

macro-level patterns of unity to assess how majority-party unity scores are influenced by majority size, as well as by minority partisanship. In the closing analytical chapter, they analyze legislative action on the Central America Free Trade Agreement through the lens of the SPG theory.

Much of the SPG theory rests on the notion that members face countervailing pressures to support their party or their constituencies. As the authors note, however, notions of party unity or party support are often inaccurately portrayed as ideological voting. While conceptually distinct, separating partisan from ideological voting proves difficult. Yet failure to establish this distinction negates a key plank of the SPG theory. Koger and Lebo's experimental results show that respondents do indeed differentiate between legislators' ideological and partisan voting records. The key implication of this is that ideological voting, even extreme ideological voting, was viewed more positively than high levels of party voting. In other words, being a "party hack" plays more poorly with voters than being a committed ideologue.

Having established that voters view party unity in a relatively negative light provides a launching point from which to investigate members' roll call behavior, partisan agendas, and the interconnected nature of the parties' electoral fortunes across time. The authors' primary aim is to identify how party unity and a party's electoral fortunes move across time. The most notable—and highly robust—finding is that higher levels of party unity lead to a statistically significant reduction in vote share. That effect is moderated somewhat, however, for the majority party. As the majority party succeeds in passing legislation, the resulting enhancement in party reputation provides them with positive electoral benefits. Those benefits, however, do not offset the losses incurred by "whipping" the rank and file to secure the level of party unity needed to pass key agenda items. The nature of the dynamics observed in party unity across time exhibit some interesting regularities. Interestingly, the process tends toward an equilibrium level of unity for both the minority and majority parties. High unity at time  $t$  results in electoral losses, which leads to lower levels of unity at time  $t+1$ . Given this dynamic, the parties adjust their respective strategies and, as a result, both sides adjust their party unity accordingly. As one of the parties increases (or reduces) unity, the other party follows suit.

Interestingly, the majority party drives much of this process, including aspects of the minority party's strategy of opposition. The minority party is rather insulated from the costs associated with party unity, and certainly is not poised to share in the benefits associated with passing the majority's agendas. As such, the minority often pursues a rational "best response" strategy of obstruction, making it notably more painful and costly for the majority party to pass its agenda. The majority party is then left to save face and pass something so they can point to some type of tangible legislative success.

Again, these findings might not be all that surprising, as in many respects they are often intuitive. What this response overlooks, though, is how difficult it can be to address such questions empirically. In this regard, Koger and Lebo provide a clear picture of how difficult it is methodologically to tease out the causal elements of interest needed to assess their hypotheses. As such, they bring an important element of sophistication and precision to addressing a series of questions many individuals tend to gloss over. That said, the high level of aggregation across time seems to treat the effects as directly comparable. Given the diversity of the prevailing party systems and political cleavages across time, this result is impressive on the one hand, but is likely too blunt on the other. For instance, does a change in party unity during the era of the strong Speaker in the Gilded Age mean the same thing as it would after the overthrow of Joseph Cannon and during the Ryan speakership? A minor point, but this would be interesting for the authors to discuss more.

The other contribution Koger and Lebo make comes in their assessments of what their findings mean for legislative politics in a polarized system. The answer they leave us with is a distinctly pessimistic one. While citizens and legislative scholars understood the incentives for members to "position take," what we did not have before was a clear metric for how certain types of legislative strategies paid dividends and imposed costs. Koger and Lebo show us why parties rarely seem to undertake legislative initiatives to fix pressing problems or to pursue "good policy" outcomes that might foster bipartisanship. In the polarized arena legislative actions are often meant to serve partisan electoral ends, rather than govern in the common interest, and policy benefits are secondary concerns.

### **The Governors' Lobbyists: Federal-State Relations Offices and Governors Associations in Washington.**

By Jennifer M. Jensen. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2016. 288p. \$75.00 cloth.  
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— Kathleen Marchetti, *Dickinson College*

In *The Governors' Lobbyists*, Jennifer Jensen details the roles that governors' lobbies assume in federalist structures, Washington, DC politics, and communities of organized interests. From the outset, Jensen clearly demonstrates the need for a better understanding of these organizations, particularly for scholars of federalism, state politics, and interest groups. Governors' associations work towards unique policy goals that bridge levels of federalism by addressing simultaneously the interests of both state and national governments. These groups also occupy distinct spaces in the organized interest population; they work on behalf of high profile political elites while mostly refraining from the fundraising and vote mobilizing aspects of lobbying. In some ways, governors' associations are the ultimate "insiders

lobby,” enjoying high levels of access to members of Congress while maintaining strong connections outside of the District of Columbia via representation of state interests.

