figures such as George Will. Chapter 5 is the first of two chapters that take up libertarian questions. This chapter focuses on moderate libertarians in a Nozickian mold, while Chapter 6 focuses on radical libertarians; Hawley suggests that while these groups may have much in common in the abstract, in practice, the distinctions between them are quite sharp. Chapter 7 focuses on paleocons, including Samuel Francis’s work on the white middle class as a counterrevolutionary movement vehicle. Hawley treats a number of European rightists in the book’s eighth chapter, including Carl Schmitt and Oswald Spengler. Perhaps most interesting is his treatment of the Russian critic of liberalism Alexander Dugin, who argues for a “new political theory” that “must be forceful in its repudiation of liberalism” (p. 236).

Chapter 9 focuses on the American racial extremists. The most important part of this chapter comes where Hawley notes that in contrast to websites with relatively unsublimated racist context, there are other sites where “an unsuspecting reader may not even initially realize that they are reading racist material, as such sites may emphasize ordinary conservative concerns such as undocumented immigration, crime, and affirmative action” (p. 259).

In the conclusion, Hawley asks a lot of questions about the future of conservatism, although he is unwilling to answer them with a high degree of confidence. After the election results, one can hardly blame him. Indeed, given that the book came out in advance of the surprising election result, his humility and prescience are refreshing. His remarks about anti-intellectualism and populism certainly hit the mark, as he observes that “[a]lthough a populism that pits ordinary folks against out-of-touch intellectuals is politically useful, it will make it more difficult to advance a conservative political theory capable of solving twenty-first century problems” (p. 285). The highly individualistic, resentment-laden populism of Donald Trump’s presidential campaign is, indeed, not just a threat to conservative political theory but to politics in general. Hawley’s book is important to understanding one part—albeit unwilling—of the coalition of American conservatism that exerts significant influence on American politics.

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With today’s acrid party polarization, even casual observers are aware that mundane government operations are becoming extraordinary. Symptoms include government shutdowns and the collapse of civility in public life.
Yet compared with earlier periods in American party development, our current stakes are simply “not so great,” according to Jeffrey S. Selinger (p. 177). Polarization before the Civil War continuously posed a far greater threat of violent disunion.

*Embracing Dissent* challenges us to view democratization in the United States with fresh eyes. The reigning scholarly consensus holds that the unwelcome early rise of parties gave way to their practical uses and later celebration with the advent of mass politics in the 1830s. This narrative was established by Cold War historians such as Richard Hofstadter in *The Idea of a Party System: The Rise of Legitimate Opposition in the United States, 1780–1840*. By contrast, Selinger treats seriously the bleak assessment of parties by George Washington, James Madison, and later generations of party builders such as Martin Van Buren and Abraham Lincoln. In their own time, concerns arose from a clear-eyed appreciation for the structural fragility of the United States. Party systems that emerged were flexible enough to bend with various crises. But Selinger demonstrates that the risk was real that party polarization might simply break the republic.

The principal reason for danger was that the antebellum central state proved too weak to guarantee territorial integrity in the face of determined opposition. Deep partisan divides over issues that severely fractured the political landscape raised the specters of civil unrest, nullification, and, ultimately, secession. “‘Union’ is the talisman of the dominant party,” railed Timothy Pickering in response to the War of 1812 (p. 78). The arch-Federalist advocated secession by the New England states. Selinger artfully shows that Pickering’s slogan could just have easily flowed from the mouths of impoverished yeomen in the 1780s, Jeffersonians during the Genêt Affair, and slaveholders across the second party system. Absent a credible federal monopoly on coercion, threats such as foreign wars heightened the danger that domestic partisan advantage would give way to fatal conspiracy. Previous scholars may have underappreciated how historical actors perceived party competition to be the vanguard of civil war, and justly so.

Leaders from Thomas Jefferson to Abraham Lincoln thus sought to make parties safe for democracy. Per Selinger, antebellum parties were not constructed on the “great principles” of the day (p. 14). Rather, parties were formed around the most pressing issues that could be politicized without risk of unleashing a cascade of political violence. Martin Van Buren and the Jacksonians brought party competition into the mainstream by taking the single most combustible issue—slavery—off the table. Even Lincoln initially followed a strategy of cross-sectional coalition building among slaveholding border states. The Emancipation Proclamation, however, was a revolutionary
break with the long tradition of silencing antislavery voices in favor of national unity.

The central novelty of Embracing Dissent is to explain why opposition parties were only fully legitimized after the Civil War. With armed exit foreclosed as a viable pathway, turn-of-the-century political scientists could market parties as vehicles of orderly competition. Yet democratic stability was circumscribed. Populists and labor radicals were suppressed and, most comprehensively, black Americans in the South. Did party pluralism emerge consolidated, as Selinger maintains? (p. 165). That particular claim is debatable. One-party rule based on racial apartheid in the former Confederacy lasted a century. Nevertheless, this book is a welcome touchstone for students of American political development.

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Debates over judicial selection in the states and which mechanism of selection produces the “ideal” judge have been raging in state legislatures and legal circles since the nation’s founding. Against the backdrop of elite appointment and electoral mechanisms that dominated state judicial selection throughout most of the nation’s history, Greg Goelzhauser produces the first comprehensive examination of the most recent innovation in state court selection—the use of “merit selection” to staff state high courts. Despite a wealth of recent scholarly attention to the empirical implications of various methods of judicial selection used in the states, the basic normative claims espoused by proponents of merit selection have never been adequately tested. Goelzhauser fills this void in the scholarly literature and, more importantly, lends empirically based insight into the policy debate over the types of judges produced by competing institutional designs of state high courts. Perhaps much to the dismay of proponents of merit selection, Goelzhauser finds that no single method of judicial selection produces a systematic advantage over another in terms of judicial characteristics.

Goelzhauser uses novel—and by no means easy to compile—data on the seating of all state supreme court justices from 1960 through 2014. His careful and exacting coding of merit selection lends specificity and clarity to the variety of commission-based appointment methods used across the states. Using these data, Goelzhauser tests the three most common claims made by proponents of merit selection: that merit selection produces more experienced