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Moving from insignificance to the top of global politics, democracy and human rights promotion has been expected to build on the waves of democratization and ensure rapid development and better protection of human rights. However, while some cases of human rights and democracy promotion have been marked with success – EU enlargement policy to Central and Eastern European countries – others have not lived up to the promise of successful democratization projected after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Today, the policy fields of human rights and democracy promotion are

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as congested as ever, even with newly democratized states joining in. They also becoming as contested as ever, making one wonder if this diversification is mirroring emerging multipolarity in world politics. This paper analyzes the gradual rise of human rights and democracy promotion to top issues within international affairs, paying attention to the roles of different actors, currently debated issues, and touching upon possible leadership within the highly interconnected fields of human rights and democracy promotion.

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Nelli Babayan and Daniela Huber*

Human rights

Democracy promotion

Introduction

Human rights and democracy promotion have been on the American and European foreign policy agendas for three decades and the field is becoming increasingly crowded with other democracies, international and regional organizations, as well as NGOs or even companies. Having advanced as one of the central issues of world politics, human rights and democracy promotion have also become subject to extensive controversies and debates, most importantly on issues such as substance, compliance, effectiveness, double standards, counter-trends and challenges, as well as relatively new issues such as the responsibility to protect (R2P) and the internationalization of criminal law. Thus, the often differentiated, but highly interconnected policy fields of human rights and democracy promotion are becoming increasingly diversified in terms of actors and issues, making one wonder if this diversification is mirroring emerging multipolarity in world politics.

This paper sheds light on the global environment in which human rights and democracy promotion policies have been unfolding and takes stock of the playing field, its actors and issues. The first part – *motioned* – discusses the actors that put human rights and democracy into motion in world politics and who are now driving this policy. It helps to understand the nature and role, past and present, of actors who shape the human rights and democracy architecture and so levels the field for the second part and the heart piece of this article – *debated* - which deals with the issues that are currently at stake in an empirical, as well as theoretical perspective. Based on this analysis, the last section – *agreed* – puts human rights and democracy promotion into the broader perspective of emerging multipolarity in world politics (Peterson, Tocci, and Alcaro 2012) and argues that while this specific policy fields are becoming increasingly congested and contested, the US and the European Union (EU) remain the top players in the field, even though they have to react to a number of challenges to their human rights and democracy agendas in order to maintain leadership in the field.

1. Motioned

Democracy promotion, from its very beginning, has been a Western-driven agenda. It was President Woodrow Wilson who proclaimed that “the world must be made safe for democracy” and exerted first leadership in this respect not only by promoting democracy bilaterally in diverse states such as Mexico, Haiti, Czechoslovakia, or Poland, but also by pursuing this aim through multilateral means such as the Pan-American Liberty Pact or by – even if perhaps controversially - limiting membership in the League of Nations to democracies. With the advance of the Cold War, this American leadership came to an end and stability became the “Holy Grail” (Schoultz 1998: 358) of US foreign policy. It was only in the 1970s that human rights activists in the US became a powerful engine lifting the issue of human rights back to the foreign policy

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agenda, first through general Congressional laws and then through a concrete foreign policy formulation of President Jimmy Carter (Schoultz 1981). Arguing that democracy was a pre-condition for human rights, the Reagan administration also incorporated a democracy agenda in US foreign policy. In the 1980s, the National Endowment for Democracy was established and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID, established in 1961) became the main US democracy promotion instrument supporting the democratic transitions in Latin America and in the former Soviet Union. In the 1990s President Bill Clinton made democracy promotion one of the three main pillars of his foreign policy and further institutionalized democracy and human rights promotion in US foreign assistance programmes. President George W. Bush decisively stepped up the democracy rhetoric, resorting *inter alia* to military means, from which President Barack Obama sought to disassociate himself, responding to a general democracy promotion fatigue apparent in public opinion surveys. According to the German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF), US support for democracy promotion dropped from 52% in 2005 to 37% in 2011 (Europeans were more supportive with 74% and 69% in the respective years) (GMF 2005 and 2011). Spending USD 5.7 billion of its 2010 development aid budget for the government and civil society sectors (OECD 2012), Obama generally continued his predecessors' democracy promotion practice. However, "in response to growing multipolarity, the United States has moved away from any single, overarching foreign policy narrative rooted in the idea of remaking the world in the image of the United States" (Carothers 2012: 6).

