

The London School of Economics and Political Science

*Rival universalisms? American and European democracy
promotion in post-Cold War International Relations*

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**Thesis submitted to the Department of International Relations
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, London, June 2009**

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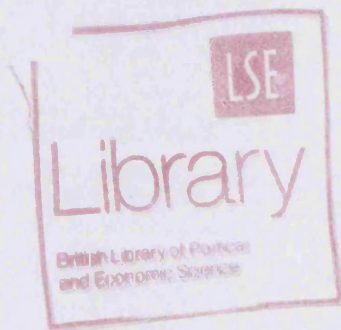


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Abstract

Democracy and its promotion are embedded in the United States (US) and in Europe, defining their distinct roles in International Relations (IR) but also maintaining a common basis for transatlantic relations. With the end of the Cold War, democracy promotion became an increasingly important phenomenon, while transatlantic relations seemed to evolve in an ambiguous “drift *and* rift”. This raised the question of whether American and European democracy promotion differed, and whether this mattered both regarding their roles in IR and the challenges arising on the ground.

This thesis documents and compares the democracy promotion strategies adopted in the US and the European Union (EU), and argues that they contributed to the development of “rival universalisms”, i.e. international narratives grounded on their own identity, external objectives and policy capacities. It tests this argument with three case studies that illustrate and nuance democracy promotion as an eminently *political* process, opposed to conventional emphasis on technical expertise.

The first part of the thesis depicts the origins, characteristics, and policy-making processes of American and European democracy promotion: turf wars and conflicting ideologies offer inconclusive pictures. In the US, the “new” post-Cold War mission still tied democracy to national security and Modernization; in the EU, “normative power” and utopian arguments in the definition of Europe did not substitute for the core tension between supranationalism and Member States’ influence regarding external affairs.

In the second part, the thesis checks the “rival universalisms” against US and EU policies actually undertaken on the ground, with case studies of a country (Democratic Republic of Congo), a region (Middle East and North Africa), and the world (Community of Democracies). In all, democracy promotion seemed elusive, and raised wide-ranging conceptual and pragmatic challenges. The cases demonstrated the limits of the US and EU “rival universalisms” as policy projections, and gave evidence of the political (and not technical) choices and trade-offs involved in democracy promotion.

Acknowledgments

This PhD program and the drafting of this thesis have been an exciting though at times arduous individual experience. Yet it has also been my luck to walk this path with other individuals and within institutions whom I would like to acknowledge here.

My first, heartfelt thanks go to Professor Michael Cox and Professor Lord William Wallace who supervised my work. I admire their academic work for their sharp understanding, relevance, openness, and penetrating implications. I also admire the way they live their work and work in their lives, and I have been most fortunate to be their student during the PhD. Professor Cox gave me the most valuable piece of advice regarding epistemology and ontology when he suggested “no chart before horses” and then “what horses?”; his supervision enhanced my autonomy and our discussions were always interesting and valuable. Professor Lord Wallace guided my reflections on the contingency as well as the institutions that shape political phenomena; he engaged with my writings in detail and helped develop many of my arguments as they were in bud. I am thankful for their many efforts and enthusiasm during these years, and for their unconditional support at some difficult moments. I met Professor Lord Wallace in a hotel in Paris as he traveled there for a meeting, and I have dear memories of Professor Cox’s time in Granada during an ECPR conference. I appreciate they took the time to share with me this experience at large, and to make this work better and more worth it; it is my hope that I will be able to follow in their steps.

Next I would like to express my thanks to the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), the Department of International Relations, and IDEAS (Centre for Diplomacy and Strategy). LSE has provided for an ideal intellectual environment where I have developed and shared my work. The many courses, workshops, events, and formal and informal discussions with colleagues have been indispensable to improve the quality of this work, and to transform my career motivations in a passion for the academic understanding of our world and its politics. I found Professors Kim Hutchings, Margot Light, Fred Halliday and Chris Coker particularly inspiring. I am thankful for the financial support granted, for the excellent working conditions on campus (and the Library!), and for the institutional encouragement to present at international conferences and to develop our own academic projects as PhD students (notably, the Transatlantic Programme at IDEAS).

At LSE I also met Serena Sharma, Lisa Aronsson, Robert Kelley and Simon Curtis, all doctors now, and above all very dear and close friends: thank you so much, and what a pleasure! These PhD years brought beautiful exchanges and engaging conversations with many in London, and I would also like to mention here Megan Harrison, Simona Manea, Felix Berenskötter, Carola Kantz, Jafri Abdul-Jalil, Bill Vlcek, Zeinep Kaya, Jasmin Gani, Claire Beaugrand, Ewan Stein, Jill Stuart, Nick Kitchen, and Marta Iñiguez.

In these years I have become a better researcher thanks to my work in the classroom, and I am very thankful to my students. Teaching has brought many

more questions than gratifying answers; it has been hard but also very enriching, my work became more meaningful and often times, indeed, very enjoyable. I have been privileged to hold positions as teaching assistant at LSE and as guest lecturer at the French grand ecole ESCP Europe in Paris. At ESCP, I have enjoyed superb professional opportunities and the very friendly support of David Chekroun, Chantal Noel, Pascal Morand, Philippe Nemo, Sylvie Hebert, Marie-Pierre Fenoll-Trousseau, Vanessa Strauss-Khan, Isabel Imbert and Olga Casas.

My thoughts wander now toward the travels and encounters I have made in my journey to unravel democracy promotion not only in theory but also on the ground. My contact with analysts, policy-makers and practitioners from different official bodies, think tanks and NGOs benefited this research enormously. I gained this way more accurate knowledge of the field, and my approach became more rigorous. Importantly, this also enhanced my sensitivity to the impact of policies and politics on people's lives. I am thankful for the views shared in formal and informal events by these many special people, all making a difference in my work, and some in my life. Among them I would like to acknowledge Boge Gebre, Cyriaque Meka-Mevoung, Andrea Subhan and Sophie Mareschal as sources of especial attention and inspiration.

At the most personal level, this work has been accomplished thanks to the presence of my mother, father, brother and sister (even if "back in Spain") and the essential support of my friends, especially Dounya Moussali, Saïd Abass Ahamed, Geraldine Chapuy, Coco González Pi and Carlos Pezzi. Thanks are also due to Yves Figueiredo, who encouraged me to begin this project and upheld it for years. This PhD was completed also thanks to the help provided by Peter Finn and the PhD group, Santiago Arias and Lila Hoiyman.

With all, in this time, I learned very much about democracy and contemporary international relations. I learned about the importance of narratives and the challenges of practice, about the role of structure and agency, and of process as well as of critical junctures. To be continued.

Paris, 31 May 2009

En memoria de mis abuelas Isabel y María

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List of Acronyms

ACP	African, Caribbean and Pacific countries
AECI	Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional (Development and Cooperation Agency in Spain)
AFDL	Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire (Laurent Desire Kabila's rebel movement that ousted Mobutu in 1997)
BMENA	Broader Middle East and North Africa
CDIE	Center for Development Information and Evaluation, part of USAID
CIAT	[from the French <i>Comite international d'accompagnement de la transition</i>] in the DRC
CD	Community of Democracies (an institution set up in 2000, based on ministerial conferences)
CCD	Council for a Community of Democracies (body in charge of CD coordination and support, officially constituted as a and American NGO [501 (c) (3) tax exempt organization])
CDIE	Center for Development Information and Evaluation (within USAID)
CEIP	Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (think tank)
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy (of the EU)
Council	[used here to refer to the] Council of the European Union [and not to the summit-meetings and overview work of the European Council]
CSCE	Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe (later OSCE)
DAD	Democracy Assistance Dialogue
DCHA	Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance (at USAID)
DCP	Democracy Coalition Project (NGO/think tank associated to the CD)
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
DG	Directorate General (administrative division within the Commission or the European Parliament)
DIE	Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (German Development Institute)
DRC/	
DR Congo	Democratic Republic of Congo (Zaire until 1997) (DR Congo is the official acronym used in the United Nations)
ECE	Eastern and Central Europe
ECHO	European Community Humanitarian Office (Humanitarian Aid Department)
EDF	European Development Fund (main instrument for aid to ACP countries)
EISA	Electoral Institute of South African (policy institute/think tank)
EIDHR	European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights; renamed as of 2007 European <i>Instrument</i> for Democracy and Human Rights
EMP	Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, also Euro-Med or the Barcelona Process
ENP	European Neighbourhood Policy
ENPI	European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument
ESDP	European Security and Defence Policy
EU	European Union
EuroMeSCo	Euro-Mediterranean Study Commission
FH	Freedom House
FPA	Foreign Policy Analysis
GMENA	Greater Middle East and North Africa (later BMENA)

IEC	Independent Electoral Commission (created in the Congo to organize and supervise the electoral process)
IRI	International Republican Institute (US party foundation)
MCA	Millennium Challenge Account
MCC	Millennium Challenge Corporation
MEDA	[from the French <i>mesures d'accompagnement</i>] Financial and Technical Measures in the EMP (for reform of economic and social structures)
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MEP	Member of the European Parliament (EU Parliamentarian)
MEPI	Middle East Partnership Initiative (launched at G8, pursued by the United States)
MS	Member State(s) of the European Union
MONUC	United Nations Mission in the Congo (acronym from the first mission, limited to observation, in French: <i>Mission d'Observation des Nations Unies au Congo</i>)
MP	Member of Parliament
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NDI	National Democratic Institute (US party foundation)
NED	National Endowment for Democracy
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OAS	Organization of American States
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (formerly CSCE)
PSC	Political and Security Committee
QMV	Qualified Majority Voting (voting mechanism in the Council featuring MS different voting-weights, used to decide on many legislative; consensus and policy-convergence is however the practice in CFSP decision-making)
UK	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
US	United States of America
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WFD	Westminster Foundation for Democracy (UK party foundation)
WMD	World Movement for Democracy (Network/Program of democracy promoters, including individuals and NGOs; related to NED)

Introduction

A great democratic revolution is taking place among us: everybody sees it but nobody analyzes it the same way. Some see it as something new and intend to stop it, thinking it is only an accident. Others believe it is inevitable, because they identify this phenomenon as the oldest, the most constant, never-interrupted trend we have known in history.
Alexis de Tocqueville, 1835¹

Democracy is a fascinating topic of study, as it brings together ideas of individual rights and political order, and translates into practices as complex as they are diverse. Its international promotion poses a number of additional questions: can democracy be promoted and if so, why and how? The discipline of International Relations (IR) is relevant here to grasp the links between the domestic and the international spheres (Pridham, 1991; Putnam, 1988): democracies influence the international system, and the system influences states. Democracy involves social aspirations and political organization that can only be realized if there is internal acceptance and will. Yet its promotion necessarily involves an external realm, as principles and reforms are fostered from the outside-in and sometimes under coercion (Peceny, 1999). Western polities have sought to promote democracy both because of internationalist ethics and ideology, and because of self-interest and convenience. Arguably, democracy promotion has been more prominent than ever in the post-Cold War period, and the United States (US) and the European Union (EU) have led this quest. This thesis substantiates this claim, and explores two aspects of this complex phenomenon.

On the one hand, focusing on the promoters' foreign policy, democracy promotion contributed to the construction of the international roles of the United States and Europe. This thesis argues that this was the case even if democracy promotion could hardly be isolated as a clear and strategic goal, and was always in competition with other interests. This construction involved identity and fundamental characteristics, international projects, and prescription for international action, leading to distinct American and European "universalisms". These narratives were shaped in relatively new ways in the post-Cold War period, embedded in the multiple layers of policy-making processes, and led to a range of positions and policies to defend and foster

¹ My translation (de Tocqueville, 2000, p. 31).

democracy². It was not obvious whether such a common value –to promote democracy abroad—translated into stronger transatlantic relations and united action. Indeed, this thesis argues that democracy promotion contributed to the development of “rival universalisms” where the US and the EU diverged.

On the other hand, democracy promotion involves specific initiatives and processes on the ground, with objectives in accordance to each case. These are case-specific problems, conceptual challenges and pragmatic trade-offs of democracy promotion, driven by the dynamics on the ground. Arguably, these realities affected democracy promotion independently from the promoter. In addition, democracy promotion has proven to be an elusive practice. Along these lines, the thesis observes four general arguments that illustrate the gap between promoting democracy in principle and in practice: the premise of positive links among security, economic and democracy policies, the efforts to arrive at a universal consensus on democracy, the attempts to revert democracy promotion of a clout of “technical expertise”, and the flexibility and trade-offs imposed as promoters are “learning by doing”.

Accordingly, it was necessary for this thesis to assess how the American and European universalisms translated into policy, and how the practical dynamics affected, in turn, the policies’ evolution and the effective construction of the universalisms. The thesis checks US and EU democracy promotion against the realities on the ground in order to explore the rise of the “rival universalisms”, but also their shortcomings in practice. The thesis is however not devoted to assessing the policies’ impact or whether the US or the EU strategies “worked”.

In this way, the thesis explores democracy promotion from a double perspective, complementing its study as an element of US /EU foreign policy (related to their identity and role-construction) with a view of democracy promotion as a process on the ground. In order to test these arguments, the thesis analyzes three case-studies: the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Middle East and North Africa region, and the global Community of Democracies. This introduction now outlines the main contributions of this thesis, its premises and methods (conceptual framework, case studies), and the organization of this research project.

² I am following some basic premises from Constructivist analysis of International Relations, which I find useful to frame the complex empirical realities we analyze in Social Sciences in terms of agency and structure, and of ideational and material interests. Following Wendt, my research questions focus on “what there is” regarding democracy promotion (Wendt, 1999, pp. 33-40).

Contribution

The thesis addresses the following puzzle: were US and EU democracy promotion different and if so, how did this affect their roles in international relations and translate into processes on the ground? This is relevant for two research agendas: one regards the evolution of the US and the EU as international actors and of their transatlantic relations during the post-Cold War period; the other regards the dynamics of democratization and the role of international factors in these processes. The thesis will be considering two hypotheses with the intention of building up our knowledge in those two areas. The first hypothesis is that US and EU democracy promotion have not constituted a common front and that there have been divergences –this hints at the limits of transatlantic common values and cooperation. The second hypothesis is that US and EU democracy promotion faced similar problems regarding conceptual and pragmatic challenges –this hints at an ongoing gap between the promoters’ premises (bureaucratic and political choices) and the processes on the ground. A broader hypothesis underlies and connects these two: that democracy promotion was more about US and EU role construction as international actors than about impact on the ground –this idea is discussed further in the Conclusion³. Along these lines and as a contribution to the existing literature, this thesis puts forward the following arguments.

First, the US and the EU have been developing separate and somewhat conflicting “universalisms” as democracy promoters, i.e. international projections grounded on their own identity, external objectives and policy capacities. American and European democracy promotion resulted from distinct historical experiences, institutional backgrounds and distributions of political power. These were not static and depended mostly on internal dynamics that, importantly, not only represented feedback but also “feedforward” of democracy promotion in foreign policy⁴.

The universalisms also depicted American and European premises and methods on what to promote and how to do it, but most importantly they constituted differentiated *narratives* for the transatlantic partners. This thesis argues that the differentiation was due to the development of a new universalism on the side of the European Union, and discusses its main characteristics and how they suited the EU’s role as a democracy promoter: civilian (and normative) power, regional cooperation,

³ I am thankful to M. Smith and M. Kaldor for helping me clarify this argument.

⁴ I not only observe how policies originate but also how they “feedforward” i.e. motivate and shape subsequent international action. This analysis follows Carlsnaes’ framework of “dynamic synthesis” between agency and structure (Carlsnaes, 1992, pp. 264-265).

multilateralism, socialization. This universalism underlined EU peculiarities but also its uniqueness, and justified (as well as motivated) EU action in the contemporary world, notably vis-à-vis the United States. This argument corroborates that the post-Cold War era has meant an “institutionalization of difference” (M. Smith, 2004) where the EU is cementing its independent, distinct role in IR, and a logic of “EU identity construction” where the US plays the role of an “Other” (Diez, 2005). Hence, on the one hand democracy promotion featured in both US and EU policies and it was celebrated as a common value in the transatlantic relationship, which seemingly drifted along. On the other hand it illustrated that a transatlantic rift was at stake⁵.

Second, democracy promotion was part of a broader set of preferences, including values and interests, and both American and European policies involved controversies and trade-offs. Most importantly, democracy promotion was an elusive practice, and our knowledge and assessment of “success” remained limited and relatively controversial (Burnell, 2007; Center on Democracy Development and the Rule of Law, 2008). Thus, the definition of democracy and the dynamics of reform and democratization faced important problems in theory and in practice, and these affected *both* US and EU approaches. The literature of “Transition studies” addressed these problems. They are relevant here in that they challenge the specificities of American or European universalisms, bringing our attention to generalized problems in the practice of promoting democracy in international relations.

Arguably, Transition studies shaped practices on the ground, contributing towards a paradigm that focused on elections and, following Rustow, underestimated long-term and socioeconomic factors (Carothers, 2002)⁶. This thesis explores democracy promotion against this background and criticizes, more specifically, four problems visible in the post-Cold War period. One problem was the tension between the universality of democracy and its potential specificities, both cultural and institutional (role of elections, parties, good governance, checks and balances). The thesis argues that democracy promoters sought to redress that tension and defended the universality

⁵ As different European states reacted differently to the American-led war in Iraq, observers from academic and policy-related circles underlined there was a transatlantic crisis or “rift”. My argument goes beyond this contingency and substantiates that the rift is structural, affecting the transatlantic relation itself.

⁶ Rustow’s article “Transitions to democracy: towards a dynamic model” exhorted comparativists to focus on genetic enquiry: cases where transition had happened over a short time, and he thought that a model of the type of transition could be derived from two or three empirical studies and tested by application to the rest (Rustow, 1970, p. 347).

of democracy promotion, but in practice the model of liberal democracy and the Western experience dominated. Another problem was the complex linkages in the promotion of democracy (including human rights and the rule of law), peace and economic development, and the nature and pace of political change, which was often long-term⁷. In this regard, the thesis argues that international democracy promotion policies were often conceived as if there was a “virtuous circle” (an ideal opposite to “vicious circle”), but this was challenged by political difficulties and trade-offs on the ground.

Finally, the thesis identifies and throws light on two more problematic dynamics that have shaped democracy promotion on the ground: a tendency to technicality, and “learning by doing”. The thesis gives evidence of how policies were artificially framed as neutral and technical, while they were a clearly *political* intervention. Indeed, calls for expertise and professionalism tended to disregard the politics that actually determined the policies’ success⁸. The thesis also builds the argument of “learning by doing”, noting that practitioners on the ground, but also officials in earlier stages of the policy-making process, lacked experience or failed to include lessons from other cases⁹. They based their work on principles from the academic and think tank world (which emphasized technicality), but “learning” was limited in view of bureaucratic processes, the volatility of funds, and the shifting goals and strategy. In practice, democracy promotion imposed a flexibility and trade-offs that led to situations sometimes (easily) criticized as hypocrisy or double-standards.

Conceptual framework

The topic of democracy promotion has been studied from two main perspectives. On the one hand it has been considered an element of American or European external relations,

⁷ Similarly, many of the methods used were also complex and not automatically positive and mutually reinforcing: conditionality, “carrot or stick”, military means, reform of laws, training of elites, funding of specific civil society programs and beneficiaries, etc.

⁸ The de-politicization of democracy promotion was similar to the way development aid was sometimes portrayed as if international economic aid and cooperation was a matter of efficiency. Instead, it is clearly influenced by the politics both on the side of the promoters (for whom its one element of foreign policy, among other goals or methods) and on the side of the target-country (where power politics and a number of actors will influence each case). Democracy promotion emanated and remained connected in many cases to development aid and cooperation, and it was affected by similar dynamics. As Chris Hill argues (2003, p. 10), foreign policy must be understood “not as technical exercise but as an important form of political argument”.

⁹ More generally, the rise of democracy promotion activity since the end of the Cold War meant that new policies were needed. My point here regards the failure to accumulate knowledge (as far as this was possible) on best practices.

as an issue-area in Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) (T. Smith, 1994; Youngs, 2001a). On the other hand, it has been considered an independent variable to explain transition and democratization processes (Burnell, 2000; Schmitter & Brouwer, 1999; Whitehead, 1996). For the latter, it was an instance of the (limited) role of international factors in these processes, and country or regional experiences were studied in the context of Comparative politics (Herman & Piccone, 2002; Schraeder, Taylor, & Hook, 1998). By contrast, this thesis aims to bridge the divides between these literatures and restores democracy promotion as a “multi-faceted” international phenomenon as suggested by Burnell (2005) and Carothers (1999, 2004). My goal is to focus on the American and the European approaches, while remaining sensitive to how the policies faced similar challenges on the ground. US and EU democracy promotion emanated from their complex foreign policy dynamics, and despite their Western values and common interests, distinct approaches emerged. Nevertheless, transition and democratization depended largely on dynamics at the target-level: history, socioeconomic conditions and domestic politics. As “rival universalisms”, distinct US and EU democracy promotion materialized, but their impact was limited and the challenges were common.

The thesis is based on the assumption that the US and the EU can be compared as international actors¹⁰. One premise in this thesis is that the European Union is a polity with external action, notwithstanding its peculiarities and differences between Member States (MS) (Carlsnaes, Sjørnsen, & White, 2004; Knodt & Princen, 2003). The thesis freely adopts White’s (2001) view of European foreign policy as one entity’s, even if “non-unitary”¹¹. The empirical analysis focuses on EU positions and policies, but I do not take for granted that these exist outside the initiatives and tensions of Member States’ foreign policies (M. E. Smith, 2008)¹². The thesis does not undertake a comparative analysis of the US-EU at the bureaucratic level, but Chapter 3 depicts how the internal dynamics in the policy-making processes shape democracy promotion.

¹⁰ My subjects of analysis are the US and the EU as two actors in a (Transatlantic) relationship, and not a singular transatlantic community.

¹¹ White differentiated between Community foreign policy (emanating from Brussels-centered institutions), Union foreign policy or CFSP broadly, and Member State foreign policy. Though I do not systematically use this division in my analysis, I am sensitive to these distinctions and give evidence of how Community (supranational decision), Union (intergovernmental) or Member States have shaped European democracy promotion. I am not using “Europe” and “European Union” interchangeably, though I am calling the policies created in this space “European”.

¹² Smith argues that middle-range approaches are more convenient for empirical analysis because they allow us to study the role of the EU as an increasingly important actor in European foreign policy while identifying member states’ agency. I found this was especially pertinent regarding democracy promotion.

In choosing and designing case studies for this project, I considered their relevance to the thesis objectives described above, their value-added to answer the research questions, and their feasibility (George & Bennett, 2005; Punch, 1998). I have considered it imperative to study US and EU democracy promotion at three different levels of analysis: by country, by region and at the international system (a “global” institution) [Table 1]. This framework was especially adequate to test how the “rival universalisms” fed into national, regional and global politics. Democracy promotion is thus framed as a phenomenon of IR, which differs from a Comparative politics thesis where one would compare one (democratizing) state to the next.

Table 1. Levels of analysis to frame democracy promotion as an International Relations phenomenon and case studies in this thesis

Democracy promotion in International Relations		Case study
Analytical level 1	Country	Democratic Republic of Congo
Analytical level 2	Region	Middle East and North Africa
Analytical level 3	International system	Community of Democracies

This approach constitutes one of the original contributions of this thesis. First, it portrays democracy promotion as a pervasive element in US and EU action abroad, corroborating the idea of “(rival) universalisms”. Indeed, democracy promotion was conceived not only vis-à-vis certain states. The fact that it happened at country, regional and global levels strengthens the argument that broader, promoter-based, universalisms existed in the US and Europe.

Second, this framework allows documenting the arguments raised above i.e. the universality of democracy, the assumption of “virtuous linkages” between peace, democracy and development, and the policies’ technical emphasis together with a “learning by doing”. Interestingly, these could be observed across levels, even if the policies conceived democracy *within* the framework of the state.

Case studies rationale and fieldwork

Three criteria underlie the case selection and design of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the Middle East and North Africa region (MENA) and the Community of Democracies in this thesis. First, all three are cases of democracy promotion, even if the actual democratization of the DRC, MENA and the international system are

questionable, as discussed in the Conclusions. Instead of choosing positive cases where progress was clearer (e.g. Poland or Eastern Europe), the “negative” cases were a more powerful test of US and EU efforts and of the existence of “rival universalisms”. With these cases the thesis also tested the arguments on the *challenges* in democracy promotion, instead of measuring success.

Second, the US and the EU have both played a role in these cases. In this regard, this research has avoided cases of disproportionate EU or US leverage in relation to its counterpart. Examples of this would include Egypt (where the US has funded many initiatives) and the Palestinian Authority (a case of special EU support) and EU potential Member States. Though I chose cases of US and EU involvement, it was unrealistic to assume this involvement was equal. For instance, it is reasonable to consider the Community of Democracies as a US initiative, and admittedly the EU has contributed with more funds and operations in the Congolese process. Indeed, assessing the levels of US and EU involvement and unraveling their implications was part of this research.

Third, the three levels of analysis enabled us to analyze the specific ways in which the US and the EU promote democracy towards a country, a region or globally. Two pertinent questions were 1) whether elements of the US and the EU “rival universalisms” existed across levels or were specific to policy-making in each context, and 2) whether the dynamics proper to the country, the region and global initiative imposed univocal trends and similar challenges for both promoters. The first question would throw light on the US and the EU approaches and the implications for transatlantic relations; the second question would document the common difficulties on the ground. The thesis argues there was a tension between these dynamics: while democracy promotion asserted American and European distinct roles, they confronted similar challenges regarding what to promote and how to do it.

The case studies involved ample research on their own, but their focus was narrowed and a parallel structure was designed across chapters. These chapters grounded the thesis’ empirical findings, addressing the central question: were there differences in American and European democracy promotion? The case studies were

framed as three instances of democracy promotion and must not be considered narrowly-worded pronouncements of US and EU policies¹³.

The chapter design was as follows. Each of the case studies (Chapters 4, 5, 6) starts with an assessment of what democracy promotion involved at that level and a discussion of the American and the European policies and positions. Then the chapters move on to discuss the main objectives of democracy promotion [Table 2], making up main sections (three) in each of the case studies. These sections assess the US and EU positions but focus on the content of the policies and their shortcomings; they constitute the heart of my empirical analysis.

The “objectives of democracy promotion” [Table 2] must be understood in the contexts of the country, region and global cases that shaped them; they were refined as my insights of each case deepened, and constitute in themselves original arguments to discuss these cases (my own interpretation). The arguments emanated from the case-study, but they helped grounding the analysis of US and EU policies and involved new, important perspectives on the hypothesis of “rival universalisms”.

For the Democratic Republic of Congo, I discuss how democracy promoters sought to 1) “broker democracy” with negotiations, 2) foster security through democracy promotion and 3) implement transition measures in active ways. For the MENA region, I argue that promoters sought to 1) overcome the premise whereby democracy could be considered incompatible with Islam, 2) construct a region in a somewhat artificial way (countries lacked cooperation among themselves and to an extent resisted democratization) and 3) privilege security and economic interests in partnership with incumbent regimes. Regarding the Community of Democracies, I argue that the objectives were to 1) substantiate democracy’s universality and non-Western options, 2) arrive at a definition of democracy and its promotion and 3) entrench this dynamic in an international institution.

¹³ Three specific reasons justify this methodological choice. First, my conceptualization of democracy promotion (combining the view from Transition/Democratization studies and from Foreign Policy Analysis) required me to ask a broader question about the process in the field and not only about the promoter’s programs. Second, my approach does not assume that democracy has been promoted, remaining open to identify what the promoters did *not* do (which is also meaningful), and to the meaning of policy-selection. Third, my questions allows me to explore a variety of motivations of US and EU democracy promotion, and rhetoric and practice, which is needed to unravel its role in their foreign policy and the implications for the transatlantic relations. By contrast, a different approach could have involved the question “what have the US and the EU done to promote democracy?”, focusing on the “what” and on specific programs. This would have led me to focus, for instance, on the electoral process for the case of the Congo, on the MEPI and MEDA funds allocated to MENA programs, or on the United Nations Democracy Caucus. I disregarded this and chose cases and designed the case-studies in better accordance with my questions in this thesis.

Table 2. Analysis of democracy promotion in the case studies: what objectives were pursued?

Case study	Objectives of democracy promotion (main sections in the case study chapters)
Democratic Republic of Congo	Brokering democracy Fostering security Facilitating implementation
Middle East and North Africa region	Overcoming the premise “democracy vs. Islam” Constructing a region (common values, cooperation) Addressing security and economic interests within “partnership”
Community of Democracies	Universalizing and “de-Westernizing” democracy promotion Defining democracy promotion Institutionalizing democracy promotion in the world

These objectives allowed a focus on the empirical case at each level, as well as an analysis of what the US and the EU did more specifically, including the policies’ shortcomings. Instead of narrow, predefined criteria to compare the US and the EU from a promoters’ perspective only, the thesis uses these objectives as entry-points for the research¹⁴.

Finally, the conclusions in each case-study pick up the central theme of US and EU “rival universalisms” and how this affected the transatlantic relationship. This is further developed in the final Conclusion, which assesses the cumulative impact of the findings regarding the promoters, as well as the success of democratization (or lack thereof) at the three levels.

During fieldwork for his thesis, I gained first-hand information and more nuanced assessment of the American and European policy-makers’ environment and the three cases studied. This included seven study trips to Brussels and five events (policy-oriented workshops on democracy promotion and on European-Mediterranean relations) in London, Paris (two), Barcelona and The Hague between September 2004 and June

¹⁴ These entry-points are the subsections in each Chapter, and they framed democracy promotion from the perspective of dynamics on the ground. I preferred this to a division into “US policies” and “EU policies” for the whole chapter, which would not allow me to discuss the challenges that appeared in the DRC, the MENA and the CD. The documentation of the “rival universalisms” was this way better connected to the empirical case-study, resulting in a more nuanced analysis.

2008. Fieldwork included visits to EU institutions (Commission, European Parliament, Council of the EU), think-tanks, NGOs and party foundations (German, British, Dutch, French). It also included a study trip in the Democratic Republic of Congo (Kinshasa and Equator-province, October-November 2006), where I engaged with EU and UN officials, electoral observation missions (EU and The Carter Center) and NGOs. Finally, I attended the 4th Ministerial Conference of the Community of Democracies in Bamako, Mali (November 2007) during three formal sessions and the whole Non-Governmental Process¹⁵. This fieldwork gave me access to some important documents, notably the drafts on the creation of a *European Foundation for Democracy Promotion*, the Council of the EU document *Food for thought: European democracy promotion*, and the documents agreed by governments (the *Bamako Consensus*) and by civil society at the Community of Democracies. When authorized, personal quotes and sources of information have been attributed.

Chapter organization

This Introduction has set out the main questions and objectives of this project, as well as some methodological premises, scope and limits. It has presented the main hypotheses and the research framework, including the justification and design of the case studies.

The thesis is organized in seven chapters. The first three chapters form my analysis of American and European democracy promotion. Rather than preliminary, this analysis fulfils one of the thesis' objectives: to document the American and European approaches to democracy promotion, explain the similarities and differences, and unravel the implications for transatlantic relations and for policies on the ground.

Chapter 1 introduces the context and main questions in the academic study of democracy promotion, establishing the definition of "democracy promotion" used in this thesis and the importance of historicity (post-Cold War International Relations) in this analysis. The chapter also summarizes the conceptual and practical debates on democracy and its links with promoting peace and development among others; this

¹⁵ These experiences gave further opportunities for telephone interviews and email exchange with American officials and experts from USAID, Freedom House, party foundations (NDI and IRI), The Carter Center, Brookings Institution, Woodrow Wilson Center. Personal semi-structured interviews included diplomats or foreign ministry officials (British, Chilean, Egyptian, French, Irish, Malian, Moroccan, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Spanish, Venezuelan), UNDP officials (in Timor-Leste and in Congo) and democracy promotion "activists" from civil society groups and think tanks (American, British, Cameroonian, Congolese, Czech, Dutch, Ethiopian, Egyptian, Kenyan, Korean, Malian, Moroccan, Philippine, Tunisian, Vietnamese).

illustrates American and European trends as well as the complexity of implementing these policies. Chapter 1 contends that democracy promotion has been characterized by an artificial de-politicization and premises on the positive links between policies to promote. In this regard, it discusses the challenges to establish a universal consensus over democracy promotion and the ongoing, imperfect “learning by doing” on the ground.

Chapter 2 shifts the focus from the subject of democracy promotion to the promoters themselves: the United States and the European Union. This chapter introduces the argument of rival universalisms, combining the study of role and identity politics. Historically, the Western partners shared the value of democracy and the goal of promoting it, and maintained this in their rhetoric of cooperation. Yet each distinctively and independently undertook some policies, and in the post-Cold War era a universalism of sorts arose. In the universalisms, democracy promotion was linked not only to what each *does* in International Relations but also to what each *is*. The chapter argues that some particularities were stressed in EU undertakings of democracy promotion, and that the European Union attempted to become a democracy promoter clearly different from the United States; it critically assesses so-called EU attributes as civilian and normative power, multilateralism, and socialization. Democracy promotion was used in the development of a EU role and identity precisely during a period of American hegemony and of American emphasis on democracy promotion under the Clinton and Bush administrations, and in contrast to the American policies after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 (in this thesis, “9/11”). This explains the image of “drift” but also “rift” in post-Cold War transatlantic relations.

Chapter 3 adopts an original FPA approach and compares American and European policy-locations in democracy promotion along four stages: inspiring, informing, designing, implementing policies. It identifies the main actors in the processes, their input in the different stages or facets of the policies, and the potential competing interests. This analysis unravels the politics of democracy promotion and some contingencies in US and EU policies. The chapter discusses the politics of US administrations vis-à-vis Congress, USAID and the National Endowment for Democracy, among others. Regarding the evolution and interactions within the EU approach, the chapter illustrates that the Commission’s influence on democracy promotion (as an element of Development and Cooperation) was increasingly challenged by Member States and the realm of Common Foreign and Security Policy.

The European Parliament's role and the overall Europeanization of democracy promotion was indeed limited (the case studies illustrate this further). Both the US and EU approaches were affected by diverse and relatively independent views and programs of non-governmental actors. The chapter underlines that transnationality (networks of knowledge and implementation) underpinned contemporary democracy promotion, though it does not detail the roles of the many and diverse actors.

In the second part of the thesis, I examine the case studies of US and EU democracy promotion in a country (Democratic Republic of Congo), a region (the Middle East and North Africa), and the "global system" (Community of Democracies) in Chapters 4, 5 and 6. As described above, these chapters discuss what I found were key features of the international democracy promotion policies. Each chapter introduces nuances on the nature of American and European approaches (and the extent of transatlantic cooperation), and the political difficulties that challenged democratization in these cases. Chapter 7 compiles and develops the arguments that derived from the case studies, reconsidering those two main themes in the thesis, relevant conclusions, and some prospects for further research.

Rather tellingly, the US and the EU have come to diverge over an issue that is at the base of their common Western identity and repeatedly features as a common principle and purpose in their rhetoric; an issue central to post-Cold War global politics. In this sense, American and European promoters translated a wavering political will into a usually idealized exercise. Then, democracy promotion on the ground ran into difficulties and paradoxes that practitioners and scholars tried to work out. The thesis analyzes these questions with the intention to contribute to a better understanding democracy promotion and the controversies around this phenomenon, and eventually to inform better, though still complex, policies.

Chapter 1. The study of democracy promotion in post-Cold War International Relations

“The European Union and the United States believe that the spread of accountable and representative government, the rule of law, and respect for human rights [...] are a strategic priority as well as a moral necessity. We will continue to work together to advance these priorities around the world.”
Joint Statement “Working together to promote democracy” (EU-US, 2005, pp. 21-26)

This Joint Statement of the European Union and the United States sets out a goal repeated in numerous celebrations of the Transatlantic relationship: to work together to promote democracy. This 2005 document and the one published in 2006 (*Promoting the advance of freedom and democracy around the world*) were issued at EU-US summits; they underlined democracy promotion in the context of amending diplomatic relations after the 2003 dissensions over military intervention in Iraq. As in many other declarations, democracy promotion was found to be a common transatlantic principle and interest, but the question remained whether a strategy of cooperation and joint policies would actually materialize.

Moreover, even word choice and terminology posed difficulties as, according to a European official participating in the drafting of the 2006 document, “we explicitly opposed using the term “democracy promotion” for its American connotations”¹. This hinted at European resistance to align to what seemed a fashionable topic on the Bush agenda. In addition, this showed that the EU and the US shared the belief but pictured “democracy promotion” differently in practice: for example, Europeans often insisted on explicit references to “accountable and representative government, the rule of law, and respect for human rights” in the draft negotiations.

This example illustrates that democracy promotion had a place in the rhetoric of US and EU action abroad, raising questions (and potential disagreement) about what these policies should actually be. This set the context to understand democracy

¹ Interview with French official in the diplomatic delegation participating in the summit (Paris 7 July 2006).

promotion through the perspective of US and EU “rival universalisms”: considerations on what democracy promotion meant, and especially how a European approach differed from an American one. At the same time, some questions were general and potentially influenced both American and European policies. They related to real and legitimate concerns over how to promote democracy efficiently, and to the (contested) meaning of concepts and theories.

This chapter will unravel what “democracy promotion” means and how its study has depended on perspectives from Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) and from Transition studies. Section 1 discusses these approaches and proposes a working definition of “democracy promotion” for this thesis. It suggests that the approaches can be reconciled, and that this allows for a critical analysis of US and EU “rival universalisms”.

Section 2 explains why the thesis is devoted to democracy promotion during the post-Cold War period, and poses a general question about what this turning point changed. Importantly, it underlines that this phenomenon needs to be studied in its historical context, and that theories and models should not disregard historicity. Section 3 discusses the academic debates on the definition of democracy and on the links and sequencing of democracy and human rights, the rule of law, economic development and peace. These conceptual and practical debates have informed this thesis and will be brought up in the case studies. Finally, Section 4 argues that democracy promotion has also been characterized by the implementation on the ground, which sought to reconcile principle and efficiency. In this, democracy promotion was portrayed as an apolitical enterprise, and strategic guidelines on “bottom-up” or “top-down” were considered.

1. “Democracy promotion” as a study subject: political understandings, academic perspectives and a working definition

Though uncontroversial in America and Europe at first sight, “democracy promotion” raised important questions as a term, notably in Europe. This thesis underlines that there were political understandings, and diverse uses, of what this should make reference to. The following working document illustrates how the Council of the EU sought to define a European approach.

Box 1. European doubts about the term “democracy promotion” and illustration of political understandings in a document from the Council of the EU

“As a general concept, “democracy promotion” encompasses all measures designed to facilitate democratic development, but despite an underlying convergence of objectives within the EU, there has been little consistency in public discourse and terminology, neither within and between Member states and within EU institutions, nor generally in the international community. “Democracy” is not frequently used as an umbrella term within the EU.

Though few contest that democracy lies at the nexus of peace and security, human rights and development objectives, the term has sometimes been considered too ambiguous and political to be used in isolation. In the context of EU development cooperation (following the practice of the OECD DAC and the World Bank), the term democracy is sometimes referred to, along with rule of law, human rights, civil society development, public administration etc. as a component of “governance”. In an ESDP context, and in general foreign policy discourse, concepts of peace building, security and the protection of human rights tend to have more prominence. The alternative term “Democratic governance”, as used by UNDP, could provide the formulation which characterizes EU support for democracy”.

Source: *A European approach to democracy promotion: food for thought* (Council of the European Union, 2006b, p. 3)

This EU document acknowledged that there has been little consistency in the use of “democracy promotion”, and warned that alternative terms might be preferable because “democracy” can be “too ambiguous and political”. The document underlines that Europe (already) supports democracy, but it also presents doubts about the scope and meaning of “democracy promotion”.

Political actors also used “democracy promotion” freely, but in rather imprecise ways. This was evident in speeches, some making a point of the transatlantic connection, others indirectly establishing a distinction from the US. For example, the Danish prime minister enhanced the transatlantic common goal (Rasmussen, 2008), while the Spanish foreign minister downplayed democracy promotion among the many complexities and contingencies of policy-making (Moratinos, 2007). These political uses create a starting point for our study of this subject and its potential in the construction of international roles both for the US and for the EU.

At times, the importance of democracy promotion in role-construction was downplayed, and the focus was shifted to its potential impact on the ground. In a 2008 lecture titled *The democratic imperative*, UK Foreign Minister David Miliband claimed: “we should not let the genuine debate about the how of foreign policy obscure the clarity about the what” (Miliband, 2008). On the one hand he saw the unending debates about the “how” to promote democracy; on the other, the

clarity of conducting such foreign policy as if such a role was inherent and indisputable, in this case regarding UK external action. This kind of discourse separates democracy promotion as two different realities: a principle of ethical foreign policy and a policy to be implemented. This way David Miliband, as many other Western politicians, may believe there is no question about promoting democracy, while research can be done on the “how” to do it successfully. This division over a “what” and a “how” proper to a positive political understanding of democracy promotion has actually been replicated in its study, creating two empirical objects of analysis that led in turn to two bodies of literature relating to Foreign Policy Analysis and to Transition studies.

1.1. Two academic perspectives: an element of foreign policy, a factor influencing transition processes

One first body of literature sought to understand the role that democracy promotion played in an international actor’s external action, mostly as an ethical justification for intervention. Because democracy promotion was, for many analysts, a marginal when not an outright duplicitous element of foreign policy (notably, in Realist calculations) this approach often underlined the conflicts among objectives. It was also corroborated by a history of double standards and of difficulties in putting idealist motivations into practice, both in the United States (W. I. Robinson, 1996b; T. Smith, 1994) and in Europe, the latter often referring to colonial times (Bancel, Blanchard, & Verges, 2003; Mayall, 2005b; Vanthemsche, 2007). Scholars have convincingly criticized the disputable “clarity” and complex meaning of such ethical quests, and importantly for this research, they have often identified democracy promotion as a *Western* foreign policy (Brown, 2001; Chandler, 2003; Light, 2001). Focusing on FPA or North-South relations, contributions in the realm of IR usually involved illustrative case studies, while enriching our knowledge about democracy and globalization (Cox, Ikenberry, & Inoguchi, 2000; H. Smith, 2000b).

The second body of literature, related to the “how to” promote democracy, sought to identify explanatory factors and patterns of success in democratization policies, drawing on Transition studies. Under “Transition studies” I refer to the literature on regime change and democratization that some called “Transitology” and has been concerned with 1) defining democracy and autocracy, 2) classifying

and studying political regimes and their links with economic and social aspects and 3) unraveling the generalities and peculiarities of transition processes in a diversity of countries/regions². In the 1990s and 2000s, a transnational epistemic community developed in the US and Europe, concerned more specifically with “whether and how” democracy could be promoted³. Part of this literature was focused on case studies and was to a certain extent policy-oriented, in contrast with more theoretical, purely academic analysis that increasingly used quantitative methods. Though Transition studies had been traditionally focused on domestic factors, the transitions of the post-Cold War period seemed to emphasize the role of international factors in the third wave of democracy (diffusion, conditionality), mainly in the context of sub-regional or regional contexts and in the light of the cases of Eastern and Central Europe (Huntington, 1991b; Pevehouse, 2005; Pridham, 1991; Whitehead, 1996). However, when this research discussed democracy promotion, it often ignored the promoters’ role in itself, focusing on what policies were working or not, and mainly resorting to local explanations.

In my view, a combination of these two academic perspectives results in a much more adequate framework for democracy promotion as a research subject. On the one hand, FPA perspectives often failed to grasp that democratization is driven by complex dynamics where the role of a specific promoter may not have so much influence, and ignored how the intrinsic contestation of democracy affected its promotion. On the other, Transition studies failed to grasp that democracy promotion is an international political venture, driven by multiple motivations and means, and that it matters even when “it doesn’t work”. The combination of these perspectives allows this thesis to unravel American and European democracy promotion as foreign policies, while checking them against the actual challenges to make democratization work.

² In this literature, that drew from Modernization studies and often linked democracy with development, key contributions have been made by: Robert Dahl, Adam Przeworski, Sartori, Gerardo Munck, Collier, Schmitter, O’Donnell, Whitehead, Alfred Stepan, Levitsky, Limongi, Juan Linz... and previously Barrington Moore, Seymour Lipset, W. Rostow. This research often appeared in American journals of Political Science and Comparative politics.

³ In the light of what I call “democracy hype” of the post-Cold War period, policy-makers developed programs and more research was needed. Think tanks, consultants, and professors and researchers from the academic world engaged in this demand, actively participating in the policy-making circles while worrying about the scientific study of the subject, too. Much work by Larry Diamond, Thomas Carothers (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace), Peter Burnell, Richard Youngs, etc. is better understood in this light.

The thesis sets out to understand democracy promotion in the construction of American and European “rival universalisms”. This hypothesis is better framed from a perspective of Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) as I analyze democracy promotion as an element of foreign policy, and this is the empirical grounding of this research. FPA has been pulled in very different directions in the epistemological and methodological debates of the past few decades (Carlsnaes, 2003; Goldstein & Keohane, 1993; Putnam, 1988; Rosenau, 1971). Some of these debates influenced the framework of this study of democracy promotion and this thesis broadly. Notably, the thesis is sympathetic to the complex relation between agency and structure (Carlsnaes, 1992) and to both the domestic and foreign influences in policy-making (Pridham, 1991)⁴.

More specifically this thesis adopts Chris Hill’s (2003, pp. 3, 188) approach to foreign policy to frame American and European democracy promotion, picking upon three important qualifications: comprehensive, purposeful (“seeks to shape the international environment”), and expressive (“projects the fundamental concerns of the society from which it derives”). With this framework, the thesis explores the hypothesis of US and EU democracy promotion in the development of competing universalisms. In adopting a *comprehensive* view, this thesis considers democracy promotion as a “sum of official external relations” and not just the executive’s policies or specific budget lines. This will be the approach in the initial description of US and EU democracy promotion for each of the case studies, and this broader scope also underpins Chapter 3’s analysis of the policy-processes. The characterization of US and EU democracy promotion as *purposeful* and *expressive* is useful to ground the concept of universalisms, both to study the projection and the origin and generation of the policies. I found these hints useful to frame my empirical analysis of US and EU policies.

This conceptual framework underpins the discussion of US and EU rival universalisms in Chapter 2 as well as the conclusion sections of the case studies. This approach is not inconsistent with the notion of “role construction”, that usually takes an interest in the links between identity and foreign policy (Aggestam, 1999).

⁴ Regarding agency-structure in the phenomenon of democracy promotion, my underlying argument is that the US and EU as “agents” shape the structure of post-Cold War International Relations, and that this democracy-favorable “structure” reinforces agency, too. The debates on domestic-international linkages served as basis for this thesis overall, as I explore how domestically democratic polities (the US and the EU) promote democracy at different levels of International Relations: country, region, global.

Goldstein and Keohane (1993, p. 3) conceived “role conceptions” as sets of norms that indicate expectations on foreign policy behavior. By contrast, this research suggests that US and EU democracy promotion both resulted from the “rival universalisms” *and* contributed to them. While the literature on role conceptions tends to focus on identity explaining action, the thesis argues that *doing* democracy promotion in determined and purposeful ways helped to forge an international role. This is observed especially for the European Union in the post-Cold War period –an argument that will be picked upon in Chapter 2.

The thesis is also open to the debates from Transition studies, notably in the discussion of the cases. This allows for deeper and more accurate insights on the shortcomings of democracy promotion, and substantiates the hypothesis that the distinctions among promoters tend to wane as the challenges pertain to the dynamics in the country, region or global politics. In this regard, I found Carothers’ (2002) criticism that “the Transition paradigm is outdated” very valuable, especially in how it identified the limits of procedural definitions of democracy and the assumptions about a virtuous process of democratization. I used this as basis for my critique of the policies that assume positive links between security, development and democracy and the promoters’ insistence on “technical” expertise. Overall, my work has been more receptive to classical studies and the non-quantitative literature; this work is not applying nor creating a model, though I found some contributions along these lines most insightful (J. A. Robinson & Acemoglu, 2005).

1.2. The working definition of “democracy promotion” in this thesis

In a 2004 lecture, Professor Lawrence Whitehead claimed “scholars have not defined democracy promotion yet”, as if the academic analysis could eventually provide a substantive concept and establish how it worked⁵. Though such an attempt was understandable in the framework of scientific research, it referred to the “how” of democracy promotion, ignoring the normativity intrinsic to the policy from an FPA perspective, and the politicization of some of the categories.

Many studies of democracy promotion have sought to define their research object *a priori*, but this led to assumptions that, in my view, hindered an adequate

⁵ Lawrence Whitehead, *Some new developments in the comparative study of democratization*, Lecture at CERI-Sciences Po Paris, 17 May 2004.

understanding of the phenomenon. For example, Schmitter and Brower (1999) excluded “covert action”, though many of the democracy promotion policies are “secret” (this was generally the case in the Cold War, and is still so in such contemporary “hard cases” as Cuba, Zimbabwe or Myanmar); most policies are implicit or create preconditions for democracy. Indeed, if only open and material policies are analyzed, it is difficult to assess the role of international factors (e.g. regional contagion or attraction). In addition, all researchers encounter difficulties in pinning down categorizations, budget allocations, money actually spent (or not), and to assess whether and how democracy promotion is actually working (Burnell, 2007).

The literature has sometimes preferred terms as “democracy assistance” or “democracy support” to “democracy promotion” (Burnell, 2007; L. Diamond, Hartlyn, & Linz, 1999; Linz & Stepan, 1996; Munck, 2001; Whitehead, 2002). “Democracy assistance” has usually referred to explicit programs, as “political aid” that, hand in hand with economic/development aid, was targeted to groups working on expanding freedoms (most commonly NGOs) or as political opposition. For some researchers, such democracy *assistance* constitutes an empirical reality that one can frame (budget lines, disbursements, programs or groups funded) and study more consistently, compared to other notions. Along these lines, “democracy support” can be considered one of the broadest terms, purposely used to remain ambiguous about the policies [see discussion on a 2009 paper on “democracy support” in the Conclusion]. Other terms as democracy “advocacy”, “dissemination”, etc. have appeared in publications that sought to make more specific points (Acuto, 2008).

Conversely, this research adopts “democracy promotion” as preferred term precisely to remain open to the potential content, scope and meaning of the policies, and to cover rhetoric as well as particular programs or budget allocations. Democracy promotion is a controversial, political endeavor often undefined by the promoters themselves, open-ended, and difficult to measure and assess quantitatively. The thesis proposes the following working definition [Box 2].

Box 2. A working definition of “democracy promotion”

[Empty box for the working definition of “democracy promotion”]

Democracy promotion is a purposeful element of foreign policy where the promoter seeks to advance the values and functioning of democracy externally. Composed of rhetorical and/or practical aspects, democracy promotion can be understood as an ethical motivation or as a means to achieve other objectives (peace, security, stability, prosperity, improved relations, legitimacy, economic advantage, control, etc.).

This definition privileges a Foreign Policy approach because this is more convenient for the purposes of this research on American and European democracy promotion. I preferred this term to democracy *assistance* or *support* because these usually refer to specific instruments. In contrast, this research considered the role of discourse and narratives as well, unravelling potential inconsistencies, side-purposes and “hidden” intentions⁶.

Five premises derive from this definition and are important for this thesis’ framework. First, “democracy promotion” does not imply a fixed definition of democracy and its components, nor of democracy as process or an outcome (D. Collier & Levitsky, 1997; Huntington, 1991a; Munck & Verkuilen, 2002)⁷. Second, it may indeed be promoted as an overall, declared objective but without precise means or strategies regarding top-down and bottom-up approaches⁸. Third, it may include diverse manifestations and be linked to the promotion of human rights, economic development, human development, good governance, human security, the rule of law, civil society, conflict resolution, etc.⁹ Fourth, this definition allows the historical discussion of US and EU democracy promotion in the post-Cold War period without constraining it. Fifth, it reconciles rhetoric and practice of democracy promotion as two sides that need to be considered to truly comprehend the phenomenon.

⁶ This is the main difference between my definition and that of Peter Burnell and of Philippe Schmitter and Imco Brower, who explicitly avoided covert assistance and programs with a potential “double purpose”. For me, these dynamics make up part of the phenomenon of democracy promotion and define it as a *political* phenomenon (the analysis of those politics is the heart of this research).

⁷ Transition studies have thrown light on the conceptualization and definition of democracy, but if I adopted any specific definition (e.g. Robert Dahl’s) I would be constraining my research of American and European approaches. Such an exercise would be useful, by contrast, if I had sought to evaluate to which extent their policies have actually fitted and fostered democracy as defined in x way.

⁸ Top-down is used to refer to democracy promotion policies focusing on the state, the bureaucratic structure and/or the incumbents that will undertake reform; bottom-up would focus on civil society and popular movements. This aspect has been key in designing democracy promotion and it has been used to analyze whether the American and European policies underlined one or the other.

⁹ This was important for the critique on how positive links may be assumed as in a “virtuous circle”.

This definition is applied to the case studies as they focus on the purposeful *objectives* of democracy promotion policies. This compounded definition informs the rest of the thesis and allows comparisons of the American and the European approaches from a diversity of angles. For example, the complex network of actors influencing US and EU policy-process at different locations are discussed in Chapter 3.

2. Historical delimitation of democracy promotion: post-Cold War democracy triumphalism

This section argues that the post-Cold War years led to a context of “democracy triumphalism” that in turn enhanced democracy promotion in rhetoric and practice. Nevertheless, democracy promotion had been pursued in the past and such a history influenced the American and the European approaches, and specific events and actors also played in the definition of policies [this will be discussed in Chapter 2].

2.1. Triumph of democracy, end of history, and blossoming research agendas

An important idea that underlies the IR framework in this thesis is how the post-Cold War world was characterized by the “triumph of democracy” and the “end of history” in the words of highly influential scholars (Fukuyama, 1989; Huntington, 1991b). For example, Fred Halliday pointed to such a Western triumph of democracy to explain a post-Cold War change in the IR system. In his view, this change was characterized by increasing conformity to the prevailing hegemonic order, that underlined democracy, rather than new or revolutionary ideas (Halliday, 1994, pp. 213, 216-235).

The arguments on democracy and the post-Cold War period were corroborated in the International Relations literature of the 1990s (Hogan, 1992). Indeed, though Fukuyama’s and Huntington’s work was criticized and nuanced, the points they raised on the rise and expansion of democracy seemed empirically true, as elections in more and more countries took place and transitions to democracy multiplied, notably in the post-Communist space (Berg-Schlosser & Vetik, 2001; Dawisha & Parrot, 1997; L. Diamond, 1992).

This characterization heralded an era of a global rise of democracy, as “new” arguments substantiated that democracy was a universal value, and new initiatives on democracy and on intervention were also conceived in the United Nations¹⁰. Nevertheless, this did not mean automatic global expansion. Indeed, the rise was challenged by the many kinds of “façade democracy” that could actually mislead observers (D. Collier & Levitsky, 1997; Zakaria, 2003). In addition, by the late 2000s, arguments on the “resistance” to democracy and cases of backlash proliferated (Acuto, 2008), but this was not so unexpected as Huntington (1991b, p. 15) had already observed that waves were usually followed by “reverse waves”.

The academic world echoed the empirical (yet complex) evidence with the multiplication of research agendas and publications devoted to this topic, and notably with the appearance of two academic journals: *Democratization* and the *Journal of Democracy*. These journals have given ample evidence of the global trend of democratization and have been key in the development of the discipline from diverse perspectives¹¹. *Democratization* was created in 1994 and is hosted by the *Centre for the Study of Democratisation* at University of Warwick, itself created in 1992. The *Journal of Democracy* was created in 1990 and is hosted by the American National Endowment for Democracy. Though of course it is a critical, open and mostly peer-reviewed journal, the *Journal of Democracy* is also explicitly pro-democracy. In a fierce critique, Florent Guenard saw in it an American ideological enterprise in which “it was impossible for the editors to separate the scientific study of democracy from the normative undertaking of promoting it” (Guenard, 2008). This is an overstatement, but many *Journal of Democracy* articles arguably reinforced some premises, e.g. democratic universalism, the liberal principles of individual freedom (instead of economic and collective rights), Modernization as a valid theory for economic development, and the compatibility of democracy with non-Western cultures, notably Islamic¹². This strengthened perceptions on the positive links and democracy promotion as an “expertise”.

¹⁰ This idea is discussed further in section 4 below, as an illustration of the difficulty to arrive at a compromise between universality, the Western origin of democracy, and cultural specificities.

¹¹ The many articles on democracy and on case studies appearing in other journals (general or geographic area-specific) also gave evidence of the literature’s expansion.

¹² The journal spotted and addressed the questions and debates that became central in the post-Cold War “democracy hype”. In addition, it often served as a tribune for “promoters”, including political leaders and field practitioners (from the NED director Carl Gershman to Egyptian-American civil society activist Saad Eddin Ibrahim). The journal also selected “Documents on democracy” in a very

More critical analyses of the academic literature on democracy also mushroomed, and it was notably argued that the post-Cold War period privileged a specific definition of democracy as well as ideological premises, underlining the liberal model of democracy and the (limited) role of the state (H. Smith, 2000b)¹³. This thesis was informed by such critical analyses, and remains alert to such potential “bias” though it does not have as an objective to develop such critiques further. Instead, it discusses the presence of such premises as they appear in the promoters’ narratives and policies and in the case-studies [a preliminary assessment of the contested definitions of democracy and the process of democratization also follows in Section 3 below].

2.2. Continuity and change with the end of the Cold War

Significantly for this thesis, the end of the Cold War strengthened the image of the West as a cohesive bloc (at least regarding democracy). In theory, the failure of the Soviet model and the demise of the Communist world would indirectly bolster common transatlantic democracy promotion. A majority of the transatlantic documents of this early period corroborated this idea, including the Rhodes American-European Declaration (3 December 1988), the Joint Declaration on European Community–United States Relations (22 November 1990), and the New Transatlantic Agenda (Madrid, 3 December 1995). However, the transatlantic relationship would be affected by the fall of the “common Communist enemy”, and the literature also documented challenges and even an “end of the West” (J. Anderson, Ikenberry, & Risse, 2008) as a result. The “hype” led, most importantly for this research, to open and unprecedented discourses and efforts of democracy promotion in the US and in Europe.

This context brought to this research a legitimate question: what changed, and to what extent and how, with the end of the Cold War? The thesis substantiates the claim that the international historical context affected US and EU democracy promotion: the case studies can only be understood against the background of a “democratic hype” and the evolving transatlantic relationship. The thesis argues that

interesting regular section gathering “pro-democracy” speeches, statements from institutions and from civil society organizations, etc.

¹³ An illustration of this could be how Huntington’s definition of democracy was clearly Schumpeterian and privileged procedures.

the historical context helps explain democracy promotion policies, which were not random or contingent. Yet it does not claim that the end of the Cold War *caused* these policies.

In this way, American and European democracy promotion in the DR Congo changed with the end of the Cold War (support for Mobutu faded), democracy aspects were first introduced and developed in relations with the Middle East and North Africa region in this era, and the global Community of Democracies was sponsored by a hegemonic United States rallying new democracies such as Poland. Nevertheless, this question and this thesis' approach do not presume there was a radical breakthrough or disconnection from earlier periods or even with long-term history. Indeed, Fukuyama resorted to long-history and Hegelian perspectives, and Huntington signaled that the Third wave of democratization started with the cases of Portugal and Spain in 1974 (the same wave then traveled to Latin America, then the post-Communist Central and Eastern European countries and South-East Asia and Africa). Yet the pace and scope of reform programs and the high level of conditionality in ECE belonged in the context of the post-Cold War "democracy hype", while in Southern Europe the policies had targeted the erosion of authoritarian regimes and gradual transition¹⁴.

3. What constitutes "democracy promotion"? Definitions, links

This section discusses the content or characteristics of democracy promotion, complementing the definition adopted for this research in Section 1 above. A series of conceptual and pragmatic problems arose from the facts that democracy is a concept contested politically but also academically, and that there was no univocal, transparent and conclusive explanation about when, how and why it occurs and is consolidated. Importantly, this affected both American and European approaches, creating common challenges on the ground.

The first subject of debate was the definition of democracy itself, an "essentially contested concept" (D. Collier & Levitsky, 1997; Whitehead, 2002, p. 7). The second subject, connected to it, concerned the debates on fundamental

¹⁴ In Spain, for example, European political party foundations had supported the opposition for a long time, while the levels of institutional conditionality were less important in the early 1980s.

aspects or preconditions for democracy i.e. what it should refer to and how to make it happen. Some of these elements were arguably more characteristic of either the European or the American approach (e.g. the European references to the rule of law) and this is discussed here. However, it is argued that these were mostly *common* questions affecting US and EU policies; this section underlines the challenges arising in this regard, which the case studies will illustrate in turn.

The diverse and rich academic literature dealing with these questions has not arrived at consensual definitions of democracy nor of the transition process, and these continue to constitute the heart of our academic research agendas (Munck, 2001). This thesis further documents this lack of consensus, and suggests that conceptual and pragmatic problems were embedded in democracy promotion policies.

3.1. Defining democracy: procedural notions and “content-rich” democracy

The debates on the definition of democracy go back to Aristotle’s writings and nothing makes us presume that they will be concluded soon, but an overview of this question is essential to frame this research. A first, intrinsically problematic, aspect was the fact that democracy is a deontological concept, as Giovanni Sartori put it in 1962: what it is cannot be separated from what it should be (Whitehead, 2002, p. 20). These conceptual and normative questions were imported into “democracy promotion”.

A strict etymological understanding of democracy refers to “government by the people”, so this often emphasized *how* democracy worked (*who* had the power) rather than the premises, content, and purpose of democracy. Highly influenced by the work of Schumpeter and of Robert Dahl, for the past few decades academics often attempted to conceptualize democracy as *a model* that, for theoretical or comparative purposes, has tended to detach it from democracy as a historical experience (Rosanvallon, 2007)¹⁵. For democracy promotion, this could translate on a focus on procedural notions (notably elections) rather than on

¹⁵ This trend is evident in the academic literature, and my own experience of international academic exchanges (International Studies Association annual conventions of 2005-9) allowed me to confirm the domination of modeling as a methodology to study democracy and its promotion (widespread in American political science, but not only), many models being a-historical or involving outrageous assumptions as a result of a disconnection with the experience in the field.

preconditions and civic participation of a “content-rich” democracy. The notion of “content-rich” I use here, in contrast to the procedural notions, refers to democracy providing citizens with the rights and opportunities to control policies (and policy-makers) and empowering them –the substance that Diamond and Morlino (2005, pp. x-xii) sought to conceptualize in their assessment of “quality democracy”¹⁶.

Carothers (1991, p. 115) claimed that democracy promotion practitioners did not give much consideration to theoretical challenges and had a very limited definition of democracy i.e. elections, but I found this criticism was not totally fair. First, procedural notions of democracy should not be totally disregarded, because procedures seem necessary to guarantee “content” (Bobbio, 2003, pp. 449-462; Karl & Schmitter, 1991). Second, because of practical imperatives, policy-makers and practitioners had limited opportunity to discuss theoretical questions, but most shared the view that “elections are not enough”¹⁷. Arguably, supporting formal projects and notably electoral processes was more visible, but not the only objective of democracy promotion.

Keeping these premises in mind, one important question was whether promoters adopted different approaches. As the US and the EU developed their policies, their own experiences influenced their approaches on what should be done, raising the question of distinct “models” of democracy. Nevertheless, the many points in common and cross-influences between the American and European democracies (Elazar, 2001) did not allow establishing that there was a “European” or an “American” model of democracy. The polities (US and EU) are complex instances of democracy themselves, and the diversity within Europe is substantial¹⁸;

¹⁶ The term “content” is also used by Diamond and Morlino, and I am expanding my discussion of this “content-rich” democracy promotion with 3.2. below. That section picks upon the main elements (“what to promote”) in “content-rich” democracy as human rights and the rule of law as well as other conditions –economic development and security- that without making part of the definition of democracy, were put forward in democracy promotion strategies.

¹⁷ This was the overall perception I assessed during fieldwork (interviews with Executive Director, Democracy Coalition Program, Bamako 15 November 2007 and NGO director, Kinshasa 22 October 2006). The numerous publications, internal papers and debates at think tanks and institutions such as Open Society also confirmed this.

¹⁸ Many national characteristics and experiences have input in the European approach: the importance and financial power of German party foundations is unmatched, Nordic countries underline human rights more systematically, countries that experienced recent transitions (notably ECE) claim their legitimacy and argue they have practical knowledge, the French conception of the welfare state is contested, etc. A number of publications have attempted to disaggregate and assess these influences (NIMD Europe Conference, 2004; Youngs, 2006). Chapter 2 develops further insights on how “European” democracy promotion is understood in this research.

thus the idea of “models” should not be overemphasized and will not be supported in this thesis.

More accurately, debates about “what” democracy is and the process of “how” to make it happen were generalized and affected both European and American policy-making. It can be argued that democracy promoters were interested in the efficiency of the policies more than in the conceptual debates, and that this led to multi-faceted democracy promotion. The case studies will test whether the focus on elections disregarded more substantial “content” in democracy promotion, but a prior overview of these questions is in order. In determining the “content” of democracy, the participation of the people and not only of political elites seemed necessary, and elements as human rights and the rule of law seemed intrinsic; in establishing democratization, links with economic development and security seemed to apply.

