

Chapter One

CONNECTING DEMOCRACY PROMOTION & PROTECTION WITH THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF DEMOCRATIZATION

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In the early 1980s, an “international policy industry” was born. It has subsequently expanded rapidly, almost monotonically, and still shows no signs of declining. We have labeled this growth industry: Democracy Promotion & Protection (DPP), and the purpose of this volume is to evaluate its impact in two contexts: (1) upon the liberalization of autocratic regimes in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA); and (2) upon the consolidation of democratic regimes in Central & Eastern Europe (CEE).

In the financial magnitude of resources expended and in the geo-cultural spread of countries involved, DPP involves an unprecedented effort. While in strictly money terms it engages only a relatively small proportion of the total of public and private policy-driven transfers from donor to recipient countries – ten percent seems to be the rough figure – this is still much larger than in the past. Moreover, at the level of public discourse, DPP has become a very prominent theme, at times eclipsing the previous emphasis on economic development, social equity or political stability. Transfers from the established to the deserving in the name of democracy are justified in terms of their contribution to domestic growth and international peace, rather than *vice versa*.

Even more surprising than the donors’ enthusiastic embrace of these objectives has been the way in which they have been received. Whereas before

such manifest intrusions by foreigners would have been resisted and probably rejected on the grounds of unwarranted “interference in the domestic affairs of a sovereign state,” DPP has not only been willingly (if sometimes grudgingly) accepted in the case of regime liberalization, but it has even been actively encouraged by elites seeking to consolidate democracy. As we shall see, this is especially puzzling since *a priori* the assumption has always been that attempts at regime consolidation in general and democratic regime consolidation in particular were uniquely autochthonous matters, heavily overlaid with national symbols and domestic calculations and, therefore, such manifest intrusions by foreigners could only diminish the chance of success.

But, first, let us interject a bit of historical perspective. In both its principles and its practices, political democracy has long been an object of international diffusion. All regimes that claim to be democratic have proclaimed a permanent national interest in having other regimes adopt similar rules and ideals – even if they have done little explicitly to promote or protect such an outcome and have, not infrequently, supported autocratic regimes when it suited their other national interests. Particular events, such as revolutions conducted in the name of democracy, and choices of rules concocted to implement it in a particular country have spread from one site to another, although again this was only rarely the subject of deliberate effort. One can invoke the images of Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Paine in the *salons* of Eighteenth Century Europe, but that was hardly a concerted policy initiative of the new American Republic.ⁱ Moreover, such diffusion was strictly limited by spatial and cultural

boundaries. For example, the first real “wave of democratization” – the so-called Spring-time of Freedom (1848-52) – started in Naples and diffused quickly to neighboring countries on the continent, but had little effect across the Atlantic or even across the Channel (although it did get as far north as Denmark). Subsequent waves associated with World Wars I and II involved a widening circle of affected countries and more explicit recourse to policies of DPP. The former involving attempts at democratizing the newly independent units of the former Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires and international supervision of plebiscites, as well as approval of constitutional guarantees of minority rights by the League of Nations, was part of that effort. The latter wave leaped across several oceans to produce regime change within units of European empires in Asia, Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific. In virtually every case, the former imperial power was itself a (more-or-less) successfully established democracy and sought to transfer its institutions to newly independent ex-colonies. The role of the newly created United Nations was limited to supervising the transfer of authority in protectorates under its mandate. With a few notable exceptions (e.g. India, Botswana, Jamaica and some other Caribbean island republics, plus a few Pacific mini-states), this most recent precursor of DPP was not a success. Most of the transplanted institutions failed to take root and many were rejected on the grounds that they were antithetic to cultural norms and popular aspirations.

