This is not a conceptually neat book, and some readers may be frustrated with its ambiguities. In particular, Holston’s definition of citizenship as not only formal membership in the polity but “the substantive distribution of rights, meanings, institutions, and practices that membership entails” (p. 7) is so broad and flexible that it is hard to be sure where its boundaries lie. Its ambiguity allows him to shift the emphasis of his empirical analysis from the extension of rights by the state (in the historical section) to the perception and exercise of those rights by ordinary Brazilians (in the section on the new urban citizenship) without any explanation. The author also makes some controversial assertions that would seem to require more evidence than he provides, including his suggestion that those struggling for home ownership have articulated the demand for a new democratic citizenship with greater “force and originality” than labor unions or political parties (p. 313).

These problems notwithstanding, Insurgent Citizenship makes a number of valuable contributions to the scholarship on Brazil and, in particular, on Brazilian land rights. Its detailed analysis of land ownership claims in one São Paulo neighborhood is especially illuminating, demonstrating how, over time, fraudulent claims have accumulated one on top of the other, so that it is almost impossible to identify a legitimate owner to many tracts of land. Rather than simply ignoring the law, Holston argues, elites have purposely manipulated this legal chaos to their own advantage, using it to force conflicts into nonlegal channels where their superior resources can be decisive. Only recently have working-class groups learned to play the same game.

Has democratization changed Brazil for the better? The reply suggested by both books is a very conditional “yes.” Hochstetler and Keck underscore the lack of sustained progress in some areas, including the degradation of the Amazon, but also show that important strides have been made in creating effective legal and institutional structures and in dealing with some other key environmental problems, such as industrial pollution in São Paulo. For his part, Holston acknowledges that Brazil’s differentiated citizenship is still largely in force, but he insists that a new, more equitable notion of citizenship has become entrenched in urban lower-class neighborhoods. Its diffusion represents a “radical opportunity” (p. 267) to deepen democracy.


— Clement M. Henry, University of Texas at Austin

Amaney Jamal has made a significant contribution to the growing literature in comparative politics about social capital. She argues that the social trust or capital stimulated by civic associations is not necessarily linked either with support for democracy or its correlates of civic involvement, knowledge about politics, or community engagement. While it may “make democracy work” in democratic Italy, the “other side” of social capital apparently also reinforces authoritarian regimes in the Middle East and North Africa. The decisive variable, for Jamal, is the political context in which social capital is accumulated. She also cogently argues that the civil society initiatives of American and other Western donor agencies are unlikely to promote democracy in the region.

Barriers to Democracy conveys a plausible theory based on a sensitive case study of the parts of the West Bank that were under the jurisdiction of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) in the late 1990s. Jamal conducted six months of fieldwork in 1998 and 1999, at a time when the peace process inaugurated by the Oslo Accords of 1993 and 1995 was still being implemented. The PNA fully controlled about 17% of the West Bank and had jurisdiction over an additional 24%, where Israel retained responsibility for security. The writer defends her selection of this case, despite the formal absence of an independent Palestinian state, because the PNA met the Weberian criterion of a monopoly of the legitimate use of force over most of the Palestinian population, and she might have added, in this reviewer’s opinion, that it was an excellent research strategy because the West Bank was then more open to social science inquiry than any other country in the region except Lebanon. Certainly her interviewing of a sample of more than 60 association leaders selected from a total of some 1,100 civic associations operating in the West Bank could not have been accomplished as readily in Egypt, Jordan, or Morocco, the countries she selected as comparators, much less in Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Syria, or Tunisia, all of which also field civic associations. Occupied Palestine was a relatively open society, the object of intensive international scrutiny and support from 1993 through 1999, although its internal regime was replicating the state-centralized ones of Egypt and Tunisia. State-society relations could be more rigorously studied than in the other states because public polling was an accepted routine, evidenced by the remarkable archive of the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (cf., p. 42), available to the public at http://www.pcpsr.org/survey/.