In addition, Europe has exerted leadership in human rights and democracy promotion. In the 1970s, some European countries started to incorporate principles of human rights into their foreign policy at the time. After a political struggle surrounding autocratic Spain's membership application, democracy began to be seen as a criterion for membership in the EC (Thomas 2006). Indeed, the EC/EU itself became the most important mechanism for the promotion of democracy in its neighbourhood. It contributed to the democratic transition of the Mediterranean states (Spain, Portugal, and Greece) in the 1980s and of the Central Eastern European countries after the end of the Cold War. Efforts have been also pursued with countries that have no prospects of becoming EU members, as EU agreements with third states have included a clause stating the crucial importance of the respect for human rights and democratic principles since 1992. During the 1990s the EU added an active dimension to this more passive approach of negative political conditionality and started explicit democracy and human rights promotion programmes, such as the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR, 1994),¹ the human rights-related elements of the Barcelona Process (1995),² the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP, 2004), or the Eastern Partnership (EaP, 2009). EU institutions disbursed USD 2.5 billion of development aid for government and civil society and the three leading European donor states in this respect (Germany, the United Kingdom, and Sweden) spent USD 3.3 billion in 2010 (OECD 2012).

Other democracies are (increasingly) participating in human rights and democracy promotion policies. When the Southern Cone in South America took the lead in the wave of democratization that swept the region in the 1980s, the newly emerging democracies sought to anchor human rights and democracy norms through the OAS and other regional forums. Argentina was specifically active in this respect. Assuming that the support for democratization in the region was essential for anchoring democratization at home, Argentina forged a democratic alliance with Brazil and Uruguay, supported democratization in Bolivia, named and shamed human rights violations of the Stroessner regime and supported the Paraguayan democratic opposition (Fournier 1999). Nonetheless, the commitment to non-intervention remains strong in today's Central and South America. Brazil as one of the main emerging powers has shown a sporadic, but growing commitment to the defense of human rights and democracy in its hemisphere (Burgess and Daudelin 2007) and proceeds mainly through multilateral frameworks. Also other emerging democracies such as South Africa and India prefer multilateral fora, even if India remains reluctant to put democracy and human rights promotion on its foreign policy agenda (Mohan 2007). Similarly, Japan has a "quiet approach" (Akaha 2002: 98) to democracy promotion. Only in 1996 under international pressure did it set up a democratic dimension in its foreign aid program, but its democracy promotion record remains low. Finally, Turkey has adopted a few democracy and human rights programs within its external assistance policy and has also advocated these issues in multilateral venues such as the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) (Carothers and Youngs 2011). It is now bound to play an important role in the transitions triggered by the Arab Spring, even if its own democratic record seems to be deteriorating (Kirişçi 2011).

1 Renamed European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights in 2006.

2 Later transformed into the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and into the Union for the Mediterranean in 2008.

In addition to democracies, international and regional organizations have been active in the protection and promotion of human rights and democracy, often but not always driven to pursue this agenda by the US and Europe. Human rights norms are enshrined in regional and international treaties, most notably the United Nations (UN) Charter, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), as well as several conventions which have recorded increased participation and developed a more detailed articulation of the human rights conceptual domain. The UN has several human rights bodies most notably including the Human Rights Council and the Human Rights Committees. Regionally, the European Union and the Americas have the most developed human rights systems with the European Convention on Human Rights, enforced through the European Court of Human Rights, and the American Convention on Human Rights with the enforcement mechanisms of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. It should be noted that the American Convention on Human Rights was a locally driven phenomenon. Lutz and Sikkink (2000: 655-56) and Legler and Tieku (2010) show that human rights have a long tradition in Central and South America. The African Union (AU) has a regional human rights regime with the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and an African Commission and Court on Human and Peoples' Rights. The African Union was pioneering in including a responsibility to protect in case of war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity into its founding charter. In Asia, the Asia-Pacific Democracy Partnership (APDP), or the South-Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) are starting to incorporate democracy and human rights into their work. Also the Arab League adopted a Charter on Human Rights in 2004. The document was, however, criticized by scholars, practitioners, and civil society organizations for falling short of internationally accepted human rights standards (Rishmawi 2010). Regarding concrete policies, international and regional organizations have increasingly started to incorporate democracy and human rights promotion as a practice into their work. The UN, the OAS, the Council of Europe, the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), APDP and the AU have been engaging in electoral assistance for years and regularly send observers to countries holding general elections, although they can only do so if invited by the countries in question. In 2005 then UN Secretary General Kofi Annan established the UN Democracy Fund, which seeks to support deeper democratization. The Arab League has not yet adopted similar practices.

