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**Democracy assistance policies of the
US and the EU: different approaches
and their causes**

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Abstract

The United States of America and the institutions of the European Union are the most prominent democracy assistance donors in third countries. Over the last two decades, they have spent tens of billions of dollars to support the formation and consolidation of democratic regimes around the world. In this sense, the US and the EU have seemingly shared interests – i.e. seeking to build democratic institutions in target countries so that these become part of the community of democracies and contribute to the stability of the world's economic and political system. However, if we look at the approaches and strategies used by the US and the EU to support democracy, we find that they are often quite different and, in some respects, clashing. Why are the approaches of both actors different if they strive to reach the same goal? Or – upon closer examination – are their goals indeed somewhat different? The key problem is that democracy as such is a contested concept, so it is necessary to ask the question: if we are promoting democracy, what kind of democracy do we mean? If we finance the development of one or the other institution, what model of democratic establishment will be created? The thesis takes a constructivist view of this issue and demonstrates how the different democratic identities of the two actors create different views on the process of democratic transformation and, consequently, informs the actors' approaches to the policy of democracy assistance. The first part of this dissertation deals with the discussion of models of democracy and creates a typology of approaches to democracy assistance. The second part examines the democratic identity of both actors – that is, the influence of different political philosophies on their contemporary perceptions of democracy, their conceptions of the role of the state in an individual's life and the sources of the legitimacy to govern for democratic regimes. The third part links previous theoretical knowledge to practice – it describes the concepts and definitions of democracy in US and EU primary guiding documents and instruments designed to support democracy in third countries and demonstrates how the specific

democratic identity of both actors manifests itself in practice. The thesis concludes that the US' preferred "bottom-up-political-procedural" approach to democracy and the EU's leaning toward the "top-down-developmental-substantive" approach are given by default by the two actors' democratic identities – in other words, how each of them defines democracy for its foreign policy use.

Anotace

Spojené státy americké a instituce Evropské Unie jsou nejvýraznějšími aktéry na poli podpory demokracie ve třetích zemích. V posledních dvou dekadách vydali tito dva aktéři na podporu zrodu a konsolidace demokratických režimů desítky miliard dolarů. Jejich zájmy se tedy mohou zdát vzájemné – oba se snaží skrz finanční spolupráci pomoci vytvořit demokratické zřízení v cílových státech, aby se tyto pak staly součástí komunity demokracií a přispívaly ke stabilitě světového ekonomického a politického systému. Avšak pokud nahlédneme na přístupy a strategie, které USA a EU používají na podporu demokracie, zjistíme, že jsou často zcela rozdílné a v některých ohledech i protichůdné. Proč se přístupy obou aktérů liší, pokud chtějí dosáhnout identického cíle? Nebo jsou po bližším zkoumání cíle těchto aktérů poněkud odlišné? Problém nastává v tom, že demokracie jako taková je rozporný koncept, a tak je nutné se dotazovat: pokud šíříme demokracii, tak jaký její typ? Pokud financujeme rozvoj té či oné instituce, jaký model demokratického zřízení tím vznikne? Práce přejímá konstruktivistický pohled na tuto problematiku a demonstruje, jak odlišné demokratické identity obou aktérů vytváří různé pohledy na proces demokratické transformace a v důsledku i rozdílné přístupy k politice podpory demokracie. První část práce se věnuje diskuzi o modelech demokracie a vytváří typologii přístupů k podpoře demokracie. Druhá část zkoumá demokratickou identitu obou aktérů, tedy vliv různých politických filozofií na jejich současné vnímání demokracie, pojetí role státu v životě jedince a zdroje legitimacy vládnutí demokratických režimů. Třetí část propojuje předchozí teoretické poznatky s praxí – vystihuje pojetí a definice demokracie v primárních dokumentech a nástrojích USA a EU navržených pro podporu demokracie ve třetích zemích a ukazuje, jak se specifická demokratická identita obou aktérů projevuje v praxi. Práce závěrem konstatuje, že preferované přístupy USA (charakterizovaný jako „zdola-nahoru-politický-procedurální“) a EU (charakterizovaný jako „shora-dolu-rozvojový-substantivní“) jsou předurčené demokratickou identitou

těchto aktérů – jinými slovy, jsou závislé na definici demokracie, kterou tito aktéři formulují pro svou zahraniční politiku.

Keywords

Democracy assistance, European Union, foreign policy, theory of democracy, United States, development support, state-building, legitimacy, good governance, democratization

Klíčová slova

Podpora demokracie, Evropská unie, zahraniční politika, teorie demokracie, Spojené státy, rozvojová pomoc, budování státu, legitimita, dobré vládnutí, demokratizace

Prohlášení

1. Prohlašuji, že jsem předkládanou práci zpracoval/a samostatně a použil/a jen uvedené prameny a literaturu.
2. Souhlasím s tím, aby práce byla zpřístupněna pro studijní a výzkumné účely.

V Praze dne

Jan Hornát

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Na tomto místě bych rád poděkoval zejména vedoucímu mé disertační práce, doc. Mgr. Tomáši Weissovi, M.A., Ph.D., který trpělivě přečetl a opoznámkoval pracovní verze práce a navrhl konstruktivní řešení, jak práci dále strukturovat a zkvalitnit. Dále bych také rád vyjádřil díky Grantové agentuře UK, která mi poskytla grant č. 234216, díky němuž jsem mohl podniknout studijní cesty do Washingtonu DC a Bruselu, kde jsem probádal knihovny a provedl několik rozhovorů s praktiky a experty.

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1 Introduction

The last three decades have witnessed a concerted effort on both sides of the Atlantic to build and develop programs that are explicitly designed to support and promote democracy around the globe. It was deemed that in the absence of a structural obstacle (the Soviet bloc), countries would innately adopt democracy as their political model of choice, inseparably followed by the application of market economy principles. History would thereby reach its “end” – to use Fukuyama’s words¹ – as democratic peace (i.e. the theory that democratic nations never fight each other²) and economic interdependence would effectively render war and conflict rare or extinct. Also – from a teleological perspective – by becoming democratic, society would reach the endpoint of cultural evolution and accept democracy as the final form of human government.

With these normative, material and teleological perspectives in mind and to speed up this new path of global progress, “Western” democratic countries started implementing policies explicitly tasked to foster democracy around the world. In the case of the United States, such policies were implemented already in the early 1980s, while the European Union (EU) created its first instruments to assist democracy in third countries at the turn of the 1980s and the 1990s. Since then, democracy promotion has evolved into an “industry” that is steadily growing (see Graph 1). As a consequence, the topic has basically become an academic research field of its own, receiving attention from scholars focusing on democratic transitions, democratic theory, national and international security and policy-making.

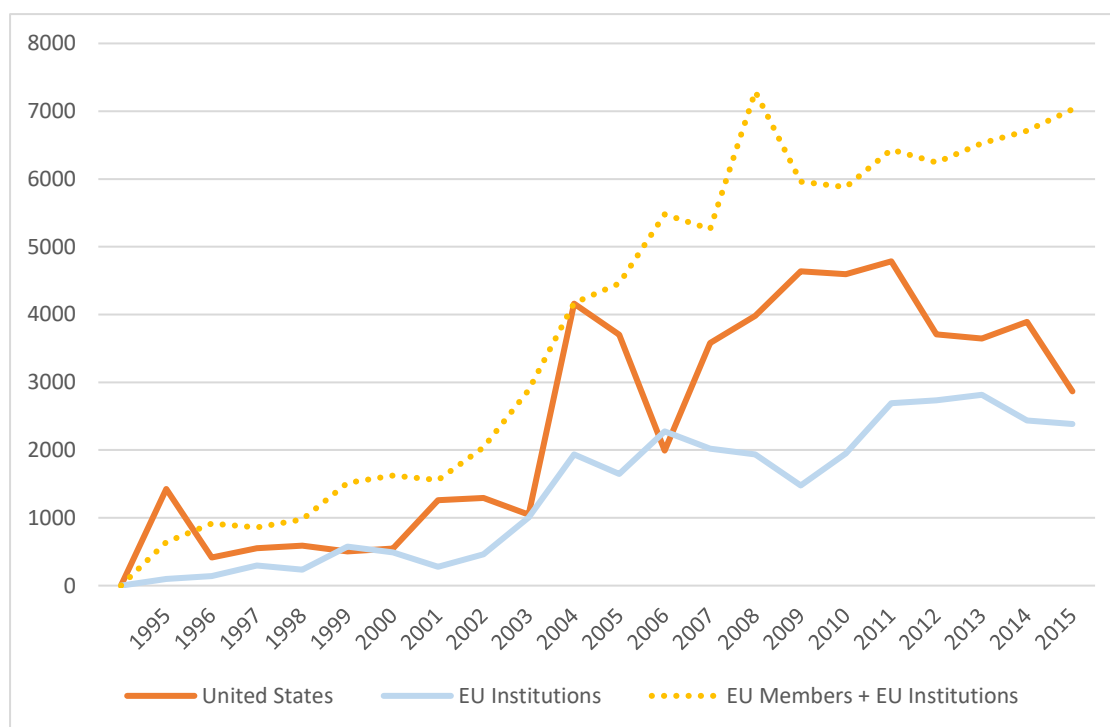
Most authors, however, have been examining *impact* of democracy promotion – that is, they have placed their attention on the *recipient* states and on evaluating (quantitatively and qualitatively) the effects of democracy promotion policies.³ This is understandable as governments strive to see what effects the programs they fund have on recipient societies and political systems and the only way to optimize efficiency is by being aware of deficiencies and real outcomes that have deviated from the “plan”. This dissertation will place the recipients at the sideline and focus rather inwardly – at the *donors* themselves.

¹ See Fukuyama, Francis, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York NY: Free Press, 1992).

² For a full discussion of the theory see Brown, Michael E., Sean M. Lynn-Jones and Steven E. Miller (eds.), *Debating the Democratic Peace* (Cambridge MA: The MIT Press, 1996).

³ Wolff, Jonas and Iris Wurm, “Towards a theory of external democracy promotion: A proposal for theoretical classification”, *Security Dialogue* 42 (1), 2011: 78.

Graph 1 “Government and civil society” funding as part of ODA (in millions of current US dollars)⁴



1.1 A common goal (?)

At least on the rhetorical level, the common goal of the United States and the EU is evident: assisting the emergence and consolidation of democratic regimes in third countries. The desired consequences of this shared activity are also clear: democratic regimes are less prone to enter into an armed conflict with other democracies; democratic regimes are – by institutional design – most likely to accommodate the desires and interests of the widest array of the domestic population, while preserving their political and civic freedoms; and, democratic regimes have proven to be more predictable and transparent partners in the international system than authoritarian regimes and thereby democracies contribute to systemic stability.

⁴ The data is compiled from the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC): www.oecd.org/dac/stats, reporting code 151: I.5.a. Government & Civil Society-general, Total. The EU member states included in the table are those that are members of the DAC. The OECD DAC “government and civil society” category included here is not the most precise for comparing democracy promotion budgets, as it can also include initiatives related only very loosely to democracy – yet it is the closest compiled category that is directly comparable across countries. Recent US budgets have – under section 7032 – included a consolidated figure for funding of “democracy programs”, which corresponds more pertinently to the issue of democracy promotion. For example, the US federal budget for fiscal year 2016 counted with a maximum of \$2.3 billion (€2 billion) for democracy programs (H.R.2029, 2016) – this is down from \$2.9 billion (€2.2 billion) in 2014 (H.R.3547, 2014). However, no comparable category can be found in the budget of EU institutions or all the member states.

However, as the words of Georges A. Fauriol, then Senior Vice President of the International Republican Institute (IRI), conclude, “The United States and Europe share similar goals in supporting democracy [...] Our approaches, however, often differ significantly.”⁵ Former Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor in the George W. Bush administration, Lorne Craner, allegedly called the disparities in the US and EU approach to democracy promotion “variations in views with common goals”. A similar conclusion is reached by a Brookings Institution study, which finds that in democracy assistance “the United States pays much more attention to political party, NGO, and union building than the EU [...] while] the latter focuses much more not only on civil and political rights, but also on social, economic, and cultural rights [...] and] on the state.”⁶

In practice, a lack of convergence of strategies leads to situations when actors involved in the democracy promotion agenda “embrace different versions or elements of liberal democracy, and may compete and clash in their efforts. Furthermore, these actors and other NGOs, domestic and international, may clash over specific goals like markets versus social justice, over tactics, and other issues [...]”⁷ Such misunderstandings quite obviously complicate or even hinder the attainment of the common goal.

A deeper understanding of these “transatlantic variations” in democracy promotion is necessary both in a practical and theoretical sense. In terms of applied research, it will help actors across the Atlantic comprehend each other’s strategies and potentially give incentives to – if not synchronize – find ways to complement each other more comprehensively. In terms of theory, analyzing the different approaches to promoting democracy provides a window into how both actors – the US and the EU – project their versions and conceptions of democracy and the ensuing role of the state in an individual’s life into their democracy promotion agendas. Such research will thereby highlight the different aspects of democracy the two actors believe are valid for recipient countries and it will also tacitly show, which aspects both actors deem to be imperative for a functioning democratic system.

⁵ Fauriol, Georges A., *Discussion Paper: U.S. Perspectives on the Transatlantic Democracy Agenda*, Presented at the Workshop on Democracy Promotion on the Transatlantic Agenda, Bratislava, December 2006.

⁶ Baracani, Elena, “U.S. and EU Strategies for Promoting Democracy” in Bindi, Federica (ed.), *The Foreign Policy of the European Union: Assessing Europe’s role in the World* (Brookings Institution Press: Washington DC, 2010), 312-313.

⁷ Scott, James M., “Transnationalizing democracy promotion: The role of Western political foundations and think-tanks”, *Democratization* 6 (3), 1999: 165.

In this sense, the present dissertation's chief goal is to demonstrate that the source of the different strategies and tactics applied by the US and EU institutions in promoting democracy is the divergence in the definitions of democracy formulated in their democracy promotion agendas. These conceptualizations of democracy can in turn be linked to the democratic identities of both actors.

In other words, as the policies of both actors emanate from different normative backgrounds (albeit still maintaining the same common goal of democratization), the substance of their respective democracy promotion agendas does not fully converge and thereby the two actors adopt different tactics and strategies in pursuing their respective democracy promotion agendas. Consequently, were we to hypothetically compare EU democracy promotion in country X and US democracy promotion in country Y (with both country X and Y having identical default characteristics), we would likely witness two different outcomes of their activities – i.e. different organizations of the political and social life in the two target countries.

The proposed research agenda is much needed as pundits have observed that, while “academic research has amply described the differences between EU and US democracy assistance, the explanations for these differences have often been neglected.”⁸ Similarly, Wolff and Wurm argue that in current literature it is mostly “the mechanisms [the ‘logics’, ‘targets’, and ‘pathways’ of influence], through which different democracy-promotion policies impact on domestic political change that receive theoretical interest”, but these fail to provide “a theoretical account that might predict/explain/help understand variances and commonalities in US and European strategies.”⁹

Thus, a probe into the understandings and conceptualizations of democracy of both actors will help us understand why the US and EU institutions employ different tactics and strategies of promoting democracy. Since each actor envisages a different *end-product* of its democracy promotion efforts (i.e. a different form of *democracy*) the two may not fully agree on how democratization of a target state should be brought about. Therefore, we can even question whether both actors, in fact, have a common goal. Of course, the shared objective is to foster and assist nascent democratic regimes, but if we look closer at the form of democracy each actor aims to promote, we see that the end-goal is not as mutual as it would seem at first sight.

⁸ Biondo, Karen Del, “Promoting democracy or the external context? Comparing the substance of EU and US democracy assistance in Ethiopia”, *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 28 (1), 2015: 99.

⁹ Wolff and Wurm, *Towards a theory of external democracy promotion*, 78.

1.2 The essential contestability of democracy

It has become commonplace after the end of the Cold War to refer to a “Western liberal democracy” that is (and ought to be) at the heart of democratization processes around the globe. This notion was soon put under post-modernist criticism and challenged not only because democracy in third countries should be adapted to local socio-cultural circumstances, but also simply because there is barely a consolidated “version” or definition of a “Western liberal democracy” as such. Moreover, “democracy” itself is a contested concept.¹⁰ In this sense, Schmitter and Karl have warned that Americans should be careful not to identify the concept of democracy too closely with their own institutions as there exists no one form of democracy and that democracies are *not more or less* democratic but can be democratic *in different ways*.¹¹ Similarly, the limitations of advocating a (single) liberal conception of democracy in the world are recognized by Peter Burnell:

“[T]he notions of democracy that lie at the centre of much democracy assistance, while not all being identical, occupy a limited range. First, they are a political construct. Ideas of social democracy and economic democracy are excluded. Second, they are informed by individualism rather than by expressly communitarian notions of society. Third, although many of the formulations specify a range of freedoms and other qualities going well beyond mere electoralism and they should not be confused with ‘illiberal’ democracy, even so there are few concessions made to the most radical models of participatory democracy.”¹²

Burnell, however, acknowledges that there are nuanced differences between the “versions” of democracy advocated by democracy promoters. He adds that the “different democracy assistance providers are culture-bound to offer their own experience, specific preferences and prejudices in respect of democracy, and these can vary considerably even in respect of seemingly technical matters [...]”.¹³ This, of course, is not a surprising conclusion as constructivist approaches in international relations (IR) theory show the mechanisms how culture and values shape and influence policy-making.

¹⁰ On this topic see Gray, John N. “On the Contestability of Social and Political Concepts,” *Political Theory* 5 (3), 1977: 331-348.

¹¹ Schmitter, Philippe C. and Terry Lynn Karl, “What Democracy is...And is Not”, *Journal of Democracy* 2 (3), 1991: 75-88.

¹² Burnell, Peter, “Democracy Assistance: The State of the Discourse” in Burnell, Peter (ed.), *Democracy Assistance: International Co-operation for Democratization* (London: Frank Cass, 2000), 4.

¹³ Burnell, Peter, “Democracy Assistance: The State of the Art” in Burnell, *Democracy Assistance*, 342.

Yet, despite these calls for caution against viewing democracy as a single, universally-applicable political system, Hobson sees that the “feature that defines most of the literature and practice of democracy promotion and democratisation is the lack of serious consideration on democracy’s variations and contestability, with it too often being taken to necessarily mean the liberal subtype. This is combined with a general refusal to consider whether, indeed, the liberal form is the most appropriate version of democracy to be encouraged [...]”¹⁴

In reaction to the “flat” and one-sided conception of democracy in contemporary practice of democracy promotion, Milja Kurki argues to “open up conceptual questions on the meaning of the idea of democracy in democracy promotion”. She finds it “curious” that while “[c]onsidering the centrality of the idea of ‘democracy’ to democracy promotion, [...] exploration of the deep theoretical and conceptual contestation over this concept in democratic and political theory is made relatively little of in existing studies on democracy promotion, or in policy practice. Some contestation over democracy is acknowledged as a matter of course [...] Yet, curiously, democracy, as it is conceived to apply in the contemporary democratization and democracy promotion context, is understood in a surprisingly singular ‘liberal democratic’ fashion.”¹⁵

In effect, the inability of democracy assistance practitioners to adequately recognize and tackle this “essential contestability”¹⁶ of democracy has important implications in their ability to conceive of the consequences that alternative models of democracy may have for democracy promotion. In other words, full acknowledgement of the existence of other models of democracy may render democracy promotion more effective as contemporary policies could be tweaked to accommodate more of the exigencies of local population even if these do not fit into the picture of “liberal democracy”. Notable examples could be the Asian countries, where society operates along more communitarian lines than in Western societies, which are marked by more individualist conceptions of the organization of society.¹⁷ Clearly, the various conceptions of societal organization, which are the product of particular historical tradition and

¹⁴ Hobson, Christopher, “Beyond the End of History: The Need for a ‘Radical Historicisation’ of Democracy in International Relations”, *Millennium - Journal of International Studies* 37 (3), 2009: 655.

¹⁵ Kurki, Milja, “Democracy and Conceptual Contestability: Reconsidering Conceptions of Democracy in Democracy Promotion”, *International Studies Review* 12 (3), 2010: 363–364.

¹⁶ On the notion of “essentially contested concepts” see Gallie, Walter Bryce, “Essentially Contested Concepts”, *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 56, 1956: 167–198.

¹⁷ See Bell, Daniel A., *Communitarianism and its Critics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993); Bell, Daniel A., *Beyond Liberal Democracy: Political Thinking for an East Asian Context* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006).

political culture, have a non-negligible effect on the design of political institutions, the judicial system and the overall expectations citizens have of their respective governments.

Explaining and understanding these differences through an examination of the EU's and US' conceptions of the democratic self and of democracy in general, is therefore among the key aims of this dissertation. Put differently, we will question and examine how normative ideals and understandings of democracy inform the formulation and implementation of democracy promotion strategies and policies.

This idealist ontology (i.e. donor's ideas of democracy) will be complemented by a materialist ontology (i.e. donor's structures through which democracy is promoted). Nonetheless it must be reiterated (and will be argued) that these two ontologies are not to be viewed in strict separation, but as mutually constitutive. It is the "ideas" of democracy that shaped the qualities of "structures". Such ontology is compatible with both an epistemology of "understanding" and of "explaining" and partly corresponds to what Alexander Wendt has labelled the "via media" of modern constructivism in IR.¹⁸

By tracing back the politics of democracy promotion to its normative roots, we will be looking at the causal mechanisms and generating processes of the agenda, i.e. "why" it was formed and "why" it looks as it does – this holds an inherently explanatory value.

Although the research agenda presented here may seem anecdotal in some respects – for example, it is no anomaly that policies of two actors differ as this is naturally the case in many other sectors (health care, development) – if we consider that the two actors have an identical *stated* goal, that is, installing democratic governance in a target country, but that both employ different approaches and instruments, then we need to ask ourselves why this is so. Consequentially, the proposed research is certainly worth probing with respect to policy recommendations. Does one actor believe its approach is "better" (in terms of effectiveness or outcome)? Does one actor have more experience and thus its approach is more "mature" (in terms of expertise and capacity)? By identifying differences in approach, we are not just describing, but looking at a bigger picture. What we are attempting to demonstrate here is that differing conceptions or understandings of democracy ultimately inform and define democracy promotion policies and, as a consequence, affect the potential effectiveness of these policies in various

¹⁸ Wendt, Alexander, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 47.

politico-cultural contexts (the matter of “effectiveness” of democracy promotion, however, is not subject of this dissertation¹⁹).

The claim proposed by this dissertation – that the US and the EU promote somewhat different models of democracy – also presents a rebuke of critical theories about democracy promotion, which assert that the “West” (meaning a unified geographic entity comprising the US and the EU) promotes a single “version” of democracy around the globe. Particularly, these critical theorists speak of “low-intensity democracy”, which instrumentally separates the political from the socio-economic sphere and considers the former as the sole determinant of a democratic system. Low-intensity democracy is, in short, a political system in which “formal electoral democracy is promoted, but the transformatory capacity of democracy is limited in order to facilitate neoliberal economic policies.”²⁰ This form of democracy is allegedly designed to support and further the interests of the transnational capitalist elite in third countries and open these states to the hegemonic project of neoliberal globalization.²¹ As will be shown, this definition of democracy does not hold namely when observing the EU’s democracy promotion agenda.

¹⁹ For a study on the effectiveness of democracy promotion, see Schmitter, Philippe C., “International democracy promotion and protection: theory and impact” in Teixeira, Nuno Severiano (ed.), *The International Politics of Democratization: Comparative perspectives* (New York NY: Routledge, 2008).

²⁰ Gills, Barry K., “American Power, Neo-liberal Economic Globalization and ‘Low Intensity’: An Unstable Trinity” in Michael G. Cox et. al. (eds.) *American Democracy Promotion: Impulses, Strategies, and Impacts* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 326.

²¹ See Gills, Barry and Joel Rocamora, “Low intensity democracy”, *Third World Quarterly* 13 (2), 1992: 501-523; Robinson, William I., “Globalization, the World System and 'Democracy Promotion' in U.S. Foreign Policy”, *Theory and Society* 25 (5), 1996: 615-665; Lazarus, Joel, “Contesting the hegemony of democracy promotion: towards the demos”, *Critical Policy Studies* 8 (1), 2014: 41-60.

2 Research method and structure

To validate the research goal, the dissertation will proceed in the following manner. In the first instance, we are going to layout a typology of approaches to democracy promotion. This typology will be based on secondary literature, yet it will be elaborated and extended to include new analytical lenses. Three pairs of approaches to democracy promotion will be identified (the political and developmental, top-down and bottom-up and procedural and substantive). This typology will serve as a tool to help us highlight the fault lines along which the two actors' approaches differ. It will also help us demonstrate and discuss which conception of democracy (in other words, the *end product* of democracy promotion efforts) each approach implicitly presupposes.

The second part of our research will examine from various perspectives the democratic identity of the two actors – i.e. it is going to set down the normative background that informs the democracy promotion agendas. These identities will hence be juxtaposed with the typology elaborated in the first part of the dissertation in order to discover which type of approaches the two actors should be inclined to pursue based solely on their democratic identity. We will thereby find the “default positions” of both actors in their approach to democracy promotion (as we will see, while the US inclines towards a “political–bottom-up–procedural” approach, the EU tends toward a “developmental–top-down–substantive” model) and in subsequent chapters substantiate our hypotheses with an examination of the conceptualizations of democracy in primary sources, the actors' instruments and practice. The process will demonstrate that the definitions of democracy that both actors apply in their democracy promotion work are not haphazard or arbitrary, but that they fully correspond to how each actor envisages and understands the process of democratization, democratic governance and the general role of the state (central authority) in an individual's (or society's) life.

Generally speaking, democracy (as any other political system) is composed of the *relationship* between the state and the citizen, thus it will be along these lines that the analysis of different conceptions of democracy will be studied. It is assumed that most variances between the EU and the US in defining or conceiving democracy are situated in varying conception of this *relationship*. This task is all the more challenging as the two actors are perceived to share many historical traditions, developments and politico-cultural traits and therefore any differences in their conceptions and understandings of democracy are rather of *degree* than of *kind*. Yet, as will be demonstrated, the differences

(albeit subtle) account for important systemic variations, which ultimately affect the substance of the democracy being promoted.

The first place to seek the roots of US and EU conceptions of democracy for their democracy promotion agendas is the narratives they have formed for the purposes of manifesting themselves to the outside world – i.e. the self-perception of the democratic systems that each of them presents to third countries as an “example” to follow. These self-styled (or also implicit) narratives are key entry points for how each actor perceives and understands its own model of democracy. Moreover, we will demonstrate how the narratives help us illuminate why the US prefers a *bottom-up* approach to democracy and why the EU tends to lean toward a *top-down* approach.

Secondly, the prevalence of “the liberal tradition” in the American context when compared to the context of EU politics, which is significantly more influenced by social democratic political thinking, needs to be considered when analyzing the conception of democracy in both actors’ agendas. It will be demonstrated that “the liberal tradition” predisposes the US to emphasize aspects connected to the *political* approach to democracy promotion, while the legacy of socialism in the EU pushes its democracy promotion agenda toward the *developmental* approach.

Finally, to clarify why the US tends to focus on promoting a rather *procedural* form of democracy in target states and why the EU has shown to lean toward a *substantive* model of democracy, we will concentrate on how the political culture of the two actors conceptualizes the role of the state relative to society (i.e. the relationship between the individual and the government). In other words, the scope of the central authority’s role in society is conceived of differently on both sides of the Atlantic and consequently this differing conception can be observed in the model of democracy that both actors aim to promote.

The aim of the third part is to give practical life to the hypothetical “default positions” of the EU and US in approaching democracy promotion, by probing and analyzing conceptions of democracy in primary sources – namely the founding documents, strategies and regulations of US and EU institutions that are mandated to carry out democracy promotion and democracy assistance work. The third part will serve to verify that the actors’ conceptions of democracy permeate into their democracy promotion programs and institutions. Neither side employs an “official” definition of democracy, yet by analyzing primary documents we can discern some fairly coherent conceptions of democracy that generally guide both actors’ work. Therefore, along with

a description of the activities and focus of US and EU institutions designed to promote and assist democracy, this part will put into perspective how and in which aspects the notion of *democracy* in the two actors' democracy promotion agendas differs.

It must be noted that the object of research in this dissertation will not be the democracy promotion policies of individual EU member states, but when we speak of the EU, we mean "EU institutions" or programs and instruments that have been created and are administered by EU institutions, such as the individual Directorate-Generales (DGs) or the European Parliament. This also applies to the US, where only programs and instruments created, administered or funded by the federal government are considered in the analysis. Purely private endeavors in the field of democracy promotion, such as those of the Open Society Foundations, are not considered as official US democracy promotion. On the other hand, organizations, such as Freedom House or the National Endowment for Democracy, which have been founded by an Act of Congress or the President and which at the same time have an earmarked sum in federal budgets, but retain relative institutional autonomy, are considered as official instruments of the US federal government's democracy promotion agenda.

An analytical challenge arises also from the fact that the EU, unlike the US, is not a sovereign state entity.²² This makes it much more difficult to examine the underlying meaning and substance of democracy within its democracy assistance activities. Even though there have been official attempts to define a common "meaning" of democracy for the EU's external action²³, these are still limited by the fact that the Union is composed of over two dozen members, whose political cultures, constitutional traditions and societal circumstances differ. Thereby it may seem that finding a common (or unitary) form of democratic identity (or definition of democracy) is not possible without making overly broad generalizations that come at the expense of academic precision. The author admits that it was necessary to turn to generalizing conclusions in some parts of this work in

²² There are, of course, discussions pertaining to the "nature" of the EU as an actor, ranging from accounts of the EU being merely an international organization or in fact a "state". See Caporaso, James A., "The European Union and Forms of State: Westphalian, Regulatory or Post-Modern?" *Journal of Common Market Studies* 34 (1), 1996: 29-52; Pollack, Mark A., "Theorizing the European Union: International Organization, Domestic Polity, or Experiment in New Governance?" *Annual Review of Political Science* 8, 2005: 357-398; von Bogdandy, Armin, "Neither an International Organization nor a Nation State: The EU as a Supranational Federation" in Jones, Erik, Anand Menon, and Stephen Weatherill (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of the European Union* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

²³ For example, Office for Promotion of Parliamentary Democracy, *Democracy Revisited: Which Notion of Democracy for the EU's External Relations?* European Parliament, Brussels, September 2009. Available at http://www.agora-parl.org/sites/default/files/OPPD_-_Democracy_revisited.original.pdf (accessed August 26, 2016).

order to proceed with research and to comprehend the meaning of democracy in EU democracy promotion, but all of these “generalizations” are referenced with works by leading academics and with empirical examples. Nevertheless, the EU is indisputably a “democracy promoter in its own right” (and, following the US, the second largest in the world) and as such it should be analyzed as any other actor in the field, no matter whether it is a state entity, a non-governmental organization (NGO) or a private foundation.²⁴ Just like any other democracy promoter, the EU works with *some* “definition” of democracy and inherently promotes one (or multiple) “models” of democracy (deliberately or unintentionally) – these are hence necessary to study and understand.

So, to help us understand the EU’s conception of democracy, we will often be referring to official EU documents (treaties, regulations), but also observing how the language of these documents was determined by the political practices and traditions of member states. In other words, even though we will be dealing with the democracy promotion of EU *institutions* – and not of member states – at some points we need to bring the member states back into the analysis in order to grasp the normative understanding of democracy in the EU. This is because there is little doubt that the norms and politico-cultural traditions of member states are filtered through the European Council, the European Parliament or the bureaucracy into the democratic identity of the entire EU project and into its policies.

It should also be noted that by examining donors in isolation from recipients, we do not mean to indicate that recipients lack importance in the formulation of democracy assistance policies and strategies – they, of course, do. In fact, the structural realities in recipient states may play a crucial part in how donors design their assistance policies. However, without knowing the “default positions” or “default approaches” of donors to democracy assistance, which we will devise based on the donors’ own understanding of democracy, we can hardly assess how and to what extent donors alter and shape their policies with respect to the structural realities and context in recipient states.

Before we turn to the research question itself, we shall explain our general theoretical perspective and clarify our use of the often-interchangeable terms of

²⁴ Moreover, democracy promotion “has been one of the foreign policy fields where EU institutions have been clearly in the driving seat since Member States have been supportive of having this policy managed at the EU level due to its experience and specific instruments in the areas”. See Huber, Daniela, *Democracy Promotion and Foreign Policy Identity and Interests in US, EU and Non-Western Democracies* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 105.

democracy promotion, democracy assistance, democracy aid etc. – this will be done in the following two chapters.

3 The theoretical approach

Since the end of the Cold War, the international community has witnessed a surge of interventions legitimated on the basis of the protection of human rights, international justice, human security, democracy and other moral responsibilities that “developed” countries claim to have toward the “least-developed”. Concepts of morality and values have thus acquired an important position in the process of foreign policy-making, requiring governments to take a more enlightened view of their own self-interests and feel a “moral duty” to protect the rights and interests of foreign citizens. Often intervening in states of little strategic significance and with nearly zero prospects for material gain, the new paradigm has posed a problem for realist and liberal international relations theories, which argue the determinants of state behavior are geostrategic and economic/material interests.²⁵

For purposes of conceptual clarity we can distinguish between two broad types of foreign policy – material/interest-based foreign policy and value-based/ethical foreign policy. While the former is formulated in order to pursue a material gain (acquisition of new territory, access to resources and markets etc.), the latter is based exclusively on upholding non-material concepts such as the rule of law, good governance, human rights, gender equality etc. This distinction is important for analytical reasons and for the purposes of this dissertation. Yet it is also necessary to emphasize that there is often significant overlap between the two types and that the distinction is not clear-cut. In fact, some scholars argue that value-based policies are used merely as a veil for the pursuit of controversial material-based interests.²⁶

Nevertheless, there is little doubt that value-based foreign policy has gained unprecedented momentum in the post-Cold War era – either in the increased number of humanitarian interventions²⁷, programs for gender equality²⁸, democracy assistance activities or the EU’s worldwide quest for the abolition of the death penalty²⁹. This turn

²⁵ Finnemore, Martha, “Constructing Norms of Humanitarian Intervention” in Katzenstein, Peter J. (ed.), *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics* (New York NY: Columbia University Press, 1996), 153.

²⁶ See, among others, Robinson, *Globalization, the World System*; Robinson, William I., “Promoting polyarchy: 20 years later,” *International Relations* 27(2), 2013: 228-234; Zubairu Wai, “The empire’s new clothes: Africa, liberal interventionism and contemporary world order,” *Review of African Political Economy* 41 (142), 2014: 483-499.

²⁷ See Abiew, Francis Kofi, “Assessing humanitarian intervention in the post-cold war period: Sources of consensus,” *International Relations* 14 (2), 1998: 61-90.

²⁸ See Harrington, Carol, “Resolution 1325 and Post-Cold War Feminist Politics,” *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 13 (4), 2011: 557-575.

²⁹ See Schmidt, John R. “The EU Campaign against the Death Penalty,” *Survival* 49 (4), 2007: 123-134.

in foreign policy-making can be aptly illustrated by the words of Czech president Vaclav Havel referring to the 1999 military intervention in Kosovo:

*“But no person of sound judgement can deny one thing: This is probably the first war ever fought that is not being fought in the name of interests, but in the name of certain principles and values. If it is possible to say about a war that it is ethical, or that it is fought for ethical reasons, it is true of this war. Kosovo has no oil fields whose output might perhaps attract somebody’s interest; no member country of the Alliance has any territorial claims there; and, Milosevic is not threatening either the territorial integrity, or any other integrity, of any NATO member.”*³⁰

Some plausible explanations for this proliferation of ethical values into foreign policy-making can be attributed to the end of the bipolar era and its related structural impediments and restraints to intervene “more freely” in the domestic affairs of other states. Also, post-Cold War foreign policy can be partly motivated by the “demand” from the increasing quantity of “failed states” in the international system, which have lost the bargaining power to receive assistance and aid that they had during the bipolar era.

However, the *demand*-side explanation for the formation of “ethical foreign policy” is, according to Chandler and Heins, not sufficient. They provide a “supply-side” account that focuses, first, on shifting sensibilities among Western publics, and second, on the new search for a sense of global mission spurred by political elites who suffer from a ‘crisis of meaning’”.³¹ Their argument is loosely connected to Jürgen Habermas’ theory introduced in 1973 of Western governments facing “legitimation problems”³² caused by mounting difficulties in effectively governing modern societies (such as fixing healthcare systems and pension schemes for their ageing).³³ Habermas argued that in order to cope with legitimation problems, governments need to tap into the symbolic resources of society and realign their political actions to the widely accepted social values, norms and cultural traditions.

³⁰ Address by Vaclav Havel President of the Czech Republic to the Senate and the House of Commons of the Parliament of Canada, Parliament Hill, Ottawa, 29 April 1999. Full transcript available at http://vaclavhavel.cz/showtrans.php?cat=projevy&val=105_aj_projevy.html&typ=HTML (accessed June 1, 2016).

³¹ Chandler, David and Volker Heins, “Ethics and Foreign Policy: New Perspectives in an Old Problem” in Chandler, David and Volker Heins (eds.) *Rethinking Ethical Foreign Policy: Pitfalls, possibilities and paradoxes* (New York NY: Routledge, 2007): 8.

³² Legitimation problems or crisis refers to a decline in the confidence of the administrative functions of institutions despite the fact that they retain legal authority.

³³ Habermas, Jürgen, *Legitimation Crisis* (Boston MA: Beacon Press, 1975).

Ethical foreign policy can be considered as an instrument for coping with “legitimation problems” of democratic governments. Chandler makes this case in his earlier work where he looks at domestic factors that shape and motivate post-Cold War value-based policies. He suggests that “one important factor behind major western powers acting on this possibility and making foreign policy concerns central to defining their administrations, is the difficulty of generating moral authority through domestic policy initiatives.”³⁴ In other words, ethical foreign policy can be employed to buttress the moral authority of governments, facing legitimation crisis in the domestic context, as policymakers are less accountable for matching ambitious policy aims with final policy outcomes in the international sphere and vis-à-vis citizens in recipient countries.

So, rather than “justifying policy in terms of practical ends – the traditional interest-based understandings of the past – policy is increasingly justified in moral or value-based terms, giving legitimacy to the actions in and of themselves.”³⁵ To a certain extent, foreign policy-making thus becomes an “idealized projection of the Western self, rather than the instrumentalized projection of strategic interests.”³⁶ The important point here is that ethical foreign policy should be seen as originating primarily in reaction to endogenous factors rather than to exogenous ones. In order to formulate and justify an ethical foreign policy, governments and authorities need to bind their discourse and policy-formulation to norms and values intrinsic to their domestic society. The language of ethics that is used to justify a policy must resonate in the given society and be congruent with traditional social and cultural values and norms. To give a heuristic example: in a predominantly Christian state, the government would face great difficulty justifying taking part in an international program focusing on the promotion of Sharia law (clearly, it would also be of little use in solving the government’s legitimation crisis and buttressing its moral authority).

The reason why this debate is relevant here is because democracy promotion is quite apparently an ethical foreign policy. Democracy promotion policies are contextually grounded in the normative background of the donor countries. In other words, the policies are formulated with respect to the perceivably intrinsic values and norms that undergird the domestic democratic society. We can thus safely claim that democracy promotion is

³⁴ Chandler, David, “Rhetoric without responsibility: the attraction of ‘ethical’ foreign policy,” *British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 5 (3), 2003: 310.

³⁵ Chandler, David, *Hollow Hegemony: Rethinking Global Politics, Power and Resistance* (London: Pluto Press, 2009), 203.

³⁶ Op. cit. 204.

(at least on the level of donor rhetoric) a “value-based policy” driven by ideals rather than a “material-based policy” driven by economic or other material interests.

Ethical foreign policy demonstrates that states’ behavior cannot be fully explained and interpreted by considering states as egoistic actors who rationally pursue their narrow self-interest. Factors, such as norms, values and culture can have significant explanatory power, but traditional approaches³⁷ to the study of international relations have been ill-equipped to deal with them or have neglected their role in foreign policy-making altogether. An analytical approach that takes into account the role of identity in the formulation and pursuit of foreign policy, is thus an imperative theoretical framework to employ when studying democracy promotion (while, of course, not denying the relevance of realist and liberal approaches).

3.1 The constructivist approach to studying democracy promotion

The crude commitment of realism and liberalism to *material* factors as the sole determinants of state behavior in international relations was challenged by the increased preoccupation with *ideational* factors by (social) constructivists in the early 1990s.³⁸ Robert Keohane succinctly formulated the shortsightedness of traditional IR theoretical approaches in 1993. He argued that “Without a theory of interests, which requires analysis of domestic politics no theory of international relations can be fully adequate [...] Our weak current theories do not take us very far in understanding the behavior of the United States and European powers at the end of the Cold War [...] More research will have to be undertaken at the level of the state, rather than the international system.”³⁹

A plausible path for “more research at the level of the state” was advocated by Peter J. Katzenstein et al., who proposed to add to the mix of factors shaping national security policies – and thus the interaction between states – the role and influence of norms, culture and identity.⁴⁰ The notion of culture – employed here as *political* culture – depicts a set of values, attitudes, beliefs and sentiments that give order, meaning and

³⁷ Here we mean (neo)realist and (neo)liberal approaches in general.

³⁸ Most notably Onuf, Nicholas, *World of Our Making: Rules and Rule in Social Theory and International Relations* (University of South Carolina Press, 1989); Wendt, Alexander, “Anarchy Is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics,” *International Organization* 46 (2), 1992: 391-425 and Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*.

³⁹ Keohane, Robert O., “Institutional Theory and the Realist Challenge After the Cold War,” in David A. Baldwin (ed.), *Neorealism and Neoliberalism: The Contemporary Debate* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 285.

⁴⁰ Katzenstein, Peter J. (ed.), *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics* (New York NY: Columbia University Press, 1996).

authority to a political system.⁴¹ Norms are the collective expectations that shape the standards of proper behavior of actors with a given identity. Apart from this regulative effect, norms are to a certain extent norms constitutive of identity, i.e. they help shape the identity of actors. Identity (described more thoroughly below) is referred to here as an umbrella term for the varying *constructions* of statehood or nationhood, which includes the interplay of norms and political culture. It is important to emphasize that identity is (socially) constructed – it is not pre-given, but formed through speech acts, discourse, (interpretations of) history, ideas and social interactions.⁴²

Constructivism thus attributes explanatory power to socially constructed realities, which were deliberately sidelined by rationalist approaches to international relations. “For realists, culture and identity are, at best, derivative of the distribution of capabilities and have no independent explanatory power. For rationalists, actors deploy culture and identity strategically, like any other resource, simply to further their own self-interests.”⁴³

Social ontology thus becomes a non-negligible research ground for determining and interpreting the behavior of states – this runs counter to materialist philosophies of the social sciences, which do not consider the epistemological ramifications of social ontology.⁴⁴ A definition of constructivism by John G. Ruggie summarizes the quintessence of the approach pertinently:

“At bottom, constructivism concerns the issue of human consciousness; the role it plays in international relations, and the implications for the logic and the methods of social inquiry of taking it seriously. Constructivists hold the view that the building blocks of international reality are ideational as

⁴¹ Freeman, Jo, “The Political Culture of the Democratic and Republican Parties,” *Political Science Quarterly* 101 (3), 1986: 327. To provide the full definition, political culture is “[...] set of attitudes, beliefs and sentiments which give order and meaning to a political process and which provide the underlying assumptions and rules that govern behavior in the political system. It encompasses both the political ideals and operating norms of a polity. Political culture is thus the manifestation in aggregate form of the psychological and subjective dimensions of politics. A political culture is the product of both the collective history of a political system and the life histories of the members of the system and thus it is rooted equally in public events and private experience.” For more on the concept of political culture see Gabriel Verba and Sidney Almond, *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1963); Ronald Inglehart, “The Renaissance of Political Culture,” *The American Political Science Review* 82 (4), 1988: 1203-1230; Ronald Inglehart and Christian Welzel, “Political Culture and Democracy: Analyzing Cross-Level Linkages,” *Comparative Politics* 36 (1), 2003: 61-79 or Robert W. Jackman and Ross A. Miller, “A Renaissance of Political Culture?” *American Journal of Political Science* 40 (3), 1996: 632-659.

⁴² See Neumann, Iver B., *Uses of the other: “The East” in European identity formation* (Minneapolis MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1999).

⁴³ Katzenstein, *The Culture of National Security*, 17.

⁴⁴ Christiansen, Thomas, Jorgensen, Knud Erik and Wiener, Antje, “Introduction” in Christiansen, Thomas, Jorgensen, Knud Erik and Wiener, Antje (eds.) *The Social Construction of Europe* (London: Sage Publications, 2001), 3.

well as material; that ideational factors have normative as well as instrumental dimensions; that they express not only individual but also collective intentionality; and that the meaning and significance of ideational factors are not independent of time and place."⁴⁵

If democracy is a value-based foreign policy, as demonstrated above, it is necessary to analyze and study it through the prism of an IR theoretical approach that admits the explanatory and causal power of ideational (socially constructed) factors in foreign policy-making. Therefore, this dissertation will primarily work with the interrelated and overlapping terms of *democratic* norms, *democratic* identity and *democratic* political culture and study how these affect, motivate and shape the approaches to democracy promotion by the EU and the US. The underlying premise of the adopted framework is that a value-based policy must be grounded in the value-system of the sender⁴⁶. In other words, in a democratic political system a value-based policy directly reflects the identity of the polity on whose behalf the policy is carried out. Were the policy not to reflect the domestic identity, norms and political culture, political elites and decision makers would have a hard time justifying it and at the same time, it would not generate the effects, for which value-based policies are formulated in the first place – that is, buttressing the moral authority of the sender (described above) and reproducing and consolidating the sender's identity (see argumentation below).

It must be reminded, however, that this theoretical approach does not disqualify the importance of material and structural actors in foreign policy-making or in shaping states' interests. Identity, norms and political culture are taken as context effects – they affect interests, which in turn inform policy choices. The explanatory power of ideational factors serves as a complementary vantage point for material-based approaches to international relations. Foreign policy-making (and democracy promotion in particular) is considered to be informed and shaped both by the material structures and interests present in the international system and by the ideational structures emanating from intrinsic and relational constructions of identity. The applied theoretical approach is therefore not a post-structuralist one.

⁴⁵ Ruggie, John Gerard, *Constructing the World Polity: Essays on International Institutionalization* (New York: Routledge, 1998), 33.

⁴⁶ By the term "sender", I will be referring to the originator of a foreign policy. The sender is the actor, who formulated a foreign policy and works on its implementation.

3.2 The role of identity in democracy promotion

Constructivists envision two basic forms of identity. First, an identity that is intrinsic to an actor and constructed internally. This internally constructed identity hence informs foreign policy.⁴⁷ Second, a relational identity that is formed through interaction of the Self with significant Others. Relational identity informs foreign policy, which in turn reproduces and potentially reshapes identity. Therefore, identity is deemed to be in part constructed by foreign policy (among other factors).⁴⁸

This is a view most famously advocated by David Campbell, according to whom “Identity is an inescapable dimension of being. Nobody could be without it. Inescapable as it is, identity – whether personal or collective – is not fixed by nature, given by God, or planned by intentional behaviour. Rather, identity is constituted *in relation to difference*” (emphasis added).⁴⁹ The “constitution of identity is achieved through the inscription of boundaries that serve to demarcate an ‘inside’ from an ‘outside’, a ‘self’ from an ‘other’, a ‘domestic’ from a ‘foreign’”.⁵⁰ It is through a “stylized repetition of acts” – i.e. the continuous reiteration of domestic norms and their reflection in foreign policy – that the state (or any coherent entity) can solidify its existence by confirming its self-identity.

Analogically to the constitution of self-identity, “otherness” and difference are also shaped as a matter of perception and interpretation – i.e. they are not “God given”. The definition of “otherness” is essentially the realm of foreign policy and is ultimately linked to the identification of danger/threat or, in other words, the “institutionalization of fear” within a given society. Foreign policy (Campbell demonstrates his theory particularly on US foreign policy) thus becomes not only an outward-looking activity, but also an inward-looking action and an “integral part of the discourses of danger that serve to discipline the state”.⁵¹

⁴⁷ This is the approach of the so-called conventional (positivist) constructivists, such as the already mentioned Alexander Wendt, Peter J. Katzenstein, but also Lapid, Yozeff and Kratochwil, Friedrich (eds.) *The Return of Culture and Identity in IR Theory* (Boulder CO: Lynne Rienner Publishing, 1996).

⁴⁸ So-called radical (post-positivist) constructivists adhere to the mutual interaction of identity and foreign policy, among them are Der Derian, James and Shapiro, Michael, *International/intertextual relations: postmodern readings of world politics* (Lexington MD: Lexington Books, 1989); Bukh, Alexander, *Japan's National Identity and Foreign Policy* (New York NY: Routledge, 2010).

⁴⁹ Campbell, David, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity* (Minneapolis MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1998): 9.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Op. cit., 51.

It is the way that the actor perceives others and itself, that “determines its self-identity, as well as the preferences which ultimately result in actions the state will choose to exercise.” As Serena Simoni describes:

*“In essence, if a state identifies itself as a ‘great power’, it will have a different set of preferences or interests than one which identifies itself as a middle power. These types of considerations enable us to understand why the US and Europe seem to be headed in different directions. The Atlantic partners simply have different preferences due to self-defined identities within the larger international and transatlantic context. It is the social construction of their identities that determines diverging interests [...]”*⁵²

Focusing particularly on democracy promotion, we see a policy that is value-based and, at the same time, a policy that has the potential to clearly define and formulate danger/threat. The danger lies in the Others – the *non*-democrats. As William E. Connolly explains, the “threat is posed not merely by *actions* the other might take to injure or defeat true identity but by the very visibility of its mode of *being* as other.”⁵³ Moreover, a lack of democratic standards in a third country is the precursor of a number of other dangers – chaos, instability, terrorism, proliferation, spillover etc. Also, by turning third parties into threatening Others, while pledging to attempt to change them (through development aid, democracy assistance etc.) actors can inherently project themselves (construct their identity) as a positive force in world politics.⁵⁴

Democracy promotion therefore inevitably produces two categories – a morally superior identity of the democratic actor juxtaposed to the inferior identity of the non- (or less) democratic actor.⁵⁵ It constructs the “very differences that transformation would ostensibly eliminate”.⁵⁶ Potentially, democracy promotion is a mechanism of conversion from inferior (and threatening) identity to the superior (and non-threatening) identity.

Because danger is always present “at the border”, identity is dependent on the securing and drawing of boundaries. In this sense, foreign policy (and hence democracy promotion as an integral part of foreign policy) can give rise to a boundary rather than a

⁵² Simoni, Serena, “Transatlantic Relations: A Theoretical framework” in Andrew M. Dorman and Joyce P. Kaufman (eds.), *The Future of Transatlantic Relations: Perceptions, Policy and Practice* (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 2010), 30.

⁵³ Connolly, William E., *Identity/Difference: Democratic Negotiations of Political Paradox* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2002): 66.

⁵⁴ Diez, Thomas, “Constructing the Self and Changing Others: Reconsidering ‘Normative Power Europe’”, *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 33 (3), 2005: 615–636.

⁵⁵ Rumelili, Bahar, “Constructing identity and relating to difference: understanding the EU’s mode of differentiation”, *Review of International Studies* 30 (1), 2004: 31.

⁵⁶ Doty, Roxanne, *Imperial Encounters* (Minneapolis MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 136.

bridge. For example, it has been argued that the most important Other in the construction of a European identity after the Second World War has been Europe's own past (fragmentation).⁵⁷ But since the end of the Cold War, there seems to be a return to geopolitics in the sense that Europe has ceased employing its temporal Other to strengthen its identity and started focusing on constructing its identity by locating geographic and cultural Others, thus delimiting a boundary between Europeans and the rest.⁵⁸

A modern nation-state thus rests on a construction of its identity based on clear inside/outside and Self/Other distinctions. As this dissertation also deals with the EU as an actor, it is necessary to include the frequent argument that, by virtue of being referred to as a "postmodern" or "post-Westphalian" collectivity, the EU needs to move beyond the practice of hard boundaries into a system of permeable or fluid boundaries.⁵⁹ According to Ole Wæver, for instance, the EU does not erect firm boundaries around itself, but "large zones of transition"⁶⁰ and Wendt claims that European states begin to see each other as an extension of the self rather than Others.⁶¹ This approach, however, is limited to the EU's neighborhood and potential future members.

The degree to which the Other is perceived as a genuine threat to the Self (identity) is particularly important in international relations because the construction of the Other as an imminent security threat facilitates the legitimation of violence toward that Other. Yet, when studying Self/Other differentiation in the context of security Rumelili makes the case that we should distinguish between *ontological* security (security-as-being) and *physical* security (security-as-survival).

"Ontological security is intimately connected with identity, and as such its pursuit requires differentiation and in that sense presupposes an Other. It stems from having a stable relationship with the Other; yet, it does not necessitate the securitisation of an Other in the sense of defining it as a threat. The pursuit of physical security, on the other hand, from a critical perspective, entails both the naming and identification of threats to

⁵⁷ Wæver, Ole, "Insecurity, Security and Asecurity in the West European Non-war Community" in Adler, Emanuel and Michael Barnett (eds.), *Security Communities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

⁵⁸ Diez, Thomas, "Europe's Others and the Return of Geopolitics", *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 17 (2), 2004: 319-335.

⁵⁹ Ruggie, John Gerard, "Territoriality and Beyond: Problematizing Modernity in International Relations", *International Organization* 47 (1), 1993: 139-174 and Buzan, Barry and Thomas Diez, "The European Union and Turkey" *Survival* 41 (1), 1999: 41-57.

⁶⁰ Wæver, *Insecurity*, 90.

⁶¹ Wendt, Alexander, "Collective Identity Formation and the International State", *American Political Science Review* 88 (2), 1994: 384-396.

survival, which often involve the securitisation of an Other, and the development of measures to defend the Self against those threats.”⁶²

This two layered conception of security provides a much more nuanced view of the identity/security nexus and more particularly permits us to better understand the role democracy (democratic norms, values, culture etc.) plays in constructing the Self and the Other. States do not only seek physical security (protecting territory and citizen’s lives), but also ontological security – the protection of its identity, values, norms and political culture.⁶³ When an actor finds itself in ontological *insecurity*, the Self experiences instability and uncertainty of being. “Ontological insecurity refers to a state of disruption where the Self has lost its anchor for the definition of its identity and, consequently, its ability to sustain a narrative and answer questions about doing, acting, and being.”⁶⁴ Ontological insecurity then tempts actors to engage in Othering on a wide range of identity markers (such as democracy/autocracy, rule of law/lawlessness, ecological/polluting etc.) that allude to the moral inferiority and the threat posed by the Other(s).

