

The Missing Link: Values and the Effectiveness of International Democracy Promotion

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Abstract

Analyses of the effectiveness of democracy promotion rest on assumptions of cultural universalism. The instruments of democracy promotion are expected to work independently of cultural differences. This is surprising because an important body of scholarly work revolves around conceptualizing, measuring, and analysing the impact of the differences and similarities of societal values between countries. Refuting any essentialist explanations of democratization, this paper integrates the general finding that values differ between societies into the existing democracy promotion literature. I argue that the effectiveness of material incentives varies when local actors value material wellbeing or not; that the effectiveness of immaterial incentives varies when local actors value social approval/disapproval by the international actor; and that the effectiveness of persuasion varies when local actors value identities conducive to the promoted norms; and when they value the norms themselves. It cannot be taken for granted that local actors value these four elements. It is therefore necessary to include the value emphases of both the international and the local actors in the analysis of democracy promotion.

Foreword

This Discussion Paper has been written as part of the DIE research project “*What is democracy’s value? The influence of values on the effectiveness of democracy promotion*” that is supported by the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. The project contributes to the research that informs the implementation of Goal 16 of the Sustainable Development Agenda as well as to theory-building in academic research on the evolution of political regimes. It examines the impact of societal and individual values on the effectiveness on democracy promotion. Two questions are addressed: First, how do value emphases affect the effectiveness of democracy promotion? Second, with which instruments can democracy be effectively promoted under conditions of contested values? This paper presents a conceptual starting point for the project.

For more information see: <https://www.die-gdi.de/en/research/projects/details/what-is-democracys-value-the-influence-of-values-on-the-effectiveness-of-democracy-promotion/>

Bonn, 1 August 2016

Kai Striebinger

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1 Introduction

In the study of democracy promotion, conventional wisdom holds that international actors will achieve more democratic change, the bigger the material incentives are. This finding is especially strong in Europeanization studies (Schimmelfennig & Sedelmeier, 2007). In extension of this finding, the influence of the European Union (EU) on democracy seems to decrease when strong positive material incentives (such as accession) and negative incentives (such as the legal power of the European Court of Justice) are missing (Van Hüllen, 2015). In situations of democracy promotion in so-called developing countries, the main conclusion is similar: The extent of power asymmetries (in terms of economic, military, and political power) favouring the EU, the United States, or Germany at the expense of ‘developing countries’ would indicate the likelihood for democratization (Levitsky & Way, 2010).

The influence of material incentives on democratization has, however, been highly uneven. In general, a correlation between the amount of resources spent on democracy promotion by international actors and the development of democracy exists but cannot be clearly attributed to international incentives. Also, qualitative empirical studies show that high power asymmetry and material incentives are no guarantee for domestic change. In Mali, for example, the EU provided quite important positive material incentives as official development assistance represented over 10 per cent of the Malian 2012 gross national income (GNI). But in the end, the EU was not able to achieve the kind of reform of the family law that it had pushed for. While the magnitude of material incentives thus seems to explain the varying effectiveness of democracy promotion in the EU and its neighbourhood, it fails to do so convincingly outside the EU.

I argue that the varying impact of international actors on democracy in third countries is due to the fact that the instruments used to further democracy – a culture-dependent goal itself – were developed in one specific cultural context which is not necessarily compatible with the cultural context where the democratization process occurs. Cultural universality has been widely assumed in the analysis of the instruments of democracy promotion, which leads scholars to assume that instruments would work the same – and to the same extent – independently of the cultural context. However, the instruments of democracy promotion, be they material and immaterial incentives or processes of persuasion, make specific assumptions about the culture of actors and their behaviour.

The non-awareness of the specific cultural preconditions of incentive-based arguments for being effective can lead to misinterpreting the influence of democracy promotion activities in three ways.

- First, in the incentive-based argument it is assumed that the incentivized actors share the same value framework as the incentivizing actors. Material incentives are based on the idea that material wealth is valued by the incentivized in the same way that the incentivizer structured the incentives. This need not be the case, however. Although incentives usually come from societies in which material wealth is highly valued (like the EU and the United States), they usually address actors in societies in which the size of the budget, the amount of trade, or the overall gross domestic product (GDP) per capita might be considered to be less important. For example, in Taoism, wealth as a concept does not exist but prosperity is measured by considering the number of species

saved from extinction. If actors who value material wealth provide an incentive based on increasing material wealth to an actor who does not value material wealth, then this incentive is unlikely to have the intended effect.