Furthermore, a whole array of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have sprung up that promote democracy and human rights, among which Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Transparency International, Freedom House, the German and American Party Foundations, the British Westminster Foundation, and International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), are worth mentioning. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that multinational companies which often hold considerable economic and thus also political power, are increasingly held accountable for their human rights abuses and are starting to set up own principles in this respect in codes of conduct.

In sum, while the US and the EU were the initial engines of human rights and democracy agenda, they were not the only ones and the field is becoming increasingly crowded. Nonetheless, it is also fair to mention that none of the mentioned democracy promoters, including such organizations as the OSCE and the Council of Europe, can match the capacities, incentives or leverage of the EU and the US, which do remain by far the 'top players' in the pitch.

2. Debated

The human rights and democracy promotion domain is not only becoming increasingly diversified in terms of players, but also in terms of essence. What are the topical issues currently at stake with regard to human rights and democracy promotion? Five such central issues and theoretical perspectives on these will now be discussed, namely definitional issues, effectiveness of democracy promotion, compliance with human rights norms, double standards, counter-trends and challenges, as well as the internationalization of criminal law and R2P.

2.1 Diverse Definitions of Human Rights and Democracy

While human rights and democracy promotion are often part and parcel of the same foreign policy approach, it should be noted that they aim at diverse, albeit related goals. Human rights are "a set of principled ideas about the treatment to which all individuals are entitled by virtue of being human" (Schmitz and Sikkink 2012: 827), while democracy empowers

the people. Democracy promotion introduces comprehensive changes to society, state, and government and is thus not only more ambitious, but also more controversial since it may cause open antagonism from the target states. In addition, democracy promotion is also more controversial since it is less anchored in international law than human rights, even though a right to democracy is emerging (Franck 1992). The first and second generation of human rights, that is liberal defense rights, civil and political rights, as well as economic, social and cultural rights are enshrined and comparatively well defined in international treaties (this applies less for the newer, third generation of collective rights).³ Democracy remains an essentially contested concept.

Therefore, one of the major challenges for democracy promotion is that leading democracy promoters frequently have a diverse concept of democracy in mind than their target societies. This might become relevant now again with the Arab Spring. Pace et al have for example pointed out that “Islamists who accept democratic procedures aim to build a significantly different type of nation-state which might challenge what European policy-makers would consider to be democratically acceptable” (Pace, Seeberg, and Cavatorta 2009: 4). Norris and Inglehart have drawn attention to remaining faultlines “between the West and Islam involves issues of gender equality and sexual liberalization” (Norris and Inglehart 2002: 260–261).

But also the concepts of major democracy and human rights promoters such as the US and the EU are slightly diverse. While there seems to be a broad global ‘script’ on the substantive content of democracy and human rights promotion (Magen, Risse, and McFaul 2009) which leans towards the liberal definitions of both concepts, the European script also includes a social-democratic dimension. Carothers who differentiates between the “political type” of democracy promotion and the developmental one, argues that the US tends more to the former and Europe to the latter (Carothers 2009a). Political type of democracy promotion focuses on elections, parties, the judiciary, media, civil society, and political rights, while the developmental one involves socio-economic measures.