Following this logic, for a democratic state it is necessary to protect its territory and lives of its citizens (physical security), but it also needs to protect its democratic identity (ontological security), all the more as it is generally perceived as the most morally superior of socio-political regimes. Non-democratic regimes – which are too weak and small to pose a threat to the physical security of a democratic state – still represent a threat to the (stability of) ontological security of a democratic regime as the non-democratic ideology may pose a challenge to the democratic state’s identity. Democracy promotion can in this sense be perceived as a mechanism of defense against the potential threats to ontological security.

To summarize the above argumentation: it is imperative to realize that democracy promotion can clearly identify a threat to the ontological (and physical) security of an actor. It can also serve as a preemptive defense mechanism for the preservation of ontological security, while at the same time reproducing the actor’s identity through the “stylized repetition of acts” and delimiting a boundary between the democratic Self and

⁶² Rumelili, Bahar, “Identity and desecuritisation: the pitfalls of conflating ontological and physical security”, *Journal of International Relations and Development* 18 (1), 2015: 54.

⁶³ Mitzen, Jennifer, “Ontological Security in World Politics: State Identity and the Security Dilemma”, *European Journal of International Relations* 12(3), 2006: 341–70.

⁶⁴ Rumelili, *Identity and desecuritisation*, 58.

the non-democratic Other(s). These general theoretical insights will be applied to the empirical observations further in this text.

4 Contextualizing democracy promotion

Before turning to further discussions, it is critical to look more closely at the term *democracy promotion* itself. The notion is being used in various contexts and employed interchangeably with terms such as democracy assistance, democracy aid, democracy support, democratization, and even development aid. For the clarity of discussion, these concepts will be defined here and the often-subtle differences will be explained.

Democracy *promotion* can be considered as an umbrella term for all “activities engaged in by external actors to encourage the development of democracy within a given country”.⁶⁵ The dictionary meaning of the word *promotion*, tells us that it is “something (such as advertising) that is done to make people aware of something and increase its sales or popularity”⁶⁶. Democracy thus becomes a “product” that democracy promoters wish to “sell” or disseminate to target countries – actively or passively. Democracy promotion can be conducted passively as democratic countries may serve as *examples* for non-democratic countries (that is, for opposition groups within these countries, newly emerging elites in liberalizing states or societies in the process of a political transformation) to follow.⁶⁷ In a sense, democracy – by virtue of its alleged attractiveness for every human being longing to live in a free society, under a benign, accountable and responsive government – can be a form of self-promoting “soft power”.⁶⁸ Democracy promotion thus encompasses tools, such as rhetorical commitments (speeches and proclamations by political leaders⁶⁹), political gestures (meetings of political leaders from democratic countries with local dissidents⁷⁰), information dissemination (e.g. through radio or the internet), but also sanctions, conditionality and direct budget support.

⁶⁵ Wetzel, Anne, Jan Orbie and Fabienne Bossuyt, “One of what kind? Comparative perspectives on the substance of EU democracy promotion”, *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 28 (1), 2015: 21-34.

⁶⁶ Merriam-Webster Dictionary, keyword “promotion”.

⁶⁷ On the topic of American “exemplarism” and its effect on US democracy promotion see Monten, Jonathan, “The Roots of the Bush Doctrine: Power, Nationalism, and Democracy Promotion in U.S. Strategy”, *International Security* 29 (4), 2005: 112-156.

⁶⁸ For a definition of the notion “soft power”, see Nye, Joseph, *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power* (New York: Basic Books, 1990) and Nye, Joseph, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004).

⁶⁹ See Obama, Barack, “Remarks by the President on the Middle East and North Africa”, *Office of the Press Secretary*, May 19, 2011; Ashton, Catherine, “Supporting the Arab Awakening”, *The New York Times*, February 2, 2012. Available at http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/03/opinion/supporting-the-arab-awakening.html?_r=0 (accessed May 24, 2016).

⁷⁰ Such as the famous breakfast meeting between then French President Francois Mitterrand and eight Czech dissidents December 1988. See Tagliabue, John, “Mitterrand, in Prague, Meets Rights Defenders”, *The New York Times*, December 10, 1988. Available at <http://www.nytimes.com/1988/12/10/world/miterrand-in-prague-meets-rights-defenders.html> (accessed May 25, 2016).

The opposite action to democracy promotion is democracy *demotion* – that is, the direct or indirect acts undertaken by an external force to hamper, disrupt or reverse the democratization process taking place in a given country.⁷¹ By some accounts, a recent example of democracy demotion can be Saudi Arabia’s “counter-revolutionary” engagement in the Arab Spring uprisings.⁷²

Democracy *assistance* is defined by de Zeeuw and Kumar as “the non-profit transfer of funds, expertise, and material to foster democratic groups, initiatives and institutions that are already working towards a more democratic society”.⁷³ It is a much narrower form of democracy promotion that focuses on *actively* supporting tangible, concrete (“on-the-ground”) projects and initiatives. Democracy assistance can be identified in reference to the flows of finance and people from donor countries to recipient countries, the primary aim of these flows being the assistance to the consolidation of democratic governance in the target country. For the purposes of this dissertation, the notions of democracy *assistance*, democracy *aid* and democracy *support* will be used interchangeably, as in other scholarly works.⁷⁴ The tools associated with democracy assistance are fewer than those associated with democracy promotion and include mainly the funding of concrete projects that aim to consolidate, strengthen and develop democratic institutions and civil society in a target state. In other words, while one can consider mere rhetoric as a tool of democracy promotion, it does not fall under the rubric of democracy assistance as it cannot be identified as a direct and explicit act of practical democracy support.

Democratization is the political and social process by which a state transforms its governance and societal structures from non-democratic (e.g. authoritarian, totalitarian⁷⁵) to democratic (the quality of the newly emerged democracy can, of course, be disputed).⁷⁶

⁷¹ Eecklaert, Rouba Al-Fattal, *Transatlantic trends in democracy promotion: electoral assistance in the Palestinian territories* (New York: Routledge, 2016): 13; Fukuyama, Francis and Michael McFaul, “Should Democracy be Promoted or Demoted?” *The Washington Quarterly* 31 (1), 2007-2008: 23-45.

⁷² For more on this topic see Oz Hassan, “Undermining the transatlantic democracy agenda? The Arab Spring and Saudi Arabia's counteracting democracy strategy”, *Democratization* 22 (3), 2015: 479-495.

⁷³ De Zeeuw, Jeroen and Krishna Kumar, *Promoting Democracy in Postconflict Societies* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2006), 20.

⁷⁴ Eecklaert, *Transatlantic trends*, 13.

⁷⁵ For a concise description of the differences between the two terms see Sondrol, Paul C. “Totalitarian and Authoritarian Dictators: A Comparison of Fidel Castro and Alfredo Stroessner”, *Journal of Latin American Studies* 23 (3), 1991: 599-620.

⁷⁶ The democratization process will be discussed throughout this dissertation, for a discussion of the various developments within transitioning states see O’Donnell, Guillermo and Philippe C. Schmitter, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies* (Baltimore MD: Johns Hopkins University Press: 1986).

Democratization (in theory) is a teleological process, with fully consolidated democracy as its ultimate goal. In this sense, it is often used interchangeably with notions such as democratic *transformation* and democratic *transition*. However, one can also often find the notion of “promoting democratization”.⁷⁷ This term therefore implies the direct or indirect actions conducted by external forces not only to promote the democratic *system*, but also the actions to promote or foster the *process* by which the *system* comes about. To put this more conceptually, promoting democratization entails supporting not just the forces that can potentially install and consolidate a democratic system in a target country, but it also includes supporting forces that would be capable of toppling the present regime. If placed on a time scale, “promoting democratization” would precede “democracy assistance”. In order to promote democratization, external actors can go as far as employing the tool of military intervention.

As will be demonstrated below, democracy promotion has evolved as a policy partly from within the sphere of *development aid*. This means that donor institutions, such as United States Agency for International Development (USAID) or the European Development Fund (EDF), which were initially designed to provide development aid have over time adopted democracy support into their agendas and competencies. While development aid is a broad notion with a number of interchangeable and derived terms⁷⁸, one can define it as the “financial flows, technical assistance, and commodities that are (1) designed to promote economic development and welfare as their main objective (thus excluding aid for military or other non-development purposes); and (2) are provided as either grants or subsidized loans.”⁷⁹ Thus, unlike democracy promotion, which targets mostly the political sphere of a target country, development aid is active in attempting to ameliorate the living conditions of target societies in all spheres of life on a sustainable basis. Development support can thus include the construction of an asphalt road that will presumably provide more opportunities for locals to sell their goods and products in regional markets – this is far from the political goals of democracy promotion.

⁷⁷ For example Windsor, Jennifer L., “Promoting Democratization Can Combat Terrorism”, *The Washington Quarterly* 26 (3), 2003: 43–58; Carapico, Sheila, “What Does It Mean, ‘Promoting Democratization’?” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 41 (1), 2009: 7-9; Norris, Pippa, “The role of the free press in promoting democratization, good governance, and human development”, Paper for UNESCO meeting on *World Press Freedom Day: Media, Development, and Poverty Eradication*, Colombo, Sri Lanka 1-2 May 2006.

⁷⁸ Such as foreign aid, official development assistance, international aid, development cooperation etc.

⁷⁹ Cited in Radelet, Steven, “Foreign Aid (2006)” in Roberts, Timmons J., Amy Bellone Hite and Nitsan Chorev (eds.), *The Globalization and Development Reader: Perspectives on Development and Global Change* (Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2015), 399.

Yet, the objectives of democracy promotion and development are clearly interrelated – as demonstrated above, one of the logics behind promoting democracy is that the democratic political system fosters not only the political advancement of target populations, but also their social, economic and environmental development – in short, development in all possible spheres of life. Similarly, by constructing quality infrastructure for the transportation of products, development aid helps the economic sustainability (GDP per capita) of target populations, which in turn (according to modernization theory) strengthens their demand for political rights and may lead to more internal pressure for democratization.

What is important to understand for the purposes of this dissertation is that development programs often have components directly related to democracy promotion – such as the Cotonou Agreement (the guiding document for the EDF), which in its Title II, Article 9 emphasizes that the EU-ACP (African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States) partnership “shall actively support the promotion of [...] processes of democratization”.⁸⁰ On the other hand, the programs also have components that can have very *indirect* effects on democracy/democratization (such as the case mentioned above). It is therefore important to distinguish between direct (or explicit) democracy assistance activities and development activities that carry indirect (where democratization or the advancement in democratic governance is a – perhaps originally unintended – by-product of development cooperation). This dissertation will – for the most part – focus on the tools and instruments employed by the United States and the European Union for the primary and direct purpose of promoting democracy. Due to the fact that democracy promotion remains “scattered” across the field of development, its overall impact is very complex to measure and the methodology and approach to evaluating it remains debated among scholars.⁸¹

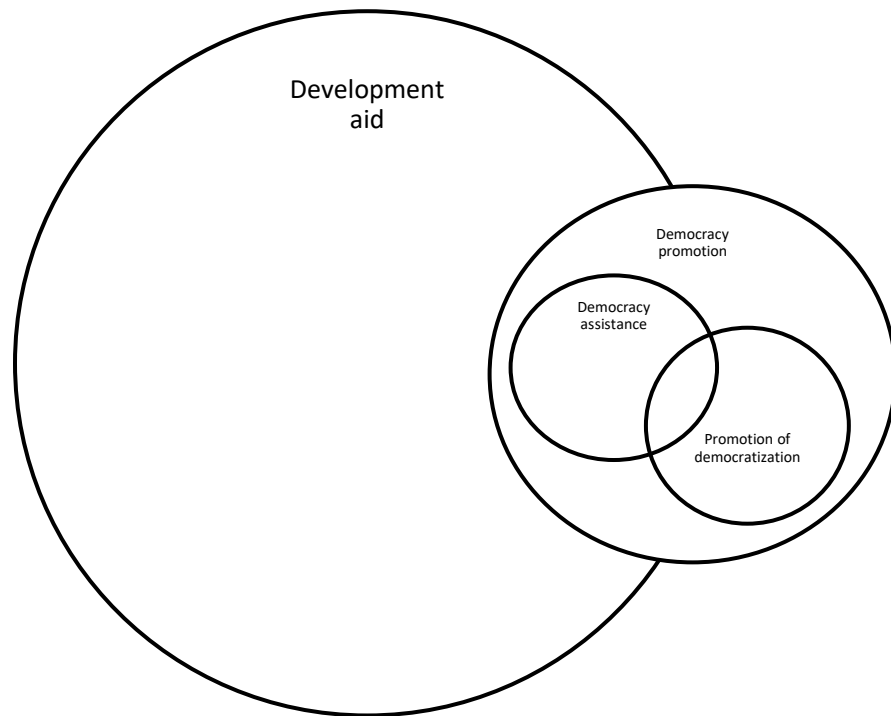
With these definitions in mind, it is possible to imagine that democracy promotion is a particular strategy (targeting political development) within the wider framework of development aid – both conceptually and (in part) structurally (i.e. development-focused institutions conducting direct democracy promotion). A heuristic framework of the

⁸⁰ *The Cotonou Agreement*, Signed in Cotonou on 23 June 2000, Revised in Luxembourg on 25 June 2005, Revised in Ouagadougou on 22 June 2010, Title II, Article 9 (4).

⁸¹ See for example Burnell, Peter (ed.), *Evaluating Democracy Support: Methods and Experiences* (Stockholm: International IDEA and Sida, 2007); Åslund, Anders and McFaul, Michael (eds), *Revolution in Orange: Origins of Ukraine’s Democratic Breakthrough* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2006).

relations between the described terms is illustrated in Figure 1. Democracy promotion does not fit fully into the sphere of development aid, as it employs instruments such as military intervention, sanctions or rhetorical commitments, which do not (should not) fall under the rubric of development.

Figure 4 Heuristic illustration of definitions



Source: Author

When speaking of development aid it is important to note one setback related to the development-democracy nexus. Adrian Leftwich has pointed to the potential internal incompatibility between institutions required for democracy and those required for effective growth and development. He argues that “institutional characteristics and requirements for development and for democracy pull in opposite directions”.⁸² For example, paths to development require *non-consensual* steps to be taken (e.g. land reform), while democracy, in order to be perceived as a legitimate political system requires a high level of *consensual* decision-making – it is at such key junctures that development plans may clash with democratic principles leading to deadlock. “In short, the institutions and system of power which democratic politics both require and represent

⁸² Leftwich, Adrian, “Democracy and development: Is there institutional incompatibility?” *Democratization* 12 (5), 2005: 689.

seldom promote the politics of radical change [...] which is normally vital, early on, for establishing development momentum [...].⁸³

Since one of development aid's proclaimed goals is economic growth in target societies and as democracy promotion is an inherent part of this endeavor, the argument of Leftwich may shine some light on the reasons why modern development aid has such difficulty creating stable and sustainable environments for the betterment of the lives of Third world societies.

4.1 State-building and democracy promotion

While the tools of democracy promotion such as rhetorical commitments and political gestures can be placed in the category of "least coercive", at the most extreme end of the spectrum of "coerciveness" lies physical (military) intervention conducted for the purposes of regime change.⁸⁴

Being (for obvious reasons) the most controversial form of promoting democracy, it still falls within the definition outlined above – that is, "activities engaged in by external actors to encourage the development of democracy within a given country". The most notable example where military intervention was justified and legitimized under the auspices of "democracy promotion" (among other things, such as alleged possession of weapons of mass destruction) was Iraq in 2003.⁸⁵

Formulating the democratic rationale for intervening in Iraq was on the one hand addressed towards the domestic public, providing a normative and teleological argument for the mission. On the other hand it was a (perhaps too idealist) part of the anti-terrorism strategy in the Middle East. According to Bush "the world has a clear interest in the spread of democratic values because stable and free nations do not breed the ideologies of murder." All the more "[a] new regime in Iraq would serve as a dramatic and inspiring example of freedom for other nations in the region."⁸⁶ This logic claimed that democracy is an antidote to terrorism. Iraq needed to become democratic in order to stop fueling

⁸³ Op. cit., 699.

⁸⁴ For further use of the term see Laurence Whitehead, "Losing 'the Force'? The 'Dark Side' of democratization after Iraq", *Democratization*, 16 (2) 2009: 215-242.

⁸⁵ Although it must be noted that the primary motivation to go into Iraq was not *democratization* of the Middle East. According to most accounts, Saddam Hussein was simply an intolerable threat to regional stability and thus the "West" in general and the only way to get rid of this threat was forced regime change. See James Traub, *The Freedom Agenda: Why America Must Spread Democracy (Just Not the Way George Bush Did)*, (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 2008): 116.

⁸⁶ President George W. Bush Speaks at AEI's Annual Dinner, *American Enterprise Institute*, 28 February 2003. Available at <https://www.aei.org/publication/president-george-w-bush-speaks-at-aeis-annual-dinner/> (accessed May 30, 2016).

radicalism and terrorism in the region – once democratic, it would hence initiate a “democratic domino” effect across a region so vital to “Western” interests.⁸⁷

Given the failure of the much hoped for “Baghdad Spring”, which would lead to the consolidation of democracy and subsequent stability in Iraq, democracy promotion began to be viewed with even more reluctance both in the mind of the U.S. public, and also in the eyes of the international community.⁸⁸ As Thomas Carothers points out “President Bush has closely associated democracy promotion with a military intervention in Iraq that is widely viewed as illegitimate, illegal, and the cause of tremendous human suffering. This constant association has done enormous damage to the legitimacy of the very idea of democracy promotion.”⁸⁹ Reacting to this “backlash” against democracy, President Barack Obama has been attempting throughout his presidency to tone down the rhetoric of democracy in US foreign policy, arguably with little success in mending the perception that democracy promotion is only a veil for pursuing American (or “Western”) material interests.⁹⁰

Even though the issue of forced regime change and military intervention is not the primary concern of this dissertation, a closer look should be devoted to an important conceptual debate regarding this topic: the conflation of the terms democracy promotion, state-building and nation-building.

Military intervention generally produces a power vacuum, which needs to be filled by a new system of administration and new political elites. Unlike during a grassroots revolution, the transition process in an invaded state is overlooked by the invading forces and the new power/administrative structure is being formed either unilaterally by the invading forces or jointly with domestic stakeholders.⁹¹ This post-intervention phase thus firstly requires the stabilization of the country in terms of providing disaster relief,

⁸⁷ Carothers, Thomas, “Democracy and Discontent,” *Democracy Journal* 10 (Fall 2008): 71.

⁸⁸ Brooks, Rosa. “Democracy Promotion: Done Right, a Progressive Cause.” *Democracy Journal* 23 (Winter 2012). Available at <http://www.democracyjournal.org/23/democracy-promotion-done-right-a-progressive-cause.php?page=all> (accessed May 30, 2016).

⁸⁹ Carothers, Thomas, *U.S. Democracy Promotion During and After Bush* (Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2007): 15.

⁹⁰ See Bouchet, Nicolas, “Barack Obama’s Democracy Promotion at Midterm,” *The International Journal of Human Rights* 15 (4), 2011: 572– 588; Carothers, Thomas, *Democracy Policy under Obama: Revitalization or Retreat?* (Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2012); Cox, Michael, Lynch, Timothy J. and Bouchet, Nicolas (eds.), *US Foreign Policy and Democracy Promotion: From Theodore Roosevelt to Barack Obama* (New York: Routledge, 2013).

⁹¹ For example, after World War II the Supreme Command of the Allied Powers (SCAP) introduced sweeping political, economic and social reforms in occupied Japan, giving little space for local stakeholders to consult and provide input to these widespread changes. See Dower, John, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1999).

humanitarian assistance, repairing key infrastructure and rebooting the economy. Secondly, measures need to be taken to create (self-) sustainable administrative structures and government institutions. At this post-intervention point, agencies and institutions specializing in democracy assistance (e.g. USAID) can become engaged in the process of democratic institution-building or – since no such institutions existed, for example, during World War II⁹² – soldiers (i.e. occupying or liberating forces) take on civilian roles as governors or statesmen.⁹³

So, the conceptual question is how does democracy promotion relate to state-building/nation-building and how should we distinguish between these two terms? There is clearly some overlap between the terms and therefore it is necessary to identify it.

First of all, for the purposes of this dissertation, we will dismiss the notion of nation-building. Even though the terms state-building and nation-building are often used interchangeably,⁹⁴ it is important to make a fundamental distinction between the two. The term nation-building implies the creation of a *nation*. This principally means “repairing all the cultural, social, and historical ties that bind people together as a nation.”⁹⁵ For that matter, many critics argue that external forces can never build a *nation* and foment a national identity.⁹⁶ Nation-building is therefore rather a domestic issue, an activity exercised by the domestic government and not by an external force.⁹⁷ Nonetheless, the United States in the post-Cold War era, according to Michael Mandelbaum, succumbed to the idea of nation-building in many parts of the world.⁹⁸

In its traditional conception – and as defined by Charles Tilly in his study on the origins of states – state-building provides “for the emergence of specialized personnel, control over consolidated territory, loyalty, and durability, permanent institutions with a centralized and autonomous state that [hold] the monopoly of violence over a given

⁹² In 1943, the US Army created the Civil Affairs Division (CAD) mandated to handle civilian affairs in all occupied territory.

⁹³ For an extensive account of US soldiers serving civilian roles in post-World War II Europe see Harry L. Coles and Albert K. Weinberg, *Civil Affairs: Soldiers Become Governors*, (Washington DC: Center of Military History of the United States Army, 1986).

⁹⁴ Notably in the study Dobbins, James, Seth G. Jones, Keith Crane, and Beth Cole DeGrasse, *The Beginner's Guide to Nation-Building* (Santa Monica CA: RAND Corporation, 2007).

⁹⁵ Fukuyama, Francis, “Nation-Building 101”, *The Atlantic*, January/February 2004. Available at <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2004/01/nation-building-101/302862/> (accessed May 30, 2016).

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ A similar definition can be found in Karl Wolfgang Deutsch and William J. Foltz (eds.), *Nation Building in Comparative Contexts* (New Brunswick NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2010 – 1st ed. 1966).

⁹⁸ Mandelbaum, Michael, “America in a New World”, *The American Interest*, 23 May 2016. Available at <http://www.the-american-interest.com/2016/05/23/america-in-a-new-world/> (accessed May 30, 2016).

population.”⁹⁹ In contemporary political science the term is associated rather with “the creation of new governmental institutions and the strengthening of existing ones” by an external actor(s).¹⁰⁰ State-building is the creation of institutions necessary for a functioning and consolidated state, such as armies, police forces, health and education systems, central banks, courts and prison systems, tax-collecting agencies, writing a new constitution etc. Essentially, it entails building a state “from scratch”. This “new state”, however, does not have to be democratic. We can imagine an authoritarian state intervening in a democratic state and remodeling its system through state-building into a model very different from democracy. So, the aim of state-building is primarily to instigate some form of stable *governance*.

State-building combined with democracy assistance provides for *democratic governance*. When state-building reaches its second phase of creating institutions necessary for the sustainability of a stable order, a democratic external actor will employ democracy assistance to create a democratic political system. The aim will be to create democratic institutions and democratic processes within those institutions – this is where state-building and democracy promotion overlap or, in fact, “join hands”.

Nevertheless, it is important to keep in mind that there is an inherent tension between forced regime change and democratization, in other words “coercive democratization”.¹⁰¹ David Beetham deems that forced democratization is “intrinsically flawed and self-contradictory” because “[i]f the basic idea of democracy is that of self-determination – that a people should determine their own affairs – then it is self-contradictory to try to initiate that through a violation of their self-determination by a forcible invasion and occupation, compelling them ‘to be free’.”¹⁰² Secondly, Beetham points out that two preconditions for a functioning democracy should be met – the first is a “state whose writ runs reasonably effectively throughout the country’s territory; the second is a minimum level of agreement on nationhood, and on the relationship between the different communities that make it up.”¹⁰³ Yet both of these preconditions for democracy are typically fractured by the process of invasion.

⁹⁹ Tilly, Charles, “Western-State Making and Theories of Political Transformation” in Tilly, Charles (ed.) *The Formation of National States in Western Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975).

¹⁰⁰ Fukuyama, Francis, “The Imperative of State-Building”, *Journal of Democracy* 15 (2), 2004: 17-31.

¹⁰¹ Whitehead, *Losing ‘the Force’?*.

¹⁰² Beetham, David, “The contradictions of democratization by force: the case of Iraq”, *Democratization* 16 (3), 2009: 446.

¹⁰³ Op. cit. 446-448.

Part I – Typology and discussion of democracy

5 Typology of approaches to democracy assistance

Before we turn to identifying the conceptualizations of democracy within the EU and US democracy assistance practices and examining how these conceptualizations are shaped by the democratic identities of the two actors, we shall focus on building a typology of approaches to democracy assistance. The typology presented below – which synthesizes the various typologies used in existing literature – is meant mainly to help us in analytically discerning the possible strategic differentiation of approaches to democracy assistance between donors. It should be emphasized that the described “type compartments” are not “watertight” or impermeable and that they represent ideal-types. In other words, democracy assistance providers can adopt a mix of the approaches based on momentary structural possibilities or opportunities and also based on the local context in a recipient country. Nevertheless, as will be demonstrated in a later chapter, empirical evidence shows us that it is possible to observe some general tendencies and inclinations of the EU and the US towards different “type compartments”.

The typology will also help us set the discussion about democracy assistance into the wider debate about the much-contested definition of democracy *per se*. The donors’ *definition* (or perception) of democracy that underlies democracy promotion, it is argued throughout this text, is essential in determining the approach to democracy assistance, the funding priorities of donors and ultimately the potential results of the policy.

5.1 Political versus developmental

The typology distinguishing between a political and developmental approach is based on the work of Thomas Carothers¹⁰⁴ and will be further elaborated using Karel Vasak’s conception of the so-called three generations of human rights¹⁰⁵. The essential difference between the political and developmental approach to democracy assistance is the underlying conception of *democracy* as such. While the political approach adopts a

¹⁰⁴ Carothers, Thomas, “Democracy Assistance: Political vs. Developmental?” *Journal of Democracy* 20 (1), 2009: 5-19.

¹⁰⁵ Vasak, Karel, “A 30-Year Struggle: The Sustained Efforts to give Force of law to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights”, *UNESCO Courier* 30 (11), 1977: 29-32.

narrow perspective on democracy and the democratic process, the developmental approach proceeds from a broader notion of democracy.

The political approach builds on a conception of democracy that could be described as “Dahlian”. Robert Dahl, according to whom democracy is a theoretical utopia and that modern-day democracies should be labeled as “polyarchies”, emphasized in his work the importance of genuine and competitive elections backed by the respect for political and civil rights.¹⁰⁶ Hence, for Dahl, democracy is a system that must ensure the political participation of citizens, so it can be as responsive to their demands as possible. In this sense, the political approach focuses on *politically* empowering the population and giving people the means to hold governments accountable. Democratization is viewed as a political struggle between the individuals and groups whom we can clearly identify as democrats and those we identify as non-democrats. Democracy assistance should therefore support the “democrats against the non-democrats”. This may include supporting (training, advising, moral support or direct funding) democratic forces, such as political parties and watchdog NGOs, but also supporting institutions which provide or lock-in the political rights of citizens in a given country, such as independent electoral commissions, media or the judiciary.

The scope of aid, of course, depends on the level of “openness” of the target regime. In a setting where democracy assistance providers have little or no access points and where the above-mentioned activities are not applicable, they will (covertly) support dissidents, exiled groups and utilize various forms of information dissemination. The support can be quite indirect – in communist Czechoslovakia the families of jailed dissidents were allegedly receiving small sums of money from various “Western” foundations to help them pay their bills.¹⁰⁷

To a large extent, the underlying definition of democracy inherent in the political approach is comparable to the notion of liberal democracy as defined by Larry Diamond.¹⁰⁸ Diamond’s definition of liberal democracy is built around the classical liberalism of John Locke and thus envisages a system that best protects the freedoms of the individual citizen – among the key tenets of his democracy are: control of the state and its key decisions lies with elected officials; no group is denied the right to form a party and

¹⁰⁶ See Dahl, Robert A., *Democracy and its critics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989); Dahl, Robert A., *Polyarchy: participation and opposition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971).

¹⁰⁷ Author’s interview with a former Czech dissident who wished to remain unnamed, November 2014.

¹⁰⁸ Diamond, Larry, *Developing Democracy: Toward Consolidation* (Baltimore MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999).

contest elections; minority groups are not prohibited from expressing their interests in the political process; citizens have multiple channels for expression and representation; alternative sources of information; political equality under the rule of law.¹⁰⁹

Moreover, the political approach inherently believes that democracy is a positive value in itself and thus merits promotion for its own sake. As such, democracy and its respect for political dignity will contribute to and facilitate socio-economic development in the target country. To a certain extent, we can understand the political approach in light of Merkel's conception of "embedded democracy".¹¹⁰ Merkel's model was further elaborated by Wetzel and comprises two constituent sets of requisites of a democratic regime – one set of requisites is the so-called (five) "partial regimes" (civil rights, political rights, electoral regime, horizontal accountability, effective power to govern), the second set is the so-called (four) "external conditions" (stateness, state administrative capacity, civil society, socio-economic requisites).¹¹¹ In this sense, the political approach focuses on the development of the "partial regimes" and leaves the "external conditions" aside – it is understood that the "external conditions" of democracy will be created instinctively as people receive the rights and competences included in the "partial regimes". Figure 5.1. illustrates the concept and shows the distinction between the two constituent sets of requisites of a democratic regime.¹¹²

While the five "partial regimes" are, according to Merkel, the defining components of democracy, the "external conditions" shape the "environment that encompasses, enables, and stabilizes the democratic regime".¹¹³ The degree of importance scholars assign to the "external conditions" varies, but most agree that from a long-term perspective, a democratic regime needs a full set of "external conditions" to consolidate itself and function.

¹⁰⁹ Adapted from Diamond, *Developing Democracy*, 11.

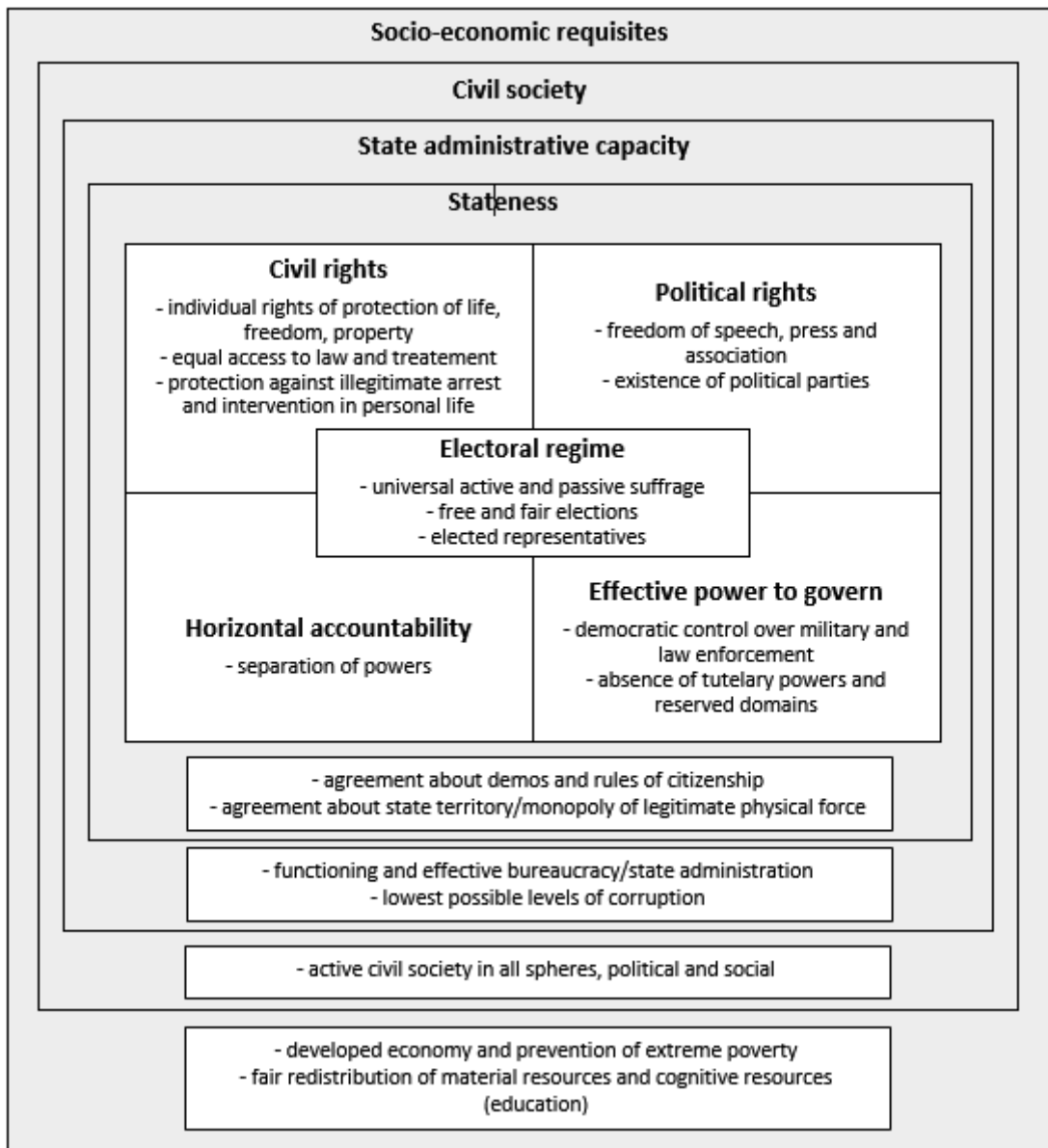
¹¹⁰ Merkel, Wolfgang, "Embedded and Defective Democracies", *Democratization* 11 (5), 2004: 33-58.

¹¹¹ Wetzel, Anne, "The Substance of EU Democracy Promotion: Introduction and Conceptual Framework" in Wetzel, Anne and Jan Orbie (eds.), *The Substance of EU Democracy Promotion* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

¹¹² Figure is adapted from Wetzel, *The Substance of EU Democracy Promotion* and Merkel, *Embedded and Defective Democracies*. The five "partial regimes" are in the middle of the Figure, the four "external conditions" form the outer core of the figure.

¹¹³ Merkel, *Embedded and Defective Democracies*, 44.

Figure 5.1 The partial regimes and external context of democracy



Source: Adapted from Merkel, 2004 and Wetzel 2015.

The developmental approach does not stop short of focusing exclusively on political rights of citizens in the target country, but looks beyond to the social and economic rights, which it deems to be no less important to the process of consolidating democracy. The underlying narrative assumes that democracy is only one of the (pivotal) factors within the larger process of national development. A developmental approach primarily seeks the betterment of governance and the advancement in the living conditions of the target population. In a sense, we can say that the developmental approach is less “ideological” than the political one and sees democratic governance as a means for reaching the wellbeing of the society. As Carothers acknowledges, “When a developing country is able

to make substantial socioeconomic progress without democracy, supporters of the developmental approach are usually quite forgiving of its shortcomings on the democracy front.”¹¹⁴

Within the framework of the developmental approach democratization is viewed as a “slow, iterative process, measured in decades and marked by the gradual accumulation of small gains.”¹¹⁵ Not only does democracy contribute to socio-economic development but it also works the other way around. Socio-economic development builds momentum for further democratization and sets the groundwork for the sustainability of democratic governance. The developmental approach aims to create a socio-economic “safety net” to ensure that advancements on the field of democracy do not start backsliding as the period of democratic transition may, in the short term, actually worsen the livelihood of vulnerable segments of the population and lead to their disillusionment.¹¹⁶ Furthermore, the political cultures of some countries may not be “ready” for democracy, so achieving a certain level of development is the first incremental step towards democracy.

In terms of on the ground support, the developmental approach will favor civil society in general (not just the politically active groups) and various NGOs providing social services, humanitarian aid. Support for state institutions is directed to foster state administrative capacity, which shall in turn lead to good governance. So, rather than focusing on openness and contestation in the political process, the developmental approach attempts to remain apolitical and largely technocratic. Cooperation with the host government and local “ownership” is also considered important as it ensures a less confrontational or interventionist perspective on democracy assistance from the domestic elites.

The developmental approach to democracy assistance is thus often tied to human rights work – on the one hand due to the proximity of the agenda, on the other hand due to the fact that it is more easily defensible against allegations of meddling into domestic

¹¹⁴ Carothers, *Democracy Assistance*, 8.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ Among the many publications about democratization and democratic transitions, see Pusca, Anca, *Revolution, democratic transition and disillusionment: The case of Romania* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013); Lust, Ellen and David Waldner, *Theories of Democratic Change, Phase I: Theories of Democratic Backsliding*, Yale University and USAID/DCHA/DRG Working Papers Series, May 13, 2015. Available at <http://www.iie.org/~media/Files/Programs/USAID-Democracy-Fellows-and-Grants-Program/G-TOC-Phase-2/Theories-of-Democratic-Change-Phase-1-Democratic-Backsliding-v2.pdf> (accessed June 5, 2016); Bitar, Sergio and Abraham F. Lowenthal (eds.), *Democratic Transitions: Conversations with World Leaders* (Baltimore MD: Johns Hopkins University Press/The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, 2015).

affairs of states (as the promotion of human rights is deemed to be more clearly rooted in universal legal principles than democracy promotion). In general, “the developmental approach avoids being confrontational and overtly political and prefers more neutral terminology to the language of democracy, politics or regime change”.¹¹⁷

To further clarify the distinctions between the political and developmental approach to democracy assistance, we can employ the concept of the so-called three generations of human rights. French-Czech jurist Karel Vasak introduced this conception in 1977, claiming that human rights can be divided into three categories (alluding to the three tenets of the French revolution: liberty, equality and fraternity):

*“The first generation concerns ‘negative’ rights, in the sense that their respect requires that the state do nothing to interfere with individual liberties, and correspond roughly to the civil and political rights. The second generation, on the other hand, requires positive action by the state to be implemented, as is the case with most social, economic and cultural rights. The international community is now embarking upon a third generation of human rights which may be called ‘rights of solidarity’.”*¹¹⁸

According to a typology envisioned by Sumner B. Twiss, the civil-political human rights include two subtypes: norms pertaining to physical and civil security (right to life, no torture, slavery, inhumane treatment, arbitrary arrest, equality before the law) and norms pertaining to civil-political liberties or empowerments (freedom of thought, conscience, and religion, freedom of assembly and voluntary association, political participation etc.). Their primary purpose is to protect the individual from excesses of the state.¹¹⁹

Similarly, socio-economic human rights can be divided into two subtypes: norms pertaining to the provision of goods meeting social needs (nutrition, shelter, health care, education) and norms pertaining to the provision of goods meeting economic needs (right to work and fair wages, an adequate living standards, social security net). The second generation of human rights shall primarily guarantee different members of the society equal conditions and treatment. The government thus has an imposed duty to respect, promote and fulfill these rights – depending, of course, on the availability of resources.

¹¹⁷ Office for the Promotion of Parliamentary Democracy, *Getting Acquainted: Setting the Stage for Democracy Assistance* (European Parliament: OPPD, 2010), 15.

¹¹⁸ Vasak, *A 30-Year Struggle*, 29.

¹¹⁹ Twiss, Sumner B. “Moral Grounds and Plural Cultures: Interpreting Human Rights in the International Community”, *The Journal of Religious Ethics* 26 (2), 1998: 272.

The two subtypes of the “rights of solidarity” include: the self-determination of peoples (to their political status and their economic, social, and cultural development) and certain special rights of ethnic and religious minorities (for example, to the enjoyment of their own cultures, languages, and religions). The third generation of human rights is also sometimes referred to as a category of “green rights” that include, for example, the right to a healthy (or satisfactory) environment and the right to natural resources.¹²⁰

Linking this debate to the question of political and developmental approaches to democracy assistance, we can see that while the political approach would focus solely on the first generation of human rights (civil-political), the developmental approach would primarily focus on the second generation (socio-economic) and secondly on the other two generations.

While some scholars argue that the three generations of human rights are, in fact, mutually incompatible – notably the first (“liberty”) and the third (“fraternity”)¹²¹ – Twiss dismisses this claim and warns of “self-defeating imbalances” that would result from the excessive prioritization of any one generation over another:

“[...]to emphasize civil-political rights to the exclusion of socioeconomic and collective-developmental rights runs the risk of creating socially disadvantaged groups within a society to the degree of triggering disruption, which, in turn, invites the counter response of repression. To emphasize socioeconomic rights to the exclusion of civil-political rights runs the risk of ironically creating a situation where, without the feedback of political participation, the advancement of socioeconomic welfare comes to be hampered or inequitable. To emphasize collective-developmental rights to the exclusion of other types runs the risk of not only fomenting a backlash against civil-political repression but also of undercutting the equitable distribution of the socioeconomic goods needed for the continuing solidarity of the society.”¹²²

5.2 Top-down versus bottom-up

The dichotomy of the top-down and bottom-up approach is given by a different perspective on how *democratization* comes about. In other words, the two approaches aim to foster and work with the dynamics that drive the process of political transition.

¹²⁰ *African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights*, Articles 21 and 24.

¹²¹ Such as Park, Han S. “Correlates of Human Rights: Global Tendencies”, *Human Rights Quarterly* 9 (3), 1987: 405-413.

¹²² Twiss, *Moral Grounds and Plural Cultures*, 275-276.

The top-down approach to democracy assistance views the state, the political elites or any central authority as the prime initiator of political change. Democratization can be directed from the top, without necessarily requiring a popular revolution to take place. The first step toward top-down democratization is political liberalization. If a donor government works with its non-democratic counterpart on incremental steps toward political liberalization, the process may distill down to the population and gain further momentum. Political liberalization can be induced by conditioning concessional loans and other types of aid on certain public sector reforms (employing the so-called “carrots and sticks”).

Apart from employing coercion and persuasion to enforce compliance states can instrumentally engage in the process of socialization, which can potentially play an important role in fostering political liberalization in a target country. The concept is borrowed from sociology, where it refers to “the preparation of newcomers to become members of an existing group and to think, feel, and act in ways the group considers appropriate.”¹²³ The concept of socialization has been frequently employed by political scientists both to describe the forces that shape the structure and behavior of new states (or transformed states) and to study the effects of mutual interactions between states and groups of states.¹²⁴

Socialization is not an outcome, but a *process*. Through this process a state internalizes the “constitutive beliefs and practices institutionalized in its international environment”.¹²⁵ Socialization thus imposes both material and ideational constraints on state behavior – states are integrated into the *structures* of the international system and are obligated to apply to the norms and culture governing conduct. An example of a socialization process was the post-Cold War period when the Western community of states socialized former Communist states. Organizations such as the EU, NATO and the Council of Europe “transmit[ted] their constitutive liberal values and norms of domestic and international conduct to the Central and Eastern European (CEE) states and thereby expand[ed] the Western international community to the east.”¹²⁶

¹²³ Persell, Caroline Hodges, *Understanding Society: An Introduction to Sociology* 3rd ed. (New York, NY: Harper & Row Publishers Inc., 1990), 98.

¹²⁴ For a debate see Alderson, Kai, “Making Sense of State Socialization”, *Review of International Studies* 27 (3), 2001: 415-433 and Thies, Cameron G. “State Socialization and Structural Realism”, *Security Studies* 19 (4), 2010: 689-717.

¹²⁵ Schimmelfennig, Frank, “International Socialization in the New Europe: Rational Action in an Institutional Environment”, *European Journal of International Relations* 6 (1), 2000: 111-112.

¹²⁶ Op. cit., 110.

Accordingly, socialization can work to promote democracy. From an idealist perspective, through increased interactions between the democratic and non-democratic states, the non-democratic state and its governing institutions can experience the merits of democratic governance and in turn adopt some of the practices leading to political liberalization.¹²⁷ When speaking of the top-down approach, the on the ground initiatives include capacity-building, technical assistance and knowledge and experience sharing – these are all targeted at employees of government agencies, civil servants, government bureaucrats and parliamentarians. The top-down approach also encompasses direct budgetary support provided to target governments to carry out various projects or programs (either directly or indirectly related to fostering political liberalization). In this sense, the donor is a guiding hand that helps the target country grasp and internalize democratic norms and democratic processes into its political and administrative system.

However, for evident reasons, top-down democracy assistance occurs predominantly in states that are *willing* to accept this sort of aid. Therefore, this approach depends to a large extent on its voluntary approval by the recipient country. A deliberately isolated totalitarian regime is very likely not going to agree to the above described measures, unless offered material incentives. In order to pursue top-down democracy assistance the donor must have a significant number of access points into the target government and needs to work in tandem with it to carry out proposed initiatives.

The top-down approach would thus adhere to the interpretation of the end of the Cold War that gives most credit to the reforms implemented by Mikhail Gorbachev (*perestroika*, *glasnost*, *uskoreniye* and finally *demokratizatsiya*) and other “new thinkers” in the late 1980s Soviet Union.¹²⁸ This top-down political (and economic) liberalization distilled down to the Soviet population and the Soviet bloc and is one of the main causal factors for the end of communist rule (which, of course, was an unintended cause of the reforms). The top-down, government-led and government-initiated political and

¹²⁷ Of course, there is logical reason to think that socialization can also work the other way around – that is, democratic states seeing the merits of non-democratic states and trying to adopt these into their systems. This is a yet unexplored field, but should receive more attention as the politico-economic model of contemporary China, for example, is being praised by leaders of certain democratic countries, such as Hungarian Prime minister Viktor Orban. See Woodward, Colin, “Europe’s New Dictator”, *POLITICO Magazine*, 17 June 2015. Available at <http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2015/06/hello-dictator-hungary-orban-viktor-119125> (accessed June 7, 2016).

¹²⁸ For the importance of Gorbachev’s reforms in “ending” the Cold War see Brown, Archie, “The Gorbachev revolution and the end of the Cold War” in Leffler, Melvyn P. and Odd Arne Westad (eds.), *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*, Vol. 3 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010) and Zubok, Vladislav M. “Why Did the Cold War End in 1989? Explanations of ‘The Turn’” in Westad, Odd Arne (ed.) *Reviewing the Cold War: Approaches, Interpretation, Theory* (London: Frank Cass, 2000).

economic liberalization that is taking place in contemporary China or Myanmar is being perceived with similar anticipation as a process that may incrementally lead to full democratization in the future.

On the other hand, a bottom-up approach to democracy would adhere to an interpretation of the end of the Cold War that highlights the role of grassroots movements, individual dissidents and opposition groups – in other words, it sees democratization as a process that is initiated by the public (civil society) and creates such strong pressure that the given regime is no longer capable of withstanding and consequently collapses.¹²⁹ In a transition period or at its inception, the dynamics of “bottom-up mobilization may play either an influential or a decisive role”.¹³⁰ To a certain extent, democracy is portrayed as a spontaneous human desire when given the opportunity to build a new political system.

In order to demand political rights, however, the population needs to reach a certain level of economic development. A population preoccupied with seeking nothing more than subsistence for the self and the family will focus its attention and energy to finding means for survival rather than pressing for political rights. This issue is discussed by the so-called modernization theory. Originally formulated by Seymour Martin Lipset in 1959, it argues that economic development sets off a series of profound social changes that together tend to produce democracy.¹³¹ Lipset further reiterated that “All the various aspects of economic development — industrialization, urbanization, wealth and education — are so closely interrelated as to form one major factor which has the political correlate of democracy.”¹³² Accordingly, the increase of GDP per capita has a positive causal effect on democratization.¹³³

¹²⁹ On the role of civil society in ending the Cold War see Tirman, John, “How We Ended the Cold War”, *The Nation*, 14 October 1999. Available at <http://www.thenation.com/article/how-we-ended-cold-war/> (accessed June 7, 2016); Cortright, David, “The Peace Movement Role in Ending the Cold War” in Summy, Ralph and Michael E. Salla (eds.) *Why the Cold War Ended? A Range of Interpretations* (Westport CT: Greenwood Press, 1995); Domber, Gregory F. *Empowering revolution: America, Poland, and the end of the Cold War* (North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 2014).

¹³⁰ Pridham, Geoffrey, *The Dynamics of Democratization: A Comparative Approach* (New York NY: Continuum, 2000), 220.

¹³¹ Lipset, Seymour Martin, “Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy” *The American Political Science Review* 53 (1), 1959: 69–105.

¹³² Lipset, Seymour Martin, *Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics* (New York NY: Doubleday, 1960), 41.

¹³³ This claim was challenged by Adam Przeworski and Limongi Fernando in “Modernization: Theories and Facts”, *World Politics* 49 (2), 1997: 155-183 or Samuel Huntington in *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 1968). On the other hand, the relevance of the theory was confirmed by Epstein, David, Robert Bates, Jack Goldstone, Ida Kristensen and Sharyn O’Halloran in “Democratic Transitions”, *American Journal of Political Science* 50 (3), 2006: 551-569.

Following modernization theory, the bottom-up approach focuses not only on empowering civil society to press for (democratic) political rights, but also on giving people the opportunity to ameliorate their economic situation. In a bottom-up approach, supporting the (free) market and individual enterprise is a necessary requisite for supporting pro-democracy initiatives. So, a bottom-up approach will provide aid to pro-democracy civil society organizations and other politically engaged NGOs, education, grassroots and pro-democratic political parties, independent media, business initiatives and other pro-market programs that in tandem with democracy initiatives empower the society to seek engagement in the political life of their country.

While discussing the role of civil society in the democratization process, it is helpful to employ the categorization of its functions provided by Merkel, according to whom we can distinguish four basic perspectives on civil society:

1. The Lockean function – protection from arbitrary state rule
 - Central task of civil society organizations (CSOs) is to protect individual autonomy, natural rights and property from state authority; civil society protects negative rights
2. The Montesquieuan function – balance between state authority and society
 - Civil society functions as a part of the separation of powers, balances and mutually regulates the central authority
3. The Tocquevillian function – the school of democracy
 - Citizens practice democratic thinking and civil behavior and become used to it on a daily basis
4. The Habermasian function – the public sphere
 - CSOs “find, absorb, condense, and pass on public problems to the political arena like and amplifier“¹³⁴

Using this categorization, while the bottom-approach presumes that the role of civil society is mainly Lockean and Tocquevillian, the top-down approach sees the merits of civil society engagement in politics for the purposes of helping to legitimize the actions carried out by the state, which corresponds rather to the Montesquieuan and Habermasian functions.

The bottom-up approach it thus well-suited to be employed in situations where the donor maintains little access points into the government and society of target country. The approach can essentially be carried out fully bypassing the government of the target

¹³⁴ Based on Mekel, *Embedded Democracy*, 45-47.

state – however, this is also the reason why bottom-up democracy initiatives funded or implemented by “Western” donors are being ousted from some countries of operation.¹³⁵

5.3 Substantive versus procedural

These two “type compartments” are situated at the two opposite extremes of the so-called minimalist and maximalist definitions of democracy – while the procedural approach corresponds with the minimalist conception of democracy, the substantive approach corresponds with the maximalist conception.¹³⁶ This typological pair is loosely based on Geoffrey Pridham’s classification of democratic regimes.

Pridham identifies a *formal* or *procedural* democracy as one that establishes the rules, procedures and institutions needed to ensure elections in which candidates competitively struggle for the people’s vote and consequently acquire the legitimate right to carry out political decisions on behalf of voters. *Substantive* democracy is defined by Pridham as “a way of regulating power relations so as to maximize the opportunities for individuals to influence debates about the key decisions that affect society”.¹³⁷ Advocates of substantive democracy claim that procedures are key to democratic governance, yet they are not sufficient conditions for a functioning democracy. Other, less tangible aspects, including transparency and accountability are necessary in order to label a political regime as democratic.

So, while the preceding pairs describe the mere *approaches* (or *strategies*) of democracy promotion by donors, the procedural/substantive types already contain in themselves the *models* of democracy that are being promoted. As Pridham notes: “Instead of division on this matter, it is more constructive to see the one version of democracy as part of a process leading to, if not closely interrelating with, the other.”¹³⁸ Therefore, we should view the given typological pair along a linear axis that comprises the various levels of the “development” stages of democracy as heuristically illustrated in Figure 5.2.

Figure 5.2 Minimalist-maximalist democracy continuum



Source: Author

¹³⁵ See Carothers, Thomas, “The Backlash against Democracy Promotion”, *Foreign Affairs* 85 (2), 2006: 55-68.

¹³⁶ The terminology of “minimalist” and “maximalist” democracy is employed also by Lipset, Seymour Martin and Jason M. Lakin, *Democratic Century* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2004).

¹³⁷ Pridham, *The Dynamics of Democratization*, 4.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

First, let us examine what a “minimalist” democratic theory entails and then elaborate on how it can be reflected in the practice of democracy promotion. The main scholars that can be associated with a minimalist conception of democracy (among others) are Joseph Schumpeter, Adam Przeworski and Karl Popper, for whom the primary point of departure for discussing a democratic political system is elections. They all adopt a somewhat different perception on the utility of the election process, so we cannot speak here of a consolidated minimalist *definition* of democracy, but grouping these authors’ theory will lead us to better grasp the logic of the term.

Schumpeter is a critic of the (“classical”) eighteenth century democratic theory. He argues that the “chief troubles about the classical theory centered in the proposition that ‘the people’ hold a definite and rational opinion about every individual question and that they give effect to this opinion – in a democracy – by choosing ‘representatives’ who will see to it that that opinion is carried out. Thus the selection of the representatives is made secondary to the primary purpose of the democratic arrangement which is to vest the power of deciding political issues in the electorate.”¹³⁹ In other words, he believes that a universally endorsed or consensual common good cannot exist, nor is he convinced in individual will as voter choice is *dependent* on political propaganda and other factors. Even if the individual will were independent and perceptions of the common good were definite, they would be too diverse to be combined.¹⁴⁰ Schumpeter thus proposes a new conception of democracy that turns the “classical” one on its head.

“Suppose we reverse the roles of these two elements and make the deciding of issues by the electorate secondary to the election of the men who are to do the deciding. To put it differently, we now take the view that the role of the people is to produce a government, or else an intermediate body which in turn will produce a national executive or government. And we define: the democratic method is that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people’s vote.”¹⁴¹

According to this logic, democracy is merely a method by which leaders *compete* for votes and also through propaganda *manufacture* the will of the voters. The democratic system has no intrinsic normative value, but serves only as a process through which voters delegate competences and responsibilities to the leaders, who in turn *formulate* their

¹³⁹ Schumpeter, Joseph, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2003), 269.

¹⁴⁰ Mackie, Gerry, “Schumpeter’s Leadership Democracy”, *Political Theory* 37 (1), 2009: 129.

¹⁴¹ Schumpeter, *Capitalism*, 269.

version of the common good (and impose it upon society). The political system thus works very much like a market structure – it is a leadership competition for the monopoly of votes, just like firms compete for customers.¹⁴² It is not the citizens who “rule”, but the elected leaders are the “rulers” of the society, as citizens’ views and policy preferences are not as well-informed and well-founded to choose the optimal policy options.

As an opponent of socialism and popular democracy (which, according to him, inevitably leads to socialism), Schumpeter’s redefinition of democracy is often interpreted as intended to preserve elite domination in the unwelcome socialist democracies of the future – perhaps it is for this reason that this theory “became canonical in postwar American political science”.¹⁴³

Adam Przeworski somewhat moderates Schumpeter’s “elitist” conception of democracy and focuses on the merits of the election process. He builds on the conception devised by Karl Popper, who – like Schumpeter – did not rely upon a well-informed and judicious public, but believed that “We are democrats, not because the majority is always right, but because democratic traditions are the least evil ones of which we know.” Popper identifies the key added value of democracy as a system in which “the government can be got rid of without bloodshed [whilst] under a tyranny it cannot.”¹⁴⁴ The uncertainties and imperfections of elections are always preferable to prospects of tyranny. More importantly for our purposes, though, Popper claims that:

*“Democracy as such cannot confer any benefits upon the citizen and it should not be expected to do so. In fact democracy can do nothing – only the citizens of the democracy can act (including, of course, those citizens who comprise the government) Democracy provides no more than a framework within which the citizens act in a more or less organized and coherent way.”*¹⁴⁵

Again, Popper sees democracy as a process or method through which leaders are competitively chosen, yet his conception emphasizes the value of using elections as a form of sanctions against those leaders with whom the society is not satisfied.

Even though Przeworski describes democracy simply as a “system in which parties lose elections”, his seemingly modest conception maintains important normative

¹⁴² Schumpeter’s intellectual background as an economist and proponent of the power of the market should be taken into account when interpreting his democratic theory.

¹⁴³ Mackie, *Schumpeter’s Leadership Democracy*, 128-129.

¹⁴⁴ Popper, Karl, *Conjectures and Refutations: The Growth of Scientific Knowledge* 2nd ed. (New York, NY: Routledge, 2002), 471-472.

¹⁴⁵ Popper, *Conjectures and Refutations*, 472.

ramifications.¹⁴⁶ The value of democracy is that it conditions the peaceful transfer of power in regular cycles. Moreover, by virtue of having to compete in elections, the conduct of political leaders is not independent of the election outcome.

The major criterion for measuring democracy is whether there exists an alteration of power consistent with the outcomes of elections – in other words, the incumbent leaders step down after losing elections. In a democratic system the compliance with the verdict of elections is quintessential. The losing party gains higher utility by accepting the results than it would by subverting the system, because it can wait for the next elections cycle. Similarly, a victorious party gains higher utility by holding the next scheduled election rather than canceling or postponing it. Voting constitutes a “flexing of muscles”. Elections “inform the losers – ‘Here is the distribution of force: if you disobey the instructions conveyed by the results of the election, I will be more likely to beat you than you will be able to beat me in a violent confrontation’ – and the winners – ‘If you do not hold elections again or if you grab too much, I will be able to put up a forbidding resistance.’”¹⁴⁷

Returning to how this debate relates to democracy promotion, it should be fairly clear that this conception of democracy would entail assistance devoted above all to the election process as such and fostering the environment for competitive elections – that is, election monitoring, creating the administrative framework for elections, supporting election watchdog groups and organizations and ensuring the *competitiveness* of election by developing the party system. The minimalist conception does not preconceive of democracy as a system that shall bring material benefits to its citizens and makes no association to socio-economic rights.

A maximalist definition of democracy is basically the antithesis to what Popper claims in the quote provided above. In addition, it pertains to what Przeworski critically confers:

“Perusing innumerable definitions, one discovers that democracy has become an altar on which everyone hangs his or her favorite ex voto. Almost all normatively desirable aspects of political, and sometimes even of social and economic, life are credited as intrinsic to democracy: representation, accountability, equality, participation, justice, dignity, rationality, security, freedom, ..., the list goes on. We are repeatedly told

¹⁴⁶ Przeworski, Adam, *Democracy and the Market* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

¹⁴⁷ Przeworski, Adam, “Minimalist conception of democracy: a defense” in Shapiro, Ian and Casiano Hacker-Cordón, *Democracy’s value* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 49.

that ‘unless democracy is x or generates x, ...’ The ellipsis is rarely spelled out, but it insinuates either that a system in which governments are elected is not worthy of being called ‘democracy’ unless x is fulfilled or that democracy in the minimal sense will not endure unless x is satisfied.”¹⁴⁸

To put it simply, while the *x* in a minimalist conception of democracy is the alteration of power based on the outcomes of regular competitive elections, a maximalist conception of democracy envisions a large number of various *x*. The maximalist conception maintains that democracy must ensure certain rights in various spheres of the political and social lives of its citizens and that adhering only to elections for the provision of these rights is no guarantee. Such conceptions often refer to the “fallacy of electoralism” or “the faith that the mere holding of elections will channel political action into peaceful contests among elites, the winners of which are accorded public legitimacy.”¹⁴⁹ Democracy must move beyond mere electoralism as the process by itself cannot provide, for example, the inclusion and protection of civil liberties and rights and does not take into account the behavioral and non-institutional dimensions of democracy.

In effect, democracy assistance undergirded by a maximalist definition of democracy – a substantive approach – will focus on developing and consolidating not only the “partial regimes” of democracy, but also on the “external context”. As a result, questions regarding the outcomes (outputs) generated by the democratic system and their effects on the wellbeing of the individual in the society are considered to be pivotal for the consolidation of the democratic system. The installment and protection of the second generation of human rights, including the focus on the provision of goods meeting social and economic needs, is actively supported.

However, the question of which definition of democracy should undergird democracy assistance and even development assistance is a contested one and the community of donors does not seem to be in consensus. The Overseas Development Institute, for example, warns that “[d]emocracy should not be expected to produce better socio-economic outcomes by the simple virtue of being a democracy” and that “[s]uch a (maximalist) interpretation places unrealistic expectations that are not intrinsic to democracy.”¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁸ Przeworski, *Minimalist conception of democracy*, 24.

¹⁴⁹ Karl, Terry, “The Hybrid Regimes of Central America”, *Journal of Democracy* 6 (3), 1995: 73.

¹⁵⁰ Menocal, Alina Rocha, “Analysing the relationship between democracy and development: Basic concepts and key linkages”, Governance and Institutional Development Division, *Overseas Development Institute Commonwealth Secretariat*, 14 September 2011. Available at

Critics of maximalist definitions of democracy are preoccupied mainly with the problem that such form of democracy is often associated with communitarian values and explicitly calls for a larger role of the central government in the functioning of the society. In this logic, the maximalist conception of democracy predisposes the state to continuously seek to expand its competences to increase its outcomes “for the people”, thus continuously creeps further and further into the individual freedoms of every citizen and hence has most potential to evolve into a totalitarian system. In short, a maximalist democracy can, in fact, swallow itself whole and incrementally degenerate into an authoritarian state. The definition thus borders on the socialist, even communist, conception of an ideal socio-political arrangement. This obviously presents a great conundrum for democracy promoters – as we know from historical experience certain, especially young, democratic regimes that had insufficient “output”, i.e. their provision of goods and services meeting the social and economic needs of their citizens was below the society’s expectations, were easily overtaken by populist political leaders who readily dismantled democracy and imposed authoritarianism.¹⁵¹

<https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/events-presentations/939.pdf> (accessed February 7, 2017).

¹⁵¹ See Berman, Sheri, *The primacy of politics: social democracy and the making of Europe's twentieth century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

6 Summary of findings of Part I

The table below (Table 6) summarizes and clarifies the differentiation of the presented “type compartments” of democracy promotion. Nevertheless, it should be clear that what will be described are general *tendencies* and *inclinations* of the two actors to lean toward one or the other type compartment. Even though we will demonstrate in succeeding chapters that the EU democratic identity predisposes the Union’s approach to democracy assistance to be situated along the “top-down – developmental – substantive nexus” promotion, while the US democratic identity predispose Washington to be placed on the “bottom-up – political – procedural nexus”, it would be myopic to assume that the approaches of the two actors fit neatly into the prescribed type compartments, as some studies may suggest.¹⁵² Such a claim would entail a great deal of generalization. Unfortunately, in the social sciences nothing is as clearly cut to enable researchers to work with easily classifiable and uncontested concepts. We cannot claim that, across the board, the US employs solely *this* type of approach and the EU only *that* type of approach. Both actors effectively employ all the mentioned types of strategies, yet the task of this research is to identify which of the types are preferred or emphasized by each actor and towards which approach they tend to incline “by default” and why. So, the aim of this study is to highlight the nuances that influence the strategies of democracy promotion of the US and the EU.

The vertical axis of the table is adapted from Carothers¹⁵³ and helps us in cross-comparing the six approaches to democracy assistance and identifying variances among them. By the “value of democracy” cell, we mean to identify what each approach views as the predominant worth of the democratic system for society. The “conception of democracy” cell looks at how each approach defines the workings and key tenets of a democratic system. The third vertical cell, “impulses for democratization”, describes the variances in how each approach perceives the pressures that forge democratization and where this pressures come from. The last cell, “methods of democracy assistance”, is directly linked to the previous and shows us where the six approaches would ideally funnel support in order to cause democratic transformation and consolidation.

¹⁵² See Kopstein, Jeffrey, “Transatlantic Divide over Democracy Promotion”, *The Washington Quarterly* 29 (2), 2006: 85-98; Landman, Todd, *Concepts Matter: Delineating Democracy, Governance and Human Rights* (Stockholm: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, 2009).

¹⁵³ Carothers, *Democracy Assistance*.

In Part II of this dissertation, we shall look at the normative backgrounds of US and EU foreign policies (notably their democratic identity) in order to find which of the enumerated approaches the respective actors are prone to adopt. In Part III, we shall link this theoretical perspective with practice.

Table 6 Typology of approaches to democracy assistance

	Political	Developmental	Top-down	Bottom-up	Procedural	Substantive
Value of democracy	Citizens have unalienable rights to be engaged in the political process and decision-making	Contributes to socio-economic development of the people	A stable system of governance that ensures the basic rights of people	A political system that enables the people to choose and oust its leaders. The system is legitimized by the people.	Leaders compete in free and fair elections; leaders can be gotten rid of	A political system that ensures a multitude of rights and services
Conception of democracy	(Liberal) democracy is a system that most effectively adheres to principles of classical liberalism and thus permits and protects individual freedoms of citizens	A means for ensuring and facilitating the well-being of the people; democratic backsliding is tolerable as long as the socio-economic development proceeds	Government institutions and agencies, if properly handled, can ameliorate the welfare and social justice in the society; engagement of civil society legitimizes government action	The people choose and design the institutions and agencies that they deem are necessary for government; civil society protects individuals against state power and teaches democratic principles	Minimalist democracy; enables the most effective way to choose political leaders that in effect formulate the common good	Maximalist democracy; a political system that provides goods and services to meet social and economic needs, thus building social equality through solidarity
Impulses for democratization	Political struggle between political actors – the “democrats” and the “non-democrats”; democratization arrives as democrats gain upper-hand	Slow, incremental process based on small gains; socio-economic development contributes to democratization in longer term	Democratization starts at the top of the political system. Weak leaders, reforms or other structural changes lead to the collapse of political systems.	“People power” – democratization occurs as pressure for change builds up in the society. No matter how strong the regime is, people have the means and power to subvert it.	People lack voice in shaping politics – this culminates in calls for open competition in free and fair elections	People lack guarantees of certain rights; state does not provide services that facilitate or ameliorate the lives of citizens
Method of democracy assistance	Support for political parties and political grassroots movements, dissidents, bloggers, exiled opposition groups, civil society etc.; challenging the existing regime; supporting the “democrats” against the “non-democrats”	Indirect support for democracy; focus on good governance, state administrative capacity. Conducted in coordination with host government. When civil society is targeted, assistance concentrates on apolitical projects and NGOs that focus on social (rather than explicitly political) issues	Capacity-building, enhancing good governance, providing direct aid to state institutions, using conditionality to alter state behavior, socialization.	Supporting all forms of civic activity, including political parties, unions, “get-out-the vote” campaigns and dissidents. Fostering a market economy by supporting business initiatives. Assistance to new legislatures and ensuring they are responsive and accountable to citizens.	Primary focus is on elections, election monitoring, assisting or forming institutions that will ensure free and fair elections, such as independent election commissions; support for horizontal accountability and vertical division of administrative powers (decentralization).	Supporting the “external conditions” of democracy and complementing these with assistance for the development of the “partial regimes”; assisting the formation of state administrative capacity and institutions that deliver necessary social services

(Source: Author, adapted from Carothers, 2009)

Part II – The roots of the actors’ democratic identity

7 The role of the promoters’ democratic self-image

Self-images and self-perceptions are powerful factors that shape the conduct of states in the international system. These self-images are derived from identity, which is in turn based on the underlying normative practices that structure the given society. We can thus expect that value-based foreign policies, such as democracy promotion, will be significantly shaped by an actor’s self-image. As we have described in the chapter dealing with the theoretical framework of this dissertation, we are working with the premise that democracy promotion is a policy involved in the identity formation and reproduction of the sender. Thereby, a rhetorical or practical deviation from the sender’s identity in conducting foreign policy would potentially cause domestic backlash, not to mention allegations of hypocrisy. In short, a democracy promoter must remain loyal to its identity. As Henry Nau points out, “the United States and other democracies will often disagree about what kind of democracy assistance to provide. They advocate different prescriptions because they practice different varieties of liberalism at home.”¹⁵⁴ Smith adds that “It is inevitable that the meaning of liberal democracy in domestic American life should deeply mark the conduct of its foreign policy.”¹⁵⁵

This part of the dissertation will examine how these self-images, identities and meanings of democracy influence the way the two actors carry out democracy assistance. Firstly, since Bridoux and Kurki mention that “in contrast to the US, the EU [...] does not underpin these activities [democracy promotion] with any grand democratic ideology”, we will examine on what ideological pillars and historical narratives the US practice of democracy promotion rests, juxtapose it to the EU and describe the ensuing implications.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁴ Nau, Henry, “America’s Identity, Democracy Promotion and National Interests: Beyond Realism, Beyond Idealism” in Cox et al., *American Democracy Promotion*, 136.

¹⁵⁵ Smith, Tony, *America’s Mission: The United States and the Worldwide Struggle for Democracy* – expanded ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 17.

¹⁵⁶ Bridoux, Jeff and Milja Kurki, “Cosmetic agreements and the cracks beneath: ideological convergences and divergences in US and EU democracy promotion in civil society”, *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 28 (1), 2015: 63.

7.1 US: the democratic “city upon a hill”

When observing the self-image of the United States throughout history, one quickly comes to understand that the promotion of democracy is an intrinsic component of American policy and has existed in one way or another since the colonial era. It is America’s “sense of mission” and perceived “exceptionalism” that render the policy of democracy promotion legitimate, necessary and authentic. Both concepts constitute a transcending moral heritage since the first settlers arrived.¹⁵⁷

The Pilgrims, who saw themselves as new Israelites, introduced into North America a major stream of thought derived from the biblical ideas of covenant (a compact or alliance between God and a religious community), which “not only formed a significant part of the foundation of the United States, but have continued to influence American life”.¹⁵⁸ The Puritans deemed themselves to be God’s chosen people who, with God’s direction, came to the New World to escape religious persecution, construct a New Jerusalem, and pursue and proliferate religious ideals. They sought to place all relationships among people on a covenantal basis, setting the basis for the American constitutional tradition. The importance of the covenant was echoed by Lyndon Baines Johnson in his inaugural address:

*“They came here – the exile and the stranger, brave but frightened – to find a place where a man could be his own man. They made a covenant with this land. Conceived in justice, written in liberty, bound in union, it was meant one day to inspire the hopes of all mankind; and it binds us still. If we keep its terms, we shall flourish. The American covenant called on us to help show the way for the liberation of man. And that is today our goal.”*¹⁵⁹

Still aboard the ship *Arbella*, taking his congregation to New England in 1630, in one of his sermons John Winthrop set a tone that resonates within the American society until today and has been cited by a number of American political leaders. Using a phrase from Matthew 5:14,

¹⁵⁷ See for example Hodgson, Godfrey, *The Myth of American Exceptionalism* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 2009); or Commager, Henry Steele, *The American Mind: An Interpretation of American Thought and Character since the 1880s* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 1959).

¹⁵⁸ Elazar, Daniel J., “Covenant and the American Founding”, Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs: The Daniel Elazar On-Line Library, 1993. Available at <http://www.jcpa.org/dje/articles/cov-amer.htm> (accessed July 26, 2016).

¹⁵⁹ Johnson, Lyndon B., *Presidential Inaugural Address*, January 20, 1965.

Winthrop envisioned the mission of his new colony: “wee must Consider that wee shall be as a Citty upon a Hill, the eies of all people are upon us”.¹⁶⁰

The morals and ethics of the first settlers were (and still are) of utmost importance to the formation of American identity. The Puritan influence “reinforced republican and democratic tendencies” in American politics and society and their ideas and institutions have withstood and survived the masses of new immigrants from various parts of the globe and cultural backgrounds.¹⁶¹ This is because the settlers who create a colony – the “charter group” – have a decisive say on its subsequent development.¹⁶² This phenomenon has been branded by cultural geographer Wilbur Zelinsky as the “Doctrine of First Effective Settlement”. Zelinsky argues that,

*“Whenever an empty territory undergoes settlement [...] the specific characteristics of the first group able to effect a viable, self-perpetuating society are of crucial significance for the later social and cultural geography of the area, no matter how tiny the initial band of settlers may have been. Thus, in terms of lasting impact, the activities of a few hundred, or even a few score, initial colonizers can mean much more for the cultural geography of a place than the contributions of tens of thousands of new immigrants a few generations later.”*¹⁶³

The American “sense of mission” was also important for US identity formation mainly from the perspective that it helped the new nation locate and define its “others”. The Founding Fathers viewed the balance of power system existing in Europe in the 18th century as a dangerous precedent of a corrupt and dysfunctional cooperation between states. At the heart of the European architecture was the Westphalian system, so the plot of the Founding Fathers for the thirteen colonies was to create a system of cooperation that would in no way emulate the system operating in Europe – in short, the Westphalian system and the European empires within it became the “other”. So, “the central point of reflection was how to constitute a new

¹⁶⁰ Winthrop, John, “A Model of Christian Charity”, sermon, 1630. Available at <https://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/winthrop.htm> (accessed July 25, 2016).

¹⁶¹ Huntington, Samuel P., *American Politics: The Promise of Disharmony* (Cambridge MA: Belknap, 1981), 15.

¹⁶² Huntington, Samuel P., *Who are We? The Challenges to America's National Identity* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2004), 41.

¹⁶³ Zelinsky, Wilbur, *The Cultural Geography of the United States* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1973), 13-14.

interstate system to avoid the two extremes of [...] ‘anarchy-dissolution-chaos-disintegration’ and ‘empire-consolidation-despotism-centralization’.”¹⁶⁴ The related debate between the Federalists and anti-Federalists moved in the middle ground between these two extremes and essentially set-out to define the major negative “others” and the structural dangers to avoid.¹⁶⁵

The question from the beginning was whether the US would *transform* or *be transformed* by the Westphalian system. Therefore, primary objective of the nascent interstate (or inter-colony) system in North America was to preserve their republican identity and simultaneously serve as a hedge against a spillover of the Westphalian system of European empires – this goal was all the more pressing as the Confederation system collapsed in 1780s. The culmination of this effort was the creation of the “Philadelphia system”, whose architects referred to it as a *novus ordo saeculorum* (a “new order of ages”), distinctive of any socio-political order in human history. It would later be described as “what a United States of Europe would be” – “an alternative to the European Westphalian system rather than an oddly constituted state within it.”¹⁶⁶

Although we can identify some forces within the newly formed United States that envisioned the union’s participation in the European balance of power system and becoming its “normal” member (such as Alexander Hamilton), the forces that struggled to prevent such an outcome and let its exceptional identity and institutions be assimilated into the European Westphalian system ultimately prevailed. It was Thomas Jefferson who argued in 1802 that “it is impossible not to be sensible that we are acting for all mankind: that circumstances denied to others, but indulged to us, have imposed on us the duty of proving what is the degree of freedom and self-government in which a society may venture to leave its individual members.”¹⁶⁷ Echoing Immanuel Kant’s essay on *Perpetual Peace*, Jefferson believed that the world would evolve into a federation of sister republics, an extended version of the US, through the proliferation of the “Philadelphia system”.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁴ Cha, Taesuh, “The formation of American exceptional identities: A three-tier model of the ‘standard of civilization’ in US foreign policy”, *European Journal of International Relations* 21 (4), 2015: 748.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁶ Deudney, Daniel H., *Bounding Power: Republican Security Theory from the Polis to the Global Village* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), 161.

¹⁶⁷ Jefferson, Thomas, “Letter to John Priestley”, Dated June 19, 1802. Available at <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-37-02-0515> (accessed July 27, 2016).

¹⁶⁸ Cha, *The formation of American exceptional identities*, 751.

The self-image of the teleological existence of the United States was hence complemented by its perceived “exceptionalism”. The term “American exceptionalism” was coined by Alexis de Tocqueville in his celebrated *Democracy in America*. To Tocqueville, America was exceptional because it was qualitatively different in all kinds of ways from Europe, particularly his country of origin France. His understanding of “exceptional” thus meant *different*, yet the semantics have somewhat evolved and the notion came to be interpreted to mean *unique* and thus normatively *superior*.¹⁶⁹ The missionary and exceptionalist discourse not only facilitates the legitimation and gives meaning to foreign policy, but also to the actions of individuals (decision makers, soldiers). As Booth acknowledges, it “helps if the individual believes in what he is doing, believes that his own nation is superior and right, and believes that the enemy is inferior, evil and in the wrong”.¹⁷⁰

Moreover, the American “mission” can choose its task: it can either serve “(a) a religious purpose that stands above and beyond politics, in which America is bidden to play a role in God’s divine plan, or (b) a political purpose that seeks to advance a certain form of government – liberal democracy – throughout the world.”¹⁷¹ The promotion of democracy can be further justified by “(a) a religious command or (b) a rational body of thought, such as philosophy, philosophy of history, science, or political-historical analysis”.¹⁷² We can see both of these justifications throughout history. The Spanish-American War and the ensuing annexation of the Philippines, was defended by Senator Albert Beveridge who believed that God

“has given us the spirit of progress to overwhelm the forces of reaction throughout the earth. He has made us adept at government that we may administer government among savage and senile peoples. Were it not for such a force as this the world would relapse into barbarism and night. [...] And of

¹⁶⁹ For a discussion of the notion see Restad, Hilde Eliassen, *American Exceptionalism: An Idea that Made a Nation and Remade the World* (New York: Routledge, 2015).

¹⁷⁰ Booth, Ken, *Strategy and Ethnocentrism* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1979), 13.

¹⁷¹ Ceasar, James W., “The Origins and Character of American Exceptionalism”, *American Political Thought* 1 (1), 2012: 8.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*

all our races [...] he has marked the American people as his chosen nation to finally lead in the redemption of the world.”¹⁷³

A scientific justification for promoting democracy and strengthening democratic governments around the globe emerged in the 1980s with the formulation of the so-called democratic peace theory – the proposition that democratic dyads have never engaged in war and due to structural and ideological constraints are unlikely to do so in the future – which has essentially been labelled as “the closest thing to a law in social sciences”.¹⁷⁴ But it usually goes that the two justifications are conflated and thus “exceptionalism” (of American institutions) and the “missionary zeal” (covenant with God) provide a dual (and thus stronger) motivation to promote democracy.

The religious aspect of America’s mission has one more important connotation yet to be mentioned. When compared to the US the levels of religiosity in the EU are abysmal (with variations, of course, such as Poland) – both in terms of belief in God and in church attendance.¹⁷⁵ This means that the US public is more easily mobilized for various causes and in reaction to threats when policymakers employ religion-based rhetoric. Indeed, in the case of the US, “the work of evil-doers defines the core set of existential threats in the world”.¹⁷⁶ From here comes the American penchant to depict the world in terms of good and evil, in a thoroughly Manichean view. The rhetoric of American presidents clearly subscribes to this line of thinking: recall George W. Bush’s “axis of evil” to describe governments that he accused of helping terrorism and seeking weapons of mass destruction; Harry S. Truman’s “evil intent” of Soviet communism and Ronald Reagan’s portrayal of the Soviet Union as the “evil empire”. Such rhetoric has all the more resonance in a society, where according to various polls, some 60% of population believes in the existence of hell and the devil.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷³ Beveridge, Albert J., “The Philippine Question”, Speech in US Senate, Washington DC, January 9, 1900. Available at http://www.speeches-usa.com/Transcripts/albert_beveridge-question.html (accessed July 26, 2016).

¹⁷⁴ See Brown Michael Edward, Sean M. Lynn-Jones, Steven E. Miller (eds.) *Debating the Democratic Peace* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1996).

¹⁷⁵ Pfaff, Steven, “The Religious Divide” in Kopstein, Jefferey and Sven Steinmo, *Growing Apart? America and Europe in the Twenty-First Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

¹⁷⁶ Hampton, Mary N., “Living in a World of Dangers and Strangers: Changing EU and German Perceptions of Threat”, *German Politics & Society* 29 (3), 2011: 77.

¹⁷⁷ In 2001 a Pew survey found that 71% of American respondents believed in hell, the number dropped to 58% in 2014 (the number is 82% among Evangelicals). Pew Research Center, *2014 Religious Landscape Study*, November 3, 2014, 55. Available at http://www.pewforum.org/files/2015/11/201.11.03_RLS_II_full_report.pdf (accessed July 26, 2016).

Consequently, “Evil needs to be either destroyed or converted, and often just war is necessary.”¹⁷⁸ Non-democracies can therefore effectively be labelled as “evil” and through democracy assistance the US can attempt to convert them – if the attempt fails, war is necessary. This type of narrative is applicable to the case of the 2003 US intervention in Iraq and predisposes the US to act in an interventionist manner when it comes to promoting democracy.

The perceived lack of reflection about evil in the EU context and the fact that European politicians “don’t do God” – i.e. invoking God in public policy spaces – leads American intellectuals to challenge the moral integrity of Europeans. As political philosopher Jean Bethke Elshtain deems, Europeans “have banished the word evil from their vocabularies [...] Therefore, it cannot really exist” and thus they are incapable of discerning good from evil and threat from non-threat.¹⁷⁹ The argument that the Americans and Europeans no longer share a common strategic culture is further elaborated by Robert Kagan, who claims in his oft-cited article that on strategic matters, “Americans are from Mars and Europeans from Venus”.¹⁸⁰ He says that Americans are generally less patient with diplomacy than the Europeans, see the world divided between good and evil, favor policies of coercion (sanctions) over persuasion (inducements), are willing to operate outside of the multilateral world order they themselves have created and tend to see finality in international relations. Europe, on the other hand, sees a more complex picture of the world than the binary good versus evil paradigm; it approaches problems with greater nuance, is more patient with results and favors peaceful solutions over coercive ones. Simply put, “Americans believe in power, they believe it must be a means of advancing the principles of a liberal civilization and a liberal world order.”¹⁸¹

The liberal world order, undergirded by democratic (or “republican”) political systems, is to be achieved by the US in two different manners. One approach is labeled as “exemplarism”, which suggests that American institutions and values should be perfected and preserved and thereby the US can exert influence on the world through the force of its

¹⁷⁸ Hampton, *Living in a World of Dangers and Strangers*, 78.

¹⁷⁹ Elshtain, Jean Bethke, *Just War Against Terror: The Burden of American Power in a Violent World* (New York: Basic Books, 2003), 1-2.

¹⁸⁰ Kagan, Robert, “Power and Weakness”, *Policy Review* 113, June-July 2002: 3.

¹⁸¹ *Op. cit.*, 11.

example – among the early proponents of this attitude was Thomas Jefferson.¹⁸² “Exemplarism” is thus a fairly *passive* way of promoting American values. On the other hand, we can identify a second perspective – “vindicationism”. It shares the “city upon a hill” perspective, but claims that the US “must move beyond the example and undertake active measures to spread its universal political values and institutions.”¹⁸³ Henry Kissinger was aware of these “two contradictory attitudes” in US foreign policy and saw a tension between the America alternating between a beacon and crusader.¹⁸⁴ To a large part, according to Monten, the alteration between the two attitudes is given by material capacities of the US – that is, the more powerful militarily and economically the US is, the more likely it is to follow a vindicationist perspective. However, a domestic nationalist ideology that favors vindicationism over exemplarism also plays its part in stimulating a more activist policy of value promotion.¹⁸⁵

These two schools of thought thus play a significant part in formulating US “grand strategy” – that is, a long-term conceptual outlook of a state’s role in the world or, in other words, the aggregation of hypotheses on how to secure one’s existence.¹⁸⁶

While the Founding Fathers sought an exemplarist promotion of the American model and believed in the moral (as opposed to material) force of the US to induce change in the world, the model started to be taken over by vindicationist tendencies at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries (Spanish-American War) and reached their apex in the form of Bush’s Freedom Agenda. The exemplarists view activist value promotion as hubris and caution against “the second iron law of polis republicanism”, which attributes the fall of the Rome to its geographical overstretch.¹⁸⁷ In contrast, the vindicationists essentially believe that liberal institutions such as democracy are a spontaneous and natural socio-political system that arises once all artificial obstacles are removed (such as authoritarians or self-serving elites).

The “sense of mission” – applied through vindicationist or exemplarist means – and American “exceptionalism” has been cultivated in the American public discourse for political

¹⁸² See Mead, Walter Russell, *Special Providence: American Foreign Policy and How It Changed the World* (New York: Routledge, 2009).

¹⁸³ Monten, *The Roots of the Bush Doctrine*, 113.

¹⁸⁴ Kissinger, Henry, *Diplomacy* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994), 18.

¹⁸⁵ Monten, *The Roots of the Bush Doctrine*.

¹⁸⁶ For a discussion of “grand strategy”, see Gray, Colin, *War, Peace and International Relations: An Introduction to Strategic History* (New York: Routledge, 2007).

¹⁸⁷ Deudney, *Bounding Power*, 111.

purposes from the founding of the US until today. George Washington believed the new American republic would “give to mankind the magnanimous and too novel example of a people always guided by an exalted justice and benevolence”¹⁸⁸ and John Quincy Adams held that the United States “will recommend the general cause [of freedom and independence of all] by the countenance of her voice, and the benignant sympathy of her example.”¹⁸⁹ In Abraham Lincoln’s words, the Declaration of Independence gave liberty “not alone to the people of this country, but hope to the world for all future time.”¹⁹⁰ In his Gettysburg Address two years later, he added that Americans have a duty to see that “government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth” (this time, the missionary discourse was intended rather for the domestic arena and the ongoing civil war). Woodrow Wilson wanted to “make the world safe for democracy” after WWI and as part of the “war of ideas” Ronald Reagan spoke of Winthrop as a man who had a vision of the United States serving as a moral example and a model for the world to emulate.¹⁹¹ Even Barack Obama, who came into office toning down American moralizing rhetoric in reaction to the backlash caused by George W. Bush’s Freedom Agenda, said in 2011: “But after decades of accepting the world as it is in the region [MENA], we have a chance to pursue the world as it should be.”¹⁹²

7.2 EU: technocratic origins and the search for an international role

One will not find such a grand narrative and moral justification to promote democracy by the EU as can be described in the case of the United States. This, of course, is not surprising given the very different nature and purpose of the EU’s founding and its evolution as an elite-driven, “technocratic” project rather than a genuinely democratic state-building effort.

¹⁸⁸ Washington, George. *Farewell Address*, 1796.

¹⁸⁹ Adams, John Quincy, *An Address Delivered at the Request of the Citizens of the City of Washington on the Fourth of July 1821*, Washington DC: Davis and Force, 1821, 29. University of California Library scan available at <https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B-5-JeCa2Z7hMzRhNmEzZWMtMTU2Yy00ZDYyLWFiODItYzU4M2FmMTc4YjNh/edit?hl=en&pli=1> (accessed July 25, 2016).

¹⁹⁰ “Speech at Independence Hall, Philadelphia, February 1861”, in Rose, Gideon, “Democracy Promotion and American Foreign Policy: A Review Essay”, *International Security* 25 (2), 2000: 186.

¹⁹¹ Winthrop’s sermon is contested by some historians as there are no contemporary references to anyone’s having heard it delivered and the precise circumstances under which it was delivered are unsure. Hodgson, *The Myth of American Exceptionalism*, 1.

¹⁹² Office of the Press Secretary, “Remarks by the President on the Middle East and North Africa”, The White House, May 19, 2011. Available at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/05/19/remarks-president-middle-east-and-north-africa> (accessed July 26, 2016).

We have described how the proliferation of American republican and democratic ideals forms an organic part of US foreign policy. If we contrast this process with the EU and how it intensely started adding language concerning the necessity of furthering democracy into its legal documents in the 1990s, we see an interesting picture. Rather than a policy that naturally evolved out of its own identity, as in the US, the EU adopted democracy promotion into its foreign policy framework for reasons of strengthening a common identity for the Union and as a benchmark for accepting new members.

A “guiding principle” or “grand ideology” behind EU foreign policy may be lacking, however the EU does strive to create a strategic outlook for its foreign policy and an “image” in the international system. This “image” has been labeled (and much discussed) by academics as a “civilian power” and as the debate advanced, a “normative power” and a “model power”. These concepts show some parallels with the US “sense of mission” and have broad implications for the EU’s handling of its foreign affairs and thereby for its approach to democracy promotion.

The question the EU has been posing to itself is “what (distinctive) role should it have in the world?” – this subject became all the more topical with the EU’s enlargement, the subsequent growth of its international aspirations and the seeming declining legitimacy of US power in the world.¹⁹³ The hegemonic concept – until at least the early 2000s – that implicitly answered the above question was formulated by Francois Duchene in the early 1970s. He described the EU as a “civilian power” – an actor that employs “civilian forms of power” (as opposed to military or purely economic)¹⁹⁴, such as low politics, ideational influence and international interdependence to pursue its interests and shape the international system.

In the original essay from 1973, Duchene advocated that Europe “must be a force for the international diffusion of civilian democratic standards” and promote the values pertaining to its “inner characteristics”, such as “equality, justice and tolerance” and an

¹⁹³ Orbie, Jan, “Civilian Power Europe: Review of the Original and Current Debates”, *Cooperation and Conflict* 41 (1), 2006: 123-124.

¹⁹⁴ Thus the EU would separate itself both from the two superpowers of the time (USSR and US) and also Europe’s own history of colonial imperialism.

“interest for the poor abroad”.¹⁹⁵ Even though Duchene was criticized for his ambiguity and vagueness in defining the term, he laid down a point of reference for the analysts of EU foreign policy and helped set the tone for the EU’s global role.¹⁹⁶ Proving that the notion was not merely an academic exercise and wishful thinking, an examination of Council documents and speeches of the EU’s High Representative Javier Solana has demonstrated that the prevailing European policymakers’ discourse has been constructing the EU as a civilian power.¹⁹⁷

Most importantly for our purposes, the concept of “civilian power Europe” (CPE) operationalized the notion of Europe serving as an *example* – as in the US “sense of mission” – for the rest to innately emulate. As Duchene reasoned:

*“Europe as a whole could well become the first example in history of a major center of the balance of power becoming in the era of its decline not a colonised victim but an exemplar of a new stage in political civilisation. The European Community in particular would have a chance to demonstrate the influence which can be wielded by a large political co-operative formed to exert essentially civilian forms of power.”*¹⁹⁸

However, the conceptualization of the EU as an example is somewhat different from that of the US and some distinctions should be discussed.

The notion of the EU as an example or a model refers primarily to its propensity to reproduce itself by encouraging regional integration around the world, which is at the same time considered to be universally applicable.¹⁹⁹ In this sense, the African Union (established in 2002) modeled itself in many respects on the EU (except for not making democratization a prerequisite of membership) as has MERCOSUR. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has also used the EU as a point of reference for forging closer ties between its members, for example modeling its Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) on

¹⁹⁵ Duchêne, Francois, “The European Community and the Uncertainties of Interdependence” in Kohnstamm, Max and Wolfgang Hager (eds), *Nation Writ Large: Foreign Policy Problems Before the European Communities* (London: Macmillan, 1973), 20.

¹⁹⁶ For example Bull, Hedley, “Civilian Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?” *Journal of Common Market Studies* 21 (2), 1982: 149–170.

¹⁹⁷ See Larsen, Henrik, “The EU: a Global Military Actor?” *Cooperation and Conflict* 37 (3), 2002: 283–302.

¹⁹⁸ Duchêne, *The European Community and the Uncertainties of Interdependence*, 19.

¹⁹⁹ Nicolaïdis, Kalypso and Robert Howse, ““This is my EUtopia ...’: Narrative as Power”, *Journal of Common Market Studies* 40 (4), 2002: 768.

the EU's Committee of Permanent Representatives (COREPER).²⁰⁰ European policymakers have actively also sought to promote the EU model and thus strengthen this EU identity during their visits of other regions, such as South Asia. Former Swedish Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Carl Bildt, for example, stated in Islamabad that the "EU could serve as an example to India and Pakistan" and continued that "inter-regional cooperation is critical to solve contemporary geopolitical challenges, and this line of thinking applies not only to the EU but to any international region".²⁰¹ Moreover, in 1989, Jacques Delors proclaimed that the mere existence and example of "a Community based on the rule of law, a democratic entity and buoyant economy" served as a catalyst for the changes that took place in Eastern Europe.²⁰²

The EU has been said to believe it can promote its model not only horizontally but also vertically to the level of global institutions. Given that "the EU is the entity in the world that has the longest and deepest experience in aggregating collective preferences", some see it as some sort of "*micro-cosmos*, a laboratory for the world at large and explorer of new kinds of political deals between and beyond states".²⁰³

The EU is thus widely depicted as a shining example of functional intergovernmental cooperation coexistent with a supranational order (i.e. sovereignty sharing), an integrated regional community based on interdependence and guarantor of peace.²⁰⁴ It is important to note that democracy is only one of the many components that keep the Union together, and therefore an actor seeking to emulate the EU model does not necessarily need to adapt democracy as a prerequisite for its members— as is the case of the African Union (nor was democracy a formal prerequisite before the Copenhagen criteria within the European

²⁰⁰ Moxon-Browne, Edward and Philomena Murray, "The EU as a template for ASEAN?" *East Asia Forum*, May 3, 2013. Available at <http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2013/05/03/the-eu-as-a-template-for-asean/> (accessed July 29, 2016). See also Poli, Eleanora, "Is the European Model Relevant for ASEAN?" *Istituto affari internazionali*, November 2014. Available at <http://www.iai.it/en/pubblicazioni/european-model-relevant-asean> (accessed July 29, 2016).

²⁰¹ Embassy of Sweden in Islamabad, "Carl Bildt: 'India and Pakistan can use EU as an example'", June 2, 2016. Available at <http://www.swedenabroad.com/en-GB/Embassies/Islamabad/Current-affairs/Events/Carl-Bildt-India-and-Pakistan-can-use-EU-as-an-example-sys/> (accessed July 29, 2016).

²⁰² Cited in Nicolaïdis and Howse, '*This is my EUtopia ...*', 774.

²⁰³ Nicolaïdis and Howse, '*This is my EUtopia ...*', 768, 783.

²⁰⁴ Cameron, Fraser, "The European Union as a Model for Regional Integration", Working Paper, *Council on Foreign Relations*, September 2010. Available at <http://www.cfr.org/world/european-union-model-regional-integration/p22935> (accessed July 29, 2016).

Community itself). This narrative is strengthened by envisioning the EU as a “model power” – a variation (or perhaps complementarity) to the CPE conceptualization.²⁰⁵

Needless to say, in order to be an effective “model power” Ferreira-Pereira (building on Albert Bandura’s paradigm of social learning, which posits that the learning process is based on imitation through the observation of a given model’s behavior) claims that “it is not enough for the EU to espouse the values of peace, democracy, and respect for human rights and to promote them in world politics. It needs to be a model power, in a consistent way, at the international level, and one that others emulate.”²⁰⁶ In other words, the EU needs to maintain a notable level of reflexivity²⁰⁷ – the self-images that it aims to export (which, in fact, may be a non-existent *EUtopia*) and the goals it sets externally need to “constitute the main benchmarks for internal politics”.²⁰⁸

Depicting the EU as a “model power” has certain implications for democracy promotion. (1) If, as in the US case, the model or example to be emulated is *participatory democracy*, then it is quite apparent that the US will focus strongly on a bottom-up approach to promoting democracy, “because democracy is by nature an indigenous, bottom-up form of government.”²⁰⁹ (2) If, as in the case of the EU, the model or example to be emulated is *regional integration* (where democracy plays a secondary role – at best as a means to achieving membership), then it is understandable that the EU will focus more strongly on the aspects of governance and intergovernmental cooperation that make any integration or harmonization possible in the first place.

Also, were we to apply the concept of “exemplarism” and “vindicationism” described above to analyze the position of the EU in furthering its norms, we would see that it relies to a large part on exemplarism, even though a number of advocates call for a more “vindicationist” attitude. Jan Zielonka, for example, believes that:

²⁰⁵ The notion was popularized by former British Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs David Miliband in “Europe 2030: model power not superpower”, Speech delivered at the College of Europe, Bruges, 15 November, 2007. Available at https://www.coleurope.eu/system/files_force/speech-files/200711_speech_miliband.pdf?download=1 (accessed July 29, 2016).

²⁰⁶ Ferreira-Pereira, Laura C., “The European Union as a Model Power: Spreading Peace, Democracy, and Human Rights in the Wider World” in Bindi and Angelescu (eds.), *The Foreign Policy of the European Union*, 302.

²⁰⁷ On the notion of reflexivity see Scheipers, Sibylle and Daniela Sicurelli, “Normative Power Europe: A Credible Utopia?” *Journal of Common Market Studies* 45 (2), 2007: 435-457.

²⁰⁸ Nicolaïdis and Howse, *This is my EUtopia ...*, 788.

²⁰⁹ Nau, *America’s Identity*, 135.

*“To be successful in the presentday world the EU needs to export its governance to other countries [...] This is clearly an imperial politics, even though it is carried out chiefly by economic means and even though the export products are norms and not soldiers.”*²¹⁰

However, noting that the EU “is not in a position to impose on other actors its preferred model of economic and political cooperation”, he adds:

*“[...] efforts to impose European norms where there is little demand for them seems to me futile, especially considering power constraints. I therefore agree with those who would like the EU to conduct its imperial politics through example [...]”*²¹¹

The “normative power” conceptualization of the EU’s role in international affairs alludes to a similar form of exemplarism and benignity. The concept of “normative power Europe” (NPE) is an attempt to refocus analysis away from the empirical emphasis on the EU’s institutions or policies – that is, from solely the merits of structural integration – and towards including cognitive processes.²¹² According to NPE the power of the EU lies not only in its exemplarism as model of a functioning Community of states, but in its ability to project norms and its core values beyond borders. In essence, the EU is claimed to have an ability to “redefine what *can* be ‘normal’ in international relations” (for example in its effort to eradicate the practice of death penalty in the world).²¹³ Still, Manners points out that NPE is “built on the crucial, and usually overlooked observation that the most important factor shaping the international role of the EU is not what it does or what it says, but what it is.”²¹⁴ NPE furthermore frames the EU as an active and benevolent “force for good” in international affairs – this, however, often makes it very difficult for its Member States and the EU as such to apply sanctions and other coercive measures on third countries.²¹⁵

The fact that the EU is inclined to pursue less “vindicationist” and coercive approaches to democracy promotion is not fully explained by the conceptualization of its

²¹⁰ Zielonka, Jan, “Europe as a Global Actor: Empire by Example?” *International Affairs* 84 (3), 2008: 484.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*

²¹² Manners, Ian. “Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?” *Journal of Common Market Studies* 40 (2), 2002: 239.

²¹³ Manners, *Normative Power Europe*, 253.

²¹⁴ *Op. cit.*, 252.

²¹⁵ Pace, Michelle, “The Construction of EU Normative Power”, *Journal of Common Market Studies* 45 (5), 2007: 1058.

foreign policy identity – an important factor is also the “othering” of the US by the EU. Like the nascent US considered the Old Continent as an “other” in its identity formation, this role is now served by the US in the EU’s identity formation process.²¹⁶ As demonstrated by Scheipers and Sicurelli, despite the fact that the EU and the US both recognize the same principles in the international system (pertaining to, for example, human rights and environmental policies), they interpret them in different ways – hence “the EU identifies this difference as constitutive of its normative framework”.²¹⁷

Vis-à-vis the US, the EU depicts itself as the vanguard in many areas, while contrasting Washington as the laggard.²¹⁸ For example, the EU considers multilateralism to be the proper strategy to tackle global problems as opposed to the US’s unilateral strategy and contrasts diplomatic means of international relations with the military strategy preferred by the US. The EU also depicts itself as being more concerned about the creation of binding rules for the global community and – more importantly and unlike the US in a number of instances in the past – it is dedicated to submitting itself to these rules.²¹⁹

It is therefore unlikely that the EU would engage in a similar feat as the United States in Iraq – that is, attempting to foster democratization by military force. This would simply be incompatible with its formulated identity.

Another point of discussion that will help us understand the role of EU’s self-mage and example in democracy promotion are the effects of the EU’s very “technocratic” nature. By “technocracy” we mean a merit-based “system of governance in which technically trained experts rule by virtue of their specialized knowledge and position in dominant political and economic institutions”.²²⁰ To some extent, we can identify similarities with the notion of “epistemic communities”.²²¹ Technocrats present value-free and technical training as an alternative to politics. Their legitimacy rests on the assumption that they have no ideology and thus represent a source of neutral, science-based truth. In technocratic governance,

²¹⁶ On this issue see Diez, *Europe’s Others and the Return of Geopolitics* and Diez, *Constructing the Self and Changing Others*.

²¹⁷ Scheipers and Sicurelli, *A Credible Utopia?*, 451.

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ *Op.cit.*, 452.

²²⁰ Fischer, Frank, *Technocracy and the Politics of Expertise* (London: SAGE Publications, 1990), 17.

²²¹ Haas, Peter M., “Introduction: Epistemic Communities and International Policy Coordination”, *International Organization* 46 (1), 1992: 1-35.

decision making is a matter of technical analysis – in an extreme case then, democratic politics is replaced by politics of expertise.

Therefore, the key problem identified with the growth of technocratic governance is its effect on democracy. Can democracies control technocratic forces? Who makes decisions – the elected minister or his technical advisers? (This, of course, has been a dilemma ever since Machiavelli's *Prince*).²²² Moreover, technocratic forces tend to resist democratic oversight:

*"[...] technocratic elites in charge of technical information and instrumental decision-making capacity have been hostile to over-stretched democratic control of public policy. Democratic control not only risks un-informed meddling with matters of which the general public know little, but also reduces the efficiency of decision-making and creates lags and delays in implementation of decisions."*²²³

So a conundrum arises within the EU, which is considered as a technocracy *par excellence* (more so than the US), as its policies are increasingly differentiated into highly complex and technical areas²²⁴ – how can a presumably value-free, non-ideological technocratic actor promote a policy that is intrinsically ideological and value-based?

Indeed, Kurki finds that the technocratic discourse has found its way into EU democracy promotion, thus “depoliticizing” the agenda. She finds a “clear preference towards ‘programmatic’ language over ‘normative’ levels of discussion and debate in the EU documents [outlining democracy promotion policies] and a tendency to avoid, if not value-based rhetoric, actual commitment to value aims, value debate and value-related forms of argumentation.”²²⁵ Kurki also adds that the technocratic “de-politicisation of the practice of democracy promotion facilitates avoidance of political conflict”.²²⁶ Thereby, in the EU's

²²² Carayannis, Elias G., Ali Pirzadeh, Denisa Popescu, *Institutional Learning and Knowledge Transfer Across Epistemic Communities: New Tolls of Global Governance* (New York: Springer, 2011), 126.

²²³ Kurki, Milja, “Democracy through Technocracy? Reflections on Technocratic Assumptions in EU Democracy Promotion Discourse”, *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 5 (2), 2011: 214.

²²⁴ See Radaelli, Claudio M., “The public policy of the European Union: whither politics of expertise?”

Journal of European Public Policy 6 (5), 1999: 757-774; *The Guardian*, “Europe: the rise of the technocracy”, Editorial, November 13, 2011. Available at <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2011/nov/13/europe-rise-technocracy-editorial> (accessed July 28, 2016).

²²⁵ Kurki, *Democracy through Technocracy?*, 219.

²²⁶ Kurki, *Democracy through Technocracy?*, 227.

technocratic context, democracy promotion becomes “covered” under depoliticized and technical activities and goes hand-in-hand with the de-prioritization of election observation and support for civil society groups.²²⁷

The technocratic “nature of the beast” also facilitates and prompts the EU to engage in what is called “institutional isomorphism”. This concept is provided by organizational theory and generally describes the phenomenon when one unit or institution is formally or informally constrained to resemble other units or institutions that face the same set of environmental conditions. In this sense, organizations also “tend to model themselves after similar organizations in their field that they perceive to be more legitimate or successful.”²²⁸ The reason why institutional isomorphism is a useful concept for exploring EU democracy promotion is because “the greater the dependence of an organization on another organization, the more similar it will become to that organization in structure, climate, and behavioral focus.”²²⁹ This is thus particularly relevant for the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP), which is the EU’s instrument for cultivating interdependence between itself and its neighborhood. In this sense, the EU has been described to have a tendency to “reproduce itself” in relation with non-members²³⁰ and manage interdependencies “through the external projection of internal solutions.”²³¹ Bicchi similarly points out that “much of the EU’s action can be characterized as an unreflexive attempt to promote its own model *because institutions tend to export institutional isomorphism as a default option*”.²³²

As will be described in a later chapter, the EU’s relations with neighboring countries are based on the Union’s system of rules and regulations, and so on the one hand the EU transfers certain aspects of its democratic governance to these countries, on the other hand it needs to support the administrative and technical capacity of neighborhood states for them to be able to implement these rules. Through this “functional cooperation”, the EU aims to actively “morph” the sectoral governance (such as the environment or migration) of its

²²⁷ Wetzel, Orbie and Bossuyt, *One of what kind?*, 28.

²²⁸ DiMaggio, Paul J. and Walter W. Powell, “The iron cage revisited: Institutional isomorphism and collective rationality in organization fields”, *Advances in Strategic Management* 17, 2000: 150.

²²⁹ *Op. cit.*, 154.

²³⁰ Bretheron, Charlotte and John Vogler, *The European Union as a Global Actor* (New York: Routledge, 1999).

²³¹ Lavenex, Sandra, “EU external governance in ‘wider Europe’”, *Journal of European Public Policy* 11 (4), 2004: 695.

²³² Bicchi, Federica, “‘Our size fits all’: normative power Europe and the Mediterranean”, *Journal of European Public Policy* 13 (2), 2006: 287.

neighbors to resemble that of the EU. It is transplanting its administrative procedures to recipient states in hope of facilitating cooperation, ensuring an increased level of predictability in the decision-making of these countries and effectively molding their policies in the EU's interest. Simultaneously, of course, by incorporating democratic principles into the administrative rules and practices of target countries, the EU works on strengthening democratic (sectoral) governance even within non-democratic polities.

According to the European Commission, strengthening state institutions is a vital component for “assuring the region's future, being as relevant to human rights and social inclusion as it is to economic development and democratization”.²³³ While Chandler sees the EU focus on governance as a “technocratic and administrative legitimisation of external intervention”²³⁴, Wetzel and Orbie argue that “since the EU lacks clear conceptual guidance [in democracy promotion], ‘governance’ seems to emerge as a non-controversial default option that reflects the EU's constitution.”²³⁵

²³³ European Commission, *Regional Strategy Paper 2002–2006: CARDS Assistance Programme to the Western Balkans*, 2001, 11.

²³⁴ Chandler, David, “The EU and Southeastern Europe: the rise of postliberal governance”, *Third World Quarterly* 31 (1), 2010: 70.

²³⁵ Wetzel, Orbie and Bossuyt, *One of what kind?*, 29

8 Political philosophy and democracy promotion

This section will set out to describe how political philosophy or socio-economic worldviews about the organization of society inform and shape the approaches and strategies to democracy assistance. It is beyond doubt that individual actors within the democracy assistance community (be it heads of field offices or directors of government agencies) form their approach and thinking about furthering democracy abroad by the political philosophies prevalent in their home countries. As mentioned in previous chapters, democracy promotion is an identity-forming (strengthening) policy and therefore the government agency engaged in democracy assistance needs to be, to a certain point, loyal to the nuances of the political identity of its polity. In other words, the actors' point of reference is the model of democracy they know best – and, of course, each democratic state maintains its own model of democracy, accustomed to local circumstances, history and culture.²³⁶ This was particularly observable when the field of democracy assistance was just being formed and there was little prior experience or academic research from which actors could gain knowledge that would inform their strategies. As one former USAID official noted about the beginnings of the field:

“There was no such thing as democracy promotion classes – the field didn't exist... The Europe program dominated everything at the Bureau for a while. It was an eighteen-hour day for me on the democracy side trying to figure out what to do. It didn't exist! I had no idea what I was doing – I'd never even been to Europe. And then over the next few years, democracy became part of the toolkit for US development.”²³⁷

In order to carry on with our debate regarding the underlying reasons why the approach of the US and the EU to democracy promotion differs, we will look at two specifics of political philosophy that distinguish the US from the EU most starkly. On the one hand, this is the prevalence of classical liberalism and the related level of individualism in the United States; on the other hand, it is the influence of socialism in the EU – i.e. a political worldview that has never crossed the Atlantic to form a major movement. This is not to say that classical liberalism and individualism do not shape thinking in Europe and vice-versa, the point is

²³⁶ See Held, David, *Models of Democracy* (Cambridge: Polity, 2006).

