



The Supreme Court in American Politics: New Institutionalist Interpretations

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For decades political scientists studying the Court have adopted behavioral approaches and focused on the relatively narrow question of how the justices' policy preferences influence their voting behavior. This emphasis has illuminated important aspects of Supreme Court politics, but it has also left unaddressed many other important questions about this unique and fascinating institution.

Drawing on "the new institutionalism" in the social sciences, the distinguished contributors to this volume attempt to fill this gap by exploring a variety of topics, including the Court's institutional development and its relationship to broader political contexts such as party regimes, electoral systems, social movements, social change, legal precedents, political identities, and historically evolving economic structures.

The book's initial chapters examine the nature of the Court's distinctive norms as well as the development of its institutional powers and practice. A second section relates the development of Supreme Court politics to the historical development of other political institutions and social movements. Concluding chapters explore how its decision making in particular areas of law or periods of time is influenced by and influences its socio-political milieu.

These contributions offer provocative insights regarding the Court's role in maintaining or disrupting political and economic structures, as well as social structures and identities tied to ideology, class, race, gender, and sexual orientation. *The Supreme Court in American Politics* shows how we can develop an enriched understanding of this institution, and open up exciting new areas of research by placing it in the broader context of politics in the United States.



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