The challenge of democracy being a contested concept also translates into the literature on democracy promotion, which is – it should be noted and similar to the practice it analyses – Western dominated. Firstly, there is no agreement on what democracy is and diverse models exist (Held 2006). Secondly, even if spanning over two decades, the literature has produced only vague definitions of democracy promotion itself, concentrating more on its sectors and strategies. Arguably one of the clearest understandings of democracy promotion defines it as “overt and voluntary activities adopted, supported, and (directly or indirectly) implemented by (public or private) foreign actors explicitly designed to contribute to the political liberalization of autocratic regimes and the subsequent democratization of autocratic regimes in specific recipient countries” (Schmitter and Brouwer 1999: 14). Partly to distance itself from the Bush agenda of democracy promotion, an academic discourse has recently emerged to rename the promotion of democracy to democracy assistance (Burnell 2010, 17). However, the two concepts remain very similar without wielding substantial differences to the strategies or targets. Schmitter and Brouwer also differentiate between democracy promotion and democracy protection, with the latter defined as “overt and voluntary activities adopted, supported, and (directly or indirectly) implemented by (public or private) foreign actors explicitly designed to contribute to the consolidation of democracy in specific recipient countries” (Schmitter and Brouwer 1999, 14). Democracy protection does not intend to change the current political regime, especially if it is democratic, but acts to make it more effective and efficient. Likewise, organisation of police training for enforcement of human rights and support for trade unions are activities directed at consolidation of democracy. While democracy promotion activities are likely to be more effective on the state and political establishment, democracy protection activities can be more influential when targeting civil society and individuals. However it may be, the boundary between democracy promotion and protection is often blurred in the actual activities of promoters who do not strictly differentiate between the two.

A more helpful way to conceptualize the phenomenon might be to distinguish between the targets of democracy promotion, visualized in table 1. This template indicates that democracy can be promoted through bottom-up and top-down approaches. Though these approaches should be used simultaneously in order to achieve better results (Babayan 2012), strategies usually differ from promoter to promoter. The US and the EU use both approaches, even though the EU focuses on a top-down approach, while the US has a rather balanced approach (Huber 2008). Encouragement of multiparty

³ Three collective rights are acknowledged in international law: physical existence, self-determination, and use of natural resources (Bonacker et al. 2011: 35).

systems and increasing both the supply (state institutions) and demand (civil society) sides are equally important for successful democracy promotion (Carothers 1999) in order to avoid resistance to democratization from the authorities and reluctance to advocate democratization from the civil society.

Table 1 | Sectors and Levels of Democracy Promotion.

Level/Sector	Goal	Type of Democracy Promotion
<i>State Institutions</i>	Democratic constitution	Constitutional assistance
	Independent judiciary and other law-oriented institutions	Rule-of-law aid
	Representative legislature	Legislative strengthening
	Responsive local government	Local government development
	Prodemocratic military	Civil-military relations
<i>Political Society</i>	Free and fair elections	Electoral aid
	Strong national political parties	Political party building
	Free and fair elections	Electoral aid
<i>Civil Society</i>	Active advocacy NGOs	NGO building
	Strong independent media	Media strengthening
	Free and fair elections	Elections observation
<i>Individual citizens</i>	Political educated citizenry	Voter education Professional and educational exchange

Source: Babayan 2012: 34, based on Schmitter and Brouwer 1999: 44 and Carothers 1999: 88.

This conceptualization should also be the basis to develop a more adequate theoretical framework that offers predictive values which is still missing in democracy promotion studies (Burnell 2007 and 2008). The literature mainly relates to the view of democracy promotion of practitioners (Carothers 1999 and 2004), and focuses mostly on ex post assessment of democracy promotion undertakings (Burnell 2008), which are both overwhelmingly narratives of democracy promotion efforts by the US and the EU. Carothers claims that “democracy promoters treat political change in a pseudoscientific manner” (1999: 102), thus lamenting the lack of any theoretical background for their democracy promotion efforts, which leads us to a second important controversy on democracy promotion regarding its effectiveness.

