



Is There a Culture War?: A Dialogue on Values and American Public Life (Pew Forum Dialogue Series on Religion and Public Life)

James Davison Hunter, Alan Wolfe

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In the wake of a bitter presidential campaign and in the face of numerous divisive policy questions, many Americans wonder if their country has split in two. People are passionately choosing sides on contentious issues such as the invasion of Iraq, gay marriage, stem-cell research, and the right to die, and the battle over abortion continues unabated. Social and political splits fascinate the media: we hear of Red States against Blue States and the "Religious Right" against "Secular America"; Fox News and Air America; NASCAR dads and soccer moms. Is America, in fact, divided so clearly? Does a moderate middle still exist? Is the national fabric fraying? To the extent that these divisions exist, are they simply the healthy and unavoidable products of a diverse, democratic nation? In *Is There a Culture War?* two of America's leading authorities on political culture lead a provocative and thoughtful investigation of this question and its ramifications. James Davison Hunter and Alan Wolfe debate these questions with verve, insight, and a deep knowledge rooted in years of study and reflection. Long before most scholars and pundits addressed the issue, Hunter and Wolfe were identifying the fault lines in the debate. Hunter's 1992 book *Culture Wars* put the term in popular circulation, arguing that America was in the midst of a "culture war" over "our most fundamental and cherished assumptions about how to order our lives." Six years later, in *One Nation After All*, Wolfe challenged the idea of a culture war and argued that a majority of Americans were seeking a middle way, a blend of the traditional and the modern. For the first time, these two distinguished scholars join in dialogue to clarify their differences, update their arguments, and search for the truth about America's cultural condition.

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