3.2. Assessing the links between democracy and civil society, the rule of law, human rights, economic development, and security

It is beyond the scope of this research to examine the vast literature on civil society the rule of law, human rights, economic development and security, but an overview is necessary to understand the diversity and complexity of democracy promotion policies. This discussion also offers interesting hints on potential commonalities and differences between American and European approaches.

Since the mid-1990s, multiple publications with a policy-making focus emanated from the United Nations (especially the UNDP), the World Bank (notably regarding good governance) and the OECD. These influenced democracy promotion and complemented the ever-growing academic literature (Beetham, 1999; Burnell & Calvert, 2004; Carothers, 2004; Dahl, 1997; L. Diamond et al., 1999; Donnelly, 1999; Evans, 2001; Goodhart, 2005; Hasenclever & Wagner, 2004; Jordan, Wurzel, & Zito, 2005; Kaufmann, Kraay, & Mastruzzi, 2005; Langlois, 2003; Linz & Stepan, 1996; Lippman, 2001; Mansfield & Snyder, 1995; O'Donnell, Schmitter, & Whitehead, 1986; Schmitter, 1994; Sorensen, 1998).

Civil society. One first challenge in defining what to promote and how to do it, was whether to target institutions and political elites, or citizen participation. The latter

came to be known, in general terms, as promotion of “civil society”, and became increasingly important in the light of the transitions in the Central and Eastern European and post-Soviet space. These democratization processes drew strength from people’s movements, and this had a long tradition in the history of democracy (R. Collier, 1999). Regarding *international* support for civil society, this differed, nevertheless, from other experiences and certain models of democracy promotion, which targeted political elites and institutions. Among these, the “pacted transition” in Spain often served as example to trigger and design reform (Linz & Stepan, 1996, p. chapter 6). The focus was here on which *actors* and dynamics that could lead and establish a path towards democracy.

A relevant side-issue in this conceptual debate was that the focus on either institutions/political elites or on civil society usually presupposed the existence of a functioning state¹⁹. In such cases, democratization raised questions of reform and of a re-conception or re-balancing of roles among political and civil society actors in the regulated framework of the state. By contrast, some cases in Africa and international interventions such as the ones in Cambodia, Bosnia or Timor-Leste, made democracy promoters confront the underlying challenge of a dysfunctional state framework.

In the framework of this thesis, a pertinent question was whether American and European democracy promotion addressed reform through institutions and new political elites or focused on civil society, and whether this led to diverging approaches. For some analysts, the European approach would in theory focus on institutions, and more specifically on a system of governance that includes multiple levels, favors negotiations, and produces norms (M. Farrell, 2005), compared to republican checks and balances in the US. The American approach, by contrast, would underline *representative* democracy both in the institutions and in the electoral process²⁰. This argument is based on the focus on procedure in Dahl’s “polyarchy” definition of democracy (Dahl, 1971), which created the ground of Transition studies and thus influenced democracy promotion. However, many analysis have substantiated that *participative* democracy is typically American, as

¹⁹ The functioning state was often an assumption in Transition studies, as they first addressed Latin America and Southern Europe and ECE. By contrast, this topic was at the heart of a vast literature in Sociology, and this opened new and still relatively weak interdisciplinary channels for the study of democracy in the 2000s.

²⁰ A related argument would be that a European model is more sympathetic to welfare state-democracy (Rifkin, 2004).

observed by de Tocqueville and underlined in critical writings by Putnam and Skocpol. Indeed, in the United States, discourses on democracy were never rid of both aspects of democracy: the power of/for/by the people (participation) and the political regime of representation (Dupuis-Deri, 2004; Kloppenberg, 2003).

The division regarding a civil-society focus in European and American democracy promotion policies did not seem substantiated. Both seemed affected by the same questions and debates on what content and target would be more adequate in a specific case. Indeed, democracy promotion policies incorporated the focus on civil society if they did not have it (as was the case with the EU's EIDHR policies), but also considered incumbents and political opposition, together with institutional dynamics. In this, flexibility and adaptation to each case was part of the dynamic of "learning by doing". Finally, as discussed in Chapter 3, democracy promotion proved to be increasingly transnational as it got closer to the target, so distinctions between American and European promoters got increasingly blurred as the policies engaged the civil society actors.

Human rights and the rule of law. Though political rights and the mention of elections in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights establish the link with democracy, and it is not conceivable to have a democracy without human rights, these should not be equated because they have different objectives and have a different status in international law. Indeed, some human rights defenders argue that the combination with democracy promotion is inadequate (because of their different legal status) and even negative because there is too much politicization around the latter, as I explored elsewhere (Barrios, 2005). Nevertheless, many argued that democracy had been artificially isolated during the Cold War and that it should be brought back as a universal right (Goodhart, 2005; Langlois, 2003). Indeed, it can be argued that CSCE policies or the emphasis on human rights during the Jimmy Carter administration also targeted –implicitly—democracy promotion²¹. In the post-Cold War period, the promotion of human rights has also seen the development

²¹ Interview with Steven Hochman, Special Assistant to Jimmy Carter since 1982 [Atlanta 9 August 2004].

of more specific policies, notably to protect minorities and to defend and enhance the role of women²².

The link between the rule of law and democracy is more pragmatic than ideological, though there are similar controversies about their prioritization, i.e. to which extent democracy can really exist without it. The rule of law, though defined differently in different countries and in civil- and common-law traditions, refers to the independence and supremacy of a legal system (body of laws and institutions) that binds political actors and guarantees rights. In practice, it is necessary for an effective functioning of democracy (Ignatieff, 2002; O'Donnell, 2005). Nevertheless, critics of the promotion of rule of law abroad have argued that the conceptual foundations of the policies are contentious, and that the policies have been minimal and state-centered (Golub, 2006; Kleinfeld, 2006)²³.

The promotion of human rights and the rule of law doubtlessly contributes to democracy, and are arguably their prerequisites; both relate to profound and long-term changes in the political and even societal systems. Yet they often became controversial in their link with democracy promotion policies, because to a certain extent they became simply part of “the language” in the calls for offers from American and European donors. Indeed, many of these definitions and strategies were not thought out, and criticism arose from practitioners in target countries. First, an ideological politicization may make policies backfire, e.g. China regularly complains about human rights as “Western” promotion in EU-China or US-China diplomatic exchange, though it has agreed to them in international documents. Second, narrow policies of rule of law have often privileged some aspects such as commercial law, defending international interests more than the people’s democratic rights. Finally, some policies focused on bureaucratic standards/rules

²² Some of the policies in these fields may have a more direct link with democracy, as the programs to foster political organization and participation, while others target economic or cultural rights. The observations I gathered during fieldwork were inconclusive, in this regard. In a conversation with a Rwandan female parliamentarian who acknowledged the important role of international policies for her case, she underlined that “the promotion of women was the promotion of democracy” [Paris 10 December 2006]. By contrast, an official from a Congolese minister told of how she “had learned the language of women rights” and used it to get funds from international donors [interview with consultant UNDP, Kinshasa 22 October 2007].

²³ The link between the rule of law and the state is complex, but it can be established that the state is a precondition, and that *in the democratic state*, the rule of law is guaranteed within it (there are no “brown areas”) and by a series of institutional structures that are intrinsic to the state (though not necessarily at federal level).

and ignored or misrepresented the reality of the country, so the judiciary and the police of a not-so-democratic regime could end up stronger.

Many American documents acknowledged the links between human rights, the rule of law and democracy, especially in the pragmatic design of programs and larger strategies (USAID, 1998a, 2000). Nevertheless, the policies of democracy promotion were rather independent (this was strengthened under the rhetoric of the Bush administration), and this differentiated them from the European approach. The rule of law and human rights appeared consistently in European documents and set the ground for EU policies: the TEU (Treaty of Maastricht) and Commission communications almost systematically mentioned them together with democracy promotion (Commission of the European Communities, 1995a, 1995b, 2000b). The premise that democratic rights had to be guaranteed vis-à-vis all-too-powerful legislatures and state-authority clearly derived from the European experience of 20th century authoritarianism and the post-World War II European institutions to defend human rights, notably the supranational European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg. In the post-Cold War period, European states insisted on the triad democracy-human rights-rule of law when drafting the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action at the World Conference on Human Rights of 1993 and the CSCE/OSCE documents of the early 1990s (Leben, 1999, pp. 93-95).

Economic development and good governance. The link between economic development and democracy promotion goes back to the post-World War II paradigm of Modernization. This theory postulated that economic and political development go hand in hand in *stages*; economic growth is otherwise considered a precondition for democracy (Lipset, 1959; Rostow, 1960). However, the most important aspect in Modernization theory was the fact that this model of economic development was capitalist; Rostow's work was subtitled "a non-Communist manifesto" and this promotion of democracy "plus" economic development could only be understood as an imperialism of sorts that was proposed by the West in contrast to the Soviet model (Mayall, 2005a, p. 36). This constitutive relationship of market economy and political freedom had roots in Lockean theories of democracy and pervaded the Western liberal tradition on both sides of the Atlantic. However, this was especially central in American political ideology of the 1950s and 1960s,

when it was exported from the US core into Europe too, notably with the Marshall Plan²⁴.

This way, in 1957 Millikan and Rostow clearly set the basis for democracy promotion universalism; they argued the keys to an effective American foreign policy were:

- i) increasing the awareness elsewhere in the world that the goals, aspirations and values of the American people are in large part the same as those of peoples in other countries; and
- ii) developing viable, energetic, and confident democratic societies through the Free World (Millikan & Rostow, 1957)²⁵.

The democratic triumphalism of the post-Cold War period only confirmed the validity of Modernization now that the Communist alternative was eliminated. Along these lines, it can be argued that the Modernization paradigm permeated democracy promotion policies (Jahn, 2007). When Rostow's book was reedited in 1990, International Relation scholars such as Snyder insisted on the validity of this structural and seemingly non-ideological paradigm (Snyder, 1996, 2007)²⁶. However, there were two major problems in that economic development continued to be a challenge for many of the Western allies in the "third world", and in that Modernization had suffered terribly from double standards in Latin America (Latham, 2000).

Coming back to the links between democracy and development, it can be argued that even though this model of promotion had shown shortcomings, Modernization permeated American and European policies and more generally development policies worldwide during the post-Cold War period. Through USAID, this paradigm permeated American democracy promotion through the decades, but it must be noticed that during the Republican administrations of Reagan and George W. Bush, more ideological (conservative) "democracy

²⁴ This was the basis for the Latin American initiatives under Kennedy too, notably the Alliance for Progress (Lowenthal, 1990).

²⁵ This is also an early example of the links between democracy promotion scholarship and policy-making, as this book resulted from discussions at the Center for International Studies, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (Professor Millikan corresponded with President Kennedy on economic aid, Professor Rostow served as advisor for both Kennedy and Johnson and was specially involved in the Alliance for Progress).

²⁶ Modernization as a path to development was however a clear ideological victory, too. In that 2007 lecture, Snyder presented Modernization as the path for economic performance that would also redress conflict in Africa: these structural explanations tended to ignore contingent political realities.

promotion” positions coexisted with it²⁷. In Western Europe Modernization was also generalized in economic development and cooperation agencies and ministries, despite the particularities of national cases²⁸.

The principles of socio-economic development as preconditions for democracy informed United Nations policies, the Millennium Development Goals, and the UNDP reports. However, many policy-makers in the development-aid world still distrusted the politicization and actual efficiency of such links, so further and (what seemed to be) more technical research was developed to address these questions. In this regard, two elements became central in the new era: good governance and conditionality. In sum, it can be argued that the World Bank’s concept of good governance came to substitute the politicized view of “democracy” in the development paradigm. It targeted accountability and focused on rules and methods instead of political regime characteristics, and is better understood in the language of managers’ good practices than that of politics. This increased technicality was obvious in the ever more complex indicators developed through the 1990s (Santiso, 2001). In a way, “good governance” sought to overcome the contestability and blurring of the concept of democracy, but the difficulty and debates on the links with economic development were not totally solved (Leftwich, 2005)²⁹. The assumption had led to increased conditionality of development aid to good governance or other democracy-factors; this spread quickly throughout development ministries and financial institutions (international loans and grants). Conditionality became the norm, despite ongoing critiques about it being harmful to the people and useless for development or for democratization (International Herald Tribune, 2006; Neumayer, 2006; Sorensen, 1993). Overall, this trend was common to European and American democracy promotion.

In sum, economic development and good governance add important factors to the democracy promotion debates, and the thesis explores the extent to which the

²⁷ To a certain extent, the focus on economic development was overcome by the inflated rhetoric of Reagan and Bush’s approaches.

²⁸ This depended on the histories and bureaucracies of the different states. For example, in 1990 Mitterrand made a famous speech at La Baule where he mentioned how democracy was to play a more important role in France’s aid policies. In the Nordic countries, development agencies were quite independent from the governments and focused on the ground; they also had more autonomy to decide on human rights policies, traditionally. Other countries, such as Portugal and Greece, only had very small budgets for aid.

²⁹ There is an open debate on the pertinence and shortcomings of “good governance”, especially criticized because it may insist on legal structures and accountability but not on citizens’ freedoms, and because authoritarian incumbents may find ways to abuse these rules.

Modernization paradigm brought the US and the EU together, for it drew on Western liberal history and was shared by development aid policymakers and practitioners. At times, value-based democracy promotion and securitization seemed to take over the generalized inputs from Modernization theory.

Security: the Democratic Peace thesis. A final aspect to consider is the link with security, most importantly derived from the Kantian argument that “democracies do not fight one another”. This argument tied in well with post-Cold War liberal triumphalism, establishing that there is a strong *correlation* between democracy and peace (Doyle, 1996; Russett, 1993). Research on the Democratic Peace has been explored with a series of models in American political science (Bennett & Stam, 1998; Bueno de Mesquita, Morrow, Siverson, & Smith, 1999), but at times these models imported the assumptions from the assessments of democracy they used (often Freedom House’s) or arrived at very obvious conclusions³⁰. At times, the research focused more on the methods than the actual pertinence of hypothesis and findings. Indeed, and much more importantly for our knowledge, the Democratic Peace has been established as a correlation; yet it was difficult to establish *causation* between peace and democracy (Mueller, 2004; Ray, 1995). Similarly, it was difficult to establish the *sequencing* of peace and democracy. The normative question that derived for democracy promotion was, then: should security be targeted first, or democratization? Case-studies hinted at complex and nuanced conclusions [in this thesis, this argument is elaborated in Chapter 4].

In the 1990s and beyond, the cases of international intervention for peacekeeping and the changing nature of conflict (compared to traditional concepts of war) presented additional difficulties to implement positively reinforcing policies. Famously, Mansfield and Snyder (1995) postulated that democratization led to conflict because of the political and economic destabilization. However, democracy promotion was increasingly tied to UN peacemaking and peacebuilding operations despite the difficulty of connecting ideals and practice (Newman & Rich, 2004). On the ground, democracy was now even part of the tools to *solve* conflict

³⁰ For example, a paper presented at the ISA Annual Convention in San Diego (2007) established that war and dictatorship were worse for a country’s economy than peace and democracy after a complicated (7 variables), large-N model.

and not only part of post-conflict resolution, as this thesis analyzes regarding the DR Congo.

In sum, though promoting democracy internationally seemed to serve the cause of international peace, the links were not systematic. Importantly for this research, they also played different roles in the US and in Europe. The Democratic Peace theory found unrelenting support from American policy makers and leaders in the 1990s who justified democracy promotion for security purposes. All National Security Strategy documents mentioned this; for instance Strobe Talbott (Clinton's Deputy Secretary of State) claimed "that proposition is the essence of the national security rationale for vigorously supporting, promoting, and when necessary, defending democracy in other countries" (Talbott, 1996/1997). By contrast, democracy promotion was absent in European Union security documents, the rhetoric was much scaled down and cases were always specified: the Balkans, the Middle East and North Africa, ACP countries. Though CFSP and European Defence Policy only made limited progress, I found this absence important because the EU basically embodies the Democratic Peace theory –Eastern enlargement proved this dynamic again (W. Wallace, 2003). Overall, there was less securitization of democracy promotion in the European rhetoric compared to the US (Barrios, 2006)³¹. This was the case during the war in Iraq, when Europe called for *the West* to defend pacific understandings and policies of democracy promotion, in clear reference to the American rhetoric. Patten's (2003) article "Democracy doesn't flow from the barrel of a gun" appeared in several European publications and was quoted extensively in this regard³².

³¹ The EU rhetoric appealed to *human security* and was closer to the theories of just war and international human rights. Solana's 2003 European Security Strategy was, for instance, shy regarding democracy promotion (but this document mentions the "rule of law" and "human security"). By contrast, the American mission of democracy promotion is conflated with the achievement of international peace: this is an essential element of Wilsonian grand strategies.

³² The argument of promoting democracy in connection with security should not be confused with armed interventions or the use of violence to promote democracy. Nevertheless, this has been raised in some accounts of US democracy promotion (Peceny, 1999) and double standards underlined (Kinzer, 2006).

4. Democracy promotion on the ground: positive links, technical approach, universality and “learning by doing”

Section 3 documented the conceptual and pragmatic problems to define what to promote and how to do it. These debates were conceptual and normative, but they also affected democracy promotion policies on the ground. Against this background, democracy promotion seemed a controversial and elusive practice. This section takes these observations closer to the ground, focusing on a middle-range level of policy formation and implementation. At this level, the “rival universalisms” emanating from the US and the EU confronted the conceptual and pragmatic challenges described above³³.

This thesis puts forwards four observations that characterized post-Cold War democracy promotion and that will be tested against (and illustrated in) the case studies: positive links, technical approach, universality of democracy, and “learning by doing”. These are related to one another but highlight specific shortcomings of the democracy promotion policies.

4.1. Positive links and technical approach

One first aspect was the assumption of positive links between the different aspects and goals described in Section 3: human rights and rule of law, economic development, security, civil society, etc. all seemed to go hand in hand. In this way, the absence of a comprehensive strategy would not be necessarily harmful because democracy would be reinforced in the end.

Nevertheless, though they all related and contributed to democracy promotion, the assumption that these policies worked in a sort of “virtuous” (as opposed to “vicious”) circle was erroneous. Instead, they involved distinct and sometimes opposed targets, and they usually implied trade-offs.

For example, policies to foster the rule of law involve strengthening institutions and the state at different levels to create a system that is independent of government. By contrast, policies to foster civil society target people’s civic participation, counterpart and check against the institutions. In a case like the

³³ I am thankful to professors M. Smith and M. Kaldor for helping me refine these points and strengthen the thesis conceptual framework, notably regarding my arguments on this middle-range level of democracy promotion policies.

Eastern Congolese provinces, justice is malfunctioning and needs to be promoted as an essential element in a democracy. Here the question is, what to promote? Should the institutions and the rule of law be strengthened, giving more independent power to the judicial branch and fighting corruption in the system? Or should democracy promoters strengthen civil society associations defending human rights and denouncing violations? While these are obviously not opposed goals, there are choices to be made and the potential result would be a stronger state or a stronger civil society. Democracy promotion policy-making assumed that all will work in the same (good) direction, but these links were not always easy and positive. On the contrary, there were cases of trade-off. In these Congolese provinces, democracy promotion has prioritized the target of civil society, and thus lawyers work with associations that usefully denounce injustice. However, the institution remains corrupted and malfunctioning, and there is no rule of law. My observation here is not that civil society policies were “wrong”, but that democracy promotion assumed positive links, and that there was no strategic plan.

The second aspect refers to democracy promotion policies being introduced as if they were neutral and “technical” instead of a clear form of political intervention. Investing democracy promotion with a technical approach arguably contributed to two effects: first, creating an image of efficiency and effectiveness and second, legitimizing the international intervention. The universalisms of democracy promotion materialized in a “technical approach”, crafted at a middle-range level of policy formation both in the US and the EU.

American and European policy documents were usually written in a style of pretended neutrality and professionalism, as if democracy promotion could be accomplished as a form of technical progress based on models. The USAID *Handbook of democracy and governance indicators* (USAID, 1998b) and EU Commission’s *Communication on Democratisation, the rule of law, respect for human rights and good governance* (Commission of the European Communities, 1998) are examples of this. In addition, the institutions tasked research institutes and individuals to draft papers and guidelines, and they utilized documents created by other bodies such as Freedom House, International IDEA, the German Development Institute (DIE) or the South African EISA (Freedom House, 2007; International

IDEA, 2000). The political party foundations also developed their own manuals³⁴. Numerous projects were created ad hoc to work on a target region or country, and also to help policymakers brainstorm, for example countless consultancies and workshops took place under the auspices of the European Parliament's DG External Policies.

Because these actors were non-governmental, they tended to address democracy promotion from a different perspective, often focusing on the goals to be achieved on the ground and on the processes (elections, reform of institutions and laws, etc.) identified with transition. To a certain extent, this was a classic instance of bureaucratic politics and government where the institutions need information and expertise, and the non-governmental groups interested in this subject (mostly non-profit, but also some companies) will seek to influence policy. This kind of direct input and lobbying is not so frequent in American foreign policy-making (Drezner, 2000), and democracy promotion became indeed an original network of policy-locations. In the EU this was maybe not so exceptional, as the Commission's limited staff and development of tasks has exponentially multiplied lobbies and policy institutes in Brussels. Noticeably, this indicated a Europeanization of democracy promotion compared to Member State capitals³⁵.

The "expertise" put forward with this non-academic literature stripped democracy promotion of its ideological and interventionist clout. In a Realist analysis, David Chandler (2006) argued that this "technicization" of democracy promotion was an instrumental discourse seeking to hide imperial behavior. While Chandler is right in that promoters sought to depoliticize their action, it is not convincing that this was explained by the American and European interested quests only, and two additional factors existed. On the one hand, "neutral" or "a-political" democracy promotion was based in an international morality (Carr, 2001, 1981) that was favored by the context of post-Cold War democratic triumphalism. On the other hand, many policy-makers in Europe and the US were genuinely impressed with the experts' knowledge about specific areas and countries and, more importantly, with the technicalities (concepts, processes, models) that sought to

³⁴ These documents are available on the institutions' websites and printed copies can be requested.

³⁵ It is a claim in this thesis that the way MS ministerial or development agency personnel developed networks on democracy promotion constructed a European approach de facto, though these connections were loose

replicate social sciences behavioral methods in policy-making³⁶. This substantiated that international democracy promotion *should*, and *could*, work.

Yet democracy promotion is unavoidably a political, ideology-laden phenomenon in International Relations. This kind of neutral, technical policy-making met important challenges in the political realities of competing interests, trade-offs and power distribution. These regarded both the promoters' side (leaders, institutional dynamics e.g. between MS and EU, bureaucracies, evolving budgets and programs) and the "target" countries and regions.

4.2. Building universal consensus: worldwide democracy promotion

The third element observed at this middle-range level of policy formation was the universal validity of democracy promotion. Indeed, this universality had to be substantiated to justify and give ground to the policies. This aspect did not help emphasize distinct European or American approaches, rather the opposite, because it raised questions about the West and about potential differences between them and between the theory and practice of democracy.

More specifically, a compromise had to be found among three aspects of democracy: its universality, its Western origin (and the domination of the Western liberal model), and its adaptation to the cultural specificities on the ground³⁷. Once they could be reconciled, democracy promotion would have increased legitimacy and feasibility. Yet the specificities of an "American" and a "European" universalism would be underplayed.

First, the universal validity of democracy was demonstrated with the post-Cold War era of triumphalism. Theoretical claims along these lines included Fukuyama's Hegelian "end of history" thesis (Fukuyama, 1989) and new interpretations of international law whereby a state's recognition in the international community would depend on its democratic regime (Franck, 1992). In more practical terms, this claim was supported by the influential writings of Amartya Sen

³⁶ I agree with Fred Halliday's analysis of the methodological limits of behavioralism as a "scientific" detour to understand International Relations, (Halliday, 1994, pp. 27-31) However, an important aspect of behavioralism was its intense relationship with the policy-making world: these quantitative-based, variable-oriented methods continue to convey a "scientific" approach to policy-making and help ground policies, much like in the realm of Economics.

³⁷ This argument is set out here as an analysis of the challenges in the field, and will be used as an entry-point to the case studies in the second part of the thesis. I will thus assess the challenge of a "consensual definition" in the Congo, the MENA region, and the global Community of Democracies.

and the new leadership (Kofi Annan and Boutros Boutros-Ghali) and policy impulses at the United Nations.

Amartya Sen's "Development as Freedom" and "Democracy as a universal value" (Sen, 1999) powerfully established the link between democracy and economic development, which was used to support the adoption or confirmation of good governance and democracy promotion policies worldwide. Sen's writings (based on the Indian experience) introduced a sensitivity to culture that portrayed democracy as a universal value, defending the policies' link with economics from an "insider" perspective: India's regional and municipal distribution, in his case. The United Nations, endowed with multilateral legitimacy and supporting democracy in the post-Cold War period, also emphasized the universality of democracy. UNDP and the Millennium Goals followed the principles linking economy and democracy; the institution increasingly endorsed a discourse of the state's "responsibility to protect" and included democracy promotion as part of security operations (Newman & Rich, 2004). Declarations from the General Assembly and speeches from Kofi Annan (2002) explicitly reintroduced democracy as an element of the United Nations action, establishing a base for promoters and their policies around the world. Yet this universalization respected state-sovereignty principles and opened the door to interpretations of democracy. For example, in Resolution 55/96 of the General Assembly (2001) a preamble clause "recogniz[es] that though all democracies share common features, there is no universal model of democracy". While the trend was to substantiate the universality of democracy, the UN state-centric dynamics allowed resisting states to safeguard their potential interpretation of "democracy".

Secondly, a consensual definition was needed to tame the argument that democracy promotion was just an instance of Western domination. In a world where the West had "won the Cold War", the United States was hegemonic, and Europe inherited a past of colonialism, both the US and the EU had to lower their profile as promoters. Indeed, some research on democracy promotion criticized the imperial tones of the American and European missions. Hazel Smith (2000a, p. 24) argued that theories as the Democratic Peace were charged with Western ideology, and that implicit or explicit claims of superiority led to export a Western version of democracy (state-centric, liberal). For some, international democracy promotion

was an instance of Western liberalism not only in theory but also in practice (W. I. Robinson, 1996a).

Other authors had a more conciliatory position, conceding that democracy promotion had a Western origin but arguing that the periphery accepted these norms coming from the Western liberal core³⁸. For example, Roland Paris explained there was a widespread international sanctioning of peacebuilding in what was, in addition, a benign *mission civilisatrice* (Paris, 2002). This meant that Western ethical grounds and morality became embedded in democracy promotion, as they were in the cause of universal human rights. Chris Brown explained how the Western origin and liberal attributes in these causes could not be denied, even if activists were sometimes unwilling to admit that “universal grounding is a fiction” (Brown, 1997, p. 42). Moreover, ideologies and in general “social morality” in IR are the product of dominant nations or groups of nations (Carr, 2001, 1981, p. 75). Thus, as far as there was a hegemonic “triumphant West” during the post-Cold War period, the surge for democracy promotion was Western, too³⁹. In this sense, there was an unsolvable tension between the Western attributes and the universalism of democracy promotion, and this tension was visible in the academic debates and in the way practitioners underlined neutrality and consensus.

Thirdly, the idea of a universal consensus was challenged by potential cultural specificities of democracy, i.e. the extent to which democracy could (and should) be adapted to the place where it was promoted. This challenge consisted in finding a compromise between procedural notions of democracy, and the relativist notions that could make some authoritarian Asian, Arab or African regimes claim they were democracies “their own way”. In the 1970s and 1980s, Transition studies had anchored definitions of democracy that were mostly procedural and thus culturally “neutral”. For example, the only cultural reference that Robert Dahl made on the requisites for polyarchy involved procedure and not substance, i.e. that consociational democracy should exist in case of subcultural units in one country (Dahl, 1989, pp. 254-264)⁴⁰. In this tradition, scholars such as Schmitter and Karl (1991) and comparativists such as Munck and Verkuilen (2002) perpetuated

³⁸ This was also Franck’s (1992) claim of international norms changing towards acceptance of democratic regimes.

³⁹ This argument is best explained from a constructivist point of view (Hopf, 1998).

⁴⁰ Consociational democracy would be a means to manage the different cultural subgroups allowing for compensated representation and power distribution (e.g. quotas for minorities).

definitions of democracy that could be applied regardless of culture. However, this literature tended to ignore the contention that Huntington famously put on the academic table of this post-Cold War period, and that practitioners confronted: the rising role of culture in globalized International Relations, the potential for civilizations to clash, and the dynamics of “the West against the rest” (Huntington, 1997b).

Regardless of Huntington’s position, the role of culture and of geographical/traditional specificities in democratic rule was a key element in the practical definition of democracy for promoters. Practitioners working on non-Western cases were rather sensitive to the claims of the cultural particularities of democracy, respecting Bhikhu Parekh’s (1993) view that religion could be important in public affairs (unlike in Western secular democracies). However, this could eventually lead to definitions of democracy for each culture, which was problematic. Moreover, the community-focus and religion-inclusive policies posed theoretical problems for the liberal traditions of individual rights and freedoms and of secularism in the state (Blaug & Schwarzmantel, 2001, p. 419). For these reasons, despite their increased sensitivity, policy-makers of American and European democracy promotion safeguarded liberal principles on most occasions⁴¹.

These questions were especially relevant (also in the scope of this thesis) for the cases of democracy in Africa and in the Arab-Muslim world, but there were no unanimous answers. For example, some analyses of African particularities included a role for the community (prioritizing collective instead of individual decision-making), and active participation instead of representation (Ake, 1993). Nevertheless, others argued that institutional and state-fragility and not cultural conditions were at the heart of the African democratic challenges (Badie, 2000). The Arab-Muslim world, which had been highlighted by Huntington and became central in post 9/11 IR, led to numerous studies and some contradictory findings on the compatibility between Islam and democracy (Ehteshami, 2004; Sartori, 2007).

There was a struggle to reconcile the cultural peculiarities, democracy’s universality and the Western liberal model in both the concept and policies of democracy promotion. The policies *needed* the cultural arguments to counterbalance

⁴¹ Overall my findings were that liberal democratic values pervaded the US and EU policies, though actors closer to the ground showed more sensitivity to cultural particularities. These findings and some examples will be discussed in Chapter 3 regarding the policy-locations, and this “compromise” definition of democracy will be discussed further in the case studies, notably in Chapters 5.

the perception of Western hegemony and imposition. However, Laurence Whitehead found this counterproductive: maintaining the validity of different “cultural blocs” meant that each bloc would legitimize its own particular definition of democracy in a potentially relativist way. As an alternative, he suggested an “adjudication at international level” of a definition that would make sense in view of the globalizing democratic trends in the post-Cold War period (Whitehead, 2002, pp. 23-24). Yet this led to two almost inevitable problems: the fact that the “international epistemic communities” he mentions are closely related to (or even embedded in) the West⁴², and that the definition of democracy finally adjudicated would probably avoid cultural peculiarities i.e. validating procedural notions, as Transition studies did.

4.3. “Learning by doing”

The fourth observation was that policy-makers and practitioners dealt with the design and implementation of policies in a relatively improvised way; when American and European democracy promotion came to be implemented there was a dynamic of “learning by doing”. In view of the surge of democracy promotion budgets and programs⁴³ and of the limited applicability of former experiences of transition from different world regions, most policies were flexible and did not conform to preconceived approaches.

This translated into broad approaches where concepts were conflated and were used inconsistently; the guidelines were flexible, sometimes patchy. The three arguments described above were reflected in this “learning by doing”. For example, the universality of democracy promotion confronted the need for cultural specificities in some countries, so practitioners tried to adapt policies on the ground. However, this could be done to a certain extent only, because policy-makers in the US and Europe controlled and introduced safeguards regarding implementation. If “learning by doing” could lead to pragmatically getting new leaders or group involved on the ground, bureaucracies and guidelines at the earlier stages tried to

⁴² His epistemic community would be an “emerging collective, international network of specialists, lobbyists, activists and practitioners”, p. 23.

⁴³ As an example, USAID democracy programs totaled USD 165 million in 1991 and 635 million in 1999, and rising to USD 1.2 billion in 2004. Sources: Carothers (1999) table p. 49 for 1991-99, and USAID (2004) p. 7.

verify the convenience of such new measures, or funds were re-assigned. Thus, there was “learning by doing”, but it was limited by the conditions in the US and EU processes [see Chapter 3].

Similarly, the assumption of positive links and the emphasis on a technical approach were reflected in aspects of “learning by doing”. This led, for instance, to the use of categories as “top-down” and “bottom-up” democracy promotion. The former supposedly referred to supporting the state and institutions “top-down” (this included electoral processes) and the latter anti-to supporting authoritarian movements and civil society “bottom-up” (Carothers, 1999; Gillespie & Whitehead, 2002; Haynes, 2007; USAID, 2000; Youngs, 2001a). These categories seemed to be based on a technical definition with a corresponding strategy, but this was rather artificial. Indeed, these concepts and directionality of democratization led to weak and blurred explanations, and the categories of “top-down” and “bottom-up” were used to mean different things in different guidelines and assessments⁴⁴. Hence, they have not been used in this thesis.

The dynamic of “learning by doing” allowed for some flexibility when implementing democracy promotion in different regions or countries. This way, in Eastern and Central Europe the focus on civil society was complemented with policies to strengthen the rule of law (for example, reform of legal codes and training of civil servants).

In sum, both American and European democracy promoters faced challenges when defining their policies, facing important problems as the policies had to be more specific on the ground: the challenges of implementation. “Learning by doing” was the way to deal with these challenges, but this did not mean the strategies were straightforward (difficulties arose in the bureaucratic processes and in specific cases) or coherent.

These points are developed later in the thesis: Chapter 3 will analyze the complexity of the US and EU democracy promotion policy-locations, and the case studies will pick up on these themes. This will further document the tension

⁴⁴ The information available in Commission Communications, European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) reports, United States Agency for International Development (USAID) summaries, etc. confirms the volatility of this conceptual and empirical research. Concepts are used for some reports but are not kept through the years, or analysis of good governance are based on changing indicators.

between, on the one hand, the promoters' preferences and abilities and, on the other, the trade-offs and controversies on the ground.

Conclusion

As with other subjects in foreign policy, democracy promotion can only be understood in the larger context of domestic politics and of competing (and not always complementary) objectives and limited means. At the same time, democracy promotion is also a policy to be undertaken "on the ground", and promoters prioritize some aspects and can have assumptions on what to promote and how to do it. The diplomatic discussions and the documents issued in the US-EU summits that were mentioned at the beginning of this chapter are better understood in this light. This chapter has established the conceptual framework for this thesis, introducing a working definition of democracy promotion that allows studying both the political understandings and the empirical manifestations of American and European approaches.

This chapter has presented the main questions in the academic study of democracy promotion as a necessary background for this thesis: goals and policy instruments (methods, strategies) matter, and so does the context. Four important claims were made to support and frame this study of US and EU democracy promotion in the different sections. First, I suggested a definition of democracy promotion as an element of foreign policy, but argued that this research will remain sensitive to how this translates on the ground –Transitions studies set the background for relevant questions. Secondly, I underlined the role of history and case study for this subject. More specifically, I argued that the triumphalism and "surge" of democracy in the post-Cold War (notably regarding Eastern and Central Europe) influenced the phenomenon of democracy promotion itself.

Thirdly, I summarized the main academic debates on defining democracy and assessed the links and preconditions with human rights, the rule of law, economic development (Modernization), security, and civil society. I claimed there were conceptual tensions and also pragmatic trade-offs when seeking to promote democracy not only as a procedure, and then assuming a sort of "virtuous" circle where all elements complement one another. Here, I also showed American and

European approaches reflected these debates but there was no outright, convincing definition of a US approach “versus” a EU one. Fourthly, I notice some relevant challenges that emanate from democracy promotion as a practice on the ground and that continue to affect the study of this subject. Among them, I highlighted the assumption of positive links among policies in a “virtuous circle”, the emphasis on democracy promotion as a technical expertise (depoliticizing the subject), the promoter’s need to build a universal consensus around democracy promotion and the challenges that arise as policy-makers and practitioners work with limited and changing knowledge and capacity, “learning by doing”.

This chapter has introduced the complexity of studying the normative subject of democracy promotion, giving evidence of a potential gap between academic knowledge and the challenges that promoters face on the ground. Importantly for this thesis, it has reconciled two analytical entry-points of democracy promotion: as an element of foreign policy, and as a factor to trigger and foster democratization on the ground. The chapter has also offered the first hints on what may unite or differentiate American and European democracy promotion, both as policy-processes that emanate on each side of the Atlantic and as evolving, case-dependent challenges that arise when the policies are implemented. This framework will allow the thesis to connect the argument on American and European “rival universalisms” with the arguments on pragmatic policy-formation and implementation difficulties, and then test this in the case studies.

It is to the central argument of “rival universalisms” that Chapter 2 now turns, as I discuss the changing transatlantic relations of the post-Cold War period and the role that democracy promotion played in them.

Chapter 2. Post-Cold War transatlantic relations: rival universalisms

Observers of American and European politics have always underlined that democracy is a distinct aspect of European and American identity: it may be something they have in common, but it is above all an essential idea that defines *each* of them. In this regard, historian Alan Brinkley (2006) evoked the *Freedom Train* that in the late 1940s traveled all over the United States to emphasize America's identity¹. Anne Marie Slaughter (2007, pp. 64-65) spoke of "democracy and liberty [being] deeply intertwined in our history and our national identity as Americans"; of their promotion she said "we should: we must". Similarly, on the European side, political scientist Norberto Bobbio (1987) reminded:

"the concepts of Europe and democracy are impossible to break apart: such is the recurrent European ideology. I understand this as an idea a bit less rational than a myth, a bit less defined than a theory, a bit less pretentious than an ideal"².

These distinct identities have nevertheless a common ground, and the history of liberal democracy unites both sides of the Atlantic in a Western tradition and quest. When Eastern and Central Europe was under Communism, some spoke of "the kidnapped West" (Kundera, 1983). For these reasons, with the end of the Cold War and the *Zeitgeist* of "triumph of democracy" and "end of history", we could have expected a stronger West, with democracy promotion as a ground for common transatlantic action.

¹ This train was an exhibit to remind the principles of US peculiarities and citizenship on a tour of 48 states and got direct approval from president Truman; another *American Freedom Train* toured the country in 1976 to celebrate the nation's 200th birthday.

² In this definition, Bobbio possibly contrasted this view of democracy with the United States more utopian conceptions: myth, theory, ideal.

Yet the end of the Cold War did not create such a scenario of unified transatlantic action and power. Indeed, the fall of the Berlin wall took off the unity-mantle of security and ideological arguments that had disguised existing tensions and downplayed European initiatives and schemes (Cox, 2007). The transatlantic relationship was shaken, and academic and diplomatic discussions had to consider whether this meant demolition, minimal maintenance, refurbishment or rebirth³.

Against this background, this chapter analyzes democracy promotion as an issue-area of American and European foreign policy, and how this affected transatlantic relations. It argues that democracy was a common ground and its promotion a common objective, yet this did not translate in a converging approach. The focus here is on the promoters rather than the target.

For my theoretical approach, I have drawn on the proposition made by Elgstrom and Smith to link *role* and *identity politics* in the analysis of EU external action (Elgström & Smith, 2006, pp. 5-6). Indeed, such a link allows observing not only US and EU identity leading to democracy promotion, but also democracy promotion itself constructing the US and EU international roles. The chapter contends that democracy promotion was increasingly portrayed as a distinct basis for separate US and EU action. In this regard, I advance the argument that two “universalisms” of sorts developed, and that they became a source of transatlantic rivalry rather than cooperation. In these two distinct narratives, democracy promotion was no longer emphasized as common value, it became instead a compatible interest. As established in Chapter 1, this broader analytical framework allows investigating democracy promotion as both resulting from the “rival universalisms” and contributing to them.

Democracy promotion thus illustrates the evolution of post-Cold War transatlantic relations that swung from drift to rift: in the rhetoric the allies drifted along, but the strengthening of universalisms and differentiated policies of democracy promotion confirmed a rift. While this rift was manifest after the American-led intervention in Iraq during the Bush administration, the chapter contends that it was not only contingent. The chapter presents American post-Cold War democracy promotion as one aspect of the “new” hegemony. It also suggests

³ I am thankful to Lisa Aronsson for the discussions we have had on the fashioning of “new” transatlantic narratives (academic and policy-oriented interpretations) during the post-Cold War period (Aronsson, 2009).

that a main factor of change in the transatlantic relationship was the “rise” and confirmation of international roles for the European Union. For this, the chapter elaborates on how democracy promotion played an important yet controversial role in the portrait of the EU as a civilian (super)power, analyzing the EU discourse and some of the norm entrepreneurs.

Section 1 will discuss the context and evolution of American and European democracy promotion and the rhetoric of cooperation. Section 2 discusses democracy promotion within the US and EU post-Cold War “universalisms”. These “universalisms” were grounded on special, unique characteristics; they asserted distinct international projects, and prescribed some action/methods in international action. Section 3 then focuses on the United States, and analyzes the post-Cold War context of American hegemony, some nuances between administrations and the changes triggered by the September 11, 2001 attacks. Section 4 assesses the evolution of the European Union since the 1990s and the way in which democracy promotion was affected by the debates on the EU potential as an international “civilian power” that partly conceived itself vis-à-vis (when not in opposition to) the United States. This section finishes with the case in point of a European foundation that sought to define and strengthen an EU approach.

1. Historical context and evolution of American and European approaches

Despite the distinct histories, the arguments for different American and European models in democracy promotion should not be overstretched because of the common Western roots of democratic ideologies –even if this did not mean an univocal understanding of the concept. European values were identified in ancient Greece in comparison with the non-democratic barbarians, Montesquieu spoke of Europe’s predisposition to democracy compared to Asia, and all through the centuries *the idea* of Europe has often included democracy (Hersant & Durant-Bogaert, 2000); yet *the history* of Europe has been one of dichotomies and synthesis between democratic and authoritarian rule.

In relatively similar ways, the United States national discourses and political historiography clearly cemented an ideal identity of America as a democracy since

its foundation, and politicians from all fronts endlessly resorted to it and endorsed the mission of “democracy promotion” as if it were unitary, transparent and self-evident (T. Smith, 1994). This was definitely not the case in history, as shown by the Civil War, by the connotations that confronted Republicans and Democrats in the 19th century (Dupuis-Deri, 2004)⁴, and by the way the national discourse depended on ideological traits (Ninkovich, 1999). In the 20th century, “democracy” increasingly came to be identified with liberalism, as in Louis Hartz’s influential 1955 book *The liberal tradition in America* (Kloppenlberg, 2003), clearly opposed to communism (Doyle, 1996).

1.1. America and democracy promotion since World War II

Before World War II, democracy was doomed in the Spanish Republic and Czechoslovakia (and in Italy and Germany), so it became clear that democracy would be central to peace. The Allies utilized a democratic rhetoric during the war, visible in speeches by US Chief of Staff G. Marshall and UK Prime Minister W. Churchill. An interesting document of the period was the series of films commissioned to Frank Capra (1942) to explain the War to the American troops and the general public, which he entitled *Why we fight*. In these films, the theme of “free world vs. slave world” is recurrent; the rise on defense expenses is justified to build “the arsenal of democracy”⁵. Then, during the Cold War, the Soviet Union would become a new non-free “other” in the Western rhetoric.

This way, democracy promotion was clearly identified with the Western fight against communism during the Cold War. Westad (2005, pp. 9-10) has shown how this ideology, constitutive of the American state and identity, has a long history and clear teleological functions: “what America is today, the world will be tomorrow”. Indeed, the Cold War’s democracy promotion was another reinterpretation of this universalism. In this period, the securitization of American policies and rhetoric was underlined: “making democracy safe for the world” should also serve US interests (Lowi, 1979). This securitization is key to understand US foreign policy in

⁴ In the 19th century, Republicans were “against democracy” because they associated this word with chaos; Dupuis-Deri’s argument is that the widespread acceptance of “democracy” as positive political reference took time both in France and in the United States.

⁵ The rhetoric of the Allies against the Axis was clearly based on the theme of democracy vs. totalitarianism, and this film illustrates the role that democracy promotion played in justifying America’s international role. The US government commissioned the film, which was then shown to soldiers, the public, etc.

general (Beeson & Higgott, 2005), and the context of post-World War II liberal institutionalism⁶. The plans for an order that combined peace and democracy were constitutive of the mounting American hegemony, and would only be emphasized with “the triumph” of the 1990s.

Nevertheless, it is important to notice that during the Cold War, as before and after, the practice of democracy promotion was never consensual and led to diverse discourses and programs, which makes it difficult to speak of “American” democracy promotion. For example, the links with Modernization and the development of aid programs (including the Marshall plan) and of the USAID bureaucracy were highlighted during Democratic administrations, while Ronald Reagan’s Westminster speech of 1982 is considered a benchmark in conservative ideology (he underlined here the role of Western civilization and Europe, too).

Some analyses have even disregarded that democracy promotion existed at all because of the cases of “double standards”, where this policy was supposedly a smoke screen for other American interests (Kinzer, 2006; Lieven, 2006; W. I. Robinson, 1996b). Indeed, inconsistencies took place under Democratic and Republican administrations. For example the program *Alliance for Progress* arrived in Chile in 1961 but there was support for the coup against Allende in 1973 (Johnston, 1999), and the interventions in El Salvador and Guatemala were not pro-democracy, despite the rhetoric (Carothers, 1991). Yet the occasional calls in the policy-making world to be rid of this ethical, value-based enterprise because of the “double standards” never succeeded; this was famously the case of Reagan’s ambassador J. Kirkpatrick (1982). Her advice for isolationist and interest-led foreign policy still persists in some ideological branches in American politics, however some remarks she dared at the time could no longer fit the post-Cold War period, i.e. “traditional leaders do not disturb” and “authoritarian governments are less repressive than revolutionary autocracies [...] more susceptible of liberalization, and more compatible with US interests” (Kirkpatrick, 1982, pp. 48-49). This Republican discourse faded in the 1990s and 2000s, and was substituted by neo-conservatism.

Still, this did not mean that “double standards” would end with the Cold War, though this was certainly envisaged in some policy circles (Carothers, 1999, p. 5).

⁶ As discussed in section 2, American universalism is grounded both on the expansion of values and on the preservation (safety) of America.

Regarding this question, this thesis contends that the problem of effective democracy promotion has not necessarily (or only) been one of hypocrisy, but one of balancing out rather complex interests and intricate networks and politics at the promoters' and the target countries; interests sometimes competed, sometimes complemented each other. Controversies about democracy promotion led to choices that were hardly ever perfectly rational, and to outcomes that portrayed such imperfect working solutions. That was so in the past and remains the case in contemporary cases.

1.2. European experience; the role of the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe

The European perspectives and practices of democracy promotion during the Cold War were affected by the same ideological battle (the West vs. communism), the same potential for different policies depending on governments and countries, and the same complexity to balance out interests that amounted to pictures of “double standards” described above⁷. It is worth stressing, however, that webs of new Western institutions were created, and these included democracy as a defining element: the Council of Europe (created in 1949), NATO, and the European Community itself (Bitsch, 1996)⁸. The links between economy and security were also evident in the aid from the Marshall Plan and the logic underlying the European Communities themselves. Significantly, the first meetings on European Political Cooperation already referred to democracy, as in the *Luxembourg report*:

⁷ It is beyond the scope of this research to discuss how the different countries in Western Europe evolved after World War II, and the role of democracy promotion in this evolution. It is worth mentioning some national peculiarities to illustrate these points, even if in a simplified way: Nordic countries reinterpreted their neutrality in policies of human rights independent from the governments, France struggled with the ideological and pragmatic problems posed by its colonies and by the American control of Western security, West Germany lacked a proper foreign policy (which was partly “replaced” by development aid and initiatives around the party Stiftungen since 1957). In addition, it is worth stressing that Turkey was admitted to the Council of Europe and to NATO but the argument of “insufficient democratic standards” still keeps it out of the European Union in 2009.

⁸ Democracy was one of the prerequisites to join the EC, but in a rough division of tasks another institution, the Council of Europe, was to undertake the promotion of human rights and democracy in the continent. To this day, there is a corridor (not always open, and entry of non-EU individuals is controlled strictly) joining the buildings of the EU and the Council of Europe in Strasbourg. The Council of Europe had a relative renaissance in the post-Cold War period as it scrutinized the democratic transitions of post-communist states, but its policy of “easy membership” has also damaged its credibility (it co-opted states early in the reform process so that democratization continues “from inside”, including all of Eastern Europe and the post-Soviet space i.e. 47 states in 2009).

“A united Europe must be founded upon the common heritage of respect for the liberty and the rights of men, and must assemble democratic States having freely elected parliaments. *This united Europe remains the fundamental aim [...]*”(Council of Foreign Ministers, 1970)⁹.

Here, Europe itself is portrayed as a project of democracy promotion, in an interesting case of domestic-external linkages: the aim is European (“domestic”), even if the meeting was to coordinate foreign policy. The role for Europe as an actor with external relations emerged as interdependence and integration were furthered, amidst trends of both Europeanization and state-sovereignty, but also thanks to the key, active role of the American “partner and patron” (W. Wallace, 1990, 1994; White, 2001, pp. 71-93). In this regard, it is interesting (and for some, paradoxical) that the European Union may seek to gain international leverage vis-à-vis the United States, which had been an active sponsor of its creation.

The case of the Conference, later Organization, for Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE, OSCE) and Helsinki Accords (1975) deserves special mention as a forum with particular European input. One aspect was the emphasis on human rights, which would prove to trigger political change. Two others were the role of multilateralism and of socialization through co-optation, as this was a diplomatic forum with the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries. While the Nixon administration was skeptical, European Community countries (with a relatively unified position) included the human rights/political basket and insisted on broad inclusion (Lundestad, 2003, pp. 174-175). The CSCE also set interesting precedents for contemporary dynamics of democracy promotion, bringing in activists from civil society. Some documents of the time illustrate CSCE support for dissidents that could play a role in democratization, as well as the creation of transnational, non-governmental groups to monitor the implementation of the Helsinki Accords (Hanhimaki & Westad, 2004, pp. 531-532)¹⁰.

The CSCE also illustrated some of the transatlantic tensions that would seem clearer in the post-Cold War period. In Europe, multilateralism was embedded and there was positive consideration of this kind of inclusive forum and of medium to long-term socialization (Bitsch, Loth, & Poidevin, 1998). In America, much like

⁹ The reference to “having elected parliaments” set the contrast with the communist regimes that called themselves democratic.

¹⁰ Charter 77 in Czechoslovakia also resulted from this context.

Kissinger during the Cold War, many contemporary policy-makers and analysts (especially conservatives) were frustrated with forums that seemed “toothless” and diplomatic negotiations (Kupchan, 1996). Such reluctance has always accompanied the many initiatives of American multilateralism, and this is partly explained by the unilateralism and even isolationism of part of the political establishment (Hassner & Vaisse, 2003, p. 45). Indeed, the US outspokenly favored international institutionalism during the Cold War with the Organization of American States and the United Nations (Halperin, 1993; Ikenberry, 2001), yet these conceptions of multilateralism also involved American hegemony and selective participation (Patrick, 2002; W. Wallace, 2002)¹¹.

1.3. General features: European long-term, indirect approach; American result- and security-oriented approach

This way, different experiences with democracy and autocracy [cf. Chapter 1] and in international relations (World War II, the Cold War) shaped American and European approaches of democracy promotion in direct or indirect ways. In this regard, the EU arguably inherited a more long-term view and indirect approach: programs were not controlled by government, but established in the bureaucracies of Development and Foreign Ministries. These policies did not directly push for reform, they sought reform in the long run; they also avoided excessive visibility and could adapt to the context. In addition, EU conditionality (for membership) was stricter, but other multilateral forums were maintained in parallel (as with the Council of Europe) and fostered socialization and some opportunities for reform even if they were limited¹². In this, the EU conforms to an international identity of milieu-shaping i.e. democratizing the European continent (K. E. Smith, 2003a, pp. 200-201).

In accordance with these features, international political aid had an important precedent in the German *Stiftungen* (party foundations). Initially conceived to work with “sister-parties” in third countries, the foundations increasingly developed

¹¹ Chapter 4 (intervention in the DR Congo) will illustrate this selective engagement and US multilateralism in Africa, while Chapter 6 will discuss how the Community of Democracies again featured an American-led multilateralism. Chapter 5 will discuss the EU approach to the Middle East and North Africa and how this replicated the CSCE structure.

¹² For example, the non-democratic governments of Greece, Spain and Portugal also participated in the CSCE from 1973.

broader activities, working with all political parties, on electoral processes, and sometimes on more general socio-economic preconditions¹³. Other national political party foundations were created in Europe in the post-Cold War period: the UK Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD) (in 1992), the Swedish support for party association (pilot projects since 1995, establishment in 2001), and the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (2001) (Öhman, Öberg, Holmström, Wockelberg, & Åberg, 2004). Assistance to sister-parties had been common in the Cold War, but the 1990s and 2000s saw a diversification and widening of projects, as if the specific ideology mattered less and the objective was the broader democratization of the system; for example, many Westminster Foundation projects aim to promote multipartism at large, and not just aid the sister-party¹⁴. The Stiftungen had also inspired the American party institutes and the National Endowment for Democracy in 1983-4, and both the German and American cases remain quite exceptional in their significant budget and their independent action –yet they are tied to ministry and congressional funding and above all, and their programs should not be understood as “neutral” [especially in the case of NED, cf. Chapter 3].

By contrast, the national principle of democracy promotion became embedded in American high-flying rhetoric, while the US arguably focused on rather short-term, result-oriented policies (Ottaway & Hamzawy, 2004; Youngs, 2001a). This translated in a focus on elections, leaders, and regime change; this led to potential direct action, often taking advantage of critical junctures in specific countries, and exceptionally creating them. The logic of Domino Theory (one movement triggers wide change) subscribed to this principle; it first appeared in 1952 in a National Security Council document when the intention was to keep South-East Asia from going communist (Kissinger, 1994, p. 626). But in none of the cases of direct intervention was democracy promotion the only or even the main justification –it was rather a means, and a positive “collateral goal” especially in Latin America (Lowenthal, 1990; W. I. Robinson, 1996b).

¹³ This depended very much on the budget and on the national histories, and the German foundations remained extremely well funded, mainly will appropriations from the Development Ministry (i.e. there was a link with socioeconomic development).

¹⁴ The national parties also receive part of the funds, which they can then spend on their own international projects.

This was also explained by the securitization of democracy promotion as an element of US foreign policy. However, the link with security was also broadly conceived and embedded in US policies in the form of the Democratic Peace argument; democracy promotion has its place as part of a widely accepted grand strategy and of national interests (Art, 2003). This usually does not imply direct military intervention, and acknowledges that socio-economic welfare accompanies the global spread of democracy (Art, 2003, pp. 27-31). Nevertheless, this does not preclude the so-called “double standards” either, as democracy and its prioritization are interpreted according to strategic goals. Because in Europe there was absence of unified security strategy or action, this feature was clearer in American democracy promotion, but this did not mean that European foreign policies were led differently –simply that democracy promotion was not framed in the same way¹⁵.

2. The rise of rival universalisms

In the context of the post-Cold War democratic triumph, it could have been expected that the transatlantic partners would become joint, active sponsors of international democracy promotion. However this was not the case, a rhetoric of cooperation continued but two additional trends unraveled. First, democracy promotion became increasingly transnational, and networks of activism and knowledge developed, similar to other issues related to humanitarian concerns and intervention (Haynes, 2007; Kaldor, 2003b; Schraeder, 2003)¹⁶. Second, and more central to this chapter, the transatlantic relationship seemed to lose weight in American politics, and European Union integration advanced. More specifically, supranational decision-making was enhanced in a number of areas, and changes arose from the Treaty of Maastricht’s creation of the single market and the Treaties of Amsterdam and Nice¹⁷.

A key question was whether the transatlantic relationship should be maintained, and on which areas, once the security-imperative of the Soviet Union

¹⁵ The case studies will allow us to nuance the EU positions, nevertheless.

¹⁶ Since the thesis focuses on American and European Union democracy promotion, the nature and role of the transnational networks are not discussed in detail; nevertheless Chapter 3 discusses this aspect and the extent to which it lead to a kind of “global” democracy promotion.

¹⁷ I would underline that the “European Union” was granted international actorhood (legal personality) and that EU citizenship was strengthened as EU rights derived from the single market provisions.

disappeared. The United States arguably needed Western Europe much less, though the partnership could still provide a “mantle of legitimacy” through multilateralism (Mead, 2005, pp. 165, 179). According to Mead (2005, p. 168) the decline of European power “is one of the oldest and best established trends in world politics”, but he also acknowledges that for many, a recovery or resurgence may have begun with the European Union. Indeed, on the European side, new political will and interests could lead to emancipation from transatlantic relations. Yet at the same time Europe seemed to follow American leadership in the Western “triumph” and, importantly, a new wave of enthusiastic atlanticists came in with Eastern and Central European countries (Oswald, 2006, pp. 21-25).

Democracy promotion must be understood in these dynamics of transatlantic “drift and rift”. Against this background, two “rival universalisms” emerged. On the one hand, democracy promotion contributed to the ongoing rhetoric of transatlantic cooperation, and was portrayed as *the* common basic value in times of transatlantic crisis, notably after the US-led intervention in Iraq. On the other, nevertheless, it was actually at the heart of two distinct trends of “universalisms” visible in American and European Union politics during this period. These universalisms were used as an ideal, teleological basis for action, both in the US “mission” and as part of the new role and identity unraveling in Europe.

2.1. Cooperation to promote democracy: a transatlantic rhetoric and a nuanced European approach

In the post-Cold War era, the principles of US-EU cooperation were set out in declarations such as the Transatlantic Declaration of 1990 and the “New Transatlantic Agenda” launched in Madrid in 1995. At the most important diplomatic level, there were regular bilateral Summits (US, European Commission, Presidency of the European Council) and other gatherings with EU Member States’ heads of state and government, and official visits (M. Smith & Steffenson, 2005, pp. 351-353). At all such meetings, and in countless other occasions, American and European officials made declarations on the common values and strategic

partnership that sustained transatlantic relations. Democracy promotion occupied a key role throughout, as the primary documents issued at these meetings illustrate.

The 1990 Declaration included a section on *Common Goals* that begun:

“The United States of America and the European Community and its Member States solemnly reaffirm their determination further to strengthen their partnership in order to support democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights and individual liberty, and promote prosperity and social progress worldwide [...]” (US & EC and Member States, 1990)

And a Declaration from the bilateral Summit in June 2008 pledged:

“The strategic partnership between the EU and the U.S. is firmly anchored in our common values and increasingly serves as *a platform* from which we can act in partnership to meet the most serious global challenges and to advance our shared values, freedom and prosperity around the globe. [...] The bond between the EU and the U.S. *has proven its resilience* through times of difficulty, and we continue to demonstrate global leadership and effective transatlantic co-operation in the face of the most pressing challenges of our day: Promoting international peace, stability, democracy, human rights, international criminal justice, the rule of law and good governance [...]” (EU-US, 2008)

As these declarations illustrate, the US and the EU considered democracy promotion a common goal, “firmly anchored” and “reaffirmed” again and again. The 2008 document insisted on “most pressing challenges of our day” that were similar to those of 1990, and indeed, to those of the Atlantic Charter signed long ago by Roosevelt and Churchill (1941).

Nevertheless, two specific references hinted at what was new in the post-Cold War period. First, the idea of “a platform from which we can act” suggests that transatlantic relations become a practical option for potential action in partnership. This evokes the shift away from common interests and shared identity and principles for more pragmatic, sporadic cooperation (Kupchan, 2008, p. 112). Second, the reference to the bond of “resilience through times of difficulty” was an open acknowledgement of past and potential differences (an even clash) between the transatlantic partners. Crises had existed during the Cold War (Hitchcock, 2008) but the transatlantic rhetoric and historiography had tended to downplay or ignore them. This changed in the post-Cold War period, as the tensions within NATO were more visible; relations deteriorated during the first term of George W. Bush’s

presidency, as it clearly tended towards unilateralism despite the worldwide diplomatic support that the US gathered in the aftermath of 9/11. The “crisis” arrived when some Western European countries opposed the US-led intervention in Iraq. Academics were arguing the US and the EU seemed “quite distinct places, very possibly moving in divergent directions” (Judt, 2005), so the rhetoric of cooperation was escalated to redress this situation.

This escalation of Atlanticist rhetoric in 2004-05 could be considered as an American operation to restore transatlantic charm, where Europe also participated actively (AFP, 2005; Beale, 2005; Wright, 2005). The US may have realized the transatlantic relationship could still be useful, but Europeans also appreciated getting back on the radar of US priorities. The tone was especially reconciliatory for transatlantic relations during the G8 summits in the US (2004) and the United Kingdom (2005)¹⁸. When Gaddis envisaged Bush’s grand strategy for the second term, he suggested to work on “manners”, “language” and “vision” (Gaddis, 2005). He did not mention transatlantic relations, but Bush’s critics had increasingly pointed at the damage that unilateralism and preemption were doing to the security partnership (Ikenberry, 2006, pp. 214-228). As in the declarations above, the reconciliatory rhetoric underlined democracy promotion as a common value and joint enterprise.

Newly appointed Secretary of State Rice disembarked (symbolically) in Paris “to talk about how America and Europe can use the power of our partnership to advance our ideals worldwide”. She insisted: “Our charge is clear: we on the right side of freedom’s divide have an obligation to help those unlucky enough to have been born on the wrong side of that divide” (Rice, 2005b).

Yet this kind of rhetoric was ill-conceived for at least two reasons. First, by “uniting” the US and the EU over democracy promotion, this rhetoric emphasized the role of the West, reinforcing the idea that universal democracy was due to the fact that “breathtaking preponderance of power is held by a liberal democracy” i.e. the US, and that “the next most powerful global actor is a loose union of countries that are also all liberal democracies” i.e. the EU (L. Diamond, 2003). This was in contrast with international democracy promotion efforts to foster consensual, worldwide-*owned* policies [cf. Chapter 1]. Second, and more specifically, this

¹⁸ A series of speeches from the White House and the Department of State during this period emphasized transatlantic relations.

discourse reinforced Huntington's picture of "the West against the rest", and stigmatized those who were now "on the wrong side of the divide": no longer the Communists but arguably the Arab-Muslim world and in any case a non-democratic "Other".

Nuances in the European approach. Europeans were interested in maintaining the transatlantic rhetoric and also made sure that the common principles and partnership were maintained. But even if Joint Declarations were signed as usual, Europeans insisted on the peculiarities of their approach [cf. Chapter 1], and claimed credit for their own record. In his last speech before the European Parliament, when he summed up his term's accomplishments, Commission President Romano Prodi avoided laudatory references to transatlantic relations, and instead insisted:

"I have said, and I will say it again: in this complex and often tragic world of ours, Europe has been capable *—indeed has been the only player capable—*of exporting democracy" (Prodi, 2004)¹⁹.

More generally, EU officials insisted on general differences vis-à-vis the US, but they also warned of defining Europe from an empty anti-americanism (Chris Patten, 2005). With the new Commission President, Jose Barroso, and the 2005 European Council presidencies of Luxembourg and (especially) the United Kingdom, the EU clearly sought to reduce the transatlantic distance too²⁰.

The nuanced European position vis-à-vis democracy promotion and the United States is best summarized in Javier Solana's words in the spring of 2005:

"Both the EU and the US want to increase the number of democracies around the world. We may bring somewhat different approaches to the table and use different language than our American friends. But human rights, good governance and the rule of law go hand-in-hand with democracy and freedom. As long as our respective strategies reinforce each other—and they do—this pluralism in promoting democracy is a source of strength" (Solana, 2005).

¹⁹ My emphasis: the reference is clear to the US's failure in Iraq.

²⁰ This period also saw important changes in Europe in the context of enlargement and of changing governments in some Member States (notably Spain in 2004, and Italy in 2006 retreated their support for the war in Iraq).

Solana struck here the right note of transatlantic friendship “reinforcing each other”; at the same time he admitted to an important European distinctiveness, both regarding style (“different language”) and content of the policies (human rights, good governance and the rule of law, which the EU traditionally emphasized). This illustrated the redefinition of the relationship: the emphasis is on pluralism and not on unified Western action. There was de facto an increasing gap in the partnership as the post-Cold War American hegemony developed a resistance to Europe’s leadership and independent agenda (W. Wallace, 2001) and as the rise of conservatism confirmed an American unilateralism and sense of mission that did not resonate with Europeans. In this context, US-EU cooperation to promote democracy was a common goal, but could not amount to more than rhetoric.

As the bond’s resilience was in doubt, the transatlantic rhetoric was supposed to improve a picture of cooperation that was rather weak. As Danchev (2005, p. 429) pointed out, the common values were supposed to live up to a past that was often monumentalized, while the rhetoric actually had to appeal to a transatlantic *future*. Nevertheless, even considering rhetoric, a-temporality (past and future, but an uncertain present), and monumentalization, American and European democracy promotion were increasingly less suitable to sustain the transatlantic common identity and role, as these features were found in the development of separate, distinct universalisms.

