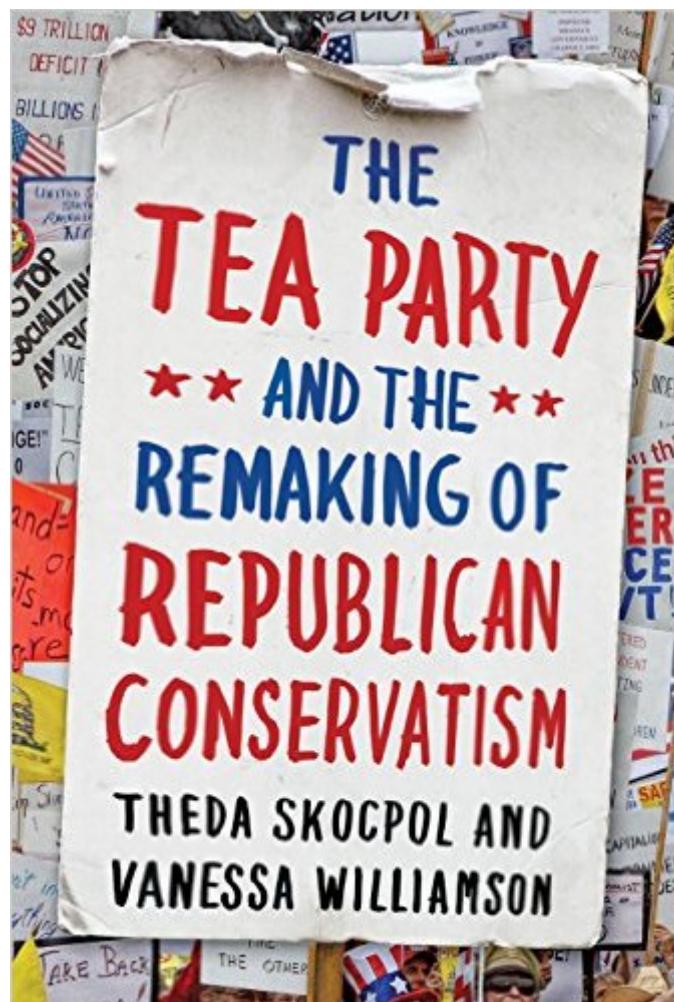


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The Tea Party And The Remaking Of Republican Conservatism



Synopsis

This revised edition features a new afterword, updated through the 2016 election. On February 19, 2009, CNBC commentator Rick Santelli delivered a dramatic rant against Obama administration programs to shore up the plunging housing market. Invoking the Founding Fathers and ridiculing "losers" who could not pay their mortgages, Santelli called for "Tea Party" protests. Over the next two years, conservative activists took to the streets and airways, built hundreds of local Tea Party groups, and weighed in with votes and money to help right-wing Republicans win electoral victories in 2010. In this penetrating new study, Harvard University's Theda Skocpol and Vanessa Williamson go beyond images of protesters in Colonial costumes to provide a nuanced portrait of the Tea Party. What they find is sometimes surprising. Drawing on grassroots interviews and visits to local meetings in several regions, they find that older, middle-class Tea Partiers mostly approve of Social Security, Medicare, and generous benefits for military veterans. Their opposition to "big government" entails reluctance to pay taxes to help people viewed as undeserving "freeloaders" - including immigrants, lower income earners, and the young. At the national level, Tea Party elites and funders leverage grassroots energy to further longstanding goals such as tax cuts for the wealthy, deregulation of business, and privatization of the very same Social Security and Medicare programs on which many grassroots Tea Partiers depend. Elites and grassroots are nevertheless united in hatred of Barack Obama and determination to push the Republican Party sharply to the right. The Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican Conservatism combines fine-grained portraits of local Tea Party members and chapters with an overarching analysis of the movement's rise, impact, and likely fate.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Though couched in cordial and scholarly tones, the authors present a carefully researched study of the Tea Party that is more alarming than the random fulminations of liberals and progressives. These authors don't hate Tea Partiers and go out of their way to present their views fully, fairly, and in the same friendly tone they feel Tea Partiers accorded them over their months-long observations. However, the picture their research paints is scary indeed. Again and again, the authors return to their startling findings that the Tea Party is a fairly large (20% of Americans, 40% of 2010 voters), influential (controlling, in fact, in GOP politics), and primarily a generational movement. That is, Tea Partiers are heavily dominated by Americans averaging around 60 years old, overwhelmingly white, who feel--by reason of their age and generation--that they are superior citizens (perhaps the last "real Americans") who deserve huge, big-government, tax-funded benefits through Social Security and Medicare... but that younger Americans as a whole are leeches undeserving of ANY public benefits such as college grants and health care. By their own views in polls and statements, Tea Partiers express appalling racist, anti-immigrant, and anti-youth prejudices characteristic of the pre-civil-rights era they mostly grew up in. Unfortunately, polls and surveys (which YouthFacts details, [...]) show the Tea Party represents the views of a majority of senior citizens who are angry, hostile, and unwilling or unable to adapt to modern America's racial diversification. Every older generation since Hesiod (700 BC), and probably long before, has bitterly criticized its young.

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