

audit courts hold governors accountable for budgetary deviations. Based on these original findings, the authors propose a thesis that radicalizes their view of Brazilian governance: that the very strong competition and fragmentation that characterizes Brazilian party politics—the same factor on which the pessimistic view of Brazilian democracy was predicated—is the driver of the effective checks and balances that prevent presidents from becoming elective dictators.

This thesis, compelling as its supporting evidence may be, suffers though from two important weaknesses: It dwells only on state level data, and it pays no attention to the timing of legislative action on audit reports. Budgetary and regulatory audits at the national level are also frequent and technically consistent, but legislative action on them is not: The Federal Congress only considered audit reports on budgetary execution after the terms of the presidents (Cardoso, Lula) who had executed those budgets had ended, and invariably validated their budgetary execution practices despite auditory objections. Checks and balances at the federal level thus seem to stop before looking into how the wheels of decision-making are greased. And conversely, the authors provide no evidence at the state level of correlation, let alone causation, between effective checks and effective governments in terms of policy activism and survival. Future research will tell whether these diverse patterns invalidate this book's thesis, or the number of cases of deviant cases is simply not enough to counter the strength of its findings. In any event, this critique should not shy readers from acknowledging that Melo and Pereira convincingly make the case for closing the debate on Brazil's governance: Their work empirically demonstrates that stable and effective governments do exist in multiparty presidential democracies not in spite of their defining features, but because of them.

**3.11: Disaster and Change in Japan.** By Richard J. Samuels. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013. 296p. \$29.95. doi:10.1017/S1537592715002005

— Laurie A. Freeman, *University of California, Santa Barbara*

Richard J. Samuels' engaging book, *3.11: Disaster and Change in Japan*, is the first scholarly assessment of the national narrative of crisis following the triple disasters of March 11, 2011. Colloquially referred to as "3.11," the Great Eastern Japan Disaster began with the unfathomable and ended in the surreal, as Japan's largest earthquake in 1000 years was followed by a super-sized tsunami and finally, a nuclear meltdown. Although two decades of economic stagnation had left the nation primed for renewal, 3.11 does not appear to have been the hoped-for catalyst for great change. Why that is so is the subject of this superb book.

Like other scholars of change, Samuels seeks to understand the relationship between crisis and outcome, stability and flux. Social scientists have long-suggested that critical junctures can broaden the range of choices available to political leaders and potentially result in large-scale changes, setting society on new paths from which it will be difficult to return. On the surface, at least, 3.11 appears a good candidate for such creative destruction. In laying out the theoretical argument of the book, however, Samuels takes issue with theories privileging great forces over human agency. Reminding us that cataclysmic events do not always result in substantive change, Samuels turns his focus to elites. Given his prior work on leaders and leadership (see: *Machiavelli's Children: Leaders and their Legacies in Italy and Japan*, Cornell University Press, 2003.), this should not come as a surprise; given the book's focus on the critical, early post-shock period, it should be expected.

Samuels makes a strong case for focusing on the instrumental features of crises. Crises, he argues, are used as discursive tools by competing groups of elites to frame national narratives, shape the emotions of the public, and ultimately move them in elite-preferred directions of change. As primary players in the establishment of dominant narratives, then, elites battle amongst themselves to provide the most compelling explanations of the problem in order to control its solution. Importantly, these discourses are not just about the crisis; rather, the crisis becomes the tool by which elites infuse pet projects and partisan goals with a pervasive rhetoric in the hope of gaining renewed support. The question in the case of 3.11, then, becomes the extent to which competing elite narratives are able to dominate discourse, shape preference formation among the public, and shift policy in a preferred direction. In the end, however, change is only possible if leaders grasp the opportunity to initiate it before the window closes. Leaders, Samuels admonishes, should "never give up a good crisis."

As various shareholders sought to frame the post-3.11 national debate, a "battle" ensued between three opposing explanations of the disaster, each having a different perspective on the necessity for—and shape of—change in post-3.11 Japan. These national reactions to the triple tragedies and their related policy prescriptions can be divided into three broad categories: 1) arguments for Japan to "put it in gear" and head in a new direction, 2) arguments for the nation to "stay the course" but do things better, and 3) demands for a "reverse course" and a return to basic values.

But change was not the only motif to gain prominence, nor was it always at the top of everyone's list. Though central, change actively competed with three equally appealing "tropes" for the public's attention: "leadership," "risk," and "community." All four metaphors

in the post disaster narrative were genuine contenders for the public's—and political elites'—attention, remaining an important part of the national debate and post-3.11 politics and policy.