2. 2. Democracy promotion and US and EU universalisms: emphasizing uniqueness, hinting at rivalry

The academic analysis of transatlantic relations emphasized that in the post-Cold War era, cooperation continued in general and that interdependence on the economic sphere was accompanied by ongoing benefits in the security alliance (Peterson, 1996; Serfaty, 2008). However, part of the literature considered that transatlantic cooperation may have reached its limits (Duffield, 2001). One important argument emphasized that despite the common values and goals, positions and policies on one side and the other of the Atlantic were strengthening different outcomes (Levin & Shapiro, 2004).

Indeed, domestic institutions and policy-making, but also the international arena, were shaping the relationship in new ways. This corresponded to new,

purposeful depictions of US and EU roles and identities for the post-Cold War era. This thesis uses the term “universalisms” to refer to democracy promotion in relationship to identity and to role-construction, considering its importance in the conception but also in the materialization of policy. The universalisms were encapsulated in two distinct *narratives* of the US and the EU as international actors²¹. The universalisms are narratives that refer not only to a story, but also to the telling of the story (Hobsbawm, 1998). This is especially useful to grasp the relevance and meaning of US and EU democracy promotion.

In general, universalisms emerge as an ideological assertion to validate, explain and eventually justify international action. In constructing the narratives, universalisms need to present their uniqueness, even though in principle *any* system of values is subjective and could be considered universal (Wallerstein, 2006, p. 46). Here is where linking the study of role and identity (Elgström & Smith, 2006, p. 5) can explain the rise of distinctions, and even rivalry, regarding American and European democracy promotion. On the one hand, it is an element of common Western identity and origin, and the rhetoric of cooperation sustains a transatlantic element. On the other, American and European positions and projects of democracy promotion needed uniqueness. Identity and role-construction reinforce one another, as democracy promotion becomes an expression of what the polity *is* and of what it purposely *does* in the international arena. On the basis of a shared Western identity, I argue, *rival* US and EU universalisms arose.

The definition of democracy promotion as an element of foreign policy (Chapter 1) allows deploying here the argument of US and EU universalisms. Table 3 below draws on the historical discussion in section 1; these observations will then be developed in section 3 (on the United States) and section 4 (on the European Union). Later in the thesis, Chapter 3 will establish how these aspects were appropriated in the policy-making processes, emphasizing the specificities, and the general argument will be tested in the case-studies, analyzing the rival universalisms against the pragmatic challenges of democracy promotion arising on the ground.

²¹ In Constructivist terms, this universalism is a “social kind” or reality: space-time specific (though generalization is possible as far as the essential characteristics remain), depending on the interlocking of beliefs held by actors and on their practices, affected by ideas and by internal and external structures (Wendt, 1999, pp. 68-71).

My goal here is to pin down the US and EU universalisms regarding democracy promotion, focusing on the characteristics that emphasized uniqueness and US-EU rivalry. In order to unravel these distinctions, I compare the universalisms along three aspects: fundamental characteristics that asserted differences, autonomous international projects, and distinct prescriptions for international action. The American and the European universalisms were not incompatible in principle, but it was difficult for these trends to simultaneously reconcile a transatlantic common view, and to substantiate independent US and EU action.

Table 3. Democracy promotion and American and European universalisms

Universalisms	American	European
Fundamental characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "Power": hard + soft - Exceptionalism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "Civilian power" (non-military) - Normative - Utopia
International project (content)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Example - Civil society - Mission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Example - Institution-building, law - Reflexivity: Regionalism
Prescription (action)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Liberal order based on US hegemony - Intervention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Multilateral order - Socialization - Legal/rational basis (Kant), conditionality

This table schematizes American and European universalisms using the concepts and arguments in the literature on changing roles of the US and the EU in International Relations. The three aspects are intrinsically interconnected; they are used as analytical entry-points to understand US and EU democracy promotion in the light of the universalisms. First, "Fundamental characteristics" refer to the concepts and principles that ground and motivate democracy promotion; they pertain to identity but also US and EU to role-construction. Secondly, "International project" refers to the goals envisaged in the enterprise: how democracy promotion is understood and conceived (the "content" that constitutes the US and EU approaches). Finally, "Prescription" refers to specific plans of *mise en oeuvre*, how the universalisms are undertaken.

The US and EU distinct narratives forge a picture where democracy promotion is no longer a common value but (at best) a compatible interest. I

discuss here the “Fundamental characteristics” in greater length, and introduce the main arguments regarding “International Project” and “Prescription”; these will be raised and developed in the relevant case-studies.

Fundamental characteristics. The universalisms’ fundamental characteristics bring up the debates on what defines international actors and what makes them “powerful”. In this regard, Robert Kagan’s wording of “paradise and power” summarized (though for many, oversimplified) the contention that America and Europe were fundamentally different (Kagan, 2003). The US was characterized by military “hard” power that Europe lacked not only passively but on principle, purposely. This way, some European commentators sympathized with Kagan’s picture of EU paradisiacal “soft power”(Lindberg, 2005). Yet it shouldn’t be ignored that, according to Joseph Nye (1990, 2004) the US also had resources of “soft power”, even though he thought this was being undermined by the policies of the Bush administration.

In contrast with hard power, Duchêne first coined the term “civilian” (1973) to refer to Europe’s non-military power. Civilian power was, for Mario Telo (2006), an alternative form of power that singled out Europe as an original polity, both its nature and its actions. Telo drew a portrait of the specificities of civilian Europe that could only be understood *in comparison with* American military power and worldview. The related notion of “normative power Europe” (Manners, 2002) referred more specifically to the EU’s ability to export norms and shape its environment, and again the emphasis was on issues that distinguished the EU from American approaches, such as the abolition of the death penalty and the protection of the environment. Arguably, the normativity of this analysis itself, and the incoherence in EU discourse and policy-making posed problems (Lerch & Schweltnus, 2006; Scheipers & Sicurelli, 2007), but this did not undermine the fact that “a clear conception of exceptionalism [was] at play” in the EU (Jorgensen, 1998, p. 95).

This picture translated into some analyses of democracy promotion where American hard power could take care of the serious combat tasks, while Europe could deal with issues of “soft security” as nation building. Hopkinson (2003) suggested this cooperation, but he observed that there seemed to be divergences in the conceptions of security and international intervention. However, democracy

promotion partly counters this argument because it is an instance of American norm-export. Seemingly, the difference could be over the instruments and means (civilian vs. military). Overall, the literature supported the argument that American democracy promotion *could* include military action (Peceny, 1999; von Hippel, 2000), while European means would be “civilian” and “normative” almost by definition (Börzel & Risse, 2007). Again, there is a link between roles- and identity-building in the universalisms. Yet these fundamental characteristics did not necessarily correspond with US and EU democracy promotion in action (this will be tested in the case studies): the universalisms seemingly corresponded to ideological rather than pragmatic positions.

American universalism, in its narrative of uniqueness, has usually taken the form of *Exceptionalism*, and argument illustrated at length and recurrent in American historiography. Exceptionalism would define the US itself (Shafer, 1999) and, importantly, create links between the domestic and an international “American dream” (Slater & Taylor, 1999, p. 344). According to Lieber (2006), exceptionalism is a key difference (and a factor of discord) between the US and the EU. Democracy and freedom would be at the heart of the national exceptionalism that is in turn embedded in American universalism.

The conception of uniqueness and the European narrative is an interesting alternative to the American materialization as a shining city upon a hill (Winthrop’s famous image). Indeed, Europe is instead a project [Section 1 above], almost a utopia i.e. *an unachievable ideal*. Along these lines, Nicolaidis and Howse (2002) argued that the European Union has been constructing a narrative of “utopia” based on the notions of civilian and normative power.

More specifically, Nicolaidis (2006) criticized that many aspects of EU narratives were basically based on an essentialist, over-generalizing self-definition of the EU vis-à-vis America. Interestingly, she contended that “democracy promotion” was one example where some Europeans saw themselves as different from the Americans in simplistic, over-generalized ways. Instead, she invited to think of an alternative utopia where the EU conceives its universalism and its identity vis-à-vis its own past. Along these lines, the new way of democracy

promotion in this “EUtopia” would need to be different from the universalism that existed then Europe was a colonial power²².

International projects and Prescription. The fundamental characteristics of the American and European universalisms set distinct contexts for democracy promotion, visible in turn in their international projects and prescription. Democracy promotion not only fitted into such universalisms, it actively contributed to construct such distinct projects of the US and the EU as international actors.

On the one hand, exceptionalism led to an American Mission to promote democracy (T. Smith, 1994), projecting Wilsonian values and enhancing security with a liberal strategy (Ikenberry, 1999). American identity and interests were invoked as one with democracy promotion: US leadership was maintained and used to shape the international order (Cox et al., 2000). Sometimes the project would be passively exemplarist, sometimes it would be pro-active i.e. “vindicationist” –both approaches rooted in American traditions (Monten, 2005). For example, under George W. Bush, vindicationism could lead to intervention, and in his neoconservative policies “soft power” had to be complemented with hard power.

On the other hand, European democracy promotion saw itself as an example, and thus sought to recreate its regional institutional settings through reflexivity (Bicchi, 2006), and to export its model of governance (M. Farrell, 2005). Reflecting its own cooperative functioning for policy-making, the EU defended multilateralism as “a specific aspect of European democracy promotion” (Council of the European Union, 2006b, p. 5), revealing connections both with identity and with role-construction as an international actor. Along these lines, the document *The European Union and the United Nations: the choice of multilateralism* was designed to shape EU policy-making in general (Commission of the European Communities, 2003). Similarly, the EU’s universalism put forward socialization (key in the European history of democratization) as an instrument to promote democracy (Youngs, 2001a). Additional elements in the universalisms’ prescription would be the legal-rational basis for international relations (in the Kantian tradition) that leads to agreements among parties (Petiteville, 2003), together with a dynamic

²² I infer from her view that contemporary EU democracy promotion should instead be designed distinguishing itself from the colonial projects –this is an interesting contention.

of conditionality –both have existed in the dynamics of EU membership and would be replicated, with elements of democracy promotion, in EU relations with third countries. While all these aspects featured in the universalisms, this thesis suggests it is necessary to check these narratives against the policies on the ground to have more nuance. This nuanced approach differs from other studies of democracy promotion that establish a relatively easy, pragmatic division of tasks in the transatlantic partnership (Sarotte, 2005). For instance, it could be argued that the US approach prioritized civil society while the EU promoted institution-building, replicating traits in their own identities (Kopstein, 2006). However, these assumptions proved to need much more nuance: Chapter 3 and the case studies depict how both the US and the EU were involved in both, they did not divide tasks along those lines, and even confronted similar challenges on the ground.

The main premise that derives from this analysis is that, in all these features, the EU approach was defined not only *ex ante*, but also in clear distinction from the United States. The universalisms did not prevent eventual complementarity, but they contributed to (and explained) the rift both in discourse and action. The literature on transatlantic relations not only pointed to features and policies distinguishing the US and the EU but also, more broadly, at world perceptions and default-behavior (Jones, 2004; M. Smith, 2004). Along these lines, democracy promotion evolved in the internal and international contexts, while it also shaped them during the post-Cold War era. The next sections are precisely devoted to the specificities of US and EU democracy promotion and these internal and international linkages.

3. Democracy promotion and the United States: a “new” mission for the superpower?

This section argues that democracy promotion fitted into the international picture of post-Cold War American hegemony, while this nevertheless allowed for differences between the Clinton and George W. Bush administrations. The impact of 9/11 was crucial in the redefinition of the American “mission”.

The end of the Cold War confirmed the picture of unmatched American power and hegemony in IR, but the demise of Communism arguably left the “superpower without a mission” (Cox, 1995). The question was whether democracy promotion could function as a new mission (T. Farrell, 2000; T. Smith, 1994), and what this would imply regarding rhetoric and practice. Even though the goal of expanding capitalism and democracy had always existed in American foreign policy, the presidential rhetoric captured this momentum and emphasized the “turning point” and “new era”, as the following quotes show²³:

“This is a plain truth: the day of the dictator is over. The people’s right to democracy must not be denied” (George H. W. Bush, 1989)

“...Today, a generation raised in the shadows of the Cold War assumes new responsibilities in a world warmed by the sunshine of freedom” (Bill Clinton, 1993)

“The advance of freedom is the calling of our time; it is the calling of our country [...]. This is above all the age of liberty” (George W. Bush, 2003)

After a long history of divisions on whether to promote democracy or not, a common line was seemingly emerging. The consensus seemed unprecedented as hardcore realists as Henry Kissinger (2005) gave in to the inevitable democracy promotion; yet the practice would depend on context and contingency, and the difficulty to conciliate this with other objectives did not change.

The following table indicates some important initiatives in democracy promotion: democracy assistance by USAID, the funds devoted to human rights and democracy within the Department of State, and the Millennium Challenge development aid that was conditioned to democracy [developed in Chapter 3]. This information is extracted from policy-papers and assessments from USAID’s Center for Development Information and Evaluation and reports available online; it should be taken as orientation only, because the categories and the methodology vary across years and sources²⁴.

²³ George H. W. Bush’s quote comes from Department of State Bulletin, June 1989. Clinton’s quote is extracted from his First Inaugural Address, 21 January 1993, the third quote comes from Bush’s Second Inaugural Address.

²⁴ In addition, as an official from USAID admitted in interview “there is just so much of some things you need to have available online”. I have also used alternative sources and (Finkel, Perez-Liñan, & Seligson, 2006) independent audits (Blair & Hansen, 1994).

Table 4. Main initiatives of democracy promotion in the United States

	Democracy assistance (USD 600-800 m /year ²⁵)	Human rights and democracy fund (USD 94 m, example 2004)	Millennium Challenge Account (USD 4-6 bi /year ²⁶)
Period	1990-	2004-	2006 -
Agent²⁷	USAID	Dept. of State, Bureau democracy, human rights & labor	Millennium Challenge Corporation
Themes	Civil society, governance, rule of law ²⁸ , elections	To be decided by beneficiaries/ implementers	Development aid (no theme) is granted if conditions satisfied incentives/conditionality: Modernization
Beneficiaries	Project-funding for NGOs, channeled on the target country	\$ 15 m NED \$ 6.5 m Syria/Iran	Eligible countries (approx. 40 eligible, 10 funded in total)

3.1. American hegemony

The confirmation of American hegemony at the end of the Cold War can be understood in the interplay of ideas, institutions and geopolitical contingency (Beeson & Higgott, 2005), and democracy promotion played a role in all three aspects. As discussed in Chapter 1, democracy was confirmed as a triumphant idea, and both the victory over the Soviet bloc and the ideology were clearly connected to America. The international institutions and the system conferred power and global leadership upon the United States, ratifying the expansion of capitalism and its political component. The United Nations (mainly the General Assembly) corroborated these principles in the resolutions it adopted²⁹; this enhanced a post-Cold War homogenization of the international society in which democracy was central. Finally the geopolitical context was one of a “unipolar moment”

²⁵ Democracy programs constitute a small percentage of the total USAID budget, e.g. 9% for 2003.

²⁶ These were the plans approved by the administration but in reality the MCA has been working with around USD 2 billion/year.

²⁷ I am using “agent” in the sense attributed in Functional theories to the institutions in charge of fulfilling a certain task (Pollack, 1997). The roles of these agents is explored further in Chapter 3.

²⁸ Almost half of US aid to the rule of law for 1990-2003 went to Latin America, where the US works with partner-governmental authorities.

²⁹ A series of General Assembly resolutions concerned democracy: 49/30 of 7 December 1994, 50/13 of 20 December 1995, 51/31 of 6 December 1996, 52/18 of 21 November 1997, 53/31 of 23 November 1998, 54/36 of 29 November 1999, 55/43 of 27 November 2000, 56/96 of 14 December 2001, 56/269 of 27 March 2002, 58/13 of 17 November 2003, 58/281 of 9 February 2004, 60/253 of 2 May 2006, 61/226 of 22 December 2006 and 62/13 of 13 December 2007.

(Huntington, 1999) that gave leverage to the US and featured unprecedented American “hyperpower” to project its preferences (Vedrine, 2003).

American primacy was not only based on “hard” power but on “soft power” too; and here democracy and its non-military promotion were central (Nye, 1990). Cumings (1999) posited that American liberal hegemony was “less as a form of domination than a form of legitimate global leadership”, presenting hegemony as the international system’s voluntary concession of power to the hegemon³⁰. In addition, the hegemon promoted democracy because of its interest in the expansion of the liberal economic regime, which needed a favorable global order and worked through cooptation better than through imperial coercion. Post-Cold War American hegemony would thus peak this “American century” (Slater & Taylor, 1999, pp. 3-4) and fulfill the post-World War II order (Ikenberry, 1989; Johnston, 1999). While this is also Cumings’ (1999, p. 298) view, he questions its fulfillment as he claims that modern liberalism is also “a heterogeneous, contested and deeply unfinished business”. This critique applies to democracy promotion as well: the liberal mission is part of American hegemony, but the superpower and the international regime are challenged because of the heterogeneity and contestability inherent to promoting democracy.

3.2. Democracy promotion and the Clinton and Bush administrations

Though this thesis makes the case for cross-administration continuity in American democracy promotion, it does not disregard the specificities that each administration brought into the policy³¹. These specificities derived from the ideological background of the party and people at the time and as any foreign policy, from the contingency imposed by world events and by domestic electoral politics (Hill, 2003, pp. 159-170, 219-249). The American mission thus took different shapes under Clinton and Bush.

Bill Clinton’s democracy promotion was set out in the rhetoric of the “democratic enlargement” (Christopher, 1993; Clinton, 1996; Lake, 1993) where

³⁰ By contrast, Fred Halliday (1994) also admitted inclusion in the international society happened through hegemony, but he is open to the Gramscian ambiguity of the acceptance and/or subjugation of the states co-opted. Pp. 100-103.

³¹ Here I leave aside the George H. W. Bush administration as the “turning point” and consider only the completely post-Cold War administrations of Bill Clinton and George W. Bush.

the Democratic Peace theory was used as justification to actively support democracy worldwide. This way, even in the early “peaceful” times after the Cold War, the discourse of democracy promotion was securitized. This discourse was framed in the liberal internationalist tradition, but it translated into only limited multilateralism in practice, as Clinton sought to safeguard rather than constrain the US position as the sole post-Cold War superpower (Kupchan, 2002). Scholars agree on the fact that Clinton’s presidency was dominated by economic matters, and this applied to democracy promotion as well. The emphasis was on the model of market-democracy and on how free trade and democracy could be fostered together (D. Brinkley, 1997; Cox, 2000). Clinton’s democracy promotion rhetoric also embraced the American tradition of exceptionalism and universalism, as Secretary Albright’s references to the “indispensable nation” and her remarks before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in 1997 show:

“...the U.S. government works to encourage democracy in developing nations throughout the world on the basis of the ideals of liberty, personal and civic freedom and government of, for and by the people –values on which the US was founded and which guide the social and political life of our nation”.

On the other hand, Clinton’s democracy promotion in practice was inconsistent and restricted mainly to USAID development policies, which he failed to reform and bring closer under the administration [cf. Chapter 3]. The reluctance of Congress (Democrats lost the majority in the House of Representatives in 1994), bureaucracy and public opinion arguably prevented more assertive policies (Haas, 1997; Ripley & Lindsey, 1997), but there was a connection between the main US military interventions under his presidency and democracy promotion, namely Haiti, Somalia and Bosnia. These cases gave evidence of the difficulties in connecting state-building and democratization policy-making in stages. In addition, as they were framed as humanitarian intervention, they also illustrated the paradoxes and challenges of just war and effective peace-support operations as new paradigms for international intervention, and the limits of US multilateral engagement (Berdal & Economides, 2007; von Hippel, 2000).

Some Realists critiques establish that Bush’s democracy promotion is only interested rhetoric without matching practice. However, this misses the well-

documented point that neoconservatism and other specific aspects, e.g. Sharansky's writings, influenced this president's foreign policy dramatically. Thus, though 9/11 and the War on Terror impacted the US, democracy promotion had a place of its own in the response that the Bush administration orchestrated and more generally in foreign policy. Here, the rising influence of neoconservative ideology was key, shifting American universalism toward enlightened intervention (Halper & Clarke, 2004; Project for the New American Century, 1997; Williams, 2004). Neoconservative ideology had an extremely patriotic understanding of American exceptionalism, and nuanced the dovish principle of democracy promotion by example. Under the lead of hawkish Republican advisors and policy-makers, this materialized in a strategy that featured unilateralism, preemption and the supremacy of military power (see for instance the 2002 National Security Strategy).

In addition, there was at times a personal justification for Bush's stand on democracy promotion. Notably, he acknowledged the influence of Nathan Sharansky's book (Sharansky & Dermer, 2004), which used a rhetoric that became familiar in Bush's speeches. For example, Sharansky (a Soviet dissident) referred to his Cold War "long journey through the world of evil" (p. xi); such manichean views were adopted by Bush but were not present in European rhetoric. Sharansky defended Western "moral clarity" to "once again secure a better future for hundreds of millions of people around the world" (pp. xiii, xxv), but also underlined the primacy of security and of war against terror. Bush's position may not have reached all sectors and personnel in his administration (Amaral & Patterson, 2009) but his personal will to put democracy promotion at its center was unambiguous.

That democracy promotion was not successful does not take away from the fact that the Bush administration elevated this mission under a particular ideological brand. In his second inaugural speech (2005) he insisted:

"so it is the policy of the United States to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world".

According to his speechwriter Michael Gerson (2006), Bush wanted this "Democracy Speech" to be the one he would be remembered for. This speech was an attempt to cement his legacy as president by substituting the obsolete Cold War theme of "anti-communism" with democracy promotion, and feature as overarching

principle and goal. In addition to the personalized rhetoric, Bush also undertook significant changes in the bureaucracy, including Secretary of State Rice's "transformational diplomacy", and the Millennium Challenge Account [cf. Chapter 3].

In sum, democracy promotion became the new superpower's mission in the post-Cold War period, but such a claim must be nuanced. Overall, democracy promotion was not really new and the reasons why it featured in American foreign policy are best understood in the light of long-term history and continuity (Barrios, 2008). Presidential speeches have very often made reference to new world orders and the US "crusade" for democracy; Olson (2004) demonstrated how Clinton's democracy promotion policies used the rhetoric of past presidents. It is however the case that the American political stand became increasingly conservative; first in the House of Representatives during Clinton's presidency, and then under the Bush administration. Such a polarization accounted for part of the rift in transatlantic relations (Kahler, 2005) and September 11 led to a reinforcement in this doctrine of "new American exceptionalism" (Hoffman, 2005).

3.3. Democracy promotion, 9/11 and the War on Terror

The terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 changed American international politics, but probably no more than the end of the Cold War (Kennedy-Pipe, 2008). Nevertheless, this thesis would miss "an elephant in the room" if it neglected this factor, so a brief account of how this affected US democracy promotion is in order³². The attacks constituted a physical, inland aggression by a stateless, transnational enemy, and this had no precedent in America. The event drew a swift governmental response; the US sought to fight back with military might, and linked the War on Terror with democracy promotion. In this war, Islamist terrorism was increasingly framed as the enemy and a new "other", maybe substituting the Soviet Union as the international bogeyman and triggering a reinterpretation of the American hegemony and power (Booth & Dunne, 2002). Since the correlation between Arab-Muslim countries and autocracy was high (according to the

³² Some arguments related to the War on Terror will be developed in detail in the case study of the MENA region (Chapter 5).

qualitative observations in Huntington's Clash of Civilizations but also to the quantitative reports of Freedom House), the rhetoric of democracy promotion found a practical target in these countries.

First, the War on Terror increased securitization of foreign policy in general and of democracy promotion in particular. Bush's National Security Strategy (2002) focused on terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, the transformation of security institutions, etc. and economic growth and free trade lost relevance. Still, promoting democracy was maintained in speeches about the War on Terror, and it was considered a tool in the war:

“America has a clear strategy for victory in the War on Terror. [...] Through the spread of democracy, the United States can help deny terrorists the ideological victories they seek. Free nations do not support terrorists or invade their neighbors. By advancing the cause of liberty across the world, we will make the world more peaceful and America more secure”.³³

Nevertheless, the tensions and practical problems of promoting democracy as part of security interests, and against terrorism, were significant. Along these lines, Carothers (2003b) criticized the instrumentalization of the democracy promotion discourse, and the potential to overestimate the US actual ability to “export” democracy. This scholar and an official from the administration exchanged some arguments (Dobriansky & Carothers, 2003), but the uncertainties in Iraq, the US policy of double standards with Pakistan and Saudi Arabia (among others) and the challenge of election results (Hamas in Palestine, January 2006) kept introducing difficulties on the compatibility of democracy promotion and the War on Terror.

Significantly, research on the links between fighting terror and promoting democracy boomed, but it was not consensual. An example that made the case *for* promotion was Windsor's (2003) argument that democracy could help prevent (Islamist) extremism. Such publications illustrated the links between the knowledge networks and policy-making, since Windsor was Executive Director of Freedom House. Despite the ideas of a “virtuous circle” of policies, this research neglected

³³ George W. Bush, “Fighting a Global War on Terror” Discourse at FBI Academy, Quantico, Virginia, 11 July, 2005. The reference to the Democratic Peace is clear here.

the fact that extremism could perform well and win elections³⁴. In addition, it misunderstood the transnational nature of the threat: that terrorism poses distinct problems as non-state actor and can exist in democratic states (this was the experience in several European countries).

Finally, these arguments and the policies that followed underestimated the key links between the state and democracy, i.e. that democracy needs the basis of a state structure. In fact, enhancing democratic-*state* capacity remained a conundrum in American democracy promotion, because documents and institutions fostered a model of democracy focused on the role of elites and on civil society, not on the state. For example, in a USAID (2002a) report on Foreign Aid in the National Interest renown scholar Larry Diamond made the case for supporting democratic trends in civil society, and argued:

“State capacity must be enhanced, but it makes no sense to strengthen the capacity of state structures that lack the political will to govern responsibly. Building effective state structures must be a major goal of assistance for democracy and governance, but not until state leaders are serious about governance. Large investments in the infrastructure and technical capacity of judiciaries and legislatures will be largely wasted if there is no political will to use the enhanced capabilities for more honest, responsive, and accountable governance” (p. 60)³⁵.

Yet the War on Terror and more specifically the interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq needed a ‘nation-building’ phase of democracy promotion. There was an imperative for practical, immediate contributions, while transitologists had been studying cases but no overall consensus was established. State-building was identified as a precondition in the cases of weak or failed states in the late 1990s and into the 2000s, as democracy promotion policies targeted Africa and post-conflict societies (Linz & Stepan, 1996). Importantly, the contributions to American know-how came from the Department of Defense and think tanks such as the RAND Corporation and the American Enterprise Institute; these publications intended to give practical if somewhat simplistic policy-advice with titles as *The*

³⁴ Possibly, the experience of this “failure of democracy” in Europe –notably regarding Nazi Germany and other totalitarianisms in the 20th century- made for a more careful European rhetoric in this regard, in contrast with American perspectives.

³⁵ This example also illustrates the input from the academic community in democracy promotion policy documents. Diamond also played a key role in the design of the post-invasion strategy for Iraq.

beginners' guide to nation-building (Dobbins, Jones, Crane, & Cole DeGrasse, 2007; Dobbins, McGinn, Crane, & Jones, 2003) or *Nation-building 101* (Fukuyama, 2004). The real problematique was the extent to which states should organize and guarantee services to the citizens, because liberal policies requested “less state” but war-torn societies needed basic infrastructures (Chesterman, Ignatieff, & Thakur, 2005).

Robert Jervis (2006) found somewhat ironic that Bush seemed to want to “change” an international order where America was the hegemon, and he explained this by the way democracy promotion is anchored in US political culture and by the president’s own “missionary zeal”. Bush’s new order consisted in overcoming an “ideological frontier”, but Jervis worried about how this quest could be balanced with the “constraints of an intractable world”. Indeed, the international context shaped the US “new mission” and vice-versa, and among the complexities and evolving features, the changing role of the European Union in International Relations was also key, as it increasingly turned Europe from subordinate to challenger in transatlantic relations.

4. European democracy promotion: a normative and civilian “superpower in the making”?

This section sets the previous discussion of European democracy promotion and “universalism” in the post-Cold War context. This universalism presented a series of EU factors (multilateralism, civilian and normative power) as willful ideology, but this section contends that EU democracy promotion is also explained by the domestic and international context regarding EU capabilities and an alternative definition of power. This discussion can be usefully framed with the question: is the EU a “superpower in the making”? (Galtung, 1973; Hill, 2002; McCormick, 2006). Democracy promotion must be understood within three key debates on the role of Europe in International Relations: the “rise” of this “superpower”, the question of capabilities and effectiveness, and the dynamics of Europeanization.

European Political Cooperation and post-Maastricht Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) set the ground for a vast literature on the EU as an international actor regarding matters other than economic (Ben Tonra, 2000; White, 2001). Indeed, during the post-Cold War period, a stronger (legal) basis, more tools, and political will established the EU as a polity with foreign policy (K. E. Smith, 2003a), and the development of European positions and initiatives became stronger vis-à-vis the United States (Carlsnaes et al., 2004; Hill & Smith, 2005; W. Wallace, 1999).

The nature of the EU draws the analysts' attention to the role of supranational or intergovernmental institutions and to the development of specific policy areas or "competencies" (Hix, 2005; McCormick, 2002). In this regard, democracy promotion was exceptionally cross-pillar, cross-themes: instances of CFSP (intergovernmental) went hand in hand with instruments where the treaties allowed for more supranational dynamics as Development Cooperation (democracy was linked to socioeconomic development); human rights had been at the heart of the European Parliament's tasks since its creation. In this regard, two dynamics were at stake: integration vs. member state-sovereignty regarding the kind of polity, and supranationalism vs. intergovernmentalism regarding the kind of power/policy.

Part of this literature sought to describe and assess the achievements and shortcomings of the EU promotion of democracy and human rights (Crawford, 2001; Ethier, 2003; Holden, 2003; Pi, 2000; K. E. Smith, 2004; Youngs, 2001b). Here, the case of EU policies on enlargement became key. The experience of European policies towards Greece, Portugal and Spain, though part of a previous "wave", influenced the enlargement process to post-communist Eastern and Central Europe (ECE) during the post-Cold War period. EU democracy promotion was driven by this evidence, which seemed complex (each of the cases brought in specific challenges) and based on material and on "soft power".

Studies about explicit programs of democracy assistance often focused on the EU-budget lines (around euro 100 million/year) that were grouped in 2008 under the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), an "integrated policy" managed at the EU. The following table indicates how EIDHR implied EC agents, and set out some guidelines (regional, thematic, distribution, non-governmental recipients) that provide some first conceptions of what European democracy promotion implied.

Table 5. European explicit policy (budgetary allocation) to promote democracy and human rights

	9 budget lines (B7-7)	European Initiative DHR	European Instrument DHR
Period	1994-99	2000-2007	2007-2013
Agent	Directorates General	EuropeAid (AidCo)	EuropeAid (AidCo)
Content	Regional focus	Thematic focus + Region/country	Thematic focus
Beneficiaries	Includes NGOs	Mostly large NGOs: (80%)	NGOs, including smaller Also political agents (e.g. local parliaments)

Primary documents explain EU objectives and functioning (EuropeAid, 2004, 2006, 2007; European Commission, 2006)³⁶ and there are also counted instances of internal auditing (Court of Auditors of the European Communities, 2000)³⁷. General comparisons between the US and the EU (for instance by the OECD) picture the EU as main provider of aid in the world, often assuming this is also valid as measure for democracy promotion. In these, the “EU side” includes this EIDHR but also the European Development Funds (around USD 5 billion/year, or a total of euro 13.5 billion for the period 2000-2007)³⁸ plus, importantly, the individual policies of Member States. Sometimes, EU documents and officials highlight themes such as the protection of minorities’ rights and the abolition of the death penalty as “European model” (EuropeAid, 2004; European Parliament, 2005; Kionka, 2007). Yet this overemphasized the EU as if it were the only exclusive defender of these causes, and mixed up the definition of democracy promotion. With the abolition of the death penalty, an aspect of “European universalism”

³⁶ Again, quantitative analysis involved some methodological difficulties as the budgets were multi-annual and broke down in unequal categories (sometimes only marginally related to democracy); additional budget lines were conceded to themes/regions/countries outside EUDHR, and there was a gap between allocation and actual disbursement. For the most informative survey for the period 2000-6, see (Youngs, 2006).

³⁷ Interestingly, and an illustration of the inter-agency competition, the Commission raised an objection to the Court’s audit of the policies’ success –arguing the Court could only audit the funds’ allocation, but not their use.

³⁸ These funds are managed by the Commission DG Development and Cooperation, and are usually allocated to governmental programs/targets, not NGOs.

seemed to be constructed vis-à-vis the US³⁹, but in any case this could hardly be equated with a definition of democracy.

4.1. The EU as normative, civilian “superpower”

The European Community proved to be exceptional as economic cooperation and integration led to an ever more prosperous Western Europe, while the political ties (notably between Germany and France) seemed to guarantee security. In the 1970s and 1980s, debates on the external leverage of Europe grew more common, and Johan Galtung (1973) asserted that Europe could evolve to become a “superpower”. In the post-Cold War period, more scholars started to consider this “superpower in the making” (Hill, 2002). Yet while only few questioned American hegemony (Todd, 2002), the potential and reality of EU power in IR was not consensual in academia. More importantly, this reflected the political debates and dynamics of (limited) integration that took place in the continent. Security debates were tied to the evolution of NATO (notably its enlargement to the East). NATO was identified with a continuation of American leadership and with ongoing tensions, as the US demanded more contribution from Europeans, but it also discouraged EU independence and “emancipation” (Niblett & Wallace, 2001; Nuland, 2008; Thornton, 2008).

These debates brought in a series of paradoxes regarding the nature of the European polity (Zielonka, 1998) and of the EU “original power”, i.e. normative or civilian rather than military (Bull, 1982; Duchene, 1973). This has been used to characterize European power; EU democracy promotion has often been assumed to fit these categories and thus reinforce Europe as this kind of “superpower”. This thesis challenges this picture of democracy promotion as a policy that fits the civilian and normative EU image; it argues that this played a rhetorical role in the construction of an EU universalism but did not completely correspond to the empirical reality.

The reality was one where the definition of the EU as “superpower” under those features could not be taken for granted, because this assumed a definition of

³⁹ Indeed, it has been disputed that this should be considered a structural US-EU difference –only the contemporary practice is different (Moravcsik, 2001).

what was considered “power” that was not evident within Europe nor in the international system. Within Europe, the prospects to develop power involved traditional conceptions and notably security and military affairs. The EU was said to gather strength as it developed CFSP and a European Defense Policy, with events and trends as the St. Malo Franco-British summit of 1998 and the St. Petersberg tasks defining EU intervention. The EU seemed attached to Westphalian features i.e. diplomacy, army, police, intelligence, hard external borders (Zielonka, 2007, p. 140); these are key in European discourses to build power as an external actor. Here there was a difference with the US in that the EU did not “securitize” democracy promotion, i.e. this element remained outside the realm of traditional, hard power considerations. For example, in documents such as the 2003 *European Security Strategy*, there is no explicit mention of democracy promotion other than to potential member states, no reference to a world of Kantian Democratic Peace. Democracy promotion was in principle not to be associated to EU external security.

This brings nuance to the picture of EU as civilian and normative power developed above: this picture existed, but there was a real tension over whether to bet on “traditional” (Realist, military, hard) power or these “new” conceptions of power. There were key political debates on *what kind* of superpower the EU could and should be. The EU was constructing this universalism, and it seemed appropriate to consider that studies on civilian power influenced policy-development further; yet there was also evidence that this was only one facet of the EU as “superpower in the making” (K. E. Smith, 2005). For detractors, it was plausible that the EU was actually not civilian and normative by choice, but because it could not aspire to hard power (Laidi, 2005). The EU illustrated this way the debates about power ongoing in International Relations (Baldwin, 2002), while at the same time it seemed to tilt the balance over the “new” interpretations of power to solve conflicts in globalization (civilian power, cosmopolitan rights, human security). These debates existed within Europe: Member States defended traditional notions of power and security (France clearly, while this is not obvious for other MS), while europeanized circles conceived and betted on the EU as

civilian superpower, a dynamic emphasized by the transnational, civilian, democratic nature of the EU itself⁴⁰.

Another important aspect regarding the “superpower in the making” was that this self-definition counted, but only as long as others considered civilian and normative attributes (and hence the EU) as powerful. As Jolyon Howorth (2008) argues, this may have allowed Europe to become a “power in the world” but not a “world power”, for which military might still seemed to count. For this reason, building up the EU as democracy promoter might not have been a way to strengthen the EU as a superpower either. This view was emphasized with the unilateralism and militarization of American foreign policy during the Bush administration, during which “American hegemony” underlined hard power instead of an international system where countries joined in. Yet there were doubts about the extent of such hegemony if “soft power” was lacking and, as Kaldor argued, the reality was that the US had been losing power and that “only multilateral framework and humanitarian norms [could] restore America’s ability for compellance” (Kaldor, 2003a).

In sum, “superpower in the making” seems an adequate phrase to characterize the EU in post-Cold War IR, though it raises questions about the kind of polity and the kind of power the EU is. There has been no consistent answer to those questions. On the one hand, the political debates and tensions in the EU (rhetoric and practice) were ongoing. On the other, interpretations of contemporary international relations and power depended on geopolitical or cosmopolitan points of view –these debates existed in the academic world, but also permeated US and EU diverging positions. In the EU, democracy promotion would traditionally fit the arguments of civilian and normative power, and of cosmopolitan IR (globalization), yet this categorization was not obvious. This meant that the pictures of the US and the EU and also of democracy promotion (securitized or not, source of power or not) needed more nuance; this underlined in turn the *political* understandings of democracy promotion.

⁴⁰ It is beyond the scope of this research to elaborate on the national positions and on how these translated in the EU discourse and policies, but this opens an important question for further research. Importantly, CFSP was mainly intergovernmental and the transnational debates on the EU’s international role may have constructed the discourse yet had limited influence on the policies.

4.2. EU democracy promotion: successful enlargement but limited capabilities

Another important argument in the literature on the EU as an international actor was Christopher Hill's (1993) identification of a gap between the EU capabilities and the expectations abroad; this framework was used to analyze EU policies and their shortcomings empirically. This hints at the difficulties and controversies of democracy promotion itself, and at a gap that not only depended on the promoter's ability but also on the possibilities on the ground, and where the evaluation depends on the views and expectations projected. This approach is key to explore whether the gap between expectations and capabilities to promote democracy was only European or American or, as explored in this thesis, related to the more general limitations of external actors in democratization processes.

Here the focus is on Chris Hill's critique that "superpower" Europe remained on the side of expectations that were not matched by EU capabilities. This argument has been explored regarding foreign policy in general and defense in particular, where some EU officials insisted on the need to develop capabilities (Chris Patten, 2005). Democracy promotion has perhaps epitomized the gap between the ambitions and the limits of the EU, and in order to measure its power, it was important to interrogate what the EU achieved, i.e. whether it actually could promote democracy as it was expected it would⁴¹.

One important question was whether the EU could be successful only in its neighborhood, as the cases of candidates had shown. EU authorities and scholars have indeed granted that enlargement has been *the* successful EU foreign policy; consequently, EU capabilities in the near-abroad have been proven (Timothy Garton Ash, 2006; Solana, 2003b; W. Wallace, 2003). The Eastern and Central European case has nourished the literature on EU democracy promotion for the past 15 years, and established that the main EU capabilities were potential membership and conditionality. Defense issues were left aside and approached from a NATO perspective (Seidelmann, 2001), so this was a case where security issues were

⁴¹ Nevertheless, as with the conception of "power", Jorgensen (1998) warned that the evaluation of EU success could actually depend on the yardstick used by the observer, who often projected its own views and expectations.

considered separately from democratization⁴². The ECE contributed to establish that EU-membership could trigger and succeed in democracy promotion for two main, related reasons: incentives were high (Pridham, 2007; Schimmelfennig & Scholtz, 2007) and conditionality was high (Ethier, 2003; Sorensen, 1993; Vachudova, 2001). However, this literature emphasizes that EU democracy promotion was not only a matter of “soft” power, as sanctions and potential sanctions had much leverage, and the EU often acted unilaterally. Again, the picture was nuanced regarding the universalism and the EU experience.

By contrast, the capabilities of the EU to promote democracy elsewhere or otherwise have been questioned altogether. This thesis is sympathetic to the exceptional character of democracy promotion in the case of candidate countries, which is, in a way, “anticipated domestic policy”. As a result this research does not analyze these cases, and it does not consider the hypothesis picturing the EU as magnet (Pevehouse, 2005). This also derives from this research’s conceptualization of the EU as international actor that is comparable to the United States, and from its subject of interest being their roles as democracy promoters in International Relations rather than their internal/expanding synergy.

Hill’s observations about the European Union’s capabilities-expectations gap lead us to consider another interesting aspect, namely the role that non-EU citizens and EU citizens expected the EU to play. Overall, there were high expectations for the EU to play a significant role in IR throughout this period both in Europe and in the world. This was the case in Iran and the Arab world (Hollis, 1997), and what transnational surveys reported, e.g. Pew, German Marshall Fund, and Bertelmanns Institute reports. Eurobarometer reports have been interpreted this way on the basis that for instance in 2007, 62% of EU citizens would like Member States and the EU to take decisions on foreign policy jointly (European Commission, 2007). In European political circles, the quest for a more assertive role for the EU was active (Ahtisaari & Fischer, 2007), though for observers such as Timothy Garton Ash

⁴² It is beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss NATO’s leverage in democracy promotion, but it is important to notice that it has arguably been ambiguous too: it often served as basis, precondition and development of democracy, but these aspects could be secondary to security. Previously this had been illustrated by the early accession of Turkey and Portugal to NATO but stricter democratic conditionality in the European Communities. In any case, NATO is core to the American-European partnership and illustrates the importance of democracy promotion for both sides and a number of additional tools (democratization of military forces, involvement of parliamentarians, etc.).

(2005) this did not necessarily mean that EU action would, or should, challenge the Western partnership.

Finally, the academic literature on Transatlantic relations was not consensual about a strong EU, either present or future. Some scholars disregarded EU action as limited re-action, for instance Lieber (2006, p. 262) argued the EU was “not about to emerge as a superpower, let alone a balancer against the United States”. However, many more authors started to picture the EU as “challenger”, and argued that the EU capability to act abroad in development cooperation and trade had increased its clout. For these authors, the confrontation vis-à-vis the United States was an integral part of what could make Europe a “super-state” (Haseler, 2004) and even “the next superpower” in economic, geopolitical and cultural dimensions (Schnabel & Rocca, 2005). In his analysis of the rise of Europe, Kupchan actually identified that Europe could challenge the American plans of global democracy promotion, turning the Atlantic into “a new axis of competition” (Kupchan, 2002)⁴³. This view was also part of Cox’s (2005) portrayal of “terrors in Transatlantia”, emphasizing the rift rather than the drift.

4.3 EU democracy promotion: in the making? Europeanization plans

In this nuanced picture of the international “rise” of the EU, there was potential and also clear attempts to “Europeanize” democracy promotion. In principle it was an area where policy could be coordinated (it was not controversial), and important instruments already existed, such as the EIDHIR and Development Funds. Nevertheless, in practice, it was difficult to overcome the fragmentation between institutions and to conciliate the different interests of actors, including the transnational or national bodies in charge of channeling funds or implementing projects on the ground. This potential and the shortcomings were illustrated by an important initiative to create a “Foundation for European Democracy Promotion”, which can be interpreted as a conscious and willful effort to construct a EU approach in practice, centralizing funds and decision-making and somewhat *branding* European democracy promotion. These efforts have actually not born

⁴³ In his chapter on “the false promise of globalization and democracy”, Kupchan claims “the EU may well find it convenient, if not necessary, to propagate a new and ambitious brand of pan-european nationalism” p. 117.

fruit and such a foundation does not exist as of 2009. Yet the initiative illustrated important aspects of EU democracy promotion: the potential and interest in building a joint, European effort, but also the limits and fragmentation within Europe and the role of the diverse agents' interests and of power politics.

Historically, the relevance of foundations in the promotion of democracy and human rights dates back to the German political party *Stiftungen* during the Cold War, which influenced the creation of the American counterparts. These foundations diverge from the traditional, mainly American private organizations based (often exclusively) on private funds and with no formal connection with public political institutions [cf. Chapter 1, Chapter 3]⁴⁴. In the US, the party institutes NDI and IRI associated with other public actors (including labor unions) under the National Endowment for Democracy. In principle, this unified front makes sense because they pursue non-partisan goals in democracy promotion and agents can in this way maximize their domestic clout: according to rational choice institutionalism, they will also increase their funding and range of action (Pollack, 1997, p. 100). The idea of creating a European foundation that brings together the *Stiftungen* and other actors would similarly seek to increase the national foundations' clout while also endowing democracy promotion with a distinct "European approach".

The project was developed mainly by the Netherlands Institute of Multi-party Democracy (NIMD), with support of the British Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD). It was pushed forward as of 2003 and gained additional importance under the Dutch presidency of the European Council in 2004, during which democracy promotion was high on the agenda. A key conference on "Enhancing the European profile in democracy assistance" was organized in July 2004 to brainstorm on what that *European profile* could be. Significantly, it brought together academics, think tanks, NGOs and national and EU officials, allowing for a very important transnational, non-governmental input at this stage of policy-definition⁴⁵. The main presentations were gathered in a publication

⁴⁴ I consider these foundations, as Rockefeller, Open Society, etc. as non-state, often transnational, actors in democracy promotion. They are however not central in this analysis of US and EU policies [cf. Chapter 3].

⁴⁵ Indeed, a number of think tanks and individual identified that democracy promotion could play a key role in defining European external action (also vis-à-vis the US). Among them there were the Centre for European Reform (researcher Steven Everts would later work as Special Counselor for Javier Solana at the General Secretariat of the Council) and the Open Society Institute (fellow Mark

symbolically entitled “Democracy: Europe’s core value” and included both academic and policy-oriented pieces (von Meijenfeld & van Doorn, 2007). In addition, a final Statement was presented to the EU presidency to pursue this goal further (NIMD Europe Conference, 2004).

Within this context, there were numerous exchanges among EU institutions, think tanks (including FRIDE in Madrid), and the foundations in different countries, and several drafts for a European Foundation for Democracy through Partnership were presented in 2006 and 2007. This proposal was submitted by D. French, Chief Executive of the Westminster Foundation for Democracy, and R. von Meijenfeld, Executive Director of the NIMD. The comparison with American democracy promotion was explicit, as if the Europeans were copying the model back from the other side of the Atlantic. Seemingly, they were also measuring the EU initiative with the levels of the NED. The 2006 draft acknowledged:

“The Foundation should be provided (after its start-up phase) with sufficient funding to enable it to fulfill its remit, with commitments to it made on a rolling basis. (The total budget for the foundation should resemble that of the US National Endowment for Democracy, euro 50 million in 2005 and euro 62 million in 2006.) The Foundation would be primarily funded from the EU, the EU Member States and the private sector.”⁴⁶

In the draft, the Foundation was presented as an ideal link between civil and political society and underlined that it would provide expertise and knowledge as well as flexible, easier access to the target (compared to heavier bureaucratic procedures in the EU and MS). Yet it also emphasized how democracy promotion would be used to raise the EU’s profile in international relations and “to strengthen Europe’s strategic contribution [...] and the achievement of wider international objectives for development and security” (p. 8). Pragmatically, the proposal suggested joining all European public funding (Member States and EU), where its role would be to coordinate and monitor EU activities, both non-governmental and governmental.

The initiative was met with enthusiasm by some individuals in the European Parliament, where the main attractive seemed to be the increased EU visibility that

Leonard ran some workshops on democracy promotion in 2007, before the foundation of the European Council on Foreign Relations).

⁴⁶ (“European Foundation for democracy through partnership: a proposal for a new initiative in EU democracy assistance world-wide,” 2006, p. 10)

democracy promotion could earn on the ground and internationally⁴⁷. However, there were also other, internal, political considerations at play, such as the possibility to create a new EP Committee on democracy, separate from the one on human rights; this meant an additional Chairmanship would have to be allocated to a political party (a very important issue in EP politics)⁴⁸. Similarly, though some foundations and think tanks supported the proposal of one Foundation, there was resistance to centralize decision-making and financial processes on the part of most non-governmental actors and of many EU officials. Indeed, the main opposition to the Foundation actually arose from the German party foundations, both the conservative Konrad Adenauer stiftung and the socialist Friedrich Ebert stiftung. Arguably, the foundations feared that the very generous (German, public) funds they are allocated yearly would be dispersed, as the budget would be redirected to this EU central pool. Some individuals also resented that the Foundation would empower some individuals and boards, while other NGOs and activists would be left out. Finally, officials in the Commission (AidCo) and some EP officials were also suspicious of such a “new kid” on the block of democracy promotion, and preferred to keep more direct control/monitoring of the projects and funding⁴⁹. This attempt to centralize European democracy promotion thus did not succeed for practical reasons but also political differences, which illustrates the fragmentation as well as the politicization on the promoters’ side of policy making.

I will refer to one last example to bring this discussion back to the general context of democracy promotion in the EU. During an event related to the Foundation plans, the President of the European Commission Barroso stood for Europeanized democracy promotion in a speech where he mentioned “universal values that must be promoted worldwide” but also Europe’s “own version of democratization”. In a clever turn, he argued that the contemporary international context is one where the EU is “a world power whose soft power is a hard reality”. He then sought to co-opt all EU parties internally, asserting that “democracy promotion is an area where everybody can play a role: Member States, European

⁴⁷ The Democracy Caucus of the EP adopted the concept of a European Democracy Foundation [source: <http://www.democracycaucus.org/42904.html>]. An active proponent of the project was Markus Meckel MEP, former foreign minister of East Germany (Meckel, 2006), and also the British MEP Scott-McMillan.

⁴⁸ Source: interview with Official, DG External Policies, EP, Brussels, 22 June 2005.

⁴⁹ Source: interviews with Policy Officer, NIMD and with Research associate, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Brussels, 8 January 2007.

institutions, etc.”. Barroso also praised the achievements of the Commission, which “fosters and restates democracy in Political Dialogue as part of bilateral relations” (Barroso, 2008). The general tone and such specific mentions to bilateral relations between the EU and non-democratic countries seek to emphasize the EU own, independent capabilities in IR, separate from MS, yet in cooperation. There was no mention of the transatlantic partnership.

This section has given evidence of how democracy promotion was embedded in the European universalism and gained an increasing role in the rise of the EU, while it was also trapped in the nuances and paradoxes of the EU as “superpower”: it seemed an instance of civilian and normative power, but it was not certain that this would actually yield international power to the EU.

Conclusion

Chapter 1 discussed the literature on democracy promotion and how this research contributed to it. This chapter has complemented this thesis’ research framework with the discussion of the US and the EU as international actors in the context of transatlantic relations. This chapter framed US and EU democracy promotion in the longer history, identifying how specific experiences and ideas corresponded to (and in turn generated) different approaches.

Importantly, it has substantiated that democracy promotion contributed to the development of two “universalisms” of sorts during the post-Cold War period. Despite the continuing rhetoric of cooperation, two independent narratives portrayed the US and the EU as distinct democracy promoters. These universalisms displayed elements that not only distinguished American and European approaches, but also made explicit the rivalry between them. Democracy promotion and the US and EU universalisms were better understood linking the study of identity and of role-construction in international relations. In designing its own action and role, the European Union notably defined itself vis-à-vis the United States, hence using the concepts of “civilian” and “normative” power.

The distinction and divergence was understood, and explained, in the context of post-Cold War International Relations that saw the United States confirm democracy promotion as a new mission and the European Union develop new and

stronger capabilities as an international actor. Regarding US democracy promotion, the chapter discussed some specificities of the Clinton and Bush administrations while making the case for continuity and structural features of “American” democracy promotion; it also presented the turning point of 9/11 and the challenges to reconcile policies and to include state-building in the War on Terror.

In the EU, democracy promotion was partly made to fit the corresponding universalism, but this chapter has argued that this narrative also presented important shortcomings: civilian power was (maybe) not so powerful, and the EU did not seem to be limited to civilian, normative roles. The chapter explored the complex evidence that exists in this regard, establishing the extent to which democracy promotion contributes to a European “superpower in the making” with independent foreign policy, and to the picture of an emancipation of sorts from the United States. Beyond the narrative, the chapter discussed one pragmatic initiative, the European foundation for democracy. This illustrated the rise and Europeanization of democracy promotion, how its content and shape were designed vis-à-vis American democracy promotion and, importantly, how internal interests and politics had led to such an initiative but also dragged it down.

Chapters 1 and 2 have focused on the content of European and American democracy promotion. They will now be completed with a study of the actors in the policy-making process in Chapter 3. This will finalize the thesis’ depiction of US and EU democracy promotion before moving on to the case studies.

Chapter 3. Democracy promotion in American and European policy-making: dispersed agency, fragmented processes

Who are the “democracy promoters” that develop or even embody the American and the European approaches? Do they inform, draft, assign and implement the policies like “intellectuals” or like “bureaucrats”? E. H. Carr thought there was a sort of antithesis of theory and practice in politics in the roles of “the intellectual and the bureaucrat, the former trained to think mainly on a priori lines, the latter empirically” (Carr, 2001, 1981, p. 14). Democracy promotion makes its way from the utopian views and principled goals of the top decision-makers in the United States and Europe and through the policy-making processes –styles and bureaucratic cultures will shape the policy outcome. Eventually, it translates into wide-ranging programs implemented in non-democratic countries. The policy entrepreneurs both sides of the Atlantic are thus influenced by epistemic communities, bureaucratic processes, and the practitioners’ choices when implementing the policies. The goal of this chapter is to throw light on the politics of this phenomenon where theory and practice intertwine.

This chapter addresses the agency question “what is done where, and by whom” in American and European democracy promotion. It focuses on the public/governmental action in the policy-process, keeping in mind that the process also involves private actors. Indeed, depending on the definitions and the estimations, the “democracy promotion community” amounted to several thousand officials and professionals (Melia, 2005), several dozen independent bodies (Carothers, 1999) or

broadly “many advocates for a new doctrine” (Mayall, 2000)¹. The state and non-state members of this loose, open “community” undertook international action as a joint venture where the views of intellectuals and bureaucrats co-existed, and where it was often difficult to consider some actors, or their approach, strictly “American” or “European”.

Nevertheless, this chapter gives evidence of how democracy promotion was shaped in two distinct foreign policy processes, and how this accounted for some important differences in the American and European approaches. As it discusses the constraints and domestic pressures that shaped the policy-making processes (Peterson, 1996), its goal is to nuance this thesis’ picture of transatlantic relations.

This chapter takes into consideration the definition of democracy adopted in Chapter 1, adopting a pragmatic and relatively classical FPA approach. The differences in the political structures and cultures in the US and the EU were manifest in specific policy-dynamics, illustrated by the actors’ potential and actual undertakings regarding democracy promotion. This chapter’s focus on the policy-dynamics one side and the other of the Atlantic allows exploring the elements of the “rival universalisms” mentioned in Chapter 2 (International Project and Prescription). More specifically, this approach allows identifying the *locus* of policy-initiatives, policy-development, decision-making and implementation (Webber & Smith, 2002). At the same time, the goal is to capture the *politics* in this process (Hill, 2003). The discussion of each approach follows four broadly-conceived “stages” in the policy-making process from guidelines to implementation, and focuses on the actors’ roles and power.

Section 1) discusses some generalities and the shortcomings of cataloguing policy-makers as “American” or “European”; it introduces three main characteristics of the policy-process: transnational, fragmented, interest competition. Sections 2 and 3 draw the picture of the American and European approaches focusing on the structures and the most important actors, i.e. the location of policy-making. Each section is divided internally in the four stages of the process: general guidelines, policy design, policy implementation-phase A (selection, allocation) and policy implementation-phase B (execution in the field).

¹ It is interesting to notice that some actors, on the contrary, specifically and explicitly *exclude* themselves from the “democracy promotion community”. This was the case of several Human Rights associations and Amnesty International [interview with senior policy official, Open Society Institute, Brussels 8 January 2007].

1. Complex and transnational relations; a comparative framework

1.1. “American” and “European” democracy promoters?

While it was easier to identify and classify promoters at the beginning of the official policy-process, as one moves along, actors include NGOs (international or local) and knowledge-hubs (research centers, experts, projects) that can difficultly be classified as “American” or “European”. This input came from actors that were independent but at the same time embedded in the American or European context, or actors that were concerned about the target-country yet remained dependant on US and EU funds.

Some of this input was of intellectual nature or, as far as that could be established, “expert advice”. For example, many publications from the Stanford Center for Democracy, Development and Rule of Law included policy advice, the Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars (Washington, D.C.) played a role in shaping policies in the Congo, and the World Movement for Democracy (loosely connected to Freedom House and the NED) served as framework in the Community of Democracies non-governmental process. Yet we could not swiftly conclude that this was “American” democracy promotion. Similarly, the think tank European Center for Development Policy Management (ECDPM), working with governmental funds of eight European countries², played a key role in the assessment and elaboration of European Union policies towards ACP countries. Yet they may use worldwide consultants and were not answerable to any institution, so one cannot easily conclude this was “European” democracy promotion either. These democracy promoters enjoyed clear freedom of mind and critical, independent action.

The input could also be more practical, as it was impossible and probably undesirable that US or EU officials perform these tasks on the ground. Within this category there were large NGOs: for instance the Electoral Institute of South Africa (EISA), which has played a key role in organizing and monitoring many African electoral processes. Among EISA’s donors were European development agencies or embassies (Norway, Sweden, UK, Germany, Belgium, Ireland, Denmark) and the

² The Development Ministries of Belgium, the Netherlands, Finland, Sweden, Portugal, Ireland, Luxembourg and [the non-EU member state] Switzerland.

EU, as well as USAID and the Open Society Initiative³. There were also small NGOs or contractors that responded, for example, to calls for offers on “women empowerment in the Middle East” in the framework of *both* the MEPI (American) or EIDHR (EU) programs. When they received financial support, these private actors “became” field-agents of the American or European authorities. Yet, they perceived themselves as independent actors with their own project or, at most, as partners with the donor. It is true that one single NGO may receive grants from both the US and the EU for one project, and that while some NGOs targeted single donors, many were increasingly diversifying their sources. The applications were made on pragmatic grounds, i.e. NGOs mostly applied for funds they thought they could get, not selecting US or European donors on principle. In addition, it was possible that the programs were not exactly implemented the way they were accepted in the call. Practitioners also had a relatively ample margin for freedom, and were pragmatic and flexible⁴. They could not be classified as “European” or “American” easily; and there were also many connections between local and international actors⁵.

This community was transnational in the sense that it brought together an open network of political actors, and private and public institutions and individuals (Josselin & Wallace, 2001, pp. 2-3)⁶. Along these lines, democracy promotion illustrated globalization and some of its features: global networks, flows and relations (Held, McGrew, Goldblatt, & Perraton, 2003). First, actors and policies were interconnected (and increasingly so). Secondly, this transnationality and networks constructed and defined democracy promotion structurally (as an international phenomenon). Thirdly, this phenomenon conditioned patterns of domestic, social, economic and political organization worldwide (in any case, beyond state borders). It is uncertain, nevertheless, that these features were becoming institutionalized in the international system, how and why.

³ Information available at EISA website (<http://www.eisa.org.za/EISA/donors.htm>).

⁴ Practitioners often complained about the abstract, sidetracked nature of some of the calls, drafted by “people sitting behind a desk” and considered their own decisions legitimate [interviews with personnel from NGOs in Kinshasa 29 October 2006, Bamako 15 November 2007, London 3 January 2008].

⁵ My use of “community” here mirrors the self-denomination that many practitioners used, and I use it to emphasize the aspects of collectivity and common interest, though the structure was loose and open.

⁶ The authors also quote a definition of Thomas Risse-Kappen (1995).

1.2. Fragmentation and competing interests

Two other characteristics are key to understanding this democracy promotion community of private and private actors, namely fragmentation and competing interests. The sections on the American and the European approaches will give evidence of this and also explain the politics within these processes.

The first characteristic was the fragmentation within this community. There was a very wide diversity of goals, tasks and competencies in the US and the EU settings. For example, DG Development and Cooperation and USAID were supposed to focus on development, while DG External Relations and the Department of State dealt with external relations more broadly. Within the case of DG Development and Cooperation, the competence is actually geographic instead of thematic –its action is traditionally addressed to ACP countries (not the Middle East, not future Member States). There was also fragmentation regarding institutional competences, such as the Commission’s vis-à-vis the European Parliament’s and those of Congress vis-à-vis the administration’s. These were key in the processes of legislation and budget approval, and driven by separate agendas and political interests⁷. This fragmentation derived from the legal provisions (Treaties or US Constitution, and the rest of the body of laws), but only to a certain extent. Individuals could clearly have a distinct impact and develop some agendas, and institutions often adopted network-governance methods. Indeed, democracy promotion provides an interesting example of what Slaughter (2003, p. 190) called “governing through networks”, where officials from governments developed policy in decentralized and informal international networks. For example, there were meetings and correspondence to prepare documents (summits, conferences) and circulation of policy guidelines. Hence there was fragmentation but also potential for cooperative synergies. There were also usual “revolving doors” in which civil servants, officials and politicians became “non-governmental” academic experts, managers or consultants at research institutes and NGOs, and vice-versa.

Fragmentation also took place at the level of expertise, especially among non-state actors. Consultants and policy-advisers and NGOs on the ground worked on specific topics, e.g. rule of law, the abolition of the death penalty, electoral

⁷ In the case of the EIDHR, the EP played a very important role as it had a co-decision power for this non-compulsory budget. In the case of the US, Bush (the executive) regularly demanded higher allocations for democracy promotion (e.g. for the NED) than he eventually got approved by Congress.

assistance. This sometimes led to gaps between topic expertise and background reality, or to incoherent or unbalanced strategies. Finally, there was also fragmentation in that the instruments devoted to promote democracy were very diverse: agreements that implied conditionality, direct financing of projects, cooperation with incumbent governments, funds for civil society. This multiplicity of actors and fragmentation in the American and European approaches amounted to a puzzle-picture of democracy promotion. Despite the complications, for many this was also a positive aspect: pooling wide-ranging and rich resources, maximizing expertise (at least in theory), and avoiding monopoly of decision-making and action⁸.

The second characteristic concerned the many interests /competing claims that converged in democracy promotion policies. The US and the EU did not only promote democracy because it was their value, this served other interests notably in the realms of security and economics [cf. Chapter 1]. The priorities and objectives varied for the different actors feeding into the policy process. For example, many argued that USAID needed its independence from the Departments of Defense/State in order to safeguard the Modernization (development and democracy) paradigm and not only the nation's interests in the short-term. Yet US governments usually used this agency as much as possible for their own purposes. In another example, the advice on democracy promotion in the Middle East issued from RAND clearly diverged from that from the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Similarly, as a research institute linked to the Barcelona Process, EuroMeSCo reports obviously emphasized the importance of the Euro-Mediterranean area and sought to raise the policies' profile; by contrast the Open Society Institute (headed by the philanthropist George Soros) focused on Eastern Europe and the post-Soviet space and thus directed funds to project and NGOs working in those countries.

1.3. A descriptive, comparative framework: locations in American and European policy-making, and four stages in the process

Transnationality, fragmentation and competing interests within and across promoters makes it difficult to establish straightforward American “vs.” European democracy promotion. Nevertheless it is possible to specify a bit further their dynamics, and address the “what is done where, and by whom” for each of the approaches. The

⁸ This visibly epitomized the liberal premises of international democracy promotion.

following table identifies the most relevant institutions and their main role in the US and the EU. For a more useful comparison between them, this analysis distinguished four stages in the policy-process⁹:

- 1) *General guidelines*: these actors proposed and conceived democracy promotion at large, interpreted the context that led to policy making and sought to imbue these policies with some principles. They influenced the provision of funds and were the last responsible decision-makers. In practice, there were no linear phases of proposition and decision, as there is some institutional bargaining in the process. Actors had power in both proposition and decision, which led to drawing the policy's general guidelines.
- 2) *Policy design and definition*: these actors¹⁰, mostly within a bureaucratic structure but also including semi-private actors, were in charge of defining areas of focus and designed democracy promotion policies at large. They also created (and constitute) the institutional memory of approaches, concepts, priorities... Their direct contact with the ground (target countries, project implementation) was scarce.
- 3) *Policy implementation phase A*: these actors included lower ranks of the bureaucratic structure (with geographic/thematic specialization) and some semi-private actors; they were in charge of operationalizing the policies by area. They were responsible for pragmatic decision-making: terms of contracts, allocation of grants, assessment (introduced accountability). They had direct knowledge and implication in the democracy promotion policies implementation.
- 4) *Policy implementation phase B*: these actors only exceptionally included officials and were mostly private organizations and individuals, including the large and dense network of transnational, non-governmental democracy activists (researchers, practitioners). Officials were occasionally deployed in the target-country, and were often tasked with supervision, organization, reporting (e.g.

⁹ I contemplated a stricter institutional approach, i.e. a list of American and European actors/agents and their tasks, but I decided to maintain the focus on democracy promotion at large. This way, I discuss the stages in the policy-process, indicating which institutions have an input, of which kind, and what this implies. This allows to analyze the politics behind this process, and to account for contextual and historical contingency when these institutional structures/roles evolved.