2.2 Effectiveness of Democracy Promotion

Democracy promotion has been on the American and European foreign policy agendas for two decades, but a “one-size fits all” approach (Börzel and Risse 2009) and set “toolboxes” (Carothers 2004) have not resulted in a “success recipe.” So, in this section we come back again to the two central players in the field, since it is them who have invested extensively in this area and it is their policies which are analysed in the literature. The issue of the impact of democracy promotion on democratizations has by now become a central field in Comparative Political Science. For several decades, scholars of comparative politics assumed that international factors and processes are of marginal, if any, importance to democratization. Advocates of the endogenous genesis and development democratization processes claimed that regime change was encouraged, initiated and carried out exclusively by domestic actors. In this context, endogenous factors such as the strength of the national economy, the institutional design (Linz 1990), the openness of political culture (Diamond, Linz, and Lipset 1989), and elite behaviour (Higley and Burton 1989) were identified as the main catalysts of democratic change without initially acknowledging that even endogenous factors can be influence from the outside. These studies have either overlooked the significance of international factors or have simply denied any possibility of their influence on domestic change (Schraeder 2002). This narrow and exclusive approach of comparative politics resulted in disagreement from various scholars who considered international factors to play a significant role in the process of regime change and subsequent democratization (Pridham, Herring and Sandford 1994). At the beginning of the 1990s scholars of democratization supposed that external governments and institutions may have a determinative impact on

democratization of a given country (Huntington 1991) Others argued that in the coming decades the significance of international institutions might prove pivotal for domestic political change (Vachudova 2005). In a revisit of his well-known “requisites of democracy” article, Lipset concluded that domestic conditions “do shape the probabilities for democracy, but they do not determine their outcomes” (1994: 17, 16). Democracy is an “international cause” and democracy promotion has become the link between the international and domestic dimensions of democratization (Babayan 2012).

Some scholars argue that there are four international dimensions of democratization, in which targeted democracy promotion is intertwined with general spread of democracy: 1) coercion, seen as military intervention; 2) contagion, seen as intended or unintended emulation of the democratic regime of a neighbouring country; 3) conditionality, seen as imposition of sanctions or rewards; and 4) consent, seen as activities by an external actor in a target country requiring the consent of the domestic government (Whitehead 2001).⁴ Within these international dimensions of democratization, there are three methods of democracy promotion (Whitehead 2001: 88) –incorporation, invasion, and intimidation. While contagion does not involve specific actions of external actors, coercion does not require the consent of the domestic actors. Conditionality is not a separate dimension but a strategy used in the framework of a consent-dominated democratization process. While international factors have received thorough examination in the literature on democracy promotion (Whitehead 2001; Schraeder 2002; Carothers 1999 and 2004), domestic factors and their connection to the international ones have usually been neglected (Schmitz 2004), even though they are now receiving comparatively more attention in some recent works (Schimmelfennig, Engert and Knobel 2006; Babayan 2012).

The analyses of democracy promotion strategies of the most influential international actors, the EU and the US (Carothers 1999 and 2004; Gillespie and Youngs 2002; Youngs 2002; Burnell and Youngs 2010) and the effort at comparing the two (Magen and McFaul 2009: 11) have shed light on the genesis, rationale and nature of the democracy promotion phenomenon. However, there are still open questions among democracy promotion scholars on the specific types of transformations that democracy promotion can lead to. Some acknowledge the value of studies on demonstration effects, contagion, emulation, and diffusion, but point to their failure in identifying causal mechanisms that lead to specific outcomes (Magen and Morlino 2009). Others mention that they do “not venture to evaluate their [strategies] impact” (Magen and McFaul 2009: 20) and that “this task has to wait for another book” (Risse 2009: 268). The theoretical framework guiding their analysis is derived, as the authors also acknowledge, from the theoretical traditions in international relations, international law, and Europeanization studies. Indeed, the “logics of influence” (Magen and McFaul 2009: 11) adopted as an umbrella concept for the strategies of control, material incentives, normative suasion, and capacity-building are largely based on the logics of action – appropriateness and consequentialism – and works of other scholars of democratization and norms diffusion. As a result of analysing EU and US democracy promotion strategies in the Middle East, the Mediterranean, the Newly Independent States, the South Caucasus, Latin America and Indonesia, Risse (2009: 250) argues that strategies of both promoters are “remarkably comparable”, as they both use the whole set of strategies diverging only in the case of Latin America.

In addition, Magen and Morlino provide “cycles and layers of democratic anchoring” as a framework of studying EU democracy promotion (Magen and Morlino 2008). Cycles identify periods when EU incentives can be most effective, while levels entail rule adoption, implementation, and internalization. Another view on strategies of democracy promotion has been suggested through the international socialization framework applied to norm promotion by European community organizations (Schimmelfennig, Engert, and Knobel 2006), and later directly applied to EU democracy promotion (Babayan 2009). The framework developed by Schimmelfennig and his collaborators is based on an amalgamation of rationalist and constructivist perspectives and demonstrates that norm promotion happens through two types of reinforcements: social and material. Based on the observation of six domestic and international variables and abovementioned strategies within nine country-cases, they argue that the EU membership incentive is necessary for norm promotion to be effective. Notwithstanding its empirical validity, this argument has left out a variety of cases where an EU membership perspective is not possible per se.