²³⁷ Cited in Bush, Sarah Sunn, *The Taming of Democracy Assistance: Why Democracy Promotion Does Not Confront Dictators* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 126.

rather to show how these nuances in the thinking about a proper socio-political system may influence the way actors approach democracy assistance. This research thus follows Hobson and Kurki's claim of the necessity to "understand democracy's meaning in democracy promotion".²³⁸

8.1 "The liberal tradition in America"

The title of this subchapter is adopted from the nearly canonical publication about American political culture written by Louis Hartz in 1955.²³⁹ Although the major thesis of the book has been contested by a number of academics²⁴⁰, it remains an indispensable and illuminating frame of analysis for studying the underlying tenets of American democracy and according to Walter D. Burnham, for example, has "the greatest explanatory power".²⁴¹ In short, Hartz claims that the liberal tradition is essentially the only tradition that shaped American political thinking throughout history. The criticism centers around the fact that Hartz places too much emphasis on liberalism and gives no consideration to other currents of political philosophy that have also had an influence on the shape of American democracy.²⁴² The criticism thus does not reject the disproportionate influence of liberalism on American political culture, when compared to other "traditions" it only calls for a more nuanced outlook.

Hartz's examination of American political culture is largely an extension of Alexis de Tocqueville's account of the socio-political nature of the United States and also fits with Gunnar Myrdal's analysis in his *An American Dilemma* from 1944. These three authors have had an immense influence on how Americans think about their political culture and democratic institutions and thus shall serve as our starting points for discussing the influence of political philosophy and the underlying conceptions of democracy can have on democracy promotion strategies.

Tocqueville called attention to the "basic fact" that American society was born out of "the equality of opportunity". The unique or exceptional aspect of the American "equality of

²³⁸ Hobson, Christopher and Milja Kurki, "Introduction" in Christopher Hobson and Milja Kurki (eds.), *The Conceptual Politics of Democracy Promotion* (New York: Routledge, 2012).

²³⁹ Hartz, Louis, *The Liberal Tradition in America: An Interpretation of American Political Thought since the Revolution* (New York: Hartcourt Brace and Co., 1955).

²⁴⁰ For an overview of critical works see Lakoff, Sanford, "Liberalism in America: Hartz and his critics", *Critical Review of International Social & Political Philosophy* 8 (1), 2005: 5-30.

²⁴¹ Burnham, Walter Dean, *The Current Crisis in American Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 15, 92.

²⁴² Smith, Roger M., "Beyond Tocqueville, Myrdal and Hartz: The Multiple Traditions in America", *American Political Science Review* 87 (3), 1993: 549-566.

opportunity” was that this condition was not created through a social (in his words “democratic”) revolution, but rather given by the composition of the population. The settlers came without any “idea of any superiority of some over others,” as “great lords did not relocate to the colonies and because the large landowners who did lacked aristocratic privileges”.²⁴³

Hartz agreed with Tocqueville at least in these two accounts. He too saw the American Revolution as a rebellion for colonial liberation, not as a social revolution. The struggle against America’s colonizer had not entailed a civil war over class structure, “nor had it left a residue of bitterness and division and disgruntled factions intent either on restoring some preexisting order or on carrying the revolution to a more radical conclusion”.²⁴⁴ This observation is highlighted also by Hannah Arendt in *On Revolution*, where she depicts the French revolution as a *social* revolution that would inaugurate a new public order and where happiness rather than freedom was guiding idea of politics.²⁴⁵ The American revolution, in contrast, was a *political* revolution, more limited in its goals and purposely neglecting the social order as such.

Secondly, like Tocqueville, Hartz theorized that the absence of a feudal tradition (or “great lords” as Tocqueville says) in the US caused that the first American citizens did not experience a sharp sense of class differentiation, which resulted in their unquestionable acceptance of the doctrine he called “irrational Lockianism” – America was a liberal nation *ab initio*. The term of “irrational Lockianism” meant that the essence of an individual was his capacity to acquire property and dispose of it at his own will. The essence of the government, in turn, was the preservation of conditions that allow the individuals to acquire property. The Lockeanism was “irrational” inasmuch “as the rights of property were unchallenged and unchallengeable”.²⁴⁶

America, according to Hartz, was so intrinsically liberal (and “doomed” to be) that it barely realized its liberalism. He observed that “there has never been a ‘liberal’ movement or a real ‘liberal party’ in America; we have only had the American Way of Life, a nationalist

²⁴³ *Op. cit.*, 551.

²⁴⁴ Lakoff, *Hartz and his critics*, 6.

²⁴⁵ Soni, Vivasvan, “A Classical Politics without Happiness? Hannah Arendt and the American Revolution”, *Cultural Critique* 74, 2010: 32.

²⁴⁶ Ryan, Alan, “Liberalism 1900-1940” in Wall, Steven (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Liberalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 72.

articulation of Locke which usually does not know that Locke himself is involved”.²⁴⁷ Liberalism’s most distinctive influence on emerging democratic (or republican) government at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth century was its insistence on a limited state – in other words “a government constrained by the rule of law” and “so weak relative to society that popular forces are capable of replacing it”.²⁴⁸ Such form of liberalism was indeed observed by Tocqueville in America:

*“There society acts by and for itself [...] The people take part in the making of the laws by choosing the lawgivers, and they share in their application by electing the agents of the executive power; one might say that they govern themselves, so feeble and restricted is the part left to the administration, so vividly is that administration ware of its popular origin, and obedient to the fount of power.”*²⁴⁹

The classical liberalism inspired chiefly by John Locke thus formed American political and economic institutions, social interactions and political discourse and made it so divergent from Europe. This comparison with Europe was important for Hartz as he knew that “any attempt to uncover the nature of an America society without feudalism can only be accomplished by studying it in conjunction with a European society where the feudal structure and the feudal ethos did in fact survive.”²⁵⁰

Apart from perpetuating the liberal tradition in America, the absence of a feudal past led to two implications for the formation of American society, which we shall examine next – the prevalence of individualism manifested in everyone’s “mentality of an independent entrepreneur” and the “unique lack” of a socialist tradition.²⁵¹

The notion of “American Creed” was popularized by Myrdal through his above-mentioned publication and was set out to signify a deeply-held implicit belief in the ideals of liberty, equality (equality of opportunity; specifically equal opportunity before the law), justice and the rule of law in American life. Lipset later pointed to another core component of the “Creed” about which Myrdal was not as explicit – this was *individualism*.²⁵²

²⁴⁷ Hartz, *The Liberal Tradition in America*, 11.

²⁴⁸ Smith, *America’s Mission*, 14.

²⁴⁹ Tocqueville, Alexis De, *Democracy in America* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), pt. 1, ch. 2-3.

²⁵⁰ Hartz, *The Liberal Tradition in America*, 4.

²⁵¹ *Op. cit.*, 89.

²⁵² Lipset, Seymour Martin, “Affirmative action and the American creed”, *Wilson Quarterly* 16 (1), 1992: 52-62.

According to Huntington, the central ideas of the Creed have their origins in dissenting Protestantism. Simply put, “their Protestant culture has made Americans the most individualistic people in the world.”²⁵³ The emphasis on the individual conscience and the responsibility of individuals to study the Bible directly, without intermediation by clerical hierarchy promoted the American commitment to individualism. The Protestant work ethic stressed the responsibility of the individual for his successes or failures in life. In this sense, “Protestantism, republicanism and individualism are all one” in the US.²⁵⁴

American liberalism thus placed the individual at the center of the social order.²⁵⁵ Hartz described the Americans as believing that the society consisted of atomistic individuals and not classes. Although economic class has become an objective socio-economic reality in America since its founding, that reality “went unacknowledged, because from the start Americans found it unnatural to think in terms of class”.²⁵⁶ Regarding Hartz, however, it must be noted that his influential work was published in 1955 – that is, in the era of McCarthyism and the ideological struggles of the Cold War – and thus could have been instrumentally devised to strengthen American liberal democratic and individualist identity (which was antithetical to Soviet communism). Nevertheless, the American consensus on the significance of the “liberal, atomistic, individualistic ideology” is highlighted if contrasted with public life in other nations. As Ketcham points out:

*“In the first place, respect for authority, the degree to which individuals feel they have a primary duty to the nation and to obey its laws, is sharply lower in the United States than in much of Europe. Though Americans in many ways are at least as law-abiding as citizens of other nations (as for example in paying taxes and adhering to traffic laws), they do so without any sense of awe or of the omnipotence of those in authority. Instead, they have in mind more practical considerations – a simple realization of the convenience of certain rules.”*²⁵⁷

²⁵³ Huntington, *Who Are We?*, 70.

²⁵⁴ Grund, Francis J., *The Americans in their Moral, Social and Political Relations* (New York: Johnson Reprint, 1968), 355-356.

²⁵⁵ Horowitz, Irving Louis, “Louis Hartz and the Liberal Tradition: From Consensus to Crack-Up”, *Modern Age* 47 (3), 2005: 205.

²⁵⁶ Lakoff, *Hartz and his critics*, 7.

²⁵⁷ Ketcham, Ralph, *Individualism and Public Life: A Modern Dilemma* (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1987), 66.

The next chapter will discuss in more detail the relation of the individual citizen to government in the US and the EU, but here it was important to note the implications of liberal individualism on this relationship. Having demonstrated how deeply embedded liberal individualism is in American political culture and philosophy, it is now time to turn to explore what implications it has for the democratic political system and in turn to how the US promotes democracy.

The importance of individual leadership seems to be a structural feature of American democracy.²⁵⁸ This is sometimes being juxtaposed to most democratic countries, where “the fate of most politicians depends, not primarily on their own endeavors, but on the fate – locally, regionally or nationally – of their party. If their party does well in an election, so do they. [In contrast, in the US the] candidate’s party is a background factor. It is the candidate himself who is in the foreground.”²⁵⁹ More than in America’s past, campaigning and fundraising today is dependent on the individual candidate’s efforts and hence Congressmen have a stronger tendency than in other democratic countries to decide (and vote) with regards to the interests of their electoral districts rather than those of their party or president. In a sense “office seeking is candidate centered” – to a large extent “candidates are autonomous and individually responsible for their own fates.”²⁶⁰ In consequence, as Richard Rose mentions, “in America the [democratically elected] individual rather than the state is the foundation of political authority.”²⁶¹

The approach to decision-making based on liberal individualism brings forth a much wider “conflict of interest politics” than we would see in a society composed of more or less coherent *classes*. In the Federalist Papers (notably nos. 10 and 51), James Madison famously warned against factions in political life – combinations of individuals motivated by passions, egotistic selfishness and “adversed to the rights of other citizens”.²⁶² Madison knew that these, however, were “sown in the nature of man” and thus the “diversity in the faculties of men”,

²⁵⁸ Fabbrini, Sergio, “American Democracy from a European Perspective”, *Annual Review of Political Science* 2, 1999: 480.

²⁵⁹ King, Anthony, *Running Scared: Why America's Politicians Campaign Too Much and Govern Too Little* (New York: Free Press, 1997), 37, 39.

²⁶⁰ Aldrich, John A., *Why Parties? The Origin and Transformation of Political Parties in America* (Chicago IL: Chicago University Press, 1995), 161.

²⁶¹ Rose, Richard, *What is Europe? A Dynamic Perspective* (New York: Harper Collins, 1996), 74.

²⁶² Madison, James, *Federalist no. 10*, 1787. Available at <https://www.congress.gov/resources/display/content/The+Federalist+Papers#TheFederalistPapers-10> (accessed August 2, 2016).

such as protection of private property and the strong connection between human reason and human self-love, all operated to insure “a division of society into different interests and parties”.²⁶³ As these motivations and ensuing divisions were inevitable, the one way to ensure that they would not translate into tyranny and oppression was to include in the political life of the nation enough factions, individual interests etc., so that these would in the end mutually exclude each other from gaining too much power. In short, “ambition must be made to counteract ambition.”²⁶⁴ This reasoning was employed for the implementation of the “separation of powers” and “checks and balances”, but it can be equally applied to special interest groups and civil society.

The more groups and individuals attend the civic life, the better the crystallization of the public good. In other words, “as in the argument that an invisible hand guides competitive economics toward the wealth of nations: in politics no one need *seek* the public good because some sort of surrogate for it, the best that can be attained, realistically, emerges from the free and full interplay of factions.”²⁶⁵ The public interest is the resultant sum of individual and group pressures in the society – or, their ability to exert these pressures. This is deemed to be the foundation of the American model of democracy – it is essentially no more than a recognition that when interests clash a compromise ought to be reached and that “truth” is best reached amidst a clash of ideas, thereby making self-advocacy, negotiation and horse-trading a key tenet of democratic politics.

Here we can see how fully the liberal individualist ideology undergirds American democracy. Conflict of interest politics are validated as the individual interest and will are at the center of existence of the society. To sum up this argument, we can quote Ketcham once more:

“The definition of democracy as ‘whatever can be done democratically’ encapsulates the argument. That is, if there is freedom of expression and association to allow interests to be articulated and organized, a multitude of ‘mediating institutions’ to assure countervailing sources of power, voting

²⁶³ Ketcham, *Individualism and Public Life*, 188.

²⁶⁴ Madison, James, *Federalist no. 51*, 1787. Available at <https://www.congress.gov/resources/display/content/The+Federalist+Papers#TheFederalistPapers-51> (accessed August 2, 2016).

²⁶⁵ Ketcham, *Individualism and Public Life*, 188-189.

mechanisms open to all, and representative legislatures for making laws – then a nation is considered democratic.”²⁶⁶

This is clearly a very “procedural” and bottom-up understanding of democratic politics. We can examine that the public good does not need to be formulated by the government, in a top-down manner, it is rather the culmination of pressures and forces emanating from the bottom up. Those who win elections are thus those who have the best ability to understand and grasp these bottom-up pressures, fuse them into a narrative of the “public good” and adopt them into their political programs.

The relevance of this narrative of the American model of democracy is made more explicit if we look at the organization of civil society in the United States.²⁶⁷ Even in a historical perspective, Tocqueville acknowledged the unique habit of the Americans to form voluntary associations to pursue their interests:

“Americans of all ages, all conditions, all minds constantly unite. Not only do they have commercial and industrial associations in which all take part, but they also have a thousand other kinds: religious, moral, grave, futile, very general and very particular, immense and very small. [...] I have since traveled through England, from which the Americans took some of their laws and many of their usages, and it appeared to me that there they were very far from making as constant and as skilled a use of association.”²⁶⁸

Ever since Tocqueville’s observation, a number of scholars have set out to research the connection between the quality of democracy and an active and strong civil society.²⁶⁹ In the American context, the first and most basic function of civil society is to provide “the basis for the limitation of state power, hence for the control of the state by society, and hence for democratic political institutions as the most effective means of exercising that control.”²⁷⁰

²⁶⁶ *Op. cit.*, 189.

²⁶⁷ Civil society is understood here as a public space between the individual and the state in which citizens associate (self-organize) within a framework guaranteed by the state. It includes different forms of activity which are *independent* from the state, such as individual charity, membership in political parties, social movements, nongovernmental organizations, but also *supplement* the state in certain sectors (more on this topic in the next chapter).

²⁶⁸ Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, p. 2, chap. 5.

²⁶⁹ For example, Almond, Gabriel and Sidney Verba, *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations* (London: SAGE, 1989); Keane, John, *Democracy and Civil Society* (New York: Verso, 1988).

²⁷⁰ Huntington, Samuel P., “Will More Countries Become Democratic?” *Political Science Quarterly* 99 (2), 1984: 204.

Even non-political CSOs are vital for democracy as they build “social capital”, trust and shared values, which are then transferred into the political arena and facilitate an understanding of the interconnectedness of interests within society.²⁷¹ The US has always been considered as a vanguard in civic participation (“the complete *civil society* [...], perhaps the only one in political history”²⁷²), in bridging the social with the political in the most comprehensive way and this aspect has become an important part of its identity.²⁷³ Naturally, the actual existence of civil society in the US has been distinctively American, shaped by the “impulses of rugged individualism”.²⁷⁴ Here we can see that the conceptualization of the function of civil society in the US corresponds to the Tocquevillian and Lockean perspective described in Chapter 6.2.

Civil society nevertheless “drags” the “atomistic individuals” out of their isolation and encourages them to be active citizens – this has been identified as a major factor contributing to the stability of democratic institutions and as an explanation for their endurance in the US (despite an alleged decline in American civic culture at the turn of the millennium²⁷⁵). Seeing the post-communist countries through the prism of civil society being a prerequisite for the consolidation of democracy, “scholars and democratic activists alike have lamented the absence or obliteration of traditions of independent civic engagement and a widespread tendency toward passive reliance on the state”.²⁷⁶ In order to create a healthy and democratic public sphere, where “ambition will be made to counteract ambition”, the formation of civic groups – that have the legal space and capacity to pressure the government (which, in turn, maintains functioning institutions that can limit excessive demands of civic

²⁷¹ Putnam, Robert D., *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

²⁷² Bell, Daniel, “‘American exceptionalism’ revisited: the role of civil society”, *The Public Interest* 95, 1989: 48.

²⁷³ For concrete numbers regarding US civic engagement see Smith, Aaron et al., *The Current State of Civic Engagement in America*, *Pew Research Center*, September 1, 2009. Available at <http://www.pewinternet.org/2009/09/01/the-current-state-of-civic-engagement-in-america/> (accessed August 2, 2016).

²⁷⁴ Bell, *American exceptionalism revisited*, 56.

²⁷⁵ For a full account of this phenomenon see Putnam, Robert D., *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000).

²⁷⁶ Putnam, Robert D., “Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital”, *Journal of Democracy* 6 (1), 1995: 65.

activism) and further the interests of individuals and groups within the society – must be supported.²⁷⁷

8.2 The influence of socialism

The prevalence of the liberal individualism in American political thought and practice is also manifest by the near inexistence of the socialist thought (although the presidential campaign of Democratic candidate Bernie Sanders may serve as the first impulse to change this dynamic). Political scientists have been examining this phenomenon and trying to find explanations why socialism “didn’t happen” in the US, despite the predictions of August Bebel and Karl Kautsky that industrial America would be among the first countries to undergo a socialist revolution.²⁷⁸ There exists a swath of explanations, among them Hartz’s emphasis on the absence of a feudal tradition and thus no pre-determined class structure; structural explanations, which give credit to the fact that the US electoral system is unfavorable to the emergence of third parties and that whenever a socialist movement emerged, the federal government was quick to repress it. But the ideational explanations seem to be the most consensual – these claim that in the US there never emerged a strong popular resentment of capitalism and that socialism is antithetical to the individualist ethos of every American.²⁷⁹

Discussing why the US Constitution lacks dedication to social and economic rights of the people (unlike constitutions in Latin America or Europe), Cass R. Sunstein explains that “there was never a strong effort to move the United States in the direction of socialism or social democracy. [...] No group that might have been interested in such rights [social and economic] was ever powerful enough to obtain them. [...] The existence of social and economic rights, within a nation’s constitution, is correlated with the strength of socialist or left-wing elements within a nation.”²⁸⁰ This may seem all the more surprising (or

²⁷⁷ Some scholars doubt that an active civil society can be considered as an indicator of healthy democracy. Without functioning state institutions that can serve as a check on certain civic activism, a vibrant civil society can actually lead to a growth of extremism and instability (more on this in the Conclusion). See Berman, Sheri, “Re-integrating the Study of Civil Society and the State” in Barany, Zoltan and Robert G. Moser (eds.), *Is Democracy Exportable?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

²⁷⁸ Puddington, Arch, “It Didn’t Happen Here: Why Socialism Failed in the United States – Book Review”, *Commentary* 3, October 2000: 78.

²⁷⁹ For a review of these explanations, see Lipset, Seymour M. and Gary Marks, *It Didn’t Happen Here: Why Socialism Failed in the United States* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2000).

²⁸⁰ Sunstein, Cass R., “Why Does the American Constitution Lack Social and Economic Guarantees?” in Ignatieff, Michael (ed.), *American Exceptionalism and Human Rights* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 103.

understandable) as we have illustrated the importance given in US democracy to the struggle of “factions” amongst themselves.

Tony Smith considers the US to be a promoter of genuine liberal democracy and liberalism in general – that is, he sees US sponsorship of democracy abroad as “genuinely innovative politically” but “not profoundly upsetting socioeconomically”. Yet Smith witnessed two slight aberrations in US history – the American occupational regime and state-building efforts in post-WWII Japan and Germany, which interestingly focused on fostering certain social democratic aspects of the nascent regimes. The underlying reason for this was that “the men and women who undertook this mission were not liberal democrats of the traditional American sort. Instead, many of them were New Dealers, for whom the prerequisites of democracy included strong labor unions, land reform, welfare legislation, notions of racial equality, and government intervention in the economy.”²⁸¹ Juxtaposing this with the prevalence of neo-liberals in the Reagan administrations and subsequent administrations in the 1990s provides us with interesting insight into how political philosophy can affect democracy promotion.

Unlike in the US, social democratic ideals have shaped policy and state institutions throughout European states and thus we cannot assume that this line of political thinking has left the EU unscathed – as Olaf Cramme claims “social democracy leaves a strong imprint on the liberal economic project of the EU”.²⁸² Even though it is impossible to generalize across member states, social policy is one element that – when contrasted with the US – is common to all the Union’s members, which they have carried over and institutionalized in the EU.²⁸³ So, following Ian Manners, it is possible to make the argument that *European* perspectives on social policy “are capable of differentiating the EU from other countries such as the USA”.²⁸⁴ This also permits us to observe how these values and norms manifest themselves in EU foreign policy (and thus democracy promotion).

²⁸¹ Smith, *America’s Mission*, 18.

²⁸² Cited in McGowan, Francis, “Social Democracy and the European Union: Who’s Changing Whom?” in Martel, Luke et al. (ed.), *Social Democracy: Global and National Perspectives* (New York: Palgrave, 2001).

²⁸³ Notwithstanding the differences in social philosophy between the member states and the heterogeneity of the national welfare states. See Moschonas, Gerassimos, “When institutions matter: the EU and the identity of social democracy”, *Renewal* 17 (2), 2009: 14.

²⁸⁴ Manners, Ian, “The constitutive nature of values, images and principles in the European Union” in Lucarelli, Sonia and Ian Manners (eds.), *Values and Principles in European Union Foreign Policy* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 20.

In many accounts, European economic perspectives are being characterized as adhering to a sense of social solidarity, which creates a social market economy based on redistribution, government intervention and stakeholder capitalism.²⁸⁵ Europeans thereby “relate their high levels of development to the achievement of economic solidarity” – the low levels of inequality are deemed to be integral to the high development levels.²⁸⁶ The economic perspective goes hand in hand with the perspective on the “social model” of European states. Social infrastructure investment, social welfare, “solidaristic” wage policies, detailed social security provisions and social legislation are to be found across European states. Habermas believes that these European outlooks are located in “a certain normative core of social liberalism [that] still provides a formative background for social solidarity.”²⁸⁷

To further demonstrate the contrast between social democratic thought in Europe and the US, we can turn to research conducted by Meyer and Hinchman, who have elaborated a system of measuring models of democracy. At one extreme of the spectrum of democratic governance they see *libertarian* democracy and on the other *social* democracy. To measure where on this spectrum a given regime finds itself, they have generated nine criteria according to which they allocate 25 points in total. These criteria were:

1. Institutionalized social and economic rights (maximum 2 points)
2. A universalistic social welfare system committed to upholding basic rights (3)
3. Social expenditure as a percentage of GDP (3)
4. Coordinated market economy (3)
5. Co-determination (2)
6. Relative poverty rate (3)
7. Social stratification in the educational system (3)
8. Labor-force participation rate (3)
9. Income equality (3)

A shortened definition to distinguish social democracy from libertarian democracy mentioned by the authors is that social democracy “recognizes all categories of basic rights, in accord with the 1966 UN Declaration, whereas libertarian democracy recognizes only its

²⁸⁵ Hutton, Will, *The World We're In* (London: Little Brown, 2002), 343.

²⁸⁶ Manners, *The constitutive nature of values*, 22.

²⁸⁷ Habermas, Jürgen, “Why Europe Needs a Constitution”, *New Left Review* 11, September-October 2001: 10.

civil and political components.”²⁸⁸ (The categories of rights will be further debated within the context of democracy promotion in a later chapter).

As expected, in the authors’ quantitative comparison of OECD countries and according to their measuring model, only the US qualified as a fully libertarian democracy. The resultant table looked as follows:

Table 7.2 Ranking of “social” and “libertarian” democracies

<i>Country</i>	<i>Points awarded</i>
Highly inclusive social democracies	
Sweden	25
Denmark	24
Austria	20
Moderately inclusive social democracies	
Germany	17
France	16
Belgium	16
Less inclusive social democracies	
Italy	13
Portugal	11
United Kingdom	10
Exclusive democracies (libertarian democracies)	
United States	3

Source: Meyer, The Theory of Social Democracy

That the social democratic idea in Europe is strong was exemplified by then first secretary of the French *Parti Socialiste*, Francois Hollande, who believed that “[Schröder’s] victory, coming after Tony Blair’s in England and that of Lionel Jospin, confirms that Socialist and Social Democratic ideas dominate Europe today.”²⁸⁹ The EU is by no means a strictly “social democratic project”²⁹⁰, but rather often referred to as a “neo-liberal” one. Although – in its current form – it may not be “the ideal place for socialist ideologies [as it] is not supportive of more economic regulation, a more encompassing welfare state, or Keynesian deficit

²⁸⁸ Meyer, Thomas, *The Theory of Social Democracy* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007), 209.

²⁸⁹ Cited in Ladrech, Robert, *Social Democracy and the Challenge of European Union* (Boulder CO: Lynne Rienner, 2000), 1.

²⁹⁰ It was surely not intended as one by its founders either. See Anderson, Karen M., *Social Policy in the European Union* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

spending”²⁹¹, given the manifestly strong social democratic ideologies within member states, the EU needs to maintain some level of adherence to the social democratic principles. In other words, social democratic thinking needs to be a part of its identity in order to be attractive for EU citizens (who are often fairly hostile to neo-liberal economic agendas, such as the currently negotiated Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, TTIP).²⁹²

Despite still being criticized by certain groups that it is too weak in social policy formulation (which could be solved by transferring social-policy competence to the European level) and amidst calls for the formation of “Social Europe”, the EU has been steadily attempting to build a stronger position for itself in this sphere in the last years.²⁹³ The Maastricht Treaty contained a “Social Chapter”, providing a procedure for introducing social legislation which allowed the EC to act in a wider range of “social” areas and to adopt more legislation by qualified majority voting. The Lisbon Treaty further strengthened the social dimension of the European Union by amending three articles of the founding Treaties (Article 3 of the Treaty on EU and Articles 9 and 152 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU) – these acknowledge that “a high level of employment, adequate social protection and the fight against social exclusion should be taken into account in the development and implementation of Union policies”.²⁹⁴ The 2000 Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU makes the norms of social solidarity even more explicit under Chapter IV. Given the EU’s emphasis on the social dimension of its policies and on positive rights of the population, some have even hinted that analogically to a “normative power Europe”, the EU acts as a “social power Europe” in the international arena.²⁹⁵

Interestingly, as a reaction to the UK’s decision to leave the EU (and perhaps lending truth to the claims that the UK was blocking increased social policy action at the EU level), President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker has announced to give a new

²⁹¹ Moschonas, *When institutions matter*, 17.

²⁹² Eurobarometer surveys confirm that “Europeans tend to prefer a ‘social’ rather than ‘liberal’ approach to solving social and economic problems”. Eurobarometer, “Poverty and Social Exclusion” *Special Eurobarometer 321*, February 2010: 99.

²⁹³ See Schildberg, Cäcilie et al., “Europe and Social Democracy”, Social Democracy Reader 4, *Friedrich Ebert Stiftung*, May 2014.

²⁹⁴ See “Summaries of EU legislation – Social policy” at <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/GA/TXT/?uri=uriserv:ai0023> (accessed August 3, 2016).

²⁹⁵ See Novitz, Tania, “Legal Power and Normative Sources in the Field of Social Policy: Normative Power Europe at Work?” in Orbie, Jan (ed.), *Europe's Global Role: External Policies of the European Union* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2008).

push to the “European pillar of social rights” and add a “social” dimension to EU policy. The measures are said to include rules on the minimum wage, new rights on “quality education and training”, gender equality and boosting social protection – i.e. “policies long considered out-of-bounds for Brussels”.²⁹⁶

The experience of the Nordic countries, which “gradually move[d] the idea of being a welfare state to the centre of what defined them as nations” – thus making it part of their identity – may show us how the increased focus on social democratic norms within the EU can affect its foreign policy.²⁹⁷ Interestingly, Hook has witnessed that the Nordic countries’ “model” of development assistance emphasized the promotion of socio-economic equalization and targeted countries that “seemed to aspire to develop a social democratic form of government”.²⁹⁸ Likewise, the practices of diplomatic of the Nordic countries “often resulted in the outward projection of welfare state norms.”²⁹⁹ This confirms the thesis that political ideology plays a role in and influences democracy assistance and we can thus expect a similar dynamic within EU action. Even more so, as it is the European Parliament (EP) – where the Party of European Socialists (Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats) is historically the strongest and “the most cohesive block”³⁰⁰ – that is “the single most vocal and most prominent” promoter of human rights and democracy among EU institutions.³⁰¹ The EP has demonstrated to have significant influence over these policies as it has “constantly hammered the Commission and the Council of Ministers to promote human rights and democracy worldwide and to put the EU’s money where its mouth is”.³⁰²

²⁹⁶ Cooper, Harry, “Jean-Claude Juncker’s next big thing”, *POLITICO Europe*, August 1, 2016. Available at <http://www.politico.eu/article/jean-claude-junckers-social-agenda-europe-commission-president/> (accessed August 3, 2016).

²⁹⁷ Schouenborg, Laust, “The rise of the welfare state in international society”, *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 28 (4), 2015: 602.

²⁹⁸ Hook, Steven W., *National Interest and Foreign Aid* (Boulder CO: Lynne Rienner, 1995), cited in Schouenborg, *The rise of the welfare state*, 612.

²⁹⁹ Schouenborg, *The rise of the welfare state*, 613.

³⁰⁰ McGowan, *Social Democracy and the European Union*, 98.

³⁰¹ Yet, along with the seeming demise of traditional parties across Europe, we are also recently witnessing a downturn in the support for social democratic parties. See, among others, Keating, Michael and David McCrone (eds.), *The Crisis of Social Democracy in Europe* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013); The Economist, “European Social Democracy: Rose Thou Art Sick”, 2 April, 2016. Available at <http://www.economist.com/news/briefing/21695887-centre-left-sharp-decline-across-europe-rose-thou-art-sick> (accessed 16 May 2017).

³⁰² Börzel, Tanja and Thomas Risse, “One Size Fits All! EU Policies for the Promotion of Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law”, Paper prepared for the Workshop on Democracy Promotion, Stanford University, October 4-5, 2004: 25.

Furthermore, in a White Paper dedicated to improving democratic governance in the EU, the Commission (vindicating our use of constructivist approaches when examining democracy assistance) makes clear that the socio-economic aspect of EU development policy is crucial from the perspective of the Union's identity formation:

*“The objectives of peace, growth, employment and social justice pursued within the Union must also be promoted outside for them to be effectively attained at both European and global level. This responds to citizens' expectations for a powerful Union on a world stage. Successful international action reinforces European identity and the importance of shared values within the Union.”*³⁰³

The specific social democratic “creed” within Europe arose as a consequence of the numerous *social* revolutions throughout European countries' histories.³⁰⁴ But it was mostly after the Second World War, when social democracy became “Europe's great gift to the world as a mechanism for managing the conflicts of market capitalism.”³⁰⁵ The new social democratic order being constructed in Western Europe (as Eastern Europe was turning communist) would make the state the guardian of the society rather than the economy and the economic imperatives would often have to “take the back seat” to social pressures. According to Berman:

*“This shift to a ‘social democratic’ understanding of the relationship between states, markets and societies was based on a recognition that, for democratic consolidation to finally succeed in Western Europe, the social conflict and divisions that helped scuttle democratic experiments in the past would have to be confronted head-on. After 1945, therefore, democratic governments in Western Europe explicitly committed themselves to pursuing policies designed to foster social solidarity and stability.”*³⁰⁶

³⁰³ European Commission, *European Governance: A White Paper*, COM(2001) 428 final, 2001.

³⁰⁴ See Berman, *The Primacy of Politics*.

³⁰⁵ Taylor-Gooby, Peter, “Social Democracy at the End of the Welfare State?” in Cramme, Olaf and Patrick Diamond, *After the Third Way: The Future of Social Democracy in Europe* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2012), 75.

³⁰⁶ Berman, Sheri, “The past and future of social democracy and the consequences for democracy promotion” in Hobson and Kurki, *The Conceptual Politics*, 75.

What Berman describes is essentially the concept of “embedded liberalism”, famously elaborated by Ruggie in 1982.³⁰⁷ The term characterizes the economic perspective in democratic countries after WWII and is generally described as involving a compromise between two desirable but partially conflicting objectives – the first being the revival of free trade; the second being giving governments the freedom to provide generous welfare programs and to intervene in their economies. This post-war economic consensus existed even in the United States, albeit with significantly less Keynesian aspects.³⁰⁸

To Berman, however, the term “embedded liberalism” is a misnomer. She claims that after the war “a new understanding of democracy developed in Western Europe, one that went beyond what we think of today as ‘electoral’ or even ‘liberal’ democracy to what is best understood as ‘social’ democracy.” What scholars failed to understand, she argues, is how this new system in Europe broke with the past and went against key tenets of liberalism. “If liberalism can be stretched to encompass an order that saw unchecked markets as dangerous, that had public interests trump private prerogatives, and that granted states the right to intervene in the economy to protect the common interest, then the term is so elastic as to be nearly useless.”³⁰⁹ This implies that embedded liberalism took over in the US (until the neoliberal era of Reagan), but the term is not as relevant for Western Europe, where a much more Keynesian, democratic socialism became the economic model. This issue calls for a deeper examination of the way the relationship between democracy (government) and markets is perceived in the US and Europe.³¹⁰

The market is innately connected to the early history of the United States. New England settlers did bring with them a sense of community and common purpose, where individual self-interests were subordinated to the good of the group. But soon, these feelings gave way under the pressure of a commercial economy. Population grew and towns found themselves without enough land for the rising generation. In reaction, farmers started shifting

³⁰⁷ Ruggie, John Gerard, “International Regimes, Transactions, and Change: Embedded Liberalism in the Postwar Economic Order”, *International Organization* 36 (2), 1982: 379-415.

³⁰⁸ See Blyth, Mark, *Great Transformations: Economic Ideas and Institutional Change in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

³⁰⁹ Berman, *The past and future of social democracy*, 79.

³¹⁰ It may seem here that we are conflating EU identity with European identity, which – some may argue – are two different things. But the aim here is to contrast with the United States, which political and economic ideas have shaped and organized the state in Europe and demonstrate how this thinking is translating into democracy promotion on the EU level.

from subsistence to commercial agriculture as “town meetings became occasions of strident competition for access to privileges and limited resource”. Instead of puritan self-denial, people began to exhibit the more “modern” qualities of unrestrained self-interest and individualism and interpersonal relations became “contractual and impersonal, shaped by competition, calculation, and self-assertion.” Hence, the individual “stood isolated, sharply defined against others”.³¹¹

In the absence of any effective institutional and social constraints that the US could inherit from a feudal past, the colonies could promote their own commercial activities giving rise to a market system. In short, in America the market arose before the state and thus was the “first institution able to impose order on social relations or, at any rate, to rationalize their development.”³¹² After the Revolution, the market – and notably its independence – became powerfully protected by the constitution and thus it gained recognition as the paramount source of individual freedom. In connecting liberal individualism and the market, self-interest became a human trait most lauded for the advancement of development of the nation. Self-interest in the market system was a source of motivation and stimulus that resulted in the material well-being of the individual and the state – in other words, “private vices, public benefits”.³¹³ So, in the US, the market never needed to justify itself as it was perceived as a “natural” institution and emblem of freedom.³¹⁴

The situation in the EU (and European states generally) was different – “by contrast, the market was imposed (with the help of the state and not despite it) on the basis of a preeminently economic rationale”.³¹⁵ European “elites have designed and completed the single market” by stealth, having produced a “political backlash that has increased over time”.³¹⁶ While market principles are generally deemed to be organizing American life in all possible spheres, Europeans tend to see them as a nemesis – as an uninvited “Americanization” of their societies.³¹⁷ Therefore – in contrast with the US – within the EU,

³¹¹ Breitenbach, William, “Unregenerate Doings: Selflessness and Selfishness in New Divinity Theology”, *American Quarterly* 34 (5), 1982: 495-496.

³¹² Fabbrini, *American Democracy from a European Perspective*, 469.

³¹³ Ketcham, *Individualism and Public Life*, 49.

³¹⁴ Lipset, *The First New Nation*, cited in Fabbrini, *American Democracy from a European Perspective*, 470.

³¹⁵ Fabbrini, *American Democracy from a European Perspective*, 470.

³¹⁶ Checkel, Jeffrey T. and Peter J. Katzenstein, “The politicization of European identities” in Checkel and Katzenstein (eds.), *European Identity*, 2.

³¹⁷ For more on this topic see Markovits, Andrei S., *Uncouth Nation: Why Europe Dislikes America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), chapter 3.

the market has labored to find its justification as an institution of efficiency. Mark Blyth summarized this dichotomy in a very pertinent manner and thus deserves to be cited in full:

“Given their common history, European mass publics are simply not willing to tolerate policies that produce the type of economic outcomes characteristic of the contemporary United States. Equality is not simply a value, it is deemed a political necessity in an environment where instability and inequality have in the past caused untold strife [...] Europe’s all-too-recent history of economic instability and political polarization has made inequality something to be abhorred, not something to be celebrated as an ‘incentive’ for individual effort. This is why in Europe, when micro- and macroeconomic reforms are made, they are made with built-in compensatory payments. When they are not built in, such reforms are challenged. This is not to argue that all Americans want inequality and all Europeans want higher taxes. But it is to claim that such policies are far more suitable in the United States than they are in Europe. This suggests growing division between countries over the very type of society deemed desirable.”³¹⁸

Likewise, according to Richard J. Ellis, “Competition is revered by individualists, solidarity is privileged by egalitarians. Differences between people are suspect for egalitarians, while individualists defend inequalities as a reflection of individual worth.”³¹⁹ Being aware that the following claim is a broad, yet useful, generalization, we can state from the above analysis that the Europeans – when compared to their transatlantic counterparts – possess a stronger form of “solidaristic communitarianism”³²⁰ that permits the operation of democratic socialism and also translates into the workings of the EU. In the US, the prospective operation of a European-type social democracy has been hindered by the ethos of liberal individualism, which is “intrinsically opposed to the political quest for socioeconomic equality” and wherein there is stronger belief that “the well-being (or mere preferences) of the majority cannot override the rightful claims of individuals”.³²¹

³¹⁸ Blyth, Mark, “American Power and Neoliberal Capitalism” in Steinmo and Kopstein, *Growing Apart?*, 133.

³¹⁹ Ellis, Richard J., *American Political Cultures* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 5.

³²⁰ The term is used by Cramme and Diamond, *After the Third Way*, 6.

³²¹ Kateb, George, *The Inner Ocean: Individualism and Democratic Culture* (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 1992), 11 and 15.

9 The role of the state relative to society

In the ontology of democracy, we need not forget the obvious that every model or “definition” of democracy not only sets down the institutional framework of the political system and the relationships between the political agents, but it also implicitly delineates the relationship of the state (government) with the society (the individual). So, for analytical precision, there are two levels at which we can analyze a democratic (and any other) political system – one is how it organizes the life of institutions (the horizontal level) and the second is how it organizes the relationship between the political power center(s) and the individual citizen (the vertical level). The implications of this analytical distinction for democracy assistance are broad and should be taken into account for the purposes of our subsequent analysis.

It can be expected that a society founded on principles emphasizing self-help and individual effort in reaching subsistence (labelled by some pundits as a “participant” society³²²) is going to be less tolerant of central authorities that frequently intervene in its endeavors and redistribute the outcomes of its toil at the expense of one to benefit the other. Such a society will prefer a limited form of central authority or a small institutional apparatus relative to society. In this sense, a society deriving its political and civic culture³²³ from communitarian ideals (a “subject” or “parochial” society) will likely be more tolerant (and even welcoming) of an interventionist central power that redistributes the outcomes of the toils of individuals.³²⁴ Hence, such a society will not prefer a limited role for the central authority, but will seek a broader role relative to society and will be more willing to trade (or delegate) some individual liberties to the central authority in exchange for the provision of certain services.

These are thus not only two very different models of democracy that can be promoted, but also two different “forms” or “morphs” of the state. This is important to be recognized by both the donor and recipient states as democratization not only creates new institutions

³²² For the categorization of political cultures see Jackman, *A Renaissance of Political Culture?*, 634.

³²³ For Ronald Inglehart the “study of political culture is based on the implicit assumption that autonomous and cross-cultural differences exist and they can have important political consequences”. The perseverance of political culture and norms is due to the fact that “people live in the past much more than they realize”, or, in other words, that the impact of direct experience on political behavior is “severely constrained by norms passed across generations”. See Inglehart, *The Renaissance of Political Culture*, 1205 and Jackman and Miller, *A Renaissance of Political Culture?*, 635.

³²⁴ A defense of communitarian political cultures against individualist ones is provided by Parekh, Bhikhu, “The Cultural Particularity of Liberal Democracy,” *Political Studies* 40 (s1), 1992: 160-175.

but also new authority patterns. The more these new institutions and authority patterns are congruent with the political culture, the greater the likelihood that democracy in the target country will eventually be consolidated. In short, the new socio-political system should be “designed at least in a way that does not dramatically violate the congruence condition – in other words, that adapts in some degree to the pre-established order.”³²⁵

As will be demonstrated below, both the EU and the US quite naturally have a fairly different conception of the role of the power center relative to society – that is, the vertical axis of the organization of the democratic system. The distinctiveness is given to the differing patterns of political development in Europe and the US, but the relevance of such contrasts for contemporary policymaking and transatlantic discussions about democracy is too often neglected.³²⁶ This question thus provides us with another domain to examine in order to understand the reasons why the EU and the US tend to approach democracy assistance from different angles.

In the following subchapters, we shall examine how the EU and the US envision an ideal form, size and role of the state in a citizen’s life and where the two seek to build their legitimacy to govern. The reason why we focus on these aspects is that they are pivotal for a democracy promoter to consider when assisting democracy in a third country. The correct mix of the mentioned factors can ultimately decide about the future consolidation of democratic governance in the target country.

9.1 The “scope” of the state

A “limited government” has been often referred to as another unique aspect of the American system. Some scholars have even identified it as an inalienable component of the American “creed” and thus a part of the United States’ political identity.³²⁷ On the one hand, from a classical liberal perspective, the term describes the simple fact that the powers of government are constrained (“limited”) by the law (the constitution). The term, however, has also been (mis)used to refer to the *size* of the federal government – meaning that the size of the federal

³²⁵ Eckstein, Harry, “Congruence Theory Explained,” *CSD Working Papers* (UC Irvine: Center for the Study of Democracy, 1997): 19. Available at <http://www.escholarship.org/uc/item/2wb616g6> (accessed May 6, 2013).

³²⁶ Featherstone, Kevin and Roy H. Ginsberg, *The United States and the European Union in the 1990s: Partners in Transition* 2nd edition (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1996), 206.

³²⁷ Murray, Charles, “Trump’s America”, *Wall Street Journal*, February 12, 2016. Available at <http://www.wsj.com/articles/donald-trumps-america-1455290458> (accessed August 9, 2016).

bureaucracy and number of agencies and departments should be “limited” (and thus small) relative to the individual states.³²⁸ Of course, throughout American history the conception of limited government has varied and various political factions within the Republican and Democratic parties have been envisaging different functions for the federal government. Until this day, the Libertarian wing of the Republican party criticizes the federal government for having becoming too bloated, extensive and powerful, while the Progressive wing of the Democratic party claims the opposite and argues that Americans deserve a much more comprehensive social “safety net”. Yet, the preference for a small government is claimed to be deeply embedded within the American ethos and political culture as a consequence of its historical development and the United States is likely going to remain a proponent of limited forms of state power even without neoliberal critiques of “big government”.

Much of the US adherence to limited government has to do with its foundation on the principles of liberal individualism discussed earlier. The individualist ethos requires the creation of individual rights, which serve to protect the individual from the powers of the states – that is, setting up the negative rights of the citizen vis-à-vis the state. Proponents of individual rights are thus suspicious of the government and assume “that government as such, government in any form, has its own power interest which inclines it to deny that rights exist or to encroach on those it recognizes.”³²⁹ The role of the government is limited to the protection of the individual – his or her life and property (this, of course, is the Hobbesian vision of government authority). Simply, “Government exists to preserve individuals.”³³⁰

This conception of central authority thus entails a fairly narrow vision of its functions – security should be the absolute priority of the government, all else being secondary. In fact, as Sarotte argues, this narrow conception of the role of the central authority has been at the foundation of the United States and is still considered to be the main feature of the federal government until today.³³¹ In Federalist nos. 3 and 4, John Jay, future chief justice of the US Supreme Court, pondered about the primary role of the nascent federal government for the

³²⁸ See Pilon, Roger, “The United States Constitution: From Limited Government to Leviathan”, *Economic Education Bulletin* 9 (12), 2005. Available at <http://object.cato.org/sites/cato.org/files/articles/CT05.pdf> (accessed August 9, 2016).

³²⁹ Kateb, *The Inner Ocean*, 1.

³³⁰ *Op. cit.*, 2.

³³¹ Sarotte, Mary Elise, “Transatlantic Tension and Threat Perception”, *Naval War College Review* 58 (4), 2005: 25-37.

thirteen colonies. He saw that “among the many objects to which a wise and free people find it necessary to direct their attention, that of providing for their *safety* seems to be the first”. “Leave America divided into thirteen [...] independent governments – what armies could they raise – what fleets could they ever hope to have?”³³² Protecting US territorial integrity and the lives of its citizens has been and remains the “first justification” of political union and the “*only* truly vital mission” of the US government.³³³ Sarotte contrasts this with “Europeans – even the British”, who “expect much more from their national leaders than territorial defense: free (or low-cost) health care and university-level education, national news broadcasting, and public transportation, to name just a few.”³³⁴

The “narrow” view of the US federal governments function emanates from the American Revolution, which was essentially a struggle against an overly powerful central authority and, as mentioned, endeavored to create an alternative to the Westphalian system in Europe. It was mostly an act of liberation and empowerment – a bottom-up movement directed partly by local elites against British rule, but also by the masses of farmers and workers in the colonies.³³⁵ As a consequence of being born out of a revolution against state power and authority, American political culture has often been described to contain a pervasive “antipower ethic” as “the genius and habits of the people of America [are] opposed to government”.³³⁶ Sir William Ashley observed this phenomenon, linking it again to the absence of feudalism in the US:

*“As feudalism was not transplanted to the New World, there was no need for the strong arm of a central government to destroy it. The action of England inspired the American colonists with a hatred of centralized authority; but had that action been a transplanted American feudalism, rich in the chaos of ages, then they would surely have to dream of centralizing authority themselves.”*³³⁷

For Samuel Huntington, it is only natural that the US maintains an “antipower ethic” not only because of its historical political development, but also because of the very components of

³³² Jay, John, “Concerning Dangers from Foreign Force and Influence”, *Federalist paper nos. 3 and 4*, 1787.

³³³ Sarotte, *Transatlantic Tension*, 28. See also Selden, Zachary, “Neoconservatives and the American Mainstream”, *Policy Review* 124, 2004: 29-39.

³³⁴ *Op. cit.*, 29.

³³⁵ Lemisch, Jesse, “The American Revolution Seen from the Bottom Up” in Barton J. Bernstein (ed.), *Towards a New Past: Dissenting Essays in American History* (New York: Vintage Books, 1967).

³³⁶ See Ellis, *American Political Cultures*, chapter 5.

³³⁷ Cited in Lakoff, *Hartz and his critics*, 6.

American identity. He describes that all the basic tenets of the American Creed are “basically antigovernment and antiauthority in character”, placing “limits on power and on the institutions of government” and that Americans, throughout their history as a nation, have been united by the ever-present hostility to authority”.³³⁸ The American Creed and most of all its component of liberal individualism is seen as “a much more fruitful source of reasons for questioning and resisting government than for obedience to government.”³³⁹

This view is shared by another renowned scholar of the America socio-political system, Seymour Martin Lipset, who argues that US political institutions are consciously designed to weaken and limit the exercise of state power. He claims that “the United States [...] compared to other Euro-Canadian polities [...] is still more classically liberal (libertarian), distrustful of government, and populist. It gives its citizens more power to influence their governors than other democracies, which rely more heavily on unified governments fulfilling economic and welfare functions. Viewed cross-nationally, Americans are the most antistatist liberal (Whig) population among the democratic nations.”³⁴⁰

By the term “populist”, Lipset refers to the heavy belief in the sovereignty of the people and their power to elect and dispose of their representatives through the fairly simple process of elections. The politically empowered individual is thus the primary and only source of legitimacy of the US government. Indeed, the number of *elected* officials in the United States is currently (as of 2012) around 520 000.³⁴¹ Of course, the US government has expanded and so has its role in society since the end of WWII, in the era of “embedded liberalism”, yet the balance between the state and the individual remains a point of contention and any growth of government is perceived as coming at the expense of the rights and freedoms of the individual. However, the still relatively smaller government in the United States “marks a very different starting point for the struggle between the individual and the state” and tilts the balance of power (in theory) toward the individual.³⁴²

³³⁸ Huntington, *American Politics*, 4, 33.

³³⁹ *Op. cit.*, 41.

³⁴⁰ Lipset, Seymour Martin, *American Exceptionalism: A Double-Edged Sword* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1995), 46.

³⁴¹ Lawless, Jennifer L., *Becoming a Candidate: Political Ambition and the Decision to Run for Office* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 33.

³⁴² Nau, Henry R., *At Home Abroad: Identity and Power in American Foreign Policy* (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 2002), 70.

As the liberal individualist paradigm dictates, each individual person is primarily preoccupied (and responsible) with his or her survival, successes and satisfactions. Government (and society) are thus only “creations” of individuals and are therefore subordinate to their private rights – the whole is no more than the sum of its parts. In this sense, it is a widely held narrative in the US that individual freedom and fulfillment is directly proportional to the absence of government in the lives of individuals.

More importantly, the “belief in individual opportunity and limited government has meant there has been much less support for welfare and redistributive policies than is typically found in Europe.”³⁴³ As discussed earlier, the American Creed maintains a strong commitment to egalitarianism, but this needs to be understood as a commitment to equal opportunity and lack of (the historical heritage of) structural hierarchy, rather than as social solidarity. Every American should have an equal opportunity to pursue his or her fulfillment, “but this is to be in the competition of a *laissez-faire* economy, and not via strong government.”³⁴⁴ Thus, as Smith points out, “in theory as well as in fact, the distinguishing mark of American liberal democracy (even by comparison with other liberal democracies) has been a state limited by strongly organized social forces”.³⁴⁵

For the purposes of describing the role of the state in a society, Francis Fukuyama proposes to distinguish being the *scope* of the state, which refers to “the different functions and goals taken on by governments”, and the *strength* of the state, which concerns the “ability of states to plan and execute policies, and to enforce laws cleanly and transparently.”³⁴⁶ Fukuyama builds on the work of Weber, for whom the state was “a human community that (successfully) claims *monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force* within a given territory.”³⁴⁷ Modern states are thus measured against their ability of *enforcement* and in this sense, the US can be considered as extraordinarily *strong*. But regarding the *scope* of US government, its system carefully limits and restricts its activities. Following this logic, Fukuyama elaborates a small diagram composed of four quadrants (Figure 1). While the US resides in quadrant I, EU states would mostly fall into quadrant II. Countries, whose

³⁴³ Featherstone and Ginsberg, *The United States and the European Union in the 1990s*, 208.

³⁴⁴ Ibid.

³⁴⁵ Smith, *America's Mission*, 17.

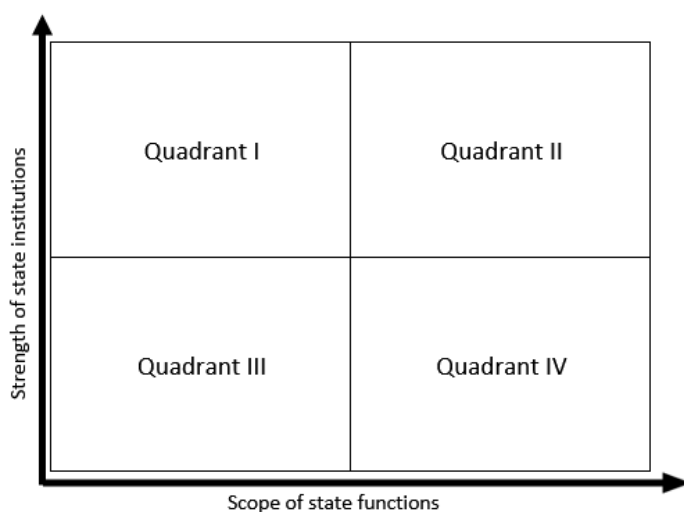
³⁴⁶ Fukuyama, *The Imperative of State-Building*, 21-22.

³⁴⁷ Weber, Max, *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), 78.

governments are minimalist (due to civil wars, lack of territorial control of state integrity etc.) and weak will fall in quadrant III and those states with an ambitious scope of government functions (due to populist leaders' pledges), yet insufficient resources to implement them are in quadrant IV (where also the largest number of developing countries would be located).

In sum, the US government has *strong* powers within its *scope* of functions – from an economist's perspective this form of state power leads to greatest effectiveness. Least “effective” governments would be those whose scope of functions is extensive (too ambitious), yet their strength to implement and enforce policies is weak. Europeans, however, would likely “argue that US-style efficiency comes at the price of social justice and that they are happy to be in quadrant II rather than I”.³⁴⁸ The implications for democracy promotion are clear and confirmed by Smith: “When their policy intends to promote democracy abroad, Americans rather naturally tend to think in terms of a weak state relative to society.”³⁴⁹

Figure 8.1 State Scope and Strength³⁵⁰



The question regarding the scope of the state also connects to the issue of vertical power distribution (i.e. decentralization). From the outset of the signing of the Declaration of Independence the query discussed by the Founding Fathers was how to organize power and competencies among individual states and the central authority (and whether a central government for the colonies³⁵⁰ was even necessary). The failure of the Articles of Confederation

³⁴⁸ Fukuyama, *The Imperative of State-Building*, 24.

³⁴⁹ Smith, *America's Mission*, 17-18.

