



# **Enemies of the American Way: Identity and Presidential Foreign Policymaking**

David Bell Mislan

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Why do presidents, when facing the same circumstances, focus on different threats to national security? *Enemies of the American Way* attempts to answer this question by investigating the role of identity in presidential decision making.

The book explains why presidents disagree on what constitute a threat to the US security via the study of three US presidencies in the 19th century (Cleveland, Harrison and McKinley). These case studies help draw a theory of threat identification to understand how and why specific actions are taken, including the decision to wage war. Using a constructivist approach, the book develops a rule-based identity theory to posit that American identity defines potential national security threats, i.e., how a policymaker defines Americans also defines the threats to Americans.

*Enemies of the American Way* offers a new means of understanding a key period when America rose to prominence in international relations while proposing a template that can be used to explain American foreign policy today. It will appeal to students of international relations and foreign policy.



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