

waste disposal, economic development planning, and assistance to domestic violence victims. Her conclusions are based on an impressive array of sources, including participant observation, surveys of nongovernmental organizations, personal interviews, and analysis of government documents. By choosing three disparate policy areas, she is able to portray variance in the democratic performance of the same city government.

In terms of waste disposal, Krakow and Lodz present stark and convincing contrasts in democratic performance along the lines that the institutional capital hypothesis would expect. Both cities were charged with relocating their solid waste facilities following the fall of communism. In Krakow, a broad range of environmental groups came together with the city government at a “Green Table” to plan environmentally sound waste disposal and recycling policies, resulting in the author’s partnership performance. In contrast, the Lodz city authorities clashed with neighborhood groups, and the two sides failed to agree on a new waste disposal facility. As a result, the city resorted to the costly solution of exporting its garbage.

The two cities exhibited similar patterns in terms of economic development planning. Following the fall of communism, Krakow’s “Oval Table” was established as a forum for city officials and national and international organizations, as well as local economic, cultural, and other NGOs, to collaborate on extensive development plans. In contrast to this high level of partnership performance, Lodz failed to create a comprehensive development plan at all and simply decided to rely on the presence of low-wage labor as a means of attracting international investment. While these latter outcomes are consistent with the amount of institutional capital present, this case seems overdetermined. Given its world cultural and historical importance, Krakow had many more development options open to it in the 1990s than did industrial Lodz; the latter’s lack of planning may represent more its lack of development options than its lack of institutional capital.

Lodz, however, also failed to structure coordination with civil society in the realm of social service provision. In contrast to Krakow, the city has not established a shelter for its high number of domestic violence victims. Here, “third sector performance” has at least emerged, as competent independent women’s organizations have been able to provide a high level of services to victims of domestic violence at an independently run hostel that receives some public funding.

In the realm of social service provision, Krakow failed to obtain the partnership performance it did in the first two policy areas. Although a vibrant array of women’s organizations were present in the city, there was a lack of will on the part of public administration to collaborate with them. The city’s Department of Social Services shut an experienced feminist NGO out of the bidding process for a contract to run a shelter for battered women, failing

to provide them with comprehensive information about the bidding process and changing the deadline for bids immediately after receiving a bid from an inexperienced Catholic charity that the department’s Catholic bureaucrats found amenable. The latter organization has failed to provide appropriate services to domestic violence victims in Krakow, and competent NGOs have been denied resources they could have used to provide such services. Here, Brunell makes a convincing case that there is not always a one-to-one correlation between a dynamic civil society and high government performance. If the government is hostile to the participation of voluntary organizations, their expertise cannot be used to improve policy outcomes. One wonders, however, if the author would have come to the same conclusion had feminist bureaucrats used similar tactics to exclude the Catholic charity from bid consideration.

On a stylistic note, the book would have benefited from better copyediting. Persistent grammatical and typographical errors throughout the book detract from Brunell’s innovative theoretical framework and detailed empirical chapters. Footnotes often lead to irregular line spacing as well.

Overall, however, *Institutional Capital* offers a logically convincing mechanism linking civil society and government performance. The case of waste disposal provides strong empirical support for Brunell’s hypotheses, while the economic development case is less persuasive. The discussion of domestic violence provides compelling evidence that high government performance is not always guaranteed, even when a dynamic civil society is present. The book tells an absorbing tale of two very different Polish cities, which is sure to be of interest to students of Polish politics, in addition to those who study civil society and government performance more generally.

Confronting the Weakest Link: Aiding Political Parties in New Democracies. By Thomas Carothers.

Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2006.

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— Regina Smyth, *Indiana University*

Thomas Carothers is a leading voice in the investigation of the success and failure of democratic transitions. Writing from the viewpoint of a practitioner, Carothers provides a unique perspective on the scholarly discussion of democratic transition and the actions of democracy assistance organizations. His previous insights into the weakness of the “transition paradigm” or modal framework that scholars use to study democratic transitions underscored important flaws: the expectation of linear democratic development, the lack of attention to state building, and the focus on democracy as the only potential outcome of the process. While most of these flaws have been

extensively addressed in the second wave of literature on postcommunist transitions and other regions, it is undeniable that much of the early work suffered from a sort of groupthink that drew overly optimistic predictions about the success of regime transitions.

