

- Allardyce, G. (1979). What fascism in not: Thoughts on the deflation of a concept. *American Historical Review*, 84(2), 367-382.
- De Felice, R. (1965-1996). *Mussolini* (Vols. 1-9). Torino, Italy: Einaudi.
- Griffin, R. (1991). *The nature of fascism*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Moore, B., Jr. (1966). *Social origins of dictatorship and democracy*. Boston: Beacon.
- Mussolini, B. (1976). *The political and social doctrine of fascism*. New York: Gordon Press. (Original work published 1932)
- Nolte, E. (1965). *Three faces of fascism: Action Française, Italian fascism, national socialism*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- Paxton, R. (1998). Five stages of fascism. *Journal of Modern History*, 70(1), 2-22.
- Payne, S. (1980). The concept of fascism. In S. Larsen, B. Hagtvet, & J. Muklebust (Eds.), *Who were the Fascists? Social roots of European fascism* (pp. 14-24). Bergen, Norway: Universitetsforlaget.
- Payne, S. (1995). *A history of fascism 1914-1945*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Sartori, G. (1970). Concept misinformation in comparative politics. *American Political Science Review*, 64(4), 1033-1053.
- Schmitter, P. (1974). Still the century of corporatism? *Review of Politics*, 36(1), 85-131.
- Schmitter, P. (1983). Democratic theory and neocorporatist practice. *Social Research*, 50(4), 885-928.

Ariel C. Armony, *The Dubious Link: Civic Engagement and Democratization*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004. 297 pp. Cloth, \$55.00; paper, none.

DOI: 10.1177/0010414005276824

Kristina Mani, Oberlin College

Why do vibrant civil societies sometimes produce undemocratic outcomes? The question underlies the various challenges that have been made, since the publication of Robert Putnam's (1993) book *Making Democracy Work*, to the link between civic engagement and successful democracy. Many of these challenges identify deeper contextual features (political institutional, social historical, or economic) as the real determinants of whether civic engagement indeed produces levels of social trust that can spawn durable democracy. Ariel Armony's new book, *The Dubious Link*, is one of these "contextualizer critiques," but with an interesting twist. He not only posits that social and economic inequality matters fundamentally in the civil society–democracy equation but also seeks to explain how this more durable link functions: through the state, via rule of law. He, thus, constructs an intricate thesis that relates to a variety of analyses, including institutionalist arguments about the role of the state, materialist arguments about the significance of having or not having economic resources, and cultural-constructivist arguments about how the structural conditions in which societies function shape the creation of group identity and community. Armony's study includes cases of civic associationism in Weimar Germany, antidesegregation movements in the United States, and civic engagement in contemporary Argentina. Along with statistical data, the cases present a diverse array of evidence that is both an empirical strength (in terms of breadth) and a weakness (in terms of depth) of the book.

In Armony's argument, both societal conditions (social and economic inequality) and institutions (the state and its legal system) play key roles, respectively, determining the how and why of civic mobilization. Both inequality and state institutions affect the effectiveness of rule of law. Inequalities structure how society interacts, and what orientations and alignments of civic engagement are likely to result; state institutions create expectations and needs in society, depending on how well they protect citizen rights and generate respect for the law (p. 3). In other words, the state must function as an honest and capable broker in regulating societal conflicts and building social trust through the rule of law. Where it fails to do so, the "dark side" of civic engagement results to compensate, producing intolerant civic action that is either beyond the control of the state (as in Weimar Germany) or indeed abetted by state agents (as in postwar southern states in the United States and in contemporary Argentina).

Several hypotheses explain the logic of these causal processes in detail (pp. 37-54). When the state and its legal system fail to "set norms of legality" that facilitate voluntary compliance with laws; when the state and its agents fail to hold themselves accountable to principles of constitutionalism and transparency that promote societal acceptance of the regime; and when the law applies only selectively rather than predictably and fairly to promote citizens' trust of each other and of the state—then social trust is at best parochial and civic association results in undemocratic forms of engagement (pp. 43-44). In short, "'winners' trust widely and 'losers' do not" (p. 28). Structural inequalities affect these dynamics by determining the victims of institutional failure: the underprivileged—the poor, unemployed, ethnic minorities, and immigrants—are the worst affected when rule of law fails (p. 51).

Armony uses a variety of methodologies to analyze his data, ranging from participant-observation to public opinion surveys and multivariate regression analysis. Drawing largely from secondary sources, chapter 2 provides useful evidence from the historical cases of Weimar Germany and the postwar United States. The German case demonstrates how social and economic cleavages produced antisystem civic mobilization that the Nazis were able to capitalize into electoral gains by 1932, paving the way for Hitler's ascent to power. However, the rule-of-law element, central to Armony's argument, receives little attention in the case study, as indeed the Weimar crises were ones of severe economic dislocation and political stalemate rather than explicit failures of legal justice. The American case more fully corroborates the book's argument. Here, Armony examines civic mobilization against desegregation in southern states and against integration in northern urban areas. For the South, he focuses on 1950s antidesegregation efforts of groups such as the Citizens' Councils. For the North, he explores grass roots organizing in the 1970s by Whites, who created homeowners' associations to keep Blacks out of White neighborhoods and antibusing movements to keep them out of White schools. In these cases, groups with separatist goals were frequently able to find allies in local or state officials, whether in Birmingham or Boston (pp. 82-84, 96), and thereby stall integration through the legal system.