- Second, incentives also have an immaterial component in terms of the social costs and benefits they produce. Whether these costs and benefits materialize, however, is not a universal given but depends on the perceived social status of the incentivizer by the incentivized. Only if the local actors care about the social approval/disapproval of the international actors in respect to their social status, will the local actors incur immaterial costs or benefits. If the local actors do not regard the international actors as part of the social group whose approval/disapproval is relevant for determining their social status, then the immaterial incentive is unlikely to have the intended effect.
- Third, the change promoted by international actors is usually framed in terms of normative statements – especially in the field of democracy promotion. However, the persuasiveness of the argument made by the international actors depends on whether the local actor values the identity that is compatible with the promoted norm and, moreover, whether the local actor values the promoted norm itself.

I thus provide a theoretical and conceptual basis in order to answer the following question: To what extent do values influence the effectiveness of democracy promotion?

By focusing on the role that culture – or societal value emphases – plays in the process of democracy promotion, this paper is thus situated and contributes to three strands of literature. First, it supplements the established literature on democracy promotion with a values perspective, shedding light of cultural diversity on a literature impregnated by cultural universalism. Second, it contributes to the literature focusing on domestic conditions for the explanation of democratization (Geddes, 2003; Geddes, Frantz, & Wright, 2014). The cultural dimension does exist in this literature but has so far not been systematically linked to the influence of international actors. Third, I contribute to the literature on conflict resolution and mediation in which the idea that cultural proximity facilitates understanding and cooperation is especially pronounced (Bakaki, Böhmelt, & Bove, 2015; Beber, 2012; Bercovitch, 2009; Wall & Dunne, 2012) but has so far not been linked up with democratization and democracy promotion literatures.

In the remainder of this paper, I will first outline the existing literature showing that culture varies across countries, and how this relates to the political order in a country. In the next part, I will outline how value emphases make the effectiveness of democracy-promoting activities more or less likely. This conceptual and theoretical groundwork lays the basis for future empirical studies.

2 Values and the political order of countries

There is a broad literature dealing with variation in values between societies and countries. The impact of values and cultures on the political order of countries is, nonetheless, disputed. I will first provide conceptual clarification with regard to values, and then discuss how dimensions of cultures are commonly linked to political orders.

2.1 What are values?

In everyday usage the term ‘values’ is used to denote those things that are highly valued. If I say that my values are equality, freedom, and solidarity, I actually mean that I value equality, freedom, and solidarity highly; at least more than their negation. Referring to values thus implies two aspects: first, there is an ordering principle or preference articulated (Hofstede, 2001, p. 6); and second, a reference is made to a substantive content (What do I value?).

In order to distinguish the substantive content of what can be ‘valued’ from preferences or interests, it is useful to reserve what can be valued to a clearly defined – but ultimately arbitrary – domain. While it would thus be correct to say I value chocolate more than I value fruits, such a formulation is not normal in everyday usage. In this example, it would be more common to say “I prefer chocolate to fruits”. In common usage, the substantive content of what can be valued is linked to “important goals and principles in one’s life” (Carnevale & Choi, 2000, p. 2) or “principles or moral standards” (Oxford Dictionaries, 2014). One way to delineate “value emphases” (Schwartz, 2006, p. 139) from other domains is to distinguish them from ‘attitudes’. Attitudes “usually refer to specific actions, objects, or situations” (Schwartz, 2006, p. 143), which can thus be excluded from the value-domain. A specific behaviour (eating chocolate) can also be differentiated from the underlying attitude (as in: ‘at this moment, I prefer chocolate over other foodstuffs’). Values can thus be understood to refer to something more abstract and general than mere attitudes and behaviour. It has been suggested that values refer to “beliefs that are linked inextricably to affect” and “serve as standards or criteria that guide the selection or evaluation of actions, policies, people, and events” (Schwartz, 2006, p. 143).

As this is still sufficiently ambiguous, I will draw on existing conceptual and empirical work that has attempted to identify the domain of values and to measure values in different societies. When moving from individual value orientations to society or group orientations, these group characteristics are usually referred to as culture (Hofstede, 2001, p. 15).¹

A popular distinction is made between societies that emphasize individualism as opposed to collectivism (Carnevale & Choi, 2000). Individualism is understood as

a cultural syndrome that emphasizes the idea of individuals as autonomous. Collectivism, on the other hand, is distinguished by the notion that individuals are highly interdependent parts of groups. (Carnevale & Choi, 2000, p. 106)

1 ‘Culture’ usually encompasses more than group values, for example also symbols, rituals, heroes (Hofstede, 2001, p. 15), but for this research, such an extension is not necessary.