Jamal’s basic argument is that civic associations are shaped by their political terrains. These are broadly of two types, either “clientelistic” or “nonclientelistic” (p. 80). A clientelistic terrain is one in which the government offers or withholds favors selectively to association leaders, and it is characteristic of authoritarian regimes. Citizens are not treated equally; indeed, the rule of law may be problematic and corruption rampant. By contrast, nonclientelistic terrains are assumed by the author to be “already democratic,” even though, as she points out elsewhere, parties in democracies may also engage in clientelistic
practices (p. 17, citing the work of Herbert Kitschelt). Clientelistic and nonclientelistic terrains may in turn field clientelistic or nonclientelistic associations. In the nonclientelistic terrain, Jamal hypothesizes, nonclientelistic associations will be associated with increased social trust and civic engagement, whereas clientelistic associations will breed trust only among their members, without increases in civic engagement. Robert Putnam and other theorists of social capital have focused on these terrains, and even here, in Making Democracy Work (1994), Putnam excluded Italian clientelistic associations and hierarchies. Jamal concentrates instead on clientelistic terrains. In these contexts, she hypothesizes that in nonclientelistic associations, social trust decreases rather than increases, even as civic engagement and support for democratic institutions increase. It is only in clientelistic associations, the tools of the incumbent regime, that trust increases, as protected members display their confidence. But in these associations, she also expects that civic engagement will not increase because “there are few incentives . . . under authoritarian regimes that limit meaningful civic involvement” (p. 81).

The author’s survey of 422 association members, building on an earlier random assessment of 1,200 Palestinians conducted by the Jerusalem Media and Communications Center (JMCC), confirmed the theory. Selecting her sample of members after interviewing their leaders, she identified roughly half of them to be from pro-PNA clientelist associations and the rest to be from associations opposed to clientelism in a civil society that was increasingly polarized. And, indeed, members of the pro-PNA associations were considerably more trusting than those of non-PNA associations (although the JMCC survey indicated that association members tended in general to be significantly more trusting than the unaffiliated majority, controlling for other factors). It also turned out that social trust was, if anything, inversely related to support for democratic institutions, civic engagement, and other values supportive of democratic participation. Indeed, there were statistically significant differences in support for democratic institutions, depending on whether the members belonged to associations supporting or opposing the PNA. The substantial share of the sample favoring the PNA wiped out any positive relationship between social capital and support for democracy. It seemed instead that social capital was strengthening an incumbent authoritarian regime, for the biggest accumulators of social capital were the pro-PNA associations whose members tended to be more charitable toward their authoritarian excesses than other, more socially engaged but also less trustful members of the associations that were keeping their distance from the regime. Here, she might have probed further into the potentially mobilizing capacities of political Islamists, who would win fair and free elections in 2006.

Jamal has supported her theory not only with a survey but also with an excellently crafted case study, replete with a subtle analysis of the double-edged weapon of international donor financing that the PNA used to its advantage. Her efforts to extend the theory to Morocco, Egypt, and Jordan, however, deserve further development. Interviews under her supervision of Moroccan association leaders detailed similar patterns of selective co-optation by the monarchy. A World Values Survey indicated that social trust was also inversely correlated with support for democracy in Morocco and offered circumstantial evidence that similar sorts of clientelistic associations were again the culprit. But Jamal does not offer comparable evidence from Egypt or Jordan, where World Values Surveys were also available (as also for Algeria, which fielded 58,000 associations in 2001–2; cf., Salim Nasr 2005, www.pogar.org/publications/books/participation/civil-reform-e.pdf). The principal common denominator shared by Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, and Palestine was substantial foreign assistance earmarked for democracy promotion.

Jamal wishes to argue that her theory can be extended to other nondemocratic “state-centralized nations” that offer “clientelistic” terrains for civic associations. It is to be hoped that she will further test her hypothesis, shared with Putnam, that social capital reinforces political order—“strong society; strong state” (p. 4). Indeed, her “other side” of social capital offers a fascinating if ironic perspective for comparing performances of authoritarian regimes in the region.


Current debates about Japan’s political economy revolve around revisiting and refining the “miracle” thesis associated with the country’s postwar development. The books by Gregory J. Kasza and Leonard J. Schoppa are excellent contributions that advance this conversation. They are thoughtful, well researched, and creative studies. They complement one another well. In fact, the two ought to be read together.

Kasza’s study examines the historical development of Japan’s welfare state. His is a story of optimism. Kasza contends that when patterns of Japanese social welfare reform are scrutinized against a comparative backdrop, the evidence strongly suggests that Japan has by and large been a leader, not a laggard, in social policy innovation. At worst, he claims, Japan’s performance has been average in some social policies when ranked among other advanced