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# Book Review: Strategic Selection: Presidential Nomination of Supreme Court Justices from Herbert Hoover through George W. Bush, by Christine L. Nemacheck

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What are the factors that impact a president's choice in the selection of nominees to fill Supreme Court vacancies? Past research has indicated multiple factors at work, but Nemacheck (William and Mary) puts those factors to rigorous empirical tests. She approaches her task from a "rational-choice" perspective and posits a variety of hypotheses that are tested. The author concludes that in selecting nominees, presidents exhibit "systemic patterns" that reflect their strategic preferences. As rational actors, presidents "act strategically" and rationally. But do they? Nemacheck examines Court nominees from Hoover to George W. Bush, and it is in the Bush cases that her rational-choice approach both illuminates (the selection of Roberts and Alito) and breaks down (the failed nomination of Harriet Miers). While presidents often act strategically, in the end they also sometimes act on the basis of other factors, such as friendship, ideology, loyalty, payment of political debts, personality, idiosyncrasy, and a host of other imponderables. Nemacheck, while claiming a bit too much for the rational-choice approach, nonetheless gives a rigorously tested, ambitiously comprehensive study that is a valuable contribution to president-Court studies.

—*M. A. Genovese, Loyola Marymount University*

Summing Up: Recommended. Graduate students and faculty.