together in himself was always inevitably fraught with difficulty (at the least). Niebuhr's genius was to see how these three themes wove their way through American political history, and Obama's audacity was always to suppose that he could, by dint of intelligence and rhetorical flourish, overcome their paradoxical interrelation to achieve his policy aims.

In their final reflections, Holder and Josephson suggest that Obama's relation to Niebuhr is more than one of influence. Rather, he is a kind of incarnation of Niebuhr's ideas about politics. When thinking about why Obama has encountered the difficulties he has, the authors seem to suggest that while the president understands the ironies of politics, the American people may find it "too bitter" for their taste (p. 185). To some degree this is probably true. Obama does not buy the idea that America is some sort of exceptional—and exceptionally good—nation, and this puts him at odds with a wide swath of Americans. And the troubles that Obama has encountered on account of his reading of American history suggest to Holder and Josephson that his Niebuhrian statecraft is foundationally problematic. What makes for an incisive analysis of the political order does not always make for effective political leadership. To put things simply, evangelists are not ironic, and ironists do not make for good evangelists.

But how much does Obama really embody Niebuhr's view of politics? The reason Niebuhr considered the exercise of coercive power to be always and inevitably ironic is that it is always and inevitably tied up with human sinfulness and finitude. Obama does not endorse that basic presumption. He, of course, recognizes the ways in which political plans go awry in any number of ways, but at heart he is more like the Social Gospelers critiqued by Niebuhr than Niebuhr himself. He may not have their eschatological confidence in the sure march of history, but aside from some discrete foreign policy choices—which do not seem to reflect a carefully thought-out or at least clearly elaborated grand strategy—it is a grand confidence about the rightness of his views that marks Obama's rhetoric, not a careful attention to their likely misjudgments. Holder and Josephson have done a credible job in laying out for us the ways in which a Niebuhrian might think about and indeed struggle to effect policy aims in a democracy like ours. I am just not sure that President Obama is as Niebuhrian as they claim.

Open for Business: Conservatives' Opposition to Environmental Regulation. By Judith A. Layzer. Cambridge, MA: The Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 2012. 496p. $35.00 cloth, $20.00 paper.
doi:10.1017/S1537592714001947

— Alexander W. Hertel-Fernandez, *Harvard University*

Riding a wave of conservative discontent with government into the White House, Ronald Reagan began his administration with bold designs to reshape the American state. It seemed to be an ideal moment for the conservative movement to retrench public policies that had attracted the ire of both business and antigovernment activists, especially the recently enacted regulations from the "environmental decade" of the 1970s. Yet no outright legislative retrenchment of major environmental laws occurred—nor would it under subsequent Republican administrations. In *Open for Business*, Judith Layzer provides an explanation for the puzzling defeats that conservatives endured in their attempts to repeal the major pillars of environmental protection in the United States.

Drawing from the historical institutionalist literature on gradual institutional change (most prominently James Mahoney and Kathleen Thelen's 2009 edited volume *Explaining Institutional Change*), Layzer argues that even as conservatives failed to repeal major environmental statutes, they succeeded in limiting the effectiveness of those policies, ultimately generating retrenchment through low-profile attacks on the environmental state. Invoking the notion of policy drift from the work of Jacob Hacker and Paul Pierson on economic policy, Layzer shows that conservatives also succeeded in preventing the enactment of new legislation that would have been necessary to address new environmental risks, most notably those related to global climate change.

Across six chapters that span the presidential administrations of Richard Nixon to Barack Obama, the author shows how conservatives were most successful when they leveraged such tactics as changing the enforcement or implementation of existing policies, starving environmental agencies of adequate funding and staff, and making it more challenging for administrators to pass new and restrictive environmental rules. These strategies worked because they generally did not provoke public protest and backlash from environmentally conscious voters and the media, unlike more high-profile efforts to either repeal existing laws or pass new laws that would dismantle regulations. Layzer's focus on the maneuverings of conservatives and businesses through the arcane corners of the federal bureaucracy and court system fits well with other recent work on business power (most notably Pepper Culpepper's 2010 book *Quiet Politics and Business Power*), which emphasizes the advantages that business can command when it operates outside of the public's range of vision.

Conservatives' greatest triumph since the 1970s, according to Layzer, was the introduction of antiregulatory narratives into the environmental policymaking process. Messages regarding "distrust of the federal bureaucracy, admiration for unfettered private property rights and markets, skepticism about science, and disdain for environmental advocates" (p. 4) have now permeated the language of both political parties. The result was that even President Bill Clinton's otherwise "hard-nosed" environmental protection administrator, Carol Browner, felt the need to take the antiregulatory critiques of her agency seriously and to introduce a number of business-friendly

practices (p. 253). Layzer thus makes a persuasive case that conservatives have trounced liberals in the war of environmental ideas—and then some.

