author makes it clear what is and is not demonstrable through this study and also makes appropriate suggestions for further research. *Lessons of Disaster* is perhaps slightly more suitable for policy academics rather than practitioners. However, after reading this book, it is hard not to become an advocate for aggressive disaster mitigation, as opposed to the preponderant paradigm of disaster relief.

Worker Centers: Organizing Communities at the Edge of the Dream By Janice Fine. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006. 316p. $49.95 cloth, $21.95 paper.
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— Oren M. Levin-Waldman, *Metropolitan College of New York*

The notion that immigrants need institutions of support as they try to make it in the U.S. economy is certainly nothing new. At the turn of the century, Jane Addams and the Settlement House Movement, beginning in Chicago with Hull House, made it their mission to provide the types of support that would ease immigrants' transition into American life. Janice Fine's *Worker Centers* is essentially a primer for activists on the role of worker centers as institutions designed to provide support to low-wage workers, especially immigrant workers in metropolitan areas. Defining worker centers as community-based mediating institutions that provide support to low-wage workers, Fine considers the effectiveness of these centers in improving the lives of low-wage workers. She also raises an even larger question: Just what institutional mechanisms are necessary for integrating low-wage immigrants into American civil society so that they can derive the benefits of ongoing economic representation and political action?

Fine's central thesis is that worker centers have arisen in part because of the absence of preexisting institutions that can both integrate low-wage immigrants into American civil society and furnish them with a means toward economic stability and self-organization. In recent years, they have come to fill the void left by the decline in institutions, most notably labor unions. About 9% of worker centers were founded explicitly to fill the gap left by the decline of unionization in particular industries, and another 14% were founded in connection with unions and union organizing drives. However, these centers are about more than union-style protections: They seek to provide a range of services including legal services to recoup unpaid wages or enforce mandated minimum wages, lessons in English and workers' rights, advocacy, and organization among others. Though there are different types of worker centers, the vast majority of these centers have grown up to serve predominantly or exclusively immigrant populations.

This book is certainly packed with a lot of information about the origins of these centers, what they do, who is recruited and how they are recruited, their relations with other organizations such as labor unions, and how they attempt to influence public policy in a quest to attain immigrant rights and social justice. Finally, it offers some assessment about their role in the new global economy. For organizers, this is no doubt useful information. Missing, however, is the place of these centers within the broader literature on the role of institutions. In the end, the book offers a larger assessment of the worker center movement, but it does not really situate these centers within the context of larger social movements, such as the Settlement House movement that preceded it. The reader is thus left to ponder the following questions: What historically has been the role of institutions in organizing otherwise disfranchised workers into the economy? How do these centers effectively respond to the decline of unions? Many immigrant centers do conduct organizing campaigns, and Fine offers as one example the Restaurant Workers Association of Koreatown (RWAK), which sought from 2004 to 2005 to build power in industry by establishing a strong organization of restaurant workers that would improve industry standards. What is important about RWAK is that it grew out of Korean Immigrant Worker Advocates and its 2001 informational campaign about California's new minimum wage of $6.25.

Though Fine certainly discusses the various economic transformations and demographic trends, such as the shift from manufacturing to services, globalization, the increase in immigration, and the decline in unionization, she does not really address the fundamental question of how such centers might then form the basis for resurrecting the union movement. Yet, she argues that the workers these centers cater to are very much on the next frontier of organizing. Therefore, the question of how these centers would fit into the union movement and the tradition of union organizing is critical. Indeed, it would have been beneficial to understand just how such centers really are an extension of that tradition of social movements. She observes that the challenge for those seeking to organize workers—worker centers, unions, and other community organizations—is to find "leverage points" within employment relationships and to identify "effective strategies for bringing pressure to bear" (p. 102). This begs the question: If worker centers exist to serve immigrant workers, do they then form the foundations of organizing these workers into effective coalitions to achieve justice for workers? If, as some have suggested (e.g., see Ruth Milkman, "Immigrant Organizing and the New Labor Movement Los Angeles," *Critical Sociology* 26 [nos. 1–2, 2000]: 59–81; Zaragosa Vargas, *Labor Rights are Civil Rights,* 2005), low-wage immigrant workers might be ripe for organizing, just where do worker centers fit in? Unfortunately, these questions remain unanswered largely because of the failure to engage the vast literature on organizing and the role that such institutions might play as a constituent base of support.