In chapter 5, the author analyzes statistical data from 28 mature and new democracies to test the validity of his claims. Drawing from sources such as the World Values Surveys and the raw data of other scholars, he finds support for two claims central to

his argument: Income inequality is a significant determinant of social trust (p. 189), whereas civic engagement is not (p. 187). Armony also finds that high levels of social trust correlate with high levels of good institutions of governance; however, to fully unpack the significance of social trust as it relates to democratic governance, we need to look at the micro-level data in the chapters on Argentina.

Armony is at his best in chapters 3 and 4, which center on Argentina. This is the case study that most clearly demonstrates the ways in which effective and fair rule of law matters. Here the author uses data he collected in the latter 1990s from archives and interviews with participants in 15 civic groups; he also analyzes legislation and legal cases investigating police violence that date back to redemocratization in 1983. In Argentina, he finds a bitter paradox. Vibrant civic activism, which emerged in the face of unprecedented repression in the 1976 to 1983 military dictatorship, developed in support of democracy and human rights and championed redemocratization. Yet increasing inequality, along with continued corruption and impunity evident among many public officials, eroded the democratic potential of civic groups. By the 1990s, many of the democracy and human rights groups had low levels of generalized trust and instead revealed exclusivist, racist, and even violent features. A striking example is a human rights activist the author interviewed in 1996, who stated bluntly that common criminals should simply be executed by the police (p. 1). Few of the groups the author studied were able to collaborate on shared agendas with each other or with state agencies. This has limited their ability to build momentum through strategic alliances for goals of government reform. In fact, Armony finds that civic mobilization has had at best a limited impact on issues such as successful convictions for police officers charged with brutality, in part because civic action faces ingrained corruption and inefficiency in the Argentine legal machinery (pp. 164-165). Such institutional inefficiency feeds back into cynicism and competition, rather than tolerance and cooperation, among civic groups (pp. 150-152).

A disappointment for readers interested in Armony's Argentine case study is that the discussion of the most interesting data, which he himself collected, gets a fairly cursory review in the text. This is unfortunate, considering that the author's field research on civic groups in Buenos Aires and other parts of Argentina is a particularly unique and potentially rich resource. Although he develops a typology of horizontal (within society) and vertical (society-state) linkages to express the nature of the associationism he finds in Argentina (p. 147ff.), the features of the different types do not seem to resonate fully. Armony gives some anecdotal examples, but sketching a real-world example for each type would have provided a more cohesive and vibrant portrait of the different paths civic engagement has taken in postauthoritarian societies riven with inequalities, such as Argentina. This criticism leads to a broader one: *The Dubious Link* takes on an ambitious agenda, theoretically and especially methodologically, and although Armony's chapters are usefully rounded with clear introductions, recaps, and summaries, the wide scope of information in the book—both in subplot arguments and in data given—at times limits the author's ability to elaborate sufficiently on the data supporting his arguments or return to some of his theoretical notions. For example, for the series of regressions in chapter 5, there are clear summa-

ries of the findings but limited analysis. Similarly, the typology of associational linkages, just mentioned, does not return in later discussions to inform the overall argument.

As with all structural arguments, the policy implications of this one are daunting. Two tools are obvious but not easily wielded. One is the reduction in socioeconomic inequalities that have become global trends in recent decades. Another is democratic state reform to promote transparent, accountable policy making and egalitarian citizenship standards that can promote more winners able to trust widely. Yet where should the proponents of such agendas come from if not from within civil society itself—now known to be dysfunctional in so many new and old democracies? Contemporary policy makers, even zealously optimistic ones, are aware that citizenship inequalities are problematic and ultimately intolerable (Wolfowitz, 2004). Yet sustaining democratic pressure for reform is hard. As Armony notes, many of the most successfully mobilized democratic forces in civil societies that brought down authoritarian or totalitarian regimes in Latin America and Europe in the Third Wave have been less successful at follow through with promoting reforms and exercising regular oversight and influence in a democratic regime context (p. 135). The bar is set high.

With fairly robust findings, Armony has made a useful and theoretically rich contribution to the debate concerning the causes and consequences of civic engagement. His conclusions raise timely new questions, including the important one of international influences on mobilization and social trust building. Given current global precedents to remake societies by cultivating grass roots through foreign guidance (e.g., in Afghanistan and Iraq), further research as theoretically rich and methodologically diverse as Armony's will be particularly welcome.

REFERENCES

- Putnam, Robert D. (1993). *Making democracy work: Civic traditions in modern Italy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Wolfowitz, Paul. (2004, February 1). Women in the new Iraq [Op-Ed]. *The Washington Post*, p. B07.