Japan's "leadership deficit" is a long-discussed and analyzed aspect of the Japanese political system. This time it became the central focus of those who felt that the lack of leadership had crippled disaster response and made it difficult for the nation to come to agreement about how—and whether—to implement change. Former Prime Minister Naoto Kan was the favorite villain in this narrative, but criticism of him was inconsistent: he was simultaneously reviled as an excessive micromanager and for being too aloof. In the end, he was a casualty of dueling narratives about leadership and forced to step down.

Like leadership, "risk," was a prominent metaphor in discussions aimed at clarifying responsibility, this time for the nuclear meltdowns. Here, the greatest villain was TEPCO, the Tokyo Electric Power Company, which had sought release from culpability by claiming that the natural disaster was "unimaginable" and therefore the meltdowns should be too. But the public was not easily convinced—and most experts knew better. Reports of mismanagement and data fraud had been in the news in the years prior to 3.11 and experts informed the Diet that international safety guidelines had not been followed. But TEPCO was only one of numerous villains in this tale. The normally quiescent media had a heyday releasing details about the collusive group of government regulators, academics, and business and industry leaders disparagingly referred to as the "nuclear village" who had conspired for decades to promote the sunny side of the atom and marginalize concerns about risk.

The final metaphor, "community," focused on the social solidarity of citizens in the Tohoku region of northern Japan who had been most affected by the disaster, and the mass of volunteers who quickly signed up to offer them assistance. Those who focused on community argued that national regeneration would follow as regional community building put the hardest hit areas back on their feet. This metaphor was probably the most optimistic of all four—and had many heroes.

Having provided a compelling intellectual, comparative, historical and theoretical blueprint, Samuels proceeds to build an argument about post-crisis discourse, framing, and change by applying the four metaphors above to three critical policy issues facing Japan: 1) national security; 2) energy policy; and 3) local government. At the end of the day, the most important questions revolve around whether all the discourse and narrative, metaphor and persuasion surrounding 3.11 resulted in a measurable shift in public perceptions and/or elite policy responses. While cautioning that the master narrative of 3.11 is still under construction, Samuels remains circumspect; still, the "stay the course"

model appears to have prevailed in all three cases examined in the book. In the case of national security, the Japanese public gained a greater sense of trust and legitimacy in the Japanese military and the U.S. Japan alliance, but it was not enough to prompt officials to request a sizeable budget increase, and the Japanese defense budget continued to decline. Similarly, in assessing energy policy, Samuels finds that the dominant narrative offered a strong rebuke of the nuclear village, but that in the end the nuclear reactors did not remain offline for long. Though likely correct that we have not seen the end of nuclear power in Japan, he may have spoken a bit too soon: as of July 2015, none of Japan's reactors were online. In the final policy area, local government, none of the competing narratives won out, so in this area, too, the default was the maintenance of the status quo.

In concluding, Samuels reminds us that political actors in Japan did not perform any differently than political actors in other democratic systems. New actors had been empowered, and greater transparency had been achieved, but elites had only agreed that a similar disaster should never be allowed to recur. In facing a crisis of epic proportions, elites explained and blamed, fought political battles along familiar lines, and sought solutions supporting pre-existing goals. Normal politics, it seems, had prevailed.

#### **Reconstructing Iraq's Budgetary Institutions:**

**Coalition State Building after Saddam.** By James D. Savage. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013. 299p. \$90.00 cloth, \$32.99 paper.  
doi:10.1017/S1537592715002017

— Haider Ala Hamoudi, *University of Pittsburgh*

The dreary task of drafting and executing national budgets hardly makes for riveting reading, yet it demands far more attention than it has received. This is particularly the case in dysfunctional and poorly administered countries such as Iraq. After all, the legitimacy of the government, and indeed of the very state itself, absolutely depends on its ability to not only fund its operational expenses, but indeed to properly budget for longer term projects—in infrastructure, education and otherwise—that will bring to the citizenry an increased standard of living. Yet there is little work on the subject as it pertains to Iraq, despite the immense attention that has been given to that state over the past fifteen years.

This book deserves credit for addressing that deficit of attention. It does so comprehensively and thoroughly, not only addressing those issues specific to budget design and execution in Iraq in the post conflict era, but also situating them historically against the broader means by which Iraq developed and carried out budget policy, from the late Ottoman era forward. Savage carefully demonstrates how badly the budget was managed during the