In *Confronting the Weakest Link*, Carothers continues his incisive investigation of failed transitions during the third and fourth waves of democratizing states. The observation that political parties create democracy and are an essential element of democratic systems is the starting point of the study. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, this truism drove a good deal of the work on parties and party systems and bolstered an extensive international aid effort to build parties in order to foster democratic consolidation. Carothers argues that both scholarly work and party-building aid programs suffered from the strong assumption that efficacious democratic political parties would inevitably emerge from repeated elections. Empirical reality and much subsequent research revealed that the assumption did not always hold. In this work, he addresses the puzzle of party weakness, asking why Western aid efforts to shape durable and democratic political parties met with so little success.

The author's explanation of the failures of party assistance targets both "political science" and the strategies of party assistance organizations. In a discussion of the academic literature on party development in new democracies, he identifies a series of factors that scholars did not consider in most models of transitional party building. Many of these factors can be grouped into a single category: the role of political resources in party development. Resources include mobilized mass publics, civic organizations, funds, and access to state resources. While transition scholars expected parties to establish a monopoly over resources, thereby controlling access to electoral politics, the reality in Latin American, the postcommunist states, Asia, and the Middle East was that many of these resources were either unavailable or controlled by nonparty actors, from strong presidents to economic elites. These omissions in the theoretic frameworks that guided research on party development carried into democracy assistance programs, fueling a shared sense of inevitability and providing limited insights into how best to overcome the obstacles to party development.

The second leg of the explanation of party weakness focuses on the strategies and decision-making processes of aid organizations. In stark terms, Carothers argues that with the best of intentions, inward-looking aid programs implemented a cookie-cutter approach to party building, ignoring both the local conditions and the needs of party leaders. The result is an "institutional approach" that repeatedly makes the same mistakes across time and countries. These problems are compounded by aid organizations' propensities to rely on a fixed set of experts and shy away from rigorous self-examination. He points out that some

of these issues, such as the insular nature of programs, the reliance on repetitive seminars, and the myopic focus on campaigning, are already being remedied. The most successful remedies have come in the form of party system assistance that focuses on making the electoral process more transparent and levels the playing field. Other factors, including the danger of backlash as foreign countries intrude in domestic politics, party leaders' resistance to reforms that might deplete their own influence, and the need to address the underlying structural problems that stunt party development, are more difficult to solve. Yet the prescription is not to abandon aid programs. In the end, the author suggests that shared expectations about the effect of democracy assistance need to be more modest and that assistance programs must be restructured to provide sustained and relevant support tailored to specific situations.

Carothers's critics often take issue with his broad conclusions and tendency to take a global view. Others accuse him of constructing straw men. In this book, his critique of the scholarly literature is overdrawn. The description of a flawed conventional wisdom rings true but the fault does not lie exclusively with poor scholarship. Many studies of party development did (and still do) consider his omitted factors in their models, but as he has pointed out in previous work, boundaries around area debates often preclude cross-regional dialogue that could redefine conventional wisdom in light of new understandings of empirical reality.

No doubt the author's broad-stroke approach in this work will raise a lot of questions from both area specialists and individual democracy assistance programs. The analysis obscures the variation in party development across a number of regions and therefore misses an opportunity to carefully evaluate factors that might explain party-building failures. Similarly, the variation in specific aid programs and strategies are underdeveloped and are not linked to differences in outcomes.

In terms of theory building, there is little systematic discussion of the relationship between state building and party building despite frequent references to the lack of state structure in most transitional states. Likewise, the link between the development of parties in government and parties in the electorate is underdeveloped, perhaps reflecting an important fissure in party assistance programs. Still, the big picture provides important directions for future research, including a reconsideration of the preconditions of democratic governance through the lens of the prerequisites of party building and the impact of technology (particularly television) and money on patterns of early party formation. Both of these areas reaffirm the need for rigorous, theoretically informed country studies that can deepen shared understandings of party development. Finally, this expansive work underscores that the democracy aid industry deserves renewed scholarly

attention in order to uncover the ways in which information transfers across the boundaries between the academic, nongovernmental-organization, and policy communities and the impact of specific aid strategies on democratic success.

Social Movements and Organization Theory. Edited by Gerald F. Davis, Doug McAdam, Richard Scott, and Mayer N. Zald. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005. 452p. \$80.00 cloth, \$36.99 paper.