Similarly, Schwartz introduces the dimensions of autonomy versus embeddedness and egalitarianism versus hierarchy (Schwartz, 2006, pp. 140–141). Basabe and Ros combine these to “Individualism-Collectivism and Egalitarianism-Hierarchy [that] are the two most important dimensions for differentiating nations and cultures“ (2005, p. 190). Rephrasing and expanding, Inman et al. point to three dimensions:

humane orientation, the degree to which one rewards altruism and generosity; performance orientation, the degree to which one rewards excellence; power distance, the degree to which individuals believe that power should be distributed equally within a state; or gender egalitarianism and the minimization of gender inequality. (Inman, Kishi, Wilkenfeld, Gelfand, & Salmon, 2013, p. 11)

Smith et al. write that

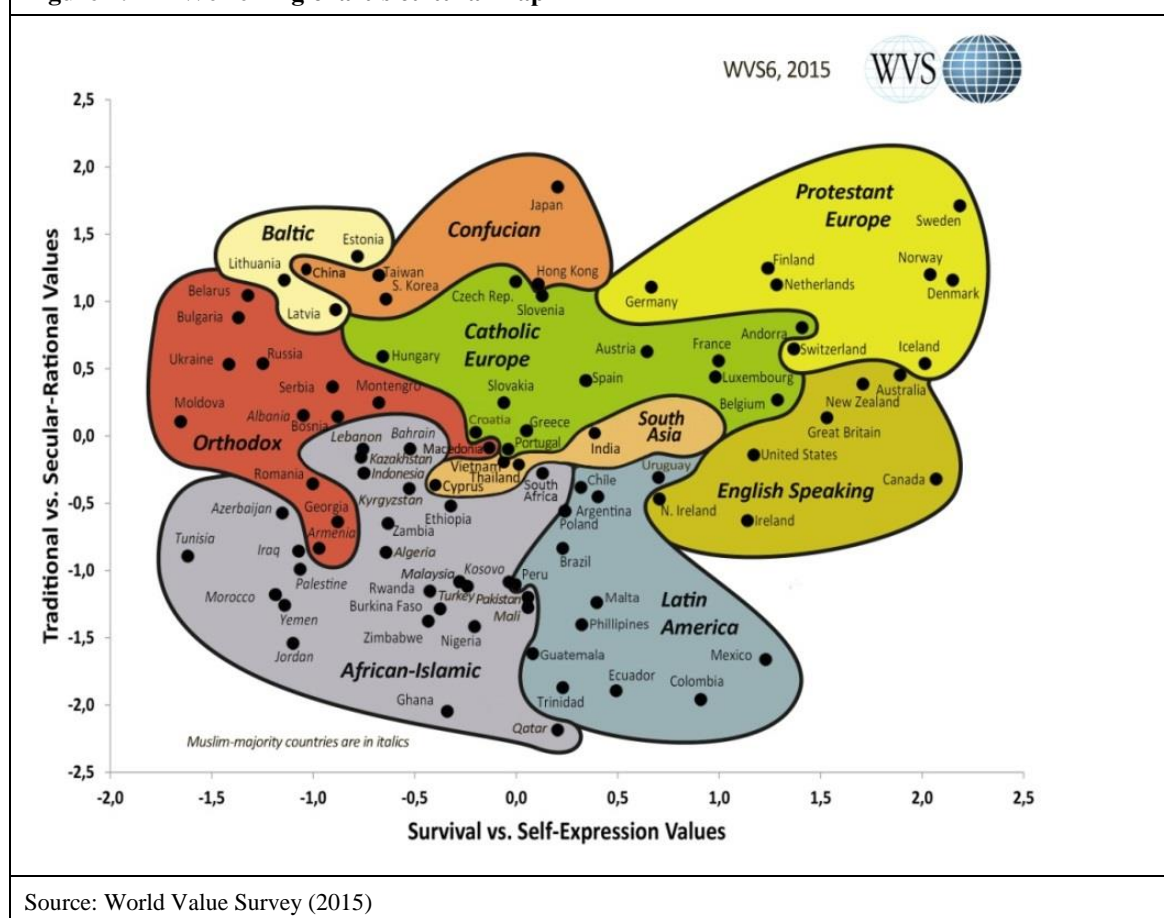
Egalitarian Commitment means a preference for universalist relations and status based on achievement, with low scores indicating preferences for personal and particularist relations and ascribed status; the second dimension, Utilitarian Involvement, sets preferences for family loyalty and collective responsibility against an emphasis on negotiated social relations and personal responsibility. (In Basabe & Ros, 2005, pp. 192–193)

Other dimensions include: materialism-postmaterialism, modernization-postmodernization, uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity versus femininity (Basabe & Ros, 2005, pp. 192–193; Hofstede, 1980, p. 9; also Maleki & Hendriks, 2015, pp. 988–990).