The introduced frameworks allow grasping the concept of democracy promotion and differentiating between its types, sectors, and strategies. However, they do not elaborate on the mechanisms of development and implementation of

4 See also Risse and Börzel in this series, who differentiate between four mechanisms to induce compliance with human rights norms, namely coercion, changing incentives, persuasion and discourse, and capacity building.

democracy promotion policies (Babayan 2012), which would assist in understanding how central players like the EU and the US adjust their policies to economic and political developments or their own interactions. Furthermore, they do not specify the conditions under which specific democracy promotion policy may have a certain outcome. Given these gaps, the structural and geographical scopes of the international socialization framework have been expanded, providing a more nuanced vision of democracy promotion strategies and their outcomes (Babayan 2012). However, also the newly developed framework requires further application to other cases.

2.3 Compliance with Human Rights Norms

Parallel to the literature on the effectiveness of democracy promotion, a literature on compliance with human rights norms has emerged, mostly concentrating on the diffusion through transnational advocacy networks, rather than states. This section briefly discusses that literature, voicing its main arguments. Human rights diffusion through transnational human rights networks takes place when citizens of a country where human rights are violated appeal to another country's population. Subsequent pressure by the second population on its own government to insist on the upholding of human rights in the first country has been called the "boomerang effect" (Keck and Sikkink 1998). It describes how transnational advocacy networks have most influence in an ascending order on agenda-setting, state discourse, institutional procedures, and state behaviour. A five-phase spiral model of human rights elaborated by Risse, Ropp, and Sikkink (1999) has aimed to explain the degree of internalization of human rights. Thus, according to the spiral model, which undergoes the phases of repression, denial, tactical concessions, prescriptive status, and rule consistent behaviour, the internalization of human rights requires the establishment of sustainable domestic and transnational networks with links to international regimes. Furthermore, Acharya (2004) has shown the importance of the local setting and agents for the localization of norms. Scholarship on human rights has been, however, criticized for focusing only on successful cases (Bae 2007) and norms supported by only parts of global civil society (Price 2003). The field of human rights research, which studies transnational networks through comparative case studies, has subsequently moved towards quantitative studies *inter alia* arguing that approval of human rights laws and treaties positively affect the upholding of human rights by countries (Simmons 2009). Further applications and development of the spiral model have showed that internalization of human rights is a "multifactor interactive process" (Risse, Ropp and Sikkink 2012: 407) where the willingness of local actors and such factors as areas of limited statehood are decisive.

2.4 Double Standards

The credibility of leading players in the fields of democracy and human rights promotion is one of the most debated issues regarding democracy and human rights promotion. The US and Europe have been called the "axis of double standards" by Al Jazeera. The issue has two dimensions. On the one hand, democracy and human promoters are often accused of own democratic deficits or violations of human rights standards. This became an issue especially in the peaking period of the "war on terror" in which not only the pictures of Abu Ghraib showed Western double standards regarding human rights, but in which democracy also started to deteriorate in Western democracies themselves due to new security legislation (Bigo 2010). On the other hand, the issue of double standards also refers to the observation that democracies tend to prioritize stability over democracy in their foreign policies. Both, the US and Europe, exhibit discrepancies in condemning human rights violations or promoting democracy depending whether they have strategic or energy interests in the given countries. Coupling close ties with autocratic regimes that help in the "war on terror" with a proactive democracy promotion policy, the George W. Bush Administration was accused of applying double standards (Carothers 2009b). Similarly, the EU has often expressed very strong criticism of the Lukashenka regime in Belarus, while frequently failing to condone similar developments in Azerbaijan or Kazakhstan, which are major partners in the EU's attempts to diversify its energy resources. The EU's sometimes "deliberately vague understandings" of democracy prompt claims that instead of being committed to democracy promotion, it "intends to adjust its promotion agenda to fit its own commercial or security interests" (Wetzel and Orbie 2012). Similar double standards can be found in US and EU policies in the Middle East and North Africa, where the authoritarian regimes had been successful in using the Western terrorism script to securitize Islamic opposition movements (Lia 1999; Joffé 2008). These movements perceive especially the EU as "fundamentally anti-Islamic" (Kausch and Youngs 2009: 969).

