The research field of external democratization

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 different mechanisms – or modes – of democracy assistance: coercion, compliance, socialization, persuasion, and example. Along these modes, pertinent theoretic classifications and empiric findings from the literature are presented.

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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). Until very recently, scholars have complained about the neglect of scholarly attention to the external dimension of democratization and consolidation (Burnell 2007: 12; Kneuer 2009: 9; Weiffen 2009: 236). Only a few years later, however, the picture has changed completely. In January 2010, an American bibliography of democracy promotion lists more than 340 texts on the topic, from advising reports and policy briefs to dozens of pertinent edited volumes and monographs. Also, many authored or edited books contain introductory chapters which take on the task of giving an overview and systematizing the knowledge on external democratization (Jünenmann/Knödt 2007; Erdmann/Kneuer 2009b; Grävingholt/Leininger/Schlumberger 2009; Magen/McFaul 2009; Merkel 2010: chapter 7).

In the light of this vast literature it would today be widely exaggerated to declare general research gap on the external dimension of regime transition. 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 differs from the just cited overviews because it includes first pieces dealing with the Arab revolutions in 2010/11 and – more importantly – because it puts more emphasis on the different mechanisms of democracy assistance: coercion, conditionality, socialization, persuasion, and example. Distinguished readers will realize that these modes of external democratization have already been presented in the literature (see, for example, Schimmelfennig/Sedelmeier 2005a; Börzel/Risse 2009; Magen/McFaul 2009).

In difference to these introductory chapters, the given overview tries to establish categories to the field of external democratization as a whole, and not just to actions of specific actors like the EU or the US government. In addition, my text argues that the existing literature offers a profound difference between the mechanisms of “socialization” and “persuasion” which has not been acknowledged in any of the just cited overviews.

The research on external democratization can be traced back to several strands of research which, in turn, are inspired by different elements of interest. A first distinction concerns the subfields of political science. 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 usually centred on the actor. 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. On the other hand, the field of external democratization belongs to transition studies. Here, the character and dynamics of domestic political regime developments are the focus of interest. Scholars involved are often trained in comparative politics and therefore bound to acknowledge multi-vectored influences to any given phenomenon.

1 See http://cddrl.stanford.edu/docs/bibliography_of_democracy_promotion#rule-of-lawH. The list is exhaustive until about the year 2008 but not complete for the years 2009-2011.
Furthermore, there is a second distinction worth mentioning, namely the one between authors from the purely academic sphere and such authors which are actively involved in the practice of external democratization. Accordingly, authors from both fields write for somewhat different audiences and purposes. One of the main differences consists in efforts of the purely academic track to anchor the research on democracy promotion in underlying theoretic frameworks (a recent example would be Magen/Morlino 2009c), whereas practice oriented authors focus on the character and effects of employed measures (for example Carothers 1999; Koopmann/Lequesne 2006; Bendiek 2008; Carothers 2009).

In any case, most authors of external democratization 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 assumption 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/Knödt 2007; Grävingholt/Leininger/Schlumberger 2009) of democracy. External democratization as such thus finds itself in an area of tension between a variety of important aspects, such as the relevant transformation phase, international surroundings, donors, their motives and instruments, and the individual recipients.

In external democratization research, normative aspects play a bigger role than in many other fields of comparative politics. Most authors agree that democratic institutions and procedures are to be preferred over autocratic, patrimonial or traditional systems of government. This argument is derived from normative as well as empirical aspects. By and large, authors in the field agree that a pluralist democracy is normatively superior to non-democratic systems (following Dahl 1989) and, in addition, that democracies are better qualified to cope with societal problems than other regime forms (Schmidt 1998). Thus, a fundamental asymmetry is generally replicated in literature. Researchers as well as actors usually portray themselves as servicing a good cause.

This constellation has, among other things, influenced the use of central research notions and categories. The terminological development of the issue has been characterized by the lingual construction of a supposed equality between democracy promoters and democracy promotions recipients. One approach to emphasize this parity relates to the usage of the term “democracy assistance” (Carothers 1996; Carothers 2009; United_States_Government_Accountability_Office 2009). The denotation as “assistance” brings into focus the recipients’ perspective in democratizing surroundings. The notion implies the recipient’s need for assistance or help, but success of democratization in this terminology is mostly dependent on the relevant domestic actors. “Promotion”, on the other hand, is largely dependent on the interests of the promoter. While the term promotion is used by scholars, democracy promoting actors rarely use it – possibly because it reveals more about the asymmetry of the process than is helpful for their purposes.

