The research field of democracy promotion

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This literature review deals with the research field of external democracy promotion. It discusses central notions and gives a short overview on real-world developments in external democratization. It then distinguishes four different modes of democracy assistance: coercion, conditionality, socialization, persuasion. Along these modes, pertinent theoretic classifications and empiric findings from the literature are presented.

Table of contents

1. Introduction – terms and contexts of external democratization research ..................... 2
2. Actors and modes of democracy promotion: towards a typology of social mechanisms .......................................................................................................................................... 3
3. Modes of Democracy Promotion in detail: research results ......................................... 9
   a) Democratization by Coercion – governmental actors and the growing focus on after-war periods......................................................................................................... 10
   b) Democratization by Conditionality – the European case ....................................... 12
   c) Democratization by Persuasion – communicative action and the civil sphere ..... 14
   d) Democratization by Socialization – from unstructured social action to external governance.................................................................................................................. 18
4. Conclusion .................................................................................................................. 21
5. Cited references .......................................................................................................... 22
1. Introduction – terms and contexts of external democratization research

In the early years of transition research, many of the major publications in the field suffered from a systematic subordination of international aspects (for example Huntington 1991; Beyme 1994; Linz/Stepan 1996). Starting in the late 1990s, scholars have started to pay attention to the external dimension of democratization. In January 2010, an American bibliography of democracy promotion listed more than 340 texts on the topic, from advising reports and policy briefs to dozens of pertinent edited volumes and monographs.

This literature review deals with that research field of external democracy promotion. It goes along with a handful of other literature overviews (Schraeder 2003; Cardwell 2011; Simmons 2011) in discussing central notions and outlining real-world developments in external democratization. It puts emphasis on the different mechanisms of democracy assistance: coercion, conditionality, socialization, and persuasion. Classifications that partly go along with these modes have already been presented in the literature (Schimmelfennig/Sedelmeier 2005a; Börzel/Risse 2009; Magen/McFaul 2009). These just cited chapters served as introductions to specific democracy promotion actors – the EU or the USA. One of the aims of this text is to show that different types of democracy promoters bear affinity to different ways of democracy promotion. The difference between democracy promotion styles of the USA and Europe (or the EU) has sometimes been characterized as a categorical matter, with the US leaning to “democracy promotion” and Europe being engaged in “democracy assistance” (Merkel 2010: 438). However, I do not use this distinction but follow that part of the literature which uses the two terms interchangeably (Burnell 2000; Finkel/Perez-Linan/Seligson 2007).

The research on democracy promotion can mainly be traced back to two strands of research which, in turn, are inspired by different elements of interest. On the one hand, democracy promotion belongs to the field of foreign policy or, in a broader sense, to international relations research. Approaches here are often centred on the actor engaged in democracy promotion. Beyond, they are often driven by the assumption that foreign policy actors assess a given situation and then decide according to a range of thought models from neo-realism to constructivism. These thought models need to be made explicit in order to understand underlying assumptions of international democratization research better. On the other hand, the field of external democratization belongs to transition studies. Here, the focuses of interest are the character and dynamics of domestic political regime developments. Scholars involved are often trained in comparative politics and are therefore bound to acknowledge multi-vectored influences to given phenomena.

Most authors of democracy promotion research follow the question under which conditions a linkage between external and domestic actors leads to domestic regimes that are more liberal, free, or stabilized than before. The question usually rests on the assump-
tion that an external actor intentionally tries to influence the quality of a political regime which exists elsewhere. Consequently, the external actor is a „promoter“ (Lawson 1999; Ethier 2003; Burnell 2004), a „sender“ (Börzel/Risse 2009) or a „sponsor“ (Freise 2004; Jünemann/Knodt 2007; Grävingholt/Leininger/Schlumberger 2009) of democracy. Since all these notions are inextricably linked to the element of intention, we are able to draw a dividing line to a related body of literature that thinks of democratization as a process of diffusion (Bunce/Wolchik 2006; Brinks/Coppedge 2007; Lauth/Pickel 2009; Elkink 2011). The concept of diffusion is only partly compatible with the idea of an intentional process. It puts attention on the recipients of democracy promotion by focusing on non-domestic impulses on the domestic drama of democratization. Researchers need to pay attention to diffusion in the sense that democracy recipient action can be decisive for the effectiveness of democracy donor action. Many notions used in connection with the diffusion concept – for example emulation, mimicry, imitation, inspiration – indicate that diffusion is by nature a process that can hardly be steered by democracy promoters. Therefore, diffusion should only be understood to a limited extent as a policy applied by external actors to intentionally promote democracy.

Another concept that is explicitly excluded in this literature overview is “external democratization”. Of course, the term has been used by important scholars (Whitehead 1986; Merkel 2010), and much of the insight produced under the label of external democratization overlaps with democracy promotion in the sense of an intentional act of political regime change. Still, I prefer to keep the two terms apart. ‘External democratization’ in my understanding refers to a process in which a broad range international factors – meaning all factors that are not domestic – may influence developments within non-democratic regimes. In particular, events in the sphere of international politics (for example the negotiation of international treaties) or transnational economics (for example the globalization of trade) belong to objects of the research on external democratization. These aspects are not extensively treated in this review due to space restriction.

Democracy promotion in this sense can then be characterized as a set of actions of non-domestic actors who intentionally try to overcome authoritarian power by supporting domestic actors who share the same objective. The definition reveals three aspects of democracy promotion; democracy promotion actors, democracy promotion recipients and the actions which link the two actor groups. They will discussed in further detail in the following section.

2. Actors and modes of democracy promotion: towards a typology of social mechanisms

With regard to the actors of democracy promotion, research takes into consideration national governments, international organizations, transnational actors as well as a plethora of societal actors. Studies exist on democracy promotion/assistance by the USA (Cox/Ikenberry/Inoguchi 2000; Magen/Risse/McFaul 2009), the United Nations (Joyner 2002; Newman/Rich 2004; Mansfield/Pevehouse 2006), the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE, see Richter 2009), or the European Union (Youngs 2001; Youngs 2003; Pridham 2005; Vachudova 2005; Kneuer 2006; Jünemann/Knodt 2007; Youngs 2008). Despite the many differences between democracy
donors, it has been argued that the type of donor organization is in the end of secondary relevance for the design – and ultimately also for the effectiveness – of external democratisation (Burnell 2008).

Even if no compilation of numbers on all resources spent in the field of external democracy promotion exists, it is beyond doubt that large resources are raised. In the United States, funds for the development of democracy and good governance have risen from US$128 million in the 1990s to US$ 817 million in 2003 (Magen/Morlino 2009b: xiv). For 2008, there is a reported figure of US$2.25 billion spent for democratic assistance by the United States. European states are also active in democracy promotion; no less than four of them each spent more than 400 million Euro on democracy promotion during both 2006 and 2007 (Youngs 2008: 10). For EU member states, these numbers are complemented by other resources. The money spent by the EU’s European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) summed up to €713.3 for the period 2000 to 2006. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in contrast, spends about $1.4 billion per year in order to support democratic processes around the world (ibid.).