The bottom-line of this short historical *excursus* is that, while it is true that democracy has always been an international subject of discourse and object of policy, it is also true that relatively little was done **deliberately** and **specifically**

to promote or protect democracy across national borders until recently. And the evolutionary trends were hardly favorable for DPP. As the practice of citizenship expanded to include forms of equality beyond the strictly legal and political, democracy itself become inevitably more “national” and discriminatory against “non-nationals.” Disparities emerged between the rights and entitlements of persons in particular countries and this inhibited exchanges of international pressure and solidarity from below, at the same time that a tightening system of inter-state alliances (and national neutralities) made cooperative action at the top more difficult. As the well-worn saying goes, “democracies have not gone to war with each other,” but they also did relatively little to help each other become or remain democratic – unless it was clearly in their national security interests to do so. And, even then, intervention ostensibly to make “(country X) ... safe for democracy” did not always turn out so favorably: *vide* Central America, Haiti and the Dominican Republic, the Philippines, South Korea, South Vietnam -- not to mention, innumerable cases in Sub-Saharan Africa.

A THEORY VACUUM

Perhaps, this dismal historical record helps to explain why, when the practice of DPP began in earnest in the early 1980s, it was so devoid of any theoretical backing. In striking contrast to the initiation of foreign economic aid to Third World countries in the 1960s and 1970s that came fully equipped with an (at the time) widely respected set of justifying concepts (remember the “take-off to self-sustained growth”?) and an expanding professional cadre of “development

economists,” one looks in vain for any serious attempt to ground its policies in existing theories of democracy or democratization.

The obvious reason is not that there were no such theories available or in the making. And if practitioners had dared to take seriously what scholars had written on the subject (and had managed to shift through their inevitable *querelles de famille*), they could only have drawn a negative lesson:

Do not intervene directly in the internal affairs of a fledgling democracy! Either you will have little or no impact since virtually all these countries lack the elementary “prerequisites” that have been necessary in the past, or you will not know what to do since success in this highly uncertain enterprise depends on contingent power relations within a relative small subset of actors inside the country.

Had they listened to the prevailing orthodoxy in academe at the time, DPP practitioners would have been strongly encouraged to act indirectly (if they had to do so at all) by promoting the allegedly indispensable economic or cultural conditions that make stable liberal democracy possible. In other words,

“Go back to what you were doing before, if only in a more focused and selective fashion by rewarding those countries that were at least trying to change from autocracy to democracy, but have no illusions.”

Democracy-building is a very lengthy and largely autochthonous process. All that established democracies can do directly is to cultivate their image of material and ethical superiority and hope that those who are less economically and culturally fortunate will eventually get the message and revolt against their authoritarian/totalitarian rulers – unless, thanks to highly unusual conditions of international insecurity, these democracies are willing to go to war, are capable of defeating their autocratic opponents and then motivated enough to occupy them for a protracted period of time. Postwar Germany, Austria and Japan

demonstrated that it could be done successfully, but then these countries already had many of the allegedly indispensable economic, if not the cultural, requisites before undergoing externally induced and protracted applied regime changes.

Had those practitioners eager to engage in *DPP* bothered to read the emerging literature on democratization that subsequently became labeled as “transitology,” they might have been slightly more encouraged. Here, the emphasis shifted from probabilistic analyses of what had been associated with the advent of liberal political democracy in the past to “possibilistic speculations” about what actors might do in the present to come up with (i.e. “to craft”) mutually acceptable rules for channeling political conflict into competition between their parties, associations and movements. This strategic rather than structural conception of the process of regime change quite explicitly did not mention the importance of material or cultural requisites and, therefore, implied that efforts to democratize in “unfavorable” settings were not *a priori* doomed to fail. However, had they read a bit further, advocates of DPP would have learned that such “possibilism” placed a high priority on **domestic** elites, whether they were incumbent authoritarians or challenging democrats. In the exaggerated uncertainty of transition, only those with “local knowledge” of rapidly changing interests and with “credible capacity” to deliver the compliance of some key group stood much of a chance of making a positive contribution – and these are precisely the qualities that foreign DPP experts are least likely to have! Only once the transition was over and reversion to autocracy more-or-less excluded would politics begin to settle into more predictable behaviors that reflected (and

reproduced) pre-existing patterns of socio-economic inequality and cultural differentiation. In that subsequent process of “consolidation” or “institutionalization,” foreigners with their various programs of democracy assistance might have a more important role to play, but by then the range of probable outcomes would have narrowed considerably. Many if not most of the crucial decisions would have already been made. The most that DPP could reasonably expect was to make a marginal contribution, more to the type and quality of democracy than to its emergence or persistence.