Another term used in the context is “external democratization” (Whitehead 1986; Merkel 2010). Here, the focus is not so much on the relation between promoters and receivers, but rather on the analytical assessment of regime development. External factors – meaning all factors that are not domestic – are then put into perspective with
other explanatory factors such as, for example, the socio-economic structure or the characteristics of the old non-democratic regime. This branch has probably the longest tradition (Whitehead 1986; Whitehead 2001b) in the research in question. It deals not only with specific external influence on the processes of regime transition, but also with specific external profiles and surroundings of states in the democratization context. In summary, the numerous notions quoted here are not used in a consistent or even uniform way. The divide between “assistance”, “promotion” and “external democratization” applies to latent core concepts, but they are not always activated. Some of the notions are even used interchangeably from time to time.

In the several hundred papers the external dimension of democratization, there are dozens of definitions to be found. An encompassing one has been presented by Wolfgang Merkel in a pertinent chapter of his book on system change (Merkel 2010, first edition in 1999). He defines external democratization as

the entirety of actions of external actors – private or public, unilateral or multilateral – which intentionally strive to overcome authoritarian forms of power and government by supporting all those institutions, organizations, movements and initiatives in the political, economic and social spheres of a target state which contribute to democratization (...) It includes all measures from unconditional support to diplomatic pressure but excludes military coercion (Merkel 2010: 439).2

The first focal point of the definition concerns third-country actors who have the intention of promoting democracy. Here, research takes into consideration national governments, international organizations, transnational actors as well as a plethora of societal actors. Even if no compilation of numbers on all resources spent in the field of external democracy promotion exists, it is beyond doubt that large sums are spent. Unfortunately, the author does not know of any studies that strive for a comparison of these mentioned numbers. Yet, even without these, the financial impact of this sector becomes clear. 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.”

Does it make a difference if democracy promotion is offered by a national or international actor? Opinions on this question diverge. Many studies address the specific character of democracy promotion originating from different countries or organizations: 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

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2 Translation by the author, TB. A further discussion on terminology in external democratization can be found in Magen/Morlino (2009b). The authors mention the following terms: diffusion, contagion, gravity, demonstration effect, complex interdependence, convergence, emulation, socialization, learning, conditionality and zeitgeist.
(Youngs 2001; Youngs 2003; Pridham 2005; Vachudova 2005; Kneuer 2006; Jüinemann/Knott 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 efficiency – of external democratization (Burnell 2008).

By directing interest towards external influence, literature implies that external actors play a vital role in the process of democratization. However, this assumption does not render domestic institutions completely meaningless. Quite on the contrary, many authors emphasize that analysis of international influence on democratization processes needs to recognize the inevitable limits of external means. Democracy and democratization are \textit{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, Central Asia, and the Arab world have frequently been characterized as being less open to external democratizing influence. This led authors to focussing in the internal political economy of regime change (Hellman 1998; Richter 2007).

2. Modes of Democracy Promotion: towards a typology of social mechanisms

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. 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 text to do so was Laurence Whitehead’s edited volume named the “International Dimension of Democratization” (Whitehead 2001b). In the introduc-
tory chapter of this book, Whitehead develops three reference models of external democratization: contagion, control and consent (Whitehead 2001a). Whitehead’s approach is oriented mainly towards empirically discernable constellations: contagion in regional neighborhood (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 his suggestion, Whitehead established basic categories which have remained relevant ever since. A few years later, Paul Kubiček employed a similar terminology and spoke of control, contagion, convergence, and conditionality (Kubicek 2003). With control and contagion staying on the list, he brought two new elements into the debate. First, Kubiček 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 (…). [It] assumes a logic of appropriateness. 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 mechanisms 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 types 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 domestic actors become aware of policy solutions elsewhere and apply them to their domestic 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). For sure, exactly this logic had 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 types of social learning. One indeed follows 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 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 come to a list of altogether five modes of external democratization. They present underlying principles rather than firmly established types; this has to do with the different usage of central notions. 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 (or space) where no democracy exists. On the receiving side, there are either too few actors to make a domestic regime change probable or the conditions for democratization are unfavourable. External democratization by coercion therefore often bears a dimension of physical conflict; in the end, we are in a power game setting which sounds familiar from the realist school of international politics. As in all modes of external democratization, we have the possibility to distinguish between the two actor groups of democracy senders and democracy recipients. While the mode bears no difficulties in imaging 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. Some authors restrict their analyses to ‘successful’ cases of coercive democratization which conceals that also acts of evasion or other non-submissive reactions to the imposition of force are relevant.

