appropriate historical setting and with regard to the particular audience that Douglass targeted. Ultimately, Buccola concludes that for Douglass, a particular ethos had to be created in which humans came to recognize obligations to others' natural rights in order for liberalism in America to work.

For Buccola, this moral ethos would be created in various ways. First, the ethos necessary to maintain liberalism in America would be the result of two "ideal" agents—the reformer and the self-made man (and woman). The reformer contributes to this moral ethos because he/she "goes above and beyond the call of duty by dedicating his life to closing the gap between moral ideals and political realities" (p. 102). The reformer is he/she who shapes government into one that is undergirded by natural rights, and also reminds "ordinary" individuals of their obligation to respect and struggle for the natural rights of others. The self-made man/woman illustrates, through hard work, the possibility of flourishing that is the result of a society undergirded by natural rights. Furthermore, this ethos is maintained through education, rituals, and the rhetoric of statesman.

In all, one may wonder how religion in Douglass would have figured into his commitment to liberalism, the moral ecology necessary to maintain it, and Douglass' conception of humans. Further, one may question whether Buccola does Douglass' thought justice in taking arguments from very early essays and pairing them with essays from very late periods without the guide of historical and developmental shifts, or considering the political landscapes that Douglass engaged. However, Buccola's contribution achieves a very high standard of academic rigor. It shows us the complexity of Douglass' thoughts without shying away from questions that arise as a result of them. In a very well written, clear, and well argued text, Nicholas Buccola shows us why Frederick Douglass' thought is invaluable to any conversation of American liberalism.

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Matt Grossmann. *The Not-So-Special Interests: Interest Groups, Public Representation, and American Governance.* Stanford University Press, 2012, 248 pp. ($80.00 cloth, $24.95 paper, $24.95 electronic).

"Special interest" is a four-letter word in American politics. Journalists, pundits, and politicians routinely spin fantastic stories about the larger-than-life power of interest groups in Washington. Special interests have made puppets of our lawmakers, they say. Special interests have insidious hidden

agendas, they say. We need leaders who will finally take a stand against the special interests once and for all. Or so they say.

Against this sensational backdrop, *The Not-So-Special Interests* provides a refreshingly clear-eyed assessment of the landscape of interest group politics in Washington. The book focuses on *advocacy organizations*, groups that represent some constituency. As the book explains, these organizations bear little resemblance to the special interest boogeymen of the popular imagination. They represent ethnic and religious minorities (e.g., Cherokees and Evangelicals). They represent occupations (e.g., teachers) and issue positions (e.g., pro-life). Almost everyone, it turns out, is a part of some "special interest."

And if that's the case, then it doesn't make much sense to spend time pondering how we can break the supposed strangle-hold of special interests in Washington. We should be asking other questions: Why are some social groups better at forming advocacy organizations? Why are some organizations better at getting their voices heard? Using impressive original data on the more than 1,600 advocacy organizations in Washington, *The Not-So-Special Interests* walks us through a few of the answers.

The book first asks which social groups are best represented by organized advocates. Its explanation—a theory it dubs *Behavioral Pluralism*—is that the social groups that are represented best by organizations in Washington are those that are most engaged in civic life in other ways (and not necessarily those with the kinds of preferences and cost structures that many models of collective action focus on). The book analyzes data on the average traits of the people in each of the several hundred distinct social groups represented by advocacy organizations in D.C. With these data, *The Not-So-Special Interests* shows that groups that have more education and income ("socioeconomic status"), that pay more attention to the news, that feel more politically effective, and that participate more in politics in other ways have more formal organizations in Washington with bigger staffs that are cited more often in the D.C. news and that testify in Congress more often. Although the book notes that most interest groups are tiny—on any given issue, there are only a few powerhouses—it concludes (somewhat cheerfully) that advocacy organizations in Washington represent the entire spectrum of American civic life.

Of course, simply having an organization in Washington is no guarantee that a social group can really influence public policy. In Part II, the book asks why some advocacy organizations are more influential than others—in other words, what determines whether a group's voice is heard. Again, drawing on impressive original data, the book demonstrates the value of a new theory—*Institutionalized Pluralism*—which holds that the organizations that are most influential are those that are older, larger, more connected to a

public membership base, and able to comment on a wider range of issues. Advocacy organizations play an important symbolic role in U.S. politics, and the groups that are most "institutionalized" are most likely to become the "usual suspects" that lawmakers and the media turn to—they are most likely to be seen as legitimate mouthpieces for the groups they represent.

Cutting through the folklore about interest groups is no small task, but *The Not-So-Special Interests* blazes an impressive trail. It dispassionately devises sensible theories. It mingles real-world insights with heaps of illuminating quantitative data, most of which the author created from scratch using techniques that combine methodological rigor and common sense. The end result is a book that has important implications for the study of interest groups and for other questions in our field. Is there a liberal bias in media coverage? No—once we account for characteristics like the size and age of an interest group, its ideology has essentially no bearing on how often it is cited in print, on television, or on the web. Are congressional hearings biased in favor of interest groups sympathetic to the party in power? No—congressional committees always invite "the usual suspects," even when their views are out of step with those of the committee leadership, because advocacy organizations provide convenient stand-ins for the politically engaged social groups that are affected by a given policy.

The only problem seems to be that less politically engaged social groups count for less in this process. In Part I, *The Not-So-Special Interests* shows that groups that are less civically engaged are less well-represented in the interest group system. The book casts this finding in the reassuring frame of pluralist theory: although the politically engaged have an advantage, our porous interest group system is open to engaged groups of all kinds. Where the book sees pluralism, however, I see the hazy silhouette of pluralist theory's old rival, *power elite theory*. Social groups that pay more attention to politics are more likely to be represented by advocacy organizations in Washington. That might be because those groups are inherently more active in civic life. Or it might be because those groups can afford well-heeled advocacy organizations to keep them informed and to spur them to action when the issues that affect them are on the agenda. Social groups that feel more politically efficacious are more likely to be represented by advocacy organizations in Washington. That might be because they are better citizens, or it might be that groups who don't have as much of a voice in Washington are understandably skeptical about what they can accomplish through government. Social groups that vote more often tend to have more advocacy organizations. That might be because politicians fear the clout of people who show up on election day or because "the process leading to electoral participation also leads to organizational mobilization" (p. 60). Or it could be that voting is one of many markers of "belonging" to the high society that

Washington caters to, or that voting is correlated with resources like money, free time, and so on—the kinds of resources that are barriers to entry in the interest group game. The links Grossman finds between civic engagement at the group level and organized advocacy in Washington could be signs of a healthy civil society. Or they could be symptoms of an interest group process that privileges those who are already privileged.

On this point, *The Not-So-Special Interests* mostly stays on the fence, or takes the pluralist side. And that's just fine—it is an impressive feat to simply show that groups that are more engaged are more likely to be represented by advocacy organizations. But now we need to know why. Whether we see "special interests" as a dirty word or not ultimately depends on whose interests we think they represent. It depends on whether we see advocacy organizations as natural extensions of the American civic tradition or as opportunities for groups that are powerful to preserve their privileged place in society.

The *Not-so-Special Interests* probably won't be the last word on this important question. But it should be the first word in many conversations about interest groups—and about American democracy.

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Richard L. Fox and Jennifer M. Ramos. *iPolitics: Citizens, Elections, and Governing in the New Media Era.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012. 310 pp. ($32.99 paper).

In politics and in the media, discussions of the Internet often become filled with hyperbole. During the Arab Spring, for example, the Egyptian revolution was sometimes referred to as the "Facebook Revolution" or the "Twitter" revolution. After all, if western media were reading posts about the revolution on Twitter and Facebook—and all the people these reporters know are on Facebook and Twitter—how could it be that not everyone in Egypt was part of this Facebook and Twitter revolution too? In *iPolitics: Citizens, Elections, and Governing in the New Media Era,* Richard L. Fox and Jennifer M. Ramos have put together an edited volume that examines various aspects of politics online. The book has a United States focus but also covers cases in Western Europe and looks at certain aspects of the Arab Spring as well. The analysis considers the use of social media, YouTube, blogging, and old-fashioned websites by politicians, citizens, and the media.

Perhaps the most beneficial aspect of the book is that it does not take either a positive or a negative position on the role of new media and the