The DPP industry seems to have been blissfully unaware of either of these “schools” and to have gone ahead on a more practical and immediate basis. Their slogan seems to have been:

“these people are (or should be) trying to democratize their respective national regimes and we (well-established democrats) should help them”

– even if behind these public proclamations may have lurked some, less “other-regarding,” motives. The fact that such a policy tended to funnel additional resources into donor agencies that already existed to promote economic and (sometimes) military aid certainly made the choice to intervene initially more palatable. Subsequently, it galvanized into action a wide range of non-governmental organizations – many of which took advantage of the “sub-contracting” opportunities offered by national and, in the case of Europe, supra-national funding authorities.

Timing seems also to have played an important role. It is very important to observe that DPP began in earnest in the early 1980s – **before** not **after** the fall of the Wall and the end of the Cold War. These events at the very end of this

decade no doubt gave an additional impetus to the policy, but they cannot be assigned initial responsibility for it. One should not forget that the first case of democratization in this most recent wave occurred under very special circumstances. The Portuguese *Revolução dos Cravos* in 1974 sent the (in retrospect, erroneous) message that regime change from protracted authoritarian rule was going to be a tumultuous process. Not only might it be associated with aspirations for radical forms of “popular power” and expansion in the role of the state, but it might also call into question well-established international alliances and, therefore, endanger the external security of existing liberal democracies. The events in Portugal were not only unexpected, but they caught these powers without any *instrumentarium* for dealing with such a threat (with the notable exception of the German party foundations and usual deployment of national intelligence services).

Ronald Reagan’s famous speech before the British House of Commons in 1982 has been widely and rightly regarded as “the kick-off event” for DPP. The Council of Europe had a long-standing commitment to democratization that it implemented through its own membership requirements and a growing network of treaties. The German party foundations – Friedrich Ebert, Konrad Adenauer and Friedrich Naumann, at the time – were also active with aid to “sister parties” and the sponsorship of academic encounters in countries with authoritarian/totalitarian regimes. But it was not until the Americans entered the arena aggressively in the early 1980s that DPP can be said to have begun *in serio*.

TWO DEVELOPMENTS AND ONE LUCKY GUESS

And when they did so, they were unequivocally motivated by the desire to prevent experiences such as that of Portugal and those that were just beginning to emerge in Latin America from upsetting the international balance of power and/or producing types of democracy that would be much less compatible with American economic interests. It is not too much of an exaggeration to claim that their interest in democracy was secondary to their concern with containing the spread of the “evil empire” and, not coincidentally, insuring the health and welfare of capitalism. Had it not been for two quite unexpected developments and one lucky guess, I suspect that DPP would never have attained its subsequent prominence. It would have been (accurately) perceived as just another weapon in the American arsenal of anti-communism (and a relatively minor one at that). Europeans at that time were experimenting with various forms of *Ostpolitik* and would certainly have distanced themselves from the endemic excesses that have plagued such policies in the past: the Manichean vision of politics divided into “good guys” and “bad guys;” the tendency to support right-wing and sometimes even reactionary political groups; the propensity to confuse “free politics” with “free markets;” and, of course, the unwillingness to admit that the enemy itself might be changing.

The first development was the discovery that democratization might not be such a tumultuous process of change as was implied by the Portuguese Revolution and subsequently reinforced by the Philippine experience with

“people power.” The specter of radical popular democracy proved to be a mirage. In case after case, domestic groups struggling against autocracy rather quickly came to realize that, whatever eventual changes might be forthcoming in property relations, income inequality or social justice, the route to attaining them passed through – rather than around or on top of – the limited and prosaic procedures of institutionalizing “liberal political democracy.” The lessons of Cuba, Nicaragua and other abortive revolutionary or populist breakthroughs had been learned and were not going to be repeated in the post-1974 wave of democratization that began in Southern Europe and then moved on to South America and Asia.