¹⁰ At times it is useful to differentiate among actors and agents (in charge of channeling/ implementing democracy promotion) as functionalist theories [cf. Chapter 2] but I am using "actor" broadly here not to presume that they behave only as agents. This view is inspired from Hix's review of the functionalist literature (Hix, 2005, pp. 12-18).

when incumbent governments were associated in the implementation). They were in charge of the execution of policies in the field (field teams, contractors, grantees). Importantly, in the case of the research community, they provided knowledge and advice that eventually influenced stages 2 and 3 too.

Though this chapter uses the term “stages”, in practice there is not a simple linearity in this scheme, especially considering democracy promotion at large and not instances of policy (e.g. a specific NGO program, or a budget line), as this thesis does. Indeed, at any given time, the policies implemented would influence decisions for other policies at earlier stages, or eventually lead to new guidelines. Nevertheless, these four categories conform broadly to *separate aspects* of the policy-process that were observed during fieldwork, and they offer a good entry-point to the empirical analysis. The question addressed is Robert Dahl’s “who governs?” in democracy promotion, and these stages let us discuss the “locations of policy-making” (H. Wallace & Wallace, 2000, p. 73).

This chapter’s core sections discuss the American (Section 2) and the European (Section 3) specificities in their contexts of domestic processes and politics. The analysis privileged the focus on actors rather than on the instruments of democracy promotion. In each of the stages, the diverse actors’ contributions or instruments are discussed: rhetoric of democracy promotion, decisions on intervention or budget allocations, as well as more specific elements of conditionality or earmarked aid in programs of democracy assistance. This discussion of each actor’s capacities (legal, bureaucratic, political) and of the tasks and policies undertaken throws light on how the “universalisms” manifested in the US and EU democracy promotion. This illustrates the pragmatic differences between the approaches and the political implications of these policy-dynamics.

Keeping in mind the element of transnationality in democracy promotion, a strict division between “American” and “European” for stage 4 was avoided. This framework also allowed exploring the complex input of public and private actors, and illustrating the fragmentation and competing claims in democracy promotion. In all four stages, actors and agents enjoyed a relatively wide discretion, depending on the institution and on the policy (tool) in question. The resulting policy did not imply that all competing claims had been reconciled; the outcome was often a result of compromises but owed a greater influence to the more powerful agent. Necessarily, bureaucratic politics, personalities, etc. affected the process, and the evolution of the

European Union and American political cycles created contexts/contingencies. This analytical framework (the stages) is used to give an account of the historical realities of the post-Cold War period, discussing first the American approach and second the European one.

Table 6. General framework for the analysis of American and European democracy promotion as an element of foreign policy, with focus on agents (location)

Policy-process (stages)		Location of policy-making	
		United States	European Union
1	General guidelines - Responsible decision-makers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administration (executive): Presidency Congress (legislative) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Member States Council Presidency Council of the EU European Parliament [limited influence]
2	Policy definition - Bureaucracy and semi-public actors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of State B. Democracy, Human Rights and Labor Deputy-National Security Advisor USAID Millennium Challenge Corporation NED 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commission CFSP: High Representative Comitology Policy unit; research institute ISS
3	Policy design/implementation phase A - Bureaucracy (theme/geographic)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> USAID Field decision-making Office for Democracy and Governance Office for Transition Development Department of State Centralized decision-making NED Core grantees: Party foundations (IRI, NDI) American Center for Int. Labor Solidarity Center for Int. Private Enterprise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commission DG Relex DG Dev EuropeAid Delegations (field) European Parliament Parliamentary assemblies
4	Policy implementation Phase B - Actors in the field, "execution"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NED grants to NGOs Policy-implementing institutes IFES (elections) The Carter Center US Institute for Peace Freedom House Research community: CEIP, Woodrow Wilson, Hoover, RAND... Networks (WMD) Philanthropists (Soros' Open Society) and Foundations Private companies (contractors) NGOs (not for profit) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EU Electoral Observation Recipient-government NGOs Party Foundations Research community: International Idea EuroMesCo German Marshall Fund (transatlantic) etc.... Private companies (contractors) NGOs (not for profit)

2. Democracy promotion in the United States

2.1. Inspiring policy: the role of Congress and the presidential office

At Stage 1, the ultimate responsible “decision-makers” in the American approach were on the side of the executive the presidential office, and on the side of the legislative, Congress, with power to appropriate funds, authorize programs and oversee action in general (Folay, 2008, pp. 116-119).

In the 1960s, Congress had shaped the Foreign Assistance Act, the programs and the funds allocated¹¹. This way, it preferred to secure dispositions that it could control and halted other programs that were to be run exclusively by the executive branch (Carothers, 1999, p. 23). The activity of Congress regarding democracy promotion intensified in the post-Cold War period¹². Many more pieces of legislation were introduced and increasingly important sums were allocated in the yearly State Department and Foreign Operations Appropriations. Bills regarding specific target countries were often discussed, and the prestigious Foreign Relations Committee (Senate) shaped decisions. More specifically, Congress approved several programs to advice legislatures in (mainly European) democratizing countries through the 1990s, and even created a House Democracy Assistance Commission for this purpose in 2005 (Epstein, Serafino, & Miko, 2007)¹³. Congress has been key in emphasizing bipartisan cooperation over democracy promotion. It was also endowed with quite some ground for programmatic detail, which would otherwise be taken over by the Department of State¹⁴. The role of Congress was often overshadowed by the executive branch, and scholars have tended to evaluate democracy promotion under presidential administrations. However, the timing of elections, the partisan

¹¹ There was also a debate on content of democracy promotion, i.e. on whether aid should be for “the encouragement of democratic private and local government institutions” instead of the governments (Title IX).

¹² Congress also had an important role in the Helsinki Accords of the CSCE, and promoted the first programs to end Communist rule i.e. the Support for East European Democracy (SEED) Act of 1989 (P.L.101-179) and the Freedom Support Act (FSA) of 1991 (P.L. 102-511).

¹³ It seems there was a blank period between assisting the Eastern European legislatures and re-starting this activity again, formalizing it with this Commission, in 2005, clearly within the context of Bush’s policies of democracy promotion. This Commission has been maintained after Democrats won a majority in Congress in 2006, which illustrates bipartisan cooperation in democracy promotion. As mode of example, in 2008 the Commission was working with the legislatures of Afghanistan, Colombia, East Timor, Georgia, Haiti, Indonesia, Kenya, Lebanon, Liberia, Macedonia, Mongolia, and Ukraine.

¹⁴ Another recent example of bipartisan cooperation for democracy promotion safeguarding these distinct executive-legislative roles was the Advance Democracy Act of 2005, later incorporated in other pieces of legislation.

composition of Congress, and the evolution of power in the hands of the House and the Senate vis-à-vis the executive also explained many of the policies undertaken (or not).

At the time of the end of the Cold War, President George Bush (father) (G. H. W. Bush, 1990) made an important speech at Congress where he mentioned a “new world order” of freedom and the rule of law. As overviewed in Chapter 2, when Bill Clinton took power he soon made the “Democratic enlargement” part of his strategy, connecting democracy promotion with security but also especially with economic interests. As of 1994, when Clinton faced a Republican majority in Congress, his range of action became increasingly limited and he had to give in to demands to reduce intervention abroad¹⁵. For instance, he signed a presidential directive limiting the potential for future deployment under United Nations operations (Clinton, 1994), which would affect democracy promotion as it had been understood for Haiti and Somalia because it made US troops deployment more difficult. This way, US politics partly explain the gap that some observers (Carothers, 1995) found between the democracy rhetoric and his actual policies.

There were many signs of continuity between the Clinton and the George W. Bush administrations regarding democracy promotion, but the latter seemed to introduce a neo-imperialist rhetoric in this regard (T. Smith, 2007). It was clear that Bush raised the profile of democracy promotion in foreign policy and it was higher on the agenda. Nevertheless, the most important initiatives and allocations were clearly security-oriented, e.g. MEPI (MENA region) and programs to complement the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. His speeches included countless references to democracy promotion as a goal of its own, but also as a means in the War on Terror. During his time in the presidency Bush worked with a Republican-majority Congress, and when at the end of his second term there was a shift towards Democratic-majority his allocations were mostly renewed –this shows the broad bipartisan agreement on this subject. President Bush clearly illustrated how the executive branch can influence democracy policies (tone and target), but also how it distinguishes features of an overall “American” approach¹⁶.

¹⁵ These interventions had a component of democracy promotion and humanitarian aspects though the conceptualization was not authoritative (von Hippel, 2000).

¹⁶ It is likely that the limited success of Bush’s controversial policies leads the new president (Barack Obama) to set a differentiated tone for democracy promotion, but this goal will not be put in question

2.2. Informing policy: the turf wars between State and USAID, and the originality of the National Endowment for Democracy and the Millennium Challenge Corporation

At Stage 2 of democracy promotion, the bureaucratic structure at large and the higher hierarchies influenced the approach. At this level, the following actors shaped the American approach: Department of State, USAID and the National Endowment for Democracy (NED). The Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) can also be included in this category. The Department of State was clearly linked to the administration in power, USAID and MCC were independent government agencies, and the NED was a semi-public agency –they all play a key role in defining the areas of focus (themes and geography-wise) and designing the guidelines for policies. Two aspects of domestic politics affected these institutions: first, plans from the executive to do away with USAID bureaucratic independence and to bring it within the administration and second, to maintain the Congress-funded bipartisan NED.

In the Department of State, democracy promotion occupied an ever-greater role since the end of the Cold War¹⁷. However, according to some analysts State officials had a tendency to remain “pragmatic Realists” and not easily give into the democracy promotion rhetoric, even during Bush’s administration (Amaral & Patterson, 2009). State’s main financial instrument was the Human Rights and Democracy fund at the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor. This fund grew from USD 7.82 million in 1998 to over USD 126.55 million in 2006¹⁸. This meant that Department of State was pursuing policies that resembled those of USAID, which is the traditional branch and main source of American democracy assistance. This posed a problem of structure and also one of content.

Regarding structure, debates on the duplication and alleged inefficiency of an independent USAID are recurrent in Congress, and took place during both the Clinton and Bush administration¹⁹. Clinton even tried to unify a diversity of

[indeed, this was one of the issues where the Republican and Democratic candidates did not disagree upon during the campaign].

¹⁷ In a symbolic change, the Bureau of Human rights and humanitarian affairs became the Bureau of Democracy, Human rights and Labor in 1998.

¹⁸ Data from the Department of State, accessed online on 12 June 2007 [<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/p>].

¹⁹ Governments have systematically tried to get more control of foreign aid and argue USAID bureaucracy is too problematic. Conservative positions identify them with missionaries ready to put the foreigners’ good before national interests [correspondence with USAID official, 25 November 2006].

development programs and substitute Kennedy's Foreign Assistance Act (1961)²⁰. In the end, coordination and policy-coherence was enhanced with the creation of a Deputy-National Security advisor within State who was a "Director of Foreign Assistance" (an assistant-Secretary position first and an under-Secretary in the Bush administration). USAID was still independent and this Director only had administrative tasks, but the move to get it closer to State was clear (Schalatek, 2006)²¹. This implied increased control by the government, as this Director was not a Senate-confirmed position, in comparison to the USAID Administrator²².

Regarding content, the evolution of USAID (and State) was indicative of the emphasis on democracy instead of development, and of the securitization of democracy promotion by moving it closer to State and even to the Department of Defense. Indeed, as of the early 1990s the guidelines and policy-papers emanating from USAID's Center for Development Information and Evaluation (CDIE) emphasized the role of democracy (USAID, 1998a). Modernization had always been at the heart of USAID but conditionality was now preferred to incentives, and securitization was always a shadow. This meant that aid had to be channeled exclusively to some beneficiaries (e.g. Egypt) while others underwent good governance conditionality. Many USAID officials closer to the implementation stages felt very uncomfortable with this approach because of the "double standards" (Harbeson, 1998) and the feeling that conditionality hindered development (International Herald Tribune, 2006).

Democracy promotion was further highlighted in the Department of State policies when Secretary Rice unraveled her "transformational diplomacy", and asked ambassadors to be more active on this ground. She suggested that a number of American "presences" or alternative posts were going to be created to further mainstream support for pro-democracy trends and factions in the world (Rice, 2006).

²⁰ There was a Foreign Affairs Reform and Restructuring Act in 1998 (Public Law 105-277) that established USAID as an executive agency, but it was kept independent (not under State, not under the president as for example the Millennium Challenge Corporation).

²¹ This reminds of the controversies between the Department of State and the USIA (US Information Agency) and is an original feature of the American approach. Nevertheless, whereas in most European countries Development policies are included in a ministry that is part of the executive, the agencies (DFID in the UK, AECI in Spain) still maintain quite some independence, and in the Nordic states the Development institutes (in charge of policy and research) have a status somewhere in between USAID and the Foundations.

²² The Administrator also reports to the Secretary of State, nevertheless. In turn, both sit on the Board of Directors of the Millennium Challenge Corporation. These positions are highly politicized in Washington DC in view of these blurred tasks and lines of command.

Though USAID has offices in many countries, it has also depended on the assistance of ambassadors to channel implementation, so potentially this created new political difficulties, i.e. tensions between officials, disagreement over specific projects and conflicting interests in specific countries.

The securitization of democracy promotion, linking USAID action to defending the national interest also became increasingly explicit in CDIE policy guidelines (Department of State & USAID, 2003; USAID, 2002a, 2005). Especially in the light of the War on Terror, USAID was framed as a “democracy-security card” in order to raise its profile or at least maintain its budget. The Director of Foreign Assistance (the State-official in charge of policy-coherence, as explained above) often referred to Bush’s speeches, to “the post-9/11 world”. At a Congress Subcommittee hearing, he claimed:

“The locus of national security threats has shifted to the developing world, where poverty, oppression, injustice and indifference are exploited by our foes to provide haven for criminals and the planning of criminal acts. Foreign assistance is an effective tool for countering these new threats, and thus has become a foundational pillar of our new national security architecture.”(Tobias, 2006)

As an “agency with a mission”, USAID recovered in this way a political goal that was strong when it was created in the 1960s but that had died off to a more development-oriented culture, especially for Africa. In his study of bureaucracy, Drezner (2000) argued that “a missionary institution thrives if the agency’s espoused norms and principles closely correlate with the state’s observed policy outcomes”. In this sense, the democracy-security turn of the Department of State and USAID strengthened this premise as national strategy, but USAID bureaucratic and field independence were likely to maintain the principles of Modernization and focus on civil society.

Debates about the USAID bureaucracy and democracy promotion continue: many criticize USAID, but they do it for different reasons. Some would like aid to fall more directly under the administration, some would like to create a new Department-level ministry for aid (independent from State and from Defense, but empowered at similar levels), some would like USAID to become strictly non-governmental (a foundation) so that it is not trapped in foreign policy “double standards”.

The National Endowment for Democracy (NED) was created in 1983 by Ronald Reagan, and since then it has been a sign of continuity in American democracy promotion. Its main characteristics are the fact that it is independent in its functioning (it works as a private association though it is a governmental agency) but has a clear official, public stand in that it depends directly from Congress and is led by a bipartisan board²³. The NED is one of the best-researched instruments of American democracy promotion (Cavell, 2002). Though sometimes described as relatively isolated from US foreign policy (Lowe, 2002), it has actually been a “brand” of American action abroad and plays a role both in informing and actually designing democracy promotion (see below). Its programs and guidelines often present broad strategies and some “technical” aspects to promote democracy which, above all, introduce a distance from the American executive or the US official policy: the focus is shifted to the target and away from the benefit/interest they imply for the US. This way, for instance, the NED had a massive program in China (including support for Tibetan communities) since 2002, but it was not connected to the US government (Lum, 2007). This example illustrates the “pros” defended by NED-supporters i.e. that they act where the government may not act (lack of will or of means, political concerns), but also the critiques: that the NED is an official American actor abroad with limited accountability and this can sometimes undermine or contradict governmental preferences and agendas. It is clear that the NED is an independent actor at this level of democracy promotion, with its own goals and methods, and with a broader and more powerful scope of action than the European party foundations that had inspired it. Institutionally, it belongs to that realm of bodies created at one point under presidential prerogatives. It is controversial at times, but its existence is not at stake (rather the opposite) because the political parties and Congress have in the NED a tool for direct international action, and the distance from the presidential office is much appreciated.

Finally, it is pertinent to include here a more recent initiative, the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA). The MCA is run by a governmental agency, the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), that works as a private company and has

²³ In its website, the NED defines itself as a “private, nonprofit organization” [<http://www.ned.org/>]. Its independent Board of directors decides on how the appropriation is spent.

a CEO with a position of Ambassador²⁴. Bush spoke of a Millennium Fund since 2002, and the MCA and MCC were officially launched in 2004. This program became a landmark in foreign aid, with funds appropriated by Congress every year that were significantly large (USD 4-6 billion) and directed to a small number of countries only²⁵. The MCA sought to reorganize American development aid, committing more substantial funds but turning away from the traditional broad paradigm of Modernization to more direct conditionality. It was considered a democracy-promotion program because it conditioned aid to achieving a certain status of democracy, which was measured by “objective” indicators (mainly originated by Freedom House and the World Bank). The MCC also brought in numerous private contractors after competition to implement the MCA programs, which also supposedly kept out the political hand of the executive. Indeed, the MCC influenced the American approach at this Stage 2 as an independent actor: it had its own guidelines and programs designed for each of the countries accepted, including the selection methodology, and it was not under the Director of Foreign Assistance.

Nevertheless, there are reasons to believe that the MCA was very close to political decisions that were convenient to the Bush Administration, and democracy promotion was based on “selected” conditionality. For instance, Morocco was granted eligibility for a Compact in 2005, which seemed a compensation for the cooperation in the War on Terror and a bilateral free-trade agreement (Crombois, 2005)²⁶. Secretary of State Powell congratulated the country for the “move to democracy” that allowed Morocco to get on the MCA list (Powell, 2004), but the country had arguably made very limited progress in democratization during these years²⁷. Similarly, negative conditionality about the MCA was envisaged against Angola in 2003, when Bush suggested this country would be no longer considered if it did not support a Security Council resolution to justify the intervention in Iraq, according to a conversation between Bush and José María Aznar leaked to a newspaper (El Pais, 2007). Finally, it can be argued that the creation of a Threshold

²⁴ The MCC depends on the president, while the Administrator of USAID has to be confirmed by the Senate (see above).

²⁵ In 2008, 10 countries had “Compact” full grants, while some 30 other had “threshold” access to some funds.

²⁶ For instance, such agreement could potentially endanger the Moroccan pharmaceutical sector.

²⁷ An interviewee (USAID official in Morocco, Brussels 22 June 2006) even suggested that the US government may have instigated Freedom House to change its evaluation of Moroccan performance so that, in view of their indicators, it could be considered for the MCA.

category for countries that did not meet the conditionality benchmarks has been used to allow some strategic countries to have access to funds. Similarly, a number of US companies with political connections have been winning the contracts in the target country (Daviron & Giordano, 2006). The MCC thus illustrated the intention to base democracy promotion on technical assessments and political neutrality (indicators on a “democratic scorecard”, private/enterprise focus). Yet *political* actors and dynamics were underlying the policy: the president had a major influence, the MCC final decision-making was rather opaque, and with the Threshold there was a potential to interpret or “adjust” development conditionality in selected cases.

2.3. Designing policy: bureaucracies and core grantees

The first phase of policy implementation or Stage 3 involved those responsible for designing programs and the calls for offers (grants, contracts) and making decisions in this regard. At this level, agents within the bureaucracy were specialized by theme or geographically. The input of the American bodies studied above was also different here.

By far, the main “implementer” was USAID, for it had the staff and capacities to design the policies in detail. In this way, it was often the case that USAID developed part of the programs of the Millennium Challenge Account at this stage. USAID was then a “contractor” of the MCC, sometimes introducing new partners in the realm of implementation [stages 3 and 4]. Regarding its own programs, USAID was decentralized and its 80-90 field offices had quite some range for action and made decisions, especially since the restructuring done under Clinton (Melia, 2005). Two USAID bodies organized work at this stage: the Office for Democracy and Governance and the Office for Transition Initiatives. These offices were part of the very large Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance (DCHA) (USAID, 2007)²⁸.

The work done in these offices illustrated the American approach at this level. For instance, the Office for Democracy and Governance had four divisions that indicated the focus of democracy promotion policies: civil society, elections and

²⁸ As specified above, the 1998 Act had triggered USAID restructuring, giving an ever more important role to democracy. Under Secretary Rice, internal restructuring was not so dramatic, the main change implied further connections of the higher USAID bureaucracy with the Department of State. All this information was also valid as of 2008.

political process, governance, and rule of law. Here the absence of a division on “human rights” was noticeable; this theme was by contrast a priority in European policies. Another example illustrated the methods that USAID sought to instill: the Office for Transition Initiatives worked with partners on the ground, and was within direct reach of American ambassadors or USAID Missions in the country. This targeted “critical windows of opportunity to provide on-the-ground, fast, flexible, catalytic short-term assistance” (USAID, 2007, p. 94). This approach was different from the European procedures that were often criticized as strict, long and overly bureaucratic (a complaint/observation recorded many times during my fieldwork).

The Department of State worked differently from USAID. It made decisions from Washington for the programs it ran (not all, some were also sub-contracted to USAID). For example, the Bureau of Middle Eastern Affairs was in charge of developing policy for the MEPI (Middle East Partnership Initiative) and this was done from the US. This example illustrated that “strategic” American democracy promotion would be understood within broader foreign policy-making and at the Department of State, and this was not fortuitous. Thus there was fragmentation as other USAID projects were pursued in the MENA region, and this led to several incoherent positions.

Finally the NED also played an original role at this Stage 3 as a grant-making institution. The NED has four “core grantees” that present their programs to the Board but have a wide discretion in their specific content and later implementation: the party foundations International Republican Institute (IRI) and National Democratic Institute (NDI) the American Center for International Labor Solidarity (focused on trade unions) and the Center for International Private Enterprise. The foundations (the most visible bodies) work mainly on electoral assistance and political party development, but they have diversified their activities in the past 10 years.

Since the end of the Cold War, the NED has issued 5-yearly “Strategy-documents” in 1992, 1997, 2002 and 2007. These documents corroborated important trends of American democracy promotion in this period: post-1989 euphoria in the post-Communist world, restructuring and budget restriction in the late 1990s, and post-9/11 securitization of democracy with focus on the Arab-Muslim world. Importantly, despite the pretended neutrality and “isolation” of the NED from American official policies, it is always in accordance with the “national interest”.

Moreover, to the extent that democracy promotion is intrinsic to American identity, it arguably incarnates (one aspect of) the national interest. With 9/11, the NED clearly aligned itself with security imperatives, and it developed a *new doctrine* to fight “non-democratic Islam” much as it had first embodied the fight against Communism.

Box 3. The NED new doctrine to fight “non-democratic Islam” according to the 5-yearly Strategy Documents (National Endowment for Democracy, 2002, 2007)

“The crisis precipitated by the attacks of September 11 and the new war on terrorism have placed the issue of democracy in the Middle East and in other non-democratic parts of the Muslim world on the agenda of the international community. Before the present crisis, democracy was often viewed as a Western system incompatible with Islamic culture and doctrine [...]”.

“[...] It is especially important that NED and its core institutes try to involve in their programs liberal Muslims individuals who work within the Islamic tradition and who are also in favor of liberal democracy as a way of strengthening these elements and countering the political abuse of religion”.

The NED influenced the American approach by implementing some programs and orientating funds to specific areas. For instance, in addition to groups, the NED neatly supported *individuals* engaged in democracy promotion, creating important networks of dissidents or activists, especially in Eastern and Central Europe and the post-Soviet space (National Endowment for Democracy, 1997)²⁹. Though the European Parliament also recognized individual commitment with the Sakharov Prize, the American policy actively maintained these “heroes” engaged in networks that in turn developed democracy promotion activities at Stage 4.

The role of these main public actors (or semi-public, as the NED) in this “phase A” of American democracy promotion implementation must be nuanced, because a number of non-state actors exerted an important influence on them: consultants, experts and some academics (individuals or groups). These shaped the policies with their work on methodology, democracy and democratization practices, and geographic or thematic expertise. They often helped policy-makers gain knowledge and create an opinion, or contributed more directly with “strategic planning”. This way, USAID outsourced part of its assessment programs, either for

²⁹ The NED clearly contributed to the US democracy front in the last stage of the Cold War and this heritage has been maintained in the post-Cold War period, though there has been an important rise of other actors in this area, most notably the philanthropist Soros and his Open Society Institute.

more transparent auditing or to gain new insights (Finkel et al., 2006; Hansen, 1996). This ad hoc (but frequent) external support was combined with internal policy-development. For example, USAID had a Division (within the Office for Democracy and Governance) devoted to strategies and research, and there was an effort to develop institutional *handbooks* and cross-country knowledge (by theme). Similar dynamics existed within the European Parliament and European Commission and its diverse DGs, such work resulted in the *Communications* and other working documents that intended to shape EU policies.

2.4. Implementing policy: a myriad actors in the field and the leverage of think tanks

Stage 4 involved the actors in democracy promotion that were in direct contact with programs on the ground. Yet they were not necessarily local; indeed, this group of policy-implementers was largely composed of Westerners in many instances (Youngs, 2005)³⁰. Though the official bodies mentioned above (USAID, NED) undertook fieldwork, their reach was limited and many more non-state actors were co-opted with grants or contracts to implement the programs, diversifying and multiplying influences and input in democracy-promotion policies.

At this level, there were hundreds or even thousands (Melia, 2005) of groups that either used American funds to implement their own programs (with grants) or won competitive offers to provide a service that the donor wanted to implement (contracts). Some were private companies, but most had NGO (nonprofit) status. A credible estimate is that NGOs depend on public funds at an average of 40%, though of course this varies widely with each case and through time (Youngs, 2005, p. 144). Youngs (2005, p. 159) gathered that NGOs had only limited access to the policy-making process, and that American funding usually targeted short-term institutional change. With such a multiplicity of actors, it is beyond the scope of this chapter to offer a comprehensive study of their policy-contents, but this section outlines the main types of non-state actors and discusses some important ones. It also draws

³⁰ Many of these organizations simply employ Westerners, though not exclusively and possibly not in purpose, i.e. they tend to be based in the United States and Europe and often require skills, work permits, etc. that involve Westerners more easily. The will to co-opt workers from democratizing countries is often evident.

some characteristics of the “American” approach at this stage, though the lines blurred and it was difficult to claim that the policy was “American” or “European”.

First, there was a series of “policy-implementing” institutions that performed specialized work. For instance, regarding electoral assistance observation, IFES (often funded by USAID, but also by the United Nations) and The Carter Center (often funded by USAID or by the NED through NDI) were formally private. This meant there were never “American observers” in the field, compared to “European Union observers”, there were IFES or The Carter Center observers (and their employees weren’t necessarily American) and their assessments/ reports did not have any official value nor represented the “American” stand.

Another of the most important American organizations of democracy promotion is Freedom House, which has existed since 1941 (it supported US involvement in World War II) and has historical connections to leaders from the Democratic and the Republican parties. Since 1973, it has published surveys of the state of democracy in the world and influences practitioners and policy-makers worldwide. NED grants fund many of its programs³¹. For instance, the NED planned a “network of democracy promoters”, the World Movement for Democracy (WMD) since 1999, and Freedom House helped establish the network. Similarly, the conference “Democracy and Security” brought together many former and current dissidents in Prague in 2007 (Donovan, 2007; Moore, 2007). This policy of actively maintaining these democracy-heroes engaged in networks as the WMD, that in turn develop democracy promotion activities broadly in this Stage 4, arguably had “something American to it”. This does not mean that there was not a similar goal in the European approach; rather, it was difference of methods, and a result of the political and bureaucratic cultures.

Second, there was a myriad of NGOs and programs in the field that got funds from USAID programs, Department of State Programs and exceptionally direct funds from Congress (this was not often the case, though NED appropriations could be quite specific and this way Congress influenced some programs directly). NED gave around 300 grants per year to non-governmental organizations of an average of USD 50,000. When they funded these “indigenous organizations”, the NED claimed:

³¹ At the same time, the European Union has also funded some Freedom House programs. It should not be assumed that NED and Freedom House work as a team, nevertheless; indeed their relationship is not always friendly and depends on the leaders and positions for specific themes.

“...[our] overall funding strategy is not to create our own programs but rather to support the work of grassroots democratic activists. *We studiously avoid a “made in Washington” approach*”³².

The policies developed in stages 2 and 3 may favor specific policies over others, e.g. women’s rights, civic education, rule of law, conflict resolution mediation, youth groups, political parties, etc³³. The case studies will illustrate some US-EU differences along these lines. Nevertheless, NGOs and programs at this stage were often quite free and enjoyed a good dose of discretion in their implementation, especially with grants.

Practitioners usually argued that American funding allows for more flexibility. Overall, there was a sentiment that the American approach allows for more pragmatism than European policies –and even European donors agreed on this (Timans, 2007). Among the examples I found on the ground, one particularly illustrated this flexibility and also the degree of cooperation among agencies that preserved an “American” policy beyond turf wars. In the early 2000s USAID had started a program of women’s empowerment, funding a handicraft workshop in a village north of Bamako (Mali), in which the women recovered some traditional patterns and coloring methods from different artisans to craft tissues, produced some with the sponsored machinery and then sold the goods. As a result of the budget restrictions suffered at USAID in the late 1990s (especially for Africa), the project was suspended and the craft-shop closed down. However, soon after, the NED-funded International Republican Institute used one of its grants to take over the project and continue the activity, with relatively little changes in Mali³⁴.

By contrast, this kind of cooperation and flexibility does not exist in the European approach, illustrated by this other example. In the Congo (Kasai region), the EU allocated funds a project on the rule of law (administrative training and material), but when the NGO was notified of the grant the court no longer existed: the building had been pillaged and torn down, and the judge had left the town (the

³² Source NED website: <http://www.ned.org/> [accessed 4 September 2008]. My emphasis

³³ Actually donors do not often find what they want to fund or have subjective guidelines. An example is NED’s explicit effort “to involve liberal Muslims” in their policies “to provide a modernist treatment of the role of Islam in public life” (NED Strategy Document, 2007).

³⁴ This shows that even if IRI/NED and USAID actually compete for funds in the American system, once on the ground the projects can sometimes take priority and contribute to a more flexible approach of democracy promotion. Interview with IRI, Bamako 17 November 2007.

application and grant-making process had been 14 months). It was not possible for the NGO to shift the funding to a related project or another town; the EU cancelled the allocation³⁵. These examples also illustrate the scope of policies: from Modernization (originally USAID but also endorsed by the IRI) to institutions for the rule of law.

Finally, it is necessary to take into consideration that some NGOs/foundations were large and self-sufficient enough to have their own programming and field-implementation. This tied in well with the “American” tradition and initiatives by philanthropists. George Soros’ Open Society Institute, a private-operating and grant-making foundation has been a key actor in all the post-Communist space during the post-Cold War period, but the Rockefeller foundation, the Ford foundation, etc. also funded numerous good governance programs. Many of these institutions arguably formed part of a socially-constructed “American” democracy promotion. Nevertheless, this research only took into consideration that at this Stage 4 of democracy promotion, what matters is that many diverse agents can eventually be funded with these private or public funds³⁶. In this, the institutions were likely to imbue this aid with their own principles and insisted on their contribution as “bottom-up” democracy promotion.

Another type of private, external actors that influenced American democracy promotion was the research community working on these topics, made up of think tanks and of active, policy-oriented academic centers. The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, the Brookings Institution and the Hoover Institute (Stanford) were only some examples of the wide-ranging, numerous centers with influential publications and, relatively often, a political preference if not an official affiliation (Hassner & Vaisse, 2003). Some with a clear ideological position as the Heritage Foundation could be quite influential over individuals in Congress (Hassner & Vaisse, 2003, pp. 14, 38). Others could reach a specific public or fulfill technical needs: a case in point would be the RAND Corporation (that receives federal, state and local funding) with publications on state-building that arguably influenced the

³⁵ Interview with NGO responsible, Kinshasa 29 October 2006.

³⁶ For reasons of space and not to over-stretch my framework, I am not analyzing American private foundations here.

Departments of State and Defense and strongly connected democracy promotion with military intervention since the 2003 Iraq War (Dobbins et al., 2003)³⁷.

3. Democracy promotion in the European Union

This section discusses the input and debates at the four stages of the democracy promotion policy-process on the European side. As in the case of the US, the outcome was very much determined by the institutions involved in the process, but these actors did not always have clearly separated powers and tasks. Rather, they all had the potential to influence democracy promotion at one or several stages, and they did. As in the case of the US, the institutions influenced the process: there were specific competencies and instruments, and an underlying system of coordination and competition³⁸. This resulted in a non-homogeneous picture with some holes and some contradictions, and a relative “undefinition” of the European approach (not so different, again, from what we observed regarding the US).

Part of the literature on EU foreign policy focuses on the EU system of governance i.e. “what the institutions do” (H. Smith, 2002) and on the *modes* of policy-making summarized in Wallace and Wallace (2000, pp. 28-34) as intergovernmental, community and cooperation modes. These angles were not satisfactory for this research because they assumed a distinction between CFSP (intergovernmental) and external relations (Community or “supranational”) that did not correspond to the practice of the EU as a democracy promoter³⁹. Democracy promotion fits better in Hill and Smith’s (2005, p. 6) description of EU foreign policy as a dynamic “web of activity” but not a stable governance system⁴⁰. For

³⁷ Again, for reasons of space and not to over-stretch my framework, I am not expanding on this topic here. Inderjeet Parmar has undertaken interesting research on the cross-influences among philanthropic foundations, think tanks, policy research institutes, university foreign affairs institutes, and state agencies.

³⁸ In a way, this system is one of “checks and balances” with complex possibilities for each institution (MS, Council, Commission, DGs) to check and balance executive and legislative powers in this policy-area and allowing for “pendulum” policy-making of common EU action and MS-governmental prerogatives.

³⁹ The originality of my framework is to remain open to consider democracy promotion in the EU’s international action and not exclusively as CFSP nor an instrument (EIDHR) nor an institution’s policy (Commission/ EP/ Council) [cf. Chapter 2].

⁴⁰ During the post-Cold War period, and specially considering the landmark treaties of Maastricht, Amsterdam and Nice, EU institutions’ roles and functioning underwent important changes, but it is beyond the scope of this thesis to account for these details comprehensively and in chronological order. As a general rule I will be referring to the situation valid as of 2008 and never earlier than 1993

these reasons, it was especially important to maintain here the more conventional account of policy stages and combine it with a discussion of “locations” of policy-making⁴¹.

It would be tempting to privilege either the federalist, supranationalist viewpoint and argue that the Commission enjoys the right to propose legislation in the EU and initiates policies, or the intergovernmentalist one and argue that it is Member States who ultimately decide if *anything* at all is to be carried out, especially in the delicate realm of foreign policy. Both stories have some truth to them, and in European policies possibly more than elsewhere “the devil is in the details”. Neither institutional trend alone fully explained the development of the European approach that has actually shaped the EU as an international actor. The following discussion will instead provide more nuanced, accurate insights.

3.1. Inspiring policy: the responsibility of the Member States

Arguably, a diversity of responsible actors (basically *all* European actors except the European Court of Justice) contributed in the conception and guidelines of democracy promotion, laying bricks towards one common policy. The resulting picture illustrated these policy-makers’ functions and instruments as defined in the EU legislation, and also the complex bargaining among them. In this way, the Commission influenced the general guidelines of democracy promotion because it had power to propose policies especially in the realm of Development and Cooperation, and it adopted Communications (often involving the EP and the Council) that spread widely and earned a status of “EU-voice”⁴². Similarly, the High Representative for CFSP, who also drafted influential proposals and officially represented the EU (for instance in trips to third countries), also played an important role. Nevertheless, this Stage 1 definitely privileged action by Member States (MS), who were the responsible decision-makers and budget-providers.

Member States played the key role in the EU flow of “collective governance” and set in motion European democracy promotion (W. Wallace, 2000). First, they

(date of the Treaty of Maastricht), with notes to the changes and characteristics of a particular time as needed. The “dynamism” underlying EU foreign policy is thus a key assumption.

⁴¹ In this I draw from Helen Wallace’s considerations, adding a necessary nuance in the policy implementation for democracy promotion (my stages 3-4), and intending to address this way Dahl’s classical question “who governs?” (H. Wallace & Wallace, 2000, pp. 70-74).

⁴² My view is that Communications contributed to the narrative of the EU as democracy promotion and informed policy-making, though not formally and automatically.

agreed the documents that lay the foundations for the EU as a democracy promoter, often by unanimity. For example, in the Treaty of the European Union they set out democracy promotion as CFSP objective; in the Barcelona Declaration they included democracy and human rights as considerations in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. The European Council adopted the first post-Cold War documents that mentioned good governance, human rights and democracy promotion in relationship with the Europe's role in the world (European Council, 1990a, 1990b).

The Council of the EU, gathering MS and usually working by consensus (even if QMV applies), agreed the Common Strategies and Common Actions that framed CFSP. A series of them included democracy promotion for specific regions e.g. the Mediterranean, and countries e.g. the DR Congo. In 1999, the Council also adopted two Regulations (binding and directly applicable) to “contribute to the general objective of developing and consolidating democracy and the rule of law and to that of respecting human rights and fundamental freedom” (Council of the European Union, 1999). These regulations framed democracy promotion in developing countries (975) and generally in third countries (976). They gave operational power to the Commission, but also set a Committee of MS representatives that would inform the policies⁴³.

The Council Presidency allowed MS to be policy entrepreneurs in CFSP, and influenced democracy promotion. Some presidencies, namely those of the Netherlands (2004) or of Portugal, clearly prioritized this policy on the agenda. Notably, the Dutch presidency organized a conference to work on enhancing the European profile of democracy promotion (NIMD Europe Conference, 2004) and was an important turning point in building up the EU approach. Country presidencies also focused on regions or themes of interest; Spain and Italy focused on the Mediterranean while Germany focused on Eastern Europe, Italy usually underlined human rights. A group of MS (Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Italy, Ireland) also insisted on the abolition of the death penalty especially vis-à-vis the US (Leben, 1999). The Presidencies also played an important role in the EU's political dialogues, though the Commission sometimes took over their organization. Political Dialogues often included democracy promotion, but they emphasized partnership and

⁴³ The Committee's opinion had to be taken into consideration by the Commission. The Commission had to submit assessments and reports to the European Parliament and the Council.

diplomatic relations; their success has been mixed (K. E. Smith, 2004; Youngs, 2006).

Finally, MS (in the Council) controlled democracy promotion with their “power of the purse”. The Council approved the main EU instruments (such as the EIDHR or MEDA or the Financial Stability Instrument) and actions (such as the EUFOR mission in the Congo). In addition, MS contributed to the European Development Funds (not included in the EU budget) that financed programs with ACP countries and other potential programs and interventions, sometimes related to democracy promotion. Though the European Parliament’s “power of the purse” remained rather limited, the EP could use its co-decision powers for non-mandatory budget to channel some allocations to democracy promotion, e.g. decisions that allow funding of think tanks as Notre Europe. More importantly, the EP has used its limited veto power (it needs to approve the EU budget) to extract concessions from the Commission and the Council with new budget lines (Hix, 2005, p. 281). Along these lines, the EP was key in bringing together the budget lines that led to the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights in 1994. This initiative typified EU action through NGOs, who would be in charge of implementing the EU’s policies –in this sense, it was the European Parliament that raised the NGOs profile in EU democracy promotion, which constituted an important new aspect of the overall EU approach⁴⁴.

3.2. Informing policy: the Commission’s controlling hand and the rising role of CFSP

This location of policy-making included the definition and design of policies at large, which contributed to the constitution of a European institutional memory. Policy was closely deriving from the general guidelines, yet there was no direct contact with democracy promotion on the ground. Here, the Commission (and the Parliament and the Council) played a key role in addressing the questions about democracy promotion that framed EU action from the first pillar, i.e. what to promote and how. In addition, the input from the pillar of CFSP into the first was increasingly

⁴⁴ Though some observes disregard the EP’s role, I found that its initiative and support for the EIDHR influenced European democracy promotion greatly, as this budget line increased significantly, it complemented other EU policies with an NGO-focus, and became symbolic of EU action.

significant, especially in the context of post-9/11 enhanced cooperation and of some institutional changes.

The Commission's central task of policy-initiation and significant bureaucratic capacity enabled it to shape democracy promotion at this stage. The Commission produced reports on the meaning of good governance, on the link with development, etc. Through an impressive production of Communications, it influenced EU legislation and potential action (Commission of the European Communities, 1995a, 1998, 2000b, 2001). These documents not only piled up in an ever-growing *acquis*, they also featured *considerations and assertions* of what the EU will do and how. Some of them were quite specific and determined, for instance, how European electoral observation will happen (Commission of the European Communities, 2000a). Others, more general, "foresaw" and planned the mainstreaming of democracy promotion in EU action and constituted the basis for later action⁴⁵.

In this way, the Commission contributed to create and strengthen an institutional identity for the EU as democracy promoter. It reinforces this thesis's central argument, as well as provides for an element of explanation, that the EU's most integrationist institution "allowed itself" and actually worked insistently to forge this emerging identity, especially at this stage of informing policy. In turn, this EU role was also picked up by academics and by other actors, who indirectly raised expectations about EU action in the world as a civilian power, counting within its external goals the promotion of democracy and human rights. Actors from stage 4 thus enhanced the roles and policies that were designed in Brussels.

When democracy promotion was shaped from the first pillar, the Commission had the right to initiate legislation and consider the EU options, but the Council and the EP made the decisions and had the "executive power". The inter-institutional distributions of power depended on the policy domain or the instrument considered. For instance, for Development and Cooperation, the Council (under QMV) and the EP had co-decision power. In this realm, democracy promotion broadly followed the Modernization paradigm, just as USAID. By contrast, for Association Agreements with third countries, the Council decided by unanimity and the EP only had an assent

⁴⁵ In its website, the Commission always indicates a selection of documents (the Council documents allowing for action and relevant Communications) that set the policy background. These strategy-documents are the equivalent of USAID's general guidelines.

role. Here the EU method has been to include conditionality through democracy/human rights clauses, e.g. in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership or ACP Agreements. In theory, this restored the institutional balance in the EU, but in truth the Commission maintained an important role as an “indirect executive”. Following upon these examples, in fact there was relatively little legislation in the domain of Development and Cooperation, so many policies were directly administered (in Stage 3) by Commission divisions. Regarding the Association Agreements or democracy clauses, the Commission was likely to have proposed to the legislators some (rather detailed) options on what to do (Commission of the European Communities, 1995b) and, in agreement with theories of principal-agent and bureaucratic discretion, it successfully influenced the policy outcome (Hix, 2005, pp. 28-30).

The second pillar (Common Foreign and Security Policy) was another locus of democracy policy-making; it existed in parallel, and to a certain extent in competition, with the Commission-controlled first pillar. The EU position and potential action was defined from the policy space around the CFSP-High Representative and the committees (with MS representatives) that guided action in this pillar⁴⁶. Though democracy promotion input had been coming from the first pillar in the 1990s, the proposals of the Treaty of Amsterdam and of Nice⁴⁷ and the context of post-9/11 International Relations led to a more active CFSP, tightly controlled by the MS. This enlarged agenda and capabilities for cooperation opened the door to democracy promotion in CFSP. Arguably, as this theme became so relevant for the Bush administration, the EU felt it had to react and take a stronger position in this regard, though own initiatives were cautious.

Since his appointment in October 1999, the High Representative for CFSP (Javier Solana) had an ever more important role in proposing policies⁴⁸. The will to develop expert policies in this field, but also independently from the Commission, led to input from the EU-funded Institute for Security Studies (created with a Council

⁴⁶ Though the Commission has the right of policy initiative according to the Treaties (TEU), it is regularly the Council that initiates CFSP actions.

⁴⁷ The Treaty of Amsterdam (1999) created the High Representative position and a policy unit, and led to changes in the committees developing CFSP and overall a strengthening of MS policy-input vis-à-vis the Commission, which was confirmed in the Treaty of Nice (2001).

⁴⁸ I have not included the High Representative’s input in the Stage 1 of policy-guidelines because there is a lack of decision-making, accountability, and budget-control, but Solana’s general input has sometimes been elevated to “grand-strategy” and has been compared to US presidential rhetoric. Nevertheless, the responsible decision-makers in CFSP are the Member States, and I believe his role fits better the category of “informing” than “inspiring” EU external action.

Joint Action under the second pillar in 2001 and formerly attached to the Western European Union). Similarly, Study Groups were created ad hoc, the most significant one produced Europe's "Human Security doctrine" (Study group on Europe's security capabilities, 2004), which opened new doors for EU action abroad and raised interesting aspects of European universalism. These moves opened the door to think-tanks, bringing the EU closer to the American system of policy-advice but with a distinct nature: the most influential think-tanks were "pre-selected" and funded by the policy-maker in a way that made them semi-official⁴⁹.

In all these documents in the realm of CFSP, the EU avoided to securitize democracy promotion. This seemed to be Solana's personal perspective, but also corresponded to widespread European views (cf. Chapter 1 and 2)⁵⁰. The reluctance to pursue democracy promotion in security quests only intensified with the Iraq 2003 war, and the contrast with the American rhetoric was increasingly evident. A certain EU-unified position appeared in this regard, as Chris Patten (DG External Relations Commissioner) and Solana spoke along the same (critical) lines⁵¹.

Finally, Solana also appointed a Personal Representative for Human Rights in 2004, who would work actively on strengthening a unified position for the EU under CFSP (Matthiessen, 2006). The Americans actually considered him an interlocutor on democracy promotion and expressed their official welcome, even though his position was *explicitly not* for "Human rights *and* democracy" but only for Human Rights⁵². In all this, democracy promotion played a role in CFSP, possibly more than the other way around (democracy promotion was not securitized). The EU also

⁴⁹ A number of private think tanks, notably CEPS (active since the mid 1980s) and the London-based CER are also influential. This trend is well known in the EU, where the limited research and policy-development abilities of the Commission and even more of the other institutions translated in a rising demand for expertise and knowledge. The supply increased accordingly, making of Brussels an increasingly dynamic think-tank hub. A recent significant addition to a very long list is the European Council on Foreign Relations, with links to Soros' Open Society network.

⁵⁰ Democracy promotion was specifically *not* one of Solana's priorities. Nevertheless he was also constrained to address democracy promotion because it is mentioned in the treaties as a CFSP objective and because it was such a key point on the international agenda during Bush's administration. Source: interviews with EU officials, Brussels 6 June 2007, 16 June 2008.

⁵¹ The personal relation between these two leaders seemingly contributed to a successful period of "troika" work in EU external relations (Solana, Patten, and the Foreign Minister of the MS occupying the Council Presidency). Cooperation with Patten's successor, Benita Ferrero-Waldner, has been more difficult (Vanhoonacker, 2005, p. 82). Other leaders, such as MEP Emma Bonino, also insisted on EU democracy promotion as a "pacific export".

⁵² Author's conversation with Michael Matthiessen, who occupied this position at the time, Paris 6 June 2006.

adapted to the context conditioned by the American approach, partly *reacting* or re-categorizing its discourse and seeking to create a common position.

Regarding EU bureaucratic settings for CFSP, the High Representative's policy unit was very small and Member States constantly assured their position and their input via comitology. For example, in the Regulations on democracy promotion mentioned above (975/1999, 976/1999), the Council charged the Commission with operationalization, but at the same time it created a Committee (with MS representatives) that would control operations. Another example was the institutional structure that evolved from the Coreper/Political Committee setting to a new permanent, Brussels-based Political and Security Committee that integrated the policy-unit in the meetings of MS ambassadors. Along the same lines, the MS-led Committee for human rights (Cohom) officially extended its mandate to the first pillar. Historically, Cohom had been linked to the OSCE and started considering democracy promotion in 1999 (Council of the European Union, 2003b; Vanhoonacker, 2005).

Thus, by 2008 the Council played a much more active role in defining what to include as EU democracy promotion, seeking to mainstream EU policies *from* the realm of CFSP (Council of the European Union, 2006a, 2006b). Most notably, the EU (re)action on democracy promotion for the EU-US summits and other diplomatic forums (e.g. G8) was prepared at this level. Within this CFSP team, only a handful worked on democracy promotion (and not exclusively on that) but they had some decision-making ability. In parallel, the Parliament also addressed democracy promotion from its Policy Unit (Committee on Foreign Affairs) and the Human Rights Subcommittee (European Parliament, 2005). Yet, since the EP only had a consultative role in CFSP, its influence was minor.

In sum, the Commission was significantly challenged as the institution in charge of defining potential EU action in democracy promotion, with increasingly aware MS clearly taking over. The fragmented approach of democracy promotion from the first and second pillars was evident at this location of policy-making, while the Commission-led first pillar view remained the reference in stages 3 and 4.

3.3. Designing policy: Directorate Generals, EuropeAid, and a contribution from the European Parliament

In a publication about exporting values, Petiteville (2003, p. 133) observed that the “European Union has hitherto found more resources of international influence in the politicization of economic cooperation than in the CFSP machinery”. With this, he meant that the EU aid (and possibly trade) policy was used to exert “soft diplomacy”. Indirectly, Petiteville compared the EU with the United States, where democracy promotion and in general value-exporting are a matter of “high politics” (not soft diplomacy). However, this analysis has shown thus far that the political will and policy-definition for democracy promotion in the European approach have involved the second pillar and the Member States, so it is not accurate to describe the EU approach as “soft” in this sense⁵³. A more adequate interpretation arises from our look here at the implementation phase of democracy promotion. Indeed, CFSP actors were not involved, and the location of policy-making concerned mainly the Commission, and to some extent the European Parliament.

The main agents in the EU approach, i.e. DG External Relations (Relex), DG Development and Cooperation (Dev), and EuropeAid did not actually differ so much from their American counterparts at USAID. For both, lower ranks of the bureaucratic structure with some thematic and geographic specialization were in charge of operationalizing the policies. The politics of democracy promotion at this level replicated the issues discussed in the American case. Regarding policy-content, there was the same link between democracy and development as in the Modernization paradigm, a similar technical-turn of democracy promotion (as a long-term policy) that requested expertise and hard-data for policies “neutrally oriented” to the field. Regarding policy-implementation and methods, USAID tried to tune in with the debates (on security and American hegemony) of the actors in the US approach. Similarly, the Commission struggled with picking up on Council Presidency or MS preferences; internal turf wars existed on both sides of the Atlantic.

In addition, fragmentation derived from the EU institutional history. Jacques Delors was already trying to unify the Commission’s external action when he was

⁵³ My argument is that the European refusal to securitize democracy promotion is not a matter of institutional lack of capabilities; rather, it is a choice in the position and action that the EU willfully planned for democracy promotion.

President, but only in 1999-2001 did changes take place (White, 2001, pp. 159-166). The division between DG External Relations and DG Development and Cooperation was actually based on geographic and historical terms. DG Dev followed relations with the African, Caribbean, Pacific (ACP) countries that traditionally had colonial links with Europe. The Council decided on the cooperation and association agreements and aid packages (from the European Development Fund), which included the promotion of human rights, with mixed results (Pi, 2000). Overall, the bureaucratic culture in this DG was not always sympathetic to good governance conditionality and to democracy promotion, in contrast to DG Relex that seemed more sensitive to mainstreaming⁵⁴. DG Relex was in turn responsible for the assistance to the non-ACP and non-Enlargement countries, i.e. the Middle East and North Africa, Latin America, most of Asia, and ex-Soviet Union countries. These DGs controlled the first part of the policy cycle. Since the end of the 1990s, implementation and evaluation of aid projects were controlled by yet another office, named EuropeAid in 2004 (Vanhoonacker, 2005).

EuropeAid then became the Commission body responsible for more pragmatic decision-making; it also established the contact with the field by defining the terms of subsidies, contracts, etc. EuropeAid was especially important because it managed the “landmark” EU program for democracy promotion, the EIDHR, even if EIDHR documents officially conceded that “the structure follows the common framework and procedure of the programming of thematic and horizontal budget lines established *jointly* by DGs Relex, Dev and EuropeAid”⁵⁵ (EuropeAid, 2004).

At this level, Commission Delegations on the ground were supposedly able to shape the policies, too. Nevertheless, though the Commission has claimed devolution to the more than 120 delegations both in reform documents and in EuropeAid project implementation, this decentralization was not really effective⁵⁶. These Delegations’ tasks were complex. On the one hand they represented the EU and intended to play

⁵⁴ I observed during fieldwork that DG Dev officials were often skeptical about democracy promotion, claiming that aid conditionality was not always positive. DG Relex only took off in December 1999 and these officials seemed more in touch with the international trends of democracy promotion. The cases of the Congo and of the MENA region show these trends: DG Dev claimed “more patience” with Africa while Relex issued a Communication [(2003) 294] on the Barcelona Process where human rights and democracy played a key role.

⁵⁵ This reiteration of shared-tasks is a clear illustration of the potential for turf wars in an institution (EuropeAid) whose board actually includes representatives from the diverse DGs. My emphasis.

⁵⁶ This was the case as far as I could verify from the EIDHR appropriations and was confirmed in interview with EU official, Brussels 6 June 2007.

“high politics” as if they were embassies. On the other, they sought to manage EU-funds and play a practical role in allocating aid, often with very limited resources (staff and budget)⁵⁷. In theory, the Delegations shape the formulation and decision regarding contracts, but it seems that communication with EuropeAid is not efficient. This meant that NGOs in contact with the Delegation only often fell out of the loop; most contractors are European NGOs or international/regional organizations. In this sense, EU Delegations were not *only* in charge of aid and implementing democracy promotion, as were USAID delegations in the field⁵⁸. However, it is interesting that EU Delegations somehow remind us of the mixed-tasks that Condoleeza Rice planned in her “transformational diplomacy” dispositions.

In addition to the Commission, the European Parliament undertook some democracy implementation tasks “hands-on”. Notably, the EP had a long tradition of work in the realm of Human Rights, awarding the Sakharov prize and regularly making declarations on cases of human rights violations and problems in democratizing countries. Nevertheless, these declarations, addressed to the Council or the Presidency, were often ignored because the EP only had a consultative role⁵⁹. More actively, EP established Parliamentary Assemblies both in a ACP-EU forum and in a Euro-Med forum. The ACP-EU assembly dated back to the 1960s and the first Yaounde Agreement, and showed the high institutionalization of relations, in comparison with the American-African case. Nevertheless, this parliamentary forum did not change the fact that EU-ACP relations maintained a “shadow of empire” where democracy promotion has been significantly relegated during and after the Cold War (Mayall, 2005b, pp. 295-302). The Euro-Med Assembly also experienced the difficulties of promoting democracy in a forum that is inclusive but simultaneously perpetuates an undemocratic situation because many parliamentarians may enjoy these positions undemocratically⁶⁰. This way, the European Parliament participation gave evidence of *multilateral and institutional* aspects in the European approach. At this level, the American approach had introduced the two main parties

⁵⁷ Observations based on fieldwork. Fieldwork included the Delegations in Kinshasa, Bamako and conversations with an official from the Delegation in Bujumbura. In Kinshasa, where different EU teams could be working at the same time, the Delegation struggled to coordinate action but it was not always successful, replicating the EU fragmentation in the field.

⁵⁸ For instance, it seems that the USAID delegation in Egypt, a main recipient of US aid, is relatively independent from the “high politics” work of the US embassy [as long as its profile is low].

⁵⁹ Hence if the EP powers were increased, it would likely imbue EU policies with further concern and action on human rights and democracy issues.

⁶⁰ Cf. Chapter 5.

(in the foundations and the NED) as grantees to channel funds. In contrast, the EU strategy was to replicate the institutional setting of parliamentary democracy, though ultimately with less influence on the ground than the other actors and policies overviewed above.

3.4. Implementing policy: EU electoral observation, state- and NGO- recipients and an influential research community

At this level of democracy promotion implementation, policy-making was dispersed and, as with the American approach, it is inaccurate to separate American and European actors strictly, or to name many of these actors in the field “European” just because they utilize EU funds. Nevertheless there were some specificities in the EU democracy-promotion scene, illustrated here with some examples gathered during fieldwork.

One example of EU-direct democracy promotion were the missions of Electoral Observation it deployed. These missions were organized by an independent desk in the Commission and included observers from a EU roster but selected and authorized by the Member States exclusively. The European Parliament often participated in these missions, sending an MEP as head of the Mission and additional observers (depending on the case). Other regional organizations, notably the Organization of American States and the OSCE, also sent missions of electoral observation, but not the US as a country.

At a broader level, this illustrated that the evolution of the EU in International Relations from standard regional organization to standard polity featuring a foreign policy has not been neat. By “standard” it can be understood that organizations usually have presence, and polities have actorness in IR. Theorists have used those terms of *presence* and *actorness* to point at a gap in the EU role in foreign affairs (Ginsberg, 2001; K. E. Smith, 2003b, p. 105). This double identity gave an inconsistent image of the EU. As an organization with a multilateral, technical and neutral role, the EU could have its own Electoral Observation missions. Nevertheless, if one considered the EU conducted a wilful policy (as did the US) of democracy promotion, then the observation mission was misplaced, and problematic. To earn credibility, electoral observers focus on procedures and portray themselves as “neutral”. The EU could play the role of presence as regional institution and

observe, but not (legitimately) that of actors involved in the process, too. The EU sought to combine both identities, but this double-hat that the EU inadvertently wore became inevitably problematic [cf. Chapter 4].

Second, the European approach lacked the equivalent “policy-implementing institutes” that channelled funds or made partners, as did Freedom House in American democracy promotion. Instead, applicants addressed the Commission directly when trying to get grants under the EIDHR or any other instrument. As in the American approach, NGOs or other private contractors (including enterprises) were independent and had relative discretion for action once the funds were allocated. At this level, the national party foundations also entered the picture, but they had to apply for grants on the same footing as other NGOs (compared to the privileged positions of the US foundations). Even the best funded foundations, such as the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, applied for grants from a variety of EU sources: the EIDHR, the instrument on Non-State Actors and Local Authorities or (more recently) the Stability Instrument. The Stiftungen were accountable to the German Ministries that financed their projects (which they normally developed independently) and were audited by national offices, but differently from the American Congress there was no role for the national parliament or for European legislators in this policy-process⁶¹.

An observation on how the European approach translated in some specific contents or policy-cycles is pertinent here. Much of the EU-aid was allocated in agreement with the local governments that had some leverage on defining the programs, for instance the ENPI for the MENA region, or many programs of the EDF for the ACP countries⁶². By contrast, USAID democracy promotion did not often involve governments. In the realm of non-governmental policies, the thematic instrument EIDHR determined some project-categories that arguably reflected the European approach. In the period 2000-6, the EIDHR included a preference for human rights projects and for the following EU-specific themes: the abolition of the death penalty, torture, rights of minorities or the disabled, and the International Criminal Court (EuropeAid, 2006, 2007). However, other themes such as

⁶¹ Source: website of the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, <http://www.kas.de/wf/en/71.3712/> and interview with KAS official, Brussels 18 June 2008.

⁶² The EU often calls this kind of aid “geographic”, which usually means “recipient-government agreed” and is the most common under DG Dev. By contrast “thematic” aid usually refers to aid going to non-governmental actors (here the EIDHR is the main instrument for democracy promotion).

governance, the rule of law and strengthening civil society (making up for an important share of the funds) broadly coincided with the American democracy policies⁶³. Another characteristic of the EU (compared to the US) was the length of the policy-cycle, which easily lasted one to three years between the call for offers and the disbursement. Aware of this shortcoming, the EU proposed to set some funds apart for “rapid allocation” in the 2007 EIDHR, and it tried to ease the bureaucratic chain to shorten these cycles⁶⁴.

Finally at this stage 4 an additional policy-location existed in the research community that influenced European democracy promotion policies. As established above, it was difficult to assert that this knowledge is “European” exclusively, but an ever-larger number of think tanks and research centers did influence policy-making in Brussels. Among them, the Stockholm-based International Idea was an interesting case; created in 1995, it illustrates post-Cold War democracy promotion⁶⁵. A diversity of Western governments and the EU Commission, but not the US, funded it, giving it status of intergovernmental institution. It develops assessments of democracy and handbooks for electoral assistance, political parties, etc. Their methodology was qualitative, compared to the score-oriented Freedom in the World or Polity IV index (the most widely used indices, together with the World Bank’s index of good governance) produced by American teams⁶⁶. They worked with many other international networks (notably ACES), but often featured as a “European” actor in the field.

As the examples of Notre Europe or the EUISS illustrated, the EU has been active in encouraging research and policy-advice centers. Another example was EuroMeSCo (1996), a network of think tanks created and financed by the Commission to drive research on issues of interest for the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, which adopted it as an “official confidence-building measure”. It plays a crucial role informing the Commission and the EuroMed Parliamentarian Assembly.

⁶³ The information on what programs were actually included in these categories is limited, and concepts in the assessments have also varied. With such misleading sources, it was not possible to arrive at clear conclusions on what was US, EU or even what was understood by these concepts at the implementation stage.

⁶⁴ The EU is subject to stricter rules on expenditure and auditing, reflecting low trust from Member States (some measures were adopted after cases of corruption or misspent funds). I am thankful to Professor Lord Wallace for bringing this point to my attention.

⁶⁵ Interview with International adviser, International IDEA Brussels 5 June 2007. Information verified in statutes and website <http://www.idea.int/index.cfm>.

⁶⁶ A German team has recently produced a quantitative assessment that is also gaining widespread consideration, the Bertelsmann Transformation Index.

In this way, the EU relied heavily on these actors' input in this and in other locations of the policy-making process. The centers specializing in geographical areas and giving a management-oriented, practical advice were specially important, such as the European Center for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) and Eurac (Central Africa) for ACP countries. In a list that is definitely very long, it is worth noting that some think tanks /research centers featured a special interest in Transatlantic relations (on both sides of the Atlantic but notably in Europe), issuing influential publications on democracy promotion (especially around 2003-5) and often advocating for cooperation. The German Marshall Fund's work has been key in this regard; as an American founded in 1972 through a gift from Germany, it makes grants to other research centers /projects mainly in Europe.

Conclusion

This chapter established “who does what” in American and European democracy promotion policy-making, utilizing a framework of the policy-process in four stages. It discussed which actors “inspired” (1), “informed” (2), “designed” (3) and “implemented” (4) democracy promotion, comparing the American and the European approaches. With a series of examples and information gathered during fieldwork, it threw light on the politics going on one side and another of the Atlantic. The chapter explored how the American and European “universalisms” manifested at the different stages of policy-making, driven by a diversity of actors. This made more explicit how democracy promotion was embedded, but also was purposely activated, in the US and the EU. Importantly, this chapter also suggested that, as democracy promotion got closer to the ground, the policy-process became increasingly transnational.

The policy-making structures, the political cultures, and the nature of incumbents underlined the specificities of American and European democracy promotion. The internal dynamics proved to shape US and EU policies: on the one hand there was the US President's overall influence and rhetoric, and turf wars between agencies, on the other hand there was a complex web of EU governance and a tension between supranational and intergovernmental policy-dynamics. At these levels, democracy promotion was imbued with US and EU original and promoter-driven aspects. As with other elements of foreign policy, multiple agency was clear in the field of democracy promotion.

The institutional fragmentation and the competing interests usefully explain the images of inconsistent policies and mixed content of democracy promotion, which in the end seemed to amount to a lack of strategy rather than a clear US and EU perspective. Hence, the argument that promoters simply have “double standards” must be nuanced: the context and the policy-dynamics open doors to specific policies, and the *politics* in the policy-making process shape many targets and outcomes. Similarly, the multiple inputs open doors to links with other interests or policies regarding content: economic development, security (national and international), human rights, civil society, etc. The picture that emerged was one where all the intentions and programs were assumed to be interconnected positively in a “virtuous circle”.

In the US, it was demonstrated that Congress plays an important role in shaping democracy promotion; the semi-private National Endowment for Democracy guaranteed a certain independence from government, but sought to safeguard the American national interest. The role of USAID was depicted notably at stages 2 and 3; it is a governmental agency and arguably pretended to be “apolitical” on the ground. Since its creation, it has had some autonomy as a bureaucracy and direct contact with target countries, and is constantly “threatened” by the executive branch and notably the Department of State. USAID traditional focus on development saw a clear securitization under George Bush, emphasizing the premise of a “virtuous circle”. In recent years, with the creation of the Millennium Challenge Account and the new state-building tasks at the Pentagon, the role of the presidential office admittedly led to specific policies; overall, the Presidential rhetoric throughout the post-Cold War period sustained the Exceptionalism at the basis of American democracy promotion and “universalism”.

In the EU, Member States made the main decisions on the budget and established multiple measures to control policy, notably via the Council of the EU; also during European Councils and Presidencies. However, the Commission developed important powers in this field, underlining Europeanization. Development and Cooperation are integrated policies, and within CFSP the Commission undertook agenda-setting and policy-design. In addition, its EuropeAid office manages the main explicit democracy instrument of the EU, the EIDHR. Commission communications and *acquis* contributed to develop the narrative of EU as civilian democracy promoter, and to establish the links with human rights, the rule of law and good

governance. The initiatives from the security pillar were more timid, yet they were increasingly present and there was potential for the Member States to “take over” democracy promotion (in this realm of CFSP) as it became an issue of “higher politics”. This discussion documented the emergence of an EU universalism along the lines depicted in Chapter 2. The “rivalry” or more clearly the distinction vis-à-vis the US were emphasized. Indeed, even at practical levels the EU sometimes sought to develop as an “Other”: some EU institutional initiatives (such as the democracy promotion Policy Unit and Special Representatives) were in part a reaction to the American stands. The European Parliament was traditionally *the* EU institution with more transparent and sharper interest in the promotion of human rights and democracy, and its influence was crucial in the inspiration and actual implementation of some policies (EIDHR, inter-parliamentary assemblies, electoral observation, Sakharov prize). Thus, though its influence seemed weak because of its limited institutional powers, it has arguably been a driver for EU identity in connection with democracy promotion.

