

# Reviews

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A Review of Theda Skocpol's *Diminished Democracy: From Membership to Management in American Civic Life*.

Like any other person in America, Skocpol is uneasy with the state of democracy in America. In effect, her book elucidates the history of Americans participation in civic activities by giving an account of volunteer associations that have distinctively featured in the political landscape of the country. Skocpol's book begins with an analysis of the nation of joiners, which discusses the increase in large civil societies and organizations during the nineteenth and the earlier part of the twentieth century. Through intense research by a team mobilized by Skocpol, the book documents the decline in the management and membership of these organizations in the twentieth century although she notes of a general increase in membership, in the decades following the World War II (68).

The fundamental strength of the book lies in the way that Skocpol presented her data from research. In this case, she achieves her objective of effectively showing how the US has abandoned its traditional membership and effective management of civic associations. On the other hand, the author did not mention the role that multiculturalism plays in defining the civic disintegration that the US faces, which I find as the book's main weakness. In this case, she failed to capture an important aspect that has led to the disintegration of civic life in America guided by multiculturalism.

Overall, I think that Skocpol's outlook of American civic life is progressive. In this regard, her recommendations for change do not dwell on mainstream prescriptions. Case in point, she questions the politics of reforms in recent times on different grounds than the grounds always cited by most authors regarding the impairment of free speech in America. Hence, I find her <https://assignbuster.com/reviews/>

perspective of focusing on the effects of contemporary reforms across various societal classes and her linkage of local participation to national participation as informative and refreshing from the traditional analysis offered by other authors.

Work Cited

Skocpol, Theda. *Diminished Democracy: From Membership to Management in American Civic Life*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003. Print.