All these works have in common that they attempt to link values to something fundamental about a society or culture. They address general characteristics and issues of fundamental importance that every society or culture has to deal with. It is thus this general domain to which values can apply; everything outside this domain is not part of what can be valued. In the end it will depend on research interests which specific dimensions will be considered in an analysis.

In addition, these approaches share the finding that cultures vary according to the dimensions analysed which themselves correlate significantly. Most studies attempting to map societies according to these or similar dimensions proceed by conducting surveys. The most exhaustive survey in this regard is the “World Value Survey”. Using its results, the analysts classify all participating countries into different global culture zones based on the combinations of values along the dimensions “traditional versus secular-rational values” and “survival versus self-expression values” (Welzel, 2013, pp. 17–33).

Figure 1: Welzel-Inglehart's cultural map



Other authors have found similar cultural groupings, suggesting that these, and similar classifications according to regions, do in fact map differences among respondents from the various countries (Schwartz, 2006, pp. 147–154). The usefulness of this specific grouping and the selection of criteria to determine membership in a group is not of concern for this paper. It suffices to show that, when conducting surveys, the results demonstrate that countries' values vary quite substantially – independently of which exact dimensions are used to measure the variation.

2.2 The contested impact of values on the political organization of society

The effect of these broad dimensions of culture on the political organization of society is highly contested. There is established research on the link between culture and political systems but the criticism of such arguments weighs heavily.

Welzel has advanced a causal argument about the origins of institutional guarantees for freedom grounded in emancipative values that would be due to technological advancement, fertility control, Protestantism, historic disease security, and a pre-historic closeness to a fresh water source (Welzel, 2013, p. 138). This is a typical example for grounding specific current institutional arrangements in ultimately unchangeable conditions (geography). According to such primordial theories, entrenched and almost immutable features would be able to explain the development of human existence.

In a more direct approach, cultural dimensions are linked to political systems. Although both theoretical and empirical studies are often lacking on the links and their validity, it seems that individualism, egalitarianism, altruism, power distribution, gender equality, egalitarian commitment, and Protestantism are understood as being conducive to liberal democracy. Frankenberger, for example, makes this connection more explicit by linking individualistic societies to the rule of law because in individualist societies each member supposedly has the same rights, while in collectivist societies such an understanding of equality is not shared (2013, p. 74; Maleki & Hendriks, 2015, pp. 990-993). Similarly, Hofstede identified the dimensions of uncertainty avoidance, power distance, masculinity versus femininity, individualism versus collectivism, and long-term versus short-term orientation and links them to various different political systems (Hofstede, 2001). The power distance index, for example, could be linked to certain understandings of political systems (high distance, more presidential powers); similarly, a high degree of uncertainty avoidance would lead to a more authoritarian state and less openness towards external actors.

Similarly, religion is an often-times advanced but misleading explanation for the character of political regimes (Leininger, 2013). One important trend in this literature is that Protestantism, Catholicism, and Islam are compatible with democracy to varying degrees. Such arguments rely on a generalized feeling about certain value emphases seemingly promoted by differing religions: it is said that Protestantism favours a work ethic and a conception of the individual that is conducive to growth and democratic participation; that Catholicism promotes values of subordination and hierarchy; and that Islam does not accept secular laws and underlines the importance of communities, thereby also not being compatible with democracy (Møller, Munro, & Skaaning, 2013, pp. 86–105).

When one follows the same logic of identifying specific cultural value emphases and the corresponding political orders in a specific group, region-specific culturalist explanations come into play. With regard to African politics, for example, the neo-patrimonial account has received some attention. Basing their account on a reading of Weberian concepts of authority and legitimacy, neo-patrimonial regimes base their rule – among others – on a “winner takes all mentality” (Bratton & Van de Walle, 1997, p. 87; Erdmann & Engel, 2006). Labels like “big man” politics or “macho politics” as “a gung ho attitude toward the exercise of discretionary power and display of gross impunity by power holders” (Gyimah-Boadi, 2004, p. 11) are relatively widespread – at least in popular accounts of ‘African politics’. They essentially rest on the assumption that the logic of engaging in politics is qualitatively different in African than in European countries where rational choice accounts would, for example, be closer to the reality of human interactions than in African contexts.