³⁵⁰ Adopted from Fukuyama, *The Imperative of State-Building*, 23.

has demonstrated that some form of centralized government was necessary, yet with limited powers and significant devolution of competencies to the state governments. Thus, the US formed the first federal democracy in the world, its federalism being “born from a rooted antimajoritarian and anticentralist prejudice.”³⁵¹ In short, the new entity had to conjugate the fear of power with the necessity of its use.³⁵² As Fabbrini point out: “Whereas Europe was laboriously seeking to bring the king into parliament, America decided to exclude its king (the president) from parliament. Whereas Europe strove to unify power, America strove to divide it.”³⁵³ The centralization of power was also more imperative in Europe than the US, as European countries struggled with powerful neighbors, shifting balances of power and more immediate threats to territorial integrity than the US.

The (de)centralization of the central authority’s powers and competencies has a very different dynamic in the US and in the EU. As Caporaso writes, “the EU can integrate politically only by transcending the sovereignties of individual states, by cajoling them into accepting the status of subordinate units”, thereby he sees the EU as a “political structure in the process of acquiring its distinctive sovereign status and surreptitiously *draining* these ‘powers’ from the Member States” (emphasis added).³⁵⁴ So, while in the US the question of decentralization is an inherent part of its historical evolution and understanding of democracy as such, the EU must effectively resist any loss of its power and maintain its competencies in order to be capable of justifying its existence. The theme of decentralization will thus quite naturally assume a different level of importance in the democracy assistance activities of both actors.

9.2 Promoting the welfare state?

A number of scholars agree that the very logic behind a welfare state goes against the principles of the America Creed and its emphasis on individual endeavor, self-motivation etc. Perhaps idealizing the work ethic of Americans, Huntington describes how the “glorification of work” leads them to have an “ambivalent attitude toward leisure, often feeling guilty about it” and that the concept of “getting something for nothing is a source of shame”.³⁵⁵ It is the

³⁵¹ Fabbrini, *American Democracy from a European perspective*, 473.

³⁵² Dahl, Robert A., *A Preface to Democratic Theory* (Chicago IL: Chicago University Press, 1956).

³⁵³ Fabbrini, *American Democracy from a European perspective*, 472. See also Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, 110.

³⁵⁴ Caporaso, *The European Union and Forms of State*, 35.

³⁵⁵ Huntington, *Who Are We?*, 72, 74.

feeling that a comprehensive welfare state would disturb the balance within American society that has been maintained for generations by the principles of liberal individualism and that the mindset, political culture and ethos of the people would irreparably change. Franz-Xaver Kaufmann summarizes the state of welfare in the US in what is perhaps a too condemnatory manner: “The US does have a welfare sector, albeit a comparatively fragmented one, but it is not a social or welfare state. As a country it has no comprehension of public responsibility for the basic aspects of well-being for all citizens” and he adds that the US “political system is based on principles that have little in common with European concepts of the state.”³⁵⁶

The situation is different in the EU – in the words of Anthony Giddens, “Europe’s welfare system is often regarded as the jewel in the crown – perhaps the main feature that gives the European societies their special quality”.³⁵⁷ The notion of a welfare state does not fall on deaf ears, given the tradition of socialist political thinking and the fact that after WWII, the proximity of communist countries behind the Iron Curtain induced the Western European countries to “embed” their liberalism much further than the US into a “European social model”.³⁵⁸ Europe of today tends to exemplify itself as a “shining city perched on the hill of [...] social welfare”.³⁵⁹ Even historian Tony Judt (of social democratic leaning) suggested that “what binds Europeans together [...] is what it has become conventional to call – in disjunctive contrast with ‘the American way of life’ – the ‘European social model’.”³⁶⁰ (Note that here we can also see a clear example where Europe is “othering” the US and depicting it, again, as a “laggard” in the sphere of social policy.³⁶¹) Moreover, the “Scandinavian model” of a “third way” between capitalism and socialism, which is considered to be the

³⁵⁶ Kaufmann, Franz-Xaver, *European Foundations of the Welfare State* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012), 230.

³⁵⁷ Giddens, Anthony, *Europe in the Global Age* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007), 1.

³⁵⁸ Of course, European states did not all develop a uniform “social model”, but their welfare states do share several broad characteristics. The general components of a European welfare state include a commitment to full employment, social protections for all citizens, social inclusion, universal health care, free higher education, strong labor protections and regulations (often at the expense of the flexibility of the labor market), and welfare programs in areas such as unemployment insurance, retirement pensions, and public housing. As European states focus to a different degree on enumerated aspects of the model, scholars distinguish between four distinct social models in Europe – the Nordic (or Scandinavian, universalistic), Anglo-Saxon (or liberal), Mediterranean and the Continental (or conservative). See Esping-Andersen, Gosta, *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990); Barr, Nicholas, *Economics of the welfare state* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

³⁵⁹ Checkel and Katzenstein, *The politicization of European Identities*, 1-2.

³⁶⁰ Cited in Laity, Paul, “Uncomfortable Truths. Interview with Tony Judt”, *The Guardian*, May 17, 2008. Available at <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2008/may/17/politics1> (accessed August 11, 2016).

³⁶¹ See also Diez, *Constructing the Self and Changing Others*.

most extensive and activist welfare state model in world, has often been referred to as an example to be emulated by other European states.³⁶²

In terms of government social expenditures as ratio of GDP, it has been estimated that the American “welfare state” is 30 % smaller than that of a “typical” Eurozone country.³⁶³ This is partly given by much lower government revenue from taxation in the US³⁶⁴, but an important factor to consider is also the absence of positive rights in the US Constitution. The Bill of Rights, which “has symbolized and energized the country’s formal and long-standing commitment to individual rights”³⁶⁵, ensures only (or *mostly*, depending on the interpretation³⁶⁶) negative rights to US citizens, without explicit formulations of positive rights.³⁶⁷

In short, the concept of negative rights centers around keeping central authority “out of the lives of individuals” – these rights provide a bulwark against any misuse of government power and thus include the right to life and rights to privacy of home and family life and do not involve expenditure of public resources. In contrast, positive rights entitle citizens to certain services provided by the central authority, such as right to health and right to education and thus typically involve expenditure of public money.³⁶⁸ Such positive rights, referred to also as “social and economic rights”, are explicitly formulated in a number of European constitutions and provide the duty of the state “to bring about real equality for the working classes which were not able to benefit from the merely formal liberty and equality recognized by the classical liberals.”³⁶⁹ The presence of positive rights in European

³⁶² Becker, Uwe, “The Scandinavian Model: Still an Example for Europe?” *Internationale Politik und Gesellschaft* 10 (4), 2007: 41-57.

³⁶³ See Lemieux, Pierre, *The Public Debt Problem: A Comprehensive Guide* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013) and Lemieux, *American and European Welfare States*, 227.

³⁶⁴ See Steinmo, Sven, “Why is Government So Small in America?” *Governance* 8 (3), 1995: 303-334.

³⁶⁵ Kateb, *The Inner Ocean*, 3.

³⁶⁶ A clear line between positive and negative rights is difficult to draw and is subject to various interpretations. The US Constitution is considered to provide only a minimum of positive rights (the right to a trial is considered to be the most explicit positive right in the Constitution).

³⁶⁷ Shapiro, Martin, “Rights in the European Union: Convergent with the USA?” in Jabko, Nicholas and Craig Parsons (eds.), *The State of the European Union: With US or Against US? European Trends in American Perspective* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 382. See also Glendon, Mary Ann, “Rights in the Twentieth-Century Constitutions: The Case of Welfare Rights” in Graham, Hugh Davis (ed.), *Civil Rights in the United States* (University Park PA, The Pennsylvania State University Press: 1994), 143.

³⁶⁸ McHale, Jean, “Fundamental rights and health care” in Mossialos, Elias et al. (eds.), *Health Systems Governance in Europe: The Role of European Union Law and Policy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 283, 284.

³⁶⁹ Pereira-Menaut, Antonio Carlos, “Against Positive Rights”, *Valparaiso University Law Review* 22 (2), 1988: 361. See also Howard, Dick A. E., “Another ‘Springtime of Nations’? Rights in Central and Eastern

constitutions has a complex history and stems largely from the programs of Christian-democratic and social-democratic parties, yet some interpretations claim that positive rights in Europe represent “a transposition to the modern state of the feudal notion that an overlord owed certain protection to his dependents in exchange for their service and loyalty.”³⁷⁰

From the perspective of democracy promotion, it is interesting to note that in the early 1990s American legal scholars urged post-communist countries not to include positive rights in their new or amended constitutions and called for drafting constitutions that “produce two things: (a) firm liberal rights – free speech, voting rights, protection against abuse of the criminal justice system, religious liberty, barriers to invidious discrimination, property and contract rights; and (b) the preconditions for some kind of market economy.”³⁷¹

Given that the EU structure of rights is “built upon preexisting rights practices of member states”³⁷², it is quite natural that positive rights have made their way into EU law (building on the Council of Europe documents such as the 1961 European Social Charter [ESC; revised in 1996] and the 1950 European Convention of Human Rights [ECHR] which contain a plethora of positive rights).³⁷³ The Charter of the Fundamental Rights of the European Union (and, as already mentioned in the preceding chapter, especially its fourth chapter “Solidarity”) is the most significant document in this sense, which potentially strengthened the EU citizens’ positive rights and the ensuing obligations of member states.³⁷⁴ The Charter is “imbued with immense iconographic significance for a Europe of Peoples as

Europe” in Robert Fatton Jr. and R. Ramazani, *The Future of Liberal Democracy: Thomas Jefferson and the Contemporary World* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).

³⁷⁰ Glendon, Mary Ann, “Rights in Twentieth-Century Constitutions”, *University of Chicago Law Review* 59 (1), 1992: 526.

³⁷¹ Sunstein, Cass, “Against Positive Rights: Why Social and Economic Rights Don’t Belong in the New Constitutions of Post-Communist Europe”, *East European Constitutional Review* 2 (1), 1993: 35.

³⁷² Shapiro, *Rights in the European Union*, 372.

³⁷³ According to Mucha-Leszko and Kąkol, the following are regarded as initiatives impacting the development of social policy at the EU/Community level: “1) the Social Action Programme adopted in 1974 in connection with the deteriorating situation on the labour market, 2) the Single European Market Programme 1992 and the Single European Act of 1986, 3) the direct evidence of taking into account the social consequences of increased competition in the Single European Market was the introduction of the European Charter of Fundamental Social Rights in 1989, i.e. defining the so-called social minimum in the Community, 4) the legal basis of the Community social policy was initiated in a Protocol annexed to the Maastricht Treaty (1992) and in the Treaty of Amsterdam, employment and labour market policy were given priority in the hierarchy of the objectives of integration, 5) the groundbreaking initiatives that make up the progress in the implementation of social tasks include White Paper on European Social Policy²⁷, where the European Union social policy model was conceptualized.” Mucha-Leszko, Bogumila and Magdalena Kąkol, “Welfare States in Europe or the European Welfare State” *Eurolimes* 17, 2014: 42.

³⁷⁴ The Charter has the same legal value as EU Treaties. Article 6 (1) TEU.

distinct from markets” and simply put, its aim is “to make the process of European integration more open and legitimate by furnishing it with a layer of rights embodying values with which intrinsically most people can readily identify”.³⁷⁵

The contrast between the acceptance of positive rights on both sides of the Atlantic links the US concept of a “limited state” and “liberal individualism” to its disregard for the “welfare state”; it also illustrates how the tradition of social democratic solidarity and essentially the lesser anxiety of “big government” that is engaged in redistributing incomes, contributes to the European affiliation (or at least greater *tolerance*) for a state with a broader scope of socio-economic functions.

The European affiliation to the welfare state and the belief in its benign effects on social stability is also supported by European history, where undemocratic leaders or illiberal leaders came to power through elections. Equating democracy merely with free and fair elections is thus more widely viewed as a fallacy. A significant number of experiments with electoral democracy took place in Europe since 1789, but most of them failed in creating a liberal system and some even slid very quickly into dictatorship. Europe therefore had to “invent” a new form of democracy, that went beyond its electoral or liberal forms, in order to amend the structural deficiencies of the past systems that failed to provide peace and stability.

*“This new ‘form’ of democracy [social democracy] was based on an explicit recognition that the state must take responsibility for heading off social divisions and conflict and actively work to promote the sense of community and legitimacy that are the necessary prerequisites for well-functioning democracy. It was only this ‘social’ form of democracy that was finally able to ensure democratic consolidation in Europe.”*³⁷⁶

Welfare states can only survive if individuals believe in the notion that ensuring a basic level of well-being for *all* citizens through income redistribution will bring stability and overall prosperity to the nation as a whole. In such a system, there is much less space for self-interests and individualism and an extensive need for *solidarity*. Arguably, there was no better time to

³⁷⁵ Kenner, Jeff, “Economic and social rights in the EU legal order: the mirage of indivisibility in economic and social rights in the EU legal order”, in Tamar Hervey and Jeff Kenner (eds.), *Economic and social rights under the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights: a legal perspective* (Oxford: Hart, 2003), 4.

³⁷⁶ Berman, *The past and future of social democracy*, 80-81.

foster intra-European solidarity than after the continent emerged shattered from WWII. Europe thus definitely moved away from the liberal *gesellschaft*³⁷⁷ – the atomization of society that brought political destabilization in the past, but that serves well within the American system – and moved toward the more communitarian *gemeinschaft*.³⁷⁸ Indeed, the sense of “pan-European” solidarity was being strengthened in part by the creation of the European Communities. As Inglehart and Rabier observed in the 1970s, there was a “growing sense of Community solidarity” among the citizens of the nine EC members.³⁷⁹ Other scholars have suggested that the common normative understanding of the state’s responsibility for the basic social protection of all citizens is a case that unites Europeans vis-à-vis the US.³⁸⁰

We can extrapolate a narrative from the above, wherein Europe reached democratic consolidation, peace and stability only with the adoption of the “social” form of democracy. This is important for our understanding of the EU’s approach to democracy, where the role of the central authority is strengthened and its scope is widened. In terms of strengthening its own identity, the EU’s emphasis on this aspect of democracy could become increasingly important as recent studies have found that citizens in member states in fact view the EU (being often portrayed as mostly a neoliberal project) as a threat to their national welfare programs and social protection.³⁸¹ This feeling among EU citizens is present even despite the frequent (and growing) signals that the EU sends out about solidifying its role in the social protection of EU citizens, catering to their “social” democratic conceptions of the role and responsibilities of central authority.

The American system of welfare and social protection, as mentioned, is different due, on the one hand, to different values that underlie it and, on the other hand, some structural differences that reduce the role of the state (both of these aspects mutually reinforce each

³⁷⁷ This terminology was first formulated by the German sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies in 1887 and later used by Max Weber. The common English translation is: *gemeinschaft* – community; *gesellschaft* – association.

³⁷⁸ Berman, *The past and future of social democracy*, 76.

³⁷⁹ Inglehart, Ronald, and Jacques-René Rabier, “Economic Uncertainty and European Solidarity: Public Opinion Trends”, *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 440, 1978: 79.

³⁸⁰ See Alber, Jens and Neil Gilbert (eds.), *United in Diversity? Comparing Social Models in Europe and America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009). Due to the diversity between European countries, the authors are skeptical of a common “European social model” which they see as “less rooted in objective facts than in a perceived need to forge a common European identity” (p. 415).

³⁸¹ Beaudonnet, Laurie, “A Threatening Horizon: The Impact of the Welfare State on Support for Europe” *Journal of Common Market Studies* 53 (3), 2015: 457-475.

other). If we look at health care, for example, the American system is guided by the dominance of choice, individualism and distrust of government, rather than equity and solidarity, and consequently by market logic. Some scholars suggest that these values in effect cause among Americans a “long-standing suspicion of any society that puts the welfare of the poor or needy high on the list of national priorities. [In the US, this is given low priority], springing in great part from a suspicion that such people have, in one way or another, brought such problems on themselves or that they are unwilling to make effort to solve their problems.” In other words, the “myth of the self-sufficient American, the descendants of those who opened the frontiers, lived in lonely cabins and sod huts, raised their own food, and took care of their own when in need, still lurks in the American psyche.” Callahan further explains that “From the American perspective, the most striking feature of European health care is its embrace of solidarity as the most important underlying value for health care and of universal care as the most obvious implication of that value. Just as American individualism was an early national trait, solidarity has deep European roots, going back to the Bismarck era.”³⁸²

We must also keep in mind that according to the typology of Esping-Andersen, the US is a *liberal* welfare state.³⁸³ This essentially means that it depends to a large extent on market provision and the privatization of social policy. Therefore, private and nonprofit organizations play a significant part in the delivery of human services. NGOs and civil society are partly a vehicle for the delivery of government-financed human services (their activity is seen as stemming from the lack of trust or failure of the government to provide needed social services), but also provide these services from their own budgets (made available through private grant foundations etc.).³⁸⁴ The “welfare society” (civil society organizations engaged in social policy) in the United States has been described to deliver “a volume of social services nearly as great as those of European states.”³⁸⁵ This is not to say that this form of public social service provision does not exist in the EU – it does and the EU

³⁸² Callahan, Daniel, “Europe and the United States: Contrast and Convergence”, *Journal of Medicine and Philosophy* 33, 2008: 285, 286, 288.

³⁸³ Esping-Andersen, *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*.

³⁸⁴ For a discussion see Salamon, Lester M., *Partners in Public Service: Government-Nonprofit Relations in the Modern Welfare State* (Baltimore MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995).

³⁸⁵ Meyer, *Theory of Social Democracy*, 147.

is also active in disbursing grants to such NGOs – but the degree or scope of it is much more crucial for the American system.³⁸⁶

In addition to the role played by civil society in welfare, the scope of social protection and services provided to the individual in the US reaches a comparable degree if private firms (employers) are added into the analysis. This aspect is often left out of the picture when analyzing the US welfare system, but it is necessary to realize that firms are also agents of social policy and offer their employees benefits that are not legally mandated and which thus do not form a part of government expenditures.³⁸⁷ When the firm plays a large role in social protection, “it logically follows that those who work will be more advantaged than those outside the labor market”.³⁸⁸ Thus, to a large part the provision of welfare is conditioned on participation in the labor market – social rights are offered via various instruments such as tax expenditures, corporate pensions and health insurance and corporate programs for parental leave.³⁸⁹

This observation does not, however, change the picture of the conception of welfare as such in the US. It is simply not considered to be the obligation or responsibility of the central authority to provide extensive social protection and services – this obligation is “outsourced” or simply left to be solved by the civil society and additionally by employers. Therefore, a thriving civil society is not only perceived to be a guarantee of democratic political deliberation and the platform for the pursuit of public-private interests, but also as a “neutral” agent that can provide social services in case the central government fails to do so. At the same time, the civil society (or “welfare society”) can balance out any excessive powers of the central government and its intervention into the lives of individuals. Moreover,

³⁸⁶ In comparative welfare state studies, the issue of private social policies and their role is said to be a largely understudied topic. See Seeleib-Kaiser, Martin, “Welfare Systems in Europe and the United States: Conservative Germany Converging toward the Liberal US Model?” *International Journal of Social Quality* 3 (2), 2013: 62.

³⁸⁷ Rein, Martin, “Is America Exceptional? The Role of Occupational Welfare in the United States and the European Community” in Martin Shalev (ed.) *The Privatization of Social Policy? Occupational Welfare and the Welfare State in America, Scandinavia and Japan* (London: Macmillan Press, 1996).

³⁸⁸ Rein, *Is America Exceptional?*, 34. This also touches upon the question of the so-called welfare dualism – i.e. the differentiation between “insiders” (workers in standard employment relationships, covered either through comprehensive public/statutory social protection or by public/statutory entitlements, complemented or supplemented by private/occupational social protection to a level that maintains living standards) and “outsiders” (the [working] poor that would have to rely on modest public provision, primarily intended to ameliorate poverty) within a welfare system. Definitions adapted from Seeleib-Kaiser, *Welfare Systems in Europe and the United States*, 62.

³⁸⁹ Levi-Faur describes this as a “neoliberal welfare state”. Levi-Faur, *The Welfare State*, 609-610.

when civil society plays this role of social service provider, there is less need (or justification) for “big government”.

9.3 The search for legitimacy to govern – “input” and “output”

Another factor we need to analyze in order to better understand the “meaning of democracy” in democracy promotion is the notion of government legitimacy. In other words, where do (democratic) governments “collect” their legitimacy to govern? Of course, the simple answer would be “through free and fair elections”, but such an answer is shortsighted. It is necessary for citizens of a state to *perceive* their government to have legitimacy to govern and this perception may not be fostered merely through the electoral process. The perception of legitimate government brings forth greater stability. Thus, there can be only little doubt that the question of legitimacy needs to be addressed by democracy promoters for the purposes of building stable and consolidated democratic regimes. So, what do governments need to do in order to acquire or foster this perception of legitimacy? For example, in Confucian political thought, which prevails until today in Chinese society and political system, the ruler’s legitimacy rested on his capacity to provide subsistence for his people (and on the “mandate from heaven”).³⁹⁰ This conception of legitimacy helps us, for example, understand the Chinese outcomes-oriented expectation from their government and their greater tolerance for one-party rule than in Western societies.³⁹¹ Observing the nuanced differences in how the EU and the US view the “legitimacy to govern” will provide us with a deeper understanding of why both actors tend to focus on different aspects of democracy assistance.

The terminology of “input” and “output” is derived from studies of democratic legitimacy elaborated by Scharpf.³⁹² He asserts that under “modern (Western) conditions [...] legitimacy has come to rest almost exclusively on *trust in institutional arrangements* that are thought to ensure that governing processes are generally responsive to the manifest

³⁹⁰ See Bell, *Beyond Liberal Democracy*; Bell, Daniel, *East Meets West* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000); Rozman, Gilbert (ed.), *The East Asian Region: Confucian Heritage and its Modern Adaptation* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991).

³⁹¹ Consult Zhao, Suisheng (ed.), *China and Democracy: Reconsidering the Prospects for a Democratic China* (New York NY: Routledge, 2000); Fukuyama, Francis, “Confucianism and Democracy,” *Journal of Democracy* 6 (2), 1995: 20-33; Nathan, Andrew J. and Shi Tianjian, “Cultural Requisites for Democracy in China: Findings from A Survey”, *Daedalus* 122 (2), 1993: 95-123.

³⁹² Scharpf, Fritz, *Governing in Europe: Effective and Democratic?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) and Scharpf, Fritz, “Problem-Solving Effectiveness and Democratic Accountability in the EU,” *Max-Planck-Institut für Gesellschaftsforschung Working Paper 03/1*, February 2003. Available at http://apps.eui.eu/Personal/Researchers/pblokker/Week%206_Scharpf.pdf (accessed August 16, 2016).

preferences of the governed (*input legitimacy*, ‘government by the people’) and/or that the policies adopted will generally represent effective solutions to common problems of the governed (*output legitimacy*, ‘government for the people’).³⁹³

Output legitimacy is mostly preoccupied with *performance*, while input legitimacy focuses on (political) empowerment of citizens – i.e. the translation of the popular will into concrete policies. In short, *output* is judged in terms of the effectiveness of the policy outcomes *for* the people, while *input* democratic legitimation is judged in terms of the responsiveness to citizen concerns as a result of participation in the political process *by* the people. The EU’s “output oriented bias” can be explained by the “nature of the beast” argument – that the EU itself is an actor that bases its democratic legitimacy on *output* and performance. Indeed, the EU is commonly described as being “‘fundamentally different from national democracies’ given its tendency toward output-oriented legitimacy.”³⁹⁴ Even the EU’s democratic deficit is thought to be vindicated by its institutional “output”.³⁹⁵ Majone argues that as a “regulatory state” the EU’s legitimacy is based on the delegated responsibility of its “expertocracy” (i.e. technocrats) to produce effective policies and decisions *for* the people.³⁹⁶ So while the EU is at pains to acquire input legitimacy due to a feeble European collective identity and the general confusion, whether it derives its governing legitimacy from the European *people* or European *governments*, it can nonetheless “be able enjoy full legitimacy deriving from [...] its capacity to guarantee *government for the people*.”³⁹⁷ If the EU is considered to base its legitimacy on its effectiveness in governance or output, this has important implications of how the *people* and their roles vis-à-vis the government are understood. In an input-oriented system or government by the people, the people are the principal actors in the political process, while in an output-oriented system or government for the people, they are merely passive recipients or “consumer[s] of efficient political decisions.”³⁹⁸

³⁹³ Scharpf, *Problem-Solving Effectiveness*, 3 (emphasis in original).

³⁹⁴ Wetzel and Orbie, *Comparing Country Cases*, 241.

³⁹⁵ Moravcsik, Andrew, “In Defence of the ‘Democratic Deficit’: Reassessing Legitimacy in the European Union”, *Journal of Common Market Studies* 40 (4), 2002: 603-624.

³⁹⁶ Majone, Giandomenico, “Europe’s Democratic Deficit: The Question of Standards”, *European Law Journal* 4 (1), 1998: 5-28.

³⁹⁷ Bottici and Challand, *Imagining Europe*, 24.

³⁹⁸ *Op. cit.*, 25.

However, according to Schmidt, missing from this typology is a third normative criterion for evaluating legitimacy, which she terms *throughput*. This type of democratic legitimation “is judged in terms of the efficacy, accountability and transparency of the EU’s governance processes along with their inclusiveness and openness to consultation *with* the people.”³⁹⁹ *Throughput*-oriented legitimacy is thus the systematic consultation of organized interests in the form of committees and private bodies, including CSOs and think-tanks, for example. Schmidt concludes that “At the EU level, ‘output’ governing effectiveness for the people and ‘throughput’ interest consultation with the people are the primary legitimizing mechanisms. At the national level, instead, ‘input’ political participation by the people and citizen representation of the people are the focus of legitimization”.⁴⁰⁰ In fact, input-oriented legitimacy could even be dangerous for the EU as it could fall “into some form of populism”.⁴⁰¹ Therefore, the EU employs *throughput* “as a kind of ‘cordon sanitaire’ to suggest that whatever the input, trustworthy throughput processes will ensure that it emerges as uncorrupted output”.⁴⁰²

It is interesting to note that the EU’s understanding of the role of civil society in political life can be viewed in the light of throughput-oriented legitimacy. The EU urges CSOs to get involved in public policy processes and policy dialogues, but rather as a partner than an oppositional force. As Boiten argues, “civil society is supposed to enhance the legitimacy of both state and governmental institutions from *inside* of the political system, rather than as a remote oppositional force.”⁴⁰³ Even though CSOs are envisaged as political actors, they are “supposed to fulfil a non-political role. [Their] task within a nascent democratic system is essentially seen as technical, procedural and consensus-based.”⁴⁰⁴ Effectively, such support to civil society strengthens the state apparatus by providing it with more legitimacy to govern. On the one hand, this reflects the EU’s cautious approach not to delve into activities in third countries that are too “political”; on the other hand, it mirrors the

³⁹⁹ Schmidt, Vivien A., “Democracy and Legitimacy in the European Union Revisited: Input, Output and ‘Throughput’”, *Political Studies* 61 (1), 2013: 2.

⁴⁰⁰ Schmidt, Vivien A., “Democracy and Legitimacy in the European Union” in Jones, *The Oxford Handbook of the European Union*, 663.

⁴⁰¹ Bottici and Challand, *Imagining Europe*, 24.

⁴⁰² Schmidt, *Democracy and Legitimacy in the European Union*, 664.

⁴⁰³ Boiten, Valérie Julie, “The Semantics of ‘Civil’: The EU, Civil Society and the Building of Democracy in Tunisia,” *European Foreign Affairs Review* 20 (3), 2015: 368.

⁴⁰⁴ *Op. cit.*, 369.

practice of the EU's cooperation with CSOs, whereby it includes them in the policy-making in order to mitigate its "democratic deficit" and further legitimize its decisions.

In contrast to the EU, civil society in the understanding of US democracy is on the input side, rather than the throughput or even output side. As described in an earlier chapter, the role of civil society is to "bargain" interests at the bottom-level and distill these toward the top. Civil society is the holder of public values and ideologies. Consequently, the US "foresees – explicitly and unapologetically – a political and an economic role for civil society. The political role seeks to create and develop a space that allows citizens to communicate freely with their government and between each other."⁴⁰⁵ Civil society itself is a guardian of democracy – in the words of Hillary Clinton:

*"These three essential elements of a free nation – representative government, a wellfunctioning market, and civil society – work like three legs of a stool. They lift and support nations as they reach for higher standards of progress and prosperity [...] Civil society undergirds both democratic governance and broad-based prosperity"*⁴⁰⁶

In sum, while civil society in the US is perceived to protect the public good from the government, the EU tends to see civil society as an instrument that can legitimize its policies and ideas created by the "technocracy" – and indication that the function of civil society in the EU is rather "Montesquieuan" and "Habermasian".

By virtue of being a national state, the US government's legitimacy is more input-oriented than EU governance. Yet, as we have demonstrated, the notions of small and limited government and the narrow conception of the responsibilities and functions of the federal government all point to the assertion that output legitimacy is only secondary to input legitimacy (at least in terms of political rhetoric and political culture).⁴⁰⁷ In fact, input legitimacy is basically a benchmark along which the US measures its own democracy and

⁴⁰⁵ Bridoux and Kurki, *Cosmetic agreements and the cracks beneath*, 65.

⁴⁰⁶ Clinton, Hillary, "Civil society: supporting democracy in the 21st century," Speech at the Community of Democracies, Krakow, Poland, July 3, 2010. Available at <http://www.state.gov/secretary/20092013clinton/rm/2010/07/143952.htm> (accessed August 17, 2016).

⁴⁰⁷ Various notions of the necessity of input legitimacy of the federal government are very commonly used by US politicians and candidates vying for Congress and state legislatures. Often, such claims are identified as "populist" by political commentators – yet we must acknowledge how deeply the notion of accountable government is embedded in US society and political culture and thus partly vindicate the "populism" of these candidates and politicians.

the democracies or political systems of other countries. The quintessential importance of input-oriented legitimacy was most pointedly described by Ronald Reagan:

*“Ours was the first revolution in the history of mankind that truly reversed the course of government, and with three little words: ‘We the people.’ ‘We the people’ tell the government what to do, it doesn’t tell us [...] Almost all the world’s constitutions are documents in which governments tell the people what their privileges are. Our Constitution is a document in which ‘We the people’ tell the government what it is allowed to do. ‘We the people’ are free.”*⁴⁰⁸

⁴⁰⁸ Cited in Smith, *America’s Mission*, 269.

10 Summary of findings of Part II

The three preceding chapters have demonstrated how historical developments in political thinking have shaped and differentiated the democratic identities of the EU and the US. We have also at various points hinted how these democratic identities permeate foreign policy practice and in particular the approach to democracy assistance. Before we turn to examining more thoroughly how these identities manifest themselves in democracy assistance practice, we should derive some premises from the foregoing part of the dissertation. The findings of this part are summarized in a table that is identical to the one presented at the end of the chapter discussing typology of approaches to democracy assistance – this will enable us to categorize and foresee US and EU preferences along the “type compartments” we have described earlier. It is our aim in Part III of this dissertation to seek to validate the premises outlined in Table 10 by examining the conceptualizations of democracy in primary documents of the two actors and by analyzing democracy assistance instruments, i.e. what are the strategic aims of these instruments, where the funding is allocated and what notions and definitions of democracy are used in practice.

Table 10 Democratic identities and their implications for democracy assistance

	US	EU institutions
Value of democracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Democracy is an end in itself as it is the only way to the liberation of man - Democracy limits government and holds political actors accountable - Only democracy can effectively provide full political rights and the ensuing political empowerment of the people – the more groups and individuals attend the civic life, the better the crystallization of the public good - Democracy organizes political life as a free market, the paramount source of individual freedom – free markets provide economic development, the free political market thus provides political development - The hallmark of democracy is active and passive voting right 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Democratic governance is a vehicle for domestic and inter-state peace, but only if its outcomes satisfy the society’s political, civil, economic and social rights (i.e. upholding negative and positive rights) - Democracy is a means for socio-economic development of all classes of society - Defense against accumulation of power by economic elites - States endorsing democratic governance states submit to rules and tend to prefer diplomacy over coercion - Democracy, if based on social solidarity, can serve as a means for limiting the excesses of the market
Conception of democracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Democracy creates a government constrained by the rule of law and so weak relative to society that popular forces can replace it - Public good in a democracy does not need to be formulated by the government in a top-down manner, it is rather the culmination of pressures and forces emanating from the bottom up - Democracy is based on liberal individualism, which is intrinsically opposed to the political quest for socioeconomic equality and wherein there is belief that the well-being of the majority cannot override the rightful claims of individuals - The essence of government is the preservation of conditions that allow individuals to acquire property, that uphold individual liberty and protect the individual’s life (i.e. protection of negative rights); civil society is a protector against state power - Democratic procedures justify government output - Small government is compensated by high civic engagement in social service provision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Democracy is the most transparent system for ensuring a sense social solidarity, which creates a social market economy based on redistribution, government intervention and stakeholder capitalism - Democratic governance can be supplied by experts and technocrats who have been delegated to formulate the public good - Lack of input legitimacy can be compensated by high output legitimacy - Civil society is a partner to a democratic government rather than an oppositional force; consultations are a legitimizing mechanism, a compensation for lack of input legitimacy - Equating democracy merely with free and fair elections is viewed as a fallacy

<p>Impulses for democratization</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Revolutions are primarily conceived as being of political nature - Bottom-up pressure by civil society - Lack of accountability of politics - Low input legitimacy of political regime - A Manichean perspective on “democrats and “non-democrats” provides incentives for religious justifications of democracy promotion and “just war”; US has the duty of providing freedom and self-government to the world – either by example or by power - Democracy is a natural and spontaneous development; people create it themselves if they are given the chance and obstacles are removed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Revolutions are conceived as being of social nature – people’s well-being is always above calls for freedom - Lack of service provision by government, growing socio-economic inequality; inequality something to be abhorred, not something to be celebrated as an ‘incentive’ for individual effort - Structural changes at the top of the political hierarchy - Socialization, non-coercive and incremental democratization through cooperation with third states
<p>Conclusions for democracy assistance practice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The antigovernment and antiauthority character of US democratic identity will hinder the US from supporting centralizing tendencies of recipient states and expanding their scope services - As the “welfare society” (civil society organizations engaged in social policy) in the United States has been described to deliver a volume of social services nearly as great as those of European states, we can expect the US to place high priority in supporting civic and grassroots organizations - The US will be prone to use coercive measures to conduct democracy promotion - US will support civic political engagement over tendency toward passive reliance on the state - US will tend to support negative rights in nascent democracies, but seclude from supporting positive rights - Democracy assistance will focus on the political and disassociate socio-economic factors from democracy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As the EU lacks clear conceptual and historical narratives to support its democracy promotion agenda, it will face confusion whether it should promote “community” or “democracy” and thereby “governance” will emerge as a non-controversial default option that reflects the its own structure - The self-image of a civilian or normative power will hinder the EU from using coercion for democracy promotion purposes - Europeans tend to prefer a ‘social’ rather than ‘liberal’ approach to solving social and economic problems - As the EU’s legitimacy is based largely on output and on delegated responsibility of its technocrats to produce effective policies and decisions for the people, it will focus on supporting effective public administration and service provision in its democracy assistance agenda - The European social model is an important part of the EU’s democratic identity and therefore socio-economic aspects will form a part of its democracy assistance agenda - The EU’s “solidaristic communitarianism” will conduce the EU to support the provision of positive rights - The EU will prefer to support apolitical civil society groups
<p>Correlated approach to democracy assistance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Political - Bottom-up - Procedural 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developmental - Top-down - Substantive

Source: Author

Part III – Conceptualizations of democracy for practical use

11 The conceptualization of democracy in primary guiding documents

The primary documents that guide policies are a key source for examining how normative background and ideology informs practice. Strategy documents, policy plans, regulations and legal acts all contain language that pertains to how democracy promotion policies will be carried out in practice. A qualitative review of such documents shall demonstrate empirical evidence that different conceptions of democracy which we have examined in theory, are also manifested practice. In order to confirm our premise that democratic identity translates into particular democracy assistance practice, the findings in this chapter shall be correlated with the “conclusions for democracy assistance practice” listed in Table 10. To reach this result, we are going to examine a wide swath of primary guiding documents (to avoid allegations of cherry-picking only the ones that prove our premises) – starting with US documents from the early 1980s and EU documents from the early 1990s.

11.1 Exporting the American model of democracy

The narrative of US democracy promotion, as described in chapter 6.1 is such that: because US institutions are held to be universally exportable; because the benignity of American power is not mere self-congratulation, but nestled in moral philosophy; and because the deployment of US power in the world is positively correlated with the proliferation of liberal values, US power can be exercised without risk of self-interested abuse and thus the US “can legitimately reject constraints [...] on its own behavior and freedom of action.”⁴⁰⁹

Unlike any other democracy assistance donor, the United States backs its actions by a grand ideology and profound “sense of mission” composed of narratives that predispose and encourage US policymakers (sometimes to their detriment) to follow democracy promotion in a particularly coercive and interventionist manner. The US willingness to

⁴⁰⁹ Monten, *The Roots of the Bush Doctrine*, 147.

engage in more *political* democracy promotion and to support politically-oriented liberal groups, dissidents and democratic parties in recipient states, despite allegations of interventionism, needs to be viewed on the background of the described narratives.

However, every mission has a goal and once that goal is achieved, the mission ends. Through the prism of America's mission, democracy represents the end goal – democracy is the end state of history.⁴¹⁰ In theory, the US will lose its sense of mission (i.e. there will no longer be use for this mission) when all states in the international system become fully democratic. But until then, the US will be a “political messiah” coming to the rescue, even without invitation.

Yet, as we have pointed to the “essential contestability” of democracy in chapter 1.2, it is necessary to examine the type of democracy the US actually promotes. We assume that the model of democracy being promoted shapes and informs the strategies and instruments of the donor. Identifying the nuances of the respective models of democracy being promoted shall help us explain why the approaches of democracy donors differ.

11.1.1 The Reagan administration's promotion of “limited” democracy

Even though we can trace attempts of US diplomacy to export its model of democratic governance to other nations throughout American history and especially since the turn of the 19th and 20th century, when Washington aimed to foster “self-government” in its new colony (the Philippines), a concerted and institutionalized (and overt) effort to assist democracy did not emerge until the early 1980s.

The Carter administration was the first to anchor human rights and democratic freedoms into its foreign policy agenda. As there existed no script on how to pursue this policy goal, the administration needed to *define* the rights that it actually aimed to pursue. Building on the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), Carter's State Secretary Cyrus Vance outlined the administration's conception of human rights in 1977 – first, it was “the right to be free from governmental violation of the integrity of the person; secondly, Vance noted “the right to the fulfillment of such vital needs as food, shelter, health care, and education” and lastly, it was “the right to enjoy civil and political liberties: freedom of thought, of religion, of assembly; freedom of speech; freedom of the press; freedom of

⁴¹⁰ Deudney, Daniel and Jeffrey Meisser, “American Exceptionalism” in Cox, Michael and Doug Stokes (eds.), *US Foreign Policy* 2nd edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 22.

movement both within and outside one's own country; freedom to take part in government.”⁴¹¹

Vance's definition was institutionalized in the Christopher Memorandum, which divided human rights into three groups (similarly as the so-called three generations of human rights described by Vasak). It made explicit that the first group (freedom from governmental violation of the integrity of the person) ought to be included in the foreign policy agenda without question. Omitting the third group of rights (civil and political liberties) “would be untrue to [the American] heritage and basic values”.⁴¹² However, the second group (economic and social rights) was given least priority.

Ronald Reagan came to the presidential office convinced that the Cold War was above all a “war of ideas” – it was as much a material struggle as an ideological one. The ideological struggle took place between two antithetical visions of societal organization and their undergirding political philosophies – individualism and communitarianism (collectivism).⁴¹³ To win the Cold War or at least to gain an upper hand, Reagan believed that the US should commence a stronger attack on the ideological front – to spread ideals of individual freedom and democracy with increased effort and effect. Reagan made this clear in his speech to the British Parliament in June 1982:

“While we must be cautious about forcing the pace of change, we must not hesitate to declare our ultimate objectives and to take concrete actions to move toward them [...]

The objective I propose is quite simple to state: to foster the infrastructure of democracy, the system of a free press, unions, political parties, universities, which allows a people to choose their own way to develop their own culture, to reconcile their own differences through peaceful means. [...] It is time that we committed ourselves as a nation – in both the public and private sectors – to assisting democratic development.”⁴¹⁴

⁴¹¹ Vance, Cyrus, “Human Rights and Foreign Policy”, Address before the University of Georgia, April 30, 1977.

⁴¹² Christopher, Warren, “Presidential Review Memorandum on Human Rights”, PRM 28, July 8, 1977.

⁴¹³ For more on this topic see Lenczowski, John, “Political-Ideological Warfare in Integrated Strategy” in Streusand, Douglas E. et. al. (eds.), *The Grand Strategy that Won the Cold War: Architecture of Triumph* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2016).

⁴¹⁴ Reagan, Ronald, *Address to Members of the British Parliament*, June 8, 1982.

Reagan's plan to "foster the infrastructure of democracy", dubbed "Project Democracy"⁴¹⁵, was supposed to be an 85-million-dollar initiative to "train young leaders and foster the growth of such democratic institutions as labor unions, political parties, news outlets, businesses and universities in countries where democracy is not permitted."⁴¹⁶ The conceptualization of democracy for Reagan's purposes was clear – the general aim was to mobilize society and motivate it into political activism. It presumed a very bottom-up momentum for the establishment of democracy with no mention of providing democratic support to governments and public institutions, no conditionality, no "state-building" as such. It was rather a minimalist form of democracy, where emphasis was to be placed on fostering the people's interest in acquiring political and civil rights, in helping political parties develop and to "train" young democratic leaders through university programs.

Nevertheless, the project was basically stillborn as it failed to gain support in Congress, which feared that "most Arab, African and Asian countries would view the project 'as a destabilizing factor' and 'mischief-making.'" Moreover, Congressmen demanded whether the US was "prepared to provide help to democrats in such places as South Korea, the Philippines, in such places as Taiwan, where there are Governments friendly to the United States, but obviously with little respect for democracy?"⁴¹⁷

However, a study commissioned by the administration, which ran parallel to Project Democracy, gained the upper hand and its recommendations merited support from the US Congress.⁴¹⁸ This study, called "The Democracy Program", was formally proposed to Reagan a few days before his Westminster speech by the American Political Foundation (APF), a bi-partisan think-tank and essentially served as a blueprint for the emerging architecture of the

⁴¹⁵ An analogy can be seen here between the administration's "Project Truth" – a counter-propaganda effort of the US Information Agency aimed at combating Soviet "disinformation" by providing positive views of democracy abroad.

⁴¹⁶ Some of the concrete projects to be funded under Project Democracy were: "A \$15 million grant to the Asia Foundation; \$1.7 million for assisting Liberia's transition to democracy; \$10.7 million to support 'Centers for the Study of the US Abroad'; a \$5.5 million proposal to make American textbooks available abroad; a \$1.1 million regional newspaper to serve rural populations in Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador; or symposiums to help build 'positive attitudes toward democracy' among third-world military leaders." Kidder, Rushworth M., "Project Democracy": Reagan tries to export the US way of governing", *The Christian Science Monitor*, March 16, 1983.

⁴¹⁷ Gwertzman, Bernard, "Skeptics Pelt Shultz with Queries on Reagan's 'Project Democracy'", *The New York Times*, February 24, 1983.

⁴¹⁸ Pee, Robert, *Democracy Promotion, National Security and Strategy: Foreign Policy under the Reagan Administration* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 130.

US democracy promotion agenda. In a letter to the president from June 4, 1982 the chairmen and director of APF acknowledged that “The United States is involved in many areas of international assistance but has a very meager capability when it comes to support for democratic forces in other countries.” Their study planned to answer two questions:

“First, what are the problems and risks associated with such an undertaking [helping to build democratic values and institutions in other nations] and what limitations do they place on how much the United States can do in his area? Second, what ways and means should be recommended to help the growth of democracy?”⁴¹⁹

One of the identified reasons to include political aid among US foreign policy goals was “economic”. Per the study, “over the years, Americans involved with economic aid programs have watched years of slow progress and patient economic advance destroyed in a matter of days by political turmoil in developing countries.”⁴²⁰ The definition of democracy used within the Democracy Program was clearly demarcated – the “democratic condition” involved:

*“1. Freedom by adult suffrage and non-governmental political organization and expression to exercise political judgement and control concerning the governance of society.
2. The recognition that within their societies individuals and minorities have unalienable rights, although their definition will vary with time and place.
3. Free information media constantly scrutinizing the domestic and foreign policy of their governments.
4. Security of life under a just and equitable rule of law enforced by agencies responsible to and controlled by legitimate authority answerable to the majority.
To the extent that states exhibit these features, then they are democracies; to the extent that these features are absent they are undemocratic.”⁴²¹*

As we can see, the definition focuses primarily on the individual political and civil rights of the people, their possibility to organize in civic and political organizations and vote in free

⁴¹⁹ American Political Foundation Letter to President Reagan, June 4, 1982.

⁴²⁰ The Democracy Program, “The Commitment to Democracy: A Bipartisan Approach”, Preliminary Report, July 1983, 18.

⁴²¹ Op. cit., 27.

elections. This is generally a very “Lockean” conception of a socio-political system, with explicit reference to the “security of life”.

Among other recommendations (further discussed in succeeding chapter), the Democracy Program called for the “immediate” creation of foundations associated with the Republican and Democratic parties. These foundations were to be modeled on the German parties’ *stiftungen* and operate in third countries, building networks and engaging in political dialogue. Although, unlike the German political parties’ *stiftungen*, the “Republican and Democratic parties may not have exact doctrinal equivalents elsewhere in the world”, the central objective – apart from “political exchange” – was “political development, designed to promote, within the broad context of each party’s respective philosophical outlook, the growth and development of democratic practices and institutions in the Third World.”⁴²² The objective of “political development” was a major aspect that every new instrument proposed by the Democracy Program was supposed to fulfill – whether it was in the realm of political parties, labor unions (funding the building of union infrastructures, training union leaders “how to combat anti-democratic forces” and “organize demonstrations”, “influencing the outcome of elections” etc.) or small businesses (“sponsoring seminars to train political leaders in private enterprise economics and business leaders in democratic political techniques”).⁴²³

The Democracy Program and the idea of adopting democracy assistance as an official US policy was positively accepted by the American public. The Chicago Sun Times ran an editorial, which stated that democracy promotion “activities would be overt, rather than covert, so we see little danger of repeating the CIA’s mistakes in Chile and Vietnam. There’s no reason why Americans shouldn’t assist the organizers of political parties or labor unions on foreign lands.”⁴²⁴

11.1.2 Promoting “market democracies”

A minimalist conception of democracy was also employed within the US foreign policy agenda toward CEECs (Central and Eastern European countries) undergoing a transition process from communist rule. The first US reaction in terms of promoting democratization in the region was the so-called Support for Eastern Europe Democracy (SEED) Act, enacted

⁴²² Op. cit., 31.

⁴²³ Op. cit., 42.

⁴²⁴ Chicago Sun Times, “Editorial”, January 18, 1983.

in November 1989. The Act was first intended for Poland and Hungary (at an allocation of \$300 million) and later extended to the entire post-communist region. The Congress later added similar authorizing language to the FREEDOM Support Act of 1992 (FSA), allowing for inclusion of the former Soviet states (raising the allocation to \$1 200 million).

The SEED Act's goal was "to promote democratic and free market transitions in the former communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe, enabling them to overcome their past and become reliable, productive members of the Euro-Atlantic community of Western democracies."⁴²⁵ The Act contained objectives within three broad categories. First, the act's aim was "to contribute to the development of democratic institutions and political pluralism", which were characterized by:

- "(A) the establishment of fully democratic and representative political systems based on free and fair elections,*
- (B) effective recognition of fundamental liberties and individual freedoms, including freedom of speech, religion, and association,*
- (C) termination of all laws and regulations which impede the operation of a free press and the formation of political parties,*
- (D) creation of an independent judiciary, and*
- (E) establishment of non-partisan military, security, and police forces;"*⁴²⁶

The second broad objective called for assistance to promote the development of open markets, characterized by:

- "(A) privatization of economic entities,*
- (B) establishment of full rights to acquire and hold private property, including land and the benefits of contractual relations,*
- (C) simplification of regulatory controls regarding the establishment and operation of businesses,*
- (D) dismantlement of all wage and price controls,*
- (E) removal of trade restrictions, including on both imports and exports,*
- (F) liberalization of investment and capital, including the repatriation of profits by foreign investors;*
- (G) tax policies which provide incentives for economic activity and investment,*

⁴²⁵ US Department of State, U.S. Government Assistance to Eastern Europe under the Support for East European Democracy Act of 1989. P.L. 101-179-Nov. 28 1989.

⁴²⁶ Op. cit., Sec. 2.

(H) establishment of rights to own and operate private banks and other financial service firms, as well as unrestricted access to private sources of credit, and
(I) access to a market for stocks, bonds, and other instruments through which individuals may invest in the private sector”⁴²⁷

Finally, the “Act mandated that assistance not provide support to political parties that lacked commitment to democratic ideals”.⁴²⁸

From the above it is quite clear that the US was much more stringent about the characteristics of market economy than democracy. The prescription for the creation of the market was much more specific, while that for democracy was quite vague, focusing on elections, political rights, rule of law (a prerequisite for a functioning market) and civil oversight of the military. The preoccupation with fostering a market economy landscape in the post-communist countries within the SEED Act is even more evident when examining the concrete “actions” that the US was to support in order to fulfill the three broad objectives.

Out of 25 enumerated “actions”, only two can be directly attributed to democracy support – number 18: the establishment of “reciprocal cultural centers” that can facilitate educational and cultural exchange and number 22: assistance designed to support the development of legal, legislative, electoral, journalistic, and other institutions of free, pluralist societies. Fourteen of these actions were directly connected to building a market economy – among them “Support for the establishment of indigenous credit unions”, “Programs to provide technical skills to assist in the development of a market economy”, “The granting of temporary or permanent nondiscriminatory treatment” etc. The rest of the actions focused on exchanges between universities, scholarships and assistance in agriculture, medicine and environmental issues.⁴²⁹

The initiative thereby resulted in small amounts of direct financial assistance to democratic governance – as a later report stated “Much of the [SEED Act] assistance is targeted at indigenous non-governmental organizations, in an effort to build a strong foundation for political pluralism and a strong civil society. Other priorities are to strengthen

⁴²⁷ Ibid.

⁴²⁸ Wolf-Rodda, Howard A., “The Support for Eastern European Democracy Act of 1989: A Description and Assessment of Its Responsiveness to the Needs of Poland”, *Maryland Journal of International Law* 17 (1), 1993: 120-121.

⁴²⁹ P.L. 101-179-Nov. 28 1989. Sec. 2, par. (c).

the independence of the legislature and the judiciary, while empowering, at a lower level, communities and NGOs to build momentum for a more decentralized society.”⁴³⁰ The aid was channeled through multilateral institutions and through the so-called Enterprise Funds.⁴³¹

The grants given through the Enterprise Fund program were designed to “jumpstart” the newly emerging market economies and financial sectors. According to USAID, which established them, the “Enterprise Funds played a key role in introducing new financial products into the region, such as home mortgage lending, mortgage securitization, credit cards, mezzanine financing, equipment leasing, and investment banking.”⁴³² As such, the acronym of the Act was emblematic – the “seed” of democracy in CEECs was the market economy.

A procedural conception of democracy and the essentiality of adopting a market economy can likewise be observed in the Cuban Democracy Act, enacted in 1992 and permitting the US Government to “provide assistance, through appropriate nongovernmental organizations, for the support of individuals and organizations to promote nonviolent democratic change in Cuba.”⁴³³

Section 1708 of the Act states that the US “President may waive the requirements of section 1706 [sanctions] if the President determines and reports to the Congress that the Government of Cuba— (1) has held free and fair elections conducted under internationally recognized observers; (2) has permitted opposition parties ample time to organize and campaign for such elections, and has permitted full access to the media to all candidates in the elections; (3) is showing respect for the basic civil liberties and human rights of the citizens of Cuba; (4) is moving toward establishing a free market economic system; and (5) has committed itself to constitutional change that would ensure regular free and fair elections that meet the requirements of paragraph (2).” Such a condition for the dropping of sanctions

⁴³⁰ A Report to The Senate Foreign Relations Committee and The House Foreign Affairs Committee of The U S Congress, “Democracy Promotion Programs Funded by The US Government – ‘Brown Report’”, PC-AAA-756, 9.

⁴³¹ The concept of the Enterprise Funds was to place U.S. Government funding under the management of qualified and independent boards of directors selected from the private sector. The goal was to encourage the private sector and free market development through loans and investments. See Enterprise Funds Association, *Enterprise Funds in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia 1990 – 2007*. Available at http://www.seedact.com/files/pdfy/enterprise_funds_at_a_glance.pdf (accessed July 18, 2016).

⁴³² USAID, *The Enterprise Funds in Europe and Eurasia: Successes and Lessons Learned*, September 12, 2013. Available at https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1863/EE_Enterprise_Funds-LessonsLearned.pdf (accessed July 18, 2016).

⁴³³ The Cuban Democracy Act, P.L. 102-484-Oct. 23 1992, Title XVII, sec. 1705, par. (g).

against Cuba could result in the “fallacy of electoralism” (i.e. the over-reliance on free and fair elections as the determinant of that country’s democratic status) as was criticized later in the case of US intervention in Iraq.⁴³⁴

The Iraq Liberation Act of 1998 contained a similar provision as the Cuban Democracy Act, where the Congress settled on how the US government would proceed in the event of the downfall of Saddam Hussein. In section 7, it stood that “It is the sense of the Congress that once the Saddam Hussein regime is removed from power in Iraq, the United States should support Iraq’s transition to democracy by [...] providing democracy transition assistance to Iraqi parties and movements with democratic goals, and by convening Iraq’s foreign creditors to develop a multilateral response to Iraq’s foreign debt incurred by Saddam Hussein’s regime.”⁴³⁵

This “market-democracy nexus” emphasized by US policies in the early post-Cold War period was officially undergirded by the Clinton Administration’s National Security Strategy (NSS). The 1994 NSS was “based on enlarging the community of market democracies” and “promoting democracy” was identified as one of the three pivotal objectives of US foreign policy strategy. The belief was that the “more that democracy and political and economic liberalization take hold in the world, particularly in countries of geostrategic importance to us, the safer our nation is likely to be and the more our people are likely to prosper.”⁴³⁶ The NSS also identified the market as the “seed” of democracy, claiming that “new market reforms in the new democracies in Europe’s East [...] will help to deflate the region’s demagogues [...] will help ease ethnic tensions [...] and] will help new democracies take root.”⁴³⁷ “Open markets and democracy” were to “go hand in hand” in furthering individual freedoms.⁴³⁸

The Foreign Relations Authorization Act for Fiscal Years 1994 and 1995 mandated the President to “submit a report to the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate and the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives on a streamlined, cost-

⁴³⁴ Moser, Robert G., “Electoral Engineering in New Democracies: Can Preferred Electoral Outcomes be Engineered?” in Barany, Moser (eds.), *Is Democracy Exportable?*, 131.