From all appearances, this work has the appearance of a scholarly work. It is replete with a bibliography and there is

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a methodology whereby centers from around the country are surveyed. It certainly provides some useful information about worker centers and is a must-read for activists. For political scientists, however, it may come as a disappointment. Even though there are chapters devoted to policy and efforts to achieve social justice, political scientists would be more interested in a more in-depth discussion of the role of organizations in affecting policy, in mobilizing support, and how these centers might be well poised to continue in that tradition. Much of the writing style is a cross between journalism and an infomercial. Toward the end of the book, Fine asserts that worker centers have been quite successful at integrating the low-wage worker's point of view into public debates about economic development and immigration issues. She further asserts that "By shining a light on the working poor and forcing the issues to be debated, worker centers are laying the groundwork for new national policies on low-wage workers and the rights of immigrants . . ." (p. 260). Yet, one searches in vain for support for these types of assertions. We do know that various coalitions in recent years—most notably living wage coalitions—have been successful in getting more than 100 cities to pass such ordinances. Scholars, however, have been able to place these movements into context and in some cases quantify the effects (e.g., see Oren M. Levin-Waldman, *The Political Economy of the Living Wage,* 2005; Isaac Martin, "Dawn of the Living Wage: The Diffusion of Redistributive Municipal Policy," *Urban Affairs Review* 36 [March 2002]: 470–96). Without similar attempts to do the same with worker centers, the overall argument of the book becomes less convincing.

Disarmed: The Missing Movement for Gun Control in America. By Kristin A. Goss. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006. 304p. $29.95.

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— Clarissa Rile Hayward, *Ohio State University*

If popular political movements attract the attention of a wide range of political scientists, this is the case, to no small degree, because they seem to bridge an impossible chasm. They seem to bridge—or at least to begin to build a bridge between—on the one hand, the lofty aspirations of democrats who invoke a language of government "by the people," and on the other, the reality of modern democracies in which elites govern, while citizens judge their performances. When people vote, they affirm—or they reject—the leaders who make and enforce collective decisions. When people participate in popular movements, by contrast, they act in public to articulate and press claims about collective norms. When ordinary citizens participate in mass political movements, that is to say, they act collectively to exercise political power.

In *Disarmed: The Missing Movement for Gun Control in America,* Kristin Goss asks, "What prompts them to do that?" What conditions make it likely (or unlikely) that ordinary citizens who share some set(s) of preferences, or who share some set(s) of potential political claims, will mobilize around those preferences and claims and act in concert to advance them? The book's principal interlocutors, then, are participants in the literature on social movements. The author proceeds, however, by examining *not* a full-fledged movement, but rather what she identifies as a nonmovement. The "missing movement for gun control," she suggests, on the face of things seems as if it *should* have happened. But it did not.

Goss begins by explaining why one might expect a gun control movement in the contemporary United States. Public opinion surveys in this country consistently show widespread and strong support for gun control. Key political elites are in favor, as well. Since the 1970s, what is more, the United States has seen the development of both state- and national-level organizations that are devoted to pressing for government regulation of firearms. In addition, the country suffers from high levels of gun violence, including periodic dramatic, widely publicized incidents (such as political assassinations and mass killings), which presumably could serve as catalysts for a popular gun control movement. Yet Americans have not mobilized in any sustained way to press political claims for state regulation of firearms. Why not?

Goss's principal explanation is that gun control supporters in this country have failed to solve the free rider problem that plagues every would-be movement, by shaping, in salutary ways, how people calculate the difference between participation's individualized benefits and costs. Specifically, they have failed to recruit institutional patrons—such as state agencies, private associations, and philanthropic organizations—to "socialize the costs of participation" (p. 51) by providing resources like capital, labor, and expert advice. They have failed to develop and to circulate narratives about gun violence that frame it as a problem that personally affects potential movement participants, rather than a problem of law enforcement: the proper province of experts. And they have failed to adopt the kinds of political strategies that might encourage potential participants to understand their personal involvement as linked to immediate, concrete gains.

Of these three failures, it is the third that receives the most attention. Goss argues that it is crucial for popular political movements to proceed incrementally, targeting relatively modest, local win, before they undertake bold legislative initiatives at higher levels of government. Incremental approaches to political change, according to her claim, are best suited to the federal structure of the American system of government. What is more, they appeal to a relatively broad segment of the population, thus attracting greater numbers of participants, and they reinforce participation with the near-immediate gratification of small and local victories. In addition, incremental strategies

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