

example, financial penalties or an inability to apply to jobs in the public sector—when they stay home on Election Day. In developing democracies, brokers in clientelism networks can observe whether people vote or participate in protests. Abstaining can be costly in those settings because people can lose access to important benefits, such as food or cash. Amending the participation “equation” to incorporate these costs seems feasible and might be advisable.

The theory and the empirical analysis in this important book focus on the individual decisions that people make to participate or abstain in an election or protest. Less attention is paid to contextual factors that can shape those individual perceptions and behaviors studied in the book. In addition to the closeness of the election, institutional characteristics (presidentialism vs. parliamentarism), political conjuncture (rise of an outsider or populist candidate), or economic factors (globalization) can all shape citizens’ evaluations of how much is at stake in a particular election. The theoretical framework developed in this book gives students of political participation new tools to think about how these macrolevel factors influence individual decisions to vote and join protests.

Notwithstanding these minor quibbles with the arguments and the empirics, this book is a tour de force that should be required reading for both theorists of political participation and empirically minded scholars alike. Aytac and Stokes offer a clear multidisciplinary synthesis of previous research, as well as a new unified and compelling theory of political participation that helps us make better sense of well-known paradoxes of political participation. This book will undoubtedly become a classic in the political participation literature.

**Transforming Rural Water Governance: The Road from Resource Management to Political Activism in Nicaragua.** By Sarah T. Romano. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2019. 232p. \$60.00 cloth.

doi:10.1017/S1537592720003011

— Alicia Dailey Cooperman , Texas A&M University  
alicia.cooperman@tamu.edu

Water is a political issue throughout the world, and struggles for equity, access, and quality of water reflect and amplify voices across social and political levels, from the grassroots to the international stage. Sarah Romano’s book, *Transforming Rural Water Governance: The Road from Resource Management to Political Activism in Nicaragua*, is an excellent case study of successful collective action and mobilization in the rural water sector, following in the influential traditions of Elinor Ostrom and Judith Tandler. Romano contributes to literatures about common property regimes, social capital, and decentralization, and her research advances our understanding of the role of grassroots organizations in “multiscalar”

political activism that spans communities, sectors, and levels of government.

Romano studies community-based water and sanitation committees (CAPS) in Nicaragua and asks, “What factors explain CAPS’ successful transcommunity mobilization to achieve a national collective presence and, ultimately, legal recognition from the state?” (p. 10). Most of the book builds on extensive fieldwork during 2009 and 2010 to understand why and how CAPS went from being invisible community-based organizations managing more than 5,000 isolated rural water systems to an organized national network that influenced the passage of national legislation—the Special CAPS Law (Law 722) in May 2010. Chapter 1 provides a historical overview of community-based water management (CBWM) and state–society relations in Nicaragua, and chapters 2–4 provide evidence for the three main theoretical arguments. Chapter 5 jumps ahead to 2015 to evaluate the financial, legal, and political implications of Law 722 and the pros and cons of formalizing CBWM organizations; it is especially relevant for policy makers and practitioners.

The research method is a single-country case study with process tracing to explain mobilization at a national scale. Romano uses “careful description” (p. 24) of the dynamic processes and sequencing of events, and she conducts impressive qualitative research and inductive theory-building grounded in participant observation in rural communities, municipal assemblies, departmental network meetings, and National CAPS Network meetings. She analyzed primary and secondary data, such as CAPS and NGO meeting notes and conducted nearly 200 semi-structured interviews with a wide range of key actors from 2004 to 2016.

Romano argues that three interrelated factors explain CAPS’ national mobilization and impact on national legislation: their (1) “organic empowerment” and “legitimate authority” derived from years of acting as local water managers and service providers; (2) multisectoral alliances with professional, urban NGOs and multilateral agencies; and (3) public discourses targeted to national political leadership.

Romano states that the first factor—CAPS’ organic empowerment at the community level—is a “necessary precondition” (p. 10), and she emphasizes that the community, not the state, conferred this authority. Chapter 2 outlines a long list of inductively derived characteristics of successful CAPS and provides a rich description of CAPS and the challenges and successes of CBWM in Nicaragua. Organic empowerment is also an important basis for the other two theoretical factors; it leads to the bonding social capital involved in multisectoral alliances and CAPS’ political discourses.

