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**Beetz, Simone. External Democracy Promotion and Diversity Among International Agencies: Evaluating Variances in the Impact of the UNDP and EC in Rwanda. Opladen, Berlin and Toronto: Budrich UniPress Ltd., 2017.**

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In 2017, the people of Rwanda reelected President Paul Kagame to a third term, giving him 98.8 percent of their vote. His total vote represented an improvement over previous elections in 2010 and 2003, when Kagame received “only” 95 percent and 93 percent, respectively. In fact, he has effectively ruled the country since the Rwandan Patriotic Front drove away genocidal Hutu forces in 1994. According to Freedom House (2018), Rwanda falls into the “Not Free” category of countries, its citizens exercising very limited political rights and civil liberties. Mass media is heavily restricted, and any opposition faces tight constraints, as illustrated by the case of political activist and businesswoman Diane Rwigara. She sought to run for the presidency in 2017 but soon found herself jailed for “offenses against state security and forgery” (Muvunyi, 2017). Human Rights Watch and other groups documented the intimidation and repression of voters. Occasionally there are glimmers of hope for a freer society. The Rwandan government in September 2018 freed more than 2,000 political prisoners, including Victoire Ingabire Umuhoya, another woman who dared to run against Kagame in 2010 (Pérez-Peña, 2018). Unfortunately, Rwigara was not among those released, and is expecting to be tried later this year.

The illiberal nature of Rwandan national governance stands in stark contrast to the substantial assistance it has received in recent years to make its political system more democratic. In *External Democracy Promotion and Diversity Among International Agencies: Evaluating Variances in the Impact of the UNDP and EC in Rwanda*, Simone Beetz explores the activities and impacts of two of the key international actors in promoting democracy in the country: the European Union (EU) and the United Nations Development Programme. She is especially interested in identifying and examining differences between the two organizations, mainly between 2003 and 2013. It needs to be emphasized that the analysis is aimed at an institutional level: she is concerned with the EU and UNDP as corporate actors, instead of trying to distinguish and scrutinize the actual human beings who occupied positions within them. Her evaluation is an academic rather than practical exercise. She is not interested in determining the cost-effectiveness of specific projects for purposes of public accountability, whether for those financing these efforts or for the Rwandans who were the intended beneficiaries. Instead, Beetz analyzes the EU’s and UNDP’s actions and results within the framework of democracy theorists such as David Beetham, Larry Diamond, and Leonardo Morlino, utilizing methodological concepts promulgated by Eberhard Gohl and Reinhard Stockmann from the German Institute of Evaluation. The book deals in a straightforward manner with Rwanda’s authoritarianism, noting that “on the whole the state still leaves only a small space for civil society to develop” (p. 254). Yet this is not a politically-charged account. Beetz can be critical without resorting to hectoring those entities, leaders, or authors that she does not favor or agree with.

Beetz’s study originated as an International Relations dissertation in the Department of Political Science at Goethe University in Frankfurt, Germany. Despite having been “slightly adapted and updated” (p. 9), her book still resembles a dissertation in format, containing the vices and virtues of that format. Fortunately, the flaws are distracting rather than fatal in nature. On first glance the book seems top-heavy with literature review on democratic theory and evaluation methodology, as well as general description of the EU and UNDP. The coverage of these subjects occupies the first five of the book’s seven chapters. Beetz sets up her evaluation to

focus on five dimensions related to democratic promotion: multi-party elections, institutionalization, rule of law, economic development, and civil society-political culture. Relatively little is said in those theoretical and methodological sections about African circumstances and the relevance of democratic promotion for its countries. Rwanda finally emerges as a focal point on page 146, with the start of Chapter 6, which takes up the next 136 pages. This chapter offers the book's most compelling material, as Beetz uses a strong command over written sources, as well as field interviews, to document how the EU's and UNDP's multi-dimensional democratic promotion encountered Rwandan realities which limited engagement by mass media, the legal system, civil society, and the layers of government. The chapter offers some historical perspective, noting the limited activities of both agencies before 1994, as well as how their sense of guilt about the genocide influenced subsequent engagement with the Rwandan government. Shifting priorities and activities, reflecting to a significant extent events within the country, are also covered for the period 2003 to 2013, and even later. Much information gets presented in the chapter. In fact, the analysis, as well as the reader's attention, probably could have been enhanced by breaking up the chapter into shorter, more focused units.

Despite the shared theme of democracy promotion among international organizations, Beetz convincingly shows that there is no singular conceptual or programmatic approach. The UNDP and EU have collaborated at times in their activities yet clear differences exist between them. Beetz summarizes: "The UNDP has emphasized particular democracy dimensions such as institutionalization and civil society and political culture even more. The EC has driven a variety of economic models over time, and emphasized to a greater extent the role of civil society and media" (p. 281). Some of these variances reflected the distinct missions and inherent structure of each organization. The UNDP spearheads sustainable development and poverty reduction efforts within the UN system. It tends to take a pragmatic, flexible, and inclusive approach regarding recipient states. The EU embodies the collective political and economic interests of its member countries, guided by its own pragmatism, such as being driven by cost-benefit analysis. Operational experience, including at the level of its host country offices, and changing mandates also matter. The EU, for example, is becoming more inclusive and innovative regarding its approach to Rwandan civil society. Meanwhile, as mentioned earlier, Rwanda has proved a challenging context, limiting the impact of the EU's and UNDP's efforts. Beetz finds that the UNDP has achieved the greatest results regarding institutionalization, civil society, and political culture, whereas the EU's strongest achievements relate to economic development. None of them have attained substantial impacts concerning multi-party elections or rule of law.

In closing, Beetz's study may seem as if it is an account of a fool's errand, given the outcome of the 2017 presidential election and the illiberal nature of Rwanda's political culture. I believe that this would be a grave error. Without a doubt there exists in that country a widespread hunger for political openness, for a greater say by civil society in the running of its affairs. Its elites would be wise to look to Ethiopia, where a charismatic but deeply authoritarian leader felt that his presence was indispensable to the well-being of the impoverished, post-conflict nation. He died, and his immediate successors found that repression could no longer contain civil society, with Ethiopia rocking on the edge of violent chaos. Fortunately, new leadership emerged, headed by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, whose political and economic reforms have brought meaningful change and increased optimism among most of its citizens. When I visited Ethiopia in June 2018, the shift in political climate was startling compared to the prior 20 years. Thus, Beetz's book is useful not only for its analysis of what has occurred in Rwanda, but in

providing an understanding of what still may come in terms of democratic institutions and practices.

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