Jensen structures her examination of governors’ associations around three central puzzles. The first focuses on how governors’ associations reinforce federalist structures and power in state governments. Specifically, how and for what purpose do governors’ lobbies act as safeguards of federalism? In the second puzzle, she turns her attention to the origins of governors’ lobbies and how these organizations fit within broader understandings of interest group formation and activity. Finally, she turns to the puzzle of proliferation: why are there so many different types of governors’ associations (state-level, regional, and national)? Though her initial presentation of the puzzles seems to imply that the text will progress in three major sections, she instead discusses one or multiple puzzles in each chapter throughout the book.

Early chapters focus on the role that governors’ associations play in the federal system (Chapter 1), the political development of the National Governors Association (NGA) and governors’ offices in the District of Columbia (Chapters 2 and 3), and the purposes and goals of Washington offices representing individual states (Chapter 4). Throughout these chapters, Jensen showcases extensive archival research and qualitative interview data which she supplements in Chapter 6 with a quantitative event history analysis (EHA) of the factors that shape states’ decisions to open and maintain governors’ offices in Washington. While mixed methods do not always equal “better” methods, she executes multiple methodologies thoroughly and purposefully. Her combination of American political development approaches with qualitative interviews and quantitative EHA produces a more nuanced and holistic picture of the development, operations, and influence of governors’ associations than would any one method alone.

Despite their unique clientele and policy goals, governors’ lobbies have been a relatively understudied element of interest group scholarship and frequently join “state and local” governmental interests in subcategories of lobbying groups. However, Jensen’s analysis makes clear the fact that “state and local lobbying interests” should be separate rather than joint categories in future research on organized interests. Governors often compete with mayors of large cities for federal funding, thus creating more of an adversarial than collaborative relationship between state and local governmental interests vis-à-vis the federal government. Similarly, though governors partner with state legislators in their work representing state interests, their party identities, policy goals, and career ambitions may differ markedly from those of state legislators. By raising these points early in the book, she highlights the relevance of her research to a range of subfields in American politics via her description of the distinct policy spaces occupied by governors’ associations and by governors themselves.

In addition to detailed examinations of the contextual factors that shape the establishment, growth, and development of governors’ lobbies, Jensen offers a secondary focus on the role of partisanship within this population of organized interests. More specifically, she suggests that some governors associations have shifted away from policy positions united by federalism to policy positions united by party. She first introduces the importance of partisanship in Chapter 3 when discussing the fact that unlike their partisan counterparts, (and many organized interests in Washington), the National Governors Association does not contribute money to legislators’ campaigns. Though traditional Washington lobbies may be able to work across party lines, she also notes that the party identification of state offices in Washington are frequently tied to that of states’ governors (p. 143). With increasing party polarization, the associations of Republican and Democratic governors have increased in importance and power, particularly with respect to their ability to raise and distribute campaign contributions to Democratic and Republican congressional candidates. Jensen’s figure 5.1 (p. 160) shows notable partisan differences in the amount of fundraising between partisan governors’ lobbies with the Republican Governors Association consistently outspending the Democratic Governors Association, recently by large margins.

Though Jensen notes the traction gained by partisan governors associations in polarized political climates, she does not discuss how party polarization shaped the bipartisan NGA over time nor how the NGA’s lack of fundraising affects their relationships in Washington. Partisan differences in fundraising are not further explored nor discussed apart from the fact that fundraising as a whole has increased in recent years. This raises the only shortcoming in her text: a few missed opportunities to tie her analyses into broader contextual focus. This is certainly not to say that she *never* contextualizes her findings—she does so in many places throughout the book, particularly in her concluding chapter. For example, Jensen compares staff size and issue area focus in governors’ offices with those of most organized interests, citing previous research that only 17% of all interest groups with small staff sizes have a large issue portfolio, whereas 15 out of 21 (70%) governors’ offices have broad issue agendas with few staff (p. 146). This contextualization within the broader interest group literature allows the reader to make better sense of her findings and demonstrates the larger implications of her work. Exploring further the effects of fundraising differences between partisan governors associations or unpacking the distinct challenges faced by the NGA’s bipartisan, non-fundraising position would connect Jensen’s work to broader understandings of how increasing party polarization and money shape lobbying and policymaking. That said, her analysis raises interesting questions about the roles of partisanship and fundraising

within a distinct group of organized interests, creating paths for future research.