Democracy recipient actors are the next field of intention. Many authors emphasize that an analysis of intentional international influence on democratization processes needs to recognize the inevitable limits of external means. Democracy and democratization are by definition dependent on the relations between domestic elites and the demos: „such processes always are, in a fundamental sense, an essentially ‘domestic drama’“ (Morlino/Magen 2009a: 29). In fact, a look on the pertinent literature reveals that different regions are assumed to be sensitive to foreign influence in diverse ways. Latin America, Southern Europe and Central Europe are usually seen as active playing fields of international democratizers. Consequently, domestic actors indeed had to deal with substantial external influence on the respective regime transitions (Whitehead 1986; Pridham 1994; Baun 2000). On the contrary, post-soviet Europe, Sub-Saharan Africa, Central Asia, and the Arab world have frequently been characterized as being less open to external democratizing influence. This led authors to focussing on the internal political economy of regime change (Hellman 1998; Richter 2007).

Which instruments do external democratizing actors use? Despite the many publications on external democratization, attempts to systematize this part of the research agenda have been rather modest for a long time. We find enumerative lists of instruments that often originate from foreign policy action. A few years ago, Peter Schraeder has presented a catalogue of seven categories of instruments: classic diplomacy, foreign aid, political conditionality, economic sanctions, covert intervention, paramilitary intervention, and military intervention (Schraeder 2003: 26). Wolfgang Merkel also uses this list, but additionally orders them by degree of coercion – diplomacy being the least, military intervention being the most coercive instrument (Merkel 2010: 456). Such enumerations help us classify the diversity of measures in the field. With external democratization going on, authors have become aware how important conditions and contexts are for the success of democracy promotion. For quite a long time, these conditions have been approached from the primary logic of the involved disciplines. The action of democracy senders were analysed through the lens of international relations (see, for example, Schraeder 2002), whereas developments in democratizing countries were in the focus of transition studies (for example Linz/Stepan 1996).
Attempts to systematically link the two actor groups by modes of interactions appeared relatively late. The first prominent text to do so was Laurence Whitehead’s edited volume named the “International Dimension of Democratization” (Whitehead 2001b). In the introductory chapter of this book, Whitehead develops three reference models of external democratization: contagion, control and consent (Whitehead 2001a). His approach is oriented mainly towards empirically discernable constellations: contagion in regional neighbourhood (e.g. Southern Europe during the 1980s, Central Europe in the 1990s), control by an external actor with asymmetrical powers (e.g. the USA in Latin America), and consent in societies with external assistance that only accompanies an already ongoing process (e.g. Southeast Asia in the 1980s).

With this suggestion, Whitehead established basic categories which have remained relevant ever since. A few years later, Paul Kubiček employed a similar terminology as he spoke of control, contagion, convergence, and conditionality (Kubicek 2003). With control and contagion staying on the list, Kubiček brought two new elements into debate. First, he renamed consent and called it convergence instead. Secondly, Whitehead’s control category was split into two categories, namely control and conditionality – control standing for instances with little room for manoeuvre for the democratizing country, and conditionality focusing on the option of the democratizing country to accept offered incentives or turn them down. Both choices relate to Kubiček’s focus on the EU and with the fact that prospective member states were included in the analysis.

On the occasion of the Eastern enlargement of the EU, a huge collection of volumes focusing on EU-approximation and on democracy development were published. One of the most seminal books was written by Frank Schimmelfennig and Ulrich Sedelmeier: “Europeanization of Central and Eastern Europe” (Schimmelfennig/Sedelmeier 2005b). Of course, Europeanization as a concept of reference deviates from external democratization in two regards. The development of a democratic order represents only one among various dimensions in which the EU tries to exert external influence on candidate countries. Also, a potential EU membership at the end of a presumed democratization process constitutes a side condition which is highly exceptional. Still, many of the insights gained in the Europeanization literature have been taken up in external democratization research, and therefore they shall be considered here.

The major contribution by Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier consisted in including a broader understanding of social action in the field of external impact on democratizing countries. This promoted the categories as established by Whitehead and Kubiček to discernable models of international interaction; Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier named them a) external incentives model, b) social learning model, and c) lesson-drawing model (Schimmelfennig/Sedelmeier 2005a). The step forward undertaken by the two scholars consisted in the endeavour to extensively link these models to existing theoretic preliminaries. Their external incentives model is designed as “a rationalist bargaining model. It is actor-centred and based on logic of consequences. In a bargaining process, actors exchange information, threats, and promises according to their preferences” (Schimmelfennig/Sedelmeier 2005a: 10). Discussion of the model revolves around conceptual figures of the rationalist tool-kit, for example the credibility of incentives (or threats), potential veto players, costs of adaptation and asymmetries in information. The social learning model is, according to Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier, “based on core tenets of social constructivism (…). The most general proposition of the social learning
model (...) is: a government adopts EU rules if it is persuaded of the appropriateness of EU rules (Schimmelfennig/Sedelmeier 2005a: 18).

These two models are largely compatible with a dichotomous view of Europeanization developed by Tanja Börzel and Thomas Risse (2003). It divides the diffusion of rules into processes of an instrumental logic on the one hand and a non-instrumental logic on the other. The division vaguely existed in external democratization research before (control/contagion versus consent/convergence, see Whitehead and Kubiček). However, in the end it was the real-world event of EU Eastern Enlargement which served as an opportunity to transfer the knowledge of EU internal dynamics to extra-EU environments. In any case, more recent publications on external democratization did not bring further types into the debate (see Pridham 2005; Youngs 2008; Magen/Risse/McFaul 2009). Even the labels accredited to the different modes seem rather familiar. For example, Amichai Magen and Leonardo Morlino use the well-known notions of control, conditionality, socialization, and example in order to map the field (Magen/Morlino 2009c). The number of descriptive terms for modes of democracy transposition seems to be exhausted.

However, our knowledge on the theoretical frame for the various kinds of rule diffusion is still less developed. In order to illustrate this, I turn to the third model presented by Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier – in their terms, lesson-drawing. According to the authors, this model can be found in situations where political actors become aware of policy solutions elsewhere and apply them to their own systems: “A government adopts EU rules if it expects these rules to solve domestic policy problems effectively” (Schimmelfennig/Sedelmeier 2005a: 22). The authors allot the model both to rationalist and constructivist schools of thought, stating a) that a rationalist framework applies where ideas are taken over and lead “to a change in means but not in ends” and b) that constructivism applies to situations where “complex learning” induces a change of goals and ends during the learning process (ibid.: 21). These elaborations show a further potential of classifying empiric situations to meta-theoretic positions in order to get to less ambiguous models.