How does theory reflect this issue? Firstly, Realism substantiates the view that democracies prioritize “first order” security issues over “second order” moral or normative issues (Hyde-Price 2006 and 2008). Miller has refined this argument by suggesting that only under hegemony would democracies promote ideology abroad – by offensive means in a highly threatening environment and by defensive means in a benign one (Miller 2010). Secondly, critical theory adds an additional dimension to the question of the double standards. Robinson, for example, argues that democracy and human rights promotion does not actually aim at promoting democracy, but a democratic farce, serving the interest of a transnational capitalist elite in “secur[ing] the underlying objective of maintaining essentially undemocratic societies inserted into an unjust international system” (Robinson 1996: 6). Thirdly, research on the democratic peace also contributes to this debate. While democracy promotion can be seen a long-term strategic foreign policy to reduce the security dilemma in international relations and so help establish a peaceful order (Ikenberry 2000), Mansfield and Snyder (1995 and 2002) have shown that transition states are prone to interstate, as well as intrastate wars. Thus, while democracy and human rights promotion might be a long-term security policy, in the short term it is problematic, which might explain why Western countries do promote, but not prioritize, democracy and human rights.

The “democratic peace” has become a commonplace in political rhetoric today and it could be argued that a “world cultural script according to which democracy is good for international security and development” emerged (Börzel and Risse 2009: 35). According to a “all good things go together” logic, democracy promotion was not only perceived as a policy to bring about a stable and peaceful, but also an affluent international system. While over decades, socio-economic development had been seen as a pre-condition for democracy (Lipset 1959), in the 1990s the view emerged that democracy was a pre-condition for development (Sen 1999). A prominent and influential example of this was the 2002 Arab Human Development Report, which argued that shortcomings in institutional development hinder human development. Research, however, does not entirely substantiate this. Johnson has pointed out that evidence of the connection between democracy and economic development remains inconclusive (Johnson 2002: 49).

2.5 Counter-Trends and Challenges

Human rights, as has been pointed out above, are less contested than “democracy” and relatively well settled in international law. Nonetheless, also the concept of the universality of human rights has been challenged by the Asian value debate.

Democracy promotion as a world value (McFaul 2005) has been challenged by several trends. Many states liberalized economically without democratizing (Gat 2007; Bremmer 2009), while many new democracies performed badly. Even though democracies are in general better performers than autocracies, they are nonetheless outrun economically and in terms of welfare by a few successful autocracies such as Singapore or Malaysia (Saxer 2009: 3), making these states another model to follow.

Furthermore, democracy promotion is also countered by possible autocracy promotion (Burnell 2010; Burnell and Schlumberger 2010), given China’s development without democratization and Russia’s fall back into semi-authoritarianism. China and Russia exhibit degrees of normative foreign policy behaviour, even if norms and normative behaviour are interpreted differently than in the US and Europe (Tocci and Manners 2008). China, for example, perceives the Arab Spring as a chance to spread its developmental approach to the Arab world (Liu 2013).

Finally, also the Iraq war harmed democracy promotion as a world value. Whitehead claims that it was a “pivotal case,” which undermined the international consensus on democracy promotion and also damaged the legitimacy of democracy promotion by countries and international institutions which had not participated in it. Democracy promotion, above all in the Arab world, became associated with occupation, war and torture, followed by disillusionment with democracy promotion and the Western liberal agenda (Gray 2007; Kagan 2008).

2.6 International Criminal Law and the Responsibility to Protect

Human rights protection is gaining new dimensions today with the internationalization of criminal law and the emergence of a new norm, the responsibility to protect (R2P). Both issues are discussed hotly since they challenge the principle of

non-intervention and change the traditional understanding of sovereignty by putting an end to impunity of state officials, making sovereignty more inclusive of human security and interpreting it as a responsibility rather than a right.