The second development was the *divine surprise* of 1989 in Eastern Europe and the subsequent collapse of the Soviet Union. Not only did this manifestly knock the props out from under the whole edifice of anti-communism, but it also vindicated the European strategy of “constructive engagement.” Moreover, it virtually doubled the number of potential recipients of DPP overnight. Deprived of their enemy and overwhelmed by the demands of their new friends, the American architects of DPP seized the opportunity to intervene, although interestingly they emphasized the absolute priority of economic over political reform. Presumably, this reflected their primary underlying goal since it was by dismantling the structure of economic management and state ownership that the communist system would be most irrevocably destroyed, not just by decreeing the end of single party rule and introducing competitive political institutions. They also prudently “off-loaded” the operational responsibility for many specific DPP

programs in Eastern Europe to a “consortium” run predominantly by Europeans and channeled through the European Community (later Union).

The “lucky guess” was that the more optimistic “strategic” theories of democratization turned out to be better descriptors and predictors of the process of regime change and its outcome than were the more pessimistic “structural” ones. Country after country that should have been condemned to immediate failure and regression to autocracy somehow managed to craft its way through the transition and many have already made substantial progress toward consolidating a mutually acceptable set of rules for competition between political groups, rotation in power and some degree of accountability of rulers. DPP promoters were probably ignorant of this underlying academic controversy, but they could not help but notice that even some countries as initially unpromising as Bolivia, Mongolia, Albania and Romania did not succumb to the temptations of “heroic leadership” or “populist power.”ⁱⁱⁱ Whatever the actual impact of their various programs for the organization and observation of elections, the promotion of civil society, the enhancement of the independence of the judiciary or the rule of law, etc., these efforts were only rarely associated with manifest regime collapse. Even with the, by now habitual, references to the low-quality of the democracies that are being crafted under these conditions, there can be no denying that the strategic choices of actors have been making a difference – and, this leaves open the possibility (but does not prove) that external democracy promoters and protectors have contributed positively to that unprecedentedly successful outcome.

THIRTEEN SKEPTICAL PROPOSITIONS ABOUT DPP

For the reasons mentioned above, DPP seems to be one of those topics in which theory and practice are unusually difficult to combine successfully. With very few exceptions, those who reflect in a generalizable and comparative way about attempts by outsiders to guide and improve the process of democratization are destined to be skeptical about the effort. With few exceptions, those “foreign agents” involved in designing and implementing policies of DPP are very likely to complain that “abstract theoreticians” are insensitive to their practical problems and, hence, that their efforts are not properly appreciated. Most of the time, however, the former do not waste much serious research time and effort on what they see as naïve and misguided policies; the latter do not even bother to read attentively such irrelevant scribblings – and, when they do, they complain that the theoreticians adopt contrary perspectives and do not provide clear and compelling guidelines for action.

As card-carrying members of the “theory party,” I and my collaborators in this volume cannot pretend to resolve this intrinsic clash of perspectives – not even to present a balanced view on the issue. The best that we can offer is a set of skeptical propositions suggested by the literature on democratization that focuses on why DPP is such a difficult and paradoxical activity, whose impact may only rarely correspond to the “good intentions” of its practitioners.

1. The net contribution of DPP can be potentially significant (and positive), but it is rarely more than marginal in determining the outcome of democratization.

2. The very existence of DPP is normally voluntary and reciprocal in principle, but is almost always semi- to in-voluntary and asymmetric in practice.
3. The presence of DPP in a given country usually involves a formal contractual arrangement between public authorities, but its performance is largely contingent upon informal relations between non-governmental organizations and private persons.
4. The epistemological basis of DPP is the presumed superiority of well-established liberal democracies, and yet democracy in these donor countries is often in serious crisis – and precisely in those aspects that they are most insistent on transferring to recipients, i.e., electoral politics and competitive parties.
5. The success of DPP is intrinsically problematic and long term (not to mention, marginal in impact), and yet donors require repeated evidence of immediate, visible and significant accomplishments in order to ensure continuous support from their citizens/taxpayers for DPP.
6. The success of DPP is likely to be greater where it is least needed and, hence, the tendency for donors to “cherry-pick” by concentrating their effort

on those countries where liberalization or democratization would have occurred anyway.