The most important step towards that direction has been taken by Tanja Börzel and Thomas Risse in a paper which tries to conceptualize the “transformative power of Europe” (Börzel/Risse 2009). Börzel and Risse are more explicit than others in highlighting the diverging logics behind the non-instrumental types of external democratization. They do not content themselves with labelling everything beyond coercion and conditionality as “constructivist”. Instead, they draw a distinction between the two constructivist camps of socialization and persuasion by accrediting the first to normative rationality and the second to communicative rationality (Börzel/Risse 2009: 5).

In their paper, normative rationality is attributed to the large literature of new institutionalism which suggests that individuals do not only follow a logic of consequentialism, but also a “logic of appropriateness” (March/Olsen 1989). Exactly this logic had also been discussed by the previous literature including Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier who classified the mode as social learning. Although Börzel and Risse only “zoom in” (Börzel/Risse 2009: 9) on their mechanisms and do not discuss them at length, the two authors advise us of the existence of two different types of social learning. One indeed follows the logic of appropriateness in the neo-institutionalist sense – actors design their decisions on the basis of values they exhibit. To this approach, norms
are important but represent only external variables. The other does not conceptualize values as something given, but is based on the idea that they develop during a process of communicative exchange. During communication, a redefinition of interests, identities and therefore values takes place (Risse 2000; Checkel 2007; Checkel/Zürn 2007).

If we take the suggestion of Börzel and Risse seriously, we have a list of altogether four modes, or social mechanisms, of external democratization. They present underlying principles rather than firmly established types. Before discussing them one by one in the next section, they can briefly be characterized as follows:

a) **Coercion**: The mode is based on the idea that a democracy sender imposes its ideas on a country where no democracy exists. On the receiving side, there are either too few oppositional actors to make a domestic regime change probable and/or the conditions for democratization are unfavourable. External democratization by coercion therefore often bears a dimension of physical conflict; the use of physical force by democracy promoters also serves as an indicator to distinguish “coercion” from the other modes of democracy promotion. While the mode bears no difficulties of identifying the democracy promoter – a democratic state or organization using force to impose democracy elsewhere –, there is a wide range of actor groups and possible reactions on the recipient end. Coercion often occurs with regard to strongly authoritarian regimes which do not allow for a clearly identifiable political opposition. Another context in which violent democracy promotion occurs is weak and/or failing states. In such a case, domestic actors which receive democracy assistance are sometimes difficult to classify as “citizens” of a non-democratic state.

b) **Conditionality**: The mode is based on instrumental rationality in the sense that both actor groups – senders and recipients – enter into a game of incentives, promises and (non-violent) threats. Despite the origin of the concept in the World Bank and development policy, conditionality based external democratization has often been linked to the EU and its institutional structure. Consequently, the paradigm of international politics has more and more been replaced by an institutionalist perspective on transnational politics. Since the pertinent mode has been growingly applied also to less probable cases of EU membership, conditionality research has recently concentrated on incidents of non-compliance or evasion, thus turning away the earlier focus from the successful democratization cases of Central Europe.

c) **Persuasion**: The mode bases on the idea that values of individuals are heavily influenced by arguments and reason. Although these roots are not overly discussed in the external democratization literature, theoretic origins largely go back to the theory of communicative action of Jürgen Habermas who has developed the idea that societal deliberation leads to legitimate political decisions, processes, and structures (Habermas 1981; 1992). The thought model has been transferred to the international sphere on a broader scale (one prominent example would be Risse 2000). In that approach, communicative international action needs resonance structures both on the societal and the elite level. Societal actors involved have to be ready for social learning in the sense of internalizing norms and ideas in an identity changing way. The sufficient condition for this consists in the access of the public to mass communication (including the new media). In
other constellations, intensive learning – sometimes called complex learning – needs enduring structures of international politics. Especially on the elite level, learning is not very likely to happen in an anarchic setting of international relations. Therefore, one implicitly natural arena for external democratization by communicative action is that of International Organizations which engage in political dialogue and deliberative bargaining.

d) Socialization: In difference to persuasion, the socialization mode is based on normative rationality. Not an active policy of convincement, but the exchange of social norms and values is in the centre of interest. The result of effective socialization is, like in the mode “persuasion”, social learning – it does not matter for an act of learning if norms, ideas, or values have been changed by communicative convincement or by an experience of practical appropriateness. The school of thought highlighting socialization as a major mode of external democratization does usually not deny that communication plays a role in establishing norms. However, the focus is less on their development than on the interaction of existing norms. Often, the norms involved are of a legal nature, for example with regard to the UN Declaration of Human Rights or European Convention on Human Rights. From a sociological point of view, these norms do entail the development of institutions with formal and informal rules – the core tenet of neo-institutionalism (March/Olsen 1989; North 1990). More specifically, it is the interplay of societal (sometimes called “traditional”, sometimes called “cultural”) rules and pure institutional logics that show the relevance of socialization (Rosenbaum 1999). For example, elections may have more meanings to people than the simple ‘democratic’ idea of selecting a temporary leadership (Verdery 1998). The relevant type of action on the democracy promotion side is tightly linked to societal performance on the democracy sender side – often in the form of role models which are able to symbolize a certain balance of societal/traditional/cultural norms and institutional logics (an example would the culture of giving up political power after the end of an electoral term).

Careful readers will notice that the four modes of democracy promotion lack an element that has been included in other reviews on external democratization: the mode around the phenomena of emulation, indirect influence, mimicry, lesson drawing, performance, imitation, copying, combination, and inspiration (terminology is from Schraeder 2003; Börzel/Risse 2009; Kneuer 2009; Magen/McFaul 2009; Magen/Morlino 2009b). As already discussed above, the according mode is not included into this review because the criterion of deliberate democracy promotion is not necessarily met in actions of imitation.

Table 1 summarizes the four modes. By linking those to different types of rationality, it is also possible to speak of social mechanisms. This notion indicates a stronger link to underlying principles of social action than the term “mode” which aims at properties of a certain type of social action without covering underlying principles. The table shows that the social mechanisms of interaction need to be distinguished from potential actions of democracy promoters on the one side and democracy recipients on the other. Whereas the aims of democracy promotion actors are not difficult to determine (their objective consists in externally supporting democracy or democratization), the range of reactions of actors in receiving countries is much more complex. Political elites may – on the basis of their own will or others’ threats – decide or not decide to allow democ-
ratic institutions to take root in the domestic regimes; usually the assumption will be that they decide for one or the other alternative in the light of their own chances for po-
litical (or sometimes physical) survival (Hellman 1998). Also the populations of au-
thoritarian or democratizing countries may decide or not decide to incorporate external impulses into their politically relevant action. Here, the assumption is that populations will in general be ready to strive for higher degrees of freedom, autonomy, and self-
determination. Obstacles do emerge when social or economic hardships become so evi-
dent that they outweigh the perceived advantages of a democratized regime (Przeworski 