Challenging Authority: How Ordinary People Change America. By Frances Fox Piven. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006. 200p. \$21.95.
DOI: 10.1017/S1537592707071964

— Heidi Swarts, *Rutgers University-Newark*

These two books, both important additions to the social movement literature, represent two traditions at theoretical odds. Frances Fox Piven's new book is an authoritative, updated restatement of Piven and Richard Cloward's classic thesis that it is not lasting organization but fleeting and overwhelming mass disruption—literally, “the mob” in her new work—that is the only source of progressive reform in American politics. Meanwhile, the focus of Gerald Davis et al.'s new book is squarely in the organization-centered tradition of social movement scholarship. And yet, while the books are quite different, Doug McAdam and Piven (with Cloward) were all pioneer scholars of the role of political opportunity on movement emergence and outcomes. These two books are testimony to how far research on social movements has come in the past 35 years.

Social Movements and Organization Theory is a significant, theoretically edited volume that draws on senior scholars of organization theory (often based in business schools) and social movements organizations. Its purpose is to craft a “stronger foundation” for explaining “organizationally mediated social change processes in modern societies” (p. 14). This is a major agenda-setting volume whose importance is obvious in the theoretical depth of its chapters. Its roots go back 10 years, when McAdam and W. Richard Scott, the prominent organization theorist, began to look for points of contact in their fields, broadening the effort to include Davis and Mayer Zald. (With this collaboration, which includes Zald and John D. McCarthy, they come full circle to the origins of resource mobilization theory, the study of movement organizations as rational resource seekers that form “sectors” and even “industries” within movements.)

This limited space cannot begin to do justice to the rich and varied contributions of this book, but simply sketches its range and some notable arguments and their implications. Those familiar with the evolution of political process theory will not be surprised to see an emphasis on mechanisms and a move away from analyzing movements in isolation (see *Dynamics of Contention* by Doug

McAdam, Sidney Tarrow, Charles Tilly, 2001). The edited volume, which emerged from two workshops, includes five sections with distinct missions.

In the two introductory chapters of Section I, McAdam and Scott and then John L. Campbell review the points of convergence and complementary strengths and weaknesses of organization theory and social movement theory. McAdam and Scott insightfully apply concepts from one body of research to the other. For example, they emphasize the value of a *field-level perspective*, often used in organization studies, for the study of social movement organizations (which McCarthy and Zald several decades ago called movement sectors and industries, a line of research that few movement scholars took up). In brief reviews of the American health-care system and the Civil Rights movement, they combine the relatively static, structural concepts from organization studies (organizational fields, actors, dominants, challengers, institutional logic) and more dynamic social movement concepts (destabilizing processes, mobilizing mechanisms, attribution of threat or opportunity). While the study of organizations and social movements includes conceptual overlap, real differences exist, and essays such as this one show the added value of combining and training them on apparently different phenomena. Campbell's introductory chapter focuses fruitfully on social *mechanisms* in movements and other organizations, another way to bridge the differences among types of organization by shifting focus to smaller-scale components they share. He argues that mechanisms play an indispensable role in causal explanation because, following Jon Elster (*The Nuts and Bolts for the Social Sciences*, 1989, 3), social mechanisms are the “nuts, bolts, cogs, and wheels that link causes with effects.”

In his introductory chapter, Campbell notes that “both movements and organizations are . . . forms of organized action and as such are susceptible to similar tools of analysis” (p. 41). This may be true, but later in the volume, Davis and Zald ask, “Why now?” (p. 335) Elisabeth Clemens offers an answer: Business organizations are increasingly removed from the stereotypical hierarchical bureaucratic firm, and scholars seek new models to understand them (p. 352). For example, firms, like activist organizations, often work in temporary networks, with the tools of the communications revolution. Davis and Zald rhapsodize about the wonders of the Internet, cell phones, and instant messaging to assemble six million protestors on one day in February 2003 worldwide against the war in Iraq—an astounding testament to the technologies, though a jaundiced observer might note their ultimate lack of impact—and that the limited impact some national protests had was on that old traditional target, the sovereign state. Nevertheless, Davis and Zald's brief case studies of the protests that brought down Philippine President Joseph Estrada in 2001 and of the April 16, 2000 demonstration against the International Monetary