Though the research for this thesis is not devoted to non-state, transnational actors in democracy promotion, this chapter acknowledged the ever more important role of the exchanges between the public policy-makers and the private actors who contribute to design and implement policies on the ground. It has been argued that these actors imbued democracy promotion with their own understandings, specialization, and interests about democracy promotion. In this way, a “democracy promotion community” had an ever more important clout, and many of these actors came to have a major, specific input in the creation and prioritization of policies (e.g. think tanks), and also in their financing and implementation on the ground. This argument leads to important nuances regarding the conceptualization of agency and of US or EU “universalisms” in democracy promotion: the key question becomes, how much and in which ways do the promoters matter, in the end?

An important implication for this research was that, at later stages of democracy promotion, the specificities of American-European approaches seemed blurred. The chapter documented how the emergence of the many new actors was related to US and EU political cultures (for example, the American philanthropist and foundation tradition) and to the policy-processes (for example, the lack of expertise and policy-capacity in some fields in the Commission). Nevertheless, the information flows and transnational networks meant that democracy promotion

featured less and less clearly as “American” or “European”. In addition, this input contributed to characterize democracy promotion as a seemingly less politicized and more “technical” process, where expertise and neutral intervention could supersede US and EU approaches and interests. In general, with its analysis of these latter stages 3 and 4, the chapter substantiated that contemporary democracy promotion involves significant “learning by doing” [Chapter 1].

Democracy promotion thus became a phenomenon increasingly determined, as it got closer to the ground, by the dynamics of globalization. As with other themes and dynamics in post-Cold War international relations, networks of individuals and institutions (public and private), knowledge-creation and distribution, and actual implementation of tasks were globalized. The chapter gathered additional evidence in this regard, but its findings did not allow for conclusions on whether or how this globalization may become institutionalized.

The first half of the thesis (the previous Chapters 1 and 2 and this Chapter 3) has laid the basis of its contribution to the analysis of democracy promotion and American and European approaches in International Relations. It has in this way established the context and key features of this ethical and interest-led international policy as well as the challenges for transition in the ground. It has also discussed how democracy promotion contributed to the construction of distinct identities and roles within the evolving transatlantic relationship with two “universalisms”. Finally, it analyzed the locations of policy-making (dispersed agency, fragmented processes) on both sides of the Atlantic.

In its second half, the thesis moves on to discuss three case studies at three IR levels: the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Middle East and North Africa region, and the Community of Democracies. The case studies will allow exploring whether the US and the EU adapted their policies to national, regional or global context. Though the previous chapters have not offered any hints in this regards. Democracy promotion projects for a country, a region and the world seemed nevertheless to substantiate the argument that the US and the EU established democracy promotion as “universalisms”, and we will investigate whether and how this was the case.

Chapter 4. American and European democracy promotion in the Democratic Republic of Congo: limited cooperation, some competition and “Kabila-state building”

“It is necessary to entirely underline that the process of transition, obviously, is a Congolese process. And this is a process which is supported by the international community, the greatest support since independence, and I believe that the international community is a faithful partner to the Congolese people.”
–W. Swing, MONUC, Special Representative of the Secretary General, 2006¹

This chapter explores the Congolese transition and the international community’s objectives in democracy promotion. I will be using “transition process” broadly, to refer to the post-Cold War period that saw the demise of Mobutu’s power, years of complex, protracted domestic and international conflict, and the election of Joseph Kabila as president in November 2006. The US and the EU roles must be understood as part of the “international community” intervention during this period. On the ground, diplomats, the media, and people in the streets often used the terms “the internationals” and “the international community”, so despite their fuzziness this was empirically an accurate starting point². In my view, “international community” did not refer to actors but to a series of *themes* and goals, instead. It seemed to include foreign interveners somehow acting under a UN-umbrella, but specially devoted to peacemaking and to democracy promotion, including the United States, the European Union and European countries (notably France, Belgium, Germany, the United Kingdom), Japan and South Africa. Importantly, this also included international non-governmental organizations (NGOs). By contrast, other international actors were *not* considered “international community”: states as Rwanda, Burundi, Angola, Uganda, Namibia, or Zimbabwe, and non state-actors such as trans-border armed groups (armies or independent militia) or miners. Hence, the term “international

¹ (Radio Okapi, 2006).

² Academics as René Lemarchand question that such an *actor* as “international community” exists and believe the term should be avoided in academic writing.

community” was partly constructed in relationship with a positive intervention underpinned by the virtuous circle of peace, democracy and development.

The US and the EU did not openly reject cooperation, but there was no transatlantic front to plan and coordinate policies either; each seemed moved by their own interests and capabilities. At times important divergences and some elements of competition arose, and these will be analyzed in this chapter. Democracy promotion policies faced very important challenges on the ground, and though they intended to be neutral, the trade-offs and challenges they faced were eminently political and shaped by the state (nearing collapse), warring factions, leaders, and economic disaster. This chapter’s goals are to unravel the American and European approaches and put this in contrast with the challenges on the ground. Three main arguments emerge from this research. First, the US and the EU influenced the old dictator Mobutu and his fall and this clearly belonged in the context of the world post-Cold War “democracy triumph”. Secondly, the US and the EU were ambiguous and parsimonious in their involvement to solve the conflict that ravaged the Great Lakes region, their policies were patchy and sometimes ill-conceived (fostering Western, “easy”, short-term solutions). Thirdly, they accounted, to a certain extent, for the political process that confirmed Joseph Kabila in power, so that the transition process came to be identified with “Kabila-state” building.

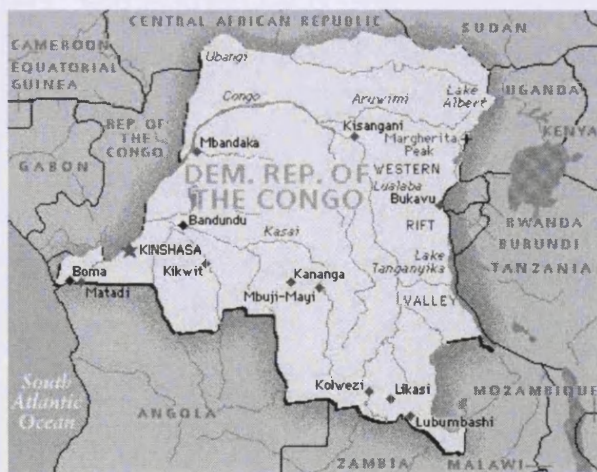
The chapter is structured as follows. The first section discusses the American and European positions and actions chronologically (three stages) in the transition process. The chapter then moves on to thematic analysis and considers the three overarching objectives that democracy promoters pursued in the Congo: brokering democracy (Section 2), fostering preconditions i.e. security (Section 3) and enforcing the transition bargaining with the government and through the CIAT commission (Section 4). A conclusion brings the main findings together to explore how this case contributed to the picture of a rising Europe while it also corroborates the United States influential, hegemonic position in post-Cold War IR. Before the chapter sheds light on these issues, a brief description of the background follows in this introduction.

Background

The end of the Cold War clearly affected democracy promotion in Zaire: after years of shoring up Mobutu, Western countries stopped supporting the dictator and called for regime-opening and democratization (G. Martin, 2005; Westad, 2005). Mobutu reluctantly consented to some reforms, but the economic situation worsened dramatically, the state as he had built it (based on the national army and the civil servants in the provinces) disintegrated, and uncontrollable murderous conflicts inflamed the Eastern region as a consequence of the genocide and the new regime in Rwanda³. A diversity of leaders and their armed groups, supported by shifting alliances and other countries (Uganda, Rwanda, Zimbabwe) challenged Mobutu, himself supported at times by Angola. Finally, Laurent Kabila's group, that came from the East and was supported mainly by Rwanda, made its way to Kinshasa in 1997, he overthrew the regime and changed the country's name to Democratic Republic of Congo.

Map 1. Map of the Democratic Republic of Congo

Source: <http://www.greenwichmeantime.com/time-zone/africa/democratic-republic-of-congo/map.htm>



Despite L. Kabila's victory, the situation deteriorated with ongoing warring-groups confrontations and population abuse, including massacres, rape and plundering leading to hundreds of thousands of refugees. Peace-making became the priority,

³ The Rwandan army and groups (in majority hutu) responsible of the genocide fled the country as Kagame and the tutsi armed groups took power. The conflict between these groups continued as those expelled or "in exile" tried to destabilize Kigali, and Kagame's army attacked the hutu groups with frequent incursions into DR Congo and accused Kinshasa of protecting those guilty of genocide. All groups used the mines as financial source and terrorized the populations, who were vulnerable even when they were displaced in refugee camps.

because this “political transition” did not mean the end of conflict, rather the opposite (previous allies became enemies). Yet L. Kabila isolated himself from international pressure⁴. The United Nations plans (observation, blue-helmet deployment, creation of MONUC) were clearly framed as security-intervention, and the Congolese transition process must be understood within this political-security framework.

When Laurent Kabila was assassinated (by insiders) in January 2001, his son Joseph took over power, inheriting the chaotic situation and the failing agreements to stop the war. However, Joseph Kabila’s strategy was to co-opt (or accept to be co-opted by) the international community as a way out of the conflict, while holding on to the government and de facto embodying the official DRC state. Disarmament and power distribution agreements often allowed Kabila to keep the lion’s share. Meanwhile, in conformity with the democratic triumph, the international community had insisted on the organization of elections since 1999, and obstinately crafted and supported a challenging electoral process in the failed-state DRC. Indeed, the organization of elections underpinned a state-building project where the voters’ lists became the census, and the Independent Electoral Commission premises and officials became the most important civil presence of the state in decades. In parallel, the international community made an effort to disarm “rebel” groups (i.e. factions other than Kabila’s) and to create an integrated Congolese army, but the practical and political problems in this regard weighed more than the incentives to disarm and build a state with the monopoly of the use of violence.

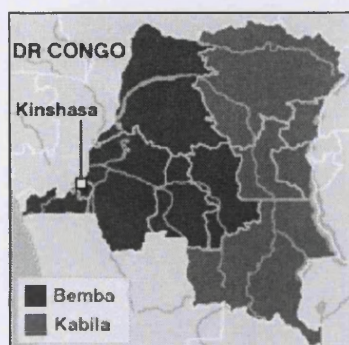
In the end, the presidential run-off election led to the inauguration of Joseph Kabila as President of the Third Republic of the DRC in December 2006. However, the electoral process could not overcome the link between political parties and their armed factions’ constant threats, the importance of ethnic and geographic allegiance instead of political programs. Still in 2009, the Congolese state is unable to guarantee security for its population, and the efforts to jump-start the economy await results. As the run-off map shows, Kabila was clearly supported in the East, while his opponent Bemba scored victories of up to 98% of the vote in the regions traditionally loyal to Mobutu such as the North-Western Equator. In 2008, Freedom House continued to

⁴ Since his own groups and himself were under suspicion for war crimes, L. Kabila notably hindered United Nations observation and reporting in 1999-2000. He also failed to grant space for other political factions even in the legislative or administrative arenas.

rank the Democratic Republic of Congo as “not free” with scores of 5/7 and 6/7 [7 being the worst] in political liberties and civil rights, Bemba was in exile, corruption was rising and human rights abuses continued.

Map 2. Map of results from the run-off presidential election, DRC 2006

Source: BBC News (Mark Doyle), 29 October 2006



The Congolese transition process and the American and European policies of democracy promotion must be understood in this context of a failed-state and an electoral process that was especially intense in 2005-6. Most importantly, since the country's implosion (roughly from 1995 on), violence ravages the East but destabilizes the whole state, so this process can be described accurately as a case of democracy promotion *during* war (Ahamed, 2006; Barrios & Ahamed, 2008)⁵.

1. Democratic transition in Zaire / Democratic Republic of Congo: American and European democracy promotion confront state- failure and war

The Congolese transition process can be divided broadly in three stages: the end of Mobutu's regime, the time of power-vacuum during the Congolese wars and instability during Laurent Kabila's government, and the stage of unsteady but incremental instauration of Joseph Kabila in power. The main events in these periods are outlined in corresponding chronology-tables below, while I focus on US and EU action. Throughout, American and European positions were rather similar and often reinforced each other, though they did not result in cooperation. In the US and the EU, internal dynamics influenced the policies, and geopolitical rivalry played a role

⁵ This observation is crucial and introduces new challenges in democracy promotion as there is no *post-conflict* transition in the Congo; instead, the transition happens *during* the conflict and is actually envisaged as part of the strategy *to end* the conflict.

in an episode of Franco-American “confrontation” over support for Mobutu or for Laurent Kabila in the second stage. In turn, on the ground, some proposals faced Congolese resistance to conform to Western ideas on what the DRC democracy should look like.

1.1. US and EU end support and aid of Mobutu’s dictatorship

Mobutu felt constrained to propose reforms and a regime opening under pressure from the West. These included the legalization of traditional opposition leader and party (Tshisekedi and his UPDS), the establishment of multiparty politics (which de facto led to a number of acolyte-parties), and the co-optation of associations and civil society to discuss the new regime in a National Conference. The attempts of institutional reform included new legislative and executive bodies, but Mobutu never yielded governmental power from the presidency to the appointed Council or Prime Minister. Meanwhile, the state gradually fell apart as the dictator lost control, his civil and military apparatus disintegrated or revolted, and the economy collapsed.

Box 4. Chronology of the DRC. Stage 1: end of Mobutu’s regime

1990-1996 Stage 1. End of Mobutu’s regime

1990 “regime opening” announcement

1991 Episodes of military mutiny and plundering

1991-2 *National Sovereign Conference* (approx. 2,850 delegates)

Confrontations between Mobutu and other Conference participants (Catholic Church led protests)

453-member Council and “new government” receive support from Belgium, France and USA

1993-4 Economic and security situation continues to degrade, dozens of people die in riots, strikes

Council fails to put pressure on Mobutu, no division of executive power

1994 World Bank office closes, IMF suspends Zaire

[1994-5 Genocide and war in Rwanda, conflict spills over the region]

Democracy promotion started to play a role in US and EU foreign policy towards Zaire in the early 1990s as they both stopped supporting Mobutu. While Western aid and military and political support had been flowing into Mobutu’s authoritarian Zaire during the Cold War and greatly contributed to his corrupted and repressive regime, the global turn of the 1990s saw a clear change in US and EU policies (Schraeder et

al., 1998)⁶. The new paradigm of democracy promotion was evident in the interruption of this flow on the grounds of democratic deficit.

In the US, the pressure came from Congress. In 1990, while George Bush's administration and the State Department had asked for USD 4 million in military aid for Zaire and lobbied to get it, Congress denied it and instead authorized 40 million in economic aid. In addition, this had to be channeled through agencies non-affiliated with Mobutu's government (Kraus, 1990). In this sense, there was a choice to support democratization *via* civil society. During the Clinton administration, a Republican-dominated Congress and Senator Jesse Helms as chair of the Foreign Relations Committee regularly checked the presidential policies, at a time when the US Africa policy became one of "trade, not aid" (Carothers, 1995). This indirectly left Zaire out, for there could be no trade exchanges in a collapsing state where the economy was estimated to be 80% informal, the regional authorities (especially the richer Katanga and Kasai) counted more and more as official reference for foreign companies, and even individuals had been granted the right to exploit diamond mines⁷. The White House left a space that was mainly filled by USAID, and not the CIA, the Pentagon or the State Department in view of the region's low priority. USAID policies perpetuated modernization links and emphasized democracy prospects (Clark, 1998), but in a context of cancelled official aid and of USAID ever-fewer funds, Clinton's vows for democracy assistance amounted to rhetoric but no practice in the DRC. This trend would not be reversed later, as President George W. Bush's Africa policy was one of continuity, focusing on trade. His other original development programs, the HIV/AIDS fund for Africa and the Millennium Challenge Account, did not apply to the Congo either (Hesse, 2005; Rothchild, 2001). Indeed, though both Clinton (in 1998) and Bush (in 2003 and 2008) famously visited the continent on widely-publicized diplomatic trips, Zaire belonged to the parts of Africa where the US was less and less engaged (Michaels, 1992)⁸.

In the European Union, while European Development Funds (EDF) cooperation had been ongoing since 1958, aid was officially suspended in 1992 until

⁶ Some estimate Mobutu got about USD 1.5 billion in aid from the United States through these decades. Schraeder Cold War foreign policy of the US, France and Japan.

⁷ Mobutu took this measure to legalize what were usual practices, maybe with the intention to gain support from individuals and the population and to "punish" the regional authorities and companies that had privileges on mine exploitation.

⁸ As there was no longer a security argument, American diplomacy mainly moved to protect economic interests.

January 2002. Only some Health and Social programs continued to be funded for their humanitarian purposes (Delegation of the European Commission in DRC, 2006, p. 6). In the larger picture, Zaire was affected when EU cooperation with Africa introduced good governance, human rights, and democratization conditionality through the 1990s. This trend was supposed to bring a change to the “special” ties that had led the EU (notably under French pressure) to maintain privileged cooperation with African countries regardless of the regime, but the preferred framework was that of CFSP Dialogue instead of legal sanction⁹. However, the EU did introduce resolutions in the General Assembly/Third Committee on “Zaire and human rights” since 1995, in a relatively rare instance of consensus and coherence (K. E. Smith, 2006). In sum, European development cooperation became more politicized, but Africa was low on the EU agenda of new foreign policy issues. EU human rights activism was relatively disjointed, and humanitarian aid by ECHO existed in parallel (Arts & Dickson, 2004; Petiteville, 2003; Whiteman, 1998).

The roles of Member States and of the European Parliament help us to get a more nuanced view of EU action. Traditionally, Member States have permeated EU Development policies for specific geographical areas, and exert pressure via the Council and lobbying in community-bodies¹⁰. Such area-influence is perpetuated by the Commission’s DG Development and Cooperation’s subdivision into regional areas, instead of themes (Arts & Dickson, 2004, p. 6). In the case of DR Congo and in general in the Great Lakes region, the roles of Belgium and France have been key in informing and implementing EU action (McCalpin, 2002) and were generally followed by other states. Individual countries’ actions were rather similar to the US’s, for instance Belgium suspended its bilateral aid on the grounds of the violent repression of a student protest in Lubumbashi (as the US), and France did the same though a bit later, in 1993.

⁹ Numerous EU documents illustrate the trend for conditionality in EU Development Cooperation, among them the 1997 Green Paper on EU-ACP relations, the 1998 Good Governance Communication, and IV Lome and the Cotonou Conventions. As of Cotonou 2000, ACP-EU agreements included the human rights clause as an essential element, before it was part of the preamble. Nevertheless, this clause has only been applied rarely and I could not verify that the suspension of aid had been formally based on this with its full *legal* implications.

¹⁰ MS interests broadly coincide with former colonial ties. As EDF are voluntary contributions (not part of the EU budget) by MS, MS also keep a high hand on the funds through Council decision and through comitology, though policies are drafted and implemented at Commission level. In 2009, the Commission continues to lobby for EU-budgetization of EDF.

In the mean time, during the 1990s the European Parliament increasingly took an active role in EU human rights and development policy-making, but its role in the Congo was limited as a result of its restricted input in EU policies. For example, in view of the appalling Human Rights reports in 1993, the EP went as far as to suggest that Member States freeze Mobutu's assets, showing the EMPS' greater disposition to punish the dictator. However, MS never followed up on these recommendations, and such "aggressive policy" was thwarted because the EP could only issue opinions.

1.2. French-American rivalry in the Congolese wars and a belated security-intervention

With a collapsed economy and the Eastern Congolese regions increasingly destabilized as the result of the Rwandan genocide, Mobutu's became one of the parties in the protracted, ever aggravating conflict that led the whole Great Lakes region to what some called "Africa's first world war"¹¹. The transition process, in crisis, became increasingly less political and more military; neither the National Conference nor Council convened again, and their leaders were powerless. Instead, armed groups led by rebels calling on polarized identities and regions, took over (Young, 2006). This was the case since 1996 when the "First War" of the Congo led to the disintegration of the state in influence-zones, with Laurent Kabila's group (AFDL) finally defeating Mobutu, whose national army groups had deserted or rebelled. The subsequent episode of the "Second War" of the Congo saw shifting armed groups, alliances and influence-zones further dominated by regional dynamics (with interventions from Rwanda, Uganda, Angola, Zimbabwe...), challenging Kabila's new reign (Lanotte, 2003).

¹¹ Quote attributed to Madeleine Albright, source: UN Security Council Meeting record: DRC, S/PV 4092, 24 January 2000, p. 4.

Box 5. Chronology of the DRC. Stage 2: Congolese Wars, Laurent D. Kabila takes power

1996-2001 Stage 2. Congolese Wars, Laurent D. Kabila takes over power

- 1996 “First war” of Congo. Insurrection of Laurent D. Kabila’s AFDL assisted by Rwanda, later Uganda
- 1997 Laurent Kabila overthrows Mobutu (May), Mobutu dies in exile (September)
- 1998 “Second war” of Congo or “Africa’s first world war”. L.D. Kabila is unpopular, he forces out Rwandan and Congolese (tutsi) military, who stir insurrection in the East. Rebel groups (old and new) and foreign armies supporting them fight. i.e.
- 1999 Beginning of Security Council discussions at the United Nations
- 1999 *Lusaka cease-fire agreement*: Kinshasa government, Zimbabwe, Angola, Namibia, Uganda and Rwanda, foresees UN peacekeeping mission and exit of foreign troops
- 2000 MONUC blue helmet operation decided

In these years, the United States and European countries mostly stood by while the Great Lakes region bled more than four million victims and the United Nations was unable to cope with the millions of displaced and refugees. The international community in general dragged its feet, unable to agree and to commit to end the conflict and restore the political transition. The Congo and the Great Lakes region have traditionally been considered part of a francophone sphere of influence in Africa, a situation largely perpetuated by American collusion (Taylor & Williams, 2004). However, as Kagame (who had fought the Habyarimana regime that had been supported by France) became leader of post-genocide Rwanda, the Great Lakes international picture changed. Kagame was not only opposed to France, he also strengthened ties with the US: in the final days of his administration, Clinton publicly regretted the lack of intervention to stop the genocide and stood by the new tutsi president. Later, Kagame’s change of sides to a theoretically antagonistic anglophone sphere would even materialize in Rwanda’s application to join the Commonwealth¹². Within this context, American-French rivalry also arose in the Congo during the “First War”.

Indeed, though they built up pressure on Zaire to open up and democratize, some Western states and especially France were not ready to let go of Mobutu easily. The press of that period, including *The New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal* and

¹² In a conference at the London School of Economics, the Rwandan president insisted on these aspects (Kagame, 2007).

especially *Le Monde* reported there was US-France confrontation¹³. This way, during the “First War”, the US arguably took the ADFL rebels’ side and supported the rebellion led firstly by Ngandu and then by Laurent D. Kabila, and backed by Rwanda and (also anglophone) Uganda. Several studies have established that the CIA and American military companies trained and funded Kabila’s rebellion and their advance towards Kinshasa (Ginifer, 2002); seemingly the United Kingdom sided with the US but not actively. By contrast France sought to keep Mobutu in power with a conciliatory diplomacy, and in any case supported (as traditionally) the Congolese troops, including during open fights against Rwandan troops; it seemingly sponsored Serbian mercenaries to fight in Mobutu’s army (Ngolet, 2000)¹⁴. In part, these moves and later negotiations are explained by the independent policies that some groups (troops units) and individuals (civil servants, deployed personnel) had in the field. Among these, on the American side the Pentagon/CIA and Clinton’s Envoy to the Great Lakes Howard Wolpe were key (Schraeder, 2000)¹⁵. Similarly, the Africa-unit of the French army, reporting directly to the president (Vasset, 1997) and the French-Africa networks and clientelist connections also explain the sometimes inconsistent strategies of the Western “allies” (Krosiak, 2004).

Nevertheless, most analysts have reduced the importance of this confrontation, and put the US and France on the same side of the larger picture, pushing for transition in the Congo from a relative distance (Clark, 2002; Schraeder, 2000). Rather pragmatically, France did not stop and regret Mobutu’s fall, and established ties with Laurent Kabila once in power. Similarly, though the US had supported Laurent Kabila, they fell out as he isolated himself internationally, hindered United Nations investigations on massacres in the East, was unable to pacify or unite the Congo, and offered no signs of democratization (Schatzberg, 1997).

A European Union position also became increasingly important with the appointment of Special Representative for the Great Lakes Aldo Ajello in 1996. He

¹³ A. J. Fralon and J. Turquoi, "Afrique: la fausse querelle franco-américaine," *Le Monde*, 21 Oct. 1996, p. 6. A. Franchon, "Les querelles entre Paris et Washington ont laissés la France en première ligne," *Le Monde*, 11 Jan. 1997, p. 16 and F. Fritscher, "La question du Zaïre oppose toujours Paris et Washington," *Le Monde*, 3 Feb. 1997, p. 6. Seemingly Mitterrand did not want to let go of France’s influence in Rwanda and the region.

¹⁴ Though this kind of information and covert actions is rather difficult to verify with documents, these accounts are broadly held as true by academics, negotiators, journalists and diplomats in the field.

¹⁵ Wolpe was in contact with Kabila and Mobutu’s sides during the conflict, and the US considered Mobutu could be part of the solution. Meanwhile, an American political officer from the Kinshasa US embassy had actually been stationed at Kabila’s guerrilla headquarters for two months.

worked to raise a “single EU-voice”, but he admitted he sometimes “had to *invent* a common position” in view of the disparate MS preferences (Ajello, 2007). In this regard, Common Foreign and Security Policy debates took place in the European Parliament in 1997 to bring France, which had been reluctant to follow the new EU democracy promotion principles, to a Council common position within European Cooperation Policy (King, 1999)¹⁶. The EU unified position of support for Kabila’s presidency was symbolized by the Foreign affairs Ministerial troika (Luxembourg, Holland and the United Kingdom) visit to Congo in August 1997. Then, as the Security Council and broadly the United Nations framework became more active, the common interests of French and American policies converged to a multilateral setting, and the dispute over French and American influence in the Congo lost ground as the “Second War” of Congo unraveled.

Then, the main parties in the conflict became on the one hand Laurent Kabila’s, or the government’s (most of the AFDL factions) and on the other Jean-Pierre Bemba’s MLC, partly supported by some of the old (Mobutu’s) national army, later supported by Uganda and Angola. The RCD-Goma and a diversity of related groups (tutsi, strongly backed by Rwanda), who had allied with Kabila in the “First War” and were disaffected, challenged the government in the East. There, the Mai-Mai militia and other groups (including Rwandan hutu) fought the RCD and Rwandan/tutsi forces (International Crisis Group, 2001). The international community had by then almost forgotten about the opening and democratization process, and shifted to negotiations for a cease-fire with military interlocutors in the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement (1999). After Lusaka, the political process came back in the framework of the Inter-Congolese Dialogue (Chivvis, 2007; Schraeder, 2002)¹⁷.

¹⁶ In the mean time, a new left-wing government (led by Jospin) had been elected in France in 1997 and President Chirac’s conservative policies and overall French military policies in Africa came under new scrutiny and had to co-exist with the government’s reform plans.

¹⁷ The roles of the US and the EU in these negotiations and the “brokering” of the democratic transition is discussed in Section 2.

1.3. American and European democracy promotion and “Kabila-state” building: conditionality, compound aid, limited influence on the democracy-model

Let us now turn to what I see as a third phase of the Congolese transition process, marked by the intermittent success of the international initiatives for dialogue and scaled-down conflict, and by more intense activity in the political realm. Most warring parties were co-opted into peace and transition agreements that at the same time safeguarded Joseph Kabila’s power. This stage saw the end of drafting a new constitution (ongoing since the National Conference), the design of new institutions and power distribution, the electoral process, and a transitional authority that lasted until Kabila’s presidential appointment in December 2006.

Kabila’s election was the key turning point for the international community, and American and European speeches and documents started to refer to the “consolidation” and “post-transition” phase after it. However, the transition process is better understood if we do not make a full stop at that election and take into consideration, for instance, that in January 2007 extremely serious cases of corruption and volatility tarnished the Senate elections¹⁸, and that local elections have been postponed indefinitely (Vuemba, 2007). There is still no peace in the East; the transition is arguably not over, democracy seems elusive.

Box 6. Chronology of the DRC. Stage 3: Joseph Kabila in power

2001-2008 Stage 3. Joseph Kabila in power

- 2001 Assassination (January) of Laurent Kabila by domestic guard, Joseph Kabila takes over power
- 2001 (November) Security Council creation of coordination mechanism for DDRRR –disarming, demobilization, repatriation, reinstallation and reinsertion
- 2002 *Inter-Congolese Dialogue* of Sun City leading to resolutions
- 2003 *Global and all-Inclusive Agreement*, sets up institutions of the Transition, foresees elections, creates CIAT
- 2003 Fighting continues in the Eastern provinces. EU operation Artemis
- 2005 Referendum on the Constitution based on transition parliament text
- 2006 EUFOR-Congo (June)
- 2006 Legislative and Presidential election (July) and Provincial and run-off Presidential election (October)
- 2007 Corruption cases concerning senate election lead to riots in Matadi (116 dead)
- 2007 New cooperation agreements with the EU, World Bank, IMF
- Local elections postponed
- 2007 Kabila accepts China unconditional aid/loan for USD 5 billion condemned by IMF
- 2008 Fighting resumes in the Eastern provinces, armistice (December)

¹⁸ A clearly pro-Kabila provincial assembly “unexpectedly” elected a pro-Bemba senator who had bought some assembly-members’ votes at USD 10,000/each. Groups of people gathered to protest and the brutal repression led to 116 deaths in Matadi.

United States and European Union democracy promotion during this period brought them together under the international community intervention to pacify the Congo with multiparty agreements and to pursue the electoral process, while basic development assistance was also urgent. The EU complemented its civil intervention with two short but decisive military operations, Artemis (2003) and EUFOR-Congo (2006) discussed in Section 3 below. Here I discuss three key aspects of *both* US and EU democracy promotion: conditionality, compound aid and limited influence on specific outcomes regarding the democracy model.

First, the dynamic of conditionality (sanctions and rewards) that underlies much of international democracy promotion was confirmed in the case of Congo: as the transition moved on and in order to make it move, donors allocated more funds (World Bank, 2002). It is difficult to estimate how much “international money” has been spent in the transition process in Congo; some sources mention over USD 10 billion for the 2002- 2006 period¹⁹. By far the main fund-providers were the European Union (including bilateral aid from Member States), notably in charge of 80% of the electoral process expenses, and the United States, main financier of the MONUC (though Germany was also an important MONUC contributor)²⁰. Most funds were channeled through the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and other international bodies. For example, the World Bank organized a Donors conference in Paris in 2002 where about USD 3 million were secured for “capacity building”.

Secondly, promoters did not differentiate funds and tasks clearly: peacemaking and humanitarian assistance for the thousands of refugees in the Congo were built in the US and the EU approaches. The same applies for democracy assistance subdivisions and categories: blurry, changing categories and a mix of policies. Indeed, a “comprehensive approach” of democracy promotion was explicitly the international community’s objective in this transition process (K. Annan, 2003)²¹. As we get closer to the field, democratization questions and dynamics somewhat lose their

¹⁹ Estimation from a *Financial Times* source quoted in (Chivvis, 2007).

²⁰ There were some critiques regarding the fact that the transition, notably the elections, “did not cost the Congolese state any money”, which created an adverse effect of a process initiated, wanted and sponsored by the internationals and co-opting Congolese stakeholders. However, the engagement and successful participation of the Congolese people demonstrated the national drive, support and ownership of the transition process.

²¹ In the words of Kofi Annan, “assisting the transition process in a country as large as the DRC [will] require a comprehensive approach in which the UN, the Bretton Wood institutions, and bilateral and multilateral donors plan and coordinate their activities to an almost unprecedented degree”. Para. 67.

“promoter’s” specificity to program complexity and shifting realities, and the conceptualizations that were applied a priori, or in assessments a posteriori, are not relevant.

Both conditionality and the undifferentiated definition of “democracy promotion” are clear in the case of the United Kingdom’s DFID policies, an example I choose to illustrate these widespread trends.

Table 7. Democracy promotion and conditionality: funds increased as the transition process moves on (illustrated by the United Kingdom’s DFID allocations to the DRC)

Period	DFID Funding (£ million)
2001-02	£5.6
2002-03	£12.9
2003-04	£17.2
2004-05	£29.2
2005-06	£58.8

UK funds allocated for the DRC democracy assistance directed at the Congo show increasing support as the transition process developed. The activities included within these funds include, among other: humanitarian aid, development aid (e.g. for water, transport projects), disarmament, election assistance, and justice reform²². Eventually, DFID funds some agents (mostly large and small NGOs) and programs to organize and undertake the specific activities, e.g. information and capacity-building workshops, roundtable negotiations. Then, for example, DFID would finance the American Woodrow Wilson Center (a renowned scholarly institute that undertakes some fieldwork), or a Concept Paper by International Alert (medium-size NGO based in London)²³. Most of DFID funds for election assistance would in turn be channeled through the EU mission. The UK contributions to MONUC and to the EU operations Artemis and EUFOR-Congo came from different budgets (not development-related).

²² Data extracted from DFID website, January 2009.

²³ Information I gathered from interview with consultant, Paris 10 December 2007 and I verified in publications from these sources (they acknowledge their donors).

Thirdly, the extent to which democracy promoters influenced the democracy-model coming about in the Congo was limited. The international community financed and made possible the logistics of the transition process entirely, and this should not be underestimated in a failed-state. This way, any computers, expertise, ballots, office material, print-outs, distribution, communications, transport, etc. depended on a complex network of international interveners (including the US, the EU and also South Africa). Content-wise, however, the influence of the promoters was more limited²⁴. During the transition process and especially from 2001 on under the Inter-Congolese Dialogue, internationals worked in commissions with appointed Congolese politicians (members of the assembly, then the parliament); their most important task was to draft the Constitution. These democracy promoters were mostly private consultants appointed by the United States, some of them via the National Endowment for Democracy, some via USAID. For example, USAID funded two American NGOs (IFES and the Law Group) to work with a network of civil society partners that in the Congo were coordinated by the Catholic Church (USAID, 2002b). The Catholic Church has been crucial in the transition process in the DRC (in fact, it could be argued that the Church was at some stages the only “state-structure”), and it should be noticed that American and European democracy promoters worked with the Church on a large number of projects and co-opted it as a legitimate partner in the transition. For instance, when the international community paid salaries to electoral officials, they channeled the money through the Church or private companies instead of through the Congolese state bank or ministerial/civil servant structures²⁵. In addition, the EU and European countries, especially Belgium, also appointed expert individuals and delegations that contributed to debates and proposals for the Constitution.

This way, the EU lobbied in the Congo for the abolition of the death penalty (a landmark of European “democracy” policies) but the Congolese commission discussing it decided not to abolish it formally. Nevertheless, an informal

²⁴ This made sense for starters in the logic of not imposing democracy promotion. The Independent Electoral Commission and other transition institutions plus the many working groups created gave leverage to the Congolese, though pressure existed behind the stage and through conditionality.

²⁵ This could be compared to the US and EU reluctance to co-opt Islamic institutions in the Middle East and North Africa region.

moratorium has been in place since January 2003²⁶, hinting at a relatively important influence of the EU. The nature of the regime was also at stake, and the EU and the American party foundation NDI defended a shift to parliamentarism in view of the problems that strong-man rule and a winner-take-all system causes in Africa (Young, 2006). Nevertheless, the final draft kept a strong presidentialism that has de facto been confirmed in Kabila's last two years in power²⁷. Another example concerned the definition of the electoral system and districts and the electoral law. The internationals encouraged lists instead of individual first-past-the-post systems in order to encourage coalitions, and larger electoral districts to assert national allegiance. However, the law that passed maintained individual candidacies for provincial governor, and gerrymandering has privileged constituencies on ethnic grounds²⁸.

These cases show the international efforts to promote democracy with a knowledge and "technical" basis, which in turn may be resisted by powerful dynamics of the field: politicians in the Congo clearly opted to maximize their power when possible²⁹. Overall, both the EU and the US failed to influence the laws and institutions in detail as much as they had, for instance, in Eastern and Central Europe. Richard Joseph (1997, p. 370) found this trend was generalized in Africa; this is partly explained by the minimal interest and efforts devoted to the continent in European and American external relations. Indeed, some academics consider the new "mission civilisatrice" and shared-sovereignty in failed states create opportunities for democratization (Krasner, 2004; Paris, 2002). Nevertheless, local actors have potential to affect the outcome and challenge international influence; they can even adopt an attitude of *shaming* the internationals for interfering.

This description of American and European democracy promotion in the Congolese transition process will now be complemented by a discussion of the main objectives pursued: brokering democracy, fostering security, and enforcing reform.

²⁶ As of April 2008, the last person executed in the Congo was on 6 January 2003. The most reliable estimate (local NGO) considers about 450 people are in death row. (RFI (Radio France Internationale), 2008).

²⁷ The open provisions of the constitution have resulted in rather weak roles for the assembly and the prime minister in 2006-8.

²⁸ Parliamentary elections also considered individual candidacies; according to DFID 9,632 candidates ran for a total of 500 assembly seats. This translated in ballots that were hard to interpret (if you did not know the individual you could not know the program) and pages-long, as they often included pictures of the candidates and not only names. This assistance came from the South African EISA.

²⁹ In his French Sociological analysis of African politics, Bayart describes this strongman-politics and family/ ethnic/ traditional allegiances as "the politics of the belly".

In the conclusions, I will come back to the arguments on US and EU “universalisms” and on the challenges regarding democracy promotion

2. Brokering democracy: from a National Sovereign Conference (NSC) to peace agreements to elections

This section argues that a first objective of US and the EU policies was to broker democracy, which consisted in three main elements. First, the international community disregarded the NSC and did not support this option, though in the end the Conference failed because of its own internal shortcomings. Secondly, the international community intervened in the negotiation of peace agreements, introducing a “political transition” of sorts as a factor in the agreements. This engagement empowered war-factions as political actors, and involved increased legitimization and power for some, notably Joseph Kabila. Thirdly, the international community gave priority to elections as a strategy to solve the conflict and to create a state.

2.1. Ambiguous support for the National Conference

As a way to initiate the transition, Mobutu gave way to a National (Sovereign) Conference (NSC)³⁰. It convened mainly during 1991-93 and reached a maximum of 2,850 delegates, with important participation from civil society groups (labor unions, the Catholic Church). The NSC invested the opposition’s leader (Tshisekedi) as prime minister and developed a legislative structure and government (High Council) that coexisted with Mobutu’s (1993-4), which weakened the regime.

Robinson and Joseph (1997; 1994) have identified National Conferences as a classic feature of transitions in Africa, which allow for broader participation and consensus compared to models of liberal-democracy representation (Ake, 1993)³¹. Zaire seemed to be following upon the models of Benin and South Africa. During the National Sovereign Conference, civil society movements played a very important role. Analysts and witnesses underline the atmosphere of civic participation,

³⁰ Mobutu opened the “National Conference”, which would later declare itself “Sovereign” and thus able and legitimate to challenge his regime and make decisions. This was a self-appointment that would not get validated through elections, and was constantly rejected by Mobutu.

³¹ Many leaders also argue that there is an “African way of democracy” that must privilege participation, community and forums to “talk” instead of a result-oriented model with controversial elections, most famously the Tanzanian president Julius Nyerere (and also Nelson Mandela).

unprecedented in the country's history, as the NSC sessions were transmitted by radio, commented in newspapers, etc. They also emphasize the role of the Catholic Church, especially in the mobilization during the 1992 March of Hope, and as the president of the Episcopal Conference Monsengwo became head of the legislature (Nzongola-Ntalaja, 2002; Renton, Seddon, & Zeilig, 2007). However, the NSC admittedly failed because its openness and inclusion brought in too many side-quarrels, because it proved unable to stop the war, and because Mobutu always imposed his control. Arguably, though it worked as a civic forum, it had difficulty in deciding and validating a new institutional framework for the state (H. Campbell, 2002; de Villers & Omasombo Tshonda, 2002).

In any case, both the United States and the European Union adopted an ambiguous but rather lukewarm position vis-à-vis the NSC. Policy-makers observed the talks and demonstrations from the distance; staff from the US Bureau of Africa Affairs (Department of State) and Western embassies disregarded this forum of more than 2,000 people as inefficient, and apprehended uncontrolled violence³². But more specifically, Western countries hesitated between keeping Mobutu (though weakening him) and strengthening ties with the opposition leader Etienne Tshisekedi. Their signals were mixed: on the one hand, they put pressure on Mobutu to maintain the Conference, isolated him diplomatically³³, and considered the new government as legitimate. On the other hand, the US, Belgium and France did not break up with Mobutu even in periods of extreme crisis, such as when the French ambassador died in one of the riot-outbreaks in 1993, or when the World Bank closed its Kinshasa offices and the IMF suspended Zaire's aid in 1994.

The NSC could be considered a civil-society driver of the transition, and the fact is that both the US and the EU disregarded it. Many in the DRC thought the NSC was the original and legitimate transition process, and openly criticized the internationals' disregard (Mbwebwe K., 2005). This way, the US and the EU indirectly endorsed elite-led transitions where elections were key, showing a preference for procedural democracy [cf. Chapter 1]. In the cases of Eastern and Central Europe and Georgia or Ukraine, Western democracy promotion gave a more prominent role to civil society and mass movements, but this was not the case in

³² See documentary film *Mobutu roi du Zaire* (Michel).

³³ For example, when King Badouin died in 1993, Mobutu was not invited to the funeral, though they had had a friendly relationship for decades.

Zaire with the NSC. Two reasons may have been that the promoters may not have been familiar with the cultural dimensions of civil society in Africa, and that few international civil society democracy promoters (e.g. foundations as Open Society) had taken action in Africa, with the exception of the Catholic Church and other churches. Later in the transition process, important funds would be devoted to funding civil society programs that seemed more transparent to Western donors and closer to the ECE experience, such as associations and NGOs³⁴.

2.2. Co-opting warring factions as the new political elite and Joseph Kabila as transition leader

A second dimension in the policies to broker the transition was to let go of the multi-party proposals and the political transition because the failed-state and security challenges became a priority, for both the US and the EU. The political opposition clearly lost ground to the armed, rebel groups that took over the country during the wars. Almost inadvertently, the groups who had been attacking the state became responsible for building it, as they were co-opted in the process. Yet they were clientelist and little worried about the public good, and they privileged ethnic and geographical allegiances instead of political programs. The transition thus gave a preeminent role to potential spoilers whose legitimacy derived from their armed power, relying on a presumed virtuous cycle.

By 1998-99, the US and the EU privileged conflict-resolution over the political transition in the 1999 Lusaka Peace Agreement. According to some witnesses, Howard Wolpe, Clinton's special envoy in the region, and the Under-secretary of State for African Affairs Susan Rice, played a key role putting in Lusaka together³⁵. This illustrated the high leverage of American diplomacy in Africa. Arguably, a mid-way had to be found between warlord agreements (responsible for armed conflict and plundering) and the proceedings of the political National Sovereign Conference that had attempted a transition from Mobutuism. The Lusaka Agreement was a failure in the eyes of most analysts: the cease-fire was never effective, the parties never disarmed (Bouvier & Bomboko, 2004). However, this Agreement made the first

³⁴ Nevertheless it can be argued that promoters remained overall skeptical of participative and also privileged elites in all cases (indeed, the Western support in the "color revolutions" of Georgia and Ukraine was accompanied by support for selected leaders as Saakasvili and Iushenko).

³⁵ Quote from Gerard Prunier (Lanotte, 2003, p. 251). Other peace negotiations (led by African leaders) had been failing in the previous months.

reference to a political process in its Chapter 5 on National Dialogue and Reconciliation, which also called for “free, democratic and transparent elections”³⁶. The circle was in place: no peace and no international intervention without democracy. Seemingly the American negotiators extracted this concession from Laurent Kabila, and this importantly became the legal basis for the Inter-Congolese Dialogue (ICD) and the ensuing electoral process.

The EU then became the main donor of the Inter-Congolese Dialogue, making possible mediation sessions in different countries and keeping the different partners at the table (Guerrero, 2007). For this, the EU often subcontracted consultants and negotiators working individually or for some institutes (as the French *Irene*). Within this framework the EU also financed most demobilization and reintegration programs, and humanitarian/ emergency assistance related to the 1996-2001 wars. In 1997-8, the EU Council adopted Joint Actions to create a European Electoral Unit and to contribute to the UN Special Fund. Thus, the US and the EU jointly supported the initiatives, though the EU financed the Dialogue more clearly.

This way, Lusaka and the subsequent Inter-Congolese Dialogue, Sun-City and Pretoria Agreements all proposed compromises that included an intertwined solution of the armed conflict (disarmament, creation of a national army) and the political transition to democracy. However, this had led to a re-positioning of actors in Congolese politics and most importantly the armed factions. Key political actors (notably Tshisekedi) lost ground to the armed parties, i.e. Bemba’s MLC and the RCD-Goma (which many considered a Rwanda government infiltration). From 2001 on, the United States and the European powers increasingly supported Joseph Kabila as “the” leader to make the transition happen. While Laurent D. Kabila had isolated the Congo and irritated the West with an official trip to China, Joseph traveled to Washington, Brussels, Paris as soon as he gained power, and was well supported by Western leaders and the media (Vircoulon, 2006). In exchange, he promised to maintain the Inter-Congolese Dialogue (Tshimanga-Bakadiababu, 2004).

Tshisekedi seemingly remained an alternative, the “non-armed opposition”, though he was increasingly seen as a spoiler in EU circles (by Louis Michel and Aldo Ajello) because he resented all the new actors’ power. In 2001, he addressed the US Congress trying to get a shift in policies:

³⁶ Point 5.5.iv. of the Lusaka Agreement, 1999.

“The US administration should resist the temptation to once again promote and legitimize the “strong-man approach” and a new dictatorship. As the only remaining superpower the United States should seize this opportunity to support the establishment of strong democratic institutions and credible leaders, who have proven their resolute and sincere commitment to the democratic ideal”. (Tshisekedi, 2001)

Campbell (2002) underlined the influence that the US (and also Belgium and France) had in disregarding non-armed participants and avoiding a return to “the people-owned National Sovereign Conference”. Most importantly, according to Lemarchand (1998), the Americans were naïve to focus on new leaders and believe in their democratic potential. Indeed, J. Kabila extracted a very important concession: he participated in the ICD as *the Government of the DRC*, a category that differentiated his party from the others, maintained and strengthened his power, and reinforced his legitimacy as the Congolese head of state³⁷.

2.3. The overwhelming importance of elections, impossible EU neutrality

The third important aspect in brokering the transition was that the United States and the European Union coincided in an approach that emphasized the elections. This was especially the case from 2003 on, when a transition period of two years was agreed (the elections were finally delayed to 2006). The American and European input for the elections was felt early in the Inter-Congolese Dialogue, which included a series of non-governmental experts on the American side, notably the National Democratic Institute and IFES (International Foundation for Election Systems) (Bouvier & Bomboko, 2004, p. 121). The EU appointed an official Electoral Unit, mostly with personnel seconded by MS and they would all cooperate with the United Nations to prepare the process, together with the Congolese Independent Electoral Commission (IEC). The IEC was by far the most important (and best endowed) of

³⁷ The ICD, facilitated by ex-president from Botswana K. Masire, included the following delegations: the Government, the MLC, the RCD-Goma, the RCD-ML and the Mai-mai (all with armed forces behind them), plus the “civil society-live forces” and the “non-armed political opposition”. Grignon has also criticized that the ICD “froze time”, in the sense that the participants included at the table then remained relevant years later, when they had lost power de facto (Nest, Grignon, & Kisangani, 2006).

the transition institutions created in the Global and All-Inclusive Agreement of December 2002³⁸.

One of the problems on the ground was that the focus on elections was perceived as an *exit-strategy* of the international community, while the IEC and many Congolese in the provinces realized that the electoral process could help build the state and strengthen Congolese national-feelings and democratic allegiance deeply and in the long-run, thus requested more time and investment. For example, when the IEC considered it needed to redo the voters' lists with stricter criteria, Western officials insisted that they use the old lists and simply attach addendums in order to stick to the election deadline. However, in the failed-state DRC, displaced populations and unreachable towns posed logistical problems that needed time and funds. The country also has a few hundred thousand *voyageurs* i.e. people who travel intermittently from region to region within the country because of business (notably using the river, stopping, buying and selling here and there) and had been registered on one list. But if they claimed they were voyageurs and had voter cards, on election-day they were often allowed to vote wherever they were instead of their original list. This was not only irregular, it led to fraud and violence as individuals were encouraged to vote several times.

At EU-level, there were some nuances. Many practitioners deployed in the Congo did not necessarily agree with those in charge, and turf-wars abounded in Brussels and among MS. For example, EU delegate De Filippi (in Kinshasa) criticized the extreme focus on the presidential elections, while Commissioner Louis Michel was determined to get them through as soon as possible (Willame, 2007, p. 171). In general, Louis Michel addressed the Congo as a political, strategic issue for the EU, and this annoyed the theoretically neutral, development oriented EuropeAid personnel, civil servants at DG Development, and opened conflict with the humanitarian branch ECHO.

In sum, "rushing" the elections came to be perceived as a way to put a stamp on Joseph Kabila's presidency. Kabila dominated the (limited) civil apparatus in the Congo, financed his campaign illegally, and controlled state-media. Thus, other candidates' sympathizers and many Congolese perceived that the electoral process

³⁸ These institutions were supposed to represent civil society (known as "the live forces" in the Congo), and their presidents had a ministerial rank. The other four institutions were the National Watchdog on Human Rights, the High Authority of the Media, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and the Commission on Ethics and against Corruption.

was a masquerade wanted and financed by the international community, notably the EU, and opposed the intervention.

Another important, related problem came with the organization of Electoral Observation Missions, where the European Union mission could not prevent being perceived as not-neutral because of the EU's overall involvement in the process³⁹. As usual, the US approach consisted in delegating election monitoring and observation mainly to IFES and the Carter Center. In the Congo, both worked with grants mainly from USAID, though they would not identify themselves with an "American" approach⁴⁰. In any case, the US administration did not deploy any official/public electoral assistance mission. In contrast, but also as usual, there was a EU observation mission. Officially, these missions are independent from the EU and the Member States, too; they are free to organize their logistics and are not answerable to any EU body. They also insist on more "neutral", strictly observing positions compared to other actors: for instance EU observers had to refrain from helping to count votes or any other administrative tasks, while IFES observers could assist if they were invited to. However, the context had forged an image of EU interventionism, and even the observation mission became important in local politics: its head, the MEP ex-General Morillon (from France) became an important character in Kinshasa and appeared in the news. EU observers deployed in provinces or cities (including Kinshasa) where Kabila was not the favorite candidate were accused of favoritism and were sometimes threatened by the local population.

3. Fostering security as a pre-condition to democracy ...amidst Realist calculations

Together with brokering the transition process, a key objective in the international democracy promotion was to foster security. This section is devoted to the security operations that characterized the intervention in the Congo, notably the United Nations mission MONUC and the EU operations Artemis and EUFOR, and discusses the American and European positions and roles. The operations were framed under

³⁹ This information is based on my own experience with an EU short-term observation mission in Equator.

⁴⁰ Interview with head of The Carter Center electoral observation mission, Kinshasa 3 November 2006.

Chapters VI and VII of the UN Charter, which legalize intervention and the use of force for the sake of international *peace* –not for democracy. However, both Europeans and Americans were reluctant to intervene in the Congolese regional wars, highlighting that the Democratic Peace motivation only applied when there is an actual risk to Western security. Indeed, the will to intervene with significant strength only materialized within the post-9/11 context of the War on Terror (Lanotte, 2003), though this also reinforced the premise that peace was a necessary precondition for democracy.

Two explanations seem relevant for the Western security intervention in the Congo. On the one hand, the virtuous circle of democracy promotion established links between state-security and democracy. Peace was a first stage towards the goal of democracy, for armed intra-state conflict was simply incompatible with democracy. In addition, democracy was also a means to manage and end conflict. Hence, democracy promotion becomes a goal but also a means to stop the war and achieve a new system, an element of peace-making and peace-building (de Zeeuw & Kumar, 2006, pp. 3, 14). The international community adopted this rationale instead of the opposite hypothesis: that transitions involve instability and crisis, and democratization may actually involve a danger of war, as defended by Mansfield and Snyder (1995). This hypothesis had however some credibility in the context of regional humanitarian crisis and the convoluted peace-process, so the strategy was not straightforward. On the other hand, Realist calculations by the different international actors (American and European) underpinned the security operations linked with democracy promotion. The two arguments help explain the MONUC operation and the American involvement (Section 1) the EU security-operations (Section 2).

3.1. Security and MONUC: elections as a condition for American involvement

As I depicted above, the late-1990s crisis in the Congo was a *security* crisis with domestic and international causes: different armed parties fed on the rich Congolese mines and abused the populations in a spiral of violence (Turner, 2007). MONUC was created in 1999 and has since been on the spot for criticism: non-intervention, intervention but “too little too late”, accusations of inaction and even scandals about

sexual abuse committed by its troops. Yet it also became the most important peacekeeping operation in UN history, with a USD 1 billion/year budget and 17,000 personnel, and a key actor in the Congolese transition process present on the ground at least until December 2009 (Altwooll, 2005; Ginifer, 2002). The United Nations Secretary General and the General Assembly had identified the need for international humanitarian and security intervention early on, but as with any peace operation, the Security Council was the body responsible for decision and as often it moved very slowly (Vircoulon, 2006). American support was necessary here and this involved, among others, that democracy and security were connected. Great-power politics in the Security Council played a role, and the understaffed and overstretched Department of Peace-keeping operations (DPKO) in New York also played the “virtuous circle” card.

It was soon obvious that the first MONUC deployment of 500 observers would be powerless, and the shadow of the Rwandan genocide led the international community to build up intervention and send troops in increasing numbers. The US was the main contributor to MONUC (about 1/3), followed by Japan and Germany. For example, it contributed USD 74 million in 2001, USD 83,5 million in 2002, and there was a request of USD 273,2 million for 2003 in view of the aggravating conditions⁴¹. It was thus key to raise support from democracy promoters in the international community, and it is them and especially the US (rather than DPKO) who emphasized the *political* solutions to the Congolese conflict.

On the one side there was the above-mentioned rationale where transition plans became part of the new interventionism. In the Congo, democracy was increasingly considered an integral part of international conflict resolution, and the country became a lab-test of the new conceptions of security and peace-keeping, following the cases of East Timor and Cambodia (Berdal & Economides, 2007; Reilly, 2004)⁴². On the other side there were the domestic considerations regarding American international intervention. After the disastrous Somalia experience, Clinton issued the Presidential Directive 25, which would shape any future UN-deployment. The Directive outlined that support would be limited to “the right peace operations”,

⁴¹ Source: U.S. Department of State, “Account Tables,” at www.state.gov/m/rm/rls/iab/2003/7809.htm (March 14, 2005); U.S. Notice that the US commitment was *limited to financing* and did not include providing troops, a usual matter in the international politics of UN peacekeeping operations.

⁴² These cases also underlined the elections as heart of the political process and the exit-oriented strategy.

which needed clear definition and most importantly, had to be *linked to concrete political solutions* and not an open-ended commitment. Literally, the Directive imposed that “each UN peace operation should have a specified timeframe tied to intermediate or final objectives [and] an *integrated political/military strategy...*” (Clinton, 1994). The role of Congress was also formalized and strengthened with the Directive. Significantly, this led to new Congress laws establishing preconditions for US support of peacekeeping operations, and binding the executive’s actions to the operations’ political viability, explicitly mentioning democracy and a timetable for disengagement (Hesse, 2005). This led the MONUC mandate and the international intervention to become much more “democracy promotion” de facto.

As MONUC was discussed and eventually upgraded in 2000, the international community took as reference the Lusaka Agreement (which already contained democracy-provisions), even though the cease-fire was constantly violated and this discredited the agreement in the eyes of those still fighting the war (Laurent Kabila’s included). MONUC’s mandate included 4 phases in 2000.

Box 7. Monuc’s mandate includes the transition as a “fourth phase” in 2000

MONUC’s mandate⁴³:

- 1- Forcibly implement the ceasefire agreement
- 2- Monitor and report violations of the agreement through the proper channels
- 3- Support the process of DDRRR (disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, resettlement and reintegration)
- 4- *Facilitate the transition towards the organization of credible elections*

Source: MONUC official website [<http://www.monuc.org/Home.aspx?lang=en>]

In the field and on the side of MONUC/ DPKO, security was the imperative and elections just a necessary aspect in the diplomatic bargaining. Hence, the United Nations DPKO partly instrumentalized the democracy promotion argument so that MONUC would have American support for a mandate and for increased troops. Even this way, it took more than two years for this mandate and the deployment to become effective.

⁴³ My emphasis. Notice the provision 1 “forcibly implementing” leads to a Chapter VII-framework authorizing the use of force by blue helmets. Monuc’s mandate also included “to protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence”, with clear reference to the concept of human security.

At the level of diplomatic negotiations, democracy-bargaining was part of DPKO policy-making. As the risk of a humanitarian crisis was rising dangerously in 2002-2003, the DPKO got serious alarms from the International Emergency Military Force already deployed in Ituri. For those on the ground and for DPKO, the crisis concerned local security challenges (different local factions and intervention from Uganda, exploitation of resources, ethnic massacres) that were not necessarily linked to the national process of political transition. Yet as they wanted to boost the MONUC mission in Eastern Congo, Jean-Marie Gehenno (head of DPKO) and Meg Carey (head of the DPKO Africa division) invoked the democracy-argument for the fund-providers. This argument especially targeted the United States. In a public interview, Meg Carey acknowledged: “my job was to convince the Security Council of investing in Ituri [...] but the US saw this as a kind of Somalia [...] Our job was to *convince the US* that there was a viable plan, that *there was a political process*” (Crown, 2004).

There was a gap between the virtuous circle and the reality in the field, it meant that “democracy promotion” was an argument in the bargaining though the imperative seemed peace, and there was no strategy (or not a carefully crafted one) to make the political transition work. With MONUC, the international intervention established the connection to the Congolese political process but its ability to deal with the conflict was still limited (Boshoff, 2003). Eventually, the Ituri crisis led to the EU operation Artemis in support of MONUC.

3.2. Artemis as an exhibition of French/ European international military force

The EU Operation Artemis supported MONUC in Northern East-Congo at a critical time, proving the international community’s engagement and military efficiency within its limited mandate⁴⁴. However, Artemis was actually never framed as “democracy promotion” but as a defense/security operation. This showed that the EU did not automatically endorse a link between peace and democracy promotion. In addition, I argue, Artemis can be explained as part of a Realist strategy of international power-projection for France but also for the EU. In policy-circles in both, it was important to establish the EU capability to pursue international military

⁴⁴ Artemis was an exceptional three-month engagement in the summer of 2003 and had clear geographical limits around the capital-city of Ituri, Bunia.

operations, earning credibility in third countries and most importantly vis-à-vis the United States. This meant that the EU would not automatically reject international interventions that were *clearly not* instances of civilian or normative power. Moreover, its international clout was enhanced through these, creating a paradox with the civilian, democracy promotion universalism.

With MONUC, the US had accepted a resort to UN multilateralism in the case of Congo (though it never envisaged its own military action or contributing troops), and introduced democracy promotion into the international mandate. By contrast, Artemis' mandate strictly concerned crisis management and ceasefire implementation, with the EU as a “military-arm” enforcing UN decisions. Certainly, it was not a EU-plan to develop its democratization strategy; the intervention was based on humanitarian and security grounds (to stop ethnic mass slaughter). There was no mention of democracy in the legislation that framed the operation, a Common Action (Council of the European Union, 2003a). This illustrates how the securitization of democracy promotion at EU level has often been timid in the realm of CFSP, compared with the American rhetoric of intervention. This also matches the EU rhetoric that does *not* contemplate military tools as a means to promote democracy; distancing the EU from the premise of a virtuous circle between security and transition. The EU position was thus more nuanced in this regard, and in contrast with the leverage that democracy-arguments had in the US.

Artemis (summer 2003) was also an opportunity for EU international action; it must be understood in the context of the transatlantic drift over the US-led intervention in Iraq (2002-2003) and the internal EU divisions over this issue (notably France opposed to the US). In addition, significant advances had been taking place regarding European Security and Defence Policy [cf. Chapter 2]. Elements of both transatlantic cooperation and confrontation were in sight. In this operation, France showed cooperation in the UN framework and its ability to deploy and finance troops in successful missions. Though this did not make up for France's boycott of the US demands in the Security Council over the intervention in Iraq, it introduced an element of transatlantic cooperation “as usual” regarding common interests in third places. At the same time, it was an instance of great-power confrontation and UN great-power politics. For instance, France insisted on having a specific Resolution (SC 1484) to back the EU operation Artemis, hinting that resolutions should be preconditions to intervene and indirectly condemning the US-

led invasion of Iraq. According to UN staff and French diplomats, this gave France an opportunity to show international leadership in practice (including military action), endorse multilateralism, and also to somewhat redress its role in the region, after having supported Mobutu and Rwanda's hutu-regime⁴⁵. For this reason, some concluded Artemis was "a French operation under EU cover", for it provided the most troops and funds.

Nevertheless Operation Artemis was also meaningful at the level of the EU, strengthening ESDP and the EU international clout with the first operation outside Europe; France was the military Framework Nation but there was an important British contingent. Arguably, the Iraq crisis also pushed Europe to deal with internal divisions and show cooperation in reaction, for instance with the creation of the Rapid Reaction Force, Solana's Security Strategy and the 2003 Franco-British summit declaration (Ulriksen, Gourlay, & Mace, 2004). Along these lines, the Congo was an important precedent in ESDP, and Africa may have been serving as laboratory for EU operations more generally, helping it earn recognition as an international actor (Youngs, 2004). Indeed, in 1996-7, Europeans had already contemplated the participation of the Western European Union to help implement Security Council resolutions against the massacres in the East of the Congo. The EU considered Artemis met its own military goals satisfactorily (Western European Union, 2006), but NGOs criticized that it was unfortunately too limited (International Crisis Group, 2006), as if they and the Congolese population were expecting *more* of the EU.

Importantly, the principles of multilateralism and the connection to UN mandates were always underlined in the development of EU defense plans (Chivvis, 2007; Giegerich & Wallace, 2004). These plans also happened in an independent policy-making realm that was relatively ad-hoc, isolated from the Commission (which was consulted) Development and even from other Council policies such as the Political Dialogue. Within the EU, only Denmark clearly opted out of Artemis⁴⁶, but the operation counted on the participation of third countries such as Canada and Brazil. These aspects illustrate the somewhat inconsistent trends of Europeans

⁴⁵ Public interview with head of DPKO Gehenno (Crown, 2004) and interview with French official, Paris, 7 July 2006.

⁴⁶ Denmark's exclusion of defense-related policies draws back to this country's safeguard clauses in the Treaty of Maastricht.

actively defending broad multilateralism in IR but at the same time building up a significant role for the EU as an international actor of its own.

Even though there was no official EU declaration in this regard and arguably no clear intention, Artemis was key in the process of democracy promotion in the Congo because it showed the international community was ready to intervene. It stabilized Bunia and fostered security as preconditions for the ongoing dialog, and sent Uganda and some warlords clear signals that the internationals would try to prevent them from spoiling the process. Importantly, it transformed the EU role on the ground from fund-provider and negotiator to a military intervener with capability to impose force, and this challenged the ideas of EU as “soft power” (versus the US as hard power) and as “civilian” power. This *new* EU role was reinforced with the second EU security operation, EUFOR-RD Congo, in the 2006⁴⁷.

EUFOR-RD Congo was a second Rapid Reaction Force of about 2,000 troops deployed in Kinshasa in the summer-fall of 2006 (one battalion was on call in Gabon), but this time the link with the transition process was clearer because its objective was to enhance security during and after the Congolese presidential elections. Again, the operation was a response to UN demands and was framed under a Security Council resolution (1671) (M. Martin, 2007). Though the operation was criticized as “cosmetic” by some in Europe (Haine & Giegerich, 2006), all peacekeeping operations of this kind have logistical limitations and it is beyond doubt that EUFOR conveyed the image of a powerful EU in Kinshasa, notably solving one of the worst crisis in August 2006. As the EU defended the main opposition party (Bemba’s) against a governmental attack by Kabila’s army, it earned credibility for not simply supporting Kabila, but also for its military efficiency⁴⁸. EUFOR enhanced the EU as a unified actor, for though the French still played an important role, this time Germany was the Framework Nation, and the

⁴⁷ Two other EU operations in the Congo were also military-oriented addressed security-aspects of the transition process: EUPOL (Congolese police training) and the larger EUSEC (operation to restructure the Congolese security sector reform).