Table 1: Modes and types of action in external democracy promotion*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of action: democracy promoters</th>
<th>Mode of democracy promotion</th>
<th>Type of action: democracy promotion recipients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coercive action</td>
<td>a) Coercion – instrumental rationality</td>
<td>Submissive or non-submissive action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of legal or physical force</td>
<td></td>
<td>Obedience, evasion, or apathy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offering incentives</td>
<td>b) Conditionality – instrumental rationality</td>
<td>Processing of incentives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving assistance with threat of withdrawal, imposing sanctions</td>
<td></td>
<td>Compliance or non-compliance, depending on reward/punishment relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persuasion</td>
<td>c) Persuasion – communicative rationality</td>
<td>Social learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion of ideas as legitimate through reason-giving</td>
<td></td>
<td>(effective or non-effective) internalization of ideas and/or identity change if norms and values are accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social interaction</td>
<td>d) Socialization – normative rationality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exhibition of norms and values in social practices</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The principle of this table is taken from Börzel/Risse (2009: 11). However, many notions and classifications differ from the ones used by Börzel/Risse. Further elaborations can be found in section 3.

3. Modes of Democracy Promotion in detail: research results

This section will now trace the literature on democracy promotion with a focus on the modes and/or social mechanisms developed in section 2. Special attention will be paid to the actors involved in instruments attached to the respective modes. The overview will make clear that modes of democracy promotion are not only distinguished by their inherent logic of different social mechanisms, but also by the types of actors using the respective interests.
a) Democratization by Coercion – governmental actors and the growing focus on after-war periods

The classic cases of successful coercive democratization are the post World War II countries of Japan and West Germany (Montgomery 1957). However, these three cases constitute exceptions to the more general insight that coercive external democratization a) often serves as a side-effect of other aims in international political action and b) is rarely effective. The expressed intention of fighting a country into democracy is often seen as a rhetorical diversionary tactic while the reason for international conflict rests in the assumptions and findings of pessimist realism (Cederman/Hug/Wenger 2009: 55). In the 1980s and 1990s, the view that democracies do not engage in wars against each other resulted in more enthusiast positions that favoured active engagement for regime change (ibid.). The security studies paradigm continued to be relevant for the study of external democratization, and civil-military relations at eye level were judged as an important element to reconcile the (potentially violent) military and (potentially civil) political spheres. Western strategy after the Cold War then consisted in making graduated offers with regard to integration into Western security structures (Mares 1998). Especially in the case of Central Europe, NATO enlargement has therefore been seen as an integral part of transition to democracy (Jacoby 2006). In the changing international environment, military cooperation consequently lost much of its coercive potential. Security assistance was identified as an element of democracy promotion (Rhame 1996). The focus shifted from the external dimension of military assistance to questions of internal control of the military in young democracies. Civil control ranked as a minimum condition for a domesticated military (Huntington 1995; Forman/Welch 1998; Watts 2002).

The event of the US-led war of the “coalition of the willing” against Iraq then brought external democratization by coercion into the centre of public and scholarly interest. The US President of that time, George W. Bush, had repeatedly claimed the aim of establishing democracy in Iraq and the whole Middle East as one of the objectives of the military operation started in March 2003. It is clear today that this goal has not been achieved. Mainstream literature simply classified allied action in Iraq as occupation; the aim of democratizing Iraq was judged as both a made-up argument and illusionary (see, for example, Cockburn 2007). Some authors saw a certain effect of state-building. For example, Andrew Arato presented an analysis of constitution-making in Iraq in which he provided evidence for a substantial and constructive role of American actors (Arato 2009). However, also Arato does not go as far as characterizing this process as democratization.

A special issue of the journal “Democratization” has systematically discussed the issue “democratization through war” by addressing the legality, legitimacy and effectiveness of external democratization as a follow-up of violent conflicts (Grimm/Merkel 2008). From the case studies in that volume, it becomes clear that coercive democratization emanates from democratic states (often the US in global politics and European states in the European context) and is accompanied by international organizations (the OSCE,

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2 The issue has later been published as an edited volume (Merkel/Grimm 2009). Cited articles are from that book version.
the UN) which legitimize external action and try to safeguard the new order that emerge after an intervention (Croissant 2009; Jawad 2009; Suhrke 2009).

External intervention should be divided into three phases: before, during, and after the conflict. The first two phases were debated heavily in public spheres around the world in the early 1990s (Mansfield/Snyder 2002; Merkel 2009b). Two aspects were discussed. On the one hand, human rights norms were more decidedly than before declared as universal values. The corresponding theory of just wars (Walzer 1977) constitutes as a normative basis for imposing regime change on governments that systematically violate basic human rights of their own citizens. On the other hand, just wars have to be seen against the background of real world power. In fact, decisions concerning legal legitimation of wars are usually dependent on the UN Security Council, in other words on a political committee. Here, the principle of sovereignty is still existent and stands in contrast to the universal validity of human rights. Public international law is therefore „normatively enlightened“ (Merkel 2009a: 29) to legitimize external changes in unjust states, but it is at the same time restricted by the will of an exclusive group of political actors.

With regard to the outcome and potential success of coercive external democratization, the editors and authors of the already mentioned special issue of “Democratization” draw sceptic conclusions. The positive examples of Germany and Japan after 1945 are contrasted with cases from post-Yugoslavia, Georgia, Afghanistan and Cambodia. Reasons for the non-success are not so much identified in the violent character of coercion itself. Rather, non-favourable preconditions like unresolved security problems, internal state failure, ethnic and minority conflicts and a lack of internal societal trust are placed in the centre of interest (Grimm 2009: 89). If several of these conditions apply at the same time, external powers with military intervention capacities hardly will have the resource to deal with all of them. In some cases, an increase in levels of good governance – for example with regard to the rule of law – can be traced, but none of the more recent cases of coercive democratization can be characterized as more than a hybrid regime. These insights go along with another study on external democratization with regard to Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua (Reiber 2009). In contrast to some of the cases mentioned above, in these Central American cases the degree of coercion was limited. Consequently, Reiber is able to ascribe some success to external action in the three states.

In a book from 2010, Sonja Grimm systematizes the challenges for coercive democracy promotion as four “dilemmas of external democratization” (Grimm 2010: 119-126). First, she identifies a “benevolent intervention dilemma”, referring to the conflict between external support and aspired self-determination. Secondly, she points out a parallel democratization dilemma of all parts of transformation, for example legitimate statehood needing a functioning election mechanism which in turn needs functioning state institutions. Thirdly, a “radicalizing democratization dilemma” exists in such cases when democratic competition intensifies societal conflicts. Fourthly, the “forced cooperation dilemma” refers to the need for a will to cooperate and to compromise which needs to be voluntary, but is counteracted by the coerciveness of the military protection of the new order. Not all of these dilemmas can be dealt with by foreign actors in constructive ways (Grimm 2010: 331). Obviously, there is “no guarantee for the success of external democratization” (Grimm 2010: 336). Beyond that, however, the mentioned dilemmas deepen with the intensification of the asymmetrical relation between donors
and receivers of coercive democracy assistance. In the end, the abilities of an external actor to consolidate peace and establish democracy and rule of law are limited (Grimm 2010: 339).