In each chapter, the author draws on an impressive array of interviews, primary texts, and secondary sources. The result is a rich picture of the diverse environmental policy battles waged during each administration. That detail, however, can be a bit overwhelming for the reader who is uninitiated into the world of environmental policy, and may even cause some to lose sight of the broader theoretical argument. Further complicating the book's presentation is Layzer's decision to rely primarily on qualitative assessments of the trajectory of environmental policy. Although she gives the reader good justifications for this choice, arguing, for example, that "any attempt to standardize enforcement at the [Environmental Protection Agency] is confounded by the enormous variety of conditions and circumstances that individual cases involve" (p. 28), it does muddle efforts to get a sense of how all of the individual policy skirmishes she documents add up. The inclusion of quantitative summary measures for each administration (with appropriate caveats) might have gone a long way to clearing up this picture, particularly for readers previously unfamiliar with the course of American environmental policy.

Aside from these organizational issues, there are moments when the historical analysis falls into the common trap of viewing the conservative-corporate movement through the lens of "diabolical competence" (to use Steven Teles's felicitous phrasing in his 2008 book *The Rise of the Conservative Legal Movement*). Layzer rightly points out that environmental policy often pits firms against each other, complicating accounts of blanket business opposition to environmental regulation. But it would have been interesting to see these cleavages explored in more detail in the historical analysis, in addition to the implications of such intraindustry tensions for the relationship between conservatives and corporate interests. Such conflicts are mentioned in passing but are generally not interrogated further. In a similar vein, Layzer tends to characterize the conservative movement as a relatively unified actor, yet other research on conservative mobilization gives us good reasons to think that coordination among conservative grassroots organizations, think tanks, and foundations is anything but easy, and therefore cannot be taken for granted. Accordingly, her analysis might have been enriched by a closer examination of the ways that different organizations facilitated (and, perhaps even more interestingly, failed to facilitate) coordination among conservative actors, and thus altered the success of conservative strategies.

Finally, one might quibble with Layzer's scorekeeping of what counts as a conservative victory. For instance, one low-profile policy instrument adopted by the federal government that the author tallies as a win for the antiregulatory movement is cost—benefit analysis. She documents how this framework has been embraced by both Democrat and Republican presidential administrations alike. But while it may have been the case that in its original formulations (especially in the Reagan administration, pp. 98–99, 130), cost—benefit analysis was a tool for limiting the scope of government regulation, it is less clear that this bias still holds. Indeed, the Obama administration has used cost—benefit analysis as a tool for making a progressive case for the *benefits* of particular regulations (see, for instance, the work of former Obama White House official and cost—benefit analysis proponent Cass Sunstein). Seen from this perspective, cost—benefit analysis might even be interpreted as a case of institutional "conversion", where old institutions or policies are directed to new uses (pp. 25–26).

These comments, however, should not deter readers from discovering the important contributions that Layzer has made in this book. She offers a careful analysis of a crucial policy domain in American politics that will be of interest not only to political scientists and policy scholars engaged in research on environmental politics, but also to those interested in the development of the conservative movement and business mobilization since the 1970s, the role of ideas in the policymaking process, and comparative public policy. *Open for Business* is a terrific model of rigorous political science that addresses timely and relevant issues.

The Color of Our Shame: Race and Justice in Our Time. By Christopher J. Lebron. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013. 202p. $74.00.
doi:10.1017/S1537592714001959

— Bruce Baum, *The University of British Columbia*

In this book, Christopher Lebron draws on political thought, sociology, and American political development scholarship to offer a fresh political theory perspective on the dilemma of racial inequality in the United States. His central questions are straightforward: Why does deep racial inequality persist nearly 50 years after the culmination of the Civil Rights movement when the vast majority of American citizens disavow racism, and what might be done to remedy this situation? He explores what prevents key actors in American politics—citizens and institutions—from working to overcome racial injustice and realize the promise of American democracy.

Lebron maintains that racial inequality fundamentally is a problem of social value: "the fact that blacks do not occupy an equal place in [our society's] scheme of normative attention and concern" (p. 4). He addresses this problem by discussing the ideas of shame, national character, and democratic perfectionism, and forwarding a theory of "historically evolved, socially embedded power" (p. 10). Like Charles Mills, Lebron highlights "the role of racially inflected power" to comprehend racial injustice (p. 9). He contends, however, that Mills's use of "white domination"