Romano argues that the second factor of multisectoral alliances supported CAPS’ mobilization in three ways by providing (1) financial support for physical mobility and political visibility at important public events, (2) political

and legal capacity building for developing and articulating legislative policy recommendations, and (3) direct access to state officials. Romano digs into an important theoretical discussion of the impacts of bonding social capital, involving relations among close family, friends, or neighbors, and bridging social capital, involving connections across different socioeconomic, sectoral, or class-based groups (p. 22). Some scholars suggest that the concepts are at odds because bonding social capital strengthens in-group affinity and exclusivity at the expense of out-group alliances. Romano finds the opposite: bonding social capital was an “important precondition” for bridging social capital because the deep, bonded social ties of CAPS in their communities, rooted in their organic empowerment, actually gave legitimacy to their intersectoral alliances. Those bridges then supported stronger bonded ties between CAPS and their communities and other CAPS groups.

The third theoretical factor focuses on public discourse and rhetoric, especially CAPS’ claims to autonomy and ownership, claims of conducting work legally prescribed to the state, and focus on collective problem solving across sectors and political parties. Romano argues that CAPS influenced national legislation by combining these rhetorical approaches with legitimate authority, political and legal capacity building through their alliances, and direct access to state officials. The case is possibly unusual in that CAPS were virtually unknown before they began mobilizing, so they were free to shape the narrative.

Romano provides a convincing single-country case study, which naturally begs multiple questions and inspires additional lines of research. I wanted to know more about subnational variation in CAPS’ participation, because the book focuses exclusively on successful CAPS. Romano notes substantial variation among the thousands of CAPS and that issues of “inclusion and exclusion” (p. 109) are somewhat inevitable in any network, and chapter 5 mentions variation in the willingness and ability of municipalities or CAPS to implement Law 722. Although a systematic analysis of subnational variation would be its own in-depth study and thus understandably outside the book’s scope, it is important for us to understand why some communities did not have CAPS and why those with CAPS did not or could not participate, before or after Law 722. This variation has implications for water access, sustainable and equitable development, and theories of the causes and effects of “scaling up” by grassroots organizations.

I also wanted to know more about two theoretically rich areas: the interaction between bonding and bridging social capital, and the politicization of grassroots organizations. First, Romano raises an important question: “Under what conditions does bonding social capital, and the positive synergies among the people who share it, transcend the geographic, social, and political boundaries of these ‘tight-

knit’ groups?” (p. 96). Although a single case study cannot evaluate this question, future work could analyze additional cases with variation in Romano’s theoretical factors. Second, community-driven development scholarship highlights the potential for elite capture and vote brokerage through grassroots organizations. Romano writes that CAPS were largely autonomous but observes “a creeping in of partisan politicization” (p. 153) after Law 722. How did CAPS avoid co-optation in the past, and how, why, and where did this change? How does politicization affect CAPS’ ability to provide and advocate for water and sanitation services?

Finally, what are the scope conditions for this theory? Romano writes that water is unique, because it is essential for everyone and is often constitutionally mandated. Can Romano’s theory explain patterns of scaling up of grassroots organizing around other issues, such as health and education reform or other human or civil rights movements? This question does not lessen the contribution of this important work. Given the essentiality of water and the ongoing struggles for equity, access, and quality throughout the world, a theory limited to water governance is still important for designing sustainable development policy and understanding how certain types of grassroots organizations mobilize nationally. However, I suspect that many aspects of her theory could transfer to other issues, and I hope this book inspires future work by Romano and other scholars.

**Authoritarian Containment: Public Security Bureaus and Protestant House Churches in Urban China.** By Marie-Eve Reny. New York: Oxford University Press, 2018. 184p. \$74.00 cloth. doi:10.1017/S1537592720003205

— Andrew R. Lewis , *University of Cincinnati*  
andrew.lewis@uc.edu

Religious freedom advocates and human rights organizations frequently critique China’s restrictions on religious rights. This has come into stark relief with China’s treatment of the Uighurs and other Muslim ethnic minorities, as well as its policy requiring state control of religious activities. Government suppression and state control, however, are not the only options for the authoritarian regime. For tens of millions of Protestant Christians, the Chinese government has pursued a different, more nuanced, and unexpected path—containment.

In *Authoritarian Containment*, Marie-Eve Reny explores why the Chinese government has chosen to informally contain certain religious organizations instead of repressing or co-opting them, especially because religion has a history of undermining authoritarian rule. Her thesis is that “public security bureaus tolerate [unregistered Protestant] churches to contain the influence of informal Protestantism in urban China” (p. 6). Toleration is an