The cautious conclusions that need to be drawn from the record of coercive democratization have shifted the attention to the time period after invasions by democracy promoting powers have been successful (Merkel 2009b). In international law, post bellum norms have not or only little been codified, yet in the political sphere they are of huge relevance. Especially in areas of limited statehood, coercive external democracy promoters are implicitly or explicitly expected to introduce an active policy for the pacification of society during the post-conflict setting. Democratic interventions can also destroy state institutions by activating latent conflicts that have been curtailed by the autocratic system (Merkel 2009b: 48-49).

b) Democratization by Conditionality – the European case

Conditionality is a concept that emanated in the 1980s when International Financial Institutions – typically the World Bank or the International Monetary Fund – started to link lending programs to certain policy demands (Koeberle u.a. 2005: 3; see Dreher 2009). In the terminology of the World Bank, those demands related to politics or public administration were labelled as measures related to ‘good governance’. Often, insisting on good governance applied to modest measures of liberalization in poor and heavily indebted countries occurred in the context of development aid. Democratization or even democracy usually served as a relatively distant part of the agenda (Crawford 2001).

This changed in the end of the 1990s when both actors and scholars applied the term ‘conditionality’ to the European Union and its Eastern enlargement process. After the withering away of the Iron Curtain almost all countries of the post-socialist space searched for closer relations with West European states and in particular with the EU. The EU reacted in establishing the Copenhagen criteria in 1992, a list of conditions EU candidate countries had to fulfil in order to be eligible for accession negotiations (Baun 2000). Soon, the list became important beyond potential accession candidates because the EU started to include these criteria in association agreements with a broad range of third countries. Obviously, the EU and its institutions were confronted with very different contexts under which third country obligations could in reality be demanded. The peak of conditionality research was reached in the years around the central European member states’ EU-accession (with two books seemingly most cited, see Grabbe 2003; Schimmelfennig/Sedelmeier 2005b).

The conceptual link between conditionality and democratization is not without pitfalls. On the one hand, there is no doubt about the potential effects of positive and negative incentives on the development of democracy in post-socialist Europe. All states that have successfully completed EU accession talks are today rated as democracies. On the other side, with the temporary exception of Ukraine, no post-socialist non-EU member has managed to build up a democratic regime, even less a stable one (Beichelt 2011).

3 Doubts have recently been raised on the Hungarian case, see Sapper/Weichsel (2011).
According to the pertinent literature, the effectiveness of EU conditionality is linked to a rather limited set of factors and conditions. One is the weight an incentive needs in order to be relevant to democratization. Another point is the credibility of the democratizer, a third one the capacity of democracy recipients to deal with incentives or threats. These insights have been forwarded by a working group formed by Frank Schimmelfennig, Stefan Engert and Heiko Knobel. In a multiconceptual analysis, they examined nine cases, among them Belarus, Estonia, Montenegro, Northern Cyprus, and Turkey. With this wide range of cases, the authors tried to catch the wide variety of (mainly) EU-driven incentives, including different levels of commitment and durability.

Their result can be summed up in a triple set of conditions which need to be present in order to be helpful to democratization. The first condition says that external input needs to be substantial: “Great and credible material and political incentives are necessary for the promotion of liberal and political norms in problematic target countries” (Schimmelfennig/Engert/Knobel 2006: 240). The two other conditions have to do with recipient elites and the distinct constellations they find themselves in. In addition to substantial incentives by the EU, identification of the elites with the EU and/or democracy is influential. Additionally, it is important how high the costs are for elites on their way of democratization. All three elements then have to be present in a specific way: a combination of great incentives and positive identification of elites with western values is sufficient for democratic change – even if the internal costs are high (Schimmelfennig/Engert/Knobel 2006: 240). Until today, the most obvious example for this argument is the case of Slovakia. During the elections of 1998, the credible offer of EU-accession lead the then acting Mečiar government to facing and accepting the electorate’s vote even despite an almost certain loss of power.

The authors also present other examples to underline their hypothesis. Especially the cases of Estonia and Latvia are used to show the effectiveness of a mix of high incentives and credible threats in the case of non-conditional behaviour. In both countries, a treatment of the Russian minorities compatible with democratic values was only introduced after EU and NATO made it a requirement for accession (cf. Schimmelfennig/Engert/Knobel 2006: 172, 194, 241).

In their work Schimmelfennig, Engert and Knobel have combined and continued preliminary works of many authors. Notable until today are Heather Grabbe who very early fanned out the instruments of conditionality in the face of potential accession candidates (Grabbe 2001; 2003). Jim Hughes, Gwendolyn Sasse and Claire Gordon expanded the concept to post-socialist regions without an immediate accession perspective (Hughes/Sasse/Gordon 2004). Milada Vachudova provided the most extensive overview over the different phases of the connection between Europeanization and democratization by introducing the distinction between “passive” and “active” leverage (Vachudova 2005). Finally, Annette Jüinemann and Michèle Knodt took up a number of suggestions made in the debate and discussed them for a number of EU partners beyond the European Neighbourhood (Jüinemann/Knodt 2007).

All of these authors have paved the way for current state of research, in which the following question is discussed from different angles: Is it possible to employ conditionality in absence of an EU accession perspective for target countries of democracy promotion? The field where this question has been discussed most prominently is Eastern enlargement. In an empirically dense study, Marianne Kneuer concentrates on the new
member states of the EU, in a way drawing on the states of Southern enlargement as an analytic foil (Kneuer 2006). In line with Schimmelfennig, Engert and Knobel, Kneuer links the EU’s effectiveness in the promotion of democracy and/or good governance to the perceived attractiveness of incentives.

With regard to the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), the findings on countries from the Eastern and Southern partnerships run parallel to the insights formulated in the literature on the potential EU accession cases (Koopmann 2006; Jünemann/Knödt 2007; Weber/Smith/Baun 2007). Complaints can frequently be heard that the resources provided by the EU are perceived as insufficient by the target countries to justify “high stakes” in the implementation of internal reforms. In this context, Annegret Bendiek uses the notion of a „tragedy“ and arrives at the conclusion that ENP is suffering from a strategy that is only little ambitioned (Bendiek/Röhrig 2007; Bendiek 2008). This finding does not run contrary to earlier results; it simply underlines that conditional approaches in external democratization only make sense if they are substantiated by according resources.

Another part of the literature turns its attention more to the recipient side of democracy promotion. Leonardo Morlino and Amichai Magen point out the destructive functions of undecided elites in e.g. Serbia and the Ukraine (Morlino/Magen 2009b: 236). Similar findings relate to the implementation of good governance in the Southern Caucasus (Börzel/Pamuk/Stahn 2010). These publications also contribute to the idea that the introduction of material and political frameworks is an adequate solution only if the elites in the target countries drum up the will and the potential for internal reforms.

