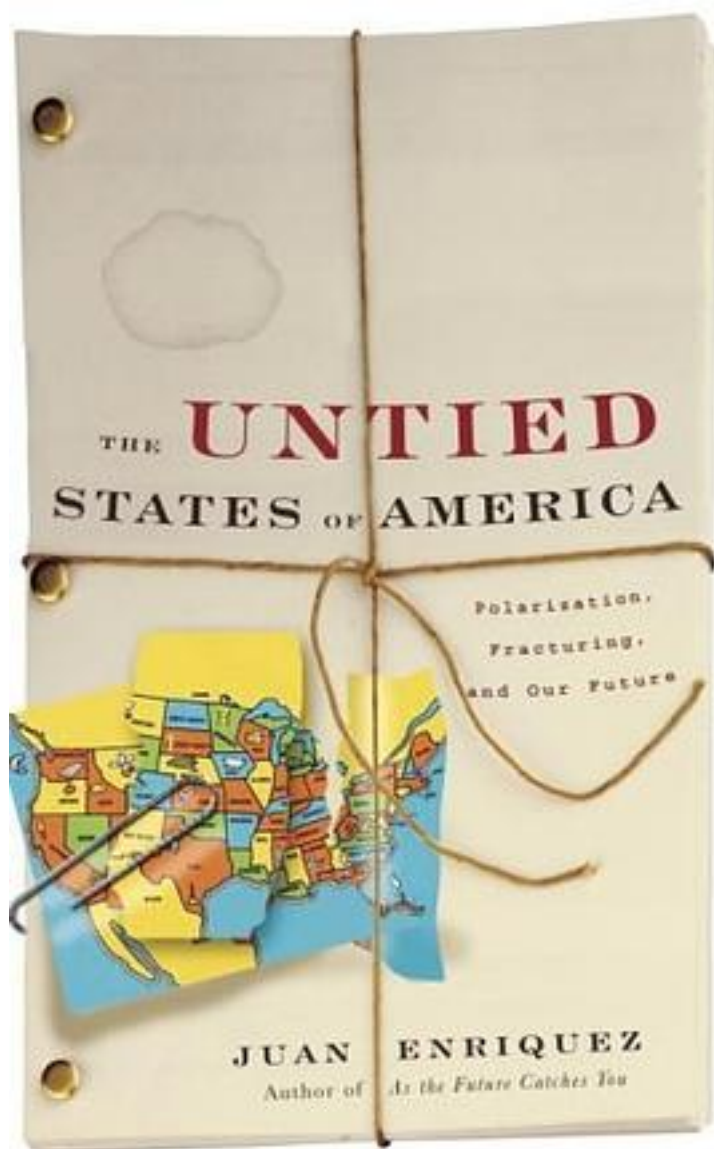


The Untied States of America



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Can a country be like a marriage that has run out of cash and steam, resulting in the inevitable frank discussions about just who is pulling his or her own weight? Eventually, even those who love each other sometimes conclude they cannot stay together.

Juan Enriquez’ s unique insights into the financial, political, and cultural issues we face will provoke shock and surprise and lead you to ask the question no one has yet put on the table: Could “becoming untied” ever happen here? It’ s a question made especially relevant when we are faced with such unpromising facts as:

• At no other time have we had the unwelcome convergence in which the three key sectors of business, government, and consumers are so tapped out due to debt that each lacks the financial wherewithal to come to the rescue of the others.

• Most assets are not being used for productive purposes but for speculation, resulting in people lacking incentives to create real wealth, focusing instead on buying, selling, and flipping real estate.

• As religion starts to mix with politics, we have a culture that allows us to fall behind what were previously third world nations, because we are now treating science the way we did sex in the 1950s, banning or burying evolution theories and research into promising lifesaving areas such as stem-cell research.

When the enemy was outside—for example, the threat perceived when the Soviet Union launched Sputnik and people feared America would lose the brain race—we rallied. Now the enemy is within, and we polarize. Defaming the legitimacy of people on the “other” side becomes the currency of the day, where people in blue states are seen as godless liberal elitists and those in red states are seen as, well, rednecks.

Citizenship, Enriquez says, is like buying into a national brand. If the brand promises one thing and delivers another, could it then have the same fate as a tired product on a supermarket shelf, eroding, losing support, even disappearing? Countries, even one as powerful and successful as America, live on fault lines. When a fault line splits, it’ s near impossible to put things back together again. What America will look like in fifty years depends on what we do today to act on the issues raised in *The Untied States of America*.

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