⁴³⁵ Iraq Liberation Act of 1998, P. L. 105–338—Oct. 31, 1998.

⁴³⁶ The White House, *A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement*, July 1994, 2. Available at <http://nssarchive.us/NSSR/1994.pdf> (accessed August 4, 2016).

⁴³⁷ *Op. cit.*, 23.

⁴³⁸ *Ibid.*

effective organization of United States democracy assistance”.⁴³⁹ The report was to include a “review of all United States-sponsored programs to promote democracy” and a “clear statement of achievable goals and objectives for all United States-sponsored democracy programs”.⁴⁴⁰ In this sense, the resulting report – later dubbed the “Brown report” – serves as a window into the conceptualization of democracy and the approaches taken to promote it by US institutions.

The report defines US democracy support activities and their objectives as those that help bolster “a democratic and tolerant political culture; a strong and participatory civil sector, including free trade unions and independent non-governmental organizations; respect for the rule of law and fundamental human rights; open, free, fair and multiparty elections; representative and accountable government; control by elected civilian officials of a professional military, and a free and independent media”. This conceptualization is more elaborate than the one presented, for example in the SEED Act, but still it places emphasis on civic empowerment, bottom-up mobilization and primarily assuring the government’s “input legitimacy” (responsiveness and accountability).⁴⁴¹

Such an approach is replicated in the 2002 Russia Democracy Act, the 2004 Belarus Democracy Act and the 2006 Iran Freedom and Support Act. Rather than providing democracy assistance, the US implicitly claims to promote or support *democratization* of these countries – that is, through the support of opposition groups enfeeble the regime to the point that it can be replaced by a (more) democratic one. In 2002, as the US ability to influence and access the Russian government waned, the Act purported to amend the 1992 FREEDOM Support Act by adding the following activities:

“(E) development and support of grass-roots and nongovernmental organizations promoting democracy, the rule of law, transparency, and accountability in the political process, including grants in small amounts to such organizations;

⁴³⁹ The Foreign Relations Authorization Act, Fiscal Years 1994 and 1995, P. L. 103-236—Apr. 30, 1994, Sec. 534.

⁴⁴⁰ Op. cit., Sec. 534, par. b, subpar. 1 and 2.

⁴⁴¹ A Report to The Senate Foreign Relations Committee and The House Foreign Affairs Committee of The U S Congress, “Democracy Promotion Programs Funded by The US Government – ‘Brown Report’”, PC-AAA-756, 4.

(F) international exchanges and other forms of public diplomacy to promote greater understanding on how democracy, the public policy process, market institutions, and an independent judiciary function in Western societies;
(G) political parties and coalitions committed to promoting democracy, human rights, and economic reforms;
(H) support for civic organizations committed to promoting human rights”⁴⁴²

Similarly, the activities mandated by the Belarus Democracy Act were quite political and bottom-up⁴⁴³:

“(1) the observation of elections and the promotion of free and fair electoral processes;
(2) development of democratic political parties;
(3) radio and television broadcasting to and within Belarus;
(4) the development of nongovernmental organizations promoting democracy and supporting human rights;
(5) the development of independent media working within Belarus and from locations outside the country and supported by nonstate-controlled printing facilities;
(6) international exchanges and advanced professional training programs for leaders and members of the democratic forces in skill areas central to the development of civil society”⁴⁴⁴

Under Title III – Promotion of Democracy For Iran, The Iran Freedom and Support Act of 2006 sets out US policy to “(1) support efforts by the people of Iran to exercise self-determination over the form of government of their country; and (2) to support independent human rights and peaceful prodemocracy forces in Iran.”⁴⁴⁵ It authorizes the president to “to provide financial and political assistance (including the award of grants) to foreign and domestic individuals, organizations, and entities working for the purpose of supporting and

⁴⁴² Russian Democracy Act of 2002, P.L. 107-246-Oct. 2002, Sec. 4.

⁴⁴³ The US approach can be contrasted with that of the EU in Belarus – one of the major activities funded by the Commission is “to strengthen institutions by supporting the implementation of structural and institutional reforms in key areas through enhancing the capacity of Belarusian public governmental institutions, state and semi-state enterprises in policy advice. The action will also promote good governance, justice, gender equality and rule of law. Twinning will be proposed as a new modality for cooperation with Belarus.” European Commission - Fact Sheet, “New EU support to private sector development and strengthening institutions in Belarus”, Brussels, 19 September 2016. Available at http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-16-3107_en.htm (accessed 17 January 2017).

⁴⁴⁴ Belarus Democracy Act of 2004, P.L. 108-347-Oct. 2004, Sec. 3, par. (c).

⁴⁴⁵ Iran Freedom and Support Act of 2006, P.L. 109-293-Sept. 2006, Sec. 301.

promoting democracy for Iran” under the condition that the recipient “is dedicated to democratic values and supports the adoption of a democratic form of government in Iran” and “supports freedom of the press, freedom of speech, freedom of association, and freedom of religion.”⁴⁴⁶ In addition, it states that US officials and representatives should “strongly and unequivocally support indigenous efforts in Iran calling for free, transparent, and democratic elections”.⁴⁴⁷

11.1.3 The ADVANCE Democracy Act and the meanings of democracy

Unlike the EU, which is mandated by the Maastricht Treaty to support democracy around the globe, there is no such provision in US law. Therefore, even as the EU felt it necessary to provide a clearer and clearer definition of what it means by the term “democracy” in its foreign agenda (see Chapter 11.2.3), US government showed little effort in formulating a more specific conceptualization of democracy beyond the term “market democracy”. By 2005, the Congress started to view the lack of a consistent (official) definition and one that would be agreed upon by all branches of the government as a problem and even hindrance to more effective efforts. As a Congressional Research Service report summarized,

“the lack of a clear definition of democracy and a comprehensive understanding of its basic elements may have hampered the formulation of democracy promotion policy and effective prioritizing of democracy promotion activities over the years. Also, the lack of definition may have complicated coordination of democracy programs and the assessment of U.S. government activities and funding. Further, without a consensus on democracy definition and goals, what criteria will determine when, if ever, a country has attained an acceptable level of democratic reform and no longer needs American assistance?”⁴⁴⁸

In the same vein, the 2005 NED report to Congress on the evaluation of democracy program lamented that,

“Currently, there is a scarcity of literature to inform and guide the decisions of senior policymakers [...] Every day, literally tens of thousands of people in the democracy promotion business go to work without training manuals or

⁴⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁸ Epstein, Susan B., Nina M. Serafino, and Francis T. Miko, “Democracy Promotion: Cornerstone of U.S. Foreign Policy?”, *Congressional Research Service*, Report for Congress, December 26, 2007.

blueprints in hand. Even published case studies of previous successes are hard to find in the public domain, which means that democracy assistance efforts are often reinventing the wheel or making it up as they go along, as was on vivid display in both Afghanistan and Iraq. Even basic educational materials for students seeking to specialize in democracy promotion do not exist.”⁴⁴⁹

Similarly, the Senate Foreign Operations Appropriation Committee Report for FY2006 claimed that the “Committee remains concerned that the State Department and USAID do not share a common definition of a democracy program” and went ahead in formulating its vision: “For the purposes of this Act, ‘a democracy program’ means technical assistance and other support to strengthen the capacity of democratic political parties, governments, non-governmental institutions, and/or citizens, in order to support the development of democratic states, institutions and practices that are responsive and accountable to citizens.”⁴⁵⁰ In the following year, the Senate Appropriations Committee Report for FY2007 asserted, “to ensure a common understanding of democracy programs among United States Government agencies, the Committee defines in the act ‘the promotion of democracy’ to include programs that support good governance, human rights, independent media, and the rule of law, and otherwise strengthen the capacity of democratic political parties, NGOs, and citizens to support the development of democratic states, institutions and practices that are responsible and accountable to citizens.”⁴⁵¹

This dry bureaucratic language requires some interpretation. We can see that the formulation is comprehensive and presupposes the use of top-down and bottom-up instruments. It unfortunately does not go as far as to formulate what is meant by human rights (unlike the EU, which in nearly all documents maintains that all three generations of human rights are considered) and the fact that “good governance” was until that period used seldom by US government in connection to democracy promotion, we are left to ponder its definition. Nevertheless, the emphasis is still placed on input-legitimacy and the citizen’s role in having a say in politics – building political parties, NGOs and supporting citizens so that the new

⁴⁴⁹ National Endowment for Democracy, *Evaluating Democracy Promotion Programs: A Report to Congress from the National Endowment for Democracy*, submitted to the House and Senate Appropriation Committees in response to a request for a report contained in the conference report H. Rept. 109-272 at 195 (2005), p. 18.

⁴⁵⁰ Senate Appropriations Committee, S.Rept. 109-96/ H.R. 3057 — Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations, FY2006, June 30, 2005.

⁴⁵¹ Senate Appropriations Committee, S.Rept. 109-277/H.R. 5522 — Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations, FY2007, July 10, 2006.

democratic governments are “responsible and accountable” to the people. There is no word of the “outcome” of the democratic process or the “effectiveness” or “delivery” on the part of the governments. This is where critics of US democracy promotion, who insist on claiming that the US promotes low-intensity democracy – i.e. a procedural form of democracy separated from socio-economic development – could be proven correct, but we need to examine a more concise conceptualization of democracy in order to demonstrate such conclusions. An important legal act in this sense is the so-called Advance Democratic Values, Address Nondemocratic Countries, and Enhance Democracy Act of 2007 (ADVANCE Democracy Act; ADA).

The ADVANCE Democracy Act experienced a long road through Congress (it was introduced as a bill already in 2005) and the related testimonies and hearings in committees can provide us with significant insight into the discussions about the definitions of democracy the Act should purportedly include and the approach that should be taken to further the goals of democracy promotion. The bill was drafted by former ambassador Mark Palmer, who happened to be the author of Reagan’s Westminster Speech announcing the creation of the “infrastructure of democracy” and it was enacted as Title XXI of the Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007.⁴⁵²

ADA was described as “the culminating moment in a struggle extending back at least three years to institutionalize democracy promotion within the Bush administration”⁴⁵³ and as Representative Ileana Ros-Lehtinen noted, it aims “to develop a comprehensive strategy that translates the objectives of democracy promotion into concrete steps toward the fulfillment of this mandate.”⁴⁵⁴

Rather than giving a definition of democracy, however, ADA provides an elaborate definition of what democracy is *not*. In Section 2104 – “Definitions”, the act sets out that “[t]he term ‘nondemocratic country’ or ‘democratic transition country’ shall include any country which is not governed by a fully functioning democratic form of government, as determined by the Secretary, taking into account the general consensus regarding the status

⁴⁵² Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007, P.L. 110-53- Aug. 30, 2007, Sec. 2101–2405.

⁴⁵³ Glen, Patrick J., “The ADVANCE Democracy Act and the Future of United States Democracy Promotion Efforts”, *Santa Clara Journal of International Law* 273 (2011): 279.

⁴⁵⁴ Promoting Democracy Through Diplomacy: Hearing Before the House Committee on International Relations, 109th Congress, May 5 (2005), statement of Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen.

of civil and political rights in a country by major nongovernmental organizations that conduct assessments of such conditions in countries and whether the country exhibits the following characteristics”:

“(A) All citizens of such country have the right to, and are not restricted in practice from, fully and freely participating in the political life of such country.

(B) The national legislative body of such country and, if directly elected, the head of government of such country, are chosen by free, fair, open, and periodic elections, by universal and equal suffrage, and by secret ballot.

(C) More than one political party in such country has candidates who seek elected office at the national level and such parties are not restricted in their political activities or their process for selecting such candidates, except for reasonable administrative requirements commonly applied in countries categorized as fully democratic.

(D) All citizens in such country have a right to, and are not restricted in practice from, fully exercising such fundamental freedoms as the freedom of expression, conscience, and peaceful assembly and association, and such country has a free, independent, and pluralistic media.

(E) The current government of such country did not come to power in a manner contrary to the rule of law.

(F) Such country possesses an independent judiciary and the government of such country generally respects the rule of law.

(G) Such country does not violate other core principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, United Nations Commission on Human Rights Resolution 1499/57 (entitled ‘‘Promotion of the Right to Democracy’’), and the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 55/96 (entitled ‘‘Promoting and consolidating democracy’’).

(H) As applicable, whether the country has scored favorably on the political, civil liberties, corruption, and rule of law indicators used to determine eligibility for financial assistance disbursed from the Millennium Challenge Account.’’⁴⁵⁵

This definition is the most elaborate and concrete definition of how the US government conceptualizes *democracy* it is foreign policy agenda. When juxtaposed to Larry Diamond’s definition of liberal democracy (see chapter 5.1), we can see that the two definitions

⁴⁵⁵ Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007, P.L. 110-53- Aug. 30, 2007, Sec. 2104.

significantly overlap. The main concern is focused on the procedural aspects of democracy – elections, accountable decision-making, political and civilian freedoms, free media and the rule of law. The definition is not occupied with the practical outcomes of the procedures and is reminiscent of Schumpeter’s and Przeworski’s minimalist conceptions of democracy. While the EU in its documents refers to the necessity to ensuring citizens’ social and economic rights, access to social services and welfare, social justice and solidarity through a functioning public administration (which can all be considered on the “outcome” side of democratic process), the US seems to be deliberately leaving this aspect out of its consideration.⁴⁵⁶

Hearings regarding the implementation of ADA show that the speakers’ thinking was geared rather toward the question of supporting civil society, as it is the one most vital component necessary for the realization of the shift towards democratic governance. As Jennifer Windsor, Executive Director of Freedom House, testified in the ADA hearing, “the emergence of broadly based civic nonviolent coalitions is the most important condition and mechanism [for] creating democracy”.⁴⁵⁷ She also expressed her mistrust in top-down democratization: “Top-down change is far less frequently the major force, something we should take into consideration as non-democratically elected governments in the Middle East and North Africa argue that they need to be the ones to control how political reform happens in the region.”⁴⁵⁸

In terms of the policies ADA implements, it first places democracy promotion firmly within the canon of foreign policy goals by dictating that such efforts shall be “a fundamental component of United States foreign policy.” It sets out “to protect and promote such fundamental freedoms and rights, including the freedoms of association, of expression, of the press, and of religion, and the right to own private property [...to promote] institutions that support the rule of law (such as an independent judiciary), an independent and professional media, strong legislatures, a thriving civil society, transparent and professional independent

⁴⁵⁶ We can also observe this in the fact that the ADA relates to affirming fundamental freedoms as reflected in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, while the EU in its documents refers to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

⁴⁵⁷ Promoting Democracy Through Diplomacy: Hearing Before the House Committee on International Relations, 109th Congress, May 5 (2005), statement of Ms. Jennifer Windsor, 41.

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid.

governmental auditing agencies, civilian control of the military, and institutions that promote the rights of minorities and women.” It further claims that the US should use its “instruments of influence” to support, promote, and strengthen democratic principles, practices, and values, including the right to free, fair, and open elections, secret balloting, and universal suffrage [by] providing appropriate support to individuals, nongovernmental organizations, and movements located in nondemocratic countries that aspire to live in freedom and establish full democracy in such countries.”⁴⁵⁹

11.1.4 The QDDR – more substantive conceptualizations of democracy?

The ADVANCE Democracy Act mandated the Secretary of State to submit a yearly report to Congress entitled the “Annual Report on Advancing Freedom and Democracy” and its aim was to describe US “priorities for the promotion of democracy and the protection of human rights for each nondemocratic country and democratic transition country, developed in consultation with relevant parties in such countries” and enumerate “specific actions and activities of chiefs of missions and other United States officials to promote democracy and protect human rights in each such country.”⁴⁶⁰

The new Annual Report replaced the former “Supporting Human Rights and Democracy Report”, which was published through 2003-2006. The rationale behind the new Annual Report was to make democracy promotion more country-specific and tailored to local needs. The ADA obliged US Chiefs of mission to “develop, as part of annual program planning, a strategy to promote democratic principles, practices, and values in each such foreign country and to provide support, as appropriate, to nongovernmental organizations, individuals, and movements in each such country that are committed to democratic principles, practices, and values.”⁴⁶¹ The new Annual Report with its individual country reports was to serve as an indispensable reference point for all democracy promotion programs under the State Department and USAID.

The 2009 Advancing Democracy and Freedom Report stated that US democracy assistance measures have concentrated “on practical ways to strengthen the following core

⁴⁵⁹ Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007, P.L. 110-53- Aug. 30, 2007, Sec. 2103.

⁴⁶⁰ Op. cit., Sec. 2121, par (b) and (c).

⁴⁶¹ Op. cit., Sec. 2111, par. (c), subpar. (1).

electoral, institutional, and societal elements that are essential to the development of participatory democracies:

- Free and fair electoral processes that include not only a clean casting and honest counting of ballots on election day, but also a run-up to the voting that allows for real competition and full respect for the freedoms of expression, peaceful assembly, and association;
- Representative, accountable, transparent institutions of government, including independent judiciaries, under the rule of law to ensure that leaders who win elections are responsive to the will and needs of the people once in office; and
- Vibrant civil societies, including independent NGOs and free media.”⁴⁶²

The Report for 2013 was far more specific in describing the aims of democracy assistance programs, dividing them into six categories: Democratic Institutions and Civil Society, Elections and Political Processes, Economic Freedom and Opportunity, Press and Internet Freedom and the Protection of Other Human Rights.

By assisting “democratic institutions”, “the U.S. government seeks to strengthen the legal framework and management practices for democratic governance” and “support recruitment and training of professionals”. This is one of the few instances where we can find an official focus on building the capacity of governmental institutions in third countries to make them more effective and responsive to the people. Perhaps as a “lesson learned” from US state-building activities in Afghanistan and Iraq, such language starts to increasingly permeate into democracy assistance documents after around 2010.

Although the 2013 Report gives no more characterization of what the support of democratic institutions entails and focuses more on questions of elections and civil society support, it can certainly be viewed as evidence of a “shift” in thinking about the recipient government’s role in the democratization process. Still, the State Department is keen on describing the necessity to support civil society to balance the role of central authorities: “U. S. assistance funds programs for civil society oversight of government activities. We also develop civil society capacity to further democracy and human rights. Such programs

⁴⁶² Department of State, “Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports”, *Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor*, May 2009.

strengthen the ability of civil society organizations to lobby governments on behalf of citizens, increase accountability, advocate political reform [...]”⁴⁶³

Similarly, the State Department emphasizes the role of election support, as US-funded programs are geared to “strengthen electoral institutions”, “support improved political processes” and “improve political party organization”. Also, in a Tocquevillian manner the US seeks to “encourage nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to provide civic education and citizen advocacy, and encourage citizen participation in governance” and “increase awareness of civic responsibilities”.⁴⁶⁴ The category of “Protection of Other Human Rights” targets “labor rights, prevent[ing] violence and discrimination against women and girls, assist[ing] indigenous communities to access effective justice” and also LGBT rights, disability rights and rights of children – all falling into the first generation of human rights.

The 2014 Report retains mostly the same language as its predecessor, but introduces a new concept of “inclusive growth” within the category “Economic Opportunity”. Inclusive growth is perceived as a component in the process of improving democratic governance and to achieve this, the US seeks to promote “efforts to facilitate the transition of workers in the informal economy into the formal economy, support other vulnerable groups, including women, youth, and migrant workers, and promote fair labor standards and safe working conditions globally” and encourage “political and fiscal reforms to address citizen grievances” and works in the realm of anticorruption measures.⁴⁶⁵

The term of inclusive economic growth was taken from the 2015 Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR) a new strategic document that was commissioned by then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in 2009 to mirror the Department of Defense’s Quadrennial Defense Review. The first QDDR, labeled a blueprint for US “civilian power” in the world, was published in 2010 and helped formulate a stronger interlink between the development agenda and the democracy promotion agenda – especially the connection between sustainable economic growth and democratic governance. It maintained that “[a]ccountable, democratic governance is a universal value and a founding

⁴⁶³ Department of State, “Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports”, *Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor*, 2013.

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁵ Department of State, “Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports”, *Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor*, 2014.

principle of our nation. The U.S. is committed to advancing democracy, human rights, gender equality, and sound governance to protect individual freedoms and foster sustainable economic growth” and announced the creation of “a new Senior Advisor to the Secretary for Civil Society and Emerging Democracies, who will advance [US] engagement with civil society.”⁴⁶⁶

To achieve sustainable economic growth, US agencies would engage in “promoting entrepreneurship, growing both the hard and soft infrastructure needed for increased trade, developing broad-based agricultural economies, educating their peoples, formalizing vast numbers of small- and medium-sized businesses, strengthening broad-based agricultural economies, and investing in clean energy technologies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions” and call for minimizing “complex and costly regulations”. The term “inclusive growth” in the 2015 QDDR can be read in a similar manner.

“Advancing inclusive economic growth” has been jointly labeled by the DoS and USAID as a strategic priority for US foreign policy. To achieve the objective of “inclusive, job-rich economic growth” the US would champion “entrepreneurship, trade, and commercial advocacy, and addresses corruption that undermines sustained and inclusive economic growth.” The target “countries require investments from multiple sources to achieve sustained and inclusive economic growth” and, in addition, a key aspect of inclusive growth is “job creation through entrepreneurship and small business growth. Because new businesses, which are often small, produce the majority of new jobs, expanding the number of entrepreneurs abroad leads to social and economic stability and provides new markets for U.S. exports.”⁴⁶⁷

The 2015 QDDR also identified “Promoting resilient, open, democratic societies” as a strategic priority. The so-called “lines of effort”, or the concrete steps the US would undertake to accomplish this priority are:

- “Strengthening global capacity on transparent and accountable governance” (this entails enabling the civil society to “hold their governments accountable”);

⁴⁶⁶ Department of State and USAID, *The First Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review: Leading Through Civilian Power*, Washington DC: 2010, 89.

⁴⁶⁷ Department of State and USAID, *Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review: Enduring Leadership in a Dynamic World*, Washington DC: 2015, 36.

- “Supporting the rights and freedoms of civil society in both open and restrictive environments” (a reaction to “the widespread crackdown on civil society” around the globe. The US aims to further “increase efforts to stand with civil society” and as the USAID works to “expand programs to protect civic space and created partnerships with community-based organizations and other local entities);
- “Combating corruption” (including supporting efforts to increase the capacity of foreign governments to prevent and prosecute corruption. “In partnership with civil society and independent media, USAID is strengthening local capacity to monitor government budgets, procurement, and service delivery”);
- “Expanding engagement and partnerships” (this means “increasing collaboration with indigenous groups and religious communities on governance and other matters);
- “Promoting the rule of law and enhancing access to justice” (in this field, the US champions “the rights of individuals through rule-of-law programs, which help countries protect human rights, increase access to justice, prevent and prosecute crimes, and empower their citizens to claim constitutionally guaranteed right”);
- “Defending human rights and the inclusion of marginalized and vulnerable groups” (these activities are geared to “amplify the voices of women, youth, persons with disabilities, displaced persons, indigenous peoples, survivors of violence and trafficking, and other traditionally marginalized populations”); and
- “Ensuring accountable security sector governance” (civilian oversight and effectiveness of security sector to tackle threats, before they spillover to neighboring regions).⁴⁶⁸

⁴⁶⁸ Op. cit., 29-31.

11.2 Exporting an EU model of democracy

As we saw in chapter 7.2, the EU – unlike the US – does not (yet) dispose of a grand strategy that would undergird its democracy promotion project. Nevertheless, concepts such as the “normative power Europe” are incrementally gaining the status of an aspirational meta-narrative for EU foreign policy. Similarly, the technocratic notion of “governance” – and the more ideology-burdened “*democratic* governance” – has become a catchword in EU development and external affairs.

The notion, however, reflects the EU’s perception of its own history – governance and creation of sustainable state institutions are two aspects considered to be key in fomenting stability. The transfer of democratic governance through functional cooperation may in the longer run trickle down and spillover to other sectors and lead to sustainable democratization of target countries. The EU’s policies vis-à-vis third states can be interpreted as “unreflexive behavior mirroring the deeply engrained belief that Europe’s history is a lesson for everybody”.⁴⁶⁹ This history alludes to the success of the integration process, to the elite-driven, top-down method of governance harmonization across European states. The EU identifies itself as an actor that assured peace on the continent by virtue of expanding its institutional model based on (democratic) governance and intergovernmental cooperation and applies this thinking to its democracy promotion. In other words, as countries where the EU promotes democracy are also finding themselves at the brink of dictatorship or in an unstable neighborhood, the EU naturally inclines (or *should* naturally incline) towards the model that it itself views as having (finally) brought democratic peace and stability in its own region. Democracy is not as much an *end* state that the EU strives to achieve, it is rather a *means* to achieve stable relations among states, good governance and ultimately, peace.

As in the preceding subchapters, we are going to examine the nuanced conceptualization of democracy in the EU’s primary documents. Again, we shall see correlations with the conclusions listed in a Table 8.4.

11.2.1 Following the US example, but altering substance

Democracy promotion instruments and programs were introduced on the level of EU institutions nearly one decade after the Reagan administration commissioned The Democracy Program, resulting in the creation of the NED and its family of grantees. This “delay” was

⁴⁶⁹ Bicchi, *Our size fits all*, 287.

caused by several factors, most notably Europe's lack of the driving forces that caused the start of democracy promotion in the US, such as strong anti-communism, the belief in the democratic peace theory and the self-perception of having a moral imperative to bring liberty to the world.⁴⁷⁰ Thus, until the early 1990s, EU's development policies were of a strictly socio-economic and apolitical nature, missing any instruments such as aid conditionality or explicit democracy assistance. It was only in connection to political tensions in Chile that Member States first publicly reaffirmed "their commitment to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms and emphasize the importance in this context of the principles of parliamentary democracy and the rule of law." (Statement on human rights of July 1986).⁴⁷¹

A World Bank Report on Africa released in 1989 may have provided further impetus for Member States to push for democracy assistance instruments on the level of EC institutions. The Report emphasized the necessity of strengthening the political dimension in recipient countries to increase the chances of effective socio-economic development.⁴⁷² As a matter of fact, in December 1990 the EC "reworded" its Statement on human rights from July 1986, stressing that in perspective of recent transitions around the globe the "interrelationship between democracy, human rights and sustainable development has become more and more evident."⁴⁷³ Moreover, the EC saw that democracy was "essential to secure social stability, dynamic economic growth and equitable income distribution" and stated that this idea "is a central concept in the Community's aid programmes".⁴⁷⁴

This "policy shift" in the EC's development agenda was practically confirmed through the SEC(91) 61 final – "Human rights, democracy and development cooperation policy". The Commission communication states that it has "become vital that human rights and democracy figure more prominently in the guidelines for cooperation policy than has hitherto been the case".⁴⁷⁵ As a result, near the end of 1991 the Council adopted a "Resolution on Human rights, democracy and development" which remains one of the key guiding policy

⁴⁷⁰ OPPD, Getting Acquainted, 21.

⁴⁷¹ Bulletin of the European Communities 19 (7/8), 1986: par. 2.4.4.

⁴⁷² World Bank, *Sub-Saharan Africa: From Crisis to Sustainable Growth* (1989).

⁴⁷³ Bulletin of the European Communities 23 (12), 1990: par. 1.5.3.

⁴⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁵ Commission Communication to the Council and Parliament on human rights, democracy and development cooperation, SEC(91) 61 final, 25.3.1991.

document to this day. The language of the resolution is clear in the sense that it views democracy as an agent of social justice, sustainable development and a prerequisite for upholding the second generation of human rights.⁴⁷⁶ This conceptualization of democracy is in stark contrast to that used in NED documents, which explicitly disassociate the socio-economic realm from the political. As Crawford noted, “in its categorization of measures the EC appeared to subscribe to a concept of democracy that was broader than the formal, institutional mechanisms.”⁴⁷⁷

The Resolution also placed emphasis on a rather top-down and non-coercive approach by endorsing “open and constructive dialogue” with “the governments of developing countries”, which “can make a very important contribution to the promotion of human rights and democracy”.⁴⁷⁸ The EC did not get caught in “electoral fallacy” as it acknowledged “that governments have to build the political, economic and social structures to support democracy and that this is a gradual process which will sometimes take a relatively long period” and introduced its preference for positive conditionality in democracy assistance (par. 7). Furthermore, the Community vowed to hold regular “discussions on human rights and democracy [...] within the framework of development cooperation, with the aim of seeking improvements.”⁴⁷⁹ By mandating itself to “active[ly] support [...] the setting-up of new democratic institutions”, the EC made clear that democracy assistance became a pillar of its development agenda.

11.2.2 “Governance” and EU development support

The evolution of EU development policy with regards to including democracy assistance as its unalienable component can be observed when examining the wording of four versions of the Lomé Convention – a framework agreement based on which the EC distributed aid to ACP countries (Africa, Caribbean, Pacific) from the European Development Fund (EDF). While the Lomé IV Convention (a 324-page document) contained no mention of the term “democracy” or “governance” (thus implying there was no formal political condition for receiving aid), its revised version, signed in 1995, proposed a number of amendments with

⁴⁷⁶ Bulletin of the European Communities 24 (11), 1991: par. 2.3.1.

⁴⁷⁷ Crawford, Gordon, “European Union Development Co-operation and the Promotion of Democracy” in Burnell, *Democracy Assistance*, 118.

⁴⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

explicit references to conditioning aid on the recipient state's movement toward democracy. For example, under section 4 (Scope of financing), Article 224, subparagraph (m) was added – the revised section now read: “Within the framework of the Convention, development finance cooperation shall cover: [...] support for institutional and administrative reform measures, with a view to democratization [...]”⁴⁸⁰ The revised agreement set out political conditionality⁴⁸¹ and – more importantly – reiterated the EU's dedication to all three generations of human rights.⁴⁸²

In 1998, seeing that the use of (academically) contested terms such as democracy or human rights in relations with ACP countries may pose ambiguity and misunderstandings in practice, the EU set out to define these concepts in an addendum to the revised Lomé Convention – the COM(1998) 146 final.⁴⁸³ The Communication's explicit objective was to “clarif[y] the concepts cited in Article 5 of the revised fourth Lomé Convention” and thus the document can be considered as one of the most lucid attempts to define democracy for the purposes of EU external action and deserves closer scrutiny.

In the document, the EU was careful to formulate the basic features of democracy so that they do not appear universalistic. Democracy “formalises a non-violent dialectic between the aspirations of the majority and those of a minority according to a body of rules accepted by all and based on respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.”⁴⁸⁴ The assimilation of the democratic process by target countries “depend on the ongoing adaptation of these rules to each country's history, cultures and particular ways of thinking” and it needs to be viewed as “a gradual and ongoing process which must take account of a country's socio-economic and cultural context.”⁴⁸⁵ The EU also made clear that “[a]s an end in themselves, elections alone will not necessarily make a country a democracy or give it the political stability necessary for it to flourish. They have to be part of a broader process, in which a

⁴⁸⁰ Agreement Amending the Fourth ACP-EC Convention of Lomé, L 156/4.

⁴⁸¹ “In this context development policy and cooperation shall be closely linked to respect for and enjoyment of fundamental human rights and to the recognition and application of democratic principles, the consolidation of the rule of law and good governance.” Art. 5.

⁴⁸² “The rights in question are all human rights, the various categories thereof being indivisible and interrelated, each having its own legitimacy: non-discriminatory treatment; fundamental human rights; civil and political rights; economic, social and cultural rights.” Ibid.

⁴⁸³ Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament, “Democratization, the rule of law, respect for human rights and good governance: the challenges of the partnership between the European Union and the ACP States”, COM(1998) 146 final, Brussels, 12.03.1998.

⁴⁸⁴ Op. cit., p. 5.

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid.

series of factors come together to prepare and consolidate a movement towards democracy.”⁴⁸⁶ The Communication further lists three fundamental democratic principles – legitimacy (authority of state derived from elections), legality (execution of power carried out with respect to rule of law) and effective application (participation of all segments of society in power).

An inherent component of the EU’s relationship with the ACP countries is the promotion of good governance, which – at least on the basis of the language in COM(1998) 146 final – could effectively be labeled as the promotion of a social democratic model of political organization. Good governance encompasses the central authority’s “role in establishing a climate conducive to economic and social development and its responsibility for the equitable division of resources.” It “refers to the transparent and accountable management of all a country’s resources for its equitable and sustainable economic and social development” and thus “extends the aims of democratization into the sphere of resource management.” Having the capacity for good governance “implies the existence of competent and effective institutions respecting democratic principles”.⁴⁸⁷ Therefore building public “institutional capacities is vital because it directly determines economic and social development, and especially the effectiveness of development co-operation.”⁴⁸⁸

The top-down process of furthering the ideals of political development by the EU in ACP countries was slightly altered in the Cotonou Agreement, which replaced the Lomé Convention in 2000. As opposed to Lomé (which makes no mention of it at all), the Cotonou Agreement attaches an important role to civil society and includes this sector among the beneficiaries of assistance. The Agreement even provides a basic definition of civil society actors, but leaves out of this definition political parties or pro-democracy activists, which are viewed by US democracy promoters as often belonging to the same category.⁴⁸⁹ Unlike proposing a definition of civil society actors, the Agreement fails to provide concrete definition of what it means by “democracy” (mentioned over 30 times in the text) or even “governance” (mentioned 12 times). However, in Article 20, titled “The Approach”, the EU

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁷ Op. cit., p. 6-7.

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁹ USAID, “Civil Society Groups and Political Parties: Supporting Constructive Relationships”, Occasional Paper Series, March 2004.

summarizes that the objectives of democratization will be pursued by “promoting institutional reforms and development, strengthening the institutions necessary for the consolidation of democracy, good governance and for efficient and competitive market economies.”

Even though the Cotonou Agreement advocates for the creation of market economies in ACP countries, it stresses that “the principles of the *social* market economy, supported by transparent competition rules and sound economic and social policies, contribute to achieving the objectives of the partnership.” (emphasis in original).⁴⁹⁰ The normative focus on social and economic equity is prevalent throughout the document, notably when it claims that it will “include support for balancing political, economic, social and cultural opportunities among all segments of society [...]”⁴⁹¹ The institutional approach to democracy building, combined with upholding socio-economic justice is reiterated in other parts of the Agreement: “Cooperation [...] shall support the efforts of the ACP States to develop and strengthen structures, institutions and procedures that help to: (a) promote and sustain democracy, human dignity, social justice and pluralism [...]”⁴⁹²

In this sense, we can claim that the conceptualization of democracy in documents with the ACP is on the maximalist side of the spectrum. The definition of democracy presented in the official documents clearly sets out a strong role for the State in the redistribution of income; it emphasizes the necessity of forming stable public institutions for the purposes of furthering socio-economic development; reiterates that all three generations of human rights are to be treated and upheld by a democratic system; avoids “electoral fallacy”; and clearly advocates a popular version of democracy, where power shall be vested in all segments of society.

11.2.3 Institutionalizing democracy assistance into EU primary law

The Maastricht Treaty can be labelled as a key juncture in EU democracy assistance, as it gave democracy and human rights promotion a legal basis in primary EU law and *de iure* obliged the EU to carry out these policy objectives.⁴⁹³ The Treaty mentions that “Community

⁴⁹⁰ The Cotonou Agreement and Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020. Art. 10.

⁴⁹¹ Art. 11.

⁴⁹² Art. 33.

⁴⁹³ The Single European Act of 1986 mentioned the determination of member states ‘to work together to promote democracy on the basis of the fundamental rights’ – however, this was stated only in the preamble, whilst the Maastricht Treaty placed an emphasis on democracy and human rights in the body of its text.

policy in the sphere of development co-operation [...] shall contribute to the general objective of developing and consolidating democracy and the rule of law, and to that of respecting human rights and fundamental freedoms”.⁴⁹⁴ A 1995 Commission communication titled “The External Dimension of the EU’s Human Rights Policy: From Rome to Maastricht and Beyond” (COM(95) 567 final) labeled “one of Maastricht’s greatest innovations” the fact that “Community action in this area [human rights and democracy promotion] is based not on the preamble but on the body of the text”.⁴⁹⁵

The aim of COM(95) 567 final was to outline future activities and approaches of the EU in the realm of human rights and democracy promotion now that the issue has become a pillar of its external action. The main suggestions included an approach based on positive conditionality and generally a greater use of incentive measures. The list of proposed activities to further the goal of democratization in third countries included “supporting the activities of parliaments and other democratically elected bodies, and supporting institutional and legislative reforms”; “promoting a pluralist civil society”, but also “promoting equal opportunities and non-discrimination; promoting transparency and good governance, supporting campaigns against corruption; protecting vulnerable groups” and “ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, their rights and cultures”. All activity was to be carried out within the general framework of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (a treaty the US has never ratified). As described above, the suggestions of COM(95) 567 final were duly applied in the revised Lomé IV Convention and also vis-à-vis the post-communist bloc of states in Eastern Europe.

Preceding COM(95) 567 final, in June 1993, what would become the most important democracy promotion instrument was formulated – the Copenhagen criteria. By setting down the prerequisite that any candidate country would “has achieved stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy” before becoming a member of the Union, the EU has made sure

⁴⁹⁴ The Maastricht Treaty, Article 130u/2, 1993.

⁴⁹⁵ Communication from The Commission to The Council and The European Parliament, The European Union and the External Dimension of Human Rights Policy: From Rome to Maastricht and Beyond, COM (95) 567 final, par. 2.

that all CEECs aiming to become its members must be democratized.⁴⁹⁶ Nonetheless, the Copenhagen criteria failed to bring forth specific criteria or definitions of democracy as such. *What* are the institutions that guarantee democracy?

From a long-term perspective, the institutions that guarantee the perseverance of a democratic political system are a democratic political culture and an active civil society – but the formation of these institutions in the post-communist countries would take up to three generations.⁴⁹⁷ So, in order to accept the new member states in a shorter period of time than “three generations”, the EU implicitly called for the stability of the state apparatus, i.e. public institutions that guarantee democracy from a rather short-term perspective as these institutions can be toppled, reformed or side-lined by one administration in one election-cycle, leaving great damage to the state of democracy.

A more specific definition of what the EU meant by “the institutions guaranteeing democracy” can be read in the documents which served the purposes of monitoring the state of affairs and adherence to the Copenhagen criteria in candidate states – the Commission’s so-called Opinions and Regular Reports.

According to these documents, the “institutions of democracy” comprised a swathe of sectors and were listed under the “political criteria” of each report. The primary focus within the “political criteria” section of the Opinions and subsequent Regular reports was always devoted to the “modernization of public administration” and the general strengthening of the state apparatus (“restructuring of the government”) and judiciary as this was viewed as being of “crucial importance in the implementation of the *acquis* and the transition process.”⁴⁹⁸ Nonetheless, in the “political criteria” section for accession, the Commission, for example, included the question of the inadequacy of “child care institutions” in Romania, the questions of gender equality and the rights of the Roma minorities.⁴⁹⁹ Yet, the reports

⁴⁹⁶ European Council in Copenhagen, “Conclusions of the Presidency”, 21–22 June, 1993. Available at http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/cc/72921.pdf (accessed 24 January, 2016).

⁴⁹⁷ Dahrendorf, Ralf, *Reflections on the Revolution in Europe* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1990).

⁴⁹⁸ See, among others, 1999 Regular Report from The Commission on Romania’s Progress Towards Accession; 2002 Regular Report on Bulgaria’s Progress Towards Accession; 2004 Regular Report on Romania’s progress towards accession.

⁴⁹⁹ European Commission, Conclusions of the Regular Reports – Enlargement Strategy Paper Report on progress towards accession by each of the candidate countries (undated), p. 16.

rarely mention developments in the civil society sector or political parties (when political parties were mentioned, the focus was on transparency in their funding).

Comparing the language of documents related to the Copenhagen criteria and thus addressed to CEECs and the language of the Lomé and Cotonou Agreements with ACP countries, we can observe that the EU makes no mention of the term “good governance” in relation to candidate countries. This is because the EU basically fused the term “good governance” (and its function) with “democracy” in relation with the CEECs, while distinguishing between the two terms when communicating with the ACP.⁵⁰⁰ As mentioned, the EU provides aid to strengthen both spheres and maintains that advancements in the two spheres are a condition for the ACP for receiving more aid. This implies that the EU sought to disassociate the “ideological” from the “practical” and – at least on paper – give more leeway to ACP states for developing “indigenous” models of democracy.

The necessity to promote all three generations of rights in conjunction with the democracy assistance agenda was reiterated in a 1999 Council Regulation, which stated that “the European Community shall provide technical and financial aid for operations aimed at: (a) the promotion and protection of civil and political rights; (b) the promotion and protection of economic, social and cultural rights”.⁵⁰¹

The Commission’s second major communication concerning the issue of the EU’s democracy promotion agenda was released in May 2001.⁵⁰² It strongly suggested to “mainstream” human rights and democracy in all external EU policies and activities, including dialogue with third countries’ governments; the systematic inclusion of democracy in strategic documents on EU assistance; a greater use of incentive conditionality; improving coherence and consistency between the first pillar, second pillar (CFSP) and Member State activities; and the provision of more democracy assistance through general development

⁵⁰⁰ “Good governance” is also never mentioned in the most recent EU Enlargement Strategy. Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, “2016 Communication on EU Enlargement Policy”, COM(2016) 715 final, Brussels, 9.11.2016.

⁵⁰¹ Council Regulation (EC) No 975/1999 of 29 April 1999 laying down the requirements for the implementation of development cooperation operations which contribute to the general objective of developing and consolidating democracy and the rule of law and to that of respecting human rights and fundamental freedoms.

⁵⁰² Communication from The Commission to The Council and The European Parliament, “The European Union’s Role in Promoting Human Rights and Democratisation in Third Countries.” COM(2001) 252 final, Brussels, 8.5.2001.

programs. Judging from the language of the communication, the era saw the high tide of democracy promotion efforts of the EU and presented the most conducive atmosphere for the purpose in recent history. At the same time, by calling for the “mainstreaming” of the theme of democracy throughout its external action, the Commission sought to strengthen its democratic identity as new members (which have just passed a transition) were soon to join the Union and to support its global role as a civilian/normative power. This approach was further strengthened in the EU’s security strategy, which adopted a rather pragmatic, state-centric approach to pursuing democracy promotion:

*“The quality of international society depends on the quality of the governments that are its foundation. The best protection for our security is a world of well-governed democratic states. Spreading good governance, supporting social and political reform, dealing with corruption and abuse of power, establishing the rule of law and protecting human rights are the best means of strengthening the international order.”*⁵⁰³

11.2.4 The push for a “European consensus” on the definition of democracy

Given that democracy assistance was now firmly (and legally) embedded in EU external action agenda, even after achieving the goal of Eastern enlargement, the EU institutions felt it increasingly necessary to attempt to adopt a definition of democracy that would guide the multi-member state Union’s endeavors in third countries. In 2006 the Policy Unit of the Council General Secretariat presented a discussion paper on democracy promotion in the EU’s external relations, which claimed that there was a need “to develop a clearer profile”, suggesting that a better-defined approach would be required for EU democracy promotion.⁵⁰⁴ A consolidated definition of democracy would hence serve as a point of reference for EU’s actions and as a clear answer to those recipients that questioned the true meaning of “democracy” contained in democracy promotion. As Sweden’s Ambassador for Democracy in Development Cooperation of the time claimed, “time is now ripe to strive for a European consensus on democracy, in other words a cross-institutional umbrella policy document on what shape the European approach to democracy support should take.”⁵⁰⁵

⁵⁰³ “A Secure Europe In a Better World”, *European Security Strategy*, Brussels, 12 December, 2003, p. 10.

⁵⁰⁴ Prunerová, Kristina and Marcin Walecki, “Report from the Conference Building Consensus about EU Policies on Democracy Support”, Prague, 9–10 March, 2009, p. 9.

⁵⁰⁵ Leissner, Maria, Ambassador for Democracy in Development Cooperation, 29 September 2008, Stockholm.

One of the first contributions “to a cross-pillar initiative on democracy building in EU external action, launched by the Czech and Swedish Presidencies” was a July 2009 Joint paper by the Commission and the Council General Secretariat (SEC(2009) 1095 final). Stating that the EU understands that “democracy cannot be exported or imposed from the outside”, the joint paper also emphasized the importance of “delivery” by democracies – “only democracies that deliver have appeal to their citizens.” For this reason, the EU’s democracy building efforts should “aim at strengthening the capacity of governments and administrations [...] to meet people’s expectations of economic and social well-being [...]”⁵⁰⁶

The approach to building democracy in third countries as described by the joint paper was very substantive. The paper admitted that EU “support for democracy is seen in a wider *democratic governance perspective* that includes exploring possible links between democratization and citizen involvement in the political process and a broad range of issues [...]. This also entails access to capable, transparent, responsive and accountable basic public services and state institutions as well as the promotion of sustainable economic growth and social cohesion” (emphasis in original). The approach applied by the EU “should be long-term and based on local ownership engaging national and local governments and all leading local stakeholders, including national parliaments”. The EU strategy in the realm was said to be “moving towards a more systemic approach, creating better synergies between direct support to democracy and support to other critical components of State building.”⁵⁰⁷ In other words, the EU was slowly fusing democracy promotion with state-building.

In addition, the joint paper stated that the “EU support for democracy takes both a *top-down* and *bottom-up approach*” (emphasis in original), from its conceptualization of democratic governance and suggestions how to support it, it was clear that the main emphasis lay in the former.

Prior to adopting its resolution on “democracy building in the EU’s external relations”, the European Parliament’s (EP) newly formed body – Office for the Promotion of Parliamentary Democracy (OPPD) – published in September 2009 an extensive discussion paper on merits of having an “official” definition of democracy for the Union’s Common

⁵⁰⁶ Joint Paper – Commission and the Council General Secretariat SEC(2009) 1095 final, 4.

⁵⁰⁷ Op. cit., 5.

Foreign and Security Policy and its Development Cooperation Policy. The paper acknowledges that “There is no authoritative definition of democracy that claims to include all possible components of democracy. Indeed, the exact definition and scope is an area of some controversy.” Therefore, it is advised that “In order to strengthen concerted worldwide actions to promote democracy, the EU could publicly endorse the UN General Assembly’s definition as the reference point of its own democratisation work.” According to OPPD, adopting a “definition” of democracy that was passed by the UNGA made “more sense diplomatically” as there would otherwise be “no compelling reason for EU partner countries to accept a specific EU definition.” Moreover, the UN definitions, in fact, “very much mirror the EU views as defined in the Treaties and in various policies and agreements.”⁵⁰⁸

In conclusion, the OPPD suggested to adopt the definition of democracy formulated in the UNGA’s Resolution “Enhancing the role of regional, sub-regional and other organisations and arrangements in promoting and consolidating democracy” of 23 March 2005 (A/RES/59/201). This definition is thought to be “relatively broad, including not only the respect of political rights of citizens, but also obligations related to the organisation of a state, [...yet] not so broad as to make it meaningless.” OPPD further states that it “thus provides a meaningful definition, beyond some minimalist definitions based on electoral competition that have occasionally been proposed by political scientists” and that it “also very much reflects the EU democratic practice and views.”⁵⁰⁹

The UNGA Resolution listed “essential elements” of democracy⁵¹⁰ and “reaffirmed” that “democracy, development and respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms are interdependent and mutually reinforcing.” This corresponds to the development-democracy nexus that the EU has been emphasizing since adopting a political agenda into its development aid. Furthermore, the Resolution stated that “democracy is based on the freely

⁵⁰⁸ OPPD, 5-6.

⁵⁰⁹ OPPD, 29.

⁵¹⁰ These “include respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, inter alia, freedom of association and peaceful assembly and of expression and opinion, and the right to take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly or through freely chosen representatives, to vote and to be elected at genuine periodic free elections by universal and equal suffrage and by secret ballot guaranteeing the free expression of the will of the people, as well as a pluralistic system of political parties and organizations, respect for the rule of law, the separation of powers, the independence of the judiciary, transparency and accountability in public administration, and free, independent and pluralistic media.” Resolution adopted by the General Assembly, “Enhancing the role of regional, subregional and other organizations and arrangements in promoting and consolidating democracy”, A/RES/59/201.

expressed will of the people to determine their own political, economic, social and cultural systems and their full participation in all aspects of their lives and, in that context, that the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms at the national, regional and international levels should be universal and conducted without conditions attached”.⁵¹¹

Two important observations stand out – first, there is no debate about what the UNGA meant by claiming that the promotion of fundamental freedoms should be conducted “without conditions attached” and the OPPD does not reflect whether this may have any implications for the EU use of conditionality in providing aid. Secondly, the claim that democracy is based on the “will of the people to determine their own political, economic, social and cultural systems” – while correct in theory – opens the door to the “paradox of freedom”.⁵¹² On the one hand, the people may choose an economic model incompatible with democracy (according to some political scientists, only a market economy is compatible with democracy⁵¹³). On the other hand, determining their “own political system” may, in fact, lead to backsliding of democracy. This was already implicitly formulated in Plato’s critique of democracy: “what if the people’s will is to live under an authoritarian leader?”.

This may be a strange contradiction in the text of the Resolution, but the European Parliament’s endorsement of the definition only shows that through its overt respect to local contexts in recipient states, it strives to appear as apolitical and un-ideological in its democracy assistance efforts as possible. This further supports our thesis that EU tends to perceive democracy as a *means* to socio-economic development rather than as a teleological *end* in itself.

The European Parliament (EP) adopted a text endorsing the UNGA Resolution’s (A/RES/59/201) definition of democracy just one month after the OPPD paper was released. The Resolution of 22 October 2009 (P7_TA(2009)0056) aimed to consolidate the EU’s approach to democracy support as the EP recognized that “the EU vision of democracy building and support has not yet been set out in a single document”. The document reiterated

⁵¹¹ Op. cit., art. 5.

⁵¹² Novák, Miroslav, “Popper versus Schumpeter: A Comparison of Two Non-Classical Theories of Democracy”, *Czech Sociological Review* 39 (1), 2003: 22.

⁵¹³ See Friedman, Milton, *Capitalism and Freedom* (Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press, 1962); Lindblom, Charles E., *Politics and Markets* (New York: Basic Books, 1977); Bhagwati, Jagdish, “Democracy and Development”, *Journal of Democracy* 3 (3), 1992: 37-44; McLean, Iain, “Democratization and Economic Liberalization: Which is the Chicken and Which is the Egg?”, *Democratization* 1 (1), 1994: 27-40; Mandelbaum, Michael, “Democracy without America”, *Foreign Affairs*, September-October, 2007.

the EU's embrace of all three generations of human rights and the interdependence of democracy, development and human rights⁵¹⁴ and identified that the Union has "significant possibilities for providing support for democratic governance and institution- and capacity-building".⁵¹⁵ In avoiding potential "electoral fallacy" allegations, the EP resolution looked "beyond the establishment of multi-party electoral systems" and suggested "the importance of pursuing electoral and parliamentary reforms [...] to ensure more extensive and effective political activity among the population".⁵¹⁶

Most importantly, paragraph 4 summarized the EU's conceptualization of democracy as a means for achieving socio-economic improvement, as a generator of the state's output legitimacy and as a guarantor of the three generations of human rights:

"[The EP r]eiterates that democratisation and good governance are not only ends in themselves, but are also vital for poverty reduction, sustainable development, peace and stability; points out that, as demonstrated by the EU's internal integration process, democracy helps to deliver not only political and civil rights, but also economic, cultural and social rights, including solidarity."

The Council subsequently adopted its conclusions on the topic of EU democracy assistance in November of the same year.⁵¹⁷ The Council stated that EU democracy support should "aim at assisting efforts and strengthening the capacity of Governments, Parliaments and other state institutions, political actors, civil society organisations and other actors" and included in the Annex the "EU Agenda for Action on Democracy Support in EU External Relations".

In the action plan, the Council reminded of the importance of output legitimacy for the state's/government's existence, saying that "Governments with democratic legitimacy must deliver on the basic rights and needs of people or they risk losing legitimacy and public support" and repeated the stance of the EP in its resolution that "Democracy, democratic governance, development and respect for all human rights – civil, cultural, economic, political and social – are interdependent and mutually reinforcing" and that "a holistic

⁵¹⁴ European Parliament resolution of 22 October 2009 on democracy building in the EU's external relations, P7_TA(2009)0056, par. J

⁵¹⁵ Op. cit., par. M.

⁵¹⁶ Op. cit., par. Q.

⁵¹⁷ Council of the European Union, Council conclusions on Democracy Support in the EU's External Relations, 2974th External Relations Council meeting, Brussels, 17 November 2009.

approach on governance entails mainstreaming of human rights and fundamental freedoms, democratic governance and rule of law to all policy sectors.”⁵¹⁸ The conclusions also called for “a special focus on the role of elected representatives and political parties and institutions, independent media and civil society” and maintained that “EU support should take into account the full electoral cycle and not focus on ad hoc electoral support only.”

11.2.5 The “Arab Spring” and the concept of “deep democracy”

A new impetus for the EU to ponder the type of democracy it is exporting came with the so-called “Arab Spring” events. In her remarks at the Senior officials’ meeting on Egypt and Tunisia in February 2011, the EU High Representative Catherine Ashton formulated a concept of democracy, which she dubbed “deep democracy”. The aim of this new term was to help the EU navigate new attempts at democracy building in North African countries experiencing public upheaval. The term encompassed “political reform, elections, institution building, fight against corruption, independent judiciary and support to civil society” and without giving further definitions of what Ashton meant by the term, we can envisage that her goal was mainly to contrast this model of democracy with “limited” or minimalist forms.⁵¹⁹ The concept of “deep democracy” can be interpreted as being in line with Wolfgang Merkel’s “embedded democracy” discussed earlier. Ashton was alluding to the fact that democracy needs strong public institutions and effective public administration in order to satisfy the needs of the citizens, but that it also needs a vibrant civil society sector functioning as some sort of a “safety valve”, so that people can have the means to engage in political, social and economic affairs of the government.