The internationalization of criminal law on genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and aggression is a project that emerged after World War II, was blocked during the Cold War, and has revived since its end. The ad hoc International Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, established by the UN Security Council in 1993 and 1994, respectively, were path-breaking steps towards the development of a body of common rules and accepted procedures. This process had its climax in 2002 with the entry into force of the Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC), which some scholars hailed as potentially “the most important institutional innovation since the founding of the United Nations” (Johansen 1997: 1). However, several central actors such as the US, China, India or Russia, have not signed or ratified the Statute.

Almost simultaneously to the internationalization of criminal law and in response to the same events, a new international norm – R2P – has emerged. Following Rwanda, Srebrenica and the debate surrounding NATO’s “humanitarian intervention” in Kosovo in 1999, then UN Secretary General Kofi Annan urged the international community to deal with the question if “humanitarian intervention is, indeed, an unacceptable assault on sovereignty, how should we respond to a Rwanda, to a Srebrenica, to gross and systematic violation of human rights that offend every precept of our common humanity?” In 2001, the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS), established by the Canadian government, then first introduced the concept of a responsibility to protect. The 2005 UN World Summit Outcome Document became a turning point for the evolution of the norm and stated that each “individual State has the responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity” and that the international community has a responsibility to assist states to fulfill their obligations, notably through a responsibility to prevent, react, and rebuild. While the contours of R2P are still being shaped (Bellamy 2011), the norm has already found some resonance in a few UN Security Council resolutions, as well as in documents by regional organizations like the African Union and, maybe more importantly, R2P has been recently invoked to justify a military intervention during the civil war in Libya in 2011.

3. Agreed?

It is increasingly argued in International Relations that the world is becoming more multipolar, even though this might vary depending on the policy area one looks at (Peterson, Tocci and Alcaro 2012). Does the policy field of human rights and democracy promotion reflect this tendency? This article offered some tentative insights into this question. Firstly, while the field is becoming increasingly congested in terms of actors, the US and Europe are still the most powerful ones in it in terms of willingness and capacity to engage on such issues. Other democracies are reluctant to enter the field and do not have the same resources and experience like the US and Europe. Thus, in terms of actors, human rights and democracy promotion has not yet developed into a multipolar field.

However and secondly, the field is also becoming more contested in terms of essence and while this might not reflect multipolarity, it does indicate a loss of unipolarity or, more specifically, a waning credibility. While the landmark events of the late 1980s and the early 1990s had signaled the triumph of liberal ideals over the authoritarian ones and have set a number of communist countries on the path of democratization, the “third wave of democratization” (Huntington 1991) and the deterministic arguments that democracy is the ultimate choice of any country and the history of regime struggle is over (Fukuyama 1993) were challenged when the majority of countries dubbed transitional have either stagnated in their transitions or even fell back into authoritarianism. Furthermore, instead of democracy per se, it is *liberal* democracy which is challenged – emerging democracies might adopt diverse models of democracy. In wake of the Iraq war and double standards, the West has also lost much credibility as a democracy promoter and the international consensus on Western democracy promotion waned. In light of these problems, the Arab Spring could now be seen as a window of opportunity for the West to acknowledge these challenges and rethink their democracy promotion approaches in terms of them. In addition, in contemporary highly interconnected world, where a financial crisis in the US spills over Europe and other parts of the world, it would be naïve to assume that democracy promotion and democratization function in their own bubble without being influenced by other non-directly related factors.

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THE PROJECT

In an era of global flux, emerging powers and growing interconnectedness, transatlantic relations appear to have lost their bearings. As the international system fragments into different constellations of state and non-state powers across different policy domains, the US and the EU can no longer claim exclusive leadership in global governance. Traditional paradigms to understand the transatlantic relationship are thus wanting. A new approach is needed to pinpoint the direction transatlantic relations are taking. TRANSWORLD provides such an approach by a) ascertaining, differentiating among four policy domains (economic, security, environment, and human rights/democracy), whether transatlantic relations are drifting apart, adapting along an ad hoc cooperation-based pattern, or evolving into a different but resilient special partnership; b) assessing the role of a re-defined transatlantic relationship in the global governance architecture; c) providing tested policy recommendations on how the US and the EU could best cooperate to enhance the viability, effectiveness, and accountability of governance structures.

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