7. Inversely, the success of DPP is likely to be greater when the desire of donors to provide it is weakest, i.e. when it is not used as a “cover” for the pursuit of other donor objectives such as national security or commercial advantage.
8. The institutional transfer inherent in DPP is often the greatest where it leaves the least perceptible traces of itself, i.e., where the practices and rules that it encourages look the most remote from those of the foreign donor and the closest to the native/national tradition of the recipient.
9. The net contribution of DPP is most positive when it is “self-canceling,” i.e., when the practices and rules of its specific programs are most quickly taken over by national authorities and politicians and require no further foreign input.
10. The long term probability of a successful transfer of institutions from donor to recipient is greatest when grounded in a generic understanding of what democracy is, yet the short term chance that a given program will work well depends on specific knowledge of conditions in an individual country.

11. DPP works best from the point of view of recipients when there exists a multiplicity of competing donors such that they are capable of picking and choosing the programs/projects that they prefer; DPP works best for donors when they can collude or divide up the market in such a way that they can compel recipients to accept the programs/projects they think are most effective.

12. Since success in democratization involves “hitting a moving target” of actors and objectives, DPP will have to change its programs/projects in a corresponding fashion and this is likely to mean disrupting and even abandoning previous exchange relations between donors and recipients.

13. The more that DPP becomes a salient and well-funded component of donor foreign policy, the greater will be its appeal to ambitious organizations and individuals in the donor country and the more they will seek to professionalize and control access to its provision. A similar process of closure is also likely to emerge on the side of recipients – especially in those countries with the least “domestic capacity” and, hence, the greatest potential need for DPP. When this professionalization becomes a mutually reinforcing process, the programs/projects will become less-and-less responsive to the needs of democratization and more-and-more difficult to adjust as actors and objectives follow the process of regime change.

It will not be easy to convert all of these thirteen skeptical propositions into discrete and testable hypotheses – although all of them are, at least in principle, falsifiable. Some are obviously worded in too abstract a manner; others contain “essentially contested” concepts that would be difficult to measure in an objective manner. Not a few refer to trends whose effects may be too soon to evaluate.

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Hopefully, however, in this volume dealing with the macro-measurement of DPP and the macro-assessment of its impact, we will be able to test several of them. The rest will have to await another stage of the research process when scholars shift to meso- and micro-analyses of specific programs and projects in particular countries. The best we can expect to extract from this preliminary (but nonetheless essential) analysis is to describe the total magnitude of the DPP effort and its distribution across countries in CEE & MENA, as well as its distribution according to generic types of programs. Then, we can attempt through statistical estimation procedures to assess the probability that DPP has made a significant difference in either promoting the liberalization of autocracies or the consolidation of democracies – not on particular institutions or practices, but upon the polity as a whole.

ONE AND TWO DEFINITIONS OF THE INDEPENDENT VARIABLE

Democracy promotion/protection is a subset of activities within the international context surrounding contemporary efforts at the democratization of national polities. It can be formally defined as follows:

Democracy promotion/protection consists of all overt and deliberate activities adopted, supported, and (directly or indirectly) implemented by (public or private) foreign actors explicitly designed to contribute to the political liberalization of autocratic regimes, the democratization of autocratic regimes, or the consolidation of democracy in specific recipient countries

This definition excludes, among other things, covert activities by external actors (e.g. “quiet” diplomatic efforts or activities of secret services) as well as indirect activities (e.g. literacy campaigns, improving a population's health, generic forms of propaganda, or promoting economic development) that may be justified in terms of their (alleged) impact upon democracy. Their exclusion from the definition of DPP should not be interpreted as implying that they have no impact on political liberalization, democratization, or consolidation of democracy – just that they are qualitatively different in intent and origin. Moreover, the effects of these activities upon regime change are generally very hard or impossible to observe and analyze, either because they are clandestine or because their impact may be temporally unpredictable.ⁱⁱⁱ

A special case of democracy assistance consists of sudden infusions of money and expