

some West Coast Straussians have taken to sounding like Neo-Confederate Traditionalists, joining the call to overturn the American constitutional order by way of a vague insistence on “regime change.” Curious, too, that some Catholic conservatives are flirting with various forms of theocracy against a tradition of religious liberty, while some culture war conservatives want to use state power to enforce (their) political orthodoxy. This sober book, perhaps prudently, resists weighing in on such issues, even while it will help us better understand them.

Important on its own terms, *Conservative Thought and American Constitutionalism Since the New Deal* is of heightened interest precisely because it comes at a moment when many of the ideas it engages are triumphing in conservative politics and in the Supreme Court’s jurisprudence. Here I have to say that I found the section on Modern Judicial Power the least compelling section of the book as it was too prone to traffic in notions that the modern Court was a profound break from the past while many of the quarrels over judicial power have been with us from the beginning. This is true, too, of debates about the proper balance between Congress and the executive, just as it is regarding debates about the proper division of state and federal power in the constitutional scheme.

In conclusion, O’Neill insists that constitutional self-government “is tied to the fate of Congress” (p. 298). Calls for Congressional restoration, pervasive among both liberals and conservatives, might point to deeper flaws in our constitutional architecture. The proper balance between American political institutions within a scheme of constitutional self-government has been debated from the beginning. Understanding how to recover that balance might require us to move beyond the past, helpful as O’Neill is in fostering our understanding of it.

Fundraiser in Chief: Presidents and the Politics of Campaign Cash.

By Brendan J. Doherty. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2023. 208p. \$44.95 cloth, \$24.95 paper.
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Fundraiser in Chief, based on a comprehensive examination of presidential fundraising activities from the Carter to the Trump administrations, shows that, over the last generation, the ways that presidents raise money for themselves and others have changed in important ways. In particular, Brendan Doherty shows that presidents today campaign more for themselves and their parties than for individual legislators, thereby changing the president’s role in party leadership and service. The book is an important contribution to scholarship on the American presidency, the nationalization of US political parties, and the evolution of the US campaign finance system.

Brendan Doherty’s scholarly contribution derives largely from his painstaking archival research. The appendix, which should not be skipped when reading the book, describes the methodological challenges of counting presidential fundraisers, many of which are private events. He begins by explaining the decisions involved in operationalizing the concept of fundraiser: Does a “donor maintenance” event count? How should private meet-and-greets attached to larger fundraisers be counted? He then proceeds by describing the difficulties of identifying fundraisers, especially those events that were closed to the press, in presidential records. He clearly explains how he cross-checked press accounts of fundraisers with the public papers of the presidents and presidential schedules. This careful research will certainly aid other scholars to better understand the changing role of the president as “fundraiser in chief.” Political scientists who teach introductory courses on research methods should also consider assigning the appendix as an accessible description of key decisions about operationalization and measurement.

It is no secret that presidents spend a lot of time fundraising and that they raise a lot of money when they do so. The key finding of this book is that there has been major change over time in who benefits from presidential fundraising. Doherty shows that in the late 1970s and 1980s, when presidents benefited from public funding for presidential nominations and general elections, they spent their time fundraising for vulnerable congressional (especially Senate) incumbents and for state political parties. As party competition gave way to what Frances Lee (*Insecure Majorities: Congress and the Perpetual Campaign*, 2016) terms “insecure majorities,” and competition destroyed the incentives to accept public funding, presidents began to raise more money for themselves and for the national party, which crowded out their fundraising on behalf of specific candidates.

In chapter 2, Doherty helpfully catalogs the additional changes in law and the political environment that helped produce this shift in fundraising strategy, including the rise of Super PACs, the importance of the Supreme Court decision in *McCutcheon v. FEC*, and a congressional decision to require fundraising beneficiaries to pick up more of the costs of presidential travel. Together, these forces drove presidents to do more fundraising through consolidated joint fundraising committees and to rely more on extremely large donations from rich donors when doing so.

Chapters 3 and 4 document those changes in fundraising strategy. Doherty shows that modern presidents in their reelection cycles now spend the bulk of their efforts raising money for their own reelection campaign and national party. He also shows that in their other fundraising efforts, especially in midterm election cycles, presidents favor raising money for Senate campaign committees over House campaigns, as well as raising money for vulnerable seats held by the president’s party over pickup

opportunities. He explains that such strategic decisions are due, in part, to the expense of presidential travel and the inability of lower-level candidates to pay for those costs.

Although the book stays close to the descriptive data he presents, Doherty also addresses some of the implications of the shift toward presidents' increasing engagement in fundraising in very large amounts from mega-rich donors. In chapter 5, he describes the political dynamics of fundraisers that are closed to the press. His data suggest that fundraiser transparency varies both with presidential job approval (because unpopular presidents do not want to be seen socializing with very rich donors) and pressure from the press (because sometimes presidents seem to provide the press with more access to fundraising events when they are criticized for denying it).

In each chapter, and especially in the conclusion, Doherty weighs and evaluates some of the normative implications of his findings. He notes that there are trade-offs in relying on small numbers of very rich donors to fund national campaigns: it can be more efficient to do so, but this practice also undermines the contribution limits that are the cornerstone of campaign finance law in the modern era. He discusses the widespread appearance of corruption when presidents spend so much time soliciting funds from super-rich donors who are often granted special and restricted access to them in return. But he also notes that presidents are able to raise more money than any other political figures and that competitive elections and outside spending leave presidents with little choice in raising money. Moreover, he notes that Raymond J. LaRaja and Brian F. Schaffner (*Campaign Finance and Political Polarization: When Purists Prevail*, 2015) have found that raising money through national party committees may be better for democratic politics than raising that money through outside groups. He also points out the special dilemma posed by President Trump, who not only raised campaign money through traditional means but also made money for himself by hosting fundraising events for his reelection and for other Republicans at his private properties.

Doherty frames fundraising as an element of presidential leadership, and as such, this book raises important questions on this theme than can be taken up by other scholars in future work. First, it suggests that presidents spend a lot of time fundraising and that such efforts might be a distraction from other presidential responsibilities. Although *Fundraiser in Chief* documents that the number of fundraisers has increased over time, others might follow up on whether the dynamics described in the book have affected presidents' focus or priorities in other significant ways.

The book also adds to Doherty's and others' work on the central role that campaigning plays in the modern American presidency. He notes that constantly being in "campaign mode," trying to defeat officeholders in the other party, and sometimes criticizing specific officeholders at fundraisers


may further erode the possibilities of working with them in governance later. This suggests productive hypotheses that future work would do well to develop.

Presidential leadership is also implicated in the shift over time from presidents holding fundraisers on behalf of specific candidates to holding fundraisers for campaign committees that benefit many candidates. Future work might also ask whether this dynamic has changed the governing relationships that presidents have with the individual senators and other political beneficiaries of presidential fundraising in their own party. Finally, presidential leadership is likewise implicated by the tendency for presidents to spend significantly more time with a few rich donors. Others might follow up on investigating how very large dollar fundraisers might be changing the influence that those donors have over policy.

Doherty put significant effort into gathering these data on presidential fundraisers. The resulting book is clearly written and is an important contribution to scholarship on presidential campaigns and presidential leadership in the modern era. It would be a good addition to many scholars' reading lists.

A Democracy That Works: How Working-Class Power Defines Liberal Democracy in the United States. By Stephen Amberg. New York: Routledge, 2023. 378p. \$180.00 cloth.

The New Power Elite. By Heather Gautney. New York: Oxford University Press, 2023. 336p. \$29.95 cloth.
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Although the substantive material they cover is far from identical, Heather Gautney's *The New Power Elite* and Stephen Amberg's *A Democracy That Works* have a great deal in common. Both are ambitious, synthetic books, based on a wide reading of an astonishing number of secondary works. Most importantly, these two books share a focus on the political economy of neoliberalism in the United States: the emergence of the neoliberal order and its consequences for both the economy and the polity. Both outline the economic transformation of the last half-century—including such developments as the conceptualization of workers, like raw materials, as just another cost center and the consequent growth of economic inequality; the decline of manufacturing; financialization; and economic concentration. And both consider these interrelated developments to be the result of the operations of both markets and democratic politics, rather than the result of economic forces alone.

Furthermore, both books emphasize the primary significance of the policies of the Reagan era with their emphasis on market freedom from government regulation and on efficiency and "shareholder value" as principal