

# Barack Obama: A Change for the U.S. Collective Imaginary

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**B**arack Obama's political career is impressive, and I say this as a young, Latin American, woman of African descent who is also a political scientist and historian by training. Yet, I believe his personal life to be even more fascinating as a cursory examination of it reveals just how much one can accomplish with strong determination. The United States became a nation by virtue of international migration. That said, if one takes into account this immigration, particularly an important segment of it that currently comprises part of the U.S.'s citizenry, i.e., African Americans, then one would have to acknowledge that Obama embodies the actual diversity of American culture—and this despite what many believe regarding his immediate cultural descent.

Identity is taken on both individually and collectively, and in that sense Obama has remained strongly committed to his origins, roots that are shared by a significant part of U.S. society.

Much has been said during this political race but it all points to changes whose first impact would be to shatter a U.S.'s collective imaginary that had defined—among other things—a specific profile for a President and Commander-in-Chief. Obama's unprecedented political campaign has brought about the discussion of certain obvious realities that in some sense were either not so evident or even continue to be subtle.

One need not fear change. As humans, we embody change; we are part of and permeated by it at every instant. The new social contract proposed by Senator Obama's CHANGE campaign has been pushing the limits of the U.S. imaginary (which is not too different from that of many other countries) so that the discourse of plurality in the U.S. starts becoming a reality. It will take time, of course, but the process must entail much more decided action.