Be they primordial, culturalist, or religious accounts – all are based on the idea that fundamental facts about human beings shape ensuing developments. Although the possibility that change can occur is acknowledged in all perspectives, this is usually given very little room. And how *can* it be given a lot of room if the main explanatory factor for society in the 21st century apparently lies in geographic conditions that are determined by nature and immutable by humanity? The focus on traditions and historic events and the simultaneous ascription of immutability to these traditions and events leads in some world regions to an “*a priori* dismissal of democracy as a possibility” (Mustapha, 2015, p. 29).

This paper does not share this essentialist view; instead it is interested in explaining change while taking into account findings that point to the fact that different cultures *do* exist and that these differences might matter for the effectiveness of democracy promotion.

3 Value conceptions and the effectiveness of democracy promotion

Burnell cites an European Union (EU) Council of Ministers report when defining international democracy promotion and takes

the term democracy promotion ‘to encompass the full range of external relations and development cooperation activities which contribute to the development and consolidation of democracy in third countries,’ which is to say ‘all measures designed to facilitate democratic development’. (Burnell, 2007, p. 1)

Scholars use slightly different terms to refer to these ‘development cooperation activities’. These range from ‘democracy assistance’ and ‘democracy support’ over ‘democracy promotion’ to ‘democracy protection’ (Schmitter & Brouwer, 1999). For the purpose of this paper, the terminology of democracy promotion/assistance/support will be used interchangeably as defined by Burnell while noting that the effect is not part of the definition, but rather the stated intention to facilitate democratic change is sufficient for an activity to be considered as part of a democracy-promoting process. I differentiate actors here according to the geographical source of their sovereignty (international and/or local), and focus on state actors. This is for illustrative purposes only, however. In further work, actors could be grouped together according to their preferences vis-à-vis a specific goal.

Empirically, the effect of democracy promotion activities is usually measured by assessing whether the behaviour and/or institutions of governments/executives/administrations in target countries changes. This is done on the level of regime-wide indices that capture formal features of democracy (Levitsky & Way, 2010); partial regime characteristics such as the quality of elections (Lindberg, 2006); or decisions by governments such as withdrawing from power or not (Striebing, 2015). If value emphases are believed to impact on political institutions, then it could be worthwhile for those aiming to promote democracy to direct their attention towards the underlying value emphases. How value emphases can be changed is, however, not the topic of this paper, but rather what role value emphases play for the effectiveness of the process of democracy promotion that is aimed at changing polities, politics, and policies.

In order to conceptualize the process of democracy promotion, I draw on the existing literature about the instruments of democracy promotion and then outline how value emphases shape the effectiveness of the instruments used. Instruments of democracy promotion have been distinguished by the logics of social action upon which they draw. A logic of social action provides a theory explaining motivations for actor behaviour. Scholars have presented instruments of democracy promotion with slightly different emphasis, especially regarding the understanding of socialization and the place of capacity-building, but for the purposes here, the overall distinction between instruments based on the logic of consequentialism and the logic of appropriateness shall suffice. In the logic of consequentialism, actors act because the act is instrumental to achieving a third good. They pursue a rational cost-benefit analysis, weigh different results according to the preferences and expected utilities, choose the preferred outcome based on its payoffs, and then select the strategy to reach that outcome. In the logic of appropriateness, actors act because they consider the act itself as appropriate – regardless of other material or social consequences (Beichelt, 2012; Börzel & Risse, 2012; Checkel, 2005; Striebing, 2015).²

2 Coercion as a third instrument defined as military force is not included here as a target. For example, a government or president that is forcefully removed from power has no choice between outcomes but is

3.1 Values and incentive-based instruments

According to the logic of consequentialism, actions are executed because the entities regard them as maximizing their material and immaterial wellbeing to pursue a certain action. International actors can provide positive and negative, material and immaterial incentives to local actors to change the cost-benefit calculations of local actors. Table 1 lists some examples of such incentives.

| Table 1: Examples of incentives | | |
|--|---|-------------------------|
| | Positive | Negative |
| Material | Increase in Official Development Assistance | Economic sanctions |
| Immaterial | Rhetorical support | Rhetorical condemnation |
| Source: Author | | |

The idea behind positive incentives, for example, is that a behaviour that used to be avoided because it did not yield enough benefits would then be pursued because of the added utility provided in terms of material or immaterial benefits by the external actors. The provision of benefits or the infliction of costs can be based on both material and immaterial considerations. Material incentives would cover all direct or indirect changes in the economic or monetary situation of the domestic actors (such as an increase in Official Development Assistance (ODA) or economic sanctions). Immaterial incentives cover all changes in the social status of the domestic actors (due to an expressed rhetorical support or condemnation by the international actor). The social status is provided by third parties and when external actors approve or disprove of a certain behaviour, the social status of the domestic actors changes accordingly (Johnston, 2003).