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 threats. With its Wider Europe White Paper of 2003, the European Commission has issued the most cited document to illustrate that logic with regard to a democracy promoting actor (Commission 2003). In general, conditionality based external democratization has therefore most 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 more 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 rests on the idea that values of individuals are heavily influenced by arguments and reason (communicative reality). 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). This 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 in a twofold manner. First, the actors involved have to be ready for social learning in the sense of internalizing norms and ideas in an identity changing way. Second, such an intensive learning – sometimes called “complex learning” – is only possible in enduring structures of international politics. Learning does not happen in an anarchic setting of interna-
tional relations. Therefore, the implicitly natural arena for external democratization by communicative action is that of International Organizations.

d) Socialization: In difference to persuasion, the socialization mode is based on normative rationality. Not communication, but norms and values are in the centre of interest. 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 school of thought highlighting socialization as a major mechanism 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. Therefore, 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). Things become confusing because neo-institutional authors also use the term of “social learning” in order to characterize adaptions on the recipient side which makes it easy to mix up the two external democratization modes of persuasion and socialization.

e) Example: As could be seen above, several classifications of external democratization or norm diffusion contain a type which aims at domestic actors following inspirations from elsewhere. This is the reason why an according mode needs to be part of a literature overview. However, due to its wide variety of events covering the mode is much less solid than the other four. We find so many terms that it is hardly possible to find a common denominator: emulation, indirect influence, mimicry, lesson drawing, performance, imitation, copying, combination, and inspiration. Possibly even worse: both Schimmelfennig/Sedelmeier (2005a: 21) and Börzel/Risse (2009: 12) state that the mode is split up on different general types of social action. Beyond doubt, the mode rests on a plethora of different phenomena. They have in common that the democracy receiving side draws lessons from a non-domestic phenomenon, like a successful foreign constitution or a functioning judicial structure. The type of action is therefore one of qualified imitation; it can follow an instrumental or normative logic. Nevertheless, this instrumental or normative rationality is attributed to actions within the ‘domestic drama’ of democratization and not – as in the other types – to processes which empirically link external and domestic players. On the democracy promotion side, the type of action is again one of model giving. In difference to the socialization type, there is usually no explicit intention to present a model to be copied by the side of the democracy promoter. It should be noted that many definitions of external democratization contain intentionality from the side of the
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><strong>Coercive action</strong></td>
<td>a) Coercion – instrumental rationality</td>
<td><strong>Submissive or non-submissive action</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of legal or physical force</td>
<td></td>
<td>Obedience, evasion, or apathy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Offering incentives</strong></td>
<td>b) Conditionality – instrumental rationality</td>
<td><strong>Processing of incentives</strong></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><strong>Persuasion</strong></td>
<td>c) Persuasion – communicative rationality</td>
<td><strong>Social learning</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion of ideas as legitimate through reasoning</td>
<td></td>
<td>Internalization of ideas and/or identity change if norms and values are accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Role model</strong></td>
<td>d) Socialization – (two-sided) normative rationality</td>
<td><strong>Imitation, lesson-drawing</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>example giving in terms of norms and values</td>
<td>e) Example</td>
<td>Become more like the relevant peer – (one-sided) instrumental and/or normative rationality</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.

Table 1 summarizes the five modes. It reiterates the message that it is important to deal separately not only with the five modes, but also with the fields of action that is overlooked by both democracy promoters and democracy promotion recipients. These fields of action are linked by the modes in rather complicated ways, which means that the promoting field and the recipient field can, under certain instances, be detached from each other. With other words, both democracy promoters and recipients have a range of choices to act differently than expected or wished by the respective counterparts.

