

in legislatures *generally*, the advantage of majority over minority or government over opposition boils down to the asymmetric costs faced in getting proposals considered on the plenary agenda. These asymmetries vary from legislature to legislature, but characterizing this variation is useful in conceiving of a continuum of legislatures.

This argument turns contemporary understanding of majority party advantage (at least in the literature on the House) on its head with its emphasis on *positive* as opposed to *negative* agenda power. The Senate majority party does not enjoy the extent of negative agenda power that the House majority party does (because of the Senate's lack of a powerful Rules Committee and a germaneness requirement for amendments). But its numerical advantage, its control of committee chairs (a position whose power scholars of the Senate have often denigrated), and its ability to undermine the minority's strategic use of amendments through motions to table, specifically, and party discipline on dispositive votes on amendments, more generally, all make it relatively less costly for the Senate majority party to bring to consideration *and pass* its policy proposals than is the case for the minority party. This asymmetry represents an easier path to legislating *and* represents a resource that can be used to the majority party's advantage when bargaining with rank-and-file members and leaders of the minority party for procedural concessions, since they presumably have policy proposals they would like to see considered and passed as well.

A colleague of my mine is fond of saying that as far as political science is concerned, there are two chambers in America's national legislature: the Congress and the Senate. For a variety of reasons, scholars have ignored the Senate in building models of the U.S. Congress. Den Hartog and Monroe offer an important corrective, demonstrating that the sort of sophisticated theoretical and empirical research usually conducted in the context of the House can find traction in the Senate despite the challenges it presents. In so doing, they have also produced a simple yet elegant argument that has important implications for the comparative study of legislatures. This book should be on every legislative scholar's book shelf, and I look forward to seeing it appear increasingly often on graduate *and* undergraduate syllabi.

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**American Neoconservatism: The Politics and Culture of a Reactionary Idealism** by Jean-François Drolet. *New York, Columbia University Press, 2011. 256 pp. \$30.00.*

In attacking neoconservatism, this book does not launch a broadside so much as unleash the Samson option. Like Israel's all-azimuth nuclear doctrine, it scores many hits at the cost of the precision required for the offensive. Rather, its battering of concepts only partially linked to neoconservatism—neoliberalism,

the “American Right,” the concept of polyarchy—makes *American Neoconservatism* a defense of “progressive politics” (p. 3) against a multitude of forces threatening to overrun it.

After sketching the history of neoconservatism from Alcove One through the administration of Ronald Reagan, chapter 2 delivers a compelling study of efforts by many of the twentieth century’s leading political thinkers, in particular Carl Schmitt and Leo Strauss, to wrestle with the dilemmas inherent to liberalism, modernism, and the state. Jean-François Drolet claims that Strauss’s argument for a comprehensive if arbitrary state moralism in a world of constant, unavoidable political conflict provides the direct and illiberal origin of the “crusading politics of American neoconservatism” (p. 88).

Chapter 3 describes this crusade as largely inward-looking, an attempt to overcome the excesses of 1970s liberalism and identity politics through welfare retrenchment, supply-side economics, and the state’s cultural and moral intervention. Quite originally, the book argues that neoconservative internationalism emerges as a consequence of this project; the state’s need to shore up its now-undermined democratic legitimacy leads to neoconservatism’s operationalization of an external “other” through enthusiastic, militarized democratization (the familiar subject of chapter 4). The strong fifth chapter ties the “sovereigntist” legal thought of John Bolton, John Yoo, and especially John Fonte to more-familiar neoconservative takes on global governance. Acknowledging the validity of many of these arguments, the book claims these stances to be ultimately motivated by preserving the state’s monopoly on moralization from chapter 3.

*American Neoconservatism* ascribes three broad components to the neoconservative agenda (p. 16). While neoconservative thought makes explicit its enthusiasm for the first category of American supremacy—Drolet uses the term “Imperialism”—the book provides less clear substantiation for the other two. The description of neoconservatism’s approach to “Capitalism” as “the dismantling of the domestic and international architecture of the post-war economic settlement...and the restoration/maintenance of corporate power” overstates the case. Irving Kristol’s belief that one “must shoulder budgetary deficits as the costs...of promoting economic growth” strays little from basic Keynesianism; and titles of his works indicate that he could only find “Two Cheers for Capitalism,” “No Cheers For the Profit Motive,” and supported a “Conservative Welfare State” (*The Neoconservative Persuasion: Selected Essays, 1942–2009*, New York: Basic Books, 2011). Similarly, the book’s definition of neoconservative “Nationalism,” the “cultivation and maintenance of a homogenous national identity—a universal ‘Americaneity’—based on the subordination of minority cultures to the enduring worldview of the white Anglo-Saxon majority culture,” opens with a clear neoconservative goal but ends with a more-tenuous implication (in both senses), in which the underpinning citations transition from neoconservatives to their critics.

*American Neoconservatism*’s selective comprehensiveness makes for a bracing read and compelling tour of American political thought, but precludes

it from the probably impossible task of definitively addressing its title's subject. The book includes Russell Kirk and Friedrich Hayek as neoconservatism's forbears and Rush Limbaugh and Ann Coulter as its offspring, invokes Daniel Bell's skepticism of the Great Society but elides his contempt for neoliberalism, and dwells more on the politics of Barry Goldwater than of Democratic hawk Henry "Scoop" Jackson. Nor do intellectual allies escape the onslaught; John Ikenberry "has his own questionable political agenda" (p. 158), while Justin Vaïsse's intellectual history is "naïve" (p. 207). The Barack Obama administration's executive aggrandizement, financial sector bailout, and human rights enforcement by drone embody Drolet's target as much as the neoconservative opposition, and thus this engaging book is best described as a broad indictment of much of contemporary American politics.

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**American Politicians Confront the Court: Opposition Politics and Changing Responses to Judicial Power** by Stephen M. Engel. *New York, Cambridge University Press, 2011. 408 pp. \$32.99.*

The reconciliation of judicial power with democracy has preoccupied American scholars and politicians since the Founding era. The counter-majoritarian difficulty of life-tenured judges overturning the work of the democratic branches has sometimes been justified as essential to a written constitution that aims to limit the power of government and control majority tyranny. Others have criticized the exercise of judicial power as undemocratic and illegitimate. Over the centuries, presidents, candidates for the presidency, and members of Congress have used various tools at their disposal to challenge the Supreme Court and its exercise of power. And yet, despite this persistent questioning of the Court's legitimacy, its place in the American political system appears more fixed and more important than it has ever been. How should we understand this seemingly contradictory development?

Stephen Engel's thorough and historically rich exploration of this question makes an important contribution to the burgeoning American political development literature about the Supreme Court. He demonstrates that early challenges by politicians to the Court's authority focused on efforts to weaken and undermine the legitimacy of the Court, while more-recent challenges are better characterized as attempts to "harness" (p. 38) judicial power, to better serve the political agendas of the politicians. The central insight of the book is that this changing approach to challenging judicial power is best explained by understanding the development of the party system and the "ideational transformation" (p. 55) that occurred over time. Using case studies that focus on confrontations between the Court and Presidents Jefferson, Jackson, Van Buren, Lincoln, Roosevelt, and Nixon, Engel traces