⁴⁸ After the first round of the presidential elections (30 July), J. Kabila was not satisfied with his party results (less than 50% when he had expected to be elected), meaning that a run-off against J.P. Bemba would have to take place. On August 21, Kabila’s governmental troops attacked Bemba’s residence at a time when the latter was hosting a meeting of CIAT members to consider the situation and the organization of the new round of elections. EUFOR intervened to safeguard Bemba, evacuate CIAT members, and avoid further conflict.

Polish and Spanish contingents were significant (Dumont, Bergeron, & Nommay, 2006)⁴⁹.

In addition, EUFOR defined itself “vis-à-vis” the US. For example, the mission *Fact-sheet* indirectly hinted at American disengagement:

“The case of the Democratic Republic of Congo shows how a variety of EU missions have helped the UN to stabilize the situation and to support the transition process to a political settlement [...]. More generally, EUFOR-RD Congo illustrates the importance attached by the EU including through ESDP to Africa [...]. It also demonstrates EU’s readiness and ability to support UN actions” (EU Council Secretariat, 2006).

In this sense, it can be considered an interesting example of what Michael Smith (2004) considered as “institutionalization of difference” regarding power margins and discourses of power in transatlantic relations. Instead of starting off from a premise of common values and cooperation, the assumption was that the EU is different and its action has value-added vis-à-vis the US (here, Africa and the UN are important for the EU).

4. Enforcing reform: the International Committee to Accompany the Transition (CIAT)

A third objective of international democracy promotion in the Congo was to ensure that the agreements and reform process really took place, and this led the United States and the European Union to “enforce democracy”. This section focuses on the committee that the international community introduced in this regard, the CIAT, active from June 2003 through December 2006. The CIAT often met in secret and involved backstage negotiations among diplomats⁵⁰. I did not find evidence neither of US-EU especial cooperation nor confrontation within the CIAT, but I found they were definitely the most important actors in it, together with MONUC. This was illustrated, at an individual level, by the roles of William Swing and Louis Michel,

⁴⁹ A Realist explanation of Germany’s leadership of EUFOR is sometimes invoked with the fact that Germany was at the time seeking a seat in the Security Council and that one of the arguments against its candidacy is that Germany does not participate actively in UN peace operations.

⁵⁰ This research is based on the CIAT’s official communiqués and declarations and on information I gathered from local press articles (notably *Le Potentiel*) and on interviews. A number of these documents have been made available by a Swiss-financed *Documentation Center on the Great Lakes region*, see <http://www.grandslacs.net>.

who were portrayed as the international community's "peacemakers" (Willame, 2007). The former had been American ambassador in the Congo and was at the time head of the MONUC: this and the constant liaison between Swing and the American ambassador underline the role of the US. Michel had been Belgian Foreign Minister (1999-2004) and had declared his will to bring Africa back to the agenda, and as EU Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid he came to dominate the EU position.

I argue here that the US and the EU monitored the transitional government and the reform process through the CIAT, an opaque and understudied factor in the DR Congo. The CIAT focused on the elites to lead the political process and was disconnected from the civil population (funds for civil society were also mobilized, but it was very difficult to allocate and audit this). The transition "enforcement" happened through the design and imposition of this international authority, whose details I discuss first. Secondly, I argue this implied a dynamic of bargaining with the Congolese who had been co-opted in the process, and of empowering (even if indirectly) Kabila, i.e. "Kabila-state building".

4.1. Designing the international authority –the Global and all-Inclusive Agreement (GIA)

As Laurent and then Joseph Kabila arrived in power, the Congo was not pacified and negotiations continued under the Inter-Congolese Dialogue (2001-3) and with side agreements between the strongest parties (Kabila's and the MLC's leader, Jean-Pierre Bemba) where the international community played a key role. In December 2002, this process led to the Global and all-Inclusive Agreement (GIA) signed in Pretoria –including this time more armed *and* non-armed factions, and hosted by African leaders (Mbwebwe K., 2005). African and Western leaders were involved in these important negotiations (they led to the Transitional Government), and acted as brokers and guarantors, for instance South African President Thabo Mbeki, and former Botswana President K. Masire (in the ICD). The literature has emphasized Mbeki's role (Landsberg, 2002), but US ambassadors seemingly had the most important leverage. On its side, the European Union also undertook a "hyperactive diplomacy", financing the negotiations as part of a Political Dialogue, and issuing as many as 9 Declarations on the Great Lakes by the Presidencies in 2002 (Guerrero,

2007). However, for some witnesses the role of the EU as mediator was less critical, even though Ajello followed the negotiations very closely⁵¹.

Most significantly, the US and EU influence did not only happen backstage and off-the-record, nor remained declaratory. The GIA intended a ceasefire, but it focused on the democratic transition adopting as main titles: I “End of hostilities”, II “Objectives of the transition”, III “Principles of the transition”, IV and V “Length” and “Institutions of the transition” (“Accord global et inclusif sur la transition en Republique Democratique du Congo, Pretoria 2002 -published by CEDAC," 2003)⁵². In addition, the GIA actually foresaw the creation of a committee that came to have extremely important power during the transition process, the International Committee to Accompany the Transition (CIAT). Notably, the CIAT was in charge of three key tasks: guarantor of the implementation of the agreement, security-provider, and arbitrator/judge in case of conflict. The role of international democracy promoters was thus defined in an appendix.

Box 8. The Global and all-Inclusive Agreement foresees creation and tasks of the CIAT

“Appendix IV: International guarantee

- 1) There will be an International Committee (IC) that will guarantee the good implementation of the present Agreement and support the DRC transition program (...)
- 2) The IC will provide for active support in the securitization of the institutions derived from the Inter-Congolese Dialog and (...) of the Lusaka Agreement (...)
- 3) The IC will arbitrate and decide any disagreement among the parties of this Agreement”

Source: *Global and Inclusive Agreement*

The GIA did not specify *who* in the international community would be part of this committee, and this was defined ad hoc as a result of diplomatic negotiations. According to its own documents, the CIAT (2006) included the following members. the permanent members of the UN Security Council (P-5) i.e. USA, UK, France, China, Russia; Belgium and Canada; the European Union and the African Union (represented by *both* the Commission and the Presidency), the governments of the so-called African “friend-countries” South Africa, Angola, Gabon and Zambia, and

⁵¹ Interviews with consultant (UNDP) in Paris 10 December 2007 and 20 February 2008 and with head of NGO (UNDP, DFID projects) in Kinshasa 22 October 2006.

⁵² My translation, idem for the paragraphs in Box 8.

the MONUC (often represented by W. Swing). This forum illustrates that all major geopolitical actors and DRC-neighbors were included, but some of the main financial contributors to MONUC e.g. Germany and Japan did not sit at this decision-making and advisory table. P-5 countries were often represented by ambassadors, but the Chinese and Russian envoys seemingly adopted a low profile.

The CIAT had no official mandate but it basically decided on the pace and funds (allocations and distribution) concerning the national army's reconstruction and the electoral process, which became the two pillars of the transition⁵³. Though the negotiations happened backstage, the CIAT delivered *Communiqués* and Declarations that could be understood –and that was the case in the Congo—as “the international community's position”. Sometimes the CIAT congratulated and expressed satisfaction with the trends; sometimes it criticized events and exhorted the Congolese actors to behave⁵⁴. For instance, during the electoral periods of 2005 and 2006, it welcomed the organization of elections and the participation of the Congolese voters, and exhorted the candidates to have clean and fair campaigns (CIAT, 2006)⁵⁵. CIAT members regularly visited cities and sites to “check” the implementation of the programs and, in general, to display support for the transition. This way, William Swing, Javier Solana, prime ministers (e.g. Belgium), ambassadors, and other officials often traveled within the country to Bukavu, Bunia, Kisangani and this made for headline news that integrated them as key actors in Congolese affairs. Some NGOs found this international leadership diffuse, weak, narrow, and insufficient to exert real pressure (International Crisis Group, 2007).

However, though it is true that the Congo was not like Bosnia or East Timor and there was no status of international protectorate or a supreme international authority for the executive or legislative, the CIAT clearly guaranteed the continuity of the process. It exerted effective pressure on Congolese actors in the Transitional Government and other bodies in a sort of bargaining where the Congolese denounced intervention in domestic affairs, and the internationals often felt that *they* cared more about democratization than the Congolese. This bargaining was part of the dynamics in the Congo, and one of the challenges for democracy promoters and overall for the transition process.

⁵³ One explanation for this logic is that these were financed by the international community.

⁵⁴ Though the language used in these documents is careful, their own existence and the rhetoric define the international community as tutor/evaluator, and could be criticized as neocolonial.

⁵⁵ These documents had a significant echo in the local press.

4.2. Bargaining with Congolese incumbents and empowering Kabila

The Global and all-Inclusive Agreement also created “transition institutions” notably a Transitional Government, and in so doing, it granted legality and legitimacy to those in power. Most Congolese actors seized this opportunity to remain within the political transition process⁵⁶. This way, on 20 June 2003 they were able to secure part of the power-pie in a large and compound Government that appointed no less than 36 ministers and 25 vice-ministers! This kind of “solution” has existed in other African democratization processes, including the reconciliation government in Kenya after the January 2008 post-electoral violence (about 90 ministerial positions) though it can hardly be considered efficient.

Within the Transitional Government, the maximum authority laid with those in the “1+4 formula” also called the “Presidential Space”: four factions earned first-class decision-making power as Vice-presidents, and Joseph Kabila earned the lion’s share as the one President⁵⁷. The GIA became a window of opportunity that only a few boycotted either because they weren’t happy with Kabila’s legitimized power (Tshisekedi) or because they estimated their power had not been sufficiently rewarded (some armed groups in the East). In the negotiations for the Transitional Government, only when the US declared its support for this 1+4 formula did the agreement come through. However the proposal came from Congolese teams: according to a highly-positioned participant in these negotiations, Kabila’s team lobbied and convinced the American delegation headed by US National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice that this was a good solution⁵⁸.

Similar bargaining became the norm between the CIAT and the Transitional Government in those years of the transition. The CIAT usually had weekly meetings to assess the situation and theoretically met with President Kabila once a month (this

⁵⁶ By “Congolese” actors I refer broadly to *all* the parties in the DRC that were militarily fighting each other and were coopted in the political process. I make this point because nationalism and identity were important factors in the conflict, e.g. some of the factions were accused of being Rwandan and not Congolese. These factors are excluded from my analysis.

⁵⁷ The four vice-presidents were one from previous government (Ndombasi), two of the main rebel groups (Bemba from MLC-Mouvement de Liberation du Congo and Ruberwa from RCD-Goma Rassemblement Congolais pour la Democratie) and one from the unarmed political opposition (Ngoma).

⁵⁸ Attributed to Evariste Boshabe, Kabila’s Chief of Staff at the time, elected member (kasai) in the majority party of the National Assembly [interview with Consultant (UNDP), Paris 10 December 2007]. This was an example of how Congolese actors would often boast about how *they* got the US and EU to do what they wanted and had planned, and not the opposite.

seemingly happened less regularly). The CIAT also met with the 1+4 “Presidential Space” to discuss policies and the state of affairs. For example, in November 2005 the CIAT attempted to control corruption and denounced that the state authorities weren’t channeling food and salaries to the national military groups (CIAT, 2005). Indeed, international stakeholders were providing the funds (USD 8 million /month) for a massive and expensive program of disarmament and army reintegration, but Congolese officials at all levels and from all parties were diverting money and goods. Because of the lack of unity between the factions and the weak economic structure, each of the armed parties (members of the Transitional Government) was in charge of its own staff and payments. In this case, all pretended to have more troops than they did just to claim more money, and then diverted most of this salary-money, which made the troops (deployed mostly in the East) intermittently revolt and attack civilians (International Crisis Group, 2007). The international effort to create an integrated Congolese army thus faced (and continues to face) amazing practical difficulties because of the generalized corruption that is intrinsic to civil/state structures and the absence of non-armed, long-term alternatives (Tshiyembe, 2005)⁵⁹.

There was constant bargaining between the international and domestic authorities, as incumbents jockeyed for power and against each other while the CIAT denounced their hidden agendas and exhorted them to “care for the general good of the Congo and its people” (CIAT, 2005). This way, incumbents in the ministerial branches tried to avoid the pressure actively or passively: new budgets weren’t approved (as they meant money would change hands), bills weren’t discussed (for instance new laws on decentralization that shifted power away to the provinces), and tax-declarations ignored (for instance on government members’ assets). They had power to shift decisions and often threatened to spoil the process, while the CIAT tried to maintain the Transitional Government in place, which showed the weight of the external factors in this process.

Now and then, Kabila’s opponents tried to cancel the whole Government agreement, and CIAT leaders prevented it. For instance, in the summer of 2004 there were new massacres in Bukavu and Makumba (Eastern Congo) and a group of RCD-

⁵⁹ Military restructuring became central to the international strategy, which for instance devoted USD 30 million for the Ministry of Defense and only USD 2 million to the Ministry of Justice in 2005. The official, widespread corruption and the informal economy (Willame estimated that the DRC Central Bank worked with only 14% of the money in the country) led the international community to use non-state actors to distribute allocations to lower-ranking officials in the provinces.

Goma dissidents rebelled, leading vice-president Ruberwa (RCD-Goma) to quit the Kinshasa Government. Thabo Mbeki seemingly flew to Bukavu to bring him back as the whole transition would have been jeopardized if the governmental agreement had collapsed. Similarly, in January 2005 Bemba had to be convinced to remain in the 1+4 though he opposed Kabila's changes in some ministerial positions. The CIAT, as the international community overall, came to be seen as biased as this bargaining arguably reinforced Kabila as state authority and gave the provisional President an advantageous position to be elected. Though there was never formal support, EU Commissioner Louis Michel was quoted declaring "Kabila is the DRC's opportunity", and people disliked MONUC in the parts of the country held by Kabila opponents⁶⁰.

This bargaining also put the CIAT as interlocutor vis-à-vis the broader international community, which was financing the policies and supporting the transition in front of financial institutions. For instance, the FMI was very critical of the expenses allowed for the elites in the Transitional Government. The CIAT became a watchdog that was clearly appreciated in the West but only forcefully tolerated by the elites in the DRC, illustrating the paradoxes and trade-offs intrinsic to democracy promotion. By 2006 most Congolese authorities criticized it, especially the President, who denounced that some were "behaving as *conquistadores*". In the name of national sovereignty, Kabila refused the proposal (from Belgium and Kofi Annan) to create a Group of Friends of Good Governance⁶¹. By the time he had won the Presidential election, Kabila declared to the press:

"From now on we will insist on bilateral cooperation between the Congo and other countries. There is no question of having a structure above us all. I am determined to take things in my hands, to retake 100% control, and the CIAT will not stop me..." (Braeckman, 2006)

By contrast, Western donors started to worry about the future, as illustrated by this UK MP intervention in the House of Commons (Judy Mallaber):

⁶⁰ Kabila dominated the media and was not a fair player (Dumont et al., 2006; Monsa, 2005); I witnessed some of these accusations/aggressions to international staff as I was in UN vehicles or with EU personnel.

⁶¹ Source: Special report of the Secretary General on the DRC elections S/2005/309. In the Security Council, Russia, China and Tanzania opposed the proposal.

“My question is whether we will ensure that there will be a post-CIAT mechanism for donor countries. [...] President Kabila may not like it—he would like to have the aid without the pressure—but even though we do not wish to interfere in how the country is run or carry on in an imperialist way, if we are putting in money, resources and assistance, we have a responsibility to ensure proper governance, and that requires some mechanism for donor countries to be able to work with the country, the institutions and civil society” (Mallaber, 2007).

The CIAT illustrated that both the US and the EU privileged short-term, elite-led democracy promotion. The Congolese people enthusiastically participated in the electoral process yet they also remained skeptical, and not without reason, that the transition process might change their lives very little in the end.

Conclusion

The Congolese transition process illustrates the political challenges and limitations of international democracy promotion on the ground, as well as the drift and rift in transatlantic relations. This chapter has given evidence of the challenges that both the US and the EU faced on the ground; democracy promotion was an elusive practice. It has also documented the multiple agency in the US and the EU approaches, offering interesting hints on the argument of “rival universalisms”.

The DR Congo presented problems regarding peace and development, and also a very weak state where strongmen, predation and clientelism were stubbornly rooted in the political arena. The international policies focused on brokering the transition, providing security, and enforcing the agreements and decisions. In this, democracy promotion seemed short-term and excessively focused on the presidential elections (procedure). It also seemed to rely on the premise of a “virtuous circle” where all problems could be solved together; the link between security and democratization was understood not only as the former being a precondition for the latter, but as democratization itself being a *means* towards securitization. The policies mainly addressed political elites –trying to create and maintain a government—though later on democracy promotion sought to include the promotion of civil society. The approach was however inconclusive, as the Catholic Church and other political actors of the “live forces” took active part in the National Conference and in some

peace Agreements, as they arguably constituted more stable societal structures than the state. Nevertheless, democracy promotion seemed to fail to integrate local and African dynamics; the universality of democracy was de facto reduced to a Western focus on elections and governmental elites.

This case study also illustrated the dynamics of technical emphasis on democracy promotion and the very challenge of “learning by doing”. This way, as legislation experts tried to create the “adequate” Constitution and electoral system they confronted the opposition of local political actors that bargained to maintain their privileges and spheres of influence. Similarly, though the EU electoral observation mission was conceived as a neutral, independent mission to support the process, on the ground this “technical” intervention could not be separated from the extremely *political* role that the EU seemed to be playing in many aspects of the transition process. Finally, the DRC has arguably been a lab-test for democracy promotion and conflict resolution, and the policy-makers and practitioners on the ground had to adapt their strategies to an ever-changing and extremely complex situation: they were “learning by doing”. In this, democracy promotion policies needed to be flexible, but the lack of consistent approaches and the assumption of the “virtuous circle” led to important trade-offs. For example, democracy promoters relied on civil society actors (notably Christian churches) to organize the elections and do civic education (among other), but this did not help install a strong and democratic state. Similarly, linking security and democracy has proven extremely difficult, and reconstituting a Congolese army seemed not only a technical but a very political challenge (as it could safeguard the incumbents’ preferences).

All these challenges emanating from the Congolese case show that democracy promotion is not clearly American, nor European, nor purely “international”. But the chapter has also helped to document and nuance the role of democracy promotion in American and European foreign policy. Many positions and policies were similar and the US and the EU were powerful actors on the “international community’s side” of promoters; yet there was no real, planned cooperation. Similarly, despite some elements of competition deriving from economic interests and notably leading France to defend its position as international power, there was no bitter confrontation between the US and the EU, who mostly drifted along. Nevertheless, the Congo-case also confirmed the new European role in global politics in cases connected to democracy promotion and peace, as the EU became the main financial source of the

transition process and even undertook (limited) military intervention to support it. The argument of “rival universalisms” was thus corroborated.

However, the evidence on what positions and what policies the US and the EU were to adopt was nuanced, the case did not substantiate the elements described in Chapter 2 in a straight-forward way. First, the rhetoric was nuanced. EU High Representative for CFSP Javier Solana stated “acting together, the EU and the US can be a formidable source for good in the world”, while the American section on Africa foresaw “coordination with European allies and international institutions is essential for constructive conflict mediation and successful peace operations” (G. W. Bush, 2002; Solana, 2003a). This got the EU closer to the kind of “missionary” foreign policy usually attributed to the US, while the US stated a *pro-multilateralism* that most analysts would attribute to the EU.

Importantly, the United States maintained a high political influence in the DRC despite a minimized investment and a very low ranking of the Congo-case in the foreign policy agenda, and this illustrated the weight of American leadership in contemporary IR. Regarding policy-dynamics, there was Congressional influence and an independent traditional diplomacy on the ground, which gave ambassadors a high leverage. As rather generally with African policy and within the bipartisan consensus on democracy promotion, there was continuity between the Clinton and Bush administrations. This translated in policies undertaken by the long-established channels of USAID (project-financing) and cooperation with institutions as the party foundations, IFES, Freedom House, the Carter Center.

Despite this minimal engagement, the US had a major influence in important agreements. However, somewhat paradoxically, for all the democracy promotion rhetoric during the Clinton and Bush administrations, the Congo caught nothing similar to the attention devoted to the Iraq-case, the post-communist Ukraine and Georgia revolutions, or even Egypt’s mild liberalization. Despite non-negligible progress, a ground-breaking transition, and a record at least comparable to Iraq’s, the Congo was observed from a distance, and US leaders hardly “capitalized” on its democratization. The US was a clear democracy promoter, and a necessary party in the process, but the case illustrates that Africa still ranks geopolitically low in American foreign policy. This relative disinterest in the Congo-case (compared, for example to the emphasis given to the case of Iraq after 2003) reinforces the view that democracy promotion is used as an instrument in foreign policy and not as

underlying goal (S. Smith, 2000). The US universalism exists, featuring the expansion of a liberal world order where the US is hegemonic, but democracy promotion policies still seemed connected to geopolitical interests.

By contrast, for the European Union, the Congo increasingly became a main endeavor in EU Common Foreign and Security Policy. Possibly, it will be considered a predecessor for defense and for more wide-ranging (even human security?) EU action in the world, with a significant level of coherence and using a multiplicity of tools. The EU invested enormously in the DRC transition: it financed the electoral process, safeguarded the transitional government with continuous negotiations among the parties, and manifested leadership with the presence of A. Ajello, L. Michel, J. Solana, and MEP P. Morillon. Moreover, it successfully launched the military operations Artemis and then EUFOR-DRC in 2006 to support MONUC.

Arguably, the EU made of the Congo a “test” for common foreign policy. Some countries, especially Belgium and France, played the most important roles in the political arena, while the UK’s DFID became the largest donor in more economic/good governance projects. This illustrates how the initiative of *some* states in a relatively uncontroversial issue can propel CFSP, but the policies do not emanate as “common” in Brussels centers. The Presidency of the European Council also proved to be an important driver of EU initiatives. As Allen (1996) argued, small states used it to build up EU leverage, e.g. Belgium in the second half of 2001 and the Netherlands in the second half of 2004.

Definitely, the case of Congo illustrated EU assertiveness in the international arena (Cox, 2005) and a transatlantic partnership that had no steam. Significantly, this happened in the field of democracy promotion, one of the values that bind the US and the EU together but which, as Wallace (2001, pp. 27-28) notices, is no longer just an exclusivity of the United States. The argument of “rival universalisms” was thus corroborated, but the chapter documented important nuances.

Despite the potential and capabilities to do so, the EU had difficulty in owning up to its international leadership, and in “boasting” its weight as democracy promoter. This case illustrated multiple-agency in European foreign policy, but the parallel channels and shifting policy-drivers precluded a long-term, overarching strategy. Nevertheless, the EU intervention as democracy promoter in the Congo was paramount, spoke clear words and had teeth, and it was acknowledged on the ground as such. This means that, despite the rhetoric of “normative power” or “benevolent

partner”, deeds have been much louder, power rather hard, and Realist explanations still apply. The EU universalism existed, but is important to notice the inclusion of hard-power support of democracy promotion: the EU drifts away from the normative-, civilian- image that is at play in much of the rhetoric as an alternative and “rival” to the US.

Chapter 5. American and European democracy promotion in the Middle East and North Africa: differentiated policies for an artificial region

“We are witnessing a growing desire for reform in the Middle East and welcome recent democratic developments”

EU-US Summit Declaration (EU-US, 2005).

“We must make sure that the Greater Middle East Initiative and the Barcelona Process are complementary and mutually reinforcing” *President of the EU Commission* (Barroso, 2005).

In the beginning of 2004, the United States announced plans to promote democracy in the Greater Middle East and North Africa (GMENA) region and intended to push this agenda on the occasion of the G8 summit it was hosting in Sea Island in the summer. Among the G8 partners, there were four European states (United Kingdom, Germany, France, Italy) and a EU representative (the president of the Commission) who were expected to support the American initiative, which would in turn become a Transatlantic / G8 multilateral endeavor. However, as the American plans for a GMENA were leaked to the press (Dar al-Hayat, 2004), the European Union actually joined Arab countries and journalists to criticize those documents’ “imposing tone” and “little realistic” approach (Baroudi, 2007; Crossick, 2004)¹.

Most importantly on the EU side, the American documents had not even mentioned the EU’s regional policy, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP): this is how many Europeans (MEPs, national and EU officials) realized that the EU policies were totally unknown to most American policy-makers². The Council issued a press release, clearly addressed to the US, emphasizing the cooperation existing in the EU approach, where partnership and democracy promotion had been on the agenda for almost a decade (Council of the European Union, 2004), and the

¹ The GMENA document did not mention how to address the Arab-Israeli conflict, which in Arab and European spheres has been considered necessarily linked to any regional initiative.

² Interviews with policy officials from the EU (Brussels 5 June 2007) and from the French and the Spanish foreign ministries [Paris 7 July 2006, and Barcelona 10 March 2006].

EU think tank Euromed issued a report to be used as “background document” (Euromed, 2004).

These events could be downplayed to a diplomatic scrap but perfectly set the background for this chapter. As the quotes in the beginning of this chapter show, the US and the EU welcomed the hints for reform they optimistically perceived in the region and were concerned about cooperation, but it is uncertain that this actually materialized. This chapter discusses American and European democracy promotion towards the Middle East and North Africa, which was addressed *as a region*. In this way, the chapter gives evidence of how US and EU policies did not only address countries (as the Congo) but a whole region, when promoting democracy in post-Cold War IR.

At the starting point, this region was depicted as an “Other” in clear opposition to the West more or less explicitly: non-democratic or even “hostile” to democratization trends, and culturally “in contrast” (when not clearly opposed) to the West. Hence US and EU universalisms, with democracy promotion at their core, sought to overcome this “otherness”. Despite this common premise, I argue here that there were distinct policies emanating from the US and the EU, and there was no joint action. Indeed, the peculiarities of American and European substantiated the distinct universalisms, and a picture of rival approaches emerged. The US clearly scaled up its democracy promotion programs towards the MENA as part of its post-9/11 policies. The Bush administration arguably expected that Europe would follow the US along these lines, but the EU already had a regional policy based on reflexivity, long-term socialization and a language of partnership. Nevertheless, as in the Congo case, there were overarching objectives that the US and the EU seemed to have in common when promoting democracy in the MENA, and the challenges on the ground shaped the (rather unsatisfactory) results.

Section 1 discusses the American and European rhetoric and programs for the region, underlining some controversial positions. The chapter then focuses on the three main objectives of “regional democracy promotion” that both promoters pursued. The first objective was to overcome the cultural “Arab-Muslim exception”, discussed in Section 2. The second objective was to target the region (instead of the state) as democracy-setting according to domino theory (the US) and to socialization (the EU), discussed in Section 3. The third objective was to address security and economic interests, connected with democracy within a broader setting

(Section 4). These sections discuss the promoters' premises and the challenges their plans confronted in the region, illustrating the trade-offs and limits to materialize democratization in the Middle East and North Africa. Finally, the chapter concludes with a discussion of how regional democracy promotion in the MENA case illustrates the EU's distinct universalism and the transatlantic "drift and rift".

1. American and European democracy promotion in the MENA region: forums with little future and long-term but innocuous socialization

The MENA *region* has seemed almost immune to the trend of post-Cold War global democracy; if one compares Freedom House indexes for 1994 and 2008, the difference is minimal (Aliboni & Guazzone, 2004; L. Anderson, 2001; Freedom House, 2007). Nevertheless, there have been US and EU policies that intended to promote democracy in the MENA, and they became increasingly important in the context of global trends and of the security and economic interests potentially linked to democratization. When the US and the EU introduced such policies in the 1990s and 2000s, both *regionalized* their approaches to the Arab-Muslim world. American democracy promotion in the MENA rose in the framework of post-9/11 policies, while the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership arguably included this goal since at least 1995. My interest here is to unravel the nature and geopolitical significance of the democracy promotion component in US and EU policies, while it is beyond the scope of this research to analyze the details of programs and allocations (Holden, 2003; Huber, 2008). In this, I follow Halliday's (2005) hints for a historical analysis that can throw light on the perspectives of power, politics and ideology.

This section discusses the American Greater /Broader MENA policy and the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) first. Next, it discusses the European Union "Barcelona Process" officially known as the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) that later evolved to be part of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). Those American policies are indicative of democracy promotion's inclusion of the Middle East within George W. Bush's "Freedom Agenda". The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership is the key policy in EU relations with the Mediterranean in this post-Cold War period (Bicchi, 2007) and depicts the EU position and original

framework. The section concludes with a discussion of how these policies built up “universalisms” that distinguished US and EU as democracy promoters in IR.

1.1. American approach –Greater/Broader Middle East and MEPI

During the Cold War, the US already addressed the MENA as a region taking two issues into consideration: economic interests (access to oil and to sea-communication) and ideological/strategic opposition to potential Soviet influence. Yet, US-MENA relations were rather based on *bilateral* contacts, and policies lacked consistency (Quandt, 2001)³. This did not entail any democracy promotion “active” policies or conditionality. At the end of the Cold War, there was no major change in this regard: Clinton dealt with the existing political forces and focused on American interests, especially oil and the defense of Israel (Watkins, 1997). His strategy of democratic enlargement was only rhetoric without any form of implementation in the region (Haas, 1997); even economic opening and free trade were low on the agenda.

For most observers, democracy promotion was only brought to the US’s MENA policy under the Bush administration, and even those who saw more continuity than change in the post-Cold War period admitted that the Middle East approach was part of Bush’s originality (Rieffer & Mercer, 2005). Bush clearly scaled up the rhetoric in his symbolic 2003 Speech at the 20th anniversary of the NED (G. W. Bush, 2003a), and arguably the MENA became the litmus test of his “Forward strategy for freedom” as a new grand strategy (Gaddis, 2002). The policy materialized with two specific features: the new framing of the “Greater/Broader Middle East and North Africa”⁴ as a target of democracy promotion, and the program and budget for the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI)⁵. Both

³ For Quandt, there was activism and containment of Soviet influence, notably during the “Arab Cold War” of the 1960s.

⁴ The program was first known as the Greater ME and then changed to Broader ME. This change of names seemingly responded to a communication strategy (the GME program was renamed after the criticism it received in the first half of 2004 that I discussed in the introduction).

⁵ MEPI has often been analyzed as an instance of democracy assistance. Such approaches focus on its content and the policy-process (from budget planning to implementation and then feedback/evaluation).

emanated from the Department of State and were not framed under USAID, which is telling of a “higher interests-related” framework⁶.

The “Greater” Middle East Initiative was never properly launched, but President Bush and other members of his Administration alluded to a plan for reform in the region since the beginning of 2004⁷. By mid-February, a draft of a Greater Middle East Initiative reached the media informally (Dar al-Hayat, 2004; International Crisis Group, 2004). The American authors defended its legitimacy because it was based on the Arab Human Development Report, a document “made by Arabs” that had been praised internationally for its bold criticism. Those documents illustrated an American conception of “democracy promotion” for the region within the modernization paradigm but emphasized capitalist reforms: they prescribed a development bank and an Economic Opportunity Forum to facilitate World Trade Organization accession. The political measures to foster democracy were awkwardly specific. These included a “leadership academy”, legal advice centers, “discovery schools”, and textbook translations, but also assisting in elections, encouraging parliamentary exchanges and developing media and civil society organizations. There was a broad definition of democracy promotion, an absence of overall strategy for political reform, and most importantly, the measures were potentially open to abuse by the authoritarian incumbents who would have to enforce them “in cooperation” with the US.

American democracy promotion thus avoided intrusive, direct policy goals and sought to develop activities in the region. In this sense, the Plan of Support for Reform adopted at the 2004 G8 summit included a new framework, the BMENA “Forum for the Future”, which would take place in US- and reform-friendly countries: in Rabat in December 2004, in Bahrain in 2005, in Jordan in 2006, and in Yemen in 2007. Despite the innovative plans, the Forums epitomized the decay of the BMENA initiative to promote democracy. No significant policies were ever

⁶ There is synergy but also competition between State and USAID, as discussed in Chapter 2. State controlled these policies, but two USAID bodies were involved in MENA democracy promotion: the Office of Middle Eastern Programs (mostly development-related) and the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (though its tasks have basically disappeared since MEPI). The 2007-12 Strategic Plan for State and USAID mentioned as an objective “governing justly and democratically” and designated several MENA programs. The Department of Defense also allocates a limited budget (1%) to democracy promotion though this basically relates to military issues.

⁷ For example, during January 2004, Senator Lugar gave a speech on “A new partnership for the Greater Middle East: combating terrorism, building peace” and Vice-president Cheney mentioned the plan in the World Economic Forum in Davos.

adopted nor budgets allocated, “democracy promotion” emphasized economic and trade initiatives (e.g. OECD-MENA Investment), and these events fell dramatically on the diplomatic agendas. Notably, though they sought multilateralism, they became increasingly “American” and partly covered under the MEPI initiative, which was the financial instrument corresponding to Bush’s MENA strategy.

The second strand of the US’s policy, MEPI, is a Presidential Initiative created in December 2002 to fund small-scale programs related to the same objectives of the BMENA initiative: women’s rights, education, entrepreneurship, local government, judicial reform⁸. These programs were very specific and arguably complemented the more development-oriented funds from USAID going to the region. One example was the training of young Egyptian party members to employ democratic practices inside their parties and do domestic election monitoring; the problem was that most participants had to be “known” and approved by the authorities, and that Egyptian electoral laws and the electoral process were far from democratic. Again, the policy left room for authoritarian incumbents to control the opening and “reform” process.

MEPI was conceived as a tool for regional projects but it became increasingly country-targeted, raising its profile precisely in the countries where USAID doesn’t operate, such as Syria. However, until 2008 MEPI has been funded at a marginal total of USD 430 million, with yearly allocations ranging from USD 29m (2002) to 74m (2005)⁹ and for this reason it is rather unknown outside a narrow circle of grant recipients (Dunne, 2005; McInerney, 2008; Wittes, 2006; Yerkes & Wittes, 2004). MEPI actually illustrates the gap between Bush’s highflying rhetoric and the limits of such Bush-branded policies.

Indeed, MEPI naively sought to ignore that democracy promotion in the region was above all affected by Bush’s policy of regime-change in Iraq (Ottaway, 2008)¹⁰. A series of papers from the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (CEIP) identified in this a double strategy of American democracy promotion in the

⁸ At the beginning it was funded from the emergency supplemental appropriations, then through annual Congress allocations.

⁹ “Success stories” are quoted in the Department of State website. This website officially acknowledges a budget of USD 293 million for 2002-6, which is significantly smaller than the equivalent EU funds, MEDA-democracy.

¹⁰ MEPI has been criticized in Washington circles as a Bush-policy that might not survive in the new administration; Congress was more reluctant to fund it in 2006 as it considered it opaque and possibly duplicating USAID action (McInerney, 2008).

Middle East, combining *hard* and *soft* lines in policy-making (Dalacoura, 2005). “Hard line” interventions towards hostile regimes, and “soft line” policies towards friendly regimes often considered “less undemocratic” (as Jordan) include reframing of aid, creation of additional instruments and active diplomatic stands for praising reform and criticizing laggards (Carothers, 2000, 2003a). However, the 2003 intervention in Iraq is likely to remain a unique case of “democracy promotion”, and the goals of this intervention were far more complex and related to interests; democracy promotion only came up in the justifications of the intervention late in time, and second to security. “Hard line” approaches (Iran, Syria) seemingly responded to other goals. Most US democracy promotion policies have rather been “soft line”, including the Greater/Broader MENA and the MEPI, initiatives openly framed under Bush’s “push for reform in the region” (Bureau of Middle Eastern Affairs, 2005).

The Millennium Challenge Account featured as an additional asset and can be included as part of the US strategy. Conceived as an incentive, this was not “soft” in that it underlined strong conditionality [cf. Chapter 3] and offered truly substantial funds (for development) in bilateral governmental agreements. In the beginning, no MENA countries classified to be potential recipients of the MCA, but arguably the US democracy promotion strategy led to the inclusion of Morocco, Jordan and Yemen, which all had Compacts by 2008. In these cases, democracy was arguably not considered as such a strong precondition to receive funds, because reform in these countries had been marginal. Thus instead of using conditionality, the MCA was used as “carrot” for democracy promotion in the MENA region. In addition, from the perspective of “domino theory”, their economic development accompanied by democracy measures was supposed to serve as example for the region, more clearly than Iraq.

Boosting transatlantic relations?

The BMENA-MEPI approach arguably peaked in 2003-4, significantly losing momentum to military programs and bilateral policies, though it continued through 2008. Despite their limited scope and the fact that it is hard to evaluate already whether they were successful, these policies remain important in the context of this thesis because they attempted to boost transatlantic cooperation in the dark hour of the crisis over the intervention in Iraq.

The GMENA initiative illustrated the potential for transatlantic cooperation after 2003. Think-tank and policy advisers recommended cooperation (Ahlin et al., 2004; Yacoubian, 2004), which did unravel but somewhat reluctantly. In the following years, two summits of the G8 (Sea Island, Gleneagles), a NATO Summit (Istanbul) and two US-EU bilateral summits all included the topic of the “Greater MENA”. However, in all these forums the Europeans made a point of agreeing to cooperation in rhetoric, but emphasized the virtues of their own approach (European Commission & Secretariat General of the Council of the European Union, 2004). In practice, the EU rather sought to cement its own, independent position with the EMP and the broader European Neighborhood Policy, and did not invest in a common transatlantic strategy. Moreover, it can be argued that this triggered an effort on the EU side to coordinate and present its own policies of MENA democracy promotion more coherently. A new Working Group was created in the Council in this regard, something unprecedented in the realm of CFSP¹¹. Arguably, this raised the profile of democracy promotion in EU external relations overall and towards the MENA region more specifically. Until then, MENA democracy promotion had a relatively low profile and was dispersed, both regarding EU institutional branches and the content of EMP policies, which are discussed now.

1.2. European approach –the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership

The history of European Community/European Union relations with the MENA region goes back in time a few decades, though it did not include democracy promotion in a particularly strong or outspoken way. These relations have rather existed around economic (opening trade) and political cooperation, and have been affected by the geographical proximity and post-colonial history that bind these “neighbors” (Bicchi, 2007; Calleya, 1997)¹². Indeed, the elements found in EU

¹¹ This group consisted of 6-8 individuals seconded by Member States to report to Solana, the rotating EU Presidency, and the Council. Individuals and working groups from other EU branches (notably in DG Development and in Human Rights group of the EP) did not particularly welcome this MS and CFSP-pillar intervention, and feared that they would seize the democracy promotion agenda off their hands. Source: interview with EU official, Brussels 5 June 2007.

¹² Spain, Italy or Malta initiated some Mediterranean cooperation schemes, while France has often kept a high hand in their content –none clearly stressed the democracy-element. In the early 1990s, the initiatives included a Spanish-Italian led Conference for Security and Cooperation in the Mediterranean (CSCM) and a French-sponsored 5 + 5 talks in a Western Mediterranean Forum. The Global Mediterranean Policy of the early 1970s (arguably the first EU regional approach to the

democracy promotion i.e. political dialogue, conditionality, democracy assistance (K. E. Smith, 2003a) are missing in older EU policies.

The new EU approach materialized in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) in 1995, and this became the main policy in region-to-region EU-MENA relations in the post-Cold War period (Vasconcelos & Joffe, 2000). Here, the EU built its own, distinct position independently from the United States. Seemingly Italy and Spain had been in favor of inviting the US as an observer to the EMP, as they had done in their previous plans for the Conference for Security and Cooperation in the Mediterranean (Satloff, 1997). Yet in the end the EMP did not include any transatlantic framework.

Illustrating the new post-Cold War dynamics, the EMP included elements of democracy promotion. Yet unlike the MEPI or the BMENA, it was not launched with the purpose of promoting democracy only. Importantly, a constructivist view underlies the EU approach: the EMP would rely on long-term socialization and the creation of a common language on democracy (Aliboni, 2004). The elements of democracy promotion existed at three levels, which I discuss here: general plans/rhetoric, frameworks/institutions and proper instruments/actions.

First, democracy promotion was present in the general strategy and rhetoric, mainly set out in the Barcelona Declaration of 1995 and in the Common Strategy adopted by the European Council at Santa Maria da Feira in 2000¹³. The Barcelona Declaration is the document underpinning the EMP with three broad objectives: peace and security, shared economic prosperity through inter alia a free trade zone, and cross-cultural rapprochement through political, social, people-to-people exchanges (European Commission, 1995). Its first chapter (or basket) on *Political and security co-operation* included the principle to “develop the rule of law and democracy in the political systems”, underlining the EU’s particular emphasis on rule of law. But the chapter also recognized “the right of each [country] to choose and freely develop its own political, socio-cultural, economic and judicial system” (European Commission, 1995). The EMP thus enshrined democracy, but at the same time set limits on its promotion by recognizing the countries’ “own” choices.

MENA) became outdated as some of the targets of this policy (Southern European countries, including Portugal) joined the EU in the 1980s and 2000s.

¹³ It is important to notice the impulse to the Mediterranean strategies is given during Spanish and Portuguese presidencies of the Council, or in 2008 the French presidency. This does not mean that these MS favored democracy as part of the strategy, nevertheless.

Indeed, this could lead to abusing democracy by claiming a country's own interpretation. This clause was the result of difficult bargaining first at EU level, as some Member States wanted to go easy on democracy, and then with the Mediterranean partners¹⁴. This is an example of how democracy promoters tried to arrive at a consensual definition of democracy [Chapter 1], but in doing so they potentially emptied it of meaning.

The purpose of Common Strategies as CFSP official documents is to set a coherent background for whatever policy might be decided in the future, though they do not necessarily translate into specific policies. The 2000 Common Strategy for the Mediterranean, reference for the region, states the following objectives: "to help secure peace, stability and prosperity in the region", and "the promotion of core values such as human rights, democracy, good governance, transparency and the rule of law" (Council of the European Union, 2000). The reference to democracy promotion is clear, but there is a prioritization of security and this would also be the case in subsequent EU documents (European Commission, 2000, 2003). The rhetoric around democracy promotion was increasingly watered down as the EMP became increasingly securitized. This was illustrated in the 2005 Summit that was supposed to celebrate the EMP's 10th anniversary but the EMP had by then lost ground to security objectives and to the wider European Neighbourhood Policy, and the only document endorsed was a Policy Code of Conduct for countering terrorism (Euromed, 2005).

Secondly, the EMP put forward an *institutional framework* that replicated the three baskets of the Helsinki Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe: security/political, economic and civil society. Nevertheless, these baskets are quite asymmetrical: the economic aspects are the most developed (with bilateral Association Agreements), while the Civil Forum is not even part of the decision-making framework¹⁵. The underpinning logic was Modernization (economic development accompanying transition) and the clear reference was the CSCE, considered a success of medium-term spill-over. Institutions would also contribute to the long-term socialization that would make MENA countries democratize. This

¹⁴ Interview with Spanish ambassador, Barcelona 10 March 2006. Spain, in the first draft, did not even mention democracy and the rule of law. Then, it was seemingly Tunisia that insisted on adding the "each their own" safeguard.

¹⁵ There are important problems of lack of communication and linkages between the baskets; MEP coordinators were appointed to deal with these.

way, the EMP institutionalized foreign minister conferences, meetings of civil servants (senior officials and experts) and most importantly for democracy promotion a Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly (Lannon & van Elsuwege)¹⁶.

The Assembly replicated regional forums such as the Council of Europe and the Organization of American States, and notably allowed the European Parliament to have direct input on EU democracy promotion. Indeed, the EP played the role of EU democracy promoter in the EMP “versus” some Commission and Member States’ officials when drafting declarations, policies and budget lines (Gillespie, 2004). Member States were notably more favorable to traditional diplomatic relations, with no additional institutions or positions regarding the domestic regimes. Arguably, EP participation explains the inclusion of democratic principles in the Barcelona Declaration and the initiatives of parliamentary dialogues, and specific measures such as the conditionality clauses that would be generalized in the bilateral agreements, and the Democracy program that was pegged to MEDA. The European Parliament would come to have the most active role in following questions and denouncing problems on human rights and democracy in the region, overall (Balfour, 2004; Juenemann, 2004).

The first Euro-Med Parliamentary Forum took place in 1998, and by 2004 it became a formal Parliamentary Assembly, but EMP Ministers (i.e. the MS in the Council) agreed to give it consultative status only. The parliamentary dimension has been problematic within the EU, some demanding participation of MEPs solely, some demanding *national* parliamentarians. There has also been disagreement as to the subjects it was to address, notably the Middle East Peace Process: though the EU has included this in its regional approach in contrast to the American perspective, the Assembly’s leverage was very limited. Another problem arose in terms of active participation or boycott from MENA countries: for instance Syria and Lebanon shunned the forum, which is arguably trapped in controversial dynamics. For example, the “elected representatives” from most MENA countries are clearly not democratic, and if MEPs denounce human rights violations in the

¹⁶ Other activities include training sessions for EuroMed Diplomats, sectoral meetings on water, energy, industry, or environment.

Assembly, Southern partners may reject these “incidents” as illegitimate interference in internal affairs and neo-colonial abuse (Stavridis, 2002)¹⁷.

The EMP strategy complemented such top-down initiatives with bottom-up democracy promotion. The participation of the peoples (third basket) has notably been framed in Civil Society forums and thematic networks (notably in education). These imply looser institutionalization but according to Gillespie (2004) they constitute an originality and potential for European democracy promotion. In addition, they have actively contributed to developing international networks of civil society, though governments sought to control as much as possible their composition and functioning. For this reason, the forums were usually marginalized when they were held in parallel with the Summits or the Assembly, and overall the results have been lukewarm in the field of human rights, often suffering from self-censorship and unproductive debates (Feliu, 2005). More generally, this actually illustrates a paradoxical “official” promotion of civil society, i.e. bottom-up is encouraged from the top-down (the organizing framework), and this involved necessary shortcomings [another example will be considered in Chapter 6].

Thirdly, EU democracy promotion under EMP has included substantive instruments that helped materialize this policy, notably under the allocations from Mesures d’Acompagnement MEDA and conditionality. MEDA included a “suspension clause” in case of violation of democratic principles, rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms, illustrating EU conditionality. However, the clause has never been invoked, which also illustrates this policy’s limits. Similarly, the human rights/democracy clauses were supposed to be in all the Association Agreements as part of the EU’s “mainstreaming” democracy promotion. However, this has been implemented unequally and the clauses rather illustrate the shortcomings of this rhetorical mainstreaming: the lack of rigor backfires and undermines the policy in principle. In his study of the Agreements, Stavridis argued there were “strong references” to the clauses in the agreements with Egypt, Jordan and Palestine, “inspiration” only in those with Morocco and

¹⁷ Stavridis mentions the case of a French MEP who denounced the human rights situation in Tunisia; the meeting’s chair then did not allow any more interventions from parliamentarians from the North. The Assembly is this way a controversial, double-edge sword as it seeks democratization through long-term socialization but is in the meantime abused.

Algeria, and no reference at all in the cases of Tunisia, Israel and Lebanon¹⁸. In the bilateral negotiations before the Agreement, Tunisia went as far as rejecting the reference to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and changed it to a domestic reference (Stavridis, 2004). EU democracy promotion thus resembled a bargaining process in which MENA regimes effectively boycotted some democracy aspects advocating the element of partnership, undermining the EU strategy.

The main financial instrument, MEDA, illustrates the bureaucratic division of the EU approach, as it was managed at DG External Relations and rather disconnected from DG Development and Cooperation; in addition the MEDA-Democracy program was subsumed under the EIDHR¹⁹. MEDA allocated about 1 billion/year, of which 232 million went to democracy assistance in 2001-3. These figures give an idea of the financial scope of the EU policy, notably in comparison with the MEPI instrument, but they should not be taken at face value because of the lack of definition of the policies, the changing categorization, and the fact that some “democratic themes” allocations actually went to unrelated policies. Most importantly, the EU policies may be resisted when MENA incumbents participate in decision-making, illustrating the trade-offs of democracy promotion: co-opting and giving a say to the target-country might divert or slow down democratization. This way, Holden (2003) complained there was little bottom-up or Southern input in MEDA, but Youngs (2006) gave the example of how “governance reforms” were reduced to innocuous technical training when Arab governments watered down a Commission proposal for Democratic Facility.

1.3. Two universalisms face practical trade offs

For Carothers (2008b), the United States “does not really think about Europe” when drafting its policies for the Middle East. Conversely, some believe that Europeans stand up against American leadership in the region as an effort to consolidate their own sphere of influence (Calleya, 1997, p. 173). Overall, American and European initiatives have remained isolated from each other, though both targeted democracy

¹⁸ The case of Morocco is dubious because it is also mentioned that the clause is an “essential element” of the agreement, which could eventually lead to enforcement within the principles of international law.

¹⁹ About 10% of the EIDHR funds (2004) go to the MENA region, which is indicative of the little attention paid to democracy compared to other regions and to EMP projects concerning trade. Compared to most of the MEDA financial assistance, the EIDHR introduces a more important role for civil society because funds are allocated to NGOs.

promotion and featured similar goals [Sections 2, 3, 4 below] for the region. These separate quests have illustrated the two universalisms, which have not necessarily clashed. Moreover, both the American and the European universalisms faced similar challenges on the ground, and democracy promotion was challenged by the political realities of the MENA region: an opening /reform controlled by the regime leading to “liberalized autocracy” rather than democracy, and “democracy” becoming an empty shell that yielded no political legitimacy (compared to the rise of Islamist proposals for change).

The following table summarizes the main features of American and European universalism, based on the policies analyzed here.

Table 8. American and European universalisms towards the MENA region

American	European
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Projection of democracy promotion to the region as part of the universal quest (“MENA is no exception”) Qualitative shift from exemplarist to vindicationist democracy promotion (Bush/neo-conservative) Policies dominated by the Executive with the Dept. of State (low profile for USAID) Policies address economic realm because it is less intrusive Domino theory underlies strategy No regional institutionalization Securitization (post 9/11 fight against terrorism) Limited funding, limited conditionality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principles and mainstreaming of democracy promotion expressed in documents and declarations as “common value” • Ambiguous regionalism: inclusive (Euro-med region), exclusive (neighbor, partner) • Influence of the European Parliament, reluctance of some Member States • Policies complement the main area, i.e. economic cooperation (Modernization) • Contagion and socialization (by co-opting into norms) underlie the strategy • Institutionalization: CSCE-model, baskets, EU model (reflexivity) • Securitization (includes immigration) • Limited funding, limited conditionality

American democracy promotion in the MENA was founded on the traditional projection of democracy as an element of foreign policy, i.e. it fit with the American mission, but it was a result from the shift from exemplarist to a vindicationist positions under the Bush administration. The discourse was based on the non-exceptionalism of the Middle East and of Islam and the strategy was broadly based on domino theory (target countries to change the region). The approach was framed in a geopolitical understanding of the region (Greater/ Broader Middle East and

North Africa); it underlined the security policies especially developed after 9/11 and addressed the lack of democracy as one of the complementary elements. As such, only very limited funding was committed, with the exception of the Millennium Challenge Account (that was a carrot more than a reward for democratization). These features manifested a universalism of democracy promotion based on traditional justifications, a new (post-9/11) rather monolithic understanding of the region, and pragmatic priorities that overrode the principles.

European democracy promotion built on the premise of “common principles” and the mainstreaming expressed in documents and declarations since the 1990s and more specifically in the Barcelona Declaration, grounding a unidirectional normative approach where “partners” had some leverage (Bicchi, 2006; Manners, 2002; Sjørnsen, 2002)²⁰. This universalism proposed democratic socialization, based on geographic contagion, through two regionalist views that coexisted but were actually ambiguous: on the one hand there was a Euro-Mediterranean Partnership that pretended to be inclusive, and on the other a “Southern Partners/Neighbors” approach that was clearly exclusionary. Adopting a reflexive approach, the EU institutionalized the project upon previous, own models that prioritized economy (main basket and ground of the EMP, as for the European Communities) but allowed for security cooperation and some cultural ground for peoples’ exchanges (as in the CSCE). This gave the European universalism greater potential and broader ground, but security became the main issue (fight against terrorism, migration). Substantive funds were allocated especially in bilateral cooperation with regimes; this increasingly included conditionality (ENP bilateral agreements).

In sum, both universalisms have strong roots on what and how the promoters act in the world and not so much on what the MENA is. In this case both American and European policies combined universalism with *othering* the MENA region (Diez, 2004). Democracy promotion was caught in this paradox, as it was based on democracy’s universality, but the region was characterized as a distinct entity at the same time.

²⁰ For Bicchi, the norm (and policy) is EU’s regionalism, motivated by reflexivity –her analysis underlines unidirectionality. For Manners and Sjørnsen, the most important aspect is that the norm rests on universality, and this way the approach is inclusive, i.e. there is partnership and common values.

Both American and European policies faced similar challenges to make democracy promotion work in the MENA region. One initial problem was that democracy assistance programs, especially on the American side, were short-term, narrow-focused and result-oriented –or else they did not attract funds from donor-agencies (Mednicoff, 2006, p. 264). At the level of implementation and of the practitioners (many Western contractors and Arab partner NGOs), US and EU policies suffered similar shortcomings, and palliated rather than transformed the situation (Carapico, 2000). In addition, both sides emphasized non-intrusive and relatively uncontroversial measures. This led the US and the EU to fund women’s NGO groups or training for businessmen, judges or parliamentarians, and many programs that targeted administrative efficiency and the fields of energy or the environment: “neutrality” and expertise were emphasized. They may have relied on long-term and Modernization dynamics, but the policies were mainly “politically correct”²¹. In the mean time, the larger-picture of democratization was left aside. This emphasized the risk of façade democracy that as Albrecht and Schlumberger (2004) warned, could conceal and even perpetuate the authoritarian regimes in the MENA. More specifically, democracy promotion policies miscalculated the political realities of the region through two inadequate assumptions.

The first problematic assumption concerned the single structure linking the state and the regime: promoters presumed that getting the regime to democratize would translate into the state’s democratization. This way, regimes may have consented to a relative opening, allowing some opposition or organizing limited elections. Yet this did not lead to democratization: some institutions may have been reformed but patronage is widespread, the state continued to be under the regime control (Bellin, 2005). Instead, this policy led to the trap of “illiberal democracy” (Zakaria, 2003) or “liberalized autocracy” (Brumberg, 2002) where the regime allows for some contestation but still controls the political arena and notably continues to thwart freedoms. Rather significantly, though this “trap” has been documented extensively and MENA and Western critics insist on reconsidering this

²¹ Regarding EU funds, only a small percentage of MEDA was dedicated to democracy promotion, which was soon included under the EIDHR and comprised about 170 projects in the first 5 years. MEDA faced important challenges, including the gap between fund commitment and actual disbursement, and the overriding role of the EU (little cooperation with MENA countries or civil society). Sometimes policies clearly matched the promoters’ needs: for example, judges were trained in intellectual property international laws or alternative dispute resolution. Sources : EU website, MEDA, Holden, Mednicoff, Carothers & Ottaway, Carapico.

premise, American and European declarations have continued to refer to these openings as instances of successful democracy promotion (Prodi, 2003; Rice, 2005a). The diplomatic language is often laudatory and overly optimistic, pointing at a glass that is at least half-full where critics see no water, or muddy water.

The second challenge was overstating or misinterpreting democracy as a source of legitimacy for non-democratic regimes. Transition scholars have argued that state legitimacy is not necessarily founded on democracy, but on the regime's socioeconomic efficiency (Linz & Stepan, 1996, pp. 76-79)²². Hence in the ever-degrading economic situation in MENA countries²³, the regimes (i.e. the state) lack legitimacy, and the ideologies they have endorsed in time have lost credibility too. This happened to the Arab-nationalist discourse and socialism, and there was a risk that the new ideology (Western-led) of economic structural reforms and democracy also became discredited. Area experts and Arab intellectuals, such as the Moroccan al-Yabri, warned of this increasing disconnection between the Arab peoples and their regimes, and the value of democratic legitimacy (Martínez Montávez, 2004). Indeed, democracy seemed to become one element in partisan debates, an ideology adopted by very few, elitist groups that do not have any real constituency (Salame, 1994) (Ottaway, 2005a). Against this background, it became crucial that democracy did not oppose the *traditional* source of legitimacy in the MENA region: Islam. For Bromley (1993), Islam was traditionally constitutive of all social structures in the region, while states had sought to create a separate administrative apparatus. As political Islam and Islamist movements became increasingly important in the politics of the MENA (Dalacoura, 2001; Halliday, 2005, pp. 193-228; Krämer, 1994), democracy promoters reacted by arguing there were positive links between democracy and Islam.

The chapter now moves on to focus on the main goals of international democracy promotion, applied to the regional level and to the MENA case in particular. I will discuss in which way the US and the EU tackled these objectives, whether there

²² It is the socioeconomic prosperity that would eventually erode non-democratic regimes, but the general argument (based on Przeworski and Limongi) is that there is a "political economy of legitimacy" necessary for transition.

²³ According to the *Millennium Development Goals Report* "even though the Arab world has made substantive strides in human development over the past three decades, the region's overall progress has faltered over the 1990s" (United Nations Development Program, 2005).

were divergent approaches, and what this actually entailed regarding a successful strategy.

2. Overcoming the Arab-Muslim cultural exception

The first objective of regional democracy promotion in the MENA was to overcome what seemed a “cultural exception” to the democratization trends of the post-Cold War period. According to Huntington, the MENA region’s “political culture” and the Arab-Muslim tradition do not meet the prerequisites for democracy and perpetuate a situation of conflict with the West (Huntington, 1997a). Huntington and other authors as B. Lewis were accused of “orientalism” precisely for stigmatizing the region, and in any case *both* the US and the EU sought to counter those arguments in their MENA policies.

The US and the EU faced the challenge of finding a consensual definition of democracy that would allow for its promotion without raising accusations of Western cultural superiority or neo-colonial behavior. As discussed in Chapter 1, this led to building a compromise definition between three elements: the universality of democracy, the Western origin of democracy and Western criteria in its promotion, and the inclusion of cultural specificities. There was American and European “learning by doing” to develop a positive discourse, notably supported by the democracy promotion knowledge community. However, conceptual tensions and trade-offs were hard to overcome in practice (as it is with *any* religion), and the actual co-optation of Islam into politics was ambiguous.

2.1. Common ground for distinct US and EU discourses

Both the US and the EU supported claims for the universality of democracy and the compatibility of Arab/Islamic culture with democracy. The official view on both sides was to counter the cultural exceptionalism thesis, but the US and the EU constructed different discourses of democracy promotion, with the American rhetoric flying high under George W. Bush, while the European language maintained a lower profile. For example, in his speech on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the National Endowment for Democracy, Bush chose to focus on the MENA region. In this speech, he claimed there should be no Western “cultural

condescension” regarding Islam, and he insisted on Islam’s “consistency with democratic rule” (G. W. Bush, 2003a)²⁴. He made similar declarations in London in a speech about Iraq that underlined the importance of democracy promotion in the Greater Middle East. As if seeking to build transatlantic consensus on this subject, he claimed: “in the West, there has been a certain skepticism about the capacity or even the desire of Middle Eastern peoples for self-government. We are told that Islam is somehow inconsistent with a democratic culture” (G. W. Bush, 2003b).

In the EU, this language has not been so straightforward and direct references to the potential problems of cultural incompatibility are hard to find. Some critics have even suggested that the EU rhetoric is too shy and concedes to the cultural exceptionalism thesis (Meyer, 2003). However, it is more likely that this reticence is explained by the tradition of secularism; overall, the EU language is extremely diplomatic and careful. Even so, EU documents and declarations about democracy promotion reach out to the region as they make reference to “dialogue between cultures and religion” (European Parliament, 2004) and to how “each society must find its own path” (Solana, 2005). This is a European stand to conciliate the West with the Arab-Muslim world. Another reason for a smoother tone (other than the tradition to avoid religion in public speech) may be that the European Union has a considerable Muslim population itself, and even a friendly reference would seem antagonistic (Amghar, Boubekeur, & Emerson, 2007). In addition, a straightforward position of “othering” the MENA region emphasizing its Arab-Muslim character would actually be contradictory with the EMP’s approach of a *common* cultural ground. Rather, EMP documents emphasized common “values and principles” of the MENA-EU (Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, 2005). Though it may seem derisory, democracy is clearly among these values²⁵.

2.2. Building consensus: the knowledge community’s normative approach

The US and EU defense of the compatibility of Islam and democracy has been substantiated with a vast academic literature and with policy documents from think

²⁴ Bush reminded that the American stand to avoid “cultural condescension” was nothing new, as this term dated back to Ronald Reagan. This also illustrates the continuity in Bush’s democracy promotion.

²⁵ The 2005 EMP *Code of Conduct to counter terrorism* stated “we must not imperil the democratic values to which we are committed”.

tanks. This point illustrates the leverage of these non-state actors that influence the policy-making process [stages 3 and 4 of the process, cf. Chapter 3]; they sought to counter Huntington's "Clash of civilizations" and the fear of rising Islamist fundamentalism.

Countless publications (articles, journal special issues, books) and events (seminars, round tables, workshops) have supported the view that there is no reason to suspect this cultural-ideological bias (Aliboni & Guazzone, 2004). Larry Diamond argued "both the US and the EU are too afraid of Islamization to push hard for democratization" while this should not be the case (Ibrahim, Ibrahim, Diamond, Nasr, & Gershman, 2005). Conferences and special issues of the main journals in the discipline documented the compatibility of democracy and Islam, for example *Democratization* (issue 9:1, 2002), *The Journal of Democracy* (issue 14:2, 2003), and the Conference on Development, Democracy and the Islamic World (University of California at Irvine, 2003)²⁶. This discussion often raised the question of interpretation in Islam, underlining its diversity and the traces of liberal thought (Ehteshami, 2004; Filali-Ansary, 2003; Hourani, 1962; Seleny, 2006)²⁷. In view of the contacts between these sources of expertise and US and EU policy-makers, it can be argued that a positive trend countering the Clash fed into their policies and their discourse.

A critique of this normative literature and its epistemology is in order here. By referring to political culture, analysts and promoters have often adopted the same standpoint as Huntington's explanation of the Islam-West clash and Lewis's account of Arab "backwardness". Here, political culture is also considered an explanatory variable; the authors just seek to substantiate the opposite claim i.e. that there can be compatibility with democracy in the MENA. This claim reflects the universalism in the liberal view of post-Cold War International Relations, which according to Brown (1999) has sought to impose itself as "an alternative story" to the one of clash and confrontation [cf. Chapter 1]. Part of the democracy promotion knowledge community has adopted a similar normative perspective with the goal of building consensus and overcoming the argument of the MENA cultural exception.

²⁶ Other examples include the journals *Middle East Policy*, *The Middle East Quarterly*, and *Arab Studies Quarterly*; the scholarly /think tank discussions have been countless.

²⁷ There is also an interesting distinction between "the Muslim" and "the Arab" in some analysis, based on the cases of democratic compatibility in Turkey, Indonesia, Malaysia, India and Mali.

Instead, a more useful approach should focus on the region's political culture as the *dependent* variable, i.e. as the object and not the explanation of our analysis of democracy promotion. If we observe certain incompatibility, the key is to explain why this is so and what could change –this debate has more to do with history and politics than with theology. This perspective is present in some of the Transition literature (Linz & Stepan, 1996; O'Donnell et al., 1986), and it is especially useful because the evidence that *culture matters* at all for democracy is at times weak (Dahl, 1989, pp. 262-263). In his overview of IR in the Middle East, Fred Halliday (2005, p. 39) endorsed this analytical perspective. He argued, more specifically, that the MENA region shares a political culture illustrated among others by the countries' political systems and forms of legitimation. These aspects constitute a better focus to gather knowledge and more powerful explanations of the challenges the US and EU face when promoting democracy.

2.3. Reluctant compromise: US and EU failure to materialize Islam co-optation in democracy promotion

A final point related to this question is that the positive American and European discourses and the analysis from the knowledge community have actually not been matched with the practice of actively supporting political Islam. Many policy-makers remained reluctant to co-opt Islamists, as they saw a link or at least a potential connection between Islamism and terrorism, and overall perceived political Islam as an anti-Western ideology. Though the consensus was built in principle, decision-makers were reluctant to allocate funds and cooperate with either Islamist political parties or civil society groups. This was an example of the gap between democracy promotion discussions in theory and the practice on the ground.

Democracy promoters worked on a compromise by seeking to avoid conflation and focusing on *moderate* political Islam, which they recognized by its relatively liberal and Western-friendly views (Richards, 2005). A new sensitivity to this position made its way in American and European policy-making circles, which slowly sought to co-opt these groups into the transition process. Again, the US and EU adopted a similar view. De Vries, European Council's coordinator of Anti-Terrorist policies at the time, declared:

“I want to stress the fact that there are important moderate Muslim communities that we should strengthen, and the EU and the US should work together on this. I don’t think our strategies should or need to differ on that score” (de Vries, 2005).

Yet in practice democracy promotion policies avoided support of religious groups. Instead, the GMENA, MEPI, and EMP privileged cooperation with the regime in power, which was often itself hostile or suspicious of the Islamist challenge (Tibi, 2005). Alternatively, they financed secular NGOs that often seemed disconnected from the people and lacked credibility (Ottaway, 2005b). In many MENA countries the main political opposition to the incumbent authoritarian regimes came from Islamist groups, e.g. Egypt, Morocco, and Jordan. US and EU democracy promotion mostly cooperated with the regimes, though there they explored ways to co-opt Islamists and made some ambiguous declarations (Schlumberger, 2000).