Concluding, the effectiveness of conditional democracy promotion is seen as one of the most successful mechanisms at hand. As Morlino and Magen write at the end of a study which includes Romania, Turkey, Serbia, and Ukraine: „Conditionality works for rule adoption! Sometimes…” (Morlino/Magen 2009b: 229). The restricting “sometimes” is related to a combination of empowering factors which include external aid, continuous conditional action, the creation of opportunities as well as an deliberate weakening of veto powers (Morlino/Magen 2009b: 256).

c) Democratization by Persuasion – communicative action and the civil sphere

The early writings on constructivism in international relations theory propagated that norms were not a given entity, but subject to context and change (Wendt 1992; Checkel 1998; Finnemore/Sikkink 1998; Ruggie 1998; Christiansen/Jorgensen/Wiener 2001). The major line of attack was directed towards realist and neo-realist approaches that derived norms from stable and non-volatile (state) interests. Constructivism forwarded an alternative meta-theory with a few major messages: interests should be seen as subject to contingent interpretation by actors (Wendt, Ruggie), norms should not be too closely linked to interests (Checkel), and norm dynamics should be rated as driving forces for international political change (Finnemore/Sikkink). These approaches present a promising research dimension in external democracy promotion in all cases where the focus needs to be directed to norms and values that make formally democratic institutions work.
Scholars of constructivism have therefore leaned towards the issue of democracy promotion rather early. Over time, two theoretic directions crystallized (Risse 2004: 162-165): discourse and communication theory on the one hand, and sociological institutionalism on the other hand. While some authors in the field of external democratization tend to subsume both of these approaches under a ‘constructivist’ mechanism of ‘socialization’ (Börzel/Risse 2003; Schimmelfennig/Sedelmeier 2005a; Magen/Morlino 2009a), it seems worthwhile to insist on the two substantially different types of human action linked to these schools. In their extremes, discourse and communication may lead to norms and ideas with distant references to empiric action, whereas sociological institutionalism may induce norm change exclusively on the basis of material constraints without communicated ideas playing a role. In a later paper, Tanja Börzel and Thomas Risse have therefore returned to Risse’s earlier division and established “persuasion” as a proper mechanism of norm diffusion (Börzel/Risse 2009: 9).

Within that category, we are able to discern different paths of persuasion. One mode is described by Jeffrey Checkel who, in a widely cited paper, explored the norm convergence of democratizing Turkey with the European Union (Checkel 2001). He argued that political actors move in ideational frames that adapt to context situations. In that sense, a changing environment in international relations eliminates earlier constraints and opens new opportunities to which political actors adjust; the result is ideational adaptation and an emergence of new frames. Consequently (but not stated explicitly by Checkel), external democracy promotion can take place by the creation of a pertinent ideational frame in international politics. The sudden appreciation of human and political rights by previously repressive communist leaders around 1989/91 may be taken as an appropriate example. Of course, this kind of ideational frame change cannot only be observed with regard to processes of democratization. It equally occurs in nation building processes in which ideas and norms co-vary with processes of internal modernization (Risse 2001).

More to the individual and less to the collective level, another argument of constructivism consists in the fact that actor norms and interests are contingent to change and dynamics. Also this argument has been used in external democratization research. Frank Schimmelfennig (2001; 2003) has pointed out in several articles that political actors in Brussels under certain conditions have been forced to accept previously rejected arguments to include Central European states both into NATO and the EU – decisions which in the long run forced the Baltic States or Slovakia into a conditional commitment to democratic norms. This line of research puts a focus on norm change on the side of democracy promoters who, after all, must be convinced to translate their democratic values into political programs attracting the democracy recipient side.

Ideational change among domestic actors is of equal importance. Here the main distinction concerns domestic elites and domestic civil society. Existing literature exhibits an interesting divide. On the one hand, transition theory tells us that it is indeed the domestic non-democratic or semi-democratic elites that have to be persuaded to accept democratic rules (Linz 1990; Burton/Gunther/Higley 1992). On the other hand, the few pieces focusing on persuasion and convincement in external democracy promotion focus exactly on the opposite, namely on civil society and their organizations. For example, Omar Encarnación has concentrated on the potential of civil society to reinforce democracy in Latin America (Encarnación 2000). In Encarnacion’s article, Alexis de Tocqueville’s “school of democracy” theorem has been put in the centre of intention. Simi-
larly, several texts with a prevalence conceptual rather than empirical issues have argued that the new transnational character of civil society present a paramount of opportunities for actors to be exposed to the persuasive idea of democracy (White 1994; Keane 2003).

The case that has been studied most extensively seems to be Russia. Two pertinent books have illustrated that close communicative encounters with the West have not led to an incorporation of democratic norms; a major reason is a lack of domestic resonance structures both within civil society and the political elites (Henderson 2003; Heller 2008). One might conclude that the empirically oriented literature on advocacy and civil society involvement has brought forward findings that are much more hesitant than the broadly optimistic tone of the theoretic research on civil society. In her work, Heller analyses the Council of Europe’s human rights policy towards the Russian Federation. She finds that the main cause for the many deficits in the implementation of human rights in Russia lies in domestic conditions. Whenever norms of human rights imposition become incompatible with power interests of the Russian elite, domestic actors enact a “decoupling” of norms and interests (Heller 2008: 306). In an earlier work, Patrice McMahon had already hinted at this constellation in a work on the support of women’s groups in post-socialist Europe (McMahon 2001). More generally, the limited acceptance of norms exported by the transnational civil society led to the assertion of a Western “aid industry”, as has already been formulated in 1998 (van Rooy 1998). Many authors in the field agree that the communicative transfer of norms is heavily limited when democracy is promoted by civil society organizations that lack a voluntary dimension (Petrova 2011).

In its ideal form, the theory of communicative action conceptualizes argumentative communication as two-sided process. What, however, if certain conditions constrain mutual communication? Democracy promotion research tells us that it is quite possible that domestic actors copy or re-contextualize persuasive arguments of foreign actors. This process of “diffusion” is defined as “an innovation [which] is disseminated through specific information channels and finds acceptance” (Lauth/Pickel 2009: 37). Diffusion can occur as knowledge transfer, change in attitude or change in behaviour (Lauth/Pickel 2009: 40). Lesson learning is only observable in case of successful imitation that has taken place not as result of socialization but as a product of diffuse persuasion of assumingly superior ideas. Research has shown a causal link between communicative openness (international telephone traffic, access to television, internet access) and the quality of democracy (Lauth/Pickel 2009: 65-67).

