

if their vote is important. Unsurprisingly, this also explains why Whites usually outvote other groups. As Whites continue to have electoral influence, they are motivated to vote. The persistent gap is exacerbated because Whites are overrepresented in most areas in the United States. This overrepresentation increases their electoral influence. While African American voting has increased, often closing the gap or surpassing Whites, the lag in voting by Asian Americans and Latinos heightens the importance of the White vote. This book finds that African Americans are able to reduce the gap because of the belief that they have electoral influence. Unfortunately, Asian Americans and Latinos are seldom in a situation where their vote is perceived to be important, causing the gap to remain. Whites benefit from this lack of electoral influence, and as a result make up more than their fair share of the electorate. The gap between African Americans and Whites is often closing, but the gap between Whites and Asian Americans and Whites and Latinos will continue as long as Latinos and Asian Americans lack the electoral influence of Whites.

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*Promoting Democracy: The Force of Political Settlements in Uncertain Times*, by Manal A. Jamal. New York: New York University Press, 2019. 320 pages. Black and white illustrations. \$35.00 (paper). ISBN: 978-1-479-87845-1.

In *Promoting Democracy: The Force of Political Settlements in Uncertain Times*, Manal Jamal delves into the world of foreign aid, NGOs (nongovernmental organizations), and civil society in postconflict situations to uncover why aid for democracy promotion works in some contexts but not in others. Departing from the quantitative studies that have informed discussions around foreign aid effectiveness, the author uses a structured, focused comparison of postconflict settlements in Palestine and El Salvador to uncover insights that can only be found through qualitative case studies. The Oslo Accords, signed in 1993 and 1995 between the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and the government of Israel with the aim of ending the broader Israeli-Palestinian conflict over the existence of a Palestinian state and specifically the First Intifada (1987–93), are characterized as a noninclusive settlement. The Chapultepec Peace Accords, signed in 1992 between the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) and the government of El Salvador to end thirteen years of civil war, are described as an inclusive settlement. Jamal draws on fieldwork conducted in five research trips from 2001–13 with 150 interviews of political leaders, local activists across multiple sectors (women, human rights activists, civic leaders, educators, and labor), and foreign donors. Archival research using primary and secondary resources from aid agencies and participant observation of NGO activities is utilized to contextualize the interviews.

The author's key argument is that in postconflict situations, the political settlement's inclusivity shapes the effectiveness of foreign assistance. Jamal contrasts with previous literature that highlights the impact of foreign donors and NGO professionalization as

key variables. Jamal argues that inclusivity of the political settlement shapes who is included in donor money, the degree of foreign involvement, and the level of institutionalization. After noninclusive settlements, foreign aid for democracy promotion will exacerbate polarization and undermine longer-term prospects for democratization (22). Jamal also introduces the concepts of “articulated and disarticulated spaces” to advance the argument. Articulated spaces occur in contexts with inclusive settlements and describe how donor-provided civil society development aid will promote programs that encourage citizen involvement and assist in reconstructing civil society across all groups. Disarticulated spaces are found in noninclusive contexts because donor money is less likely to flow to actors who were not involved in the settlement; consequently, the institutions that could provide channels between the civil society and the state are disconnected, with the excluded parties having no reason to participate, which as a result impedes democratic development.

*Promoting Democracy* is organized into seven chapters. The first chapter serves as an introduction and outlines key terms and highlights the work’s place within the broader literature on democracy promotion, foreign aid, and postconflict settlements. Chapter 2 provides a historical background for conflicts in Palestine and El Salvador and charts the emergence of the parties that would be engaged in the political settlements. It shows that while all major parties were represented in the Chapultepec Accords, the Oslo Accords were between the PLO and the Israeli state with Hamas and other “opposition tendency groups” excluded. Chapter 3 examines the inclusivity of the political settlements by focusing on their institutional design and how they were institutionalized through the development of NGOs and political parties in El Salvador and Palestine, again showing that while donor assistance was able to help foster political involvement and reconstruct civil society in El Salvador, the actors in Palestine became more polarized, leading eventually to the 2006 fracturing of the Palestinian National Authority after Fatah (the PLO’s political vehicle) refused to recognize the election victory of Hamas. Chapter 4 examines how political settlements determine the amount and types of foreign donors and priorities, with organizations working in an inclusive settlement context having more input into the donor process than those functioning after a noninclusive settlement. Chapter 5 is an in-depth case study of the mediating role of donor assistance in developing specific sectors by looking at women’s groups in both cases. Chapter 6 examines how Western donors impacted the government of the Gaza Strip under Hamas after the 2006 elections, contributing to increased polarization and creation of a disarticulated space as opposed to promoting a cohesive civil society among the Palestinian factions. The last chapter serves as a conclusion of sorts by drawing a brief comparison between settlements in Iraq (noninclusive) and South Africa (inclusive) to expand the generalizability of the framework and arguments elaborated in the previous chapters.

Jamal’s work offers several empirical and theoretical contributions. The author makes good use of the data throughout the book and provides a tantalizing insight into the intertwined world of foreign donors, NGOs, and activists. The detailed look at the postconflict women’s sector in El Salvador and Palestine is a rich comparison that yields new insight into this sector in both countries. Theoretically, the author makes a persuasive

case for scholars to reexamine the impacts of foreign donors and how such impacts can be mediated by forces that have nothing to do with capacity or donor whims but are related to structural factors in place before the first check was ever cut. The book also contributes to the social movement literature by addressing the phenomenon of the “NGOization” of movements and how grassroots mobilization can attenuate the effects of demobilization by remaining connected to their NGOs. The book also makes important contributions to the literature on democracy promotion not only through its argument on settlements but also by interrogating the very motivations of the donors and asserting that the West and many dominant political groups embrace “the notion of democratic governance that is based on exclusion” (15).

While *Promoting Democracy* is clear on the initial statement of the argument, its development through the chapters is uneven and its progression difficult to follow at times. In general, the execution of the case studies is imbalanced, with far more time devoted to Palestine than El Salvador. Additionally, the author asks the reader to adopt several assertions that could use further theoretical undergirding. For example, the book is about democratic aid, yet early on, Jamal states that per leading democracy assistance and governance scholar Thomas Carothers, all aid will be treated as promoting democracy and not just specific aid for democratic development such as election assistance, political party development, and advocacy training. Understanding that this qualitative study’s purpose is to yield nuance that is not seen in quantitative studies, it would help readers unfamiliar with the literature to spend more time on why this vital determination was made and relating it more strongly to the organic emergence of civil society. By conflating aid foreign aid and Western donors, the author at times loses nuance between different types of aid. The attempt to generalize the study to different areas in the last chapter was laudable, yet referring to the postconflict civil society of South Africa as “no longer coinciding along polarized racial lines but across the civil society spectrum” (211) is problematic, given the continued racialized nature of governance in that country, and bears more explaining. The argument treats all conflicts and political settlements as equal, but the framework might be more applicable to some postconflict settlements than others, and further work is needed to refine how and when it can be applied beyond a broad understanding. Notwithstanding these issues, *Promoting Democracy: The Force of Political Settlements in Uncertain Times* makes a valuable contribution to the field of development studies. It will assist scholars and practitioners in thinking about how to best finance and construct conflict settlements that can achieve democracy—assuming, of course, that is indeed their primary goal.

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