**3. Modes of Democracy Promotion in detail: research results**

This section will now trace the literature on external democratization with a focus on the question under which circumstances which mode of democracy promotion has proved to be more or less successful.
a) Democratization by Coercion – the growing focus on after-war periods

Until the end of the Cold War period, international acts of coercion were rarely linked to the paradigm of democratization. For example, Ronald Reagan’s decision to invade Grenada in 1988 was usually interpreted as an element of geostrategic backyard policy rather than a deliberate step to establish a certain political regime. After the breakdown of the Soviet Union in 1991, the security studies paradigm continued to be relevant. Quite some literature addressed problems of civil-military relations (Huntington 1995; Forman/Welch 1998). In these early works, it became clear that Russia constituted a special case. Due to its strong international position as a UN Security Council member and a nuclear power, international military relations remained a priority – the Russian military power served as a break in external tries to promote regime change. In other areas, Western strategy 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 soon lost much of its coercive potential. In 1996 already, an article classified security assistance 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 domesticized military (Watts 2002). Political control became another issue, and it did not go by unremarked in post-communist Europe that NATO extension only replaced military dependency – from Moscow to Brussels.

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 the 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. In the main, 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.

In more general terms, a research group at the „Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin“ (Research Centre for Social Science Berlin, WZB) has recently focused on the topic of “democratization through war”. The central publication was published in 2008 as special issue of the “Democratization” journal (Grimm/Merkel 2008) and was distributed one year later as an edited volume by Routledge (Merkel/Grimm 2009). In both volumes, Grimm and Merkel discuss legality, legitimacy and effectiveness of external democratization as a follow-up of violent conflicts.

External intervention is divided into three phases: before, during, and after the conflict. As Reinhard Merkel describes in an instructive article, the first two phases were debated heavily in public spheres around the world in the early 1990s notices (Merkel 2009a).
One result of the debate constituted in a tension between universal human rights norms on the one hand, and the principle of sovereignty on the other. Autocratic actors today still benefit from the protection of their sovereignty, even if they violate human rights within the boundaries of their states on a large scale. Only on the basis of normative argumentation, public international law is „normatively enlightened“ to legitimize external changes in unjust states, as the expert on international law Reinhard Merkel from Hamburg remarks (Merkel 2009a: 29). In fact, decisions concerning legal legitimization of a “fair war” are dependent on the UN Security Council, in other words on a political committee.

In his contribution to the mentioned volume, Wolfgang Merkel therefore discusses the aspect of *jus post bellum*, meaning ideas of law and justice after an intervention (Merkel 2009b). The shift of focus towards that period is one of the main accomplishments of the research done at WZB. 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 the context of recent interventions with the aim of democratization, directed partly at entities where state structures are only sparsely consolidated. This is where the theorem of “New Wars” (Münkler 2002), i.e. the difficulties of waging wars in areas of limited statehood, comes into effect. In such contexts, a democracy promoter using violent means is implicitly or explicitly expected to introduce an active policy for the pacification of society during the post-conflict setting. Merkel turns our attention to the fact that democratic interventions can also destroy state institutions by activating latent conflicts that had been curtailed by the autocratic system (Merkel 2009b: 48-49); again, Iraq serves as one example.

Along with numerous comparisons on the macro-level, analyses in the volume also deal with the cases of Post-Yugoslavia, Georgia, Afghanistan and Cambodia in further detail. Overall, the editors and authors draw skeptic conclusions concerning the potential success of coercive democratization. The positive examples of Germany and Japan after 1945 are seen as exceptions largely depending on favorable circumstances. In a monograph, Tatjana Reiber also identifies certain successes of external democratization with regard to Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua (Reiber 2009). However, many other cases are characterized by less favorable preconditions like unresolved security problems, internal state failure, ethnic and minority conflicts and a lack of internal societal trust (Grimm 2009: 89). If several of these conditions apply at the same time, external powers with military intervention capacities hardly have the resource to deal with all of them.

In her book from 2010, Sonja Grimm systematizes these challenges as four “dilemmas of external democratization” (Grimm 2010: 119-126). First, Grimm identifies a “benevolent intervention dilemma”, referring to the conflict between external support and aspired self-determination. Second, she points to 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. Third, 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.
According to the summary in Grimm’s work, 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).

**b) Democratization by Compliance – the European case**

The literature on external democracy promotion by compliance is heavily dominated by a focus on the neighbourhood of the European Union. 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. Nevertheless, it was the EU experience which led scholars to introduce the notion of *conditionality* (Kubicek 2003) which is today sometimes even used as a complete substitute for the term *compliance*. Against this background, it is also no surprise that 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).

However, 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. After all, all states that have successfully completed EU accession talks are rated as democracies, whereas, with the temporary exception of Ukraine, no post-socialist non-EU member has managed to build up a democratic regime (Beichelt 2011). On the other hand, not all combinations of sticks and carrots are bound to work. A few elements have been of special interest to research. One is the sufficient 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. If one of the three elements is weak or non-existent not only the perspectives for external democratization by compliance are bleak. Moreover, parallels with the EU-accession process – which are practically always implied in the notion of conditionality – then prove to be misleading.

At least within the political space of potential EU-accession, conditionality can be seen as a promising modus of democratization. Most clearly, this has been elaborated by a working group led 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. Schimmelfennig et. al. found that, in addition to substantial incentives by the EU, identification of the elites with the EU and/or democracy is influential. Additionally, however, 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).

Maybe the most obvious example for this argument is 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 Jünemann 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 Neighborhood (Jünemann/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: Can conditionality be used successfully if the only effective incentive – namely EU accession – is only realistic for a very limited number of countries anymore? The field where this question has been discussed most prominently are Eastern enlargement and the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP). 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). With regard to ENP there is a plethora of publications, most of them paying much more attention to the Eastern than to the Southern neighborhood of the EU (Koopmann 2006; Weber/Smith/Baun 2007). An exception is an edited volume by Annette Jünemann and Michèle Knodt who also concentrate on other regions than the states working with the EU under its Eastern Partnership (Jünemann/Knodt 2007).
Basically, 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. 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 – arguing and convincing

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). 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).

Despite their path-breaking qualities, these early constructivist pieces paid much less attention to the internal logic of ideational change than to the consequences of the change of norms in international politics. If ideas (or norms) change, what elements are behind it? A first answer to this question was given by Jeffrey Checkel who in a widely explored into 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 new frames. Of course, this process cannot only be observed in situations of international change. It equally occurs in nation
building processes in which ideas and norms co-vary with processes of internal modernization (Risse 2001).

The initial research on the constructivist paradigm referred to a wide range of different approaches (specifically see Christiansen/Jorgensen/Wiener 2001). Over time, two theoretic directions crystallized (Risse 2004: 162-165): discourse and communication theory on the one hand, and sociological institutionalism – the sub-segment of new institutionalism which centers on the logic of appropriateness – on the other. 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 very weak reference to empiric reality, 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 Europeanization (Börzel/Risse 2009: 9). An elaborated justification of this mode can be found in Nicole Deitelhoff’s book on “persuasion in politics”. Deitelhoff bases her discourse theory of international governance on the theory of communicative action by Jürgen Habermas. This model demands that all partners in a communicative process are in principle open to be persuaded; they put up their preferences for discussion (Deitelhoff 2006: 19). Ultimately following Finnemore/Sikkink (1998), Deitelhoff identifies norm entrepreneurs as important elements in a norm change based on persuasion. As Deitelhoff shows by the example of the establishment of the International Criminal Court, these norm entrepreneurs have to constitute themselves in “islands of persuasion” (Deitelhoff 2006: 280) in order to overcome earlier preference of discourse participants.

With regard to the external dimension of democracy promotion, the persuasion approach has been used both with regard to state and civil society actors. Frank Schimmelfennig (2001; 2003) has pointed out in several articles that political actors in Brussels have under certain conditions 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.