Overall, Jensen's rich archival and interview data provide a nuanced view of the origins of governors' lobbies and their evolving role in the American political landscape. She makes a strong case for the consideration of subgroups of state and local lobbying organizations, even for those that comprise a small share of the overall lobbying population. By closely examining governors' lobbies, she reveals variation among organizations that are commonly assumed to have homogenous policy preferences due to their positions vis-à-vis the national government and sheds light onto the unique position assumed by governors associations in the federalist structure. In doing so, Jensen raises important secondary questions regarding the role of partisanship and polarization in lobbying organizations and state/national government relations. *The Governors' Lobbyists* is an accessible, informative, and carefully researched text that addresses fundamental questions of federalism and lobbying in American politics.

**Pulse of the People: Political Rap Music and Black**

**Politics.** By Lakeyta M. Bonnette. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015. 232p. \$49.95 cloth.  
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— Lester Spence, *Johns Hopkins University*

In September 2016 President Donald Trump, in an effort to stoke racial animus and drive conversation away from his administration specifically and from police actions against African Americans in general, sought to direct the ire of his supporters and middle-income white Americans against NFL players who, following the lead of Colin Kaepernick, took a knee during the National Anthem in protest of police brutality. Since Trump's election, the president has engaged in a number of such actions, including expressing implicit support for white nationalists and supremacists in Charlottesville. At the end of that month, during the BET Hip-hop Awards, Detroit-based MC Eminem responded in a blistering two-minute freestyle that while base, vulgar, and sexist, asked his fans (many of them white) to make a stark decision—either support Donald Trump or him. To date his video has been viewed approximately 2.28 million times.

Although neither hip-hop in general nor rap specifically were created as political vehicles, they have always *served* as political vehicles. In the mid- to late-eighties east and west coast MCs rhetorically attacked police surveillance and violence, presaging Black Lives Matter activism by decades. In the mid-nineties, as the neoliberal turn began to take hold, we watched MCs increasingly see themselves as entrepreneurs of their own human capital. And in the dawn of the Obama/Trump era we see MCs like Kendrick Lamar eviscerate both men. And as black youth and whites of all ages increased their consumption of rap, anxiety about its

effects have led some to castigate it as part of modern-day respectability projects. In the early nineties C. Delores Tucker used criticism of rap effectively to bolster her political career, while Oprah Winfrey dedicated a number of episodes to rap's harmful effects a year after Obama's election.

In partial response to the growing power of hip-hop and rap, both inside and outside of the United States, a range of scholars have begun to examine its effects. For some, like Cathy Cohen, rap has served as a sometimes powerful vehicle of youth socialization. For others, like the late Richard Iton, rap limns intra-racial fault lines, particularly in the wake of welfare reform. While the literature on rap and politics is growing, for the most part this body of work has largely ignored substantial intra-genre differences. Kendrick Lamar is not Lil Wayne is not Lor Scoota (RIP) is not Childish Gambino. Political rap is a distinctly different sub-genre of rap that has its own content and arguably has its own unique effects.

At least this is the claim made by Lakeyta Bonnette's *Power to the People*. Bonnette's work seeks to accomplish three tasks—to distinguish political rap from other genres, to test the specific effects of political rap on black youth attitudes, and to chart the relationship between political rap and hip-hop more broadly and black politics. While the research on rap and hip-hop have grown substantially since Tricia Rose's *Black Noise* was published in 1994, this body of work has largely ignored the fact that there is one distinct genre of rap that has the explicit intent of both moving the crowd bodily and politically. While charting the effect of rap on populations (black and non-black) may help move the literature forward, charting the effect of political rap *specifically* may give us more analytical purchase than examining the effect of rap broadly considered.

How effective is Bonnette at achieving her aims? Her work is most effective at charting the significant differences between genres of rap. Defining political rap as rap that contains a political reference and refers to a social problem/issue and/or advocates a solution to injustice does more to distinguish political rap from other genres than either focusing on an artist or by performing close readings of rap music, particularly for the purpose of empirical testing. To test effects she conducts two experiments on black respondents, exposing them either to a control or to one of four genres of music (political rap, non-political rap, rhythm and blues, pop), and then administering a survey designed to assess support for either black nationalism or black feminism. She reports effects for one of the treatments—she states that listening to political rap and non-political rap has an effect on the level of support listeners express for black nationalism (those exposed to political rap were approximately 20% more likely to express support for black nationalism than those in the control group, while those exposed to non-political rap were approximately 20% *less* likely than those exposed to the control to express such support).