



# Right-Wing Critics of American Conservatism

By George Hawley

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## Right-Wing Critics of American Conservatism By George Hawley

The American conservative movement as we know it faces an existential crisis as the nation's demographics shift away from its core constituents—older white middle-class Christians. It is the American conservatism that we *don't* know that concerns George Hawley in this book. During its ascendancy, leaders within the conservative establishment have energetically policed the movement's boundaries, effectively keeping alternative versions of conservatism out of view. Returning those neglected voices to the story, *Right-Wing Critics of American Conservatism* offers a more complete, complex, and nuanced account of the American right in all its dissonance in history and in our day.

The right-wing intellectual movements considered here differ both from mainstream conservatism and from each other when it comes to fundamental premises, such as the value of equality, the proper role of the state, the importance of free markets, the place of religion in politics, and attitudes toward race. In clear and dispassionate terms, Hawley examines localists who exhibit equal skepticism toward big business and big government, paleoconservatives who look to the distant past for guidance and wish to turn back the clock, radical libertarians who are not content to be junior partners in the conservative movement, and various strains of white supremacy and the radical right in America.

In the Internet age, where access is no longer determined by the select few, the independent right has far greater opportunities to make its many voices heard. This timely work puts those voices into context and historical perspective, clarifying our understanding of the American right—past, present, and future.

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

"In this highly readable and well-researched study, George Hawley persuasively shows that the various disaffected right-wing movements in America, which have often been unfairly banished to the political margins by the mainstream conservative movement, deserve far more serious attention than they have received to date."—**Grant Havers**, author of *Leo Strauss and Anglo-American Democracy: A Conservative Critique* "For anyone trying to understand how modern conservatives have worked to create an intellectually legitimate, politically successful movement, this book is essential reading."—**David Farber**, author of *The Rise and Fall of Modern American Conservatism: A Short History* "An intellectual page-turner, a safari through an exotic world of amusing, strange, compelling, and creepy right-wing political thought. Hawley is an outstanding guide: knowledgeable, eloquent, fair, curious, and a great listener."—**Bryan Caplan**, author of *The Myth of the Rational Voter: Why Democracies Choose Bad Policies* "A solid introduction to the conservative sects, both large and small, that seek to influence our politics today. His book is especially useful for students interested in the variety of conservative groups that have existed since the 1950's."

—**Jeremy D. Bailey**, author of *The Contested Removal Power, 1789–2010*

"The best guide to the bizarre reality of the 2016 GOP."—**Reason Magazine**

"The book's tone is exquisitely non-judgmental, but it is clear that Hawley's interest is not just academic. . . . In chapters on localists, libertarians, paleoconservatives, and white nationalists, he provides thorough summaries of major figures and arguments."—**The American Conservative**

"In this highly readable and well-researched study, George Hawley persuasively shows that the various disaffected right-wing movements in America, which have often been unfairly banished to the political margins by the mainstream conservative movement, deserve far more serious attention than they have received to date."—**Grant Havers**, author of *Leo Strauss and Anglo-American Democracy: A Conservative Critique*

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#### About the Author

George Hawley is assistant professor of political science at the University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa. He is the author of *White Voters in 21st Century America* and *Voting and Migration Patterns in the U.S.*

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