Generally speaking, Schimmelfennig’s works on persuasion processes within political institutions have remained an exception. Institutional decision making processes are usually not open to the public. That makes it difficult for researchers to access situations in which persuasion takes place. By nature of their inner constitution, this can be easier accomplished with civil society organizations. Consequently, much of the research on persuasion in the promotion of democracy has crystallized here. The general suggestions on advocacy potential of civil society and advocacy coalitions (Finnemore/Sikkink 1998; Price 2003) were adapted to the context of external democratization. The earlier literature concentrated more on the theoretically deducted potential of civil society to reinforce democracy (Encarnación 2000). In Encarnacion’s article, Alexis de Tocqueville’s “school of democracy” theorem was put in the center of intention. In addition to that, many authors argued that the new transnational character of civil society presented
a paramount of opportunities for actors to be exposed to persuasive ideas (White 1994; Keane 2003).

However, the later 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. Two very informative books on civil society and democratization in Russia have shown that Western support has not been fruitful in cases where civil society lacked domestic resonance structures (Henderson 2003; Heller 2008). 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 (some) civil society based democracy promotion led to the assertion of a Western “aid industry”, as has already been formulated in 1998 (van Rooy 1998). In summary, the persuasion mode of external democratization is marked by a difference between theoretic expectations and empiric findings. Further research will be needed to more specifically outline islands of persuasion or non-persuasion in democracy promotion.

d) Democratization by Socialization – arguing and interacting

As sketched out above, the mode of socialization needs to be carefully confined against other mechanisms. 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 refer to 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 approach socialization has much in common with is persuasion. Here, the common denominator rests in the weight given to the exchange of arguments and other symbolic values. Again, a major difference between the two modes consists in the behavior 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 is manifold and takes place in arenas with indirect communication, norms and values on the democracy taker side take place in a more autonomous manner. Rules and norms of democracy are less learned through direct persuasion, but through observance and the re-contextualization of Western ‘democratic’ elements in the domestic setting.
The quasi-natural environment for norms to be spread without extensive elements of persuasion is networks. In networks, values and ideas undergo diffusion, but rarely in constellations that are adequate for ideal speech situation that are needed for norm-spreading communication (Deitelhoff 2006: 117-156). Unfortunately, there is a very limited number of studies 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).

When looking at the landscape of democracy promotion through socialization we quickly find that the major pertinent region is Europe with a major involvement of the European Union (Risse 2004: 163). This is worth mentioning because in recent decades the most important role model for the coming of democracy was represented by the United States (Beyme 1986). However, the mixed experiences of the democracy by war campaigns to Afghanistan and Iraq (again, see Merkel/Grimm 2009) have strongly limited America’s attractiveness. Consequently, democracy receivers are less likely to adapt to norms and values exposed by US democracy promoters; social learning is directed to other sources (Todd 2002).

As in the persuasion mode, 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 and persuasion are not likely to take place or be transposed into governmental action. This means that the explanatory power of external action is often hard to determine. Where it is applied towards reluctant domestic actors a danger of evasion and bluffing exists and an adoption does not take place. Where domestic elites are open to the external norms, further socialization is superfluous and other instruments of democracy promotion are needed. Democratization by socialization is successful if political leaders are open to democratic norms and values anyways. Especially in cases of successful consolidation it remains hard to say if external forces have played a decisive role. Sometimes it is more interesting to look at less successful cases like Belarus (Marples 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, however, not apply for democracy promotion in civil society, which makes up a large proportion of research on external democratization by socialization (Forbrig 2003; Forbrig 2004). Systematically speaking, three matters of civil society groups can be discerned a) in target countries, b) in donor countries as well as c) a 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. Sarah Mendelson as well wrote in the concluding remarks of a big 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). 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 color revolutions – the electoral defeats of semi-democratic regimes for example in Serbia (2000), Georgia (2003) and Ukraine (2004) with the aid of mass protest and civil society pressure. A very instructive volume on this topic has been edited by Jens Forbrig and Pavol Demeš (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. Still, the contributions contain a plethora of empirical information, which might not have been made available to the public without the privilege of the actors’ knowledge.

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. But also other actors in the field are not purely national any more. International organizations with little bargaining power like the Council of Europe or the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (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 instrumentalizing approach towards civil society in a democracy recipient state bears the potential problem of an evolving artificial civil society (Stewart 2009).