One area of recent interest where this effect can be shown is the Arabic world, where several revolutions have eliminated several authoritarian regimes in 2010 and 2011. For a long period of time, the Arab world has been characterized by particularly stable autocratic regimes (Kailitz 2009). By and large, they were considered to lack many internal preconditions for liberalization or democratization. Most of the regimes seemed so stable that it is even hard to find literature that focuses on the region with a perspective on potential regime change before 2011. If external forces were dealt with, they were rather seen as elements stabilizing the existing authoritarian regimes because of Western governments’ interests in access to resources and a stable regional security structure (Richter 2007).
This changed in late 2010 and 2011, when – starting with Tunisia – street revolutions turned into the so-called Arabellion. One of the central success elements of the over-turns consisted in the communication of the protesting population via electronic media, in particular Facebook (Todd 2011). First analyses of these processes highlight that the respective media introduce “the West” in a twofold way. On the one hand, social networks are a Western technology import. On the other, networks and the Internet in general have served as catalysts for the knowledge on Western lifestyle and democratic government practices. With both qualities “the digital media helped to turn individualized, localized and community-specific dissent into a structured movement” (Howard/Hussain 2011: 41).

In that sense, the model giving quality of established democracy existed in the Arab upheavals, but in a somewhat hidden way. The globalization of communication has made the low living standard and high levels of corruption – to name two endemic problems of many Arab regimes – known. Furthermore, digital media were able to circumvent traditional or official ways of communication. It has been shown with regard to the Tunisian case that those elements were in principle sufficient to overthrow a seemingly stable regime (Schraeder/Redissi 2011). Accordingly, Schraeder and Redissi see only a limited and indirect role of foreign forces. Ironically, the authors identify the WikiLeaks affair during which US American diplomatic documents were made open to the public as an important element of the Tunisian regime breakdown (ibid.: 14). These documents made transparent the decadent lifestyle of Ben Ali’s clan to a wider public. The irony about WikiLeaks is that it was seen as a scandal by the US American government. Besides Tunisia and Egypt, there are other Arab cases which are less successful in liberalizing. The Syrian case demonstrates that external democratization forces or their arguments do not come into game if strong stability interests prevail (Bickel 2011).

Taken together, the cases at the Northern Mediterranean and in the Middle East indicate the affinity of the coercion and the example modes. Both apply to cases of a relatively closed regime nature. If this is not the case, direct social interaction by politically relevant actors is much more likely to evolve, and consequently, the other modes discussed – conditionality, persuasion, socialization – are more likely to apply. If regimes are relatively closed, and if democracy promotion actors decide to refrain from coercive action, societies and states are left to the ‘domestic drama’. During the 20th century, this has usually led to the perpetuation of closed (and hence autocratic) regimes. The early 21st century has brought up the question if the globalized character of electronic communication may be able to change that setting. The transnational character of digital media has made it easier to break up authoritarian regimes without external democratizers directly involved.

In summary, persuasion arguably presents the most understudied mode of democracy promotion for several reasons. First, the process of convincement can only be observed in research settings with relatively high costs. Actors not only need to be observed over a longer time but also in an atmosphere of mutual trust and concord. Second, norm change usually becomes relevant on a collective level rather than on the individual level which multiplies research costs if persuasion – and not the easier to observe socialization (see below) – is supposed to be documented. Third, several actor groups need to be taken into account: external elites have a privileged access to those domestic actors that might actively initiate a regime change; external or international civil society is often better legitimized than state actors because of a lack of involved state interests; domes-
tic elites may carry on normative arguments and therefore constitute a communicative link between external actors and domestic societies; last but not least domestic civil society actors present the area where democratic norms and values take root.

Most research on democracy promotion has not so much concentrated on one of these empiric fields but focused on communicative mechanisms between several actor groups. Individual (or group individual) processes of persuasion have been of less interest than encompassing advocacy coalitions (Finnemore/Sikkink 1998; Price 2003) and their – more or less successful – implantation to democratizing societies. Within international advocacy coalitions, norm entrepreneurs of democratization can form “islands of persuasion” (Deitelhoff 2006: 280) on which non-democratic norm systems can be transformed into democratic ones. However, a study of Manal Jamal on civil society oriented democracy promotion in Palestine and El Salvador has shown that external democracy promotion is not only dependent on communicative processes between all actor groups but also on the inclusiveness of political settlements in general – where certain groups are excluded from the settlement, external democratization efforts may even weaken the quality of civil society as the main carrier of democratic institutionalization and consolidation (Jamal 2012).

**d) Democratization by Socialization – from unstructured social action to external governance**

As sketched out above, the mode of socialization needs to be carefully confined against the other modes of democracy promotion. Socialization in the tradition of sociological institutionalism bears close links with two other directions of research. The mode is related to conditionality in the sense that the logic of consequentialism (conditionality) and the logic of appropriateness (socialization) present two sides of the coin called new institutionalism (March/Olsen 1989; North 1990). In that tradition, both modes are ultimately linked to actors with an instrumental agenda. In order to distinguish between them, we have to concentrate on the difference between the processing of incentives and social learning (see above, table 1). Both aspects are always present in interaction between actors with asymmetric resources. In the end, it depends on the context – and the type of action chosen by the (more powerful) democracy promoter – which mode predominates in a given situation.

The second mode ‘socialization’ has much in common with is ‘persuasion’. Here, the common denominator rests in the weight given to the exchange of symbolic values. Again, a major difference between the two modes consists in the behaviour of the democracy promoter. Is he/she bound to deliberately convince the democracy taker with the use of arguments, we are dealing with persuasion. If social interaction takes place in many arenas, and if it can be characterized as social rather than argumentative communication, norms and values on the democracy taker side change in a more autonomous manner. Rules of democracy then are less learned through direct persuasion, but through observance and the re-contextualization of Western ‘democratic’ elements in the domestic setting. In both cases, however, it is justified and confirmed by existing literature to speak of social learning.
The quasi-natural environment for norms to be spread without extensive elements of persuasion is networks that are formed both by individuals and organizations (Diani 2003). Unfortunately, only a very limited number of studies exists that explicitly concentrate on networks in external democratization. Doris Beer has written on networks of political consulting (Beer 2006), Matthias Freise on civil society in the Czech Republic. Forbrig and Demes have gathered experts involved in the network of election monitoring (Forbrig/Demes 2008). One common result of these studies is that the potential effects of democracy promotion by socialization depend on the precondition of a certain degree of openness in the democratizing society. Otherwise, social interaction is not likely to take place or to be transposed into social or even governmental action.

This means that the explanatory power of external action is often hard to determine in the socialization mode. Where it is applied towards reluctant domestic actors a danger of evasion and bluffing exists; adoption is not likely to take place in such a case. Where domestic elites are open to external norms, further socialization is superfluous and other instruments of democracy promotion are used by democracy promoters. With other words, the empirically existing constellations make it hard to identify effects of democracy promotion by socialization – either there is (in non-successful cases) little basis for success, or (in successful cases) there are additional variables that may override the relevance of instruments linked to the mode of socialization. Some scholars therefore have decided to explicitly concentrate on less successful cases of democratization like Belarus (Marple 2006). Here, it becomes clear that non-willing elites are hardly influenced by interaction which is not interlinked with strong conditional instruments.