In conjunction with building a “deep democracy”, Ashton stressed that the EU needed to work on economic development as the given societies faced significant social imbalances, high youth unemployment, rising food prices. In this sense the EU needed the “right blend of democratic and economic reforms to build sustainable stability” that would go “hand-in-hand” and “tackle the political and economic aspects in an integrated manner.”⁵²⁰ The fusion of building political democracy on the one hand and fostering economic development on the other was further reflected in the review of the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP), which

⁵¹⁸ Op. cit., Annex, art. II.

⁵¹⁹ Remarks by the EU High Representative Catherine Ashton at the Senior officials’ meeting on Egypt and Tunisia, Brussels, 23 February, 2011.

⁵²⁰ Ibid.

reformulated Ashton's "deep democracy" to "deep and sustainable democracy" – a move that reinforced the notion that the EU aims to build democracy directly "accompanied by inclusive economic development".⁵²¹

The ENP review reiterated the EU's commitment "to support democratic transformation" in the MENA region by setting up "Comprehensive Institution-Building programmes similar to those implemented with its Eastern neighbours", which will "provide substantial expertise and financial support to build the capacity of key administrative bodies (customs, enforcement agencies, justice) and will be targeted in priority towards those institutions most needed to sustain democratisation."⁵²² It also called for a stronger EU support toward civil society as a "thriving civil society empowers citizens to express their concerns, contribute to policy-making and hold governments to account".⁵²³ In order to build "deep and sustainable democracy", the EU would seek to work with partner governments in "improving social protection", "supporting agricultural and rural development", pursuing policy dialogue in "macro-economic governance and budgetary sustainability" and "employment and social policies".

Even though in the economic realm the EU does propose elements that could be identified as a "neoliberal" agenda – such as greater investment protection or proposing Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreements (DCFTAs), which call for regulatory convergence and dismantling of trade barriers – the role that the EU implicitly assigns to partner countries in the development of their economic and social policies is much more extensive and beyond what we would assume were the Union to pursue "low-intensity" democracy in third countries.

The Resolution passed by the European Parliament a few months after Ashton's remarks echoed these commitments and, in fact, stated that there is "need for a paradigm shift aimed at genuine consolidation of democracy on the basis of endogenous, sustainable and comprehensive development".⁵²⁴ The EP reaffirms again "that civil, political, economic,

⁵²¹ European Commission, "European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) - Fact Sheet Memo", Brussels, 19 March 2013.

⁵²² Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, "A new response to a changing Neighbourhood", COM(2011) 303, Brussels, 25.05.2011, 16-17.

⁵²³ Op. cit., 4.

⁵²⁴ European Parliament resolution of 7 July 2011 on EU external policies in favour of democratization, P7_TA(2011)0334, par. 7.

social and cultural rights are interdependent and mutually reinforcing, and that only the enforcement of all of these can contribute to the founding of a genuine democracy” and “considers therefore that the question of social justice and the fight against inequalities has to become an essential objective of the Union’s external policy, as it is an indispensable factor in the building of a peaceful, prosperous and democratic society”.⁵²⁵ Importantly, it stressed “that if a democratisation process is to be successful, it is crucial that it should address the social and economic development of the country concerned, in order to ensure that the inhabitants’ basic rights, such as the right to education, health and employment, are met”.⁵²⁶

Moreover, the EP “Recommend[ed], in the case of the most problematic partnerships, that the Union refrain from isolating the countries concerned, and that it instead conduct relations with them on the basis of appropriate, effective conditionality, serving as a genuine incentive to democratic reform”.⁵²⁷

If we juxtapose the concept of and the EU’s concept of “deep and sustainable” democracy and “resilient and inclusive democracy” contained in the 2015 QDDR, we can identify subtle differences that lead us to envision a framework of how the two actors generally conceptualize democracy in their legal acts and strategies.

The “resilience” of democracy is given by the society’s power to make the central authority accountable, to maintain the capability of oversight over governmental action. By having a strong base of civic activism and citizens that are aware of their political role and rights, the society can be *resilient* against the potential creeping authoritarianism of the government and defend itself against the usurpation of its civil and political rights. The society becomes resilient and more prone to sustain democracy due to a general “consensus” within the polity as everyone has a right to voice opinions and a right for those opinions to be heard. In the civil and political life, every individual is on an equal footing and this system is maintained by independent courts that uphold the rule of law. Therefore, we can read the meaning of “resilience” as effective defense against state power.

“Inclusive economic growth”, which needs to be achieved in conjunction with building a resilient democratic society, is conceptualized rather in the terms of providing individuals with economic opportunities based on easy access to entrepreneurship and thus

⁵²⁵ Op. cit., par. 6.

⁵²⁶ Op. cit., par. 9.

⁵²⁷ Op. cit., par. 24.

by having the right balance between interventions from the state into the economy and letting the market operate freely. It essentially promotes, again, the idea that if given the right amount of freedom, the market will create inclusive growth – both through investments from abroad and growing business enterprises in the emerging democracy.

In the EU’s conceptualization of the “deepness” of democracy, we cannot speak of a “defense” against state authority. The term rather signifies the need to build *trust* between the government and the individual. This trust can be achieved if the government delivers on its promises and produces the desired democratic outcomes. It is a stronger trust between the citizen and the political establishment that foster “deep democracy”. The conceptualization of the sustainability of democracy is linked to the issue of trust. Democracy can become sustainable over time, if the government establishes the right balance between what the citizen expects from it and what it can, in effect, provide. This means that the state has a much more important role to play in developing the economy and assuring basic public services – this relates also to the fact, that the EU emphasizes its devotion to social and economic *rights*. This notion is nowhere to be found in the language of US primary documents, which prefer to use the terms social and economic *freedoms*.

11.2.6 The post-Arab Spring “Strategic Framework”

In light of the continuing “Arab Spring” events, the Council released the EU’s first “strategy” on the topic of democracy promotion in June 2012. The official title was “EU Strategic Framework on Human Rights and Democracy” and it included an Action Plan for its implementation.⁵²⁸ However, more than on democracy, the strategic framework focused on the human rights agenda and generally repeated the points of the Council’s 2009 “Agenda for Action”. In this sense, the updated Action Plan for 2015-2019 (the wording of the “Strategic Framework” remained identical to the 2012 version) is more concrete in its prescriptions on democracy support. As nearly all documents described above, the updated strategic framework states that the “guiding principles of EU action in the coming years will be on a more coordinated use of all EU instruments and policies”.⁵²⁹ It seems that nearly two decades of calling for a “more coordinated” and “systematic” use of EU instruments in the

⁵²⁸ Council of the European Union, “EU Strategic Framework and Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy”, 11855/12, Luxembourg, 25 June 2012.

⁵²⁹ The Council of the European Union, EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2015-2019, 5.

realm of democracy assistance has never been fulfilled to the satisfaction of the Commission, Council or Parliament.

Interestingly, the one aspect of the new strategy Frederica Mogherini, the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, points out in her foreword is the increased focus “on empowering local actors and civil society organisations.” Comparing the language of this recent document with those in the 1990s and early 2000s, where the rhetoric of “supporting civil society” was rather sidelined and not given primary importance, the focus on NGOs and civil society in general became more acute during the “Arab Spring” period. We can assume a number of explanations for this shift in rhetoric, which went largely unnoticed.⁵³⁰ One of them is the rising trend of civil society and NGO activism in the EU as a whole and thus EU institutions need to start seeing this aspect as a component of its democratic and political identity. In addition, the EU also increasingly sees civil society as a means to alleviate its own democratic deficit. A more structural explanation would deem that the EU is losing “entry points” for reaching and influencing partner states in a top-down manner, so it diverts its focus on swaying its partners in a bottom-up manner through civil society.

The first objective of the Action plan is “Delivering a comprehensive support to public institutions”, which includes “Supporting the integrity of electoral processes and the strengthening of Election Management Bodies”, “Supporting the capacity of Parliamentary institutions”, “Targeted support to justice systems” and generally “Providing comprehensive support to public institutions”. This entails continuing to strengthen “good governance and the rule of law through support to the separation of powers, independence and accountability of democratic institutions” and strengthening “the capacity and expertise of public administration and anti-corruption bodies to develop and implement policies with integrity and good management of public resources.”

This top-down process of democratization shall be complemented by “Invigorating civil society”. Keeping in line with the EU’s concept of “deep and sustainable democracy”, the focus in the realm of human rights shall focus on “Fostering a comprehensive agenda to promote Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ESCR)” – this predetermines the EU to

⁵³⁰ Whilst in practice this shift is arguable as the budget of the EU’s one bottom-up instrument, the EIDHR, remained constant or if we look at particular case studies, such as Ukraine, where the Special measure devoted 365 million EUR to institutional building, of which 12 million was earmarked for civil society.

“promote and support the development and increased coverage of national social protection floors and gradual implementation of higher standards of social guarantees” and to underline its commitments in this sphere, the document suggests that the EU consider “accession to the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights” (the protocol has been ratified by a number of EU Member States; the US has not signed or ratified).

The new action plan for the EU’s Strategic Framework on Human Rights and Democracy and its conceptualization of democracy – or, respectively, the necessary requisites for reaching consolidated democratization – neatly fits, again, into to the concept of “embedded democracy”. The new action plan is apt at balancing out the need to strengthen the “external conditions” of democracy (socio-economic development, state administrative capacity and civil society) and the “partial regimes” of democracy (the electoral regime and civil and political rights) to foster a sustainable democratic system.

The latest document to date that can provide us with a window into how the EU conceptualizes democracy for its external action is the 2015 review of the ENP.⁵³¹ The review clearly states that “new ENP will take stabilisation as its main political priority in this mandate” and in the same sentence notes that the “EU’s own stability is built on democracy”. With regards to democracy, the term “deep democracy” used by Catherine Ashton and included in ENP language previously was dropped out and the new document maintains no reference to it. Yet the logic of term itself remained intact. The EU was still aware that fostering democracy requires steady public institutions that deliver socio-economic development and inclusive growth. Were these aspects to be separated from each other, the desired stability based on democratization of the EU’s neighborhood would be impossible.

Therefore, it is necessary to support state institutions and its bureaucracy in the political realm:

“Accountable public administration at central and local government level is key to democratic governance and economic development. Therefore public administration reform is essential. This includes strengthening democratic and independent institutions; developing local and regional authorities;

⁵³¹ Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, “Review of the European Neighbourhood Policy”, JOIN(2015) 50 final, Brussels, 18.11.2015.

*depoliticising the civil service, developing eGovernment and increasing institutional transparency and accountability. The EU will also support work to improve partner's capacity in policy development, service delivery and management of public finances, and support the work of national parliaments.*⁵³²

In parallel, the EU needs to focus on “enhancing economic governance” and assisting the role of state institutions in its economic affairs:

*“The EU should promote capacity building and new opportunities for training to help develop a new generation of public administrators capable of delivering effective and inclusive economic management and sustainable social outcomes. The modernisation of the economy, fostering innovation, the creation of jobs and boosting skills and promoting economic, social and territorial cohesion are other key aspects.”*⁵³³

The review acknowledges that the “incentive-based approach (“More for More”) has been successful in supporting reforms in the fields of good governance, democracy”, but that it “has not proven a sufficiently strong incentive to create a commitment to reform, where there is not the political will”. In such cases, the EU claims to “explore more effective ways to make its case for fundamental reforms with partners, including through engagement with civil, economic and social actors.” This can be partly interpreted as the EU’s increased devotion to work on promoting democracy and human rights through the private sector, in case the public sector refuses such cooperation.

⁵³² JOIN(2015) 50 final, 6.

⁵³³ JOIN(2015) 50 final, 7.

12 The architecture of democracy assistance instruments of the US and the EU

In the preceding chapters, we have firstly outlined the normative background and ideological tenets that undergird US and EU democracy assistance. Secondly – as our goal is to demonstrate how these diverse ideational backgrounds shape and inform democracy assistance practice – we have examined all pertinent primary guiding documents related to US and EU democracy assistance that can unearth how democracy is conceptualized within the actors’ foreign policy agendas. In order to further link theory with practice, we need to research one more level below – that is, scrutinize the very instruments that both actors employ to assist democracy in third countries and trace how the differing conceptualizations of democracy affect the design of policy instruments.

12.1 US democracy assistance instruments

12.1.1 The NED family’s support for bottom-up democratization

As mentioned earlier in the text, the recommendations of the “Democracy program” commissioned by the Reagan administration lead to the creation of one of the major institutions of the US democracy promotion infrastructure – the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) and its four core grantees: the National Democratic Institute (NDI), the International Republican Institute (IRI), the American Center for International Labor Solidarity (ACILS) and the Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE).

The reason why Congressmen gave a green light to the establishment of the NED was its planned autonomy. Even though the organization receives the bulk of its funding from the US Congress (appropriating \$170 million in the Fiscal year 2016 omnibus appropriations act – a record high number⁵³⁴), its authorizing legislation strictly spells out its non-governmental status, namely that “Nothing in this title shall be construed to make the Endowment an agency or establishment of the United States Government.”⁵³⁵ This provision takes the “mischief-making” guilt off of the US Government (at least formally) and gives the NED – designed to

⁵³⁴ In the first years of its existence, the NED received \$ 31 million annually. McInerney, Stephen and Cole Bockenfield, *The Federal Budget and Appropriations for Fiscal Year 2017: Democracy, Governance, and Human Rights in the Middle East* (Washington DC: Project on Middle East Democracy, 2016), 18.

⁵³⁵ 22 USC §4412. Grants to the Endowment, Sec. 503 (c).

be a “grant-making foundation” – a significant amount of autonomy to distribute the funds it receives.

By design, the NED can be considered as an institution that aims to foster democratization through a bottom-up, political approach and focusing more on the procedural aspects of democracy.⁵³⁶ In its Statement of Principles and Objectives, the NED states that it “generally does not fund projects aimed primarily at promoting economic and social development” and lists the key priority fields of support – these primarily are: trade unions, business, private sector institutions promoting political participation of various social groups, political parties, election participation and administration, public policy and information (i.e. research and think-tanks), civic and democratic education.⁵³⁷ An analysis of NED projects funded between 1985 – 2009 showed that the bulk of these projects focused on unions, political parties, business and dissidents. Other major themes were media, local governance (i.e. decentralization) and elections, while issues such as good governance and support for constitutions were trailing at the end of the list.⁵³⁸

The NED’s most recent strategic document from January 2012 does acknowledge that “If democratically-elected governments cannot deliver for citizens in terms of improved economic opportunity, health, and social welfare, they can quickly lose appeal, opening the way to populists who exploit grievances to gain power.” Yet, it maintains its position as an organization that supports grass-roots (bottom-up) institutions as it aims to “help democratic institutions function more effectively and responsively [by] help[ing] civil society monitor the functioning of institutions, agencies and officials, diagnose the causes of ineffective performance, propose reforms, and build civic coalitions to back those reforms.”⁵³⁹

Apart from funding various NGOs across the globe, NED serves as an “umbrella organization” for its four core grantees, to which it is obliged to grant a portion of its federal funding appropriations, but which evolve autonomously albeit in a “cooperative and at times collaborative manner”.⁵⁴⁰

⁵³⁶ The National Endowment for Democracy, *Statement of Principles and Objectives*. Available at <http://www.ned.org/about/statement-of-principles-and-objectives/> (accessed July 15, 2016).

⁵³⁷ Ibid.

⁵³⁸ Bush, *The Taming of Democracy Assistance*, 114-115.

⁵³⁹ The National Endowment for Democracy, *2012 Strategy Document*, January 2012. Available at <http://www.ned.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/2012StrategyDocument.pdf> (accessed July 15, 2016).

⁵⁴⁰ Executive Board of The Democracy Program, *The Commitment to Democracy: A Bipartisan Approach*, 23.

Both the NDI and IRI are the international branches of the Democratic and Republican parties, respectively, whose main aim is to foster cooperative relations with democratic parties around the world. Under US tax law, both organizations are so-called 501(c)(3), that is, tax-exempt and limited in lobbying activities on the national scene. They receive funding through grants not only from the NED but also from the U.S. State Department, USAID, and a number of other foundations and aid agencies (the NED provides at times only about 15 % of the institutions' budgets, depending of course, on their fundraising and other factors⁵⁴¹). They do not receive any money from the Republican or Democratic Party.

The IRI describes itself as “a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization committed to advancing freedom and democracy worldwide by helping political parties to become more issue-based and responsive, assisting citizens to participate in government planning, and working to increase the role of marginalized groups in the political process – including women and youth.”⁵⁴² From the time of its founding, the IRI has generally focused on “strengthening the ability of parties to develop and present issue-based platforms and represent citizens”, “empowering youth and women”, “helping citizens organize and advocate for solutions to community problems, demand changes in policies and raise public awareness”, public opinion research (polling), get-out-the vote initiatives, “strengthening election processes” and under its rubric of “democratic governance” the IRI has focused mainly on bringing the government “closer to citizens” and increasing its accountability.⁵⁴³

In terms of staff, budget and range of countries and programs, the NDI is the largest of NED's grantees. Its goals and key priorities are similar to those of the IRI: citizen participation, empowerment of marginalized groups, accountability and transparency of government, elections and technical support to political parties are aimed at grass-roots mobilization and the active role of citizens in civic life. More recently, the NDI has been

⁵⁴¹ See Melia, Thomas O., “The Democracy Bureaucracy: The Infrastructure of American Democracy Promotion”, A discussion paper prepared for the Princeton Project on National Security, September 2005, Appendix 1, 6. Available at https://www.princeton.edu/~ppns/papers/democracy_bureaucracy.pdf (accessed July 15, 2016).

⁵⁴² The International Republican Institute website “Who We Are”. Available at <http://www.iri.org/who-we-are/faqs> (accessed July 15, 2016).

⁵⁴³ Data collected from the IRI website and various IRI Annual Reports.

focusing on employing new technologies in emerging democracies (internet campaign strategies for political parties, polling etc.).

CIPE is an affiliate of the US Chamber of Commerce and tasks itself with strengthening the role of the private business sector in emerging democracies. It works directly with businesses and associations to mobilize them for “public policy advocacy, building knowledge of how markets function in a democracy, advancing privatization as a key step to improved competitiveness and establishing property rights and the rule of law” etc.⁵⁴⁴ The objective is to make business a part of civic life and increase its participation in the democratic process – teach business how to lobby and oversee the government, advocate market-oriented reform and work with civil society to exert pressure for democratic reform. In one of its key strategic documents from 2004, CIPE still hostility toward socialism, saying that “many citizens in emerging democracies are rejecting democratic, market-based reforms and are embracing populism, socialism, and terrorism.”⁵⁴⁵

The ACILS (Solidarity Center) is affiliated to the largest US labor union, the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO). Apart from the NED, USAID and the State Department, it receives funding from the US Department of Labor and AFL-CIO. The Center provides a wide range of education, training in basic human and worker rights, research, legal support, organizing assistance, and other resources to help build strong and effective democratic trade unions. Labor unions are a strong grass-roots force, which has great potential in exerting pressure on the standing government. In this sense, supporting the advocacy capabilities of unions is one of the main priorities of ACILS. According to the Solidarity Center, social injustice will be mitigated if “working women and men can collectively improve their wages and workplaces, call on their governments to uphold laws and protect human rights, and be a force for democracy, shared prosperity and inclusive economic development.”⁵⁴⁶

⁵⁴⁴ As the NDI and the IRI, CIPE receives funding also from the US Department of State and USAID. While in 2004 it received 60 % of its budget from the NED, in 2014 it was over 75 %.

⁵⁴⁵ Sullivan, John D., Aleksandr Shkolnikov and Catherine Kuchta-Helbling, “Democratic Governance: The Key to Political and Economic Reform”, *Center for International Private Enterprise: Economic Reform Issue Paper no. 0405*, January 22, 2004. Available at <http://www.cipe.org/sites/default/files/publication-docs/IP0405.pdf> (accessed July 15, 2016).

⁵⁴⁶ Solidarity Center website, “Our Vision”. Available at <http://www.solidaritycenter.org/who-we-are/our-vision/> (accessed July 15, 2016).

12.1.2 USAID's political aid programs

The largest player in the US democracy promotion infrastructure, however, is USAID. The Agency was established by President John F. Kennedy in 1961 through the Foreign Assistance Act and by Executive Order, but initially focused exclusively on traditional development work, despite ambiguous efforts in the latter half of the 1960s to include the building of democratic institution in third countries within USAID's mandate.⁵⁴⁷ It did not engage in democracy assistance work until the 1980s.⁵⁴⁸ The first organizational unit focusing on democracy assistance that emerged within USAID was the Office of Democratic Initiatives (ODI) established in 1984. The incoming Clinton administration spelled out democracy building as one of the four fundamental objectives of a new USAID strategy – the focus in the field of democracy was to (1) strengthen the rule of law and respect for human rights; (2) support genuine and competitive political processes; (3) increase development of politically active civil society; and (4) support transparent and accountable government institutions.⁵⁴⁹

In 1994 ODI was (re)established as Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI)⁵⁵⁰ and formed part of the humanitarian bureau. Since a reorganization in 2001 operates under the Bureau of Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance (DCHA). Moreover, in February 2012, USAID formally launched the Center of Excellence on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance (DRG Center), which serves to elevate and integrate democracy, human rights and governance within the Agency's overall development portfolio.

As seen in Graph X, the democracy assistance (under the program area Democracy and Governance) budget of the Agency has varied over time – the sudden increase after 2001 and 2003 is attributed to nation-building efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

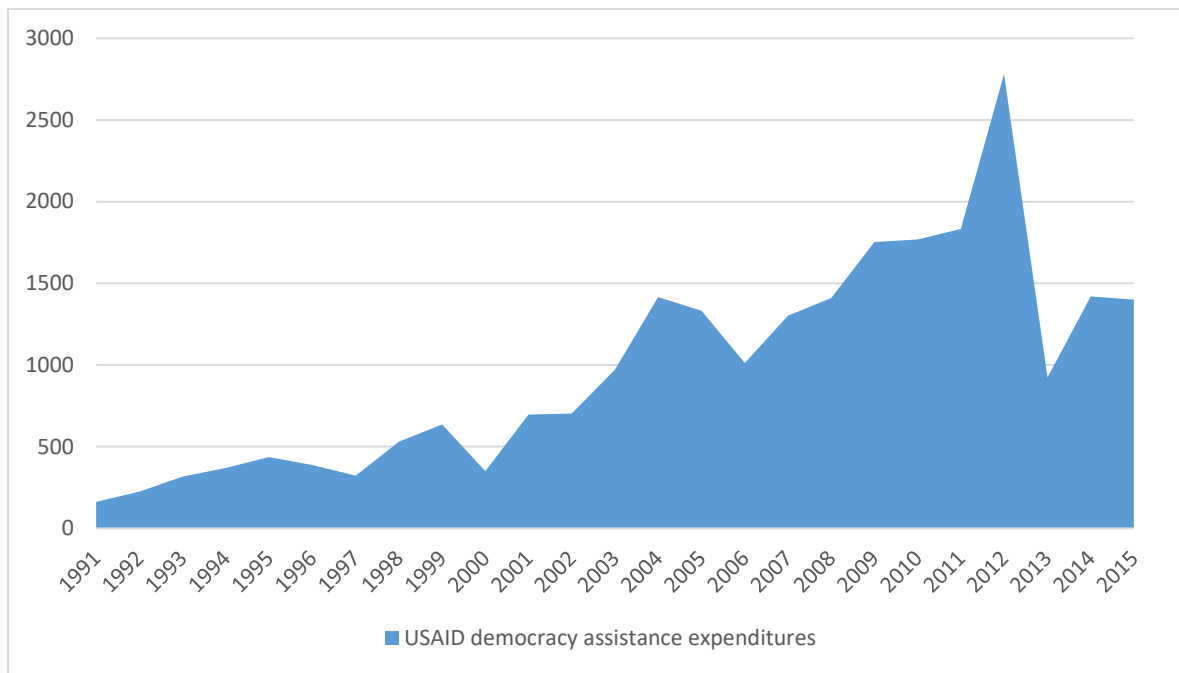
⁵⁴⁷ See Carothers, Thomas, *Aiding Democracy Abroad: The Learning Curve* (Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1999), 22-27.

⁵⁴⁸ Bush, *The Taming of Democracy Assistance*, 125.

⁵⁴⁹ Burnell, Peter, "Democracy Assistance: Origins and Organizations" in Burnell, *Democracy Assistance*, 38.

⁵⁵⁰ OTI is specially designed to provide "fast, flexible, short-term assistance targeted at key political transition and stabilization needs." The goal is to be capable of mobilizing democracy funding in a short period of time, without the traditional administrative burdens. For this cause, OTI uses a special public procurement mechanism, the so-called Indefinite Quantity Contract (IQC). This mechanism preserves the principle of competition in public contracts, yet enables OTI to direct small grants to CSOs in third countries in a much shorter period than through the standard procurement process.

Graph 12.1.2 USAID democracy assistance expenditures (in millions of constant USD)⁵⁵¹



Compared to the NED and its four grantees, USAID devotes a portion of its budget to the area of good governance (in terms of top-down democracy assistance). Throughout the existence of USAID’s programs focused explicitly on democracy assistance, the Agency has maintained four key areas of support: rule of law, governance, civil society and elections and political processes.⁵⁵² While in the 1990s, the civil society subsector received the highest allocation of all four areas of support⁵⁵³, the 21st century saw the most expenditures in the sector of governance⁵⁵⁴ – again, this rise should be mainly attributed US engagement in Iraq

⁵⁵¹ Source: USAID Accountability Reports; Performance and Accountability Reports; Agency Financial Reports and for data from 1991 to 1999, Carothers, *Aiding Democracy Abroad*. The data correspond to program areas: Democracy and Governance (until 2005), Democracy and Human rights (2005-2006) and Governing justly and democratically (2007 onwards). The graph shows total costs for program area.

⁵⁵² The current “Governing justly and democratically” operations comprise four program areas: civil society, Rule of Law and Human Rights, Good Governance, and Political Competition and Consensus-Building, which more or less correspond to the ones mentioned in the text.

⁵⁵³ In 1992, civil society received \$92.5 million, governance \$23.6 million, rule of law \$70.2 million and elections and political processes \$38.5 million. In 1999, the numbers were \$230.8 million for civil society, \$203.2 million for governance, \$146.9 million for rule of law and \$58.9 million for elections and political processes. Carothers, *Aiding Democracy Abroad*, 50.

⁵⁵⁴ In 2010, \$338 million were spent on the civil society subsector, \$934 million on good governance, \$181 on rule of law and human rights and \$314 on political competition and consensus-building. In 2015, civil society received \$269 million, good governance \$792, rule of law and human rights \$164 and political competition and consensus-building \$174. USAID, *Agency Financial Report*, Fiscal Year 2010, 2015.

and Afghanistan, where Washington had a much larger number of entry points to influence the development of the respective political regimes⁵⁵⁵. Nevertheless, the preference for a bottom-up approach by USAID, when it lacks effective entry points has been highlighted by the US General Accounting Office (GAO) in one of its reports to the Chairman of the International Relations Committee of the House of Representatives:

*“Based on USAID’s experience in Eastern Europe and Russia, USAID has focused its democratic assistance on working with citizens to develop a civil society that would push for democratic reforms from the bottom, up, rather than focusing on the national government.”*⁵⁵⁶

Given that USAID has strong institutional linkages with the State Department, the two organizations have since 2003 jointly elaborated a Strategic plan – each of the multiyear plans devoted space to the issue of promoting democracy. The plan for fiscal years 2004–2009 conceptualized democracy as a “society of free citizens [...] founded on a profound commitment to the dignity of each individual and to good governance. Representative government needs to be built on a culture of democracy that includes the rule of law, limits on the absolute power of the state, free speech, freedom of worship, freedom of association, equal justice, respect for women, and respect for private property.” The strategic plan further notes that “[w]ithout this intangible infrastructure, democracy may become a vehicle for the very tyranny that our Founding Fathers feared”.⁵⁵⁷

The succeeding Strategic plan (2007-2012) was more concrete in enumerating the measures by which DoS and USAID would pursue the goal of strengthening democracies abroad. The guiding words of George W. Bush cited at the outset of the chapter on democracy promotion seem to describe in a nutshell all the sectors the strategic document aims to strengthen – Bush is quoted saying, “America will always stand firm for the non-negotiable demands of human dignity: the rule of law; limits on the power of the state; respect for women; private property; free speech; equal justice; and religious tolerance.”⁵⁵⁸ The ensuing “strategic priorities” include supporting:

⁵⁵⁵ See also Bridoux and Russell, *Liberal democracy promotion in Iraq*.

⁵⁵⁶ General Accounting Office, *Foreign Assistance: U.S. Economic and Democratic Assistance to the Central Asian Republics*, Report to the Chairman, Committee on International Relations, House of Representatives, August 1999, 6.

⁵⁵⁷ US State Department and USAID, *Strategic Plan Fiscal Years 2004-2009*, Washington DC: 2003, 19.

⁵⁵⁸ US State Department and USAID, *Strategic Plan Fiscal Years 2007-2012*, Washington DC: May 2007, 18.

- Rule of Law and Human Rights (Strengthen judicial independence and impartiality; support human rights advocates and defenders, including legal defense for advocates under pressure by their governments; ensure an effective and equitable justice system)
- Good governance (Strengthen legislative, lawmaking, and legal reform processes; work to reduce corruption to foster citizen confidence and help develop legitimate, stable, democratic institutions that are accountable to the people; promote and support decentralization; promote the professionalization of the security sector)
- Political Competition and Consensus-Building (Support free, fair, legitimate, and credible elections; develop and strengthen democratic political parties; increase citizen awareness of rights and responsibilities, and encourage greater participation in political processes)
- Civil Society (Develop and strengthen the capacity of NGOs to advocate; advance media freedom; increase citizen participation and oversight in governance; sustain the UN Democracy Fund’s support to civil society organizations).⁵⁵⁹

Moreover, the 2014-2017 Strategic Plan provides an elaborate rationale for supporting civil society as part of democracy promotion, which deserves to be cited in length:

“[...] since the late 20th century, international relations have not been about ties between governments. The growth of new democracies, shifts in culture, rise of the middle class worldwide, and advances in technology have resulted in the diffusion of power from governments to citizens. [...] Today, international relations are increasingly about the links between societies rather than governments.

Civil society can be a catalyst for social, political, and economic progress. Civic groups mobilize people and resources to fight disease and hunger. They work to strengthen rule of law and promote accountability and transparency. They are also critical to economic development, because in our global economy, trade and investment flow to countries that give citizens the freedom to create and develop new ideas. [...] For the United States, strengthening and protecting civil society is not just a matter of good global citizenship; it is a more effective and efficient path to advancing key foreign policy objectives.”⁵⁶⁰

The consistent focus on the four core program areas of democracy assistance shows also a strategic coherence of USAID, which has formulated its strategy (at least in the field of democracy assistance) in a similar fashion throughout the years. The goal of the rule of law

⁵⁵⁹ Op. cit., 19-21.

⁵⁶⁰ US State Department and USAID, *Strategic Plan Fiscal Years 2014-2017*, Washington DC: March 2014, 34-35.

and human rights program area has been “to advance and protect human and individual rights [...] and to promote societies in which the state and its citizens are accountable to laws that are publicly promulgated, equally enforced, and independently adjudicated, and which are consistent with international norms and standards.”

In the governance program area, USAID has been mainly focusing on decentralization, reducing corruption and strengthening law-making processes in order to make governments more responsive, accountable and transparent for their citizens. Namely decentralization has often been labeled as a cornerstone of USAID’s governance support. The principal objective to be achieved through decentralization is to “increase governmental responsiveness to citizens (women as well as men) at the local level”. So, the goal is not only to improve local administration and government capacity to deliver services for citizens, but firstly to enhance “people’s capacity to participate in local government and hold it accountable”. According to Blair, this narrative of the effects of decentralization “accords with USAID’s concept of democracy as primarily an end in itself, worthy of achieving for its own sake.”⁵⁶¹ He further emphasizes that this perception of local government (as being firstly *democratic* and only secondly providing services) is a fallacy that the US adheres to as a consequence of its “reverence of a Tocquevillian model of a vibrant grass-roots pluralism at the local level.”⁵⁶²

For example, according to findings by Daniela Huber, the vast majority of the democracy aid (some 87 %) provided to state institutions by USAID in the Middle East and North Africa region was used for programs supporting decentralization and local governments and administrations. As Huber notes, this disproportionate focus on decentralization is “remarkable, because the European Commission [...] hardly funds decentralization in its [democracy assistance] programmes.”⁵⁶³ In 2012 alone, the US devoted over 300% more funding to decentralization than the EU.⁵⁶⁴

⁵⁶¹ Blair, Harry, “USAID and Democratic Decentralization: Taking the Measure of an Assistance Programme” in Burnell, *Democracy Assistance*, 228.

⁵⁶² *Op. cit.*, 235.

⁵⁶³ Huber, Daniela, “Democracy Assistance in the Middle East and North Africa: A Comparison of US and EU Policies”, *Mediterranean Politics* 13 (1), 2008: 48-49.

⁵⁶⁴ Directorate-General for External Policies of the Union, “A Comparative Study of EU and US Approaches to Human Rights in External Relations”, Brussels, November 2014, 79-80. Available at [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2014/534981/EXPO_STU\(2014\)534981_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2014/534981/EXPO_STU(2014)534981_EN.pdf) (accessed August 15, 2016).

The program area of political competition and consensus-building has focused on supporting free, fair, legitimate, and credible elections and political processes; developing and strengthening democratic political parties; increasing citizen awareness of rights and responsibilities, and encouraging greater participation in political processes. Civil society is being developed and strengthened in order to have the capacity to advocate for good governance, democratization, and human rights. Furthermore, USAID strives to “increase citizen participation and oversight in governance through education and awareness training on rights and responsibilities”.⁵⁶⁵

The most recent USAID Strategy on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance reiterates that the Agency “will prioritize participation and inclusion to empower reformers and citizens from the bottom up so they can have a greater say in how they are governed and have a stake in the process.” However, claiming that the new strategy “replaces a 20-year-old set of categories”, USAID vows to “Assist state institutions at all levels in delivering on the mandates of their offices, fulfilling the public trust, and providing public goods and services through transparent and responsive governance” – this new objective may signal a stronger focus on top-down assistance than in the past.⁵⁶⁶

As within the NED framework, we can see that the USAID narrative for democracy assistance is to primarily empower citizens to be capable of active civic participation and thereby acquire the capacity to oversee the workings of their government.

12.1.3 Focus of democracy assistance programs of the executive branch

“The nation’s primary democracy advocate”, the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL) within the Department of State (DoS), was established in 1994⁵⁶⁷ and since FY 1998 administers the Human Rights and Democracy Fund (HRDF). The HRDF is essentially a bottom-up instrument focusing on “non-state actors and thus the development of democratic societies rather than state institutions.”⁵⁶⁸ The Fund is conceived to act as the

⁵⁶⁵ See Bureau of Resource Management, Department of State, *FY 2007-2012 Department of State and USAID Strategic Plan*, Strategic Goal 2: Governing Justly and Democratically, May 2007.

⁵⁶⁶ USAID, *Strategy on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance*, June 2013.

⁵⁶⁷ It was created as a consequence of the reorganization and renaming of the former Bureau of Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs, created under the Jimmy Carter Administration in 1977. US Department of State website, “Democracy”. Available at <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/democ/> (accessed July 18, 2016).

⁵⁶⁸ Stahn, Andreas and Vera van Hüllen, “Different actors, different tools? Approaching EU and US democracy promotion in the Mediterranean and the Newly Independent States”, Paper prepared for the European Union Studies Association (EUSA), Tenth Biennial International Conference, May 17-19, 2007, Montreal, Canada.

DoS's flexible "venture capital" fund for democracy and human rights, which enables the US to "support democracy activists worldwide, open political space in struggling or nascent democracies and authoritarian regimes, and bring positive transnational change."⁵⁶⁹ The appropriations for HRDF have been rising steadily from \$7.8 million in its first year of operation to \$88.5 million in FY 2016.⁵⁷⁰ In addition, DRL is responsible for administering a portion of the funds allocated under the Support for Eastern Europe Democracy (SEED) Act of 1989 (along with USAID and other institutions).

In 2003, the Bush administration – as a part of its Freedom Agenda in the Middle East – created the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI), a regional democracy assistance program of which the program areas are "Supporting Democracy Builders", "Empowering women", "Inspiring Youth" and "Fostering Economic Opportunity". Starting with an initial allocation of \$29 million⁵⁷¹, MEPI funds have been used for projects ranging from voter registration programs, training sessions for female candidates for parliament to commercial law initiatives and the development of information technology.⁵⁷² MEPI's approach is stated to be "bottom-up and grassroots, responding directly to local interests and needs" and its funds are allocated as small grants to CSOs – these usually range from \$25 000 to \$150 000.⁵⁷³ Although MEPI was clearly designed to be a bottom-up instrument similar to the HRDF, a study conducted two years after its inception has found that the Initiative has rather applied a top-down approach, distributing nearly 70% of its funds to regional governments (in activities ranging from translating documents to computerizing schools).⁵⁷⁴ Nevertheless, this seems to be an aberration from its stated approach (perhaps due to a lack of a coherent

⁵⁶⁹ US Department of State website, DRL Programs. Available at <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/p/index.htm> (accessed July 18, 2016).

⁵⁷⁰ DRL also administers special funds, which the US implements in cooperation with other countries around the world, these are Lifeline: Embattled Civil Society Organizations Assistance Fund and Human Rights Defenders Fund.

⁵⁷¹ The highest funding granted by the US Congress to MEPI was in 2006 (\$142 million), nonetheless, the average MEPI for fiscal years since have been around \$65 million.

⁵⁷² Sharp, Jeremy M., "The Middle East Partnership Initiative: An Overview", *Congressional Research Service Report for Congress*, February 10, 2005.

⁵⁷³ Otterman, Sharon, "Middle East: Promoting Democracy", *Council on Foreign Relations Backgrounders*, October 10, 2003. Available at <http://www.cfr.org/democratization/middle-east-promoting-democracy/p7709> (accessed July 18, 2016).

⁵⁷⁴ See Wittes, Tamara Cofman and Sarah E. Yerkes, "The Middle East Partnership Initiative: Progress, Problems, and Prospects," Middle East Memo No. 5, *Saban Center at the Brookings Institution*, November 29, 2004. Available at <http://www.brookings.edu/research/papers/2004/11/29middleeast-wittes> (accessed July 18, 2016).

strategic framework) and the focus is largely viewed as targeting mainly NGOs, civic participation in the political process and fostering market-oriented reform.⁵⁷⁵

The State Department also administers a number of small regional democracy funds, such as the Near East Regional Democracy Program⁵⁷⁶ (budget request for FY 2016 was \$30 million), also a largely bottom-up instrument aiming at internet freedom, civil society capacity-building, advocacy and awareness training activities that address human rights abuses and lack of due process and access to justice and generally improving the capacity of citizens and civil society groups to advocate for domestic interests.⁵⁷⁷

An often-overlooked program and one that does not explicitly fall under the rubric of democracy assistance is the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP). The IVLP is the US Department of State's professional exchange program that provides foreign leaders from a variety of fields with short-term visits to the United States, upon which they "cultivate lasting relationships with their American counterparts".⁵⁷⁸ The instrument's alumni include Frederik de Klerk, Anwar Sadat, Margaret Thatcher or Hamid Karzai.⁵⁷⁹ American diplomats are calling IVLP "the best money we spend overseas", as it is a "program that offers foreigners direct exposure to the workings of American democracy [which] is clearly urgently needed."⁵⁸⁰ Up to date, some 337 alumni of the program have served as current or former chiefs of state and heads of government in their home countries.

The logic behind a program like IVLP reflects the American perception of how revolutions originate. As Kopstein describes the discrepancy in the views of the collapse of the Soviet bloc: the Americans saw the revolutions as a "bottom-up movement, a celebration

⁵⁷⁵ See Salime, Zakia, "Securing the Market, Pacifying Civil Society, Empowering Women: The Middle East Partnership Initiative", *Sociological Forum* 25 (4), 2010: 725-745; Craner, Lorne, "Democracy in the Middle East: Will U.S. Democratization Policy Work?", *Middle East Quarterly* 13 (3), 2006: 3-10; Mulrean, Peter F., "MEPI: Adding to the Diplomatic Toolbox", *Foreign Service Journal* 86 (1), 2009: 40-45.

⁵⁷⁶ Formerly known as the Iran Democracy Fund. It was renamed by the Obama administration in 2009.

⁵⁷⁷ McNerney, Stephen and Cole Bockenfeld, *The Federal Budget and Appropriations for Fiscal Year 2016: Democracy, Governance, and Human Rights in The Middle East and North Africa* (Washington DC: Project on Middle East Democracy, 2015), 16. Department of State, *Congressional Budget Justification FY 2016*, Foreign Operations, Appendix 3, 229. Available at <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/238222.pdf> (accessed July 18, 2016).

⁵⁷⁸ Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs website, IVLP. Available at <https://eca.state.gov/ivlp> (accessed July 19, 2016).

⁵⁷⁹ Since its founding in 1940, the program has brought over 200 000 leaders to the US. Annually the the programs accomodates around 5 000 individuals and in the last years has had a budget of around \$90 million.

⁵⁸⁰ Lozovsky, Ilya, "Rolling Up the Welcome Mat", *Foreign Policy*, March 10, 2015. Available at <http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/03/10/rolling-up-the-welcome-mat-soft-power-public-diplomacy-democracy/> (accessed July 19, 2016).

of freedom in which people [...] managed to cast off the yoke of dictatorship”, while the Europeans saw that the “true *dramatis personae* of history [...] were found in Kremlin and not in the streets of Warsaw or Budapest [...] Political leaders and diplomats, not demonstrators, brought about regime change.”⁵⁸¹ In this sense, Europe views reform and revolution as a top-down effort carried out or enabled by state institutions; for the US a true democratic revolution needs to “topple the leader, pull down his statue, and let civil society take over.”⁵⁸²

The Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), established by Congress in 2004, but operating independently of any federal department or agency, is the only US instrument that formally employs conditionality. The MCC is not a democracy assistance instrument *per se*, it is a development corporation that allocates funding based on pre-defined criteria. Sixteen official criteria for determining which countries shall be eligible for MCC fall into three categories: “encouraging economic freedom,” “investing in people,” and “ruling justly” – the last category includes standards of democratic governance. Thus, the recipient country’s compact with the MCC is contingent on its willingness to pursue political and economic reforms. At the same time, the MCC strongly supports the involvement of stakeholders (government, private sector and citizens) in the definition and the supervision of the implementation of aid compacts, as well as civic participation in government. Kurki and Bridoux explain this willingness to promote citizen empowerment and their active participation in public decision-making as “merely in the name of accountability and transparency of governmental action” and effectively for the sake of social stability and the mitigation of social tensions generated by a functioning capitalist economy. In this sense, they view MCC as a neoliberal project that aims to generate economic growth and thus development through free markets.⁵⁸³

The Department of Defense also administers a program that we can qualify as democracy assistance. The International Military Education and Training (IMET) is designed as an exchange program for military officers and personnel and works with an annual budget

⁵⁸¹ Kopstein, *Transatlantic Divide over Democracy Promotion*, 86-87.

⁵⁸² *Op. cit.*, 88

⁵⁸³ Bridoux, Jeff and Milja Kurki, *Democracy Promotion: A Critical Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 59.

of around \$100 million.⁵⁸⁴ Apart from acquiring technical knowledge, the objective of the program is to “Expose foreign military and civilian personnel to the important roles democratic values and internationally recognized human rights can play in governance and military operations.”⁵⁸⁵ Like the IVLP, IMET targets individuals in leadership positions (or prospective leaders) and aims to strengthen their ties with the US, while emphasizing democratic norms and hoping that the alumni of these programs bring the adherence to and respect for these norms back to their home countries.

12.2 EU democracy assistance instruments

12.2.1 The first post-Cold War democracy assistance instruments

As mentioned earlier, one of the first formal democracy promotion initiatives pursued by the EU can be traced back to 1986, when the European Parliament introduced a new budget line titled “Assistance to NGOs in Chile” into the European Community’s budget. This was soon followed by the insertion of other self-standing budget lines focusing on the protection of human rights and democracy assistance in Latin America and post-communist countries – for example, the “PHARE⁵⁸⁶ Democracy” and “TACIS⁵⁸⁷ Democracy”. The former focused on Eastern European countries, while the latter focused on the newly independent states of the former Soviet Union.

PHARE and TACIS can be considered as the first EU instruments explicitly geared toward assisting democratic transformation. In the first years of implementation, both programs adopted a mixed top-down/bottom-up approach to supporting the democratization process in the post-communist countries.⁵⁸⁸ The PHARE program, for example, initially had two specific objectives:

⁵⁸⁴ US Department of State website, “International Military Education and Training Account Summary”. Available at <http://www.state.gov/t/pm/ppa/sat/c14562.htm> (accessed July 19, 2016).

⁵⁸⁵ US Department of State, *FY 2007 Budget Justification*, Military Assistance, 211. Available at <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/60649.pdf> (accessed July 19, 2016).

⁵⁸⁶ Poland and Hungary: Assistance for Restructuring their Economies. Launched in 1989. PHARE’s budget for 1989-1999 was €11 billion; for 2000-2006 it was €10 billion.

⁵⁸⁷ Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States. Launched in 1991. TACIS’s budget for 1991-1999 was €4.2 billion; for 2000-2006 it was €3.14 billion.

⁵⁸⁸ See ISA Consult, “Evaluation of the PHARE and TACIS Democracy Programme 1992 – 1997”, Final Report. Available at http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/how/evaluation/evaluation_reports/reports/cards/951432_en.pdf (accessed July 20, 2016).

*“a) the acquisition of knowledge and techniques about democratic practices and the rule of law by relevant bodies and professionals in the CEECs [Central and Eastern European countries],
b) the strengthening of local associations and institutions which, by their vocation, can make a continuing contribution to the promoting of a pluralistic society”*⁵⁸⁹

The program later evolved into an “accession-driven” instrument and focused primarily on preparing candidate countries to satisfy the criteria for accession. The goal of PHARE hence became “to assist the candidate countries in their efforts to strengthen their public administrations and institutions to function effectively inside the Union, to promote convergence with the European Community's extensive legislation and reduce the need for transition periods and to promote economic and social cohesion.”⁵⁹⁰

The support for NGOs remained in the program and was directed at four (rather non-political) areas of activity: (1) local development; (2) business and enterprise development; (3) human resources development; (4) socio-economic development.⁵⁹¹ In addition, both PHARE and TACIS were evaluated based on their contribution to building “substantive” democracy, as they focused on a number of thematic areas ranging from human rights, status of minorities to political culture and local and regional governments.⁵⁹²

In 1992, the EU launched the SIGMA program (Support for Improvement in Governance and Management) designed for candidate countries. SIGMA had been designed as a medium-term tool for public governance and administrative modernization, targeting “public governance institutions responsible for horizontal management systems of government – civil service, administrative law, expenditure management, financial control, external audit, public procurement, policy and regulatory capacities and property rights management”.⁵⁹³ This top-down governance support program has been extended in 2008 to other (non-candidate) countries in the EU’s neighborhood.

⁵⁸⁹ Cited in ISA Consult, *Evaluation of the PHARE and TACIS Democracy Programme*, 9.

⁵⁹⁰ Report from the Commission – The PHARE programme annual report 2001, COM (2003) 97 final. Available at <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52003DC0097&from=EN> (accessed July 20, 2016).

⁵⁹¹ The PHARE Programme and the enlargement of the European Union, Briefing no. 33. Available at http://www.europarl.europa.eu/enlargement/briefings/33a2_en.htm#4 (accessed July 20, 2016).

⁵⁹² ISA Consult, *Evaluation of the PHARE and TACIS Democracy Programme*, 13, 17, 21.

⁵⁹³ Evaluation of the Programme Support for Improvement in Governance and Management (SIGMA) for European Neighbourhood Region (SIGMA / ENPI), Final Report, June 2013. Available at

The gradual creation of individual budget lines and the allocation of moderate amounts to democracy promotion was a rather intuitive and uncoordinated process of the European Union. Nevertheless, the process gained momentum after 1992, when the European Parliament decided on the Resolution on a “European Democracy Initiative” and, more importantly, the Maastricht Treaty was signed into force.

In the Resolution, the Parliament, making references to “the development of democratic movements across Europe, Asia and in other continents”, “the establishment in 1983 by the US Congress of the National Endowment for Democracy” and the positive results of its moves towards democracy in Chile, proposed “the establishment of a ‘European Democracy Initiative’ to provide financial aid through the Community budget on a non-party basis, principally through parliamentary institutions and to non-governmental organizations and non-profit groups, for general civic education and to stabilise and reinforce democratic principles in non-EC countries”.⁵⁹⁴ Hence in 1993 the budget heading “European Democracy Initiative” was included in the budget, yet without any financial allocation.

In 1994 the existing human rights and democracy budget lines were grouped into a single budget Chapter with the heading “European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights” (EIDHR) – this step *de facto* fulfilled the aim of the Resolution mentioned above to launch a “European Democracy Initiative”.

EIDHR is the one EU instrument that is concerned with building democracy from the inside of the target country in a bottom-up approach. Appropriating EIDHR’s funds does not require the consent of governments in beneficiary countries, yet the instrument is prohibited from directly financing any political parties. EIDHR restriction on supporting political parties in third countries reflects the wider EU policy of apolitical, non-coercive and low-profile democracy assistance. As Director of the EU Office of the IRI Miriam Lexmann noted, even though “both the EU and the US consider support for civil society an inseparable part of international democracy support schemes, they differ in their understanding of who the key partners for transformation are.” According to Lexmann, while the US channels its assistance

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/evaluation-programme-support-sigma-enpi-1325-main-report-201306_en_0.pdf (accessed July 21, 2016).

⁵⁹⁴ European Parliament, “Resolution on a European Democracy Initiative”, OJ 1992 C150/281, 1992.

to politically engaged NGOs, political parties, trade unions and businesses, “the EU restricts access to its support primarily to the non-political part of the civil society spectrum”.⁵⁹⁵

The instrument’s budget for the program period 2007-2014 was €1.1 billion and for 2014–2020 it is €1.3 billion. EIDHR encompasses five broader objectives (which have been fairly steady throughout its existence), two of which can be explicitly associated with democracy assistance.⁵⁹⁶ As a consequence, about 40-45% of the instrument’s budget is directly connected to democracy assistance. Other supported measures are in the realm of human rights protection, yet as its strategic document states: “The EIDHR pillars of democracy and human rights are inextricably linked.”⁵⁹⁷ In this sense, a large portion of the funding is allocated to the category of social and economic rights. The support for all three generations of rights is specifically enumerated in the founding Regulation of EIDHR, wherein it is stated that “the EU should apply a rights-based approach encompassing all human rights, whether civil, political, economic, social or cultural.”⁵⁹⁸

Given the EIDHR’s presumed reluctance to engage in projects that are considered too political, it has been criticized for preferring the support of “civil society in the form of NGOs that rather become the providers of social and advisory services [...and thereby the EU] renders the NGOs rather technical instead of political and thus misses the chance of strengthening a liberal narrative” in target countries.⁵⁹⁹ Likewise, in the Mediterranean

⁵⁹⁵ From her position, she has also advocated for the EU to “move away from budgetary support and invest a greater proportion of the overall country-based aid budget in civil society, including political parties and organisations.” Lexmann, Miriam, “No party, no society: the EU’s and the US’s differing approaches to providing international aid to political parties”, *European View* 14 (2), 2015: 155, 157.

⁵⁹⁶ The current objectives from the 2014-2017 EIDHR strategy are: (1) – Support to Human Rights and Human Rights Defenders in situations where they are most at risk (20-25% of allocation); (2) – Support to other EU Human Rights Priorities (20-25%) – e.g. death penalty, human dignity, torture; (3) – Support to Democracy (15-20%); (4) – EU Election Observation (up to 25%); and (5) – Support to targeted key actors and processes, including international and regional human rights instruments and mechanisms (10%).

⁵⁹⁷ Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights Worldwide, Multiannual Indicative Programme (2014-2017), 7. Available at http://eeas.europa.eu/human_rights/docs/eidhr-mip-2014-2017_en.pdf (accessed July 20, 2016).

⁵⁹⁸ Regulation (EU) No 235/2014 of The European Parliament and of The Council of 11 March 2014 establishing a financing instrument for democracy and human rights worldwide, Art. 1, par. 8. Available at <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2014:077:0085:0094:EN:PDF> (accessed July 20, 2016).

⁵⁹⁹ Mühlenhoff, Hanna, “Funding Democracy, Funding Social Services? The European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights in the Context of Competing Narratives in Turkey,” *Journal of Balkan & Near Eastern Studies* 16 (1), 2014: 102-118.

region, the EIDHR “promoted human rights (and politically less controversial human rights in particular) more than democracy”.⁶⁰⁰

An interesting conceptual difference in the operation of US and EU grant making organizations – namely EIDHR and USAID – was described by Kurki and Bridoux, who have found that USAID “does not only consider development and democracy promotion programmes as ‘aid’ but as an *investment* in a better future for the United States and the world.” (emphasis added). In order for a CSO to receive funding from USAID it must fulfill such criteria that make it *competitive* in the “aid market”. The authors thus indicate that “a fully marketized model of democracy support delivery is at work in the US context.” On the other hand, EIDHR employs slightly different methods of delivery where it does not wish to “‘safeguard investment’ as in the US but to safeguard ‘public money’.” CSOs, in the EU’s contextualization, are viewed as entrepreneurial actors fighting for funding, but in a competitive “public funding” market.⁶⁰¹

For the purposes of our analysis of EU democracy assistance, it is important to return to the European Development Fund, which was already mentioned in a preceding chapter. The EDF assists democracy from a rather developmental perspective – it focuses primarily on democratic governance, i.e. capacity-building of public administration, direct budget support and since 2012 designs the so-called State Building Contracts (SBC) with EDF recipient countries. The general objective of the SBCs points to a strictly top-down democracy building, as its aim is “to contribute to the eradication of poverty through the promotion of sustainable and inclusive growth and the consolidation of democracy by supporting the Government’s macroeconomic stability programme and thereby mitigate the risk of further social tensions resulting in widespread violence”.⁶⁰² Case studies examining democracy assistance provided by the EDF further demonstrate that it gives more emphasis

⁶⁰⁰ Bicchi, Federica, “Democracy Assistance in the Mediterranean: An Overview”, *Mediterranean Politics* 14 (1), 2009: 75.

⁶⁰¹ Bridoux and Kurki, *Cosmetic agreements and the cracks beneath*, 67.