In summary, it becomes clear that the mode of socialization can only be seen as 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, especially materially supporting steps need to be taken into consideration here, which in themselves are often connected with 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 “partners” of the domestic elites (Richter 2009).

e) Democratization by Example – ‘domestic drama’ and transnational horizon

As stated above, the mode of example giving appears in many typologies of external democracy promotion. However, it is used for a wide variety of phenomena like 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). The list implies that the mode refers to a certain aspect of example giving, namely, to lesson drawing without elements of direct interaction. By and large, the term applies to situations where external models are taken over without an evident *mechanism* between the democracy promoter and the democracy recipient side. With other words, acts of persuasion or socialization are not present or at least not dominant.

This leads to a demarcation of the example mode into two directions. First, persuasion is at place if we can empirically find an arena of communicative social learning, for example, foreign experts trying to convince this or that domestic actor to accept a certain new constitution. Second, we deal with socialization if domestic actors undergo norm-based social learning, for example, by interacting with foreign experts in putting together an association agreement. In contrast, example giving means that domestic authors copy or re-contextualize elements of foreign democracy without (or with very limited) involving foreign actors. Consequently, Gero Erdmann and Marianne Kneuer define “lesson learning” simply as “lections from other countries” (Erdmann/Kneuer 2009b: 23).

This flexible concept is often filled with life by connecting it with the term “diffusion”. The volume by Erdmann/Kneuer offers a comprehensive overview of the concept (Erdmann/Kneuer 2009a; Lauth/Pickel 2009). Lauth and Pickel define diffusion as a process in which “an innovation (idea) 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 behavior (Lauth/Pickel 2009: 40). At this stage, we can observe another difference between the modes of lesson learning on the one hand and sozialization and persuasion on the other. While socialization and persuasion are examined predominantly with a focus on its procedural dimension, the diffusion approach needs a focus on the effects of a model transfer. Lesson learning is only observable in the case of *successful* imitation. Only if mimicry has actually taken place, the relevance of an external model can be meaningfully shaped out.

The example mode does not assume direct channels of communication between specified actor groups. In another sense, however, communication is essential to lesson drawing. Mass media and internet communication have become the most important means of transporting knowledge on role models. Accordingly, Lauth and Pickel demonstrate that there exists 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 authoritarian 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 show 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 higher living standard and lower levels of corruption – to name two endemic problems of many Arab regimes – known. Furthermore, the 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 the decadent lifestyle of Ben Ali’s clan transparent to a wider public. The irony is that WikiLeaks was seen as a scandal by the US American government – a scandal that helped overthrow a regime whose characteristics were quite similar to Iraq where the US have sacrificed many human lives with about the same result.

Besides Tunisia and Egypt, there are other Arab cases which are less successful in liberalizing. The Syrian case shows that external democratization forces do not come into the 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. So far, however, this does not mean that the road to democracy can be built on mimicry or imitation alone.

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 ex-
ternal democratization by a) coercion, b) conditionality, c) persuasion, d) socialization and e) example are in complex ways linked to the empiric side of the external dimension of transition on the one side, and to conceptual developments in political science subfields of international relations, EU and transition studies on the other side. Between the five modes of democracy promotion, 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’, on networks of socialization or on lesson-drawing processes by the actors of democratic transition. 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 are 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 the connection of prospective studies with (partially competing) basic consumptions of social action. 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 be able 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 special need for constant review to verify whether irrelevant premises are incorporated into democratization research in those cases where hypotheses and approaches are taken from Europeization research. This seems to be the background for the statement by Gero Erdmann and Marianne Kneuer, who assert a “lack of established concepts and models for analysis” (Erdmann/Kneuer 2009a: 320) in the field of democratization research. This statement needs to be rejected, however. The theoretical origin of the above cited studies can be found in the seizure of theoretical assumptions which are not incorporated into Europeization research, but rather belong to greater theories as New Institutionalism or Social Constructivism.

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. Anyhow, democracy promotion only becomes sufficiently effective if adequate instruments considering both the case and the situation are implemented. The prospects of success rise for both donors as well as receivers of democracy when logics of action for the different modes of democracy promotion are recognized and consistently followed.

Against the background of the still widespread complaints of research deficits in the field of external democratization, this insight can indeed be seen as a sign of progress. It should not be misjudged, however, that large parts of the recently gained knowledge are related to the character, and not so much the effects of the underlying mechanisms. In other words, the state of research on the nature of external democratization extends mainly on the theoretical part, research on the effects on the empirical dimension.
5. Cited references