This rather pessimistic result does not apply for democracy promotion which is directed towards domestic civil society – an area on which a large proportion of research concentrates (Forbrig 2003; Forbrig 2004). Systematically speaking, three dimensions of civil society groups can be discerned: a) civil society organizations in target countries, b) civil society organizations in donor countries, and c) transnational, cross-border civil society. Research exists mainly in dimensions a) and c). In the first field, Marc Howard (2003) and Matthias Freise (2004) have published extensive studies on the development of civil society in Russia, Eastern Germany and the Czech Republic. Both come to rather reluctant conclusions concerning the external impact on civil society. Similar statements have been made by Sarah Mendelson who conducted a large comparative research project: „Local and Western NGOs have had very little effect on the actual functioning of new fragile institutions (…). The diffusion of norms and practices associated with democracy has in many cases been affected more by regional norms and practices than by international ones“ (Mendelson 2002: 233). The tenor of these early writings is that democratization in the civil society sphere largely depends on domestic conditions, whereas external aid can only serve as a resource of democracy to a very limited extent.

A significant change in this assessment came with the colour revolutions – the electoral defeats of semi-democratic regimes in Serbia (2000), Georgia (2003) and Ukraine (2004) with the aid of mass protest and civil society pressure. An instructive volume on this topic has been edited by Jens Forbrig and Pavol Deméš (2008). Both editors are related to the German Marshall Fund, an active and relevant actor of external democratization. Therefore, the volume needs to be read with some caution due to the fact that the editors are not in a position to evaluate the role of external promoters from a neutral point of view.
An issue that has received growing attention in the external democratization literature is the post-national constellation of many actors in democratization networks. The focus on non-state organization leads to transnational groups of civil society. This is true for the donor side of democracy where many organizations have pillars in different countries. International Organizations with little bargaining power like the Council of Europe or the OSCE are also dominated by an internal logic that is detached from clear national profiles. In addition, civil society in democracy receiving countries is often heavily interlinked with transnational networks. One important contribution which highlights this aspect is Solveig Richter’s study on the impact of the OSCE on democratization in chosen South-Eastern European countries, such as Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia (Richter 2009). She finds out that the (non-)success of the OSCE depends on the timing of socialization measures. During the phase of stabilization and institution building, conditionality may prove successful. At a later stage, the OSCE and other transnational bodies need to switch their strategy to arguing and model giving in order to remain a relevant player. A similar statement has been made by Susan Stewart who argues that an instrumental approach towards civil society in a democracy recipient state bears the potential problem of an evolving artificial civil society (Stewart 2009).

The most recent literature which puts the socialization mode into its centre deals with external governance by the EU. Previously, countries of the European Neighbourhood Policy usually have been treated within the conditionality paradigm. Since it has become clear that the major incentive of the EU – prospective EU membership – is not on the agenda for the next years to come, the character of contacts has been bent towards less conditional types of interaction. Of course, the EU still partly follows its strategy of offering certain benefits to ENP countries. However, the focus has been switched from the direct promotion of democracy to transgovernmental interaction which invests in principles like transparency, accountability, and participation rather than in directly demanding progress in the institutions of electoral democracy. In its non-democratic neighbourhood, the EU has arguably moved from leverage to external governance (Lavenex/Schimmelfennig 2009; Lavenex/Schimmelfennig 2011). Effective democracy promotion in this context depends on sectoral adoption costs of the above named principles, on the accessibility and autonomy of a country’s administration, and institutionalization of functional cooperation (Freyburg et al. 2011; Lavenex/Schimmelfennig 2011: 898). In these texts, one main difference to the existing socialization literature consists in the actor level being involved. Whereas most texts using the socialization approach concentrate on civil society and the non-state sector, the notion of external governance implies transgovernmental structures as the level where social learning does potentially take place (Freyburg 2011).

In summary, it becomes clear that the mode of socialization can only be seen as a promising approach of external democracy promotion in specific constellations. On the one hand, measures resting on the transfer of ideas need to be flanked by alternative measures, in particular by elements of conditionality. On the other hand, measures focusing on social interaction gain plausibility in those cases when a certain progress of democratization can be discerned in the target countries; only then external democracy promoters can become actors on equal footing which is necessary for social learning both by domestic civil society and by domestic elites.
4. Conclusion

In the research field of external democratization, the state of the art consists of a bundle of conceptual approaches that have developed over time. In the field, the modes of democracy promotion by a) coercion, b) conditionality, c) persuasion, and d) socialization are in complex ways linked to the empiric side of the external democratization and to conceptual developments different political science subfields. Between the four modes, our empiric knowledge is unevenly distributed. While numerous papers address the conditional democracy assistance in particular by the EU, there is considerably less knowledge on existing ‘islands of persuasion’ or networks of socialization. In contrast, it is not difficult to find research on the conceptual dimension – by and large, there is a certain imbalance to the disadvantage of descriptive analysis which could sufficiently back up all modes of external democratization.

Against this background, it seems that the bigger projects by Frank Schimmelfennig and Ulrich Sedelmeier (Schimmelfennig/Sedelmeier 2005b) as well as by Tanja Börzel and Thomas Risse (Börzel/Risse 2009) set the tone in conceptual respect. Currently, there seem to be no rivalling projects that contest the basic ideas developed here. Their systematizations, drawing on alternative metatheoretical schools of thought, have perpetuated existing propositions and paved the way for future studies. It is necessary to underline that both contributions stem from the research field of European Union studies. On the one hand, EU studies have once more proved to give important impulses to other subfields of political science. On the other hand, this orientation towards European Studies also implies some problems. There is a need for constant review of presumably inadequate presuppositions, and a possibly even greater danger consists in the inappropriate transfer of empirical results to regions with other political or historical contexts.

All in all, research on external democracy promotion has developed rapidly in recent years. The general line is that external democracy promotion can indeed play a significant role in the democratization process of a given country. Geographical or ideational proximity to a western integration system almost assumes the position of a condition sine qua non for the durable stabilization – meaning consolidation – of a young democracy. Democracy promotion only becomes sufficiently effective if adequate instruments considering both the case and the situation are implemented. The prospects of success rise when logics of action for the different modes of democracy promotion are recognized and consistently followed by donors and receivers.

Against the background of the still widespread complaints of research deficits in the field of external democratization (Erdmann/Kneuer 2009: 320), these general insights can indeed be seen as a sign of progress. It should not be misjudged, however, that large parts of the gained knowledge are related to the character, and not so much the effects of the underlying mechanisms. Therefore, it can be expected that further research literature will concentrate on the results rather than on the attributes of democracy promotion.
5. Cited references