Moreover, the cases of Algeria and Palestine showed the ambiguity of Western support. In Algeria, elections were aborted in 1991-2 as the FIS was going to be the clear winner (the West supported the military’s take over), and in Palestine the elections of 2006 that gave a majority to Hamas led to a government boycotted by the West. This set a clear precedent of Western opposition to Islamists in power, in these cases because of the links with terrorism for both FIS and Hamas. But more generally, there is still suspicion that “moderate” political Islam might hide anti-democratic and anti-Western positions²⁸. In a way, this practically brings into question the objective of showing that democracy is compatible with Islam²⁹. In Turkey, which could possibly be considered an example of this compatibility, the political history and current system had a strong component of secularism.

As a mid-way, promoters explored the possibility to cooperate with Islamic groups on scenes other than the political, i.e. in the realm of civil society. USAID and the MEPI have included among their recipients some groups connected to religious activism, but this has been rather exceptional (Dunne, 2005). Arguably, the EMP also included Islam and democratic compatibility as part of its third basket (Silvestri, 2005), i.e. within the institutional frame of culture and not of politics.

²⁸ By contrast, the case of Turkey and Erdogan’s “moderate Islamist party” in power has led to nuanced experience. Turkey’s EU membership candidacy place it in a difficult position to generalize the arguments to the MENA region.

²⁹ I am thankful to Professors Smith and Kaldor for bringing this point to my attention.

However, this posed a conceptual problem regarding the definition of “civil society”, with important authors and sectors in the MENA region arguing that their societies’ concept must be related to religion, and emphasizing collective rather than individual civic rights (Juenemann, 2004). Juennemann identified two other aspects of EU policies in the MENA (they also apply to American democracy promotion) that emptied the concept of “civil society”. First, state-regimes broadly created, controlled and infiltrated the associations and NGOs that received democracy assistance, which undermined civil society’s essential role of “independent check” on the state. Second, entrepreneurs and businesses have been co-opted as civil society partners, which counters some of the definitions of “civil society” and notably reinforces the state-regimes because of their domination of the economy. Indeed, according to Bromley (1993) the MENA states do not even qualify as capitalist because the appropriation of surplus labor (economic power) has never been separated from the political institutions and ruling class.

In sum, the efforts on the US and the EU sides to overcome the MENA cultural exception to democratization were one first objective in their approaches. Nevertheless, the implementation of Islamic-friendly democracy promotion was rather complex (because of potential links with Islamist terrorism) and this translated into American and European reluctance to co-opt political Islam. The first goal of democracy promotion policies thus seemed inconclusive, though the questions (theoretical and practical) were not that different, from those arising with other religions, from the definition of a positive civil society in general, or from the case of the Catholic Church’s role in the DR Congo [cf. Chapter 4]. For these reasons, it can be argued that the MENA region was treated as an “other”, though the US and the EU policies sought exactly the opposite. A similar dynamic was underpinning the artificial regionalization of the MENA, to which I now turn.

3. Encouraging a democratic MENA region: but what MENA region and how to diffuse reform?

The second patent objective of American and European initiatives to promote democracy was to address the region as a whole and not only states. This fitted in

well with the trends of regionalism and interregional cooperation observed in contemporary IR (Buzan & Waever, 2003; Hettne, 2003)³⁰. However, the Middle East and North Africa is hard to classify according to Hettne's degrees of regionness or to functionalist and integration theories. The geographical basis of the MENA region is blurred, there is no unified actorness, and organized cooperation (institutionalized) has failed. However there is a rich shared basis at cultural and civil society levels, which in Hettne's categories only comes at a later stage of regional identity-building. To this day, intra-MENA trade amounts to only to 5% of all regional trade, the alliances and conflicts between states are complex and numerous, and there is no political will to build up a region –instead, one observes centrifugal tendencies (Calleya, 1997, pp. 89-136) where states remain the main actors (Dodge, 2006)³¹. Finally, in the existing regional frameworks, African Union, Union of the Arab Maghreb, Arab League or Gulf Cooperation Council (S. Smith & Levasseur, 2005), democracy does *not* appear as precondition or goal. This distinguishes the MENA from European organizations or the Organization of American States where democracy is a common reference.

An alternative perspective regarding the MENA was presented by Michelle Pace in her analysis of *region-making* that focuses on discourse and process, rather than on existing entities (Pace, 2006, pp. 22-35). I follow her perspective here to unravel the second objective of US and EU democracy promotion: to create and to sustain a concept of the MENA region “from outside”. Democracy promotion intertwined with this process of regionalization, becoming an essential element of the discourses and practices. First, this section discusses geographical constructions of the MENA and the visions underpinning those maps. Secondly, it argues that this MENA-building corresponded to the argument of regional “contagion” or “diffusion” in democracy promotion. This way, both US and EU policies applied the Transition studies that had focused on *regional* challenges to democratization (L. Diamond, Plattner, Chu, & Tien, 1997; Hawthorne, 2001; Linz & Stepan, 1996).

³⁰ Buzan and Waever considered regionalism as the most valid theoretical perspective to explain post-Cold War IR, based on a constructivist approach and focusing on security. Hettne differentiated up to five degrees of “regionness”: geographical, social system, cooperation, civil society cooperation, actorness in IR.

³¹ The Israeli-Palestinian is the most important one, but the conflict over the Western Sahara confronting Algeria and Morocco also poses important problems in the MENA. In addition, there is an element of competition among individual countries in their relations with the US and/or the EU, e.g. privileged partnerships with Egypt and Morocco, US “special relations” with Jordan and Saudi Arabia, EU sympathy for the Palestinian cause and connivance with the Tunisian regime.

Nevertheless, and this is the key distinction here, the US privileged “domino theory” while the EU approach relied on long-term socialization.

3.1. American and European constructions of the MENA region

Rather than relating to the domestic proposals of self-imagining in the MENA region, American and European constructions responded to a diversity of goals in the promoters’ views. This regionalization was relatively new in the American approach to the MENA and must be understood in the context of post-9/11 policies and the War on Terror, that required to frame security in larger terms than country-threats. For the EU, the history of treating the MENA as a region is longer: the first policies date back to the 1970s and the last proposal thus far has been the 2008 “Union for the Mediterranean”. It is also more complex, as the approach sometimes referred to one *common* European-MENA region (e.g. “the Mediterranean”), and other times referred to the MENA as a *neighboring* region, an Other. Because of the links developed with migration, diaspora communities and business/holidaying (together with the colonial past), Europe’s relationship with the region was more intricate than America’s³². This also helps understand the ambiguous trends of “one, common” region (Euro-med) coexisting with the “othering” embedded in the neighbors approach.

The following maps illustrate the concepts of the MENA region that American and European democracy promotion initiatives have included. They give evidence of a sort of variable geometry of the MENA region; they also hint at how any common policy of democratization was a difficult if not impossible puzzle.

Map 3 represents the Greater or Broader MENA region as it was conceived in the American working documents of 2004 and the declarations by George Bush and Condoleeza Rice (2005) to promote democracy. It included 23 countries that arguably had little in common, ranging from Mauritania to Pakistan³³. The inclusion of Sudan was not clear (it depended on the status of negotiations with the government notably regarding Darfur), but Mauritania was usually included because it was part of NATO’s Mediterranean Dialogue since 1994. The Western Sahara is excluded in this map because the US official position is to avoid siding with the

³² I am thankful to Professor Lord Wallace for these observations.

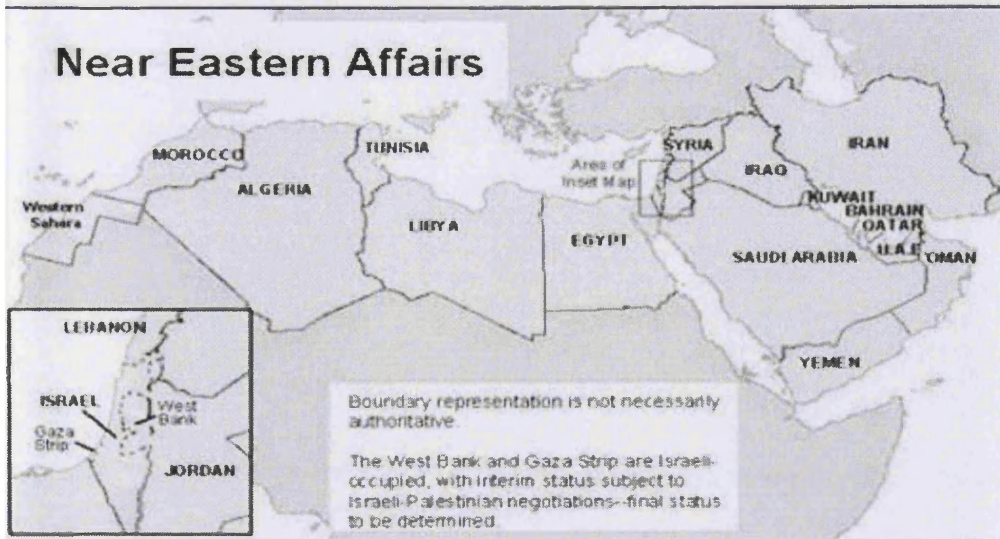
³³ Map elaborated by the author based on the information from the Sea Island G8 documentation (2004).

Moroccan claim (and thus to avoid a clash with Algeria) and to respect the international process; the topic is not mentioned in GME plans. Nevertheless, the map officially used by the State Department for MEPI includes it (see below).

Map 3. The Broader/Greater MENA region as conceived in American working documents



Map 4. Map of “Near Eastern Affairs” that the Department of State includes in its information about MEPI



Map 3 shows a broader conception of the region that relates to the War on Terror (inclusion of Turkey, Afghanistan and Pakistan). Map 4 shows the countries where MEPI was supposed to invest in democracy promotion³⁴. As of 2008, about 450 projects have been funded in 17 countries but there is no action in for instance Iran, though it is included in the map. These maps constituted the references for American democracy promotion policies. However, they reflect a trend of MENA region-making that amalgamates very different countries that sometimes are in conflict. As such, it is hard to envisage a regional strategy and policies that could fit all countries or at least draw them together. In fact, despite the regional rhetoric and initial plans, MEPI programs have targeted countries separately in the end.

The European Union approach of MENA region-making has also been complex,. As of 2008, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership included 39 members: 27 EU Member States and 12 Mediterranean Partners: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestinian Authority, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, Albania and Mauritania³⁵.

*Map 5. The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, 2008: not one Euro-Med region, "just neighbors"*³⁶

³⁴ Source: <http://mepi.state.gov/c10128.htm>

³⁵ An important feature of the EMP that it creates an institutional framework where Arab countries, the Palestinian territories and Israel can sit together.

³⁶ Source: Euromed website of the DG External Relations, European Commission, accessed on 1 August 2008. According to the recent developments, in this map Romania and Bulgaria should be in blue as the other MS; Albania and Mauritania should be in brown.



Up until 2005-6, Euro-Med maps in the EU website and documents usually portrayed all the countries in one color (EU Member States and partners), which enhanced the idea on one region. By contrast, Map 5 underlines the shift in the EU trend, where the concept of Euro-med evolves towards separate “partners” of the neighborhood. I thought this development was symbolic of how the EU shifted from region-making of a “common EU-MENA region” to the ENP –the most recent image for media and communications from the EU underlines the *othering* in color. This is quite important for MENA region-making in view of Pace’s focus on discourse and processes.

This map of the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) must be understood in view of the 2004 enlargement, when the Euro-Med was subsumed in the larger ENP with Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia to underline the fact that no EU membership should be expected. However, that factor is the only thing they have in common (except for Turkey), and as in the US case we find a wide diversity among the countries in this region, which brings Turkey, Libya, Mauritania, and Albania into one forum (European Commission, 2005, p. 17)³⁷.

³⁷ Turkey is a member of the EMP but it receives funds and has bilateral relations as a candidate country in the accession process (different from the Euro-med partners). While Libya had observer status in the EMP since 1999, European rapprochement has been undergoing since 2004 and Libya is now eligible to benefit from ENP assistance despite no progress in the realm of democratization. Mauritania had been part of the ACP-countries in its relations with the EU but it has acceded to EMP recently, showing certain replication of the American MENA region approach. In view of the 2008

These recent inclusions, not yet materialized in policies, have been welcomed by some commentators (Calleya, 2008) but they actually show the inconsistency of European region-building. Indeed, the ambiguous trend from the EU (common region vs. “othering”) is perpetuated in the French Presidency initiative of a “Union for the Mediterranean” (2008) that groups, again, EU and MENA countries under one regional framework.

More specifically and relevant for this research, it was hard to envisage common, regional democracy promotion for such different cases. Smith and Bicchi have argued that the reflexivity (to replicate one’s own nature) of EU external relations led to region-making and to democracy promotion in the MENA (Bicchi, 2006; K. E. Smith, 2003a, pp. 75-77). Nevertheless it has also been argued that the EU approach was increasingly motivated by the perception of broad threats stemming from the MENA, including terrorism (as for the US) and also a securitized conception of migration (Bicchi, 2007; Soravilla Fernández, 2006). In any case, all American and European regional maps emanated from the promoters’ perspectives, and not from within the MENA.

3.2. Regional contagion in Transition studies: American domino theory and European long-term socialization

Transition studies consider that the external context influences a country’s potential for transition through diffusion or “contagion”. This happens either at global level through the waves of democracy or at regional level as in Eastern and Central Europe (Whitehead, 1996). The importance of the *regional* context has been demonstrated with historical and statistical analysis: there is a high correlation between democracy and spatial proximity (Wejnert, 2005), and more specifically the region can indicate the potential for transition in one country (Skrede-Gleditsch & Ward, 2006). In the case of the MENA, this theory holds true since there is a consistent lack of democracy in the region, with the exceptions of Israel and maybe Lebanon. On these grounds, conceiving the MENA as a region made sense as an objective of democracy promotion. Interestingly, the United States and the European Union adopted different policies on this common ground of contagion:

coup, Mauritania’s status can now be considered as “frozen”. Albania was admitted to the EMP in 2008.

the American approach was based on the potential of domino theory, the European one on long-term international socialization.

The United States sought to change some actors in the region, hoping that this would lead to contagion and even imitation effects, much like the Cold War domino theory that led to intervention against Communist regimes. According to Kopstein (2006), this differentiated the US approach from Europe, and was emphasized in the rhetoric of the intervention in Iraq in 2003. Though Iraq became important in recent years, MENA policies in the post-Cold War period rather illustrate the US focus on Jordan and Morocco, and to a lesser extent Egypt and Kuwait. These countries were considered pivotal in the US strategy of “domino effect” for democracy promotion (Carothers, 2003b; Haas, 2003). However, domino theory actually means that the regionalization of the US approach is rather weak, for the focus remains on targeting specific countries. The MEPI is thus only a regional complement that, as discussed above, actually relies on country-programs. The problem with this strategy is that the domino effect of democracy promotion is contingent and far from systematic, and thus regional democratization is elusive (Leeson & Dean, 2007). This has also been proven in the longer term, as the US confronted similar ethical and strategic trade-offs in Vietnam. Indeed, the US support of South Vietnam as “democracy promotion” had been increasingly criticized in the late 60s and early 70s, and it was confirmed that Saigon’s regime was not freer nor more democratic (Kissinger, 1994, p. 667). The contemporary support for some regimes, such as Mubarak’s Egypt, corresponds to similar strategic “democracy promotion”. Though the regional approach for the MENA region only appeared explicitly in US policies in the GMENA and the initiatives under the Bush administration, it seems that the domino theory was somehow underlying earlier geopolitical moves.

By contrast, the European Union’s EMP was a policy of common structures based on democracy as a common value: an institutionalization of “soft power”. This approach involved replicating the EU regional setting for the MENA region and creating a Euro-Med space, which has been considered the example par excellence of EU normative power, with an institutional turn (Bicchi, 2006). Here, democracy promotion is not only based on socialization but, as Pevehouse (2005) analyzed, on regional organizations actually constraining and locking members into the democratization process. In this way, in view of the European geographical closeness to the MENA, contagion was planned as a sort of community

convergence that would be rather unique to EU trends in external relations (Volpi, 2004).

Nevertheless, as I discussed above, in reality there was not one “common region” but two: on the one hand the EU was always more prosperous and more democratic, and on the other the MENA seemed locked in an opposite circle. The ambiguous EU approach (one Euro-Med region or cooperation between two in the ENP) created an additional tension and skepticism in the MENA, because either option was dominated by the EU and the MENA was at best co-opted into the common identity (Pace, 2006). This EU-domination undermined its legitimacy and challenged the regional policies of democracy promotion. Yet the attempt to solve this implied the co-optation of authoritarian regimes in the MENA: the paradox was evident and there could not be a “virtuous circle” between these securitization and democracy promotion.

This will be studied in the next section. The artificial regionalization and the underlying dynamics of contagion as a form of democracy promotion have thus far not succeeded in either the US or the EU approach. Despite their specificities, both had in common the fact that they rather responded to the promoters’ (and not the MENA) reality, including EU reflexivity and socialization. We now turn to study the third objective of democracy promotion policies, which were to go hand in hand with security and economic interests.

4. Addressing security and economic interests within “partnership”

A third important objective of US and EU democracy promotion was to foster security and economic interests; this implied complex trade-offs and a broader question i.e. could this actually happen? Democracy promotion in the Middle East and North Africa region has not only been ideological and normative as discussed above; it has also been driven by interests. In the logic of a “virtuous circle” and the premises of Modernization and the Democratic Peace, it was assumed that it all could lead or be related to democratization. These security and economic interests were better framed in a regional approach because the Islamist terrorist threat was clearly transnational, and because economic growth should rely on open, free trade according to liberal principles.

But security and economic factors would at times take over the agenda and when they were in conflict with democracy promotion, downgrade this to mere rhetoric. Though it is normal for foreign policy to try to conciliate diverse interests, the inconsistency was clearer in the Western relations with the MENA than in other regions. Potentially this implied vicious (instead of virtuous) dynamics as, in order to downplay the promoters' image of domination and intervention, democracy promotion became a policy of "partnership" with autocratic regimes.

4.1. An exceptionally "soft" democracy promotion, based on spill-over and securitization

The MENA case has raised the harshest criticisms for double standards and hidden agendas (L. Anderson, 2001; Schlumberger, 2000), discrediting the task of democracy promotion as much as the actors, and maintaining a sort of "exceptional" treatment (Bellin, 2008; Carothers, 2008b; Ottaway, Brown, Hamzawy, Sadjadpour, & Salem, 2008). For example, in his analysis of policy papers informing USAID action, Carothers (1997, pp. 26-27) observed there was a particular focus on interests in the MENA case, and that USAID was even ready to use special methods of assessment for the status of democracy there, instead of a standard list of component institutions. Similarly, the European Union fostered the Agadir Agreement signed by Jordan, Egypt, Tunisia and Morocco in 2001 to enhance free trade and harmonization with EU rules, which mentioned the potential of an Arab Common Market but no reference to democracy ("Agadir Agreement establishing a free trade area amongst Arab Euro-Mediterranean countries," 2004); this was different from the Cotonou and Lome agreements with ACP countries. According to Youngs (2002), EU democracy conditionality has clearly been weaker towards MENA than other regions: there was no real monitoring such as that established for the Copenhagen criteria for ECE, and no sanctions (suspension of aid, intention to use the human rights clause of bilateral agreements) such as those applied to some ACP-countries.

The MENA has thus been a sort of infamous exception in the American and the European approaches to democracy promotion. It is usual to have competing interests in foreign policy, but in this case addressing security and economic interests was misleadingly portrayed as compatible and benefiting from other

policies when there was no evidence in this regard. The BMENA and MEPI specifically targeted democracy and the EMP allowed for cooperation for democracy as a principle, but this often materialized in a diversity of projects in areas such as energy, the environment, control of weapons of mass destruction, translation and information exchange. This pragmatic, compromise-bound “problem-solving” relied on the premise that there would be spillover from these policies into political reform. In this, US and EU policies towards the MENA region were typically functionalist; yet contrary to what Karl Deutsch and neofunctionalists observed, they gave too much importance to external factors instead of *internal* regional dynamics (Calleya, 1997; K. E. Smith, 2004, pp. 17-20). Indeed, policy-makers were well aware of the little progress that existed or could be expected in practice both regarding democracy and MENA regionalization in view of some projects, concerning for example wind energy³⁸. Eventually, in the EMP the thematic labels started to replace the regional, political objectives that were mentioned in the strategies (Lesser, 2004), confirming the downscaling of explicit EU democracy promotion.

Increasingly, security became the main objective of democracy promotion policies. The American rhetoric insistently linked democracy to security, despite the contested idea that democracy could combat terrorism [see Chapters 1 and 2]. The main policies and the more meaningful budgets were not adjusted to the democracy rhetoric, including bilateral aid packages, trade agreements and military joint ventures (Wittes, 2006). As a result, democracy promotion was harmed as a credible policy in the long term.

The European Union did not use the democracy rhetoric in the fight against terrorism as freely, but clearly targeted many of the same issues as the American approach. For Bicchi, securitization actually led the EMP “policy outburst” of the mid 1990s, deriving from concerns about migration and terrorism (Bicchi, 2007, pp. 130-144). Indeed, in 2005, the EMP summit could only agree on a Declaration to Combat Terrorism, which showed the shortcomings of the EMP, the salience of security and by default the demise of democracy promotion as a goal. According to

³⁸ In a research project with Notre Europe and Tunisian civil servants [October 2004], I participated in a discussion about a EU-Tunisia project on wind energy, and participants agreed to leave out the topic of democracy promotion though in theory it had to be included.

Gillespie (2003), cultural cooperation existed in the third basket, but there was a trend to de-politicize civil society requests.

This allowed co-existence with autocratic regimes that theoretically consented to reform, while promoters cashed in benefits in mainly three areas. First, economic advantage derived from open trade and safe energy supplies; second, security cooperation both to fight against terrorism and to scale down the Israeli-Arab confrontation; third, migration control in Europe. These issues were brought to the table as priorities and allowed the “partners” to bargain on democracy promotion with governments and in the Euro-Med Parliamentary Assembly. In the latter, the situation was discouraging for many European Parliamentarians and for some reform-minded MENA representatives³⁹ because they had little power on the “hard issues” and could not move democracy up the agenda.

4.2. “Partnership” undermines credibility

American and European initiatives were framed as “partnership” to establish cooperation on equal terms and more specifically to rid democracy promotion of the shadow of Western interventionism. However, the framework was not truly reciprocal: it has been established that both for the MEPI and for the EMP (especially in its first years), all policy input and decision-making came from the promoter and not from the MENA countries (Dunne, 2005; Youngs, 2002). European Union documents built up the rhetoric of partnership (Euro-Mediterranean Study Commission, 2004), sometimes to the extent of unimaginable EU-MENA “exchanges regarding electoral practices” (Euromed, 2005)⁴⁰.

In fact, partnership became a source of tension and a practical problem for democracy promotion. Though partnership safeguarded the sovereignty of the target country and took some emphasis off the Western predominance, in practice it translated in cooperation with laggard incumbent regimes. This was different from former European experiences of engagement with Eastern and Southern Europe; the post-Cold War era had led to an enthusiastic rhetoric and ambitious projects that were not upheld. This failure in turn undermined the prospects of democracy

³⁹ Interview with Official, DG External Policies, European Parliament, Brussels 22 June 2005.

⁴⁰ Indeed, no MENA teams have ever come to observe any European elections, while the EU and the US have significantly supported the processes in Morocco, Egypt, Bahrain, Kuwait and Palestine. The “exchange” is obviously rather unidirectional.

promotion, and there was evidence on both the promoters' side and the target country's.

On the one side, for the sake of “partnership”, Western leaders co-opted undemocratic leaders and overly praised the limited democratic progress in MENA countries [see 2005 EU-US Declaration quoted at the beginning of this chapter]. This undermined the policies' credibility and arguably the US and EU leverage on the region, because this meant that even “soft power” was very limited. George W. Bush was swift to enumerate the reforms in the region in his speeches, emphasizing the elections in Kuwait and Bahrain (G. W. Bush, 2003a). By contrast, there was a crying absence of criticism regarding the most reluctant regimes. A 2008 example was Secretary of State Rice's article “New American Realism”, that spoke of democracy promotion and the MENA region but conveniently ignored Saudi Arabia and Egypt (Rice, 2008). European leaders have shown similar support for MENA “partners”; Tunisia is one of the clearest cases. For example, Spanish President Zapatero praised “the Tunisian path to democracy” in a visit in 2004 (Soravilla Fernández, 2006) and French President Sarkozy did the same during his visit in 2007⁴¹. This kind of discourse during official visits illustrates that European leaders have been themselves co-opted into acknowledging democratization for the sake of “partnership” [another, less harmful option could be not to make *any* declarations on this subject]. Indeed, throughout the post-Cold War period, Tunisia has continued to lack freedom of expression, and President Ben Ali's repressive state-structure is (in)famous. As an example, if one compares Freedom House's annual reports, in 1994-5 Tunisia scored 6 in Political Rights and 5 in Civil Liberties (7 being the worst), and for 2008 the scores were 7 and 5 respectively⁴².

On the other side, the MENA regimes also bargained on “partnership” according to their own interests and resisted democratization (as if this were not an interest for the country). In practice, when the US and the EU intended to finance civil society (mainly NGOs) without state authorization (MEPI and the EIDHR both allowed for direct non-governmental applications), this was prevented by the regimes in power. For instance, Syria blocked international access to civil society altogether, and Egypt and Tunisia enforced NGO laws that allowed them to control

⁴¹ Sarkozy declared “Tunisia is making progress in the road of democracy” [Agence France Presse, Tunisia –Sarkozy's perspective of the Mediterranean (Tunisie –La Méditerranée vue par Sarkozy), 11 July 2007].

⁴² Source: *Freedom in the World*, Freedom House, years 1994-5 and 2008.

potential aid beneficiaries. This meant that democracy promotion funds went to the governments, which in turn controlled and limited reform to protect their own position (Bellin, 2008; Ottaway et al., 2008).

This also had important consequences to undermine democracy promotion, because it seemed merely rhetorical. One option was that the authoritarian regimes were clear “partners” in democracy promotion, the enterprise lost credibility for more honest reformers and the people in the countries. Another option was to (implicit or explicitly) oppose democracy promotion at large, because it was a policy of Western intervention and aggression: there could be no trust and “partnership” should be refused. This is based on an ideological argument that Halliday termed “regional narcissism” of the MENA, which authoritarian leaders have used to defend their legitimacy. According to this, the West would be “endemically hostile to peoples in the region” and the world can’t seize, and it should simply respect, MENA “uniqueness” (Halliday, 2005, pp. 10, 194). The European Union found itself in a more sensitive position to this argument because of its Member States’ colonial past, and EU policies have sought to handle these relations with care. Ottaway and Hamzawy think that the post-Cold War American imperialism and the 2003 Iraq intervention now put the US and the EU on a similar level as “aggressors” (Ottaway & Hamzawy, 2004). This is an inadequate generalization, but most importantly the real challenge is that this ideology sustains undemocratic legitimacy in the region and makes the objective of “partnership” backfire in democracy promotion policies.

Conclusion

Democracy promotion in the MENA region illustrated the evolving international roles of the United States and the European Union and the existence of “universalisms” in this regard. This was the case even if their policies do not seem to have succeeded: throughout the post-Cold War period, internal regionalization did not develop, and the MENA continues to be dominated by autocracy. Regarding transatlantic relations, the joint declarations did not translate into common policies or a unified approach to the region. This was due to the complex role that the MENA region played for Europe compared to the overly geopolitical, Realist approach from the United States (emphasized after 9/11). It was also due to the

principles and dynamics of the two universalisms: divergent, if not opposed, democracy promotion approaches existed, even if both faced similar challenges emanating on the ground.

The chapter first introduced the main elements of the American Greater/Broader Middle East and MEPI and of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. This gave evidence of the multiple-agency in foreign policy and the way non-state actors also shaped democracy promotion policies. This case illustrated some nuances in this regard. For example, US presidential administrations (policy-cycles) required “short-term” policies and resulted in programs that may not last (e.g. MEPI), while the EU’s bureaucratic stability allowed for a “long-term” approach. The European longer-term, broader, process-oriented approach towards the MENA region materialized in policies of *socialization*, compared to American reliance on incentives and on Domino Theory. As the policies got closer to the implementation phase, the US-EU differences were blurred: many of the actors and democracy assistance programs in the field (sponsored by MEPI and MEDA-Democracy or EIDHR) were under both the US and the EU influence⁴³. Along these lines, the view that US-EU differences shouldn’t be overestimated is shared by many Western policy advisors, including most participants of a CEPS conference on “American and European approaches to democratization in the European Neighbourhood” (Emerson, 2005) and of a similar conference at Stanford in October 2004.

The chapter discussed the three main features of the regional policies. Both American and European democracy promotion in the MENA region intended to, first, overcome the view of this Arab-Muslim region as a “cultural exception” to the third wave of democracy. Second, the US and the EU artificially encouraged a region to create democratic synergies, while the MENA-internal regionalization remained weak. The EU was ambivalent, featuring a rhetoric of a “common” Euro-Med space but also a practice of *othering* the MENA as partners in the ENP. Third, the promoters made up “partnerships” for democracy with the region, but these

⁴³ Indeed, there are many similarities among, for instance, the work undertaken by the American party foundations IRI and NDI and the British Westminster Foundation. In the field, many Western organizations and the organizations they co-opt in the field depend on the same Western public funding from American and European sources. As discussed in Chapter 2-3, at this level of the democracy promotion policy-chain, the different approaches are blurred. The overall themes of contracts and grants were similar; there was little European leverage regarding the abolition of the death penalty in practice, for instance, though this had been included in the 2000 EU Common Strategy.

actually concealed unbalanced power-relations and economic and security interests; the “partnership” undermined the policies’ credibility. The chapter showed that American and European approaches had similar objectives, though for the EU they were more complex. Both devoted only limited resources to these policies (though the EU devoted more, and in a broader framework), and included security-oriented or purely administrative activities (translation, training on organizational skills, etc.) as “democracy promotion”. Unlike for the case of intervention in the DRC [Chapter 4], EU hard-power means were never an option for the region.

This chapter documented the absence of meaningful transatlantic cooperation to promote democracy in the region. This happened despite policy advisers’ and academics’ arguments in favor of cooperation in the MENA; indeed, many had thought this could create new Western aims and restore transatlantic relations after the 2003 US-led intervention in Iraq (Ahlin et al., 2004; K. Campbell & Carroll, 2005; Kupchan, 2007; Lugar, 2004; Sarotte, 2005). It is not accurate to speak of a confrontation, but there was a transatlantic disconnection regarding how to approach the MENA and how to promote democracy, strengthening the argument of “rival universalisms”.

On the one hand, the US carried more weight in the region: its hegemonic position had grown stronger after the end of colonialism and since the end of the Cold War (Satloff, 1997). US leadership was unquestionable, yet democracy promotion was low on the agenda and policies were contingent. A NATO Mediterranean Dialogue existed since 1994, but it remained marginalized in Washington. Then, in the light of the War on Terror, the US awakened this latent hegemony, intensifying its scope in the regional GMENA and MEPI initiatives. But this broad, transcontinental scope gave evidence of a geopolitical view that privileged interests and unilateralism. Importantly, the US sought European approval and association for its policies, failing to seize the complexity of Europe’s relations with the MENA and underlining the Europe’s own position.

On the other hand, for Europe the MENA was not a strategic choice but “a strategic reality” (Menotti, 2006). This chapter substantiated how Europe developed an original framework (reflexivity) towards the region, an illustration of its universalism [Chapter 2]. This approach predated US regional strategies and only got stronger in the post-Cold War period, and the contrast (if not the competition) with the American approach was evident. In the 1990s, Southern Member States

succeeded in creating a European position that was not unified from the beginning, but increasingly set up a structure inspired from the CSCE to which the EU committed a significant budget. On the basis of CFSP objectives, EU synergies made room for democracy promotion; here the Commission's hand on policy design and the European Parliament's interest on this theme were determinant. This state of affairs hinted at a consolidation of the MENA as a EU sphere of influence (Calleya, 1997, p. 172; Hollis, 1997), and substantiated the EU's role and identity as an international actor.

The MENA case illustrated the structural change of transatlantic relations, with European independent action throughout the period, and including tacit divergence from a common project to favor its own in 2003-4. Yet this did not mean "EU power" really manifested that significantly, because the EU-MENA relations did not overcome larger geopolitical dynamics or internal tensions within the region. Indeed, many Americans only discovered the EMP when the Europeans complained about their unilateral Greater Middle East and North Africa initiative in 2004.

This chapter also threw light on the challenges that both promoters faced to trigger and support democracy in the MENA, which were linked to conceptual and procedural debates. These challenges affected the definition of democracy promotion, bringing in religious and cultural considerations. They also affected the (lack of) coherence of the US and the EU approaches, which were trapped in not such a positive "partnership" with the incumbent regimes. The chapter illustrated the gap between democracy promotion as an element in both American and European foreign policies, and as a complex practice that involves controversial political options and trade-offs.

The problems regarding the MENA's prospects for democratization stemmed from the history of the state and the structure of society, with undemocratic elites leading politics and Islamist movements (not always or clearly favorable to democratization) often providing the only alternative profile. This case gave further evidence that there are no easy links to promote democracy in a "virtuous circle". Economic Modernization (leaving behind clientelism and a economic-political elite domination) and security (in this case, the fight against terrorism) did not seem to easily match democracy promotion; instead, political compromising and trade-offs undermined US and EU policies. The chapter demonstrated that these challenges

could not be addressed as “technical”, either reforming institutions or engaging incumbents. The focus on elections (procedural democracy) also proved its potential to backfire, as the case with Hamas’s 2006 victory in Palestine. It was observed that the promoting civil society was also conveyed as an expertise, yet importing lessons from other cases did not work. Democratic activism of civil society was ambiguous: broad, popular support for democratization was missing, and the strategy of Western support for NGOs was mixed. Similarly, the US and EU strategies did not adequately relate to the religious context in the region. Despite the rhetorical objective to defend the universality of democracy (and its compatibility with Islam), democracy promotion programs failed to be effectively open and inclusive. In the MENA, “learning by doing” in democracy promotion was also evident. The promoter’s strategy was patchy and required flexibility; practitioners on the ground had to adapt to imperfect situations on the ground, which sometimes translated into a picture of stalemate.

As democracy promoters, the US and the EU disregarded the potential for a transatlantic approach in the MENA region, and grounded their separate, “rival universalisms” and independent roles. This hypothesis was explored in the policies towards a country, the DR Congo, in Chapter 4, and here it has been substantiated vis-à-vis a region, which allowed discussing additional features and nuanced pictures of the US and the EU. Now the thesis moves on to a final case of US and EU democracy promotion with the study of a global initiative, the Community of Democracies.

Chapter 6. Democracy promotion worldwide: American initiative and European reluctance in the Community of Democracies

“We will continue to work cooperatively to promote democratic governance around the world and are prepared to encourage multilateral initiatives such as the Community of Democracies.”
(Declaration EU – US Summit, Brdo 10 June 2008)

In their 2008 summit, the US and the EU adopted a Declaration where they supported the Community of Democracies as an effort to promote democracy “around the world” (EU-US, 2008). Born as an American initiative in the second half of the Clinton administration, the Community of Democracies (CD) materialized in 2000 with a Ministerial Conference and the Warsaw Declaration, where more than one hundred countries met to uphold and promote democratic values and practices. This group included some controversial “democracies” such as Tunisia or Russia, but excluded for instance China. It also included most European countries, with Poland and the Czech Republic as members of the leading Convening Group.

The Warsaw Declaration was notably shunned by France. The French Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine addressed the Conference to actually *disapprove* of the “triumphal, imposing” democracy promotion rhetoric. Vedrine later argued that he had meant to “correct the hubris of a West that should not forget its own history” and that he was not ready to give his blessing to “a holy alliance of democratic nations chosen by the Department of State alone, and on dubious grounds” (Vedrine, 2000). Rejecting this “new doctrine” was for him a way to stand up to the United States and search an alternative to “defend our own fundamental interests, French and *European*”. An American official censured this incident arguing that “107 countries came to the conference to support democracy, but only 106 really did it” (Krauze, 2000). The other Western European countries, which had adopted a low profile, considered this an unimportant anecdote.

The Community of Democracies raises important questions about the potential and shortcomings of promoting democracy at global level. First, what would “democracy” mean in content, in such a universalized setting? Second, what would the CD mean in practice, notably vis-à-vis *the* global institution of the United Nations, would it substitute it or should it? Third, what would be the reaction of the world –European, and non-European countries—to this manifestation of American hegemony?

Overall this topic has received limited attention in academia, possibly because it has not had much success despite its potential for democracy promotion. Indeed, it is significant that the Warsaw event did *not* lead to a stronger institution in the context of the post-Cold War democratic excitement. CD conferences were organized as follow-up but they had limited weight in the diplomatic agendas; to this day, the CD is very little known of policy-makers. In this thesis, it provides for a pertinent case study to analyze US and EU democracy promotion at a global level, complementing the country case of the DR Congo (Chapter 4) and the region case of the Middle East and North Africa (Chapter 5).

This case study explores the functioning and policies of the CD and American and the European approaches in it, as well as the challenges of democracy promotion at this global, system-level. Since the Transatlantic alliance and NATO have themselves often been referred to as a “community of democracies” (Kupchan, 1996; Risse-Kappen, 1995, p. 15), the chapter also assesses how the CD resonated with US-EU cooperation and/or confrontation. The chapter is structured as follows. Section 1 introduces the Community of Democracies, initiated by the US and triggering ambivalent European positions. Sections 2, 3 and 4 consider the three main goals that democracy promoters pursued with this initiative: to universalize and de-Westernize their policies, to seek agreement on a definition of democracy and its promotion, and to somehow institutionalize democracy promotion in the world. These objectives belonged to this initiative to promote democracy at the global level, and involved important shortcomings and challenges in practice. In its conclusions, the chapter unravels what this meant for American and European democracy promotion approaches, the transatlantic relationship, and underlines the controversies of such worldwide policies.

1. The American initiative of the Community of Democracies: development and European ambivalence

The Community of Democracies is an ongoing international initiative to promote democracy at a global level, building on the momentum created after the Cold War and emanating from American policy-making circles. Along the same lines, there have been other calls to create a *League of democracies* or a *Concert of democracies* during the last decade, and these multilateral initiatives resembled the Community of Democracies very much (Ikenberry & Slaughter, 2006; Kagan, 2008; The Economist, 2007).

The *Concert* originated in Democratic circles, with such supporters as Daalder, Ikenberry, Lindberg and Slaughter. The *League* was defended by the Republican candidate John McCain in the 2007-8 presidential campaign; it received notable attention in the media and in Washington circles, and support from Kagan. McCain strongly criticized the limits of the United Nations and called for enhanced cooperation within a League (McCain, 2007). In this conservative line, a February 2009 paper from The Heritage Foundation proposed a creation of a *Global Freedom Coalition* and the practical abandonment of the UN (Carafano & Brands, 2009). The Democratic plans also responded, to a certain extent, to the US frustration with the United Nations, but their critiques have been more careful. They mostly see the need for an alternative framework where democracies can agree to act when the UN will (or can) not, but the liberal universalism underpinning this is wider: “[The Concert would be] the institutional embodiment and ratification of the democratic peace” (Ikenberry & Slaughter, 2006, p. 25).

These plans usually mix two themes: to create an exclusive (democracies-only) multilateral framework to manage international security, and to promote democracy worldwide, which leads to dilemmas about inclusion (the ideal is large-N and eventually the whole world) and about conditionality (carrot, sticks and rewards). These multiple themes and other conceptual and pragmatic challenges also existed in the CD, which is analyzed in detail in this section. First I assess the ministerial conferences, the promoters in the Convening Group and the main

documents. I then move on to discuss the American and the European positions in it.

1.1. Ministerial Conferences, a Convening Group, American management bodies, and declaratory documents

The CD has mainly consisted of a series of Ministerial Conferences and has lacked a permanent structure. In between the conferences, and especially during the months before conferences take place, there was active preparation from diplomatic and also from non-governmental forums. The main actors in the CD have been a series of countries in a “Convening Group”, they had the initiative and also had decision-making power, notably regarding the invitation process, i.e. deciding which countries could be included in the gatherings of the Community of Democracies. It must be noticed that the country hosting the conference on each occasion also had significant leeway, both regarding final invitations and the drafting of documents.

Table 9 summarizes the main information about the four Conferences (2000-2008), the countries in the Convening Group, the documents adopted, and the main actions/events in the institution from one Conference to the next, in chronological order.

For the first conference, the United States and Poland decided initially which countries to invite to co-convene the Warsaw Conference; subsequently the Convening Group decided on the new members they added by consensus but arguably without strict criteria: they went on to be seven, ten, and sixteen (2007) countries in the Convening Group. The group composition illustrates the objective of an “internationalized” and “de-Westernized” initiative: though the US was the clear leader, it emphasized multilateralism and especially brought in non-Western democracies. The Convening Group decided on the invitation process for the conferences and was dominated by bargaining between conference organizers, fund providers for specific initiatives (e.g. an Indian project for micro-credit, a Hungarian research center) and the main driving force of the United States.

Table 9. Community of Democracies Ministerial Conferences –chronology, membership of Convening Group, Documents adopted

Venue (number of countries)	Date	Convening Group	Document(s) adopted
Warsaw (107)	June 2000	Czech Rep, Chile, India, the Republic of Korea, Mali, Poland and the United States	<i>Declaration: Toward a Community of Democracies</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Council for a Community of Democracies continues in charge of management → creation of Task Force for research → creation of the Democracy Coalition Project 			
Seoul (105)	November 2002	governments above + Portugal, South Africa, Mexico	<i>Plan of Action: Democracy: Investing for Peace and Prosperity</i> <i>Statement on Terrorism</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Global strategy for Democracy Education, 2003 (project led by CCD) → Democracy Coalition Project + Freedom House issue assessment /recommendations on invitations → first convening of the United Nations Democracy Caucus, 2004 (Chilean chairmanship) → Non-governmental Process regional roundtables established 			
Santiago de Chile (122)	April 2005	shifting ¹	<i>Commitment: cooperating for democracy</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Democracy Fund in place → International Advisory Committee → International Steering Committee of the Non-governmental Process 			
Bamako (147)	November 2007	(16 as of 2006) governments above + the Philippines, Mongolia, Morocco, El Salvador, Cape Verde, Italy)	<i>Consensus on Democracy, development and poverty reduction</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Permanent secretariat created in Warsaw 			

Source: primary documents from the conferences and the diverse bodies of the CD (CCD, 2006a, 2006b; Community of Democracies Ministerial Conference, 2000, 2002a, 2005, 2007; Convening Group, 2003).

¹ During these years, Italy and Romania played important roles leading some initiatives, and Peru was among the conveners for some of the UN Democracy Caucus activities. Yet, the membership of the Convening Group (from 10 to 16) was made official only in 2006.

It is widely acknowledged that US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright played a key role organizing the first meeting of the Community of Democracies in Warsaw (2000), together with the Polish foreign minister Bronislaw Geremek¹. Poland and the Czech Republic (EU candidate countries at the time) were among the most involved in the CD initiative. The Council for a Community of Democracies (CCD) developed and monitored the agenda. Subsequently, a *Task Force* was created to further research on the possibilities of global democracy promotion. This task force was associated with the Council on Foreign Relations, which regularly informs American foreign policy. Other informal settings had been foreseen, such as “a cadre of trained experts to assist countries facing a threat to democracy”, but were never really in place (Community of Democracies Ministerial Conference, 2002a).

Instead, CD-specific bodies would be constituted later, including the *Council for a Community of Democracies*, the *Democracy Coalition Project*, the *International Advisory Committee*, and the *Non-governmental Process* (Halperin & Bagley, 2002). A permanent Secretariat in Warsaw was foreseen for 2009. This series of “management” bodies was important for two reasons. First, it gave evidence of the technical point of view of this global democracy promotion project; they claimed to achieve the common, public good of democracy. Second, many others perceived these activities as the clear “American hand” on the CD, because they were all based in Washington, D.C., mostly using American (public and private) funds and personnel. This American leadership happened to a certain extent by default because that is where the initiative stemmed², and this was the case even if these bodies were proactively open and inclusive, and even if this angered their directors³.

The *Council for a Community of Democracies* has a long history as a platform or group of individuals working on democracy initiatives, including the

¹ The project counted many other supporters within the Democratic party, such as Anthony Lake (Assistant to Clinton for National Security policy), and also benefited from George Soros’s support. In Poland, as in the rest of Eastern and Central Europe, the context of “one decade after the Berlin Wall fall” was symbolic.

² For example, the Malian embassy in Washington D.C. worked with the CCD, the DCP and the IAC to organize the 2007 conference. The only time the US influence was maybe less important was around the 2004 Santiago conference, when the Chilean organization Participa played an important role in the non-governmental process.

³ The DCP Executive Director strongly disagreed with my argument that these bodies did show the “American hand” over the CD [email exchange with DCP, 10 January 2008].

Association to Unite the Democracies of the early 1990s and a network of CCDs at different cities⁴. The CCD connects non-governmental and governmental action; it is an independent body mainly working with grants from foundations, but it has actually contributed to the institutionalization of the CD with the preparation of the Conferences and the implementation of some decisions. This way, on the one hand it was able to support dissidents in non-democratic countries, and coordinate CD non-governmental action internationally i.e. the Non-governmental Process. On the other it helped diplomats plan the Conferences, and briefed the UN Democracy Caucus meetings. In the period 2000-2005, the CCD funding amounted to USD 1,15 million, 62% came from foundations donations [CCD own sources].

The *Democracy Coalition Project* begun in June 2001 as an NGO funded with a grant from the Open Society Institute, and has contributed to the CD with research and advocacy, roughly as a think tank. On the one hand it undertook independent research projects on democracy, notably a Report/Assessment on whether and how countries were promoting democracy (Herman & Piccone, 2002). On the other hand, it sought to influence CD action, for instance shaming CD members for failing to side with the Democracy Caucus at the United Nations as they had agreed. The DCP was especially important in enhancing CD visibility and support, coordinating some activities and overall participating in a wide network of think tanks, NGOs and other organizations such as the Club de Madrid⁵. This illustrated the connections between actors (networks of activists) and the multiple influences of non-state actors in democracy promotion policy-making [Chapter 3]. The DCP was independent and also supported the CD goals with assessments and academic study, insisting on the “technical” aspects of

⁴ The Association to Unite the Democracies was established in 1992 and later became the 21st Century Foundation. In 1989, advocacy/policy support groups called “CCD” existed in London, Seattle, Paris, Stockholm, Tokyo, Cote d’Ivoire, Sydney... but without a common goal. The individuals include (former) officials from the Foreign Service, such as Mark Palmer and Bob La Gamma, with long careers in democracy-related activities. For instance Palmer was one of the authors of Ronald Reagan’s famous Westminster speech in 1982. This illustrates the complexity of non-state actors (networks of civil society activists, at times members of government or bureaucracies) in democracy promotion.

⁵ Founded in October 2001, the Club de Madrid gathers former heads of state and government from democratic countries. Representatives of the Club de Madrid have participated at CD Conferences independently, too: a 9-member delegation attended the Santiago CD and presented the Madrid Agenda document to the meeting, former French Prime Minister Lionel Jospin gave a speech at the Bamako CD. In addition, the DCP has partnerships with, among others, the Madrid-based think tank FRIDE, and key NGOs in the democracy promotion arena as Freedom House and the NED-sponsored World Movement for Democracy.

democracy promotion; however, it was also affected by domestic politics [Chapter 2]. Though not openly, the DCP sympathized with Democratic approaches, opposing and seeking to influence some Republican policies during the Bush administration⁶.

The DCP also supported and gave wider clout to the International Advisory Committee (IAC) work in 2006-7. The IAC was a group of non-partisan, prestigious personalities who sought to depoliticize the CD invitation process, advising the Convening Group on the countries that should be invited. This Committee and the DCP (which acted as Secretariat and hosted the research project) elaborated their own assessment for the invitations to Bamako 2007⁷.

In addition, the CCD and the DCP also fostered and supported the *Non-governmental Process of the Community of Democracies*. The Process was a clear illustration of the transnational networks of activists that have come to define contemporary democracy promotion [Chapter 3], as it was meant to counterbalance the ministerial conferences with civil society participation. This movement became increasingly coordinated thanks to an International Steering Committee, and it issued advisory documents in parallel with ministerial events. Here American and some European party foundations became dominant in agenda-setting and organization, though there was an important effort to include civil society activists from all regions⁸. The Non-governmental Process had a double role: to watch and influence public policy and to enhance bottom-up democracy. For example, they prepared a *Handbook for Diplomats* that gave practical ideas on how to engage with grassroots organizations, and they sought to finance NGOs and, somewhat controversially, political parties on the ground (Barrios, 2007, pp. 4-5).

The CD is characterized by these bodies, but also (more officially) by the documents it has adopted. As they were the result of compromise and consensus, and they have been declaratory, they did not contribute to raise the CD's

⁶ The DCP (with Madeleine Albright's leadership and Soros-funds) was, for some critics, the cradle for the Democrats affiliated to the Community of Democracies initiative. Among them, executive directors Morton Halperin and Ted Piccone had worked as officials during the Clinton administration.

⁷ Internal Methodology note of the Secretariat of the IAC available at http://www.demcoalition.org/pdf/II_Methodology_note.pdf

⁸ In a first stage, the Open Society Institute and Participa did not underline the role of party foundations, but these seemed very important in Bamako. Notably, European participants were co-opted this way (Italian, Dutch, UK party foundations were represented).

international profile or grant it teeth. Yet these documents offer interesting insights on how democracy promotion worked at this level. In 2000, participant states issued a Declaration that constituted the founding document of the CD and intended to become a reference to democracy promotion worldwide. The subsequent documents were shaped by the conference hosts or the general international atmosphere. Thus, in the light of 9/11 and the subsequent War on Terror, the Seoul Conference (2002) brought up the link between democracy and peace with a Statement on Terrorism. This Statement acknowledged that “terrorism is a threat to democratic societies” and also that “democratic principles and institutions [...] are crucial elements in endeavors to combat terrorism” (Community of Democracies Ministerial Conference, 2002b), replicating the paradigm of a “virtuous circle” underpinning democracy promotion.

Though documents adopted by the CD were declaratory (Plan of action, Commitment, Consensus), the wording and clauses were carefully debated and agreed upon. For example, when debating the Bamako Consensus in the formal session, the initial draft said that the CD’s objective was “to *protect* democracy” (Article 2). However, some states opposed thinking this could lead to intervention in the name of democracy. This was changed to the more politically correct “to *support* democracy” in the final document, thereby thwarting any potential for intervention legitimized under CD principles.

1.2. Disconnection in the CD: American initiative, European division and reluctance

American leadership in and management of the initiative were clear from the events and structures discussed above, but the evidence of American-European competition in the Community of Democracies was not conclusive. On the one hand, Europe was divided and Eastern European countries were overall supportive. On the other, more than opposition, there was a reluctance to support the initiative in some Western European states; they were unenthusiastic about the initiative when not outright critical. The context of EU enlargement adds some nuance here, as Western MS were investing heavily in democracy promotion in Eastern Europe (future MS). With the CD, Eastern European countries had a

chance to become democracy promoters instead of targets, and increase their international clout by allying with the US.

It is an important observation that Europe failed to build a unified role under the European Union regarding the Community of Democracies; there was no common reaction or coordination of positions whatsoever. According to an EU official, this item never even made it to the Council's agenda, and there are no records of it in the European Parliament⁹. At Bamako, another EU official admitted that "the Conference was solely a Member State issue", though a discreet representation of the Commission Delegation in Mali attended one of the sessions¹⁰. The Commission Delegation in the field thus kept track of the event, but it could not channel policy-advice or initiative up to Brussels institutions. This lack of unity and of interest could seem paradoxical in the hypothesis of an enhanced role for the EU as international democracy promoter. However, the EU reluctance may have derived from the CD being an American-led initiative with low profile that was seemingly "dividing" Europe –the passivity was possibly an active strategy if not repositioning the EU, at least clearly not positioning it as an unconditional follower of US democracy promotion.

The content of the policies themselves was not the reason for this lack of cooperation. For example, one important aspect of the CD has been its support for the individuals, i.e. political activists (in the opposition), compared to fostering structural, institutional changes. As I argued in Chapter 1, the support of dissidents has sometimes been framed as an "American" method of democracy promotion, but this can't be considered an exclusivity. Indeed, Europeans have often supported these initiatives (sometimes indirectly, through funding) and Polish, Czech and traditionally British and Nordic states' policies have all supported political dissidents. But in any case this was an important aspect in this global initiative, illustrating usual dynamics of democracy promotion: many dissidents attended the CD as part of the Non-Governmental Process. Some individuals were invited even though, or precisely because, their country had not been invited e.g. from Venezuela and Myanmar (in Bamako 2007). Other dissidents were also invited, even if they came from countries that actually had official representation

⁹ Email exchange with official from the Council, 20 September 2007.

¹⁰ Interview with political advisor, Delegation of the European Commission [Bamako, 16 November 2007].

at the CD, such as Egypt and the Philippines. American non-governmental institutions (e.g. Freedom House) invited these individuals. They sometimes met in private with American officials, including under-Secretary of State Paula Dobriansky in Chile in 2005 (Committee on International Relations, 2005).

If it was not the policies content, it seems that the method of “fake multilateralism” explained Western European capitals’ reluctance during these years. Some European officials plainly stated “the CD is no multilateral enterprise, just an American project”¹¹. Despite American impetus, the fact is that the CD conferences remained “low profile” events, often attended by low-ranking officials in the foreign ministries. The Warsaw conference was by far the best attended one¹². By Santiago, only one foreign minister from Western Europe attended¹³, though the foreign ministers of Hungary, Ukraine and Croatia attended. By contrast, foreign ministers from all South America and from Canada, Mexico usually attended, and either Deputy Secretaries or the Secretary of State represented the US.

On the US side, the CD resonated with the American, bipartisan mission. As presidential candidate John McCain declared in his defence of the idea of a League of Democracies:

“When our nation was founded over two hundred years ago, we were the world’s only democratic republic. [...] We were right to struggle for democracy then, and we are right to do so now. The vision [...] is not a Republican vision, not a Democratic vision, it is an American vision. (McCain, 2007)

But on the Western European side this did not really sound “multilateral”, so transatlantic cooperation was elusive. This reticence was however ambiguous, and in many occasions the rhetoric of transatlantic democracy promotion, including for global initiatives, kept coming up as if the Community of Democracies did not exist (Timothy Garton Ash, 2007; Miliband, 2008; Rasmussen, 2008). For

¹¹ A Dutch official maintained that this spirit was generalized in European foreign ministries [interview Bamako, 15 November].

¹² According to Hubert Vedrine (French foreign minister at the time), Geremek and Albright ardently invited high representations (i.e. foreign ministers) and personally asked him to attend.

¹³ Moratinos, from Spain; yet this was exceptional and probably due to the links between Spain and Latin America, since he did not attend the Bamako conference in 2007.

instance, in a speech that introduced the EU as a reinforced power and praised transatlantic cooperation (especially NATO), the Danish Prime Minister called for

“a strengthened transatlantic partnership [that] should form the nucleus of an alliance of democracies”, “a global alliance [that] would be more powerful than the sum of its participants” (Rasmussen, 2008).

Clearly this completely ignored the CD, but it seemed it sought to re-invent it: would it this time be framed as an idea coming from Europe, an alternative universalism?

In the American bodies of the CD, officials had been aware that the Western European lack of interest was problematic. The Council for a Community of Democracies acknowledged:

“It is vital that Western Europe and the institutions of Europe and Asia become more deeply involved. So far Western European countries and EU institutions are much less active in the Community of Democracies than the US and some Eastern and Central European countries.” (CCD, 2006b)

They then sought to co-opt European countries, allocating part of its budget exclusively to “building a European network” (CCD, 2006b). As an example of this policy, Charles Heck was dispatched to a number of European capitals in July 2003 and October 2004 to gather support for the CD. As North-American Director of the Trilateral Commission, Heck’s diplomatic tour was an important symbol of the CD for cooperative transatlantic relations. This policy implied that *both* United States and European support were needed as promoters for a multilateral CD to work.

2. Globalizing and de-Westernizing democracy promotion

Promoting democracy at the world level implied one important first objective: to globalize but also to “de-Westernize” this quest. This meant that, in the post-Cold War period, *universal* democracy had to be inclusive, but also not “owned” and spread by the West [Chapter 1]. The premise of democratic universalism meant that the CD could target all countries or most (“large-N”). Ownership by non-Western countries would also increase the legitimacy of international democracy

promotion. Thus the CD sought to dilute the Western “core” in this initiative¹⁴. This was also interpreted as an opportunity for countries as Japan and Australia to move closer to the Atlantic alliance (The Economist, 2007). Similarly, for Benner (2007), the UN Democracy Caucus that was associated with the CD was a chance to move away from “the atmosphere of ‘the West vs. the rest’ that currently poisons the United Nations”. The CD thus sought to raise its international profile with policies of broad inclusion and of multilateralism (regional organizations and the UN).

2.1. Inclusion to the largest-N and non-Western conference venues

The objective of globalization and “de-Westernization” of the Community of Democracies was pursued with two policies. First, the CD aimed to include the largest number of states from the world possible. Second, it sought to appoint non-Western countries for the conference venues, and to open space for their leadership and decision-making in the Convening Group¹⁵.

Table 10. Non-Western conference venues and large-N inclusion in the Community of Democracies

Ministerial Conference venue	Number of states represented
Warsaw	107
Seoul	105
Santiago	122
Bamako	147

As the Table above shows, the total number of countries attending each conference rose for each Ministerial Conference, though obviously they were not all democratic. For Santiago de Chile this included many of the island states in the Caribbean, and for Bamako (Mali) many African states that until then had not attended CD meetings (precisely because of low democratic standards).

¹⁴ At the beginning the participation of Western Europe was taken for granted and the real driver was to include countries from the rest of the world. Nevertheless, as discussed above, the CD later included some lobbying in Western Europe, so the “de-Westernization” was relative.

¹⁵ Membership in the Convening Group also tried to be representative of all continents, see Table 10.

The logic behind this large-N inclusion of the CD was to increase its clout by becoming truly global, and this aspect differentiates the CD from other initiatives that arose in American policy debates. The Democratic proposals of the *Alliance* (Daalder & Lindsay, 2004) or the *Concert of Democracies* (Ikenberry & Slaughter, 2006) sought a mid-way, open to large inclusion but determined to keep non-democratic states out. The proposals coming from Republican think-tanks, as the *Global Freedom Coalition* (Carafano & Brands, 2009) or Kagan's (2008) *League of Democracies* purposely reduced the membership of the group to confirmed, Western-friendly democracies.

The CD was also different in that it increasingly focused on democracy promotion, and reminded with this policy of the method of *socialization*. However it was not easy to practice exclusion and globalization simultaneously (Carothers, 2008a; Halperin & Piccone, 2008). The policy of large-N inclusion implied important trade-offs for the Community of Democracies, as it endorsed a frail definition of "democracy" by co-opting maybe *too many* states with dubious credentials [see 3.2. below]. Yet again, once *some* dubious democracies were in, leaving others out was increasingly difficult, and the political preferences of the organizers would be exposed (for example, Mubarak's Egypt OK, but not Chavez's Venezuela).

The large-N inclusion of the CD is also undermined by the paradox of creating a "community" that actually seeks comprehensive, worldwide inclusion as a goal. Indeed, any community *implies exclusion* vis-à-vis some "other" who is not a member¹⁶. In the CD, *democracy* would be the distinctive element and commonality, even the community's *raison d'être* –but if the CD assumed global inclusion as its achievable goal, there is potentially no "other" in the long run, so no logic in calling for a "community".

Secondly, it is relevant that the Community of Democracies did not celebrate its first venue (or any other, thus far) in Washington D.C. where it was initiated. The choice of Warsaw for the co-organization was symbolic in 1998-9, when the initiative gathered momentum: not one of the classical Western European allies but at the same time Europe, and a new democracy. This gave evidence of the will

¹⁶ The literature on security communities acknowledges this element, even when there is no narrowly defined enemy against which the community organizes. For this reason, notions of security community are close to alliance (e.g. NATO), and in this sense the initiative of a Community of democracies is conceptually different.

to make post-Cold War transatlantic relations evolve, while projecting an image of newly successful, globalized democracy promotion. It was not accidental that the Community of Democracies subsequently brought its ministerial conferences to Seoul (South Korea), Santiago de Chile, and Bamako (Mali). In this global tour of democracy, the effort to downplay Western leadership and management in the process was evident.

Along the same lines, the Convening Group sought to include countries that were instances of non-Western democracies in all continents, such as India (2000), South Africa (2002), or Mongolia (2006). The CD thus earned some valid points as a “manifestation of the global agreement on democratic values” (Krauze, 2000).

This inclusion and focus on non-Western countries had other implications. First, it ceded some agenda-setting power to the host countries, who shifted the CD debates to fulfill their own perspectives and priorities. Two important examples of this were Chile’s emphasis on regional multilateralism (notably the Organization of American States) to drive democracy promotion, and Mali’s emphasis on development and poverty reduction. The documents adopted in these venues reflected these priorities (Community of Democracies Ministerial Conference, 2005, 2007). For example, Latin American participants were very active in 2005, to the extent that the Commitment adopted explicitly mentioned the “inter-American system for the protection of human rights and the inter-American Democratic Charter” as a model to replicate in other regions. Indeed, regional organizations and poverty reduction were not classical elements in American democracy promotion.

Host countries also had the last word on invitations to the conferences. For example, Mali decided to invite many African countries that were previously left out or their low democratic standards. Mali also denied entry-visas to members of a Taiwanese NGO that had participated in previous CD conferences as part of civil society¹⁷. This was a clear friendly signal to undemocratic China, but a problematic sign for the CD (Diallo, 2007). Western NGO activists and some American organizers felt deceived with these dynamics.

¹⁷ Taiwan has attempted to join the Community of Democracies formally but it has been a non-invitee in all conferences. Reports from Democracy Coalition Project have recommended to invite Taiwan since 2004, which is quite a daring, controversial position.

Another implication of shifting the focus away from the West was that this partly condemned the CD to a lower international profile, because Western leadership is often a powerful driver in the world. This way, an international ministerial conference at Washington D.C. is likely to draw more ministers and wider communication coverage than one in Bamako. In sum, these elements attempted to “de-Westernize” the CD, but it is uncertain that it benefited the CD because of some of the implications and because it was still perceived as an American project.

2.2. Multilateralism in the CD: regional organizations and the United Nations

The objective of globalization and “de-Westernization” was enhanced with the calls for an increased role for regional organizations and the incipient work undertaken within the United Nations. This policy derived from liberal circles in the CD policy-making, in contrast with the traditional opposition of American conservatives. This brought the CD closer to conventional multilateral methods, but a number of challenges arose when this was put into practice.

Regionalism as a method in global democracy promotion had already been mentioned in the Seoul Plan of Action of 2002, but it materialized in the run-up to the Santiago conference. Then, there was very active involvement of the Organization of American States (OAS), which had already offered to coordinate action by regional institutions back in 2000. The OAS held meetings and one conference to organize the CD in 2004, it circulated preparatory material, and sponsored the participation of small states such as St. Lucia, which had not attended the previous events. Notably, there were discussions for the OSCE to replicate this CD preparatory and organizational work in Europe. Other than the lack of enthusiasm in Western European capitals, this posed the problem of Russian hostility to democracy promotion activities (including electoral observation) in the OSCE, but American organizers thought that precisely this would be a way to co-opt Russia, which was participating in the CD. Finally, there was no follow up of this OSCE idea.

The role of regional organizations to safeguard and promote democracy through contagion and conditionality had been documented widely (Pevehouse,

2005). Thus, it made sense to develop democracy promotion through the OAS or any other organization, and this also constituted a way for the CD to anchor multilateralism. Nevertheless, when the CD sought to develop cooperation with other regional institutions, this brought in new difficulties regarding the potential division of tasks and duplication of forums. The African Union and ASEAN did not respond actively, and within Latin America MERCOSUR saw potential rivalry. Another main problem was the fact that the European Union was absent from such discussions, since it was considered *the* model of regional cooperation and democracy promotion. Clearly its absence thwarted this CD effort.

Multilateralism was then enhanced in the cooperation between the CD and the United Nations, but “multilateralism” means that the UN is a diplomatic forum where states negotiate, and inclusion of non-democracies is its cornerstone. This topic is of special interest in this thesis because of the post-Cold War challenges to this conception and the pro-democracy stands of Secretary Generals and documents from the General Assembly [Chapter 1]. The vision of a United Nations safeguarding non-intervention and state-sovereignty has been challenged by calls for the UN to participate in democracy promotion, eventually as an institution made up of democracies (Newman & Rich, 2004). In this sense, the UN *would become* the Community of Democracies, but Newman’s claim is that democracy was supposed to be a cornerstone of the United Nations when it was created, and that in this sense the post-Cold War period could actually allow a return to this original purpose. However this may have been the American original idea of the UN, but the post-World War II reality led to a UN of clear state sovereignty and non-intervention. These principles continue to be unchallenged, and this is why some projects such as the Concert or the League are usually opposed and alternative to the UN (Daalder & Lindsay, 2004; Kagan, 2008). By seeking to work *with* the UN (and trying to influence it), the CD tried a more conciliatory approach.