Both material and immaterial incentives rely implicitly on value-judgements. In order for *material* incentives to work, domestic actors have to value material wellbeing. Valuing material wellbeing is probably relatively widespread but not universal. In certain cultures and social groups (and thus the targets of the incentives), material growth is not valued highly. It may even be allotted a negative value as the use of resources may seen as problematic and distracting from spiritual affairs. In many religions, groups and interpretations exist that promote the rejection of material concerns to the benefit of more aware and non-material lifestyles. Even in societies where a majority of people value materialistic goals, (non-religious) social movements often underline that the quality of life is not enhanced by more goods but rather that less goods should be used. Relatedly, the link to living in harmony with the environment is made and the current economic system that creates material wealth by depleting environmental resources is criticized. If, for example, values regarding family policy are to be changed (from a patriarchal model to a model of equality between all genders and identities) and the international actor uses monetary incentives to induce this change but the local actors do not value material wellbeing because they are part of a society which does not value material wealth highly, then this instrument will not work.

physically forced to act in a certain way (or physically removed from a position of influence). Thus values or any other interests of the target do not matter for the effectiveness of the instrument.

In addition, considerations of material wealth are not solely important in determining the costs and benefits of certain actions. Actors also take the *immaterial* costs and benefits of their actions into account. They are interested in maximizing their social status and in avoiding social shaming (Johnston, 2001). The adoption of a material incentive also has an automatic immaterial effect: if a sanction is adopted, it is supposed to create material costs but also indicates a social disapproval of the current situation. Whether social approval/disapproval – which can also be exclusively verbal – creates the intended costs or benefits with the incentivized actor depends on the fact whether the incentivized actor regards the incentivizer as part of a social group whose approval/disapproval is relevant for the incentivized's social status. Or, in other words: Does the target of the incentive value the approval/disapproval of the sender of the incentive? If, for example, someone like the President of Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe, does not value the social approval of the government of the United Kingdom, then any sanction on its part is unlikely to create social costs. If, however, the incentivized highly values a sender and then this actor speaks out against a policy, this is likely to create high social costs. Paradoxically, in situations where the incentivized person perceives little change in his/her social status, it can be more effective to continue to cooperate because a closure of all contact would not only create few social costs for the incentivized but would also prevent reformist forces in the local government from being reached.

As local actors may be confronted with both material and or immaterial incentives, they are likely to aggregate these material and immaterial costs and benefits. It could be the case that, although material wellbeing is valued, the resources provided are not sufficient to offset social costs that would be incurred if a change were adopted. The costs could also come from a loss in social status before a different (not external) actor group – one that is highly relevant for policy-making within the society. For instance, traditional leaders who prefer the status quo might threaten a withdrawal of acknowledgement, possibly offsetting any material gains provided by international actors.

For material incentives to work, the domestic society thus has to highly value material wellbeing (assuming that material incentives are based on valuing material wellbeing); for immaterial incentives to work, the domestic society has to consider the international actors as part of their socially relevant group; and aggregated incentives must have a clear direction. Consequently the following four questions have to be answered in order to determine the effectiveness of incentives:

- 1) Do local actors value material wealth?
- 2) Do local actors value immaterial approval/disapproval?
- 3) Do local actors value material or immaterial incentives more?
- 4) Do aggregated incentives have a clear direction?

A hypothesis can thus be formulated:

H₁ The more the local society values material wellbeing and regards the external actors as relevant for its immaterial wellbeing, the more likely is democratic change based on incentives.

With regard to the aggregation of incentives, the following expectations can be formulated. If material wealth and immaterial approval/disapproval are valued, then the incentives have

a clear direction and the likelihood of effective democracy promotion increases. If neither material wealth nor immaterial approval/disapproval is valued, then the incentives also have a clear direction and democracy promotion activities would be expected to be ineffective. In situations where there is a mix of valuations, the effect depends on the magnitude of the respective incentives. The effectiveness of democracy promotion can thus either be increased or decreased.

| Table 2: Aggregating incentives and their effects | | | |
|--|--|--|---|
| Does the local actor value material wealth? (material incentive) | Does the local actor value immaterial approval/disapproval? (immaterial incentive) | Do aggregated incentives have a clear direction? | Effect |
| Yes | Yes | Yes | Measures of democracy promotion likely to be effective. |
| Yes | No | Yes/No | Effectiveness of democracy promotion measures unclear. |
| No | Yes | Yes/No | |
| No | No | No | Measures of democracy promotion likely to be ineffective. |
| Source: Author | | | |

Although incentives might have a clear direction, the promoted action might not be pursued in the end. Actors can also be guided by considerations of appropriateness.

3.2 Values and persuasion attempts

In a qualitatively different approach, the logic of appropriateness explains human actions by referring to dominant identities of actors. Actors are assumed to answer the following questions when deciding upon a certain action: “What kind of a situation is this? What kind of a person am I? What does a person such as I do in a situation such as this?” (March & Olsen, 2008). The answers to these three questions are not the same for every person as each individual might emphasize different aspects of the situation and of the personal characteristics that are dominant, and then make a different evaluation of the connection of these two elements to a specific behaviour. While it might be easier to objectively determine the type of situation an individual finds him-/herself in, the multi-layered character of personal identity makes the subsequent choices contingent on personal evaluations.

| Table 3: Questions motivating behaviour in a logic of appropriateness |
|--|
| Questions asked? |
| What kind of a situation is this? |
| What kind of person am I? |
| What does a person such as I do in a situation such as this? |
| Source: March & Olsen (2008) |

In a sense, acting based on the logic of appropriateness is acting based on value emphases because actors value what is appropriate. They value certain parts of their identity when answering the question what kind of person they are, and they value norms when deciding what a person such as them does in a situation such as this.

In most circumstances, actions following the logic of appropriateness are executed in a routine and unconscious manner. Shaking someone's outstretched hand is not the result of a thought-through process but one of (culturally induced) appropriate behaviour. If international actors enter the scene, the process of determining appropriate behaviour is made in a conscious way. In particular, international actors may engage domestic actors in arguments about the last two questions relevant to determining appropriate behaviour in a given situation. External actors can try to persuade local actors that they should consider a specific identity frame as most important and that therefore a certain outcome would be appropriate to follow. This process initiated by international actors can be referred to as persuasion.

When international actors engage local actors in discussions about the democratic character of the local actors' polity, politics, or policies, they make claims both about the identities local actors should value and about the norms that local actors should value. If the local actor does not share the identity frame and the substantive norm with the international actors, then it will be more difficult to effect change. The effectiveness of international democracy promotion is thus not independent of the valued identities and substantive norms being promoted. The extent to which the local actors value the same or similar identities and substantive norms as the external actors will influence the degree to which local actors are likely to change.

An example might illustrate this point: Assuming a situation in which an external actor wants to promote equal treatment of lesbians and gays with regard to the legal possibility of having sex (as heterosexual couples have), thus laying high value on the norm of equality. The first question "What situation is this?" can be determined as follows: Actors are in a situation in which they have to answer the question "Should it be legally allowed for homosexual consenting adults to have intercourse?" Second, the government would have to answer the question: "What kind of person am I?" Here, the government would be able to value different identity frames. It could value its religious identity but also its republican identity. Assuming that it valued its religious or traditionalist identity most, what would a government like that do in such a situation? Such a government would try to infer from the situation and its identity that it considers intercourse between homosexuals immoral and inappropriate. Such a government does not value the norm of equality highly. Attempts at changing a policy might thus be prevented because the identities and norms that are promoted are not the ones valued by the local actor – even though a change could have been beneficial for the local actor in material or immaterial terms if corresponding incentives had been provided.

Hence value emphases play an important part in the process of determining appropriate conduct. If external actors want to promote certain norms, they have to consider the identities and norms valued by the local actors.

- 1) Do the local actors value the identity that is conducive to the norm?
- 2) Do the local actors value the norm that is being promoted?

From this discussion, the following hypothesis can be formulated:

- H₂ The greater the value that the local actors attribute to a norm-compatible identity and the promoted norm itself, the more likely is democratic change based on persuasion.

Thus, in order to determine the effectiveness of democracy promotion, the value conceptions of the local actors need to be taken into account. If material incentives are to work, local actors need to value material wealth; if immaterial incentives are to work, local actors need to value immaterial approval/disapproval by these international actors; if incentives are to work, the balance of material and immaterial costs and benefits has to be in the direction of the supported change; and if persuasion is to work, the promoted norms and underlying identities have to be valued by the local actors. Having said that, while theoretically the different logics of social action can be separated nicely, empirically, they may occur simultaneously. Their interaction thus has to be considered.

3.3 Interaction of incentive and persuasion-based instruments

Although material and immaterial incentives, and persuasion recur in different logics of social action, actors may also be motivated by the two logics simultaneously. As mentioned before, material incentives cannot occur without producing an immaterial effect because setting a material incentive always implies a dis/approving social act that can have immaterial consequences as well. In addition, all incentives are also linked to a substantive issue at stake. Therefore, incentives cannot occur without initiating a reflection process about the normative content. In practical terms, incentives are linked to normative statements, especially in the field of democracy promotion. It is, however, possible that persuasion occurs without incentives. The effects vary from the above hypotheses when both occur simultaneously.

When incentives are set in the direction of the promoted change, and local actors value both the identity conducive to the norm as well as the norm that is being promoted, then the measures of democracy promotion are likely to be effective. If incentives are set in the direction of change, identities are not conducive to the norm but the norm itself is valued, then democracy promotion is still expected to be effective because the norm is more directly related to the outcome than the identity. If valued norms do not match the promoted norm but incentives exist and identities conducive to the norm are valued, then measures of democracy promotion are still likely to be effective. In such a situation, the incentives can work with the identities and tip the balance in favour of changing norms. If the incentives are not set in the direction of the promoted change but identities are conducive to change and the norm is valued, then measures of democracy promotion are likely to be effective because the logic of appropriateness-based action is sufficient to motivate behaviour. If either identities conducive to norm change or the promoted norm are not valued in a situation where incentives are also not valued, then democracy promotion measures are likely to be ineffective.

If incentives are set in a valued direction but are not matched with either identity nor norms conducive to the promoted norms, then the effect of measures of democracy promotion is expected to be less clear. Such a situation would assume some value convergence with

regard to the value of material wellbeing and social approval/disapproval but incompatible valuations with regard to identities and norms. It could be expected that the effects cancel each other out and that the measures of democracy promotion will be ineffective.

| Table 4: Interaction between incentives, persuasion, and values | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
| Do benefits of change outweigh costs of change? (incentives) | Do the local actors value the identity that is conducive to the norm? (persuasion) | Do the local actors value the norm that is being promoted? (persuasion) | Effectiveness |
| Yes | Yes | Yes | Measures of democracy promotion likely to be effective. |
| Yes | No | Yes | |
| Yes | Yes | No | |
| No | Yes | Yes | |
| No | Yes | No | Measures of democracy promotion likely to be ineffective. |
| No | No | Yes | |
| No | No | No | |
| Yes | No | No | |
| Source: Author | | | |

When local actors value material wellbeing, the social approval/disapproval of international actors, the identity that is conducive for the promoted norm, and the promoted norm, effectiveness of democracy promotion should be highest. While this expectation in itself is not surprising, it rests on quite demanding preconditions. The existing literature on democracy promotion assumes that these four elements are given in all cases, which is not completely plausible – or at least calls for further empirical research. This research should not only investigate whether the assumptions are met in those cases where incentives are believed to have worked but also look into whether variations in value emphases can explain the varying degrees of effectiveness of democracy promotion.

4 Conclusions

This paper started with the finding that analyses of the effectiveness of democracy promotion rest on assumptions of cultural universalism: the instruments of democracy promotion are expected to work independently of cultural differences.

This is surprising because an important body of scholarly work evolves around conceptualizing, measuring, and analysing the impact of differences and similarities in values between different countries. This literature coalesces around the finding that cultures are different, although it is rightly disputed by some authors that primordial features could explain differences in political orders in the 21st century.

Refuting any essentialist explanations of democratization, I integrated the general finding that values differ into the existing democracy promotion literature. Three instruments of democracy promotion have been identified and these can be used by international actors to influence local actors: material incentives; immaterial incentives; and persuasion. These in

turn draw on two distinct logics of social action: incentives draw on the logic of consequentialism, and persuasion draws on the logic of appropriateness.

I argue that the effectiveness of material incentives varies when local actors value material wellbeing, that the effectiveness of immaterial incentives varies when local actors value social approval/disapproval by the international actor, and that the effectiveness of persuasion varies when local actors value identities conducive to the promoted norms and when they value the norms themselves.

In contrast to what is usually assumed in the literature on democracy promotion, it cannot be taken for granted that local actors value these four elements. In order to capture the impact of democracy promotion and the conditions under which it is effective, it is therefore essential to include the value emphases of both the international and local actors in the analysis of democracy promotion.

By including value emphases in the analysis of democracy promotion processes, important insights can be gained. First, the puzzle of high material asymmetry without corresponding impact can be addressed. The non-valuation of material wellbeing by local actors might explain the non-execution of desired changes towards democratization even if international actors have disbursed important resources. Second, if it is empirically substantiated that values matter to a significant degree, then it might be fruitless under certain conditions to increase the amount of resources for democracy promotion in order to increase its effects. Instead, thirdly, it might be more useful to focus on changing value emphases directly – which would mean that international actors re-conceptualize the final target of democracy promotion from a change in behaviour and/or institutions to a change in value emphases.

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