⁶⁰² Bernardi, Myra, Tom Hart and Gideon Rabinowitz, “EU State Building Contracts: Early lessons from the EU’s new budget support instrument for fragile states”, *ODI Report*, February 2015, 18. Available at <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/9441.pdf> (accessed July 20, 2016).

to top-down and substantive democracy assistance and assistance to civil society remains quite limited (partly because it is deemed to be complemented by EIDHR).⁶⁰³

To balance the EU's focus on the CEECs and amidst a growing concern about instability in its southern flank, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the then 15 members of the Union launched the so-called Barcelona process in 1995. This was a framework to manage the bilateral and regional relations and served as the basis for the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP). The partnership consisted of a series of bilateral association agreements (AA), which basically served as the EU instrument for promoting democratic change in the region. All Mediterranean partners have been obliged to endorse a human rights clause in their respective AAs, which stipulated a commitment to democratic reform. In theory, the European Union could use the clause as a "stick" and withhold aid or suspend trade when governments committed serious human rights offenses. As aptly described by Yacoubian, "The basic precept of the Barcelona Process is to exploit the deliberate linkage of political and economic policies and extract better performance on the former through the latter".⁶⁰⁴ In other words, the hope of the EU was to incentivize partner governments to conduct reforms by providing them with economic incentives. According to this logic, the democratization work lay in the hands of the Mediterranean governments.

The financial arm of the EMP was the MEDA program. One the three objectives outlined for the program was "reinforcing political stability and democracy", while "supporting sustainable socio-economic development, in particular through: [...] the improvement of social services (education, health, housing, water, etc.); the strengthening of democracy, human rights and the rule of law; the protection and improvement of the environment; the upgrading of economic infrastructure, especially in the sectors of transport, energy and the information society [etc.]".⁶⁰⁵ Thus the focus of the program – with an allocation of circa €1 billion a year – was very wide. Also, by the wording of the MEDA

⁶⁰³ Del Biondo, Karen, "Democracy Promotion in Restrictive Environments: Ethiopia and Eritrea" and Carbone, Maurizio and Karen Del Biondo, "Responding to Political Crises in the South Pacific: The Solomon Islands and Fiji" in Wetzel and Orbie, *The Substance of EU Democracy Promotion*.

⁶⁰⁴ Yacoubian, Mona, *Promoting Middle East Democracy: European Initiatives* (Washington DC: United States Institute for Peace, 2004), 5.

⁶⁰⁵ Council Regulation (EC) No 1488/96 of 23 July 1996 on financial and technical measures to accompany (MEDA) the reform of economic and social structures in the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership.

program regulation, we can see that rather than an end in itself, democracy was viewed as a means to achieve sustainable socio-economic development in the region.

Given that the EMP's goal was to preserve stability in the Mediterranean region, the EU was also very cautious in implementing projects perceived as too intrusive (or political) by local governments. In fact, of the three "baskets" (political, economic, and cultural) of the EMP, the majority of MEDA funds have been spent on the second basket, as aid was oriented toward offsetting the social cost of economic reform.⁶⁰⁶ However, a portion of funding had been devoted to promoting good governance, but due to tensions with Mediterranean governments, the political basket funding was geared more toward "tame" projects, focusing on women's and children's rights. Consequently, as the traditional top-down approach was not possible given the local governments' unwillingness to engage with the EU in this manner and the EU's own preference for stability over any confrontation, the MEDA program was left with timid support for NGOs and very little institution building. Indeed, democracy assistance amounted to only 0.5% of all aid provided to the region in the 1990s.⁶⁰⁷

12.2.2 The second half of the 1990s and contemporary instruments

The EU's perceived geopolitical imperative prevalent in the second half of the 1990's was enlargement and thus the preparation of candidate states from Eastern Europe for accession to the Union. Correspondingly, the EU shaped its democracy promotion instruments (as the transformation of PHARE described above).⁶⁰⁸ Therefore, democracy assistance became convoluted with the objective of "europeanizing", i.e. socializing candidate states. The EU created new accession instruments, such the SAPARD, CARDS and ISPA⁶⁰⁹ programs targeted at bringing Eastern European (and Western Balkan) countries closer to the Union – politically, economically and infrastructure-wise – and which worked on an inter-

⁶⁰⁶ Yacoubian, *Promoting Middle East Democracy*, 5.

⁶⁰⁷ Youngs, Richard, "The European Union and Democracy Promotion in the Mediterranean: A New or Disingenuous Strategy?" *Democratization* 9 (1), 2002: 55.

⁶⁰⁸ This also demonstrates a shift from the "linkage" model of democracy promotion (consists of activities that tackle the societal preconditions for democracy and give support to the democratic opposition and other civil society actors in the target countries) to the "leverage" model (top-down inducement of political elites towards democratic reforms via political conditionality) as described by Sandra Lavenex and Frank Schimmelfennig in "EU democracy promotion in the neighbourhood: from leverage to governance?", *Democratization* 18 (4), 2011: 885-909.

⁶⁰⁹ SAPARD – Special Accession Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development; ISPA – Instrument for Structural Policies for Pre-Accession; provides assistance for infrastructure projects in the EU priority fields of environment and transport; CARDS – Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilisation.

governmental basis. All the pre-accession instruments were merged in 2007 into one – the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA), which had an allocation of €11 billion for the period 2007-2013 (IPA I).

A conceptual note must be mentioned here. It would be analytically inaccurate to consider IPA (and other pre-accession instruments) as purely a democracy assistance tool. As we have described in a previous chapter, to a certain degree democracy assistance is situated within the realm of development and the EU's pre-accession instruments should be perceived in that manner. While the IPA's objectives include investment into public administration and institution building, they also include rural development and transportation infrastructure building – i.e. goals related to democracy building very indirectly. But in the EU's own words the enlargement process as such “reinforces peace, democracy and stability in Europe” and therefore every instrument and activity implemented to further this goal is, in itself, geared to consolidating democratic governance in Europe.⁶¹⁰ As described in the Regulation establishing IPA II (for the period 2014-2020), assistance under pre-accession instruments “should mainly focus on a selected number of policy areas that will help the beneficiaries [...] to strengthen democratic institutions and the rule of law, reform the judiciary and public administration, respect fundamental rights and promote gender equality, tolerance, social inclusion and non-discrimination.”⁶¹¹

Therefore, the EU sees that in order to build sustainable democracy in candidate countries, it needs to adopt a very wide definition of democracy, one that encompasses not just the political and institutional sphere, but also the socio-economic and cultural. So, to situate pre-accession instruments in our pre-defined type compartments of democracy assistance, they unquestionably correspond to the substantive and developmental approach to democracy assistance. The strong focus on institution building and strengthening of public administrations also positions pre-accession instruments into the compartment of top-down democracy assistance.

The top-down scheme is complemented by two instruments focused solely on strengthening capacity in public administration in candidate countries and also in the wider EU neighborhood – the TAIEX (Technical Assistance Information Exchange) and Twinning

⁶¹⁰ Regulation (EU) No 231/2014 of The European Parliament and of The Council of 11 March 2014 establishing an Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA II), par. 5.

⁶¹¹ *Op. cit.*, par. 7.

programs. TAIEX activities are directly linked to the implementation of the overall cooperation objectives of the European Union with its partners: it provides exchange of experience and public sector expertise, good practices and capacity-building to beneficiary countries. The expertise assists in understanding, transposing and implementing the *acquis communautaire* of the EU and makes sure that target institutions do so in line with EU (democratic) standards. In the Neighborhood area, TAIEX aims to provide “short-term targeted technical assistance to support the implementation of Action Plans and National Indicative Programmes”.⁶¹² The Twinning program takes a similar approach by pairing two (or more) institutions from an EU member state to its counterpart in a candidate or neighborhood state. Twinning is implemented in various sectors – from individual governmental agencies to prisons. Both programs, including the still-active SIGMA, are unique and similar tools are not found in the portfolio of US democracy assistance instruments, or any other donor.⁶¹³

Following the 2004 enlargement, the EU conceived the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) to maintain ties with its neighbors. Effectively, the ENP, with its financial arm – the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI; in 2014 renamed as European Neighbourhood Instrument, ENI) – replaced MEDA and TACIS and consolidated the EU’s policy towards states at its border.⁶¹⁴ The ENPI aimed to assist political reform and “promote commitment” to democracy in neighboring states.⁶¹⁵ Similarly, the Regulation establishing the ENI asserted that “Union support under this Regulation shall focus on promoting enhanced political cooperation [and] deep and sustainable democracy [...]”.⁶¹⁶

However, the ENP is not an enlargement policy and thus the single most important motivation to democratize, that proved so effective for the post-communist states, is out of the question. Nonetheless, both positive and negative conditionality are employed in the ENP

⁶¹² European Commission, *TAIEX Activity Report 2009* (Brussels: European Commission, Enlargement Directorate-General, 2009), 5.

⁶¹³ European Union, *Evaluation of TAIEX Instrument: Final Evaluation Report* (Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2016), 15.

⁶¹⁴ The ENP includes 16 partner countries, namely Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Syria for ENP-South (ex-MEDA), and Belarus, Georgia, Ukraine, Moldova, Armenia, Azerbaijan for ENP-East (ex-TACIS).

⁶¹⁵ Regulation (EC) No 1638/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 October 2006 laying down general provisions establishing a European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument.

⁶¹⁶ Regulation (EU) No 232/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2014 establishing a European Neighbourhood Instrument.

framework and even more so since the “Arab Spring” developments.⁶¹⁷ In the ENP context, each of the partner states concludes a bilateral Action Plan with the EU, which set out the partner country’s agenda for political and economic reforms and reflects the country’s interests, needs and capacities, as well as the EU’s interests. The partner can hence expect to receive substantial political, financial and technical assistance as it is in the Union’s interest that the Action Plans are implemented.⁶¹⁸

The ENI places greater emphasis on the commitment to common values and principles than either MEDA or TACIS have. Overall, the Commission proposes a wide array of objectives to be achieved under the ENP, in order to foster a ring of stability around its external border. These objectives range from the promotion of social development and gender equality, employment and social protection, core labor standards to the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, support for democratization and the development of civil society.⁶¹⁹

Governance reform stands out as the primary effort of the EU vis-à-vis its neighborhood. In 2006, the Commission created the so-called Governance Facility under the ENPI:

*“intended to provide additional support, on top of the normal country allocations, to acknowledge and support the work of those partner countries who have made most progress in implementing the agreed reform agenda set out in their Action Plan. In line with an assessment of progress made in implementing the (broadly-defined) governance aspects of the Action Plans, this funding would be made available to top-up national allocations, to support key elements of the reform agenda; this will help reformist governments to strengthen their domestic constituencies for reform”.*⁶²⁰

⁶¹⁷ In light of the “Arab Spring” events and the crisis in Ukraine, a revision of the ENP was issued in November 2015. The revision seeks to find more effective ways to “promote democratic, accountable and good governance”, upholds the necessity to “promote universal values through the ENP” and mostly notably places more emphasis on the interests of the EU in pursuing the ENP. See Völkel, Jan Claudius, “More for More, Less for Less - More or Less: A Critique of the EU’s Arab Spring Response à la Cinderella”, *European Foreign Affairs Review* 19 (2), 2014: 263-282.

⁶¹⁸ The European Neighbourhood Instrument has an allocation of €15.4 billion for 2014–2020.

⁶¹⁹ Bosse, Giselle, “Values in the EU’s Neighbourhood Policy: Political Rhetoric or Reflection of a Coherent Policy?” *European Political Economy Review* 7, 2007: 38-62.

⁶²⁰ Strengthening the European Neighbourhood Policy COM (2006) 726.

Democracy assistance under ENP is thus significantly top-down oriented and given the swath of goals that it connects to democratization in the Neighborhood countries, it adopts a highly developmental and apolitical approach. Consequently, Rouba Al-Fattal Eeckelaert claims that in comparison with the US, the EU is reluctant to support decentralization and political parties in the Palestinian territories.⁶²¹ She deems that the preference for targeting state institutions over CSOs is a consequence of the Union's consideration that these organizations are too political. In fact, 70 % of all aid received by the Palestinian territories by the EU was identified by Al-Fattal Eeckelaert as direct budget support.⁶²² Democracy assistance in the South Caucasus paints a similar picture. Nelli Babayan finds that in the region, the EU follows a statist, top-down approach whereas the US focuses primarily on civil society, thus a bottom-up approach. Moreover, when comparing the two actors the US activities were "widely marketed" in contrast to the EU initiatives, which were characterized as "over-bureaucratic" and keeping a "low-profile".⁶²³

Freyburg et al. however argue, that "there is no conclusive evidence that strong democratic governance leads necessarily to democratization of political institutions."⁶²⁴ It is perhaps for this reason that non-democratic states in the neighborhood are willing to accept EU technical support in the sphere of governance (i.e. top-down democracy assistance) and provide entry points for the EU to shape their public institutions. Indeed, some democracy assistance activities aimed at capacity-building in ENP public administrations are even said to have *strengthened* authoritarian regimes.⁶²⁵

To balance out its exceeding focus on recipient governments, the EU established the Civil Society Facility in 2008 as part of the ENP and in 2012 – to provide more operational flexibility in its democracy assistance – created the European Endowment for Democracy (EED). The creation of these two institutions according to Noutcheva "marks a clear

⁶²¹ Al-Fattal Eeckelaert, *Transatlantic Trends in Democracy Promotion*, 128.

⁶²² *Op. cit.*, 93.

⁶²³ Babayan, Nelli, *Democratic Transformation and Obstruction: EU, US, and Russia in the South Caucasus* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 158.

⁶²⁴ Freyburg, Tina, Sandra Lavenex, Frank Schimmelfennig, Tatiana Skripka and Anne Wetzel, "Democracy promotion through functional cooperation? The case of the European Neighbourhood Policy", *Democratization* 18 (4), 2011: 1047.

⁶²⁵ Durac, Vincent and Francesco Cavatorta, "Strengthening Authoritarian Rule through Democracy Promotion? Examining the Paradox of the US and EU Security Strategies: The Case of Bin Ali's Tunisia", *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 36 (1), 2009: 3-19.

departure from previous policies focused on dealings with governments only, at the expense of engaging societal actors and fledgling opposition forces.”⁶²⁶

The EED, modeled partly on the NED, was designed to be faster and more flexible than EU instruments to mobilize funding “to help political parties, non-registered NGOs, trade unions and other social partners in a coherent, concerted effort to promote deep and sustainable democracy as well as respect for human rights and the rule of law.”⁶²⁷ The Commission allocated €6 million to its budget, despite the fact that the EED is formally an independent entity of the EU institutional structure. EED thus complements the EIDHR and in terms of flexibility is on par with the EU’s Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP), which “provides technical and financial assistance [...] in response to [...] exceptional and unforeseen situations [such as] a situation posing a threat to democracy, law and order, the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, or the security and safety of individuals [...]”.⁶²⁸ The IcSP can provide short-term assistance, for example in countries where a crisis is unfolding, or long-term support, to build capacity for lasting socio-economic development, establishing interim administrations or the develop democratic public institutions and independent judiciaries.

To finalize the list of instruments employable in democracy assistance activities, in 2007 the EU set up the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI), which geographically complements the Union’s development policy in areas not covered by the EDF or the ENP – namely Latin America, Central Asia, Middle East and North, South and Southeast Asia. While DCI is framed as a development instrument, it focuses on fostering sustainable economic, social and environmental development as well as promoting democracy, the rule of law, good governance and respect for human rights. It devotes significant funding to civil society organizations in target areas, yet the aim is to “to encourage them to play a bigger role in development strategies” – that is, supporting them in non-political activities.

⁶²⁶ Noutcheva, Gergana, “Institutional Governance of European Neighbourhood Policy in the Wake of the Arab Spring”, *Journal of European Integration* 37 (1), 2015: 24.

⁶²⁷ “The European Endowment for Democracy – Support for the unsupported”, European Commission Press Release, November 12, 2012. Available at http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-12-1199_en.htm (accessed July 21, 2016).

⁶²⁸ Regulation (EU) No 230/2014 of The European Parliament and of The Council of 11 March 2014 establishing an instrument contributing to stability and peace, Art. 3, par. 1 (b).

DCI places significant focus on building stable and effective public administrations in recipient states. The Regulation establishing DCI for 2014-2020 period explicitly notes that at least 20 % of the assistance provided under the instrument “should be allocated to basic social services”, that is “supporting sectoral reforms that increase access to basic social services, in particular quality health and education services”.

One of its cooperation areas under the Human rights, democracy and good governance program is “Public sector management at central and local level”, whereby the EU aims to support “the development of the public sector with the purpose of enhancing universal and non-discriminatory access to basic services”, support “programmes to improve policy formulation, public financial management” and strengthen “technical expertise”. The EU’s concern with social policies is also included, as DCI is said to be geared toward “supporting national social protection schemes and floors, including social insurance systems for health and pension schemes, with a focus on reducing inequality” and “supporting the decent work agenda, and promoting social dialogue”.⁶²⁹

⁶²⁹ Regulation (EU) No 233/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2014 establishing a financing instrument for development cooperation for the period 2014-2020, par. 22, Annex I.

13 Ideas form structures: US and EU democracy assistance in perspective

The democracy assistance infrastructure of the United States was formed mostly during the Reagan administration and later during the “window of opportunity” of the Soviet bloc collapse and the subsequent policies of the Bush and Clinton administrations to support the spread of “*market democracies*” around the globe.⁶³⁰ The fact that the described instruments were formed in the circumstances of the Cold War carries some necessary implications that need to be mentioned.

When the Reagan administration entered the White House, it shifted focus “toward an electoral model of democracy at the expense of the human rights agenda”, which was formulated during the Carter years.⁶³¹ Political rights became the key priority as the administration viewed political participation of citizens as an indispensable precondition to the respect for human rights. As Picken argues, the priorities reflected the administration’s own ideology, but departed significantly from the understanding of human rights in the Universal Declaration. Reagan “rejected the validity of economic and social rights [...] and focused primarily on free and fair elections and a narrow understanding of democracy.”⁶³² Social and economic rights were perceived by Reagan as too communitarian and socialist and alluded to the binary choice of the Cold War period between liberal democracy and communism. In this sense, the struggle between the US and the Soviet Union took place even on the field of defining human rights.⁶³³

The model of democracy employed by the drafters of the Democracy Program and by the Reagan administration, which was loyal to the American conservative tradition, Locke’s classical liberalism and thus hostile to “big government”, anticipated the approach that the US would apply when promoting democracy. There was basically no focus on

⁶³⁰ See also Bouchet, Nicolas, *Democracy Promotion as US Foreign Policy: Bill Clinton and Democratic Enlargement* (New York: Routledge, 2015).

⁶³¹ Huber, *Democracy Promotion and Foreign Policy*, 52-53.

⁶³² Picken, Margo, “Ethical Foreign Policies and Human Rights: Dilemmas for Non-Governmental Organisations” in Smith, Karen Elizabeth and Margot Light (eds.), *Ethics and Foreign Policy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 96.

⁶³³ See Morsink, Johannes, *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights: Origins, Drafting, and Intent* (Philadelphia PA: University of Philadelphia Press, 1999) or Posner, Erik, “The case against human rights, *The Guardian*, December 4, 2014. Available at <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2014/dec/04/-sp-case-against-human-rights> (accessed July 19, 2016).

“governance” – on the “output-legitimacy” of the state. The focus centered on “input-legitimacy” – the ability of citizens to choose and alter the policies of their government and limit its power. In addition, there was a clear distinction between the “political” and the “socio-economic dimension” of the system, where the latter had no connection to democracy. Democracy was viewed as a strictly political, procedural project. The socio-economic dimension – the outcome of the process – was to be taken care of by the market, as the neoliberal mantra of the time suggested.

This procedural model of democracy (corresponding to Dahl’s “polyarchy”) sees no contradiction between a “democratic” process and a social order punctuated by sharp social inequalities and minority monopolization of society’s material and cultural resources” – in short, such system can thus acquire a democratic *form* without producing democratic content and *outcome*.⁶³⁴ The legitimization of the system is acquired mainly through “input” (elections and political rights), but not as much through its “output” (positive rights in general and socio-economic development). As a matter of fact, one of the NED’s earlier projects (National Endowment for Democracy was founded based on the recommendation of the Democracy Program) was an extensive and widely read study by leading US experts on democracy, where they formulated the definition of democracy that was to be applied by the new institution: “We use the term democracy in this study to signify a political system, separate and apart from the economic and social system [...] Indeed, a distinctive aspect of our approach is to insist that issues of so-called economic and social democracy be separated from the question of governmental structure.”⁶³⁵ For these reasons, this form of democracy is “favoured by capitalist forces as the political does not interfere with the economic in such a model.”⁶³⁶

As mentioned earlier, this Schumpeterian interpretation of democracy was preferred by US policymakers at the time not only given the fact that it corresponded with the historical conception of democracy in the US, but likewise for strategic purposes. Promotion of any other form of democracy that provided a stronger role to state institutions and the government in managing the country’s socio-economic development (i.e. a more maximalist version of

⁶³⁴ Robinson, *Globalization, the World System and “Democracy Promotion”*, 625.

⁶³⁵ Diamond, Larry, Juan J. Linz and Seymour Martin Lipset (eds.), *Democracy in Developing Countries* (Boulder CO: Lynne Rienner and the National Endowment for Democracy, 1989), xvi.

⁶³⁶ Bridoux and Kurki, *Cosmetic agreements and the cracks beneath*, 59.

democracy including all three generations of human rights), may produce results that contradicted US interests. This was the reason why the CIA covertly intervened in Guatemala in 1954 to help overthrow Jacobo Árbenz Guzmán or in 1973 to help topple Salvador Allende in Chile – both democratically-elected leaders, which started a process of nationalization and socialization of their respective socio-economic systems.

Yet, it must be acknowledged that vis-à-vis the states within the Soviet bloc, the US had few other “entry points” to pursue an agenda of democracy promotion than through individuals – dissidents, scholars, journalists – and civil society organizations, such as unions. In other words, providing technical assistance and capacity building in public administration that the EU applied to countries in its neighborhood after the end of the Cold War was simply not possible (unless the US could persuade the respective governments otherwise). In this sense, the explanation for applying a minimalist form of democracy within a bottom-up, political approach had both an ideological and a structural explanation. On the other hand, Washington had the opportunity to apply principles of political conditionality and institution-building in allied countries such as Taiwan or South Korea.

As Huber argues, for the United States “in the last decade of the Cold War, the substantive framing of democracy developed to a large degree”. Reagan marginalized economic and social rights and “paved the way for an electoral-structural model of democracy”. Moreover, given the structural realities of the Reagan era, “we can witness the emergence of a democracy-promotion script which is largely valid today”.⁶³⁷ Indeed, as the preceding analysis of US instruments of democracy assistance demonstrated, most support is provided in a bottom-up manner to politically empower civil society against excesses of the state, to foster individual entrepreneurship and build a market economy. Support for governance is meant to uphold decentralization and increase accountability and transparency of governments. In other words, weakening the central authority has uncontested precedence over strengthening it for the purposes of service delivery and effective outcome generation. As Smith put it: “When their policy intends to promote democracy abroad, Americans rather naturally tend to think in terms of a weak state relative to society.”⁶³⁸

⁶³⁷ Huber, *Democracy Promotion and Foreign Policy*, 55.

⁶³⁸ Smith, *America's Mission*, 17-18.

When compared to the US, the EU was a latecomer to the democracy promotion agenda. While the US perceived democracy assistance as a tool in the ideological struggle against Soviet communism and designed its democracy assistance tools accordingly, the EU instruments emerged mainly with the perspective of accepting new members into the Union or at least bringing its neighbors closer to the common market through “legislative approximation”.⁶³⁹

It therefore makes sense that most EU instruments for democracy assistance have been designed to strengthen or build democracy in a top-down process through technical intergovernmental cooperation and conditionality – the EU needed the CEECs to become democratic not in a minimalist or procedural manner, but in a *substantive* manner as these candidates would soon be members of the Union, where they would need to adhere to the same principles and regulations and have the administrative and institutional capacity to implement and transpose EU legislation into their domestic structures. In this sense, the EU also enjoyed a wide range of entry points into the political and social systems of candidate countries and could thereby pursue democracy assistance policies that directly intervened in the domestic affairs of the respective states.⁶⁴⁰

However, it was not only in relation to candidate states that the EU strived to adopt a government-to-government approach to democracy building – the case of post-Cold War Cuba is a fitting example of how the US and EU approached a state whose democratic transformation potential increased due to the disintegration of the Soviet Union.

A study of EU and US engagement in Latin America has shown that “while the United States aims at the ultimate goal of regime *change*, the EU prefers the more moderate goal of regime *reform*” – this of course applies more generally, as we have seen above.⁶⁴¹ Whereas regime *change* requires the mobilization of politically active individuals, opposing forces or

⁶³⁹ For more see Petrov, Roman and Peter Van Elsuwege, *Legislative Approximation and Application of EU Law in the Eastern Neighbourhood of the European Union* (New York: Routledge, 2014).

⁶⁴⁰ A question may arise here: aren't these entry points the one core variable whether an actor adopts a top-down approach (when it has enough entry points) and a bottom-up approach (when entry points are lacking and assistance has to be channeled through unofficial networks, dissidents etc.)? This is true to a certain degree, but does not explain why the US did not employ top-down democracy assistance to Taiwan, South Korea and other autocratic allies during the Cold War or why the EU sought to work together with the Cuban government after the end of the Cold War.

⁶⁴¹ Gratius, Susanne and Thomas Legler, “Latin America is Different: Transatlantic Discord on How to Promote Democracy in ‘Problematic’ Countries” in Magen, Amichai, Thomas Risse and Michael McFaul (eds.), *Promoting Democracy and the Rule of Law: American and European Strategies* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 186.

the masses, which consequently strive to replace the present regime thereby inciting a bottom-up revolution, regime *reform* requires cooperation with the given regime in power and (through socialization or conditionality) incentivize or motivate the standing regime to implement changes to its governing structures. Regime reform is thus clearly a top-down effort to foster democratic change – either by weakening the standing regime (for example, by introducing more rigorous separation of powers or open elections on the local level) and opening space for new political elites to takeover or by working together with the standing regime on reform initiatives, until criteria of democratic governance are met.

The early 1990s offered a window of opportunity for the “West” to start engaging with Cuba as communist regimes including the Soviet Union collapsed, leaving Havana with little formidable allies. However, at this point, the US and the EU with its member states advocated countervailing approaches to the island-nation. While the US pursued diplomatic isolation, the EU sought political dialogue and encouraging reforms. The US reaction was a tightening of the embargo and its extension (Cuban Democracy Act of 1992 and Helms-Burton Act of 1996). The EU, on the other hand, attempted to engage Cuba through increased trade and investment and conditionality. In a sense, the EU policy helped the Castro regime survive and mitigate US sanctions, whilst the US policy contributed to the failure of the EU approach in opening Cuba through trade and dialogue.

So, again, the “EU’s policy has focused on the regime, the United States has never recognized the Cuban government and concentrated on the support of dissidents and exile groups.”⁶⁴² Indeed, in the latest leaked information on covert US democracy promotion programs in the country, US government funding was channeled, for example, to a project concerned with the creation of ZunZuneo (“Cuban Twitter”)⁶⁴³ – an online social networking platform where individuals could discuss politics (or any other matter) without being monitored by the government – or to a project supporting the Cuban hip hop scene in order “to break the information blockade” and “spark youth unrest”.⁶⁴⁴

⁶⁴² Op. cit., 194

⁶⁴³ BBC, “US confirms it made ‘Cuban Twitter’”, April 3, 2014. Available at <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-26876801> (accessed July 12, 2016).

⁶⁴⁴ Weaver, Michael, “US agency infiltrated Cuban hip-hop scene to spark youth unrest”, *The Guardian*, December 11, 2014. Available at <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/dec/11/cuban-hip-hop-scene-infiltrated-us-information-youth> (accessed July 12, 2016).

Most recently, as President Barack Obama announced the reopening of diplomatic relations with Havana, opponents of the move (lead by first or second generation Cuban-Americans like Ted Cruz or Marco Rubio) have been explicit in stating that the US Congress should not support the lifting of sanctions unless Cuba undergoes a full regime change and criticized the new policy on the grounds that it will strengthen the standing regime rather than lead toward its reform.⁶⁴⁵

The perhaps disproportionate EU focus on the external context of democracy and institution-building led to the conclusion that it often neglected the classical elements of liberal democracy like civil and political rights and checks and balances.⁶⁴⁶ In contrast, by US market-oriented logic in democracy promotion, a *procedural* democracy was sufficient, if at the same time the country agreed to liberalize its economy and enter the global market economy. Thereby, free and fair elections ensure the accountability of governments and the socio-political model of liberal democracy is predetermined by a functioning market economy – this scheme continuously perpetuates and reproduces itself.

The path dependency of employing the logic of enlargement instruments beyond candidate countries is still nestled in EU democracy assistance.⁶⁴⁷ This is quite pragmatic as there is little doubt that these were effective and successful in accomplishing their objectives.⁶⁴⁸ Nevertheless, in the post-2004 enlargement period, the EU has moved from the “leverage” model of democracy promotion (see footnote 606) to the “governance” model (promoting democratic principles through policy-specific, functional cooperation with third countries and conditionality) and thereby the question remains how successful its approach to democracy assistance can be without the membership incentive.⁶⁴⁹

⁶⁴⁵ Voice of America, “Cruz, Rubio Slam Obama for Cuba Trip”, February 18, 2016. Available at <http://www.voanews.com/content/cruz-rubio-slam-obama-cuba-trip/3196128.html> (accessed July 13, 2016); Leatherby, Lauren, “Republicans Stand Against Cuba Change Despite Public Opinion Shift”, *National Public Radio*, July 27, 2015. Available at <http://www.npr.org/sections/itsallpolitics/2015/07/27/424736858/republicans-stand-against-cuba-change-despite-public-opinion-shift> (accessed July 13, 2016).

⁶⁴⁶ See Held, *Models of Democracy*.

⁶⁴⁷ Judith, Kelley, “New Wine in Old Wineskins: Promoting Political Reforms through the New European Neighbourhood Policy”, *Journal of Common Market Studies* 44 (1), 2006: 29-55.

⁶⁴⁸ Schimmelfennig, Frank and Hanno Scholtz, “EU Democracy Promotion in the European Neighbourhood: Political Conditionality, Economic Development and Transnational Exchange”, *European Union Politics* 9 (2), 2008: 187-215.

⁶⁴⁹ Lavenex and Schimmelfennig, *EU democracy promotion in the neighbourhood*.

Unlike the US (in Latin America, for example) the EU never opted for expeditious regime change in its neighborhood – its aim was to mold governance in target states, to shape the governing practices of the respective governments without resorting to coercion (i.e. applying negative conditionality on only very rare occasions⁶⁵⁰) as this would cause instability in relations and damage the idea of a stable external perimeter of neighbors. Therefore, the EU is more cautious than the US to support overtly political CSOs and political parties, focusing rather on what NED President Gershman called “long-term democratic development”.⁶⁵¹

In the EU democracy assistance agenda, a “human rights-development-democracy nexus” seems to be a mantra of all EU aid. One cannot exist without the other. The three spheres are presumed to be inseparable and all the EU democracy/development instruments and regulating documents acknowledge this, in addition highlighting the importance of all three generations of human rights. Consequently, the EU democracy assistance agenda is closely knit with the development agenda, often conflating the two beyond analytical distinction. This, for example, is the dilemma described with the so-called Governance Incentive Tranche (GIT) offered to the ACP countries under the EDF. The original design of the instrument planned that target countries would be offered a top-up of up to 30% of their initial country allocation of aid, if they subscribed to ambitious and credible reform efforts. Yet the reform efforts do not necessarily need to be *political* (and, implicitly, “democratizing”) – while political criteria were included for the GIT, only two of the nine criteria concern political governance, the others being primarily developmental or related to technocratic governance and political stability”.⁶⁵² As a consequence the EU democracy promotion in countries like Ghana “remains a traditional development aid programme, with almost no political component”.⁶⁵³

⁶⁵⁰ See Koch, Svea, “A Typology of Political Conditionality Beyond Aid: Conceptual Horizons Based on Lessons from the European Union”, *World Development* 75, 2015: 102.

⁶⁵¹ Gershman, Carl, “The United States and the World Democratic Revolution”, *The Washington Quarterly* 12 (1), 1989: 125-139.

⁶⁵² Del Biondo, Karen and Jan Orbie, “The European Commission’s implementation of budget support and the Governance Incentive Tranche in Ethiopia: democracy promoter or developmental donor?” *Third World Quarterly* 35 (3), 2014: 416.

⁶⁵³ Crawford, Gordon, “The European Union and Democracy Promotion in Africa: The Case of Ghana”, *The European Journal of Development Research* 17 (4), 2005: 580.

All current (and former) EU instruments for democracy assistance are either originating from the development agenda (EDF, DCI) or the enlargement agenda (ENI, TAIEX, IPA etc.). The EIDHR, which emerged from a discussion that the EU needs a democracy promotion instruments, also maintains the democracy-human rights nexus as over 50% of its funding is allocated to human rights and the rest to democracy. Only the EED is a purely democracy assistance instrument, albeit with a miniscule EU budget allocation when compared to other instruments. In this sense, Anne Wetzel hypothesizes that EU democracy assistance coming from a “development background” will stress the component of socio-economic development, while assistance from an “enlargement background” will focus on a broader (more “substantive” in our typology) definition of democracy.⁶⁵⁴

So, even past the 2004/2007 enlargement and taking into account the remarkable variation of the substance of EU democracy assistance⁶⁵⁵, the Union’s approach is still being described as “technocratic, rules-based, governance focus[ed]”.⁶⁵⁶ Indeed, upon observing 22 case studies of countries where EU institutions assist democracy, Wetzel and Orbie have concluded that the primary focus of the EU’s activities (and the “default substance”) is building “state administrative capacity” and “socio-economic development” – from this conclusion they have inferred that EU democracy promotion is “output-oriented”. They have also settled that the EU under-addresses input-oriented aspects of democracy.⁶⁵⁷ In Central Asian states, for example, the EU’s strategies for democracy promotion “place considerable emphasis on good governance, particularly assistance to administrative and financial capacity building of Central Asian administrations”. Whereas, US assistance has mainly focused on the development of electoral capacity and election monitoring skills of political parties and civil society groups.⁶⁵⁸

⁶⁵⁴ Wetzel, Anne, “The Substance of EU Democracy Promotion: Introduction and Conceptual Framework” in Wetzel and Orbie, *The Substance of EU Democracy Promotion*, 16.

⁶⁵⁵ See Börzel, Tanja A., *Transformative Power Europe? The EU Promotion of Good Governance in Areas of Limited Statehood*, Paper prepared for the ERD Workshop “Transforming Political Structures: Security, Institutions, and Regional Integration Mechanisms”, Florence, April 16-17, 2009. Available at <http://erd.eui.eu/media/borzel.pdf> (accessed July 22, 2016).

⁶⁵⁶ Youngs, Richard and Kateryna Pishchikova, *A More Pluralist Approach to European Democracy Support* (Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2013), 25.

⁶⁵⁷ Wetzel, Anne and Jan Orbie, “Comparing Country Cases: Output-Oriented EU Democracy Promotion?” in Wetzel and Orbie (eds.), *The Substance of EU Democracy Promotion*, 236.

⁶⁵⁸ Omelicheva, Mariya Y., “Competing perspectives on democracy and democratization: assessing alternative models of democracy promoted in Central Asian states”, *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 28 (1), 2015: 83.

The underlying reason for this persistence of structure is that the EU instruments (just like those in the US) were designed with a conceptualization of democracy that reflected European democratic identity. The founding documents of the described institutions and their strategic documents all envisaged a specific model of democracy upheld and advocated by the EU. This model, as mentioned in previous chapters, preconceived a democratic central authority, whose legitimacy rests largely on the output side of governance – e.g. provision of services that fulfill the social and economic needs of the population. Understandably, promoting such a model of democracy requires different types of targeted programs and institutional design than are required to promote the more limited and narrow model that the US employs in its primary documents.

13.1 Following the money and searching for data

Following the money – that is, observing the flow of donor finance in democracy assistance – can help us better place EU and US democracy assistance in perspective. However, a key conundrum arises here: the lack of cross-comparable data. The large number of instruments on both sides of the Atlantic, different accounting, categorization of projects and varying transparency of this data all make the task of arriving at numbers with relevance for comparative purposes quite challenging. It is the aim of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (DAC OECD) to synchronize this data and categorize the money flows for development aid in general.⁶⁵⁹ Therefore, despite the limitations – including insufficient data for random years – of DAC OECD statistics,⁶⁶⁰ we shall refer to its Creditor Reporting System dataset for heuristic reason and for purposes of illustrating the variations in the distribution of democracy assistance finance by the EU and the US.⁶⁶¹

The most pertinent DAC OECD category for democracy assistance is “150: I.5.a Government and Civil society-general” and its subcategories (or reporting codes). The data for this category are available from the year 1995 to 2015. Some subcategories, however,

⁶⁵⁹ As per the OECD.Stat website, “The objective of the CRS Aid Activity database is to provide a set of readily available basic data that enables analysis on where aid goes, what purposes it serves and what policies it aims to implement, on a comparable basis for all DAC members.”

⁶⁶⁰ See OECD, “Is it ODA?”, Factsheet, November 2008. Available at <https://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/34086975.pdf> (accessed 23 May, 2017).

⁶⁶¹ All data for tables below is collected and retrieved by author from the Creditor Reporting System at <http://stats.oecd.org> (accessed 20 May, 2017).

lack data for certain years either for the US, the EU or both; some categories contain data only since a certain year (e.g. 2009). Also, reporting codes such as “15152: Legislatures and political parties” do not enable us to distinguish between what portion of the money is distributed for political party support and which portion is employed to support parliaments. Similarly, as in the subcategory “15110: Public sector policy and administrative management”, the data does not permit us to qualitatively analyze which state institutions and public policies were supported. In other words, the dataset provides us with information on the quantification of aid, but leaves little room for qualitative analysis. Nonetheless, we can discern certain trends by aggregating some reporting codes together. First, to examine the level of support funneled to state institutions (that is, a top-down approach to democracy assistance), we shall focus on the subcategories “15110: Public sector policy and administrative management” and “15111: Public finance management”.

Secondly, a bottom-up approach, focusing on the empowerment of citizens and the protection of citizens (but also private companies and investors) against the state (i.e. rule of law) can be identified by looking at the reporting codes of “15112: Decentralisation and support to subnational government”; “15150: Democratic participation and civil society”; “15152: Legislatures and political parties”; “15153: Media and free flow of information”; “15130: Legal and judicial development” and “15151: Elections”.⁶⁶²

A third category we can separate is the donor’s focus on non-political citizen’s rights, which suggests a more developmental approach to democracy assistance. In this category, we will include subcategories “15160: Human rights” and “15170: Women's equality organisations and institutions”. As the overall commitments of EU institutions and the US are different, we shall not focus on nominal values of democracy assistance, but on the percentage of financing that is devoted to a particular subcategory from the total in a given time period.

⁶⁶² As it is not possible to disaggregate certain reporting codes, such as “Legislatures and political parties”, which indicate both a possible top-down and bottom-up approach, the same applies to including the “rule of law” indicator in the bottom-up category. However, the logic behind placing the reporting code “15130: Legal and judicial development” in the “Empowering citizens” category is that rule of law serves the individual citizen and can protect his/her life liberty and property from the excesses of the government. Rule of law is also necessary to foster a genuine market economy.

The following four tables, summarizing the years from 1995 to 2015, demonstrate the leaning of the US towards a bottom-up support for democracy and including less developmental aspects within its democracy assistance. In comparison, EU institutions focus more of their aid toward building public administration and devote a smaller share to bottom-up democracy assistance. Also, the EU's inclusion of non-political human rights issues within its democracy assistance programs is much more significant than that of the US.

Table 13.1.1 Total government and civil society support in years 1995–2015

Donor	1995 – 2015 (current prices)
US	53 180 million USD
EU institutions	29 888 million USD

Table 13.1.2 Support for state institutions in years 1995–2015

Donor	1995–2015 (current prices)	Percentage of total
US	19 757	37.2 %
EU institutions	14 014	46.9 %

Table 13.1.3 Empowerment of the citizen, years 1995–2015

Donor	1995–2015 (current prices)	Percentage of total
US	29 383	55.3 %
EU institutions	10 389	34.8 %

Table 13.1.4 Non-political citizen's rights, years 1995–2015

Donor	1995–2015 (current prices)	Percentage of total
US	1 556	2.9 %
EU institutions	3 406	11.4 %

If we separate the Obama administration period (2009–2015) from the rest of the data, we see that even after the era of EU enlargements and US state-building in Iraq and Afghanistan, the leanings of the two actors stay generally the same and, in fact, are even more stark. However, both actors have decreased their overall top-down support and diverted it toward

a bottom-up approach – this is the result of the virtual end of EU enlargement and US disengagement from the two mentioned countries.

Table 13.1.5 Total government and civil society support in years 2009–2015

Donor	2009–2015 (current prices)
US	28 132 million USD
EU institutions	16 490 million USD

Table 13.1.6 Support for state institutions in years 2009–2015

Donor	2009–2015 (current prices)	Percentage of total
US	4 661	16.6 %
EU institutions	6 145	37.3 %

Table 13.1.7 Empowerment of the citizen, years 2009–2015

Donor	2009–2015 (current prices)	Percentage of total
US	22 269	79.2 %
EU institutions	8 315	50.4 %

Table 13.1.8 Non-political citizen's rights, years 2009–2015

Donor	2009–2015 (current prices)	Percentage of total
US	733	2.6 %
EU institutions	1 850	11.2 %

14 Conclusion

This dissertation set out to explore a conundrum regarding the often-diverging approaches of the United States and the European Union in assisting the nascence and consolidation of democratic regimes in third countries. Given the contestability of democracy as such, it would be myopic to assume that when both actors speak of promoting “democracy”, they have in mind the identical models of democracy. In fact, by adopting a constructivist lens for our research in which identity plays a consequential role in foreign policy-making, we have identified that the models of democracy that the US and the EU employ in their democracy promotion agendas are directly related to their democratic identities. In other words, the US and EU institutions promote their own versions of democracy and as these versions differ in many respects, the approaches and the means used to reach the goal (i.e. democratization of target country) are different. To simplify the conclusion and to answer the basic research question: the explanatory factor that causes US and EU approaches to democracy assistance to differ is their democratic identity, i.e. different conceptions of the ideal-type of democracy. As a consequence, the design of institutions and programs that form the structure of democracy assistance policies are geared to toward achieving different targets.

In our analysis, we have principally relied on a critical reading and content analysis of primary documents – such as legal acts, strategies, handbooks, evaluations, regulations and reports – to reveal the concepts of democracy that both actors use in their democracy assistance agenda and how these relate to their democratic identities and also how these identities are manifested in the design of instruments. Practitioners in the field confirm the thesis of a conceptual divide between EU (and more widely European) and US approaches to fostering democratic momentum in target countries. One European practitioner hinted that he (and other European colleagues) was getting into contradictions with American colleagues while working at the IRI. As each individual in the organization was influenced by his/her socio-cultural and political backgrounds, the interviewed practitioner noted, the Americans tended to view democracy assistance through the prism of US history and the Europeans through the prism of their own backgrounds. Consequently, as “very enlightened individuals were key in creating American democracy”, Americans tend to see that democracy is brought about by *individuals* making *decisions*. While the Europeans, with a long history of struggles between segments of society fighting for their rights, tended to be more structuralist in their

conception of democratization. This hence leads Americans to look for the individuals, whom to support and the Europeans to lobby for firstly creating or reforming the *structure* (i.e. institutions), which will enable or facilitate future democratization.⁶⁶³

Indeed, our distinction that the EU inclines toward a “top-down – developmental – substantive” approach to democracy promotion and the US towards a “bottom-up – political – procedural” approach consolidates this claim. As the US tends to conceptualize democracy in more minimalist terms, it inclines toward promoting a limited state, undergirded by a strong civil society sector and vibrant political participation. The political empowerment and civil engagement of the individual is necessary as it provides a hedge against overstretched government powers and its potential intrusion into the rights and freedoms of the individual. Democratic governments gain legitimacy primarily through input – i.e. their ability to provide citizens with sufficient civil and political rights, so that they can engage in political life and influence governance from the bottom-up. The provision of positive rights is viewed as a factor that corrupts individual toil and serves as a means for the government to widen its scope. The market and civil society groups can fully and more effectively substitute the government in provision of social services. The government shall stick to the Lockean protection of life, freedom and property of its citizens. We can clearly see this framing of democracy throughout the US strategic documents and in the architecture of its instruments. These nuances become all the more apparent when we juxtapose them with the language used by EU institutions.

The inclination to adopt a more maximalist conception of democracy causes that the EU prescribes a stronger role to state institutions during the phase of democratization. In a simplified manner, we can say that for the EU the government is not the “enemy” of the people against whom each citizen should be equipped with irrefutable rights, but a facilitator of democratization and a potential insurer of well-being. Democracy is a means toward good governance. Therefore, the legitimacy of the central authority is perceived not just in terms of input, but also its output, which can be linked *inter alia* to the provision of positive rights. So, judging by their approach to democracy assistance, EU institutions adopt the perspective of liberalism (in IR theory terms), as they believe in the function of binding structures and

⁶⁶³ Author’s interview with an employee of the EED, who previously worked for the IRI, Brussels, February 2016.

norms (in this case democratic). A strong democratic structure built from the top-down ensures the longevity of democracy. This approach proved effective with respect to new members from east and therefore the EU has basically extended varying forms of its pre-accession instruments (e.g. TAIEX, Twinning) to its wider neighborhood, despite the fact that these states are not (currently) being considered for membership.

The model of EU democracy assistance does not fit into the interpretations of critical theorists of democracy promotion, who deem that the “West” promotes a uniform archetype of democracy that is deliberately minimalist and procedural as such a political system is designed to uphold and facilitate the interests of the transnational capitalist elites.⁶⁶⁴ At the same time – as our research shows that for the American model the assumption of critical theorists holds – we have to take into account the fact that the conceptualization of democracy the US promotes derives from its democratic identity (and thus the historical and cultural understandings and experience of democracy) and therefore should not be interpreted as instrumentally used to be subservient to the interests of elite classes, but simply as something that the Americans truly believe to be the essence of democratic governance.

The table below summarizes the distinctions in the conceptualization of democracy in both actors’ democracy promotion agendas and thus stipulates the divergence in their approaches to reach the goal of fostering democracy in third countries.

Table 14 Conclusions on the approaches of US and EU to democracy assistance

	United States	European Union institutions
Conceptualizations of democracy in guiding documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Reiterating political and civil rights, while dismissing social and economic rights. – Discouraging governments from adopting positive rights, while supporting the strengthening of positive rights. – Socio-economic outcomes of political process are de-linked from the operation of democracy. – Input legitimacy is pivotal for the preservation and consolidation of democratic regimes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Conflation of democracy with “good governance”, whereby the EU attempts to “depoliticize” its democracy assistance. – Positive rights are a necessary component of the government’s democratic legitimacy. – A democracy should build its legitimacy not only on input, but (often more so) on output/outcomes.

⁶⁶⁴ Gills and Rocamora, *Low intensity democracy*; Robinson, *Globalization, the World System and 'Democracy Promotion'*; Lazarus, *Contesting the hegemony of democracy promotion*.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vibrant and politically active civil society serves as bulwark against state power. - Democracy is an end for the achievement of individual freedoms. - Free market is a prerequisite for democratic governance. Nexus between market and democracy is inseparable. - Society needs to have sufficient number of instruments to defend itself against the excesses of the central government. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The three generations of human rights are inseparable while building a democratic system. - Democracy is a means for achieving welfare and well-being of the population. - Civil society works with democratic government to increase legitimacy of its actions. - Democratic government can serve as hedge against excesses of the free market.
Strategic propensities of democracy assistance instruments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More instruments designed and focused on supporting the growth of civil society – i.e. political and social actors. - A stronger emphasis on the provision of a market economy as a prerequisite for democracy. - When democratic state institutions are supported, they pertain mainly to providing the government with input legitimacy (parliaments, checks and balances, decentralization, elections) and instigating rule of law (judicial system). - Physical intervention to promote democracy is not ruled out under US missionary grand strategy. - Geared more toward supporting “partial regimes” of democracy than “external conditions”. - Development of political party capacities. - Assuring accountability of government toward the governed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Instruments previously employed to prepare candidate states for accession to the EU are now being used to assist democracy in third countries, which currently have no prospect of membership. - Under current self-perceptions of EU hard power, physical intervention in the name of promoting democracy would mean denial of own principles. - Fostering the socio-economic requisites needed for stabilizing society prior to building market economy and democracy. - Support for civil society is aimed at apolitical actors. - Assisting recipients in effective public service provision. - Supporting “external conditions” of democracy.

Source: Author

To be clear, the research conclusions do not aim to imply that we can neatly compartmentalize and separate the differences between the two observed actors – we were describing ideal types and default positions of both actors. By saying that the EU tends to put

more emphasis on democracy assistance in a top-down manner, whilst the US focuses on a bottom-up approach does not mean that the EU never applies the latter and the US never applies the former. As we saw earlier in the text, the actors acknowledge that both approaches are necessary, yet it is the balance between these approaches that interests us: looking at the past few years (2009 – 2015), why did the US devote an average of 16,6 % of its annual democracy assistance expenditures to projects that can be qualified as “top-down”, while the EU devoted 37,3 % in this sector? Why did the US devote 79,2 % of its budget to “bottom-up” projects, while the EU dedicated 50,4 %?

Importantly, our research also indicates a gradual convergence of approaches to democracy assistance as was hinted in some of the latest strategic documents of both actors analyzed above – on the one hand the EU started to give increasing efforts to fostering civil society in third countries, while USAID more often acknowledges the necessity of building stable governments that deliver sound public services to its citizens. Such developments are in line with Scott’s observation that the democracy promotion epistemic community is becoming transnational due to the increasing number of possibilities for information and experiences exchanges and as a consequence becomes more socialized.⁶⁶⁵ In this sense the power of socialization can alter the conceptions of democracy employed in the foreign policy agenda (and ultimately modify the actor’s behavior).⁶⁶⁶

Simultaneously, we can see these differences as part of an unintended division of labor between two partners. As the US approach emphasizes the “power of the people” by dedicating considerably more resources to creating a vibrant civil society, sanctioning non-democratic regimes, educating new leaders, developing political parties, individual enterprise within a market economy and funding rule of law initiatives, its instruments and strategies seem to be geared more toward bringing forth the momentum to *cause* democratization – i.e. to overturn the one obstacle (authoritarian government) to the society’s “natural” inclination to form democracy. Therefore, the US approach and tools are designed to be most effective in a pre-revolutionary phase, in mobilizing the population to rise up for democracy and oppose authoritarians. On the other hand, the EU’s perception of the potentially benign effects of the “power of institutions” – in which capacity-building measures for public

⁶⁶⁵ Scott, *Transnationalizing democracy promotion*.

⁶⁶⁶ See Kent, Ann, “China’s International Socialization: The Role of International Organizations”, *Global Governance* 8 (3), 2002: 343-364.

administration, positive government-to-government incentives, support for increasing governance output, ameliorating the socio-economic conditions of citizens and building the infrastructure and institutional scaffolding to support democracy play a stronger role (mainly given the EU's experience with enlargement and programs conceived for developing states for the accession to the Union) – make its role and toolset more suitable for post-revolutionary state-building. In other words, even in the realm of democracy promotion – to borrow Kagan's terms – the European Union is predestined to “do the dishes” after the United States “makes the dinner”.⁶⁶⁷

The simple reason why this dissertation chose to juxtapose the EU (and not an individual nation state) with the US in their respective democracy promotion agendas was because these are the only two actors in the world with comparable capacity and contributions to promote democracy. We thereby avoided the problem of considering a state, whose capacity and toolkit to promote democracy would be limited by the size of its budget and thereby be incomparable to the US. However, in order for our basic hypothesis to hold – that democratic identity shapes the conceptualization of democracy in democracy promotion policies and thus the actors' approaches and strategies – we need to assume that individual EU member states are very likely to apply a similar model and approach to exporting democracy abroad as EU institutions. Although the studies focusing on individual European states and the substance of their democracy promotion are scarce, the ones that exist – focusing for example on Germany and the Norden countries – generally prove our point. The development and democratization programs of Sweden and Norway present a “Nordic model”, of which the “core objective was the promotion of socio-economic equalization [...] and seemed to aspire to develop a social democratic form of government.”⁶⁶⁸ In a comparison with the US, Germany is depicted as a “civilian power” democracy promoter, while its counterpart is viewed as a “freedom fighter” employing more coercive instruments.⁶⁶⁹

⁶⁶⁷ Kagan, Robert, *Of Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003), 23.

⁶⁶⁸ Schouenborg, *The rise of the welfare state in international society*, 612.

⁶⁶⁹ Poppe, Annika E., Woitschach, Bentje and Wolff, Jonas, “Freedom Fighter versus Civilian Power: an ideal-type comparison of US and German conceptions of democracy promotion” in Wolff, Jonas, Hans-Joachim Spanger, Hans-Jürgen Puhle (eds.) *The Comparative International Politics of Democracy Promotion* (New York: Routledge, 2014).

In recent years, the academic debate surrounding democracy promotion has significantly broadened. While most research focuses on the recipients of democracy aid and on measuring the outcomes, we aimed our research design at the donors themselves. As our research demonstrated, the EU and the US conceptualize different models of democracy that should be built in recipient countries – these differences shall not be disqualified from further research as mere inconsequential nuances, since these nuances can effectively cause varying organizations of socio-political life. In this sense, we should assume that the efforts of both actors in democratizing recipient states can in extreme cases be conflicting – i.e. US attempts to limit the number of state institutions and services, while the EU attempts to build these very institutions as necessary components of the socio-economic outcomes of democratic governance. More research on the compatibility and congruence of the different donors’ models of democracy with recipient political cultures should be conducted in order to optimize the effects of democracy assistance. At the same time (and with a hint of wishful thinking), the more practitioners are aware of the reasons underlying their transatlantic divergences in democracy promotion practice, the more it is conceivable to formulate complementary policies that instrumentally divide labor among the two actors. In other words, while the US model of democracy and democracy assistance may be more suitable for country X, the EU model may be more suitable for country Y; while the US approach may be more effective during the democratization process at time T_1 , the EU approach may have better effects at time T_2 .

This approach, of course, would require institutionalized coordination between the EU and the US, which may show to be implausible as democracy promotion cannot be disassociated from the pressures of donors’ strategic and material interests.

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