In the rhetoric, CD documents have made clear that this forum does not intend to substitute for the UN. Along these lines, the Warsaw Declaration made reference to “cooperation with international organizations” and UN Secretary General Kofi Annan himself addressed the forum on that occasion. All the subsequent documents adopted at the ministerial conferences have explicitly referred to respecting the UN. In practice, the CD sought to influence the UN and

was involved in the creation of a UN Democracy Fund and a UN Democracy Caucus. These proposals reflected American projects of cooperation among democracies within the UN, some going back to the 1980s (Convening Group, 2003; Piccone, 2005). The plans to reinforce a CD-group and CD-initiatives within the UN already appeared in the communiqué issued right after the Warsaw Conference (CCD, 2006b) and have continued throughout, but with limited success.

Regarding the Fund, the Santiago Commitment still “looked forward to the creation of the Fund” in 2003, and in a speech before the UN General Assembly on 21 September 2004, George W. Bush reiterated this wish. Eventually, the UN Democracy Fund has been established in July 2005, but difficulties in the processes of appropriation and allocation have nevertheless haunted it up until 2008¹⁸.

The UN Democracy Caucus convened for the first time in September 2004, led by the Chilean foreign minister in her capacity as chair of the CD. Until then, there had been an informal democracy caucus at the Commission of Human Rights (Democracy Coalition Project, 2002). In 2004, the Caucus formally endorsed four thematic resolutions, on torture, cooperation among religions, regional cooperation to strengthen democracy, and women’s status. However, CD members continued to prioritize regional or North-South alliances when casting their votes in the GA, as is traditional in the UN system. The thematic, cross-regional caucus on democracy made little headway against that. Thus, Western countries continued to ally regularly on democracy issues, but countries that were supposed to be CD “leaders” such as South Africa or India also kept their traditional alliances even if this meant going “against” the CD [despite the intention of CD “de-Westernization”, the caucus corresponded with traditional Western allies]. For example, the Democracy Caucus sought to make a difference in cases such as Sudan, Myanmar or Zimbabwe, but votes from the dozens of non-Western members of the CD did not automatically follow (Democracy Coalition Project, Freedom House, CDD -Ghana, & Bertelsmann Institute, 2007).

¹⁸ Information and data on current projects available from <http://www.un.org/democracyfund/>.

3. Defining democracy promotion: a consensual definition “subject to interpretation” and low standards derived from inclusion *de facto*

The second goal that the Community of Democracies pursued was to agree and establish some common *global* grounds on what democracy meant, as a basis on which to promote it. In this regard, the CD proposed a definition of democracy and sought to provide “technical” answers to the controversial questions on how to identify and “measure” democracy, disregarding the conceptual debates and inherent normativity of democracy promotion [Chapter 1]. In practice, the CD run into problems because as it included among its ranks many states with their own “democratic” characteristics, it endorsed a hollow definition. This section analyzes, first, the CD proposals of democratic assessment and the challenges this involved. It then discusses the large-N inclusion of the CD where the definition of “democracy” was watered down.

The CD struggled with two main problems. On the one hand, each country could potentially “interpret” the terms of the definition agreed upon. On the other hand, the CD introduced categories of CD members to try to respect democratic principles, and to use them as incentive or sanction: it differentiated between “full participants”, “observers” and “not-invited” countries. This was nevertheless hampered by inconsistency and politicized decisions.

3.1. Definition of democracy: different interpretations and controversial methods

Academic definitions of democracy have tended to focus on the procedures and achieved significant consensus on the essential elements (Schmitter & Karl, 1991). By contrast, democracy promotion initiatives, and the CD among them, adopt such definitions but have enormous difficulty to apply them: to trigger reform, to make states and elites comply, and to make sure that the implementation is not in disagreement with other basic elements (human rights, rule of law, development, security). The CD upheld a definition of democracy that allowed different countries to focus on different things, and created its own assessments and an

Advisory Committee to establish this consensus. But this also involved some problems.

In the Warsaw Declaration and the Seoul Plan of Action, the CD proposed a definition of democracy that all signatories could agree upon, as follows (Community of Democracies Ministerial Conference, 2000, 2002a).

Box 9. Definition of democracy promotion according to the CD

The essential elements of representative democracy in all its forms are:

- respect for *human rights* – civil, political, economic, social and cultural – including freedom of expression, freedom of the press, and freedom of religion and conscience;
- access to and free exercise of power in accordance with the *rule of law*;
- the holding of periodic free and fair *elections* based on secret balloting and universal suffrage monitored by independent election authorities;
- freedom of association including the right to form independent *political parties*;
- *separation of powers*, especially an independent judiciary;
- constitutional subordination of all state institutions, including the military, to the legally-constituted *civilian authority*.

In theory the principles in this definition are consensual, and the CD insists that this does not lead to any specific model. In this sense, there was no distinction between a European and an American view of democracy, though this could have been a forum to defend, for example, the European position on the abolition of the death penalty (a theme usually put forward in United Nations forums).

In practice however, the definition and its accompanying list of nineteen “principles and practices” could lead to diverse interpretations and emphasis. Europeans emphasized the need to always speak of “democracy and human rights” together; the French delegation at Bamako insisted on this wording for the final documents. But even “human rights” could have different interpretations. Indeed, R. J. Vincent (1986) identified different traditions that gave priority to civil, individual rights instead of socio-economic, collective rights. Though he framed his vision along the Cold War lines of West-East, he also observed a North-South divide that continues to be valid in contemporary IR.

Along these lines, the example of Mali’s defense of socio-economic rights was symptomatic. The Bamako Consensus underlines the links between democracy and development, establishing that democracy is “an essential means to

reduce poverty and support equitable and sustainable development” –notice democracy becomes a *means* rather than as a goal on its own. This document reminded CD members of their commitments regarding the UN Millennium Declaration, Development Goals, Johannesburg and Monterrey documents (Community of Democracies Ministerial Conference, 2007). During the Conference, the discussion included specific references to Amartya Sen’s work on “Development as Freedom” to support some clauses of the document, illustrating how some research influenced policy-making [cf. Chapters 1 and 3]. Indeed, Mali has had free elections since the early 1990s and there is ample freedom of expression, but it still ranks 175 out of 177 in the Human Development Index and last among the 102 countries included in the Human Poverty Index¹⁹.

This way, the CD served as a forum where states could pursue a diversity of agendas, and democracy-issues were understood very broadly and, in view of some Americans, not clearly prioritized²⁰. In another example from the Bamako conference, Brazil made some remarks on how the West was posing problems at other international forums, such as the World Trade Organization. Clause 64 on “open, rule based and non discriminatory trade...[and] conclusion of the WTO Doha Development Round” was then included in the Consensus (Community of Democracies Ministerial Conference, 2007). The celebration of the conference in Mali was itself “politicized”, as Mali-US relations had depended on the final concession of the US-funded Millennium Challenge Compact, worth USD 460.8 million (Barrios, 2007). As usual, many other diplomatic interests coexisted with democracy promotion, and the CD must be understood in this context –here at global level.

The objective of “defining democracy” was intrinsically connected to how to assess democracy and then include only “democratic” countries in CD conferences. The organizers (host countries but mainly the CDD and the DCP) tried to apply the definition from the documents to the selection process. However, this entered in conflict with the other objective of large-N inclusion, and in general involved methodological problems. In turn, this undermined CD credibility.

¹⁹ Source: UNDP 2004 http://hdrstats.undp.org/countries/country_fact_sheets/cty_fs_MLI.html.

²⁰ Some of the American organizers had ambiguous feelings about this: they understood the importance of this flexibility and that this rendered “ownership” to non-Western countries, but their own priority was to work on civil and political rights. Interview with participant from Non-governmental process, Bamako 15 November 2007.

This also posed important problems in some circles in the United States, notably in Congress. In a hearing at a US Committee, Congressman Lantos expressed his concern about the CD “lightly giving the label of democracy” (Committee on International Relations, 2005, pp. 32-35). Under-Secretary of State Dobriansky then shared the diplomatic backstage feeling that:

“The selection process need[ed] to be modified. A recommendation that has been specifically made is to set up an independent body that would be comprised of NGOs and also by former leaders. They would make determinations based on, in fact, the Freedom House ranking structure. We do use their ratings at this time but the Convening Group makes the decisions” (Committee on International Relations, 2005, pp. 30-35)

This comment gives evidence of a double approach to defining democracy at the CD: on the one hand the supposedly technical, neutral definition from Freedom House, on the other hand the decisions of the Convening Group that seemed necessarily politicized and that led to the controversial inclusions of Russia, Venezuela, Morocco, Turkey and others.

By 2006, such an independent assessment body was created, the International Advisory Committee (IAC). It was composed of 13 personalities, emphasizing the “expertise” in democracy promotion [cf. Chapter 1]²¹. The CD sought to counterbalance this sort of “elite” judgments with civil society endorsement, i.e. opinions from the International Steering Committee of the Non-governmental Process on the IAC’s work (2007)²². The IAC based its analysis on a working group based in the DCP. They developed a methodology that considered hard data from Freedom House’s *Freedom in the World* surveys [cf. Chapter 3], and from a report coming from Europe that had increasingly gained prestige in the field, the *Bertelsmann Index* (itself partly based on World Bank data). In case of “middle democracy rankings”, the IAC made case studies (up to 35 in 2006) (Democracy Coalition Project, 2007).

²¹ The 13 members of the International Advisory Committee for the Community of Democracies Invitations Process had profiles combining political experience and expertise/participation in democracy promotion: Genaro Arriagada (Chile), E. Gyimah Boadi (Ghana), Cêsar Gaviria (Colombia), Morton Halperin (United States), Rima Khalaf Hunaidi (Jordan), Asma Jahangir (Pakistan), Josef Janning (Germany), Hong-koo Lee (Republic of Korea), António Mascarenhas Monteiro (Cape Verde), Nadezhda Mihailova (Bulgaria), Mark Palmer (United States), Sonia Picado (Costa Rica), and Ghassan Salamé (Lebanon). Wim Kok (the Netherlands) served as an advisory member; Ambassador Martin Palouš (Czech Republic) was an observer.

²² The Process however lacked means to effectively check the IAC’s work, as its own representativity of “true” civil society was also questioned.

However, democracy measurement methodologies are unavoidably subject to criticism as they rely on sometimes opaque sources and what seems arbitrary assessment, compared to ideal criteria established in academic definitions (Munck & Verkuilen, 2002). In this case, the IAC tasked specifically Freedom House with the expert review of Arab-Muslim countries, but critics denounced that this could have been done by “non-Americans”. Indeed, Freedom House has at times been accused of not providing enough information on sources, and even having a bias towards some regions (Latin America) compared to others (Foweraker & Krznaric, 2000). In any case, despite the careful work done at these institutions, non-Western countries criticized that this remained a Western-centric and Western-dominated method. Moreover, they resisted these judgments in the diplomatic realm, i.e. by keeping the Convening Group’s and host country’s prerogatives on the invitation process.

Ultimately, the problem with this attempt to invest the CD with a technical, professional input was that the states’ Convening Group made the decisions it judged *politically* best on the occasion. This concerned both the United States and non-Western countries. For example, the IAC recommended exclusion in the case of Iraq, and “observer” status for Afghanistan, but both were accepted as full members of the CD at the Bamako conference as a result of American pressure²³. Mali, the host country, in turn invited African countries such as Cameroon, Guinea Bissau, Rwanda and Uganda (as observers), despite their dubious democratic status and the fact that the IAC had advised against it. In sum, despite many efforts the CD’s definition of democracy was in practice far from consensual, and the category of “observer” was also plagued by inconsistencies- this is discussed next.

3.2. “Democracies” in the Community: “who’s in the CD” depicts what democracy means

The CD allowed a great number of states to participate in it, and this reflected or indirectly constructed a meaning of “democracy”. This section proposes to compare “who was in the CD” with the countries’ status as democracies. This exercise led to two main findings. First, though it was expected that only (or mostly) democratic countries participated in the CD, the correlations show that

²³ The decision on Iraq was echoed in the international press (The Washington post, AFP, Turkish Daily News 13 April).

“non-democratic countries” made up for an important percentage of participants in the conferences. Second, it was also expected that the “non-democracies” that participated in the CD would have had the status of “observers” instead of full participants. However, it was found that only a limited number was downgraded as “observer”, meaning that this category was not used systematically.

As assessment of the status of democracy, I have used Freedom House’s *Freedom in the World* for two main reasons: its widespread use in the discipline makes it (as well as its shortcomings) transparent, and the fact that the CD itself used it, at least in part. Even in case of disagreement with some of Freedom House’s ratings, which I do not endorse automatically (Barrios, 2004), the two basic findings hold true.

While it is beyond the scope of this research to discuss each case, some cases are discussed to illustrate the politicization of the invitation process. In addition, the cases of Russia and of the Arab-Muslim world deserve special mention here. On the one hand, including Russia was key in the course of the CD, for it meant inclusion of the former “enemy” to the West and of a non-Western great power. This inclusion was the result of the co-optation undertaken by the West during the 1990s. However, during the Putin years, as his style and policies vis-à-vis the West became more confrontational and Russia’s status as a democracy degraded, the CD faced increasing pressure to exclude Russia²⁴. Russia’s “uncooperative” behavior was also evident in the UN Security Council, and overall the optimism of the beginning of the post-Cold War era had faded by 2008. On the other hand, contemporary debates on democracy required countering the Clash of Civilizations, especially after 9/11 and policies sought to include the Arab-Muslim world in the global dynamics of democratization [cf. Chapter 1, Chapter 5]. Along these lines, bringing in the Arab-Muslim world and some countries was key, for American organizers of the CD this was a way to co-opt Morocco and notably Egypt in a diplomatic, multilateral forum. These two aspects, drivers of the CD, would be present in the conferences.

²⁴ Putin was elected in April 2000.

The tables elaborated for each Ministerial Conference correlate participants with their scores for the corresponding year of the Freedom House survey²⁵. They shed light on two issues: first, each table includes the CD states that were considered only “Partly Free” or “Not Free”, indicating the number of “non-democracies” that participated in each conference. Second, the tables indicate whether the countries were considered “full participants” or “*observers*” (in italics), showing the relative use of this category.

Table 11. “Non-democracies” in Warsaw 2000, Freedom in the World 2001

Total of countries participating	% not democracies ²⁶	“partly free” Countries (33)	“not free” Countries (6)
111: 106 signatories of the declaration + 4 countries signed it a posteriori+ France	36%	Albania, Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Bosnia/Herzegovina, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Colombia, Georgia, Guatemala, Indonesia, Honduras, Jordan, Kuwait, Lesotho, FYR Macedonia, Madagascar, Malawi, Moldova, Morocco, Mozambique, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Paraguay, Russia, Senegal, Seychelles, Tanzania, Turkey, Ukraine, Venezuela, Yugoslavia	Algeria, Egypt, Kenya, Qatar, Tunisia, Yemen

33 participants of the Warsaw conference were considered “Partly Free” by Freedom House, and six (Algeria, Egypt, Kenya, Qatar, Tunisia, Yemen), outright “Not Free”, meaning that up to 36% of the participants were not democracies.

²⁵ It was not easy to access the information of participants and the different categories: some documents were made available by the Council for a Community of Democracies, and I got the document of participation circulated in Bamako during fieldwork.

²⁶ This is the % of countries either “Partly Free” or “Not Free”.

Table 12. “Non-democracies” in Seoul 2002, Freedom in the World 2003

Total of countries participating	% not democracies	“partly free” Countries (29) [includes <i>observers</i>]	“not free” Countries (7) [includes <i>observers</i>]
105	36%	Albania, Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Bosnia/Herzegovina, Colombia, Guatemala, Honduras, Indonesia, Jordan, <i>Kuwait</i> , FYR Macedonia, Morocco, Mozambique, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Paraguay, Russia, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, Timor-Leste, Turkey, Tanzania, <i>Ukraine</i> , Venezuela	<i>Afghanistan, Algeria, Haiti, Oman, Qatar, Tunisia, Yemen</i>

The overall correlation between democracy and participants remained similar, with 34% of CD participants not qualifying as “Free” for Freedom House. The category “observer” was introduced in the Seoul conference. It was used as a carrot or incentive in the case of Afghanistan, which was included in the CD as observer. However, it was mostly used to downgrade some of the former participants, e.g Armenia, Azerbaijan, Ukraine and some Arab states. If we correlate the invitees’ status with their rating in the Freedom House ranking, we find consistency in that all the states that had been rated as “Not Free” were *only* observers. However, it was inconsistent that most “Partly Free” states were *full participants* while others were downgraded to observers. Among the Arab states, Bahrain, Jordan and Morocco were kept as full participants.

The Seoul “Plan of Action–Democracy: investing for peace and prosperity” contained a clause claiming “wide consultations as possible with participants” in order “not to include those countries where there is currently a disruption of constitutional rule or severe, persistent erosion of or lack of essential elements of democracy” (Community of Democracies Ministerial Conference, 2002a). The CD was already aware of the lack of credibility of its notion of “democracy” in the rhetoric, but in practice the leverage of the United States in the Convening Group seemingly led to indulgent positions, especially vis-à-vis Afghanistan and Morocco.

At Santiago (table 13), the percentage of state participants that were not considered “Free” for that year rose to almost 42%. The inconsistencies to use the “observer” category remained, for instance, both Armenia and Azerbaijan continued to be “observers” though Freedom House found the democratic situation in the latter was significantly worse (“Not Free”) than the former. One could argue that bringing in Azerbaijan was a “carrot”, but maybe the “stick” of exclusion could have sent a more useful signal to condemn the lack of reform. This time, Afghanistan was upgraded to full participant despite its great democratic instability. The most delicate case was that of Russia, that became the only “Not Free” state to be included as full participant in the CD. This happened because of the diplomatic blow that it would represent to Russia, which already threatened to boycott the initiative. The choice of the Convening Group was to compromise, though this underlined CD inconsistencies.

Table 13. “Non-democracies” in Santiago 2005, *Freedom in the World 2006*

Total of countries participating	% not democracies	“partly free” Countries (42) [includes observers]	“not free” Countries (9) [includes observers]
122	42%	Afghanistan, Albania, Armenia, Bahrain, Bolivia, Bosnia/Herzegovina, Burkina Faso, Colombia, Djibouti, Gambia, Timor-Leste, Ecuador, Fiji, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lebanon, FYR Macedonia, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Moldova, Morocco, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Papua-New Guinea, Paraguay, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Thailand, Turkey, Venezuela, Yemen, Zambia	Algeria, Azerbaijan, Egypt, Haiti, Iraq, Oman, Qatar, Russia, Tunisia

Another problem became increasingly noticeable: the fact that “observers” actually could play a very important role in the negotiations and propose initiatives. Since there was no constraining delimitation or formal distinction in the meetings, many observer countries occupied the center CD stage. For instance,

Yemen (very active since 2005) stood out as it proposed to draft an Inter-Arab Democracy Charter, though it was an observer.

At the Fourth Ministerial Conference in Bamako (Table 14), again 39% of participants were countries outside FH's category of "Free". After long discussions, Russia (again classified as "Not Free" by Freedom House) was finally downgraded to observer. Russia reacted by canceling its formal representation at the conference. Tunisia ("Not Free") and Venezuela ("Partly Free") had been present at the previous round but were now outright excluded²⁷. However Iraq ("Not Free") was included as full participant, again as a result of American influence in the Convening Group. Yemen was arguably compensated with an upgrade to "full participant" (no longer observer) though its Freedom House score had not significantly changed.

Similarly, the problem of the active participation of "observers" continued in Mali. Indeed, I observed the delegations of Algeria, Egypt and Cameroon all took the floor repeatedly during the formal discussions, and made suggestions on equal footing. This meant that they actually influenced the document that would be adopted, which gave them a rather important say and was indeed contradictory with their status²⁸.

²⁷ Bangladesh, Thailand, Fiji, Singapore and Qatar (all with previous affiliation to the CD) were not invited either.

²⁸ I was able to observe this during my fieldwork (attendance to CD sessions). In my view, the host of the conference (Mali) did not enforce any strict rules on how "observers" should behave because it privileged inclusion and large-N for the CD, especially inviting African countries at least as "controversial" as some of the excluded non-democracies. Because these discussions are considered "closed-doors" I haven't been able to verify the minutes from the other conferences, but according to witnesses there was no significant difference with the one in Bamako.

Table 14. "Non-democracies" in Bamako 2007, Freedom in the World 2008

Total of countries participating	% not democracies	"partly free" Countries (48) [includes observers]	"not free" Countries (6) [includes observers]
147	39%	Afghanistan, Albania, Armenia, Bahrain, Bolivia, Bosnia/Herzegovina, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Colombia, Djibouti, Ecuador, Georgia, Guatemala, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Honduras, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Liberia, Macedonia, Madagascar, Malaysia, Malawi, Mauritania, Moldova, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Philippines, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Uganda, Yemen, Zambia.	Algeria, Azerbaijan, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Iraq, Oman, Russia, Rwanda

In sum, the CD only discredited the definition of democracy it "embodied" by allowing this large-N inclusion, and arguably this was an trade-off that undermined the initiative in essence. Despite its attempts, the CD was unable to implement an invitation process or an "observer" category consistently, and was dominated by political influence from a variety of states (mainly the US). In this it illustrated the struggle to promote democracy at the global level when the international system is still dominated by states, to which we now turn.

4. Institutionalizing democracy promotion: international system and American hegemony

The third goal that the CD pursued was to institutionalize democracy and its promotion in the international system, i.e. to ground the post-Cold War democratic values and support with institutions. This way, it sought to confirm the international expansion of liberal values, which had been on the rise arguably

since the 18th century and clearly, with American input, throughout the 20th century (notably after World War II). This institutionalization could be seen from both Constructivist and Functionalist perspectives. On the one side, by its own existence the Community of Democracies constituted a unique attempt to institutionalize democracy as a norm in the international system, as it gathered states around it as a common value, and established its promotion as a common goal. On the other, as an international organization, the CD sought to establish commitments from the participating states and to defend and support democracy around the world with a diversity of tools.

Nevertheless, the Functionalist attempts to create standards of the definition of democracy, and a platform to support it internationally were not successful. This was the confirmation that democracy and its promotion is *intrinsically political* and thus difficult to conceive from a consensual, “technical” point of view. Instead, the CD seemed to rely on a Constructivist dynamic where, as Barnett and Finnemore (1999) argued, international organizations exercise power and eventually create their own synergy –so there is agency and also constitution of a “new” international reality. Against this background, the CD clearly relied on American hegemony in contemporary IR (Ruggie, 1998) to institutionalize democracy promotion.

This section argues that on the one hand the CD illustrated the changes in the post-Cold War international system (a new international regime of democracy promotion), but that on the other hand these changes were driven by the United States, confirming the hegemony of “liberal institutionalism” but also its shortcomings.

4.1. Democracy promotion as a norm in the international regime

In 2001, two American scholars observed the CD was “one more manifestation of the global agreement on democratic values” (L. J. Diamond & Plattner, 2001, p. xvi), hinting that there was an institutionalization of democracy and its promotion. This section focuses on the systemic perspective, and argues that this attempt at institutionalization of a regime that would follow the norm of democracy faced important difficulties.

A widely accepted definition of an international regime is “a set of implicit or explicit principles, norms, rules and decision-making procedures around which actors’ expectations converge in a given area of international relations” (Krasner, 1982, p. 186). In Hedley Bull’s (1977, p. 54) classical perspective, international organizations are created with the purpose of securing adherence to the norms²⁹.

The Community of Democracies can be understood as a regime where states agree on the value of democracy, to the extent that it “embodies” the convergence of IR actors towards democracy. Regime Theory is Realist in that it usually disregards that this norm-convergence may happen out of common values or identity. Instead, it gives priority to actors’ interested and rational behavior as explanation for the creation of a regime, and that actors (states) agree to create or reform the international system this way. In addition, Regime Theory somewhat disregards the drivers for long-term transformation. Other works in IR theory have corrected these trends. Two interesting alternatives have focused on great power strategies and order-creation (Legro, 2005), and on liberalism as an ideology embedded in the post-World War II regime (Ruggie, 1982). These perspectives prove more helpful to establish the role of the United States (vis-à-vis other actors) in the international system, and introduce important nuance in the case of the Community of Democracies (see below).

Still, from the perspective of the international system, the CD has two important shortcomings. First, it has proven to be a very weak binding institution. Due to its lack of permanent and independent structure, its functioning based on consensus, and it has also failed to issue other than declaratory documents. Indeed, the CD has not been successful in advancing democracy in the world; either as a carrot or as a stick, its leverage has been negligible. It has not had much success in making democracies work together or in binding participant states either. Notably, the CD bodies (CCD, IAC) have not been able to constrain states’ leverage during the invitation process, when the countries in the Convening Group imposed their choices against the institution’s recommendations.

Secondly, the CD intended to make its members’ preferences evolve towards democracy and affect policy-making through socialization (Ikenberry, 2001).

²⁹ This definition is more accurate to the Community of Democracies than a Functionalist or Neoliberal Institutionalist approach that would focus on specific fields for more efficient action and on the internal structure and functioning of the institution (interdependence): “thicker” institutions are developed for a purpose, and convergence helps maximize a result (Keohane and Nye, Haas).

However, there has been no convergence towards the norm: many of the states that agreed to the Warsaw Declaration perpetuated their authoritarian regimes. Moreover, it can be argued that the CD may have had a *negative* influence in the international system. In a way, the CD contributed to institute a social world where democracy was downgraded to a minimum-degree and became symbolic, and where many non-democracies were actively co-opted in the system of a “Community of Democracies”. This way, many states instrumentalized the CD to convey their support for the American initiative, but this hardly advanced the CD’s objective to institutionalize democracy promotion in the international system.

4.2. Liberal institutionalism: the institutionalization of American hegemony?

This chapter has documented the protagonism of the United States as driver of the CD, establishing the extent to which the Community of Democracies was an instance of *American* democracy promotion. This section discusses how this corresponded to the US’s “liberal grand strategy”, and argues that US agency counted more than systemic change. The work of G. John Ikenberry on Liberal Institutionalism illustrates this point, offering two important arguments about American hegemony. On the one hand, America has shaped the international system; on the other, the system (the liberal order) also contains and even constrains the United States.

For Ikenberry, contemporary International Relations must be understood in the light of Liberal Institutionalism, which he sees both as a “grand strategy” and an international order where the liberal principles of capitalism and democracy have triumphed (Ikenberry, 1999, 2006). Ikenberry acknowledges democracy promotion is of American origin and has pervaded American history and foreign policy in the long-term, but where Smith (1994) saw an American “mission” tied to political identity and culture, he argues there is a universalist strategy. Creating institutions such as the Community of Democracies is actually part of the strategy that leads to and maintains the liberal *order*. The order then supports itself. This premise would explain the policy of large-N expansion in the CD, as the objective is to change the international system.

This perspective of grand strategy clearly led by the US came across clearly in documents from the Council for a Community of Democracies; it also pervaded US officials' speeches at CD events (opening and closing ceremonies), including Albright's and Rice's. In this quote from Deputy Secretary of State John Negroponte's speech, notice the vague use of the "we": does it mean "we, the United States" or "we, the Community of Democracies"?

"We must remind those who are elected democratically that they have a responsibility, to their people and to the international community, to govern democratically. And if they do not, then responsible democracies everywhere must hold them accountable. We are making progress in using this Community as a platform for promoting democratic values and best practices". (Negroponte, 2007)

Importantly, Ikenberry argues that the United States may be a hegemonic force in the liberal order, but that it is actually constrained by the system. The system is "constraining" because of its democratic and institutional nature: it must remain open, decentralized, and it actually binds the US as all the other members (Ikenberry, 1989, 2001). There is evidence of such a liberal system in the way that the CD sought to open up its administrative and decision-making bodies to non-Americans, and strongly sought to co-opt Europe and other non-Western nations in the initiative. Arguably, the US also had to abide by some of the decisions taken in the system (for instance, Mali's focus on development rather than democracy, and the "deviance" of CD members when voting "in disagreement" with the UN Democracy Caucus).

Critics of Liberal Institutionalism argue that this theory is normative and it should not be overestimated as an explanation for American policies, because "strategic constraint" might simply serve a purpose for the US too (Patrick, 2002). Indeed, while Ikenberry (2006, p. 148) considers there is American benevolent, non-coercive hegemony in Liberal Institutionalism, the CD has some aspects of "empire" as an expansionist political project. First, there is a global geography that reminds of imperial quests, and there is imperial ideology in the implicit links between democracy promotion and American exceptionalism (Cox, 2003). In addition, there are also imperial means in the imposition of some decisions (such as the invitation and "status" of countries as observers or full participants). Finally,

the CD administration and management is exerted from Washington, D.C. and most funds come indisputably from American public or private sources.

Thus, it is accurate to nuance the “neutral” regime that is the Community of Democracies. As Susan Strange (1982) argued in her critique of “international regime” as a falsely neutral analysis of systemic IR, the notion of regime is valid when it implies an authority dictating some precise rules and discipline. This nuanced analysis sheds light onto the lukewarm acceptance of Western European partners and the open rejection that many diplomats admitted in private (and also the notable, public case of France’s Foreign Minister in 2000). Post-Cold War American hegemony is manifest in the CD, and the European reluctance in this forum is a form of passive resistance to this hegemony.

Conclusion

This chapter discussed the Community of Democracies as a global initiative to promote democracy. This research shed light on the debates on the global definition of democracy and its promotion, and the gap between theory and practice. This case study of American and European democracy promotion allowed testing the hypothesis of “rival universalisms”, substantiating that a disconnection and some rivalry existed between the transatlantic partners. The fact that the CD remained a low-key international initiative witnessed the limits of democracy promotion at a global scale.

In this case, policy-making was dominated by states and by the diplomatic corps; declarations were issued, but there were very few programs to materialize the initiative. Indeed, this level of multilateral cooperation did not easily translate into policies; states were reluctant to allocate funds and did not create common frameworks to develop or implement policy beyond the Convening Group that decided on CD participation. Additional policy-making circles existed in the form of Washington-centered think tanks, such as the Council for a Community of Democracies and the Democracy Coalition Project, but these struggled to influence the process and to advance specific programs. Importantly, a civil society forum arose as a complement to the ministerial conferences of the CD,

giving evidence of such networks and emphasizing the non-state, transnational aspect of democracy promotion.

The CD faced important challenges to make democracy promotion work, strengthening this thesis's arguments on how this is an elusive practice. First, it developed a definition of democracy that was relatively open to interpretation in order to be consensual. While this sought to install democracy's universality, the "interpretations" and the will to include as many states as possible in the CD potentially watered down the meaning of democracy. Second, the CD sought to focus on democracy, human rights and rule of law, and links with other themes were also brought to the table. Significantly, the link between security and democracy was invoked in the aftermath of 9/11, and non-Western states insisted on the links between democracy and development (with emphasis on the latter). This provided additional evidence of the premise of a "virtuous circle" whereby all policies would work towards the same goal.

Third, the emphasis to pursue democracy as a "technical" policy where expertise and neutrality could exist was evident in, for example, the development of a working group with an original methodology to measure the state of democracy. In turn, these ratings were supposed to lead to inclusion or exclusion in the CD. Instead, there was evidence of the politicization of defining such criteria, the use of double standards and privileged decision-making (while Iraq was invited, Venezuela was excluded). Finally, this case study documented how democracy promoters were "learning by doing" as they sought to implement this global initiative. The Non-governmental Process had increasing weight as it got more organized, but political support—and funds—were volatile. This was the case, for example, when CD members did not adopt common positions in the United Nations, despite their engagements.

Focusing on the side of the promoters, the CD was characterized by American leadership, programs and support, and it was somewhat resisted by Western European states. General comparisons of the US and the EU under George W. Bush emphasized the US's unilateralism vs. the European preference for multilateralism. Yet the US has often favored multilateralism, and US-EU relations themselves are bound by a net of multilateral organizations, mainly NATO, but also the OSCE, OECD, etc. (Hiatt, 2006; W. Wallace, 2002).

The initiative illustrated that there was no open confrontation between the United States and Europe, i.e. transatlantic relations drifting along. Even if some instances of overt disapproval led to moments of tension, most transatlantic criticisms happened in the diplomatic backstage. Rather than confrontation, the Community of Democracies illustrates the absence of collaboration between the transatlantic partners, and there were elements of rift. The difference between Eastern and Western European countries was important. On the one hand, the US sought and found unconditional, enthusiastic support in Eastern Europe and notably in Poland, that according to the Department of State is the most pro-American country in the world (Applebaum, 2005).

Regarding the American position, the CD illustrated bipartisan agreement and continuity over democracy promotion in the post-Cold War period, as it extended during the Clinton and George W. Bush administrations. No significant change was triggered by 9/11, and though Bush's neoconservative ideology translated in increased unilateralism during his first term, this did not affect the US position at the CD in general. Arguably, the American leadership defended in neoconservatism (Williams, 2005) was already at the heart of the CD, though the large-N, multilateral emphasis came originally from policy-making in Democratic ranks. Yet the Bush Administration exerted some privileges, such as formally inviting Afghanistan and Iraq despite their dubious democratic status. This chapter discussed how one of the problems was precisely that Europeans purposefully disregarded the initiative despite efforts from the American leaders to "sell" the project for co-ownership. Notably, they remained skeptical vis-à-vis the project overall, and specially beware of the possibility that any such Concert or League of Democracies may in turn undermine the United Nations. In this, the European universalism favoring multilateralism and standing independently from the American position was asserted.

On the European side, the Community of Democracies remained an intergovernmental, interstate initiative in which different states took different positions. As an interstate project, it took off with a US-Poland core, it co-opted a diverse group of Convening States (including the Czech Republic and, in time, Portugal and Italy), and then sought to have global reach. It did not envisage a European group within it, neither in the form of European Union position nor of Member-State coordination at any stage, before or after the EU Enlargement to

Eastern and Central Europe. For critics, the CD was an instance of American “divide and rule” in Europe (Alessandri, 2008).

Yet, the fact was that the European side also lacked political will to coordinate Member-State positions or to create a EU stand (and even single voice or institutional participation) at the Community of Democracies. This could have been a common position (or even a joint action) within the CFSP pillar; democracy promotion could remain intergovernmental (not “communitarized”) and probably rely on enhanced cooperation (Jaeger, 2002; White, 2001)³⁰. With this case, the discourse and narrative on a strong international EU were evident (Benjamin Tonra, 2003), and the potential for capabilities too. Yet, the Community of Democracies showed that when it came to translating this into efficient CFSP, there was no political agreement. Notably, EU Eastern members insisted on cooperation with the US (Whitehead, 2004) and refused to consider it a “rival”, unlike some officials in the EU and some member states who are reluctant to simply “follow up” (Harries, 1993). This brought in a new characteristic of the evolving EU that will necessarily affect the prospects of universalism –maybe not the discourse, but definitely the practice.

A final consideration in this regard is that this global initiative to promote democracy seemingly needed the EU support for it to take off. CD officials insistently planned to co-opt and boost the role of Western European countries; the Council for a Community of Democracies saw itself precisely as “a companion [...] to enhance Transatlantic cooperation at a time when the relationship has been under great strain” (CCD, 2006a, p. 7). Russell Mead spoke of the international “value of Europe” as a mantle that provided legitimacy to US action and disguised unilateralism (Mead, 2005): this may explain both why there was American insistence but also European reluctance. In any case the important implication was that such premise actually re-centered democracy promotion as a Western quest, thus hindering the “de-westernization” and universalization that the CD claimed to seek.

³⁰ It could be a common position or joint action on the grounds of “constructive abstention” (no blocking action by others, but with the possibility to opt out). Since the Treaty of Amsterdam (closer cooperation) and of Nice (enhanced cooperation), this framework has been rather flexible.

Conclusions: American and European universalisms face political challenges on the ground

This thesis on American and European democracy promotion sought to move forward our academic discussions both on contemporary American and European foreign policy and on democratization. It argued that there is pluralism and two “universalisms” of sorts, instead of unified Western action. It also substantiated that, despite the plurality of approaches, democracy promotion challenges stem on the ground and depend on each specific case, which in the end makes promoters and practitioners confront similar problems on what to promote and how to do it. I have adopted an original research framework combining Foreign Policy Analysis and Transition studies, and undertaken case studies at three levels: a country (the DR Congo), a region (the Middle East and North Africa) and the global initiative of the Community of Democracies. The different levels gave evidence of the large scope of American and European democracy promotion, giving ground to the argument of “universalisms”. Instead of comparing policies towards different countries, the thesis explored democracy promotion as US and EU projections at the three main levels used in the study of International relations: state, region, world. Nevertheless, it was found that the conceptual and pragmatic challenges to promote democracy existed across levels.

One major objective in the thesis was to depict the American and European approaches of democracy promotion with nuance. Two important preconceptions were challenged in this portrait: American unilateralism and European civilian power. Indeed, though these seemed to be inherent to US and EU universalisms, the reality was much more complex. On the one hand, the United States had a unilateral “instinct” in policy-making, but the practice challenged this position. In the DR Congo, it acted as part of the “international community”; in the MENA region, it sought European cooptation for its Greater Middle East strategy in 2003-

4; in the Community of Democracies, it undertook global cooptation and found that the initiative was failing because of Western European lukewarm support. Still, American policies were independent and, in the context of American hegemony, carried more leverage than the European Union's. Yet this did not mean efficacy for democracy promotion. On the other hand, the European Union's picture of "civilian power", which has been intrinsically connected to its role as democracy promoter and to the construction of the EU universalism, did not prove totally accurate. In the Congo, the EU coordinated to intervene with wide-ranging support, from negotiations to elections to, importantly, military support to pacify the country and guarantee the electoral process. In the MENA region, its approach was ambiguous and underpinned by reflexivity and long-term flexible institutions instead of the blurry "civilian" aspect. In the Community of Democracies, the EU failed to rally around the theme of democracy promotion at global level and Western Member States defended classical multilateralism while Eastern European countries supported the American initiative more easily. As with the American approach, there was a gap between the policies and the field reality, though the diversification of policies and actors, the longer-term perspective and the EU's own historical experience allowed it to claim more potential for success regarding democratization. Yet this did not necessarily correspond to the universalism it sought to construct around this theme.

The second major objective in this thesis was to check the practical challenges that US and EU universalisms against the realities on the ground. For this, it used case studies and rooted the analysis on "objectives of democracy promotion for each case", which allowed for specificity and nuance. Not only did these objectives depict US and EU policies more accurately, they also illustrated the general, practical problems of democracy promotion in practice. The thesis grouped these problems around four general observations, which are summed-up here in connection with the main case-study findings accumulated in the thesis.

The first challenge on the ground regarded the quest for a balance between a universal consensus on democracy promotion and the cultural and country specificities, observed with the non-support for the local DRC transition conference, the theoretical defense of the compatibility between democracy and Islam that did not follow through with political and civil society groups in the MENA region, and the risk that non-democratic countries in the Community of

Democracies defended their regimes as “own interpretations”. The second argument regarded the premise of positive links between policies to foster security, economic development, and political reform. Though all three seem compatible objectives, the policies to foster them may imply trade-offs and political choices. The practical challenges were clearly observed in the DRC’s democratization *during* conflict, as well as in the “double standards” leading the West to cooperate with non-democratic incumbents in the MENA region, and the diverging priorities of underdeveloped countries in the CD.

The third argument underlined the promoters’ emphasis to present their policies as “technical” and expert so that intervention were more effective and, arguably, neutral. This approach underestimated that the problems on the ground were usually political and affected the policies’ outcomes. Thus, the transition’s implementation involved empowering the Kabila government (and army) in the DRC, the MENA did not become a real “region” despite the regionalization fostered by the promoters, and the CD had to accept Iraq and Afghanistan as full-range participants at America’s request despite their not meeting the institution’s definition of democracy. The fourth observation regarded the volatility and evolution of the promoters’ policies as they were “learning by doing”. This required adapting policies in all three cases: the practitioners had limited resources and limited scope for action and the challenges were multiple. Here, the gap between the promoters’ universalisms and the limited budgets, decision-making autonomy, and coherent strategy was evident in the Congo, the MENA initiatives, and the global CD.

This work has been grounded on empirical analysis of the United States and the European Union approaches, and of the three case studies. Two main themes framed this research throughout: post-Cold War transatlantic relations, and the potential and shortcomings of democracy promotion. Along these lines, this conclusion brings together the findings and key contributions from previous chapters: these nuances brought in innovative arguments, and open up new avenues of research. After introducing this concluding picture, two sections with final thoughts on the transatlantic “drift and rift” and on whether and how democracy can be promoted follow.

1. Findings and key contributions in the thesis

The first part of the thesis (Chapters 1, 2 and 3) focused on democracy promotion and the American and European approaches. Chapter 1 proposed a working definition of “democracy promotion” sensitive to the promoter’s peculiarities and to the complexities of implementation (definition, links). This chapter called our attention to some specific challenges, explored in the rest of the thesis. The first one was the universality of democracy: this was the basis for democracy promotion, but how to reconcile universality with the policies’ Western origin and with the cultural specificities potentially arising on the ground? Second, as an element of foreign policy, democracy promotion was portrayed in a sort of “virtuous circle”, the premise being that democracy, security and economic development all went hand in hand; yet this proved to be a quick assumption, for trade offs and prioritizations were part of the policies on the ground. Finally, two other observations were advanced: that democracy promotion was often conceived as a “technical” or neutral exercise and the *political* difficulties were underestimated, and that the field was necessarily undergoing a process of “learning by doing” in which practitioners on the ground had to adapt their policies to political situations far from ideal.

Chapter 2 discussed how democracy promotion contributed to the construction of distinct American and European identities and roles with two “universalisms”, where the EU defined itself, at least in part, vis-à-vis the US. This did not just spring up in the 1990s; it was embedded in historical experiences one side and the other of the Atlantic. In the post-Cold War period, the allies maintained a rhetoric of cooperation, common principles and values, but in the international context they also distinguished themselves with particular roles as democracy promoters. I contended that transatlantic relations evolved within a complex drift *and* rift during this period: there was a positive inertia in the partnership but also reserve and demarcation for meaningful, new international actions. American “liberal hegemony” brought democracy promotion to the fore, though as with the rest of foreign policy there was a shift with 9/11 and George Bush’s War on Terror. The European Union crafted a narrative as a “civilian” power where democracy promotion seemed to fit well. It undertook a major

enlargement to Eastern and Central Europe (further strengthening its role and identity as democracy promoter), and unraveled new instruments and meaningful plans for policy Europeanization. Despite the lack of confrontation, distinct positions emanated one side and the other of the Atlantic regarding democracy promotion.

Chapter 3 presented a comparative analysis of US and EU democracy promotion along four locations of policy-making: inspiring, informing, designing and implementing the policies. I discussed the roles and politics among the main actors: the presidential office, Congress, NED and USAID in the US, and Member-States, the Council, the Commission (including EuropeAid) and the European Parliament in the EU. I argued that democracy promotion policy-making was characterized by fragmentation and by the input of academics, activists, and practitioners at different levels, which illustrated the significant role of transnational networks in this field. This blurred the peculiarities of US and EU policies regarding implementation, but the dominant roles of political institutions and bureaucracies in policy-making exposed key differences.

This chapter set the background to explore the main policy-drivers and how they shaped democracy promotion in the DRC, the MENA region, and the Community of Democracies. Regarding the United States, this hinted at potential differences depending on the case: USAID, diplomats, together with non-state actors (designing and implementing democracy promotion) were relevant overall, but in the case of security interests (notably in the MENA region) the executive branch dominated. Regarding the European Union, its multi-level governance would create complex webs of policy-input that also varied on each case. While the MENA case exposed the many potential branches of EU policy-making with another region, the CD case underlined the shortcomings to create a EU joint output. Overall, the Commission and the European Parliament sought to Europeanize democracy promotion and kept this policy up on the agenda, while member states de facto shaped the policies more effectively and were, overall, more compromising.

The second part of the thesis sought to check this picture against the practice of democracy promotion, introducing the case studies of the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Middle East and North Africa region, and the Community of

Democracies. The cases brought in a necessary awareness of the historical and political context of the policies, as well as of the paradoxes and inconsistencies arising at the stage of implementation. With similar structures, they all began with an overview of US and EU democracy promotion. In the Congo case, that section followed three chronological stages. In the MENA case, it discussed the US policies (GMENA, MEPI) and the EU's Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, and then the transatlantic implications. In the CD case, it discussed the ministerial conferences, main agents and documents of this American initiative and the division and reluctance in Europe. These depictions of the policy-processes demonstrated the general dynamics observed one side and another of the Atlantic, but there was no particular strategic thinking or policy-design structure adapted to promote democracy at country, regional or global level.

Each chapter focused then on the three main objectives of democracy promotion, setting out a clear structure to discuss the dense, case-specific contents of the policies. This allowed for a discussion of the American and European specificities in the accurate context, underlining the main trade-offs and political challenges on the ground.

The case studies also contributed to a more nuanced understanding of American and European democracy promotion: different aspects of the universalisms, instances of transatlantic rivalry and, frequently, lack of coordination or of initiative for joint action. They also illustrated the many and diverse challenges to trigger change, to create a positive context where peace, socio-economic preconditions, institutions (state, rule of law) and political actors contribute to democratization and to finally consolidate democracy. There is a vast literature on this, ranging from political theory and comparative approaches; academic writings and practitioners have contributed to an ideal of "virtuous circle", a paradigm where any policy could contribute to the rest [Chapter 1]. This research has demonstrated this is a misleading premise in democracy promotion, as trade-offs and political challenges are intrinsic to this phenomenon. Moreover, instead of virtuous, there are sometimes "vicious" circles of abuse of democracy, nepotism, and violence.

In the DR Congo (Chapter 4), the United States and European countries (and the EU) halted their support of Mobutu in the early 1990s, illustrating the common Western principle and the "democratic hype" of the post-Cold War period. Later,

though the US was reluctant to support international intervention, it made transition a central element in the peace agreements and the MONUC mandate. The Congo case illustrated limited US interests and low priority. This mission had limited presidential input and was driven by diplomats deployed on the ground, with input from public agencies (USAID), the NED and the party foundations; corporate and security interests were in the background. Regarding Europe, the Congo case confirmed the possibility for the EU to undertake significant international action (it notably funded the electoral process to 80%). Yet this case clearly supported the necessity of “hard power” and not simply a “civilian” role for a universalist Europe, for its international clout increased significantly with operations Artemis, EUFOR 2006 and the ongoing programs of police and military restructuring. The DR Congo was a lab-test for a renewed role for Europe in the world, but the shadows of neocolonialism could not be dissipated as the main influences came from France and from a very active EU Commissioner who was a former Belgian foreign minister. This illustrated how the colonial past may invite itself into the debates and attempts for a post-Cold War EU universalism.

Chapter 4 also discussed the debates on “African” notions of democracy that emphasized collectivity and dialogue, e.g. a large National Conference in the early 1990s. I argued that there was a definition of democracy based on elections, to the extent that after the appointment of President Joseph Kabila democracy promoters already started to refer to the post-transition or the consolidation stage. At the same time, there were policies to promote civil society participation, in an effort to support the “bottom-up” factor. In the DR Congo, many NGOs and forums were created with these policies, while the Catholic Church continued to be one main interlocutor for international organizations, active in civic education and to gather and transmit information¹. This illustrated some reluctance to support local processes (the conference) instead of quicker and exit-oriented elections, but also the need for the promoters to adapt their policies to the field. Nevertheless, as this experience fed back into the policy-making debates, two criticisms could be raised: that democracy promotion was election-oriented in practice, and that religious actors sometimes played key roles in democracy promotion. Such

¹ The role of the Catholic Church in the Congo was crucial for American and European democracy promotion because of its widespread geographical reach and its intricate knowledge (Barrios & Ahamed, 2008).

feedback was often missing, probably because such experiences countered some premises in the democracy promotion rhetoric of “more than elections” and “secularism”. The Congo case also raised basic but relatively new questions on the role of the state and institutions. These had been considered preconditions for democracy, but with the promoters’ attempts there was a dynamic of co-development of the Congolese state and institutions *with* and *through* democracy – i.e. elections to establish legitimate government, and democratization assistance to *shape* institutions for better governance and rule of law. More time and research will be needed to assess this dynamic, but here political features will be necessarily tied to success in basic security and socio-economic standards for the population.

The presence of democracy promotion in American and European universalisms and the development of a specific EU post-Cold War universalism were also illustrated in the case of the MENA region (Chapter 5). Here, it was significant that the EU exported regional identity-building and functionalist cooperation as a model for the MENA region. Nevertheless, EU institutions and some Member States with interests in the region contributed to an ambiguous policy of either inclusion under a common Euro-Med region, or of a more disconnected Neighbourhood Policy. In these policies, democracy promotion was key as a core aspect of the EU universalism in principle, but the practice amounted to squaring the circle. Indeed, the EU but also the US preferred respectful “partnerships” with authoritarian regimes in the region, and combined security and economic priorities with some carrots but no stick. The EU was relying in its normative, diffusion power and a long-term strategy of socialization for the MENA democratization. By contrast, in the light of the post-9/11 War on Terror, the US under the Bush administration scaled up its rhetoric of a Greater-MENA and an Arab-Muslim region, and traditional drivers as domino theory and development aid were brought in the picture. However, the rhetoric and the military intervention in Iraq in 2003 clearly harmed the credibility of American democracy promotion in the region. In the field, MEPI programs could actually diverge very little from the programs funded with EU aid, though the EU financial investment was much more significant and the inter-regional structures much more complex and original (including parliamentary and civil society forums). Again, there was a picture that made US and EU policies of democracy promotion

confront similar shortcomings, despite the very different and unrelated approaches they emanated from.

On the implementation side, Chapter 5 illustrated the difficulties for liberal democracy because of the MENA states' weak capitalist basis (Bromley, 1993) and their clientelistic regimes. For the sake of interests and the principle of partnership, the policies involved the non-democratic incumbents in MENA states, which in turn led to "illiberal" or "façade" democracies at best. This case study also documented the artificiality of the "MENA region", which somewhat perversely created an "other" defined by the lack of democracy and implicitly to the Arab-Muslim culture in view of the promoters; by contrast, internal-MENA regionalization is de facto null. I claimed that despite their shortcomings, bottom-up policies and civil-society forums (as the Euro-Mediterranean "third basket") seemed to open important doors to protect and channel dissent, and to trigger domestic reform. Yet democracy promoters (the executive, more than parliamentary bodies) have privileged relations with incumbents, and this was replicated again in the most recent European initiative for a "Union for the Mediterranean".

Finally, the case of the Community of Democracies (Chapter 6) threw light on the political controversies and difficulties around US universalism. It documented how the CD stemmed in American foreign policy, supported in bipartisan fashion. The CD illustrated the complexity of the European reaction to American policies. Poland and the Czech Republic supported the cause enthusiastically, while Western European policy-makers did not rally around it, much as they had been reluctant to the proposal of a "Greater Middle East" (tainted of American unilateralism and ignoring the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership). This was partly because the CD was clearly managed by the United States, but also because proponents of this kind of initiative (as the Concert or the League of Democracies) sometimes sought to undermine the United Nations, a pillar of EU multilateralism. This case confirmed three of the new transatlantic trends. First, European alignment to American initiatives would not be automatic in the post-Cold War period, and Europe would consider democracy promotion instead of automatically rally to US initiatives. Second, Eastern European countries are nevertheless more ready in principle to align with America. This would change the dynamics in EU CFSP in a way that needs to be explored

beyond US Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld's "old vs. new Europe" (Levy, Pensky, & Torpey, 2005). Third, the EU is not indifferent to democracy promotion worldwide and may eventually defend its own universalism, but it does not seem easy to raise the political will or capabilities for this. Member States were divided over the pertinence and interest of such an initiative, and they failed to empower EU institutions to act in a unified and influential way either to shape it or to propose an alternative.

Chapter 6 analyzed this ambitious and unprecedented attempt to gather democracies in an international organization, which seemed to foster the liberal order that would derive from the post-Cold War "democracy hype" and American hegemony. This initiative faced paramount conceptual and practical challenges, to the extent that the CD's potential contained its shortcomings: a dynamic of open and inclusive promotion (co-opting non-democratic states) led to abusive interpretations of "democracy". Importantly, the CD was not an initiative for universal democracy in the *supranational* sense. The role and sovereignty of states remained capital; as such the CD was closer to a normative quest to influence the international system promoting a liberal order, and it did not subscribe to democratic dynamics beyond the state. At the same time, civil society forums and a Non-governmental Process existed in parallel to the ministerial proceedings. Yet, importantly, this form of "transnational democracy activists" may not be the clearest or healthiest ground for non-state democracy, as its representativity, legitimacy, and potential role in policy-making are uncertain. Civil society actors, and likewise "practitioners" and the "epistemic community" that also influence international democracy promotion may have their own conceptions and agendas; and this thesis called for a more nuanced assessment of their input that unravels these *politics* of civil society, too.

Original arguments for further research

This framework and the fieldwork undertaken for this research also allowed me to analyze new material and arguments, adding value to the existing literature and opening doors to further research: three important ones are indicated here.

One original contribution in Chapter 4 was the study of the CIAT as an international authority that facilitated but also monitored the transition in the Congo. This antagonized the internationals and the local elites in the compound

government; the former insisted on democracy, while the latter sought to maximize their power. Such bargaining over democracy promotion is paradoxical, and it is uncertain that the conditionality works in the long run. For example, Western promoters worried about the new aid and investment from China into the DR Congo (non conditionality attached).

In Chapter 5, I studied the tension between overcoming what seemed a “cultural exception” in the MENA (an Arab-Muslim, undemocratic “other”) but not knowing whether to co-opt Islamist movements in practice. Democracy promoters have often focused on establishing a positive link between Islam and democracy, and portrayed this as an independent variable (a “cause”) that can lead to democratization. Instead, I suggested addressing this element of political culture as the dependent variable, i.e. something we need to understand and explain in the processes of transition.

A particularly interesting contribution of Chapter 6 was the study of the dilemma that American agents in the Community of Democracies and the West in general face when seeking to universalize and scale down their protagonism in democracy promotion. They opened up membership to other countries but this watered down the meaning of “democracy”; they ceded visibility to Seoul, Warsaw, or Bamako for conferences in non-Western capitals, but this did not change the underpinning leadership in the initiative and just downgraded these events to the bottom of diplomatic agendas. Important theoretical implications derived from these cases, as there were “good intentions” on the side of the promoters but also a gap with the reality, due to the misinterpretation of political challenges.

2. Democracy promotion and the transatlantic drift and rift

American-European relations clearly hinted at divisions that were not about democracy and its promotion, but about the transatlantic structure and dynamics as a potential source of cooperation but also, more and more, of competition (Kanet, 2008). Along these lines, the thesis substantiated this original claim: that democracy promotion arose from, and strengthened, universalist trends from the United States and Europe. The thesis claimed that the US and EU universalisms

arose from a context of shared Western identity and history and evolved towards further differentiation, even rivalry, in the post-Cold War. It has argued that democracy promotion not only emerged from and illustrated this international context of transatlantic “drift and rift”, but it also played itself a role in the construction and consolidation of the US and EU “rival universalisms”.

On the one hand the relationship drifted along, without open confrontation; on the other there was a rift that may have existed for long, but now became increasingly evident with the development of a European position and policies. The case studies substantiated the argument of “rival universalisms”, but important nuances and implications for transatlantic relations arose.

Inconclusive transatlantic trends but no division of labor

During the Cold War, Western universalism had been unified against the competing universalism projected from the Communist world, and one of the key themes was democracy and its promotion i.e. “the Free World”. In the new era, this common ground would paradoxically become a source, and an objective, for separate action in the world. As Chapters 1 and 2 showed, the new context allowed for divergence between the US and Europe. On the one hand democracy promotion was the “new” American mission in an era of hegemony, and on the other, a key feature that the EU assumed as its own in its Common Foreign and Security Policy and in Development and Cooperation policy, officially outlined in the Treaty of Maastricht.

The thesis argued that transatlantic cooperation was minimal: there was no confrontation, but there was no transatlantic pursuit of democracy promotion either in strategic thinking or in practice. This failure to develop transatlantic democracy promotion derived only partly from the passive absence of cooperative enterprises. Indeed, the US and the EU actually significantly increased *their own* policies of democracy promotion, both the intensity of the rhetoric and the programs (including higher budgets). In this they neglected the potential for bonding, and went for the alternative choice *not to* act together: there was “rifting apart” and, with the separate universalisms, the assertion of independent, distinct roles. This hints at a continuation of transatlantic partnership in contemporary International Relations, but not the strengthening of a transatlantic *relationship* itself.

The theories and policy recommendations that insist on a division of labor in the transatlantic relationship (Everts, 2003; Nuland, 2008) fail to grasp the nuance of the evolving roles of the US and the EU in contemporary IR. It is not about the US doing the “hard security” and the EU the “soft security” tasks when intervening abroad, and it is not only about the EU “footing the bill” and “doing the dishes”, though those times may not seem totally past. The novelty in the transatlantic relationship came from the more open and purposeful assertion of EU dissent and autonomy: the distinct role of the EU as “democracy promoter” and in turn the projects of EU identity seemed reinforced one another.

Ideological historiography of Europe: discourse matters

Yet EU-unified action was not always manifest and the European Union was no monolith regarding the promotion of democracy: the complexity of its approach derived partly from the polity’s complex nature. Along these lines, the thesis documented the diversity of institutional drivers for policy, and the politicization of the processes (in Brussels and with the Member States) and of each of the case studies. In addition, and against this background, the thesis argued that democracy promotion and the EU universalism also contributed to forging EU “international actorness”. Democracy promotion policies were embedded in a powerful narrative that corresponded to an ideological historiography of Europe that did not always correspond to the reality.

As a narrative, the European universalism notably rose around the key concepts of “normative power” and “civilian power” that, as Chapter 2 showed, went hand in hand with the promotion of democracy in the world. In addition, they clearly substantiated an idea of Europe as *opposed* to the United States; the terms seemed especially accurate as the Bush administration led the war in Iraq in 2003 and the cause of democracy promotion was (belatedly) thrown in the picture for intervention.

It has long been established in the literature that democracy promotion as “*the mission*” has been used in the construction of universalist narratives of the United States as an international actor. This is also documented in this thesis, and I underlined the long tradition of American exceptionalism and the “vindicationism” that characterized the Bush administration. But it was the EU construction of a universalism based on democracy promotion that raised questions regarding

transatlantic relations and that deserved special attention as an original argument here. But in the end the two trends do not seem so different in form, though they are distinct in content –indeed, any universalism needs to reflect uniqueness and teleology.

In a nuanced picture, the discourse of European democracy promotion must be analyzed together with its practice, much like American democracy promotion has been in the past decades. Here, these first findings hint at the existence of an ideology, a discourse developing within the EU as part of the internal political dynamics and against the international context. Along these lines, the notion of “civilian” or “normative power” seemed to have been endorsed (and partly construed) in Brussels, but any analysis of democracy promotion and EU universalism should not take for granted that the EU will be “civilian”, that this will yield “power”, or that it will succeed on the ground. The European experiences of democratization in Southern and Eastern Member states have confirmed the potential of EU democracy promotion by inclusion. In this light, conceiving successful democracy promotion could be connected to broader but similar dynamics with globalization. Yet *foreign* policies and *exclusionary* trends continue to be a reality of our contemporary world. Transnational and cosmopolitan trends seem to nevertheless constitute a real challenge, so in turn it will be necessary to conceive more positive connections (conceptual and mainly pragmatic) between those trends and democracy.

3. Democracy promotion: whether and how

This thesis documented the complexity of democracy promotion when American and European policies were implemented in the field, and the gap between their universalisms and the reality that imposed imperfect decisions and restricted policies. In this regard, the thesis pitched its findings at a mid-range level above specific programs and allocations, and below larger theoretical questions on the paradigms linking democracy, economic development and conflict, such as Modernization theory or the Democratic Peace.

This empirical analysis and some of the arguments developed have contributed to characterize democracy promotion as a contemporary international

phenomenon of “learning by doing”. This has been the history of democratic experience, and this seems to apply to this policy that, since the end of the Cold War, has rallied ever more significant funds and numbers of political elites and activists from civil society, policy-makers on the ground and from abroad, and academics as part of a broader epistemic community.

Political and not technical challenges

Democracy promotion is a normative policy that has been based on accumulated experiences and scientific knowledge about transition and democratization. Yet this should not construct an image of democracy promotion as a technical, neutral policy where efficiency and success will be predictable.

The main reason why cumulative knowledge is marginal and transferable lessons are limited is that democracy promotion is an eminently political phenomenon. While practitioners often have a genuine worry to improve their programs, their professional expertise and advice will be conditioned by each of the cases in point. It is uncertain that segmented thematic specialization (judiciary reform, electoral observation, NGO projects...) is preferable to area-expertise, and that procedures and benchmarks can usefully influence sociological and historical determinants.

This thesis documented this phenomenon of “technicization” of democracy promotion. On the one hand, international promoters sought to achieve models and policies that worked. On the other, they sought to invest their intervention with a legitimacy that they seemed to derive more easily from formulas and indicators in reports. Instead, this legitimacy could derive from the historical experiences where peace, democracy and economic prosperity have been in clear correlation (though we are still uncertain about causes and explanations), and from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights or the values of human security and democracy that have indeed achieved greater international status in this post-Cold War period. I found the widespread belief on the ground was that, even if at times it reminded of former “mission civilisatrice” (Paris, 2002), democracy promotion was usually benign. Moreover, a picture of professional, expert, short-term assistance could in this sense do more harm than a less pretentious and equally pragmatic *political* engagement for individual freedoms and democratic rules and institutions.

“Support” rather than promote

Democracy promoters worried about these policies becoming a new sort of imperialism because of the complex dynamics of what to promote and how to do it. More importantly, “double standards” continued to marginalize this aspect of foreign policy when it entered into competition with some others –especially those considered vital interests (security). It is along these lines that a recent report based in interviews with American democracy promotion experts suggested a shift to more basic “democracy support” instead of “promotion” (Lennon, 2009). Yet the underlying argument was that “democracy promotion” had been overused and discredited during the Bush administration. Indeed, highflying rhetoric such as George W. Bush’s in Iraq post-2003 may not do a favor to implementing policies that need discretion and cooptation on the ground (Carothers, 2008b).

In reality, “more basic” referred to downscaling the rhetoric so as to avoid the argument of double standards. Along the same lines, the new administration should better use a new label, and “democracy support” take over the now politically incorrect “democracy promotion”. This reinforces the premise in this thesis that debates on democracy promotion concern rhetoric and discourse as much as practice. This thesis showed how the rhetoric was key in the role-construction of American and European universalisms, insisting on a profile as “civilian” power in the case of the EU. In the downplaying of “democracy promotion” and the potential choice of other terms by the new Obama administration, we witness how the American universalism is projected with different political nuances. Democracy promotion is composed of rhetoric and practice, and the debates on terms and concepts e.g. “support”, “assistance”, “promotion” do not necessarily move forward the pragmatic debates on what is more successful to promote democracy.

Pragmatic debates on how to make democracy promotion work do exist, nevertheless, and this thesis has addressed some of the challenges that make it such an elusive practice. The policies emanating from US and EU “rival universalisms” confronted similar shortcomings. This research contributed to document that such a “virtuous circle” of peace, democracy, and socioeconomic prosperity was not self-evident. The premises of Modernization and of the Democratic Peace thesis offer important hints for political change, but it will be the political specificities that carry more weight, either at country-level as in the

DR Congo, a regional level as in the MENA, and for worldwide initiatives. The meaning of democracy and the links with preconditions beg additional research and more carefully adapted policy-making. Here, backlash should not be considered just a risk. Indeed, its occurrence has been demonstrated in many and diverse ways throughout the long history of democracy, to the extent that promoters should include it in their studies and policies as one of the factors (to avoid) by default.

This thesis has addressed democracy promotion as an element of American and European foreign policy, analyzing its role and influence in the transatlantic relationship, and the gap with the complex and challenges dynamics of transition on the ground. The scope of my research led me to forgo (or at least not treat with as much depth as deserved) what I consider three key aspects, potential avenues for further research.

First, further detailed analysis of European and American policies in content and outreach is much needed. We need to know more about the nature of the policies on the ground (good governance, electoral assistance, women's rights, etc.) i.e. what is really done, but also about the terminology, categorization and design that is imbued in the policy-making process. As these policies have suffered from the trends of expertise and "technicization" in democracy promotion, it might be useful to give further thought to the real utility of the terms and to gain better knowledge about what they really meant in the implementation stage. The second item in this research agenda would involve the links between the state and the political model of democracy in our globalizing world, a theme that needs reconsideration from the perspectives of political theory but also, importantly from sociology and anthropology. Contemporary democracy promotion policies, rooted in Western, liberal history, confront essential dilemmas (conceptual and practical) because our knowledge on what "works" about the state is elusive, and because policies either strengthen or undermine it. Since this is extremely consequential, research that considers innovative approaches but also case-study realities is in my view essential. The third avenue would lead us to study, broadly, the drivers and consequences (ideological and material) of the internationalization of liberalism in the past decades and centuries. This thesis was informed by many of the debates on the essential components of democracy and

on the potentially negative dynamics of the different models as they seek to balance out individual freedoms and collective goods. Here, further research on the history of ideas and the political history in Europe and the United States is needed to unravel the meaning of democracy as an idea and a practice.

Personally, this research brought up many questions on democracy as a practice, but also a valuable positive answer about it as an idea. I was born in Spain as my country made the transition to democracy, so as I finish this work I still ponder the complexity that is to promote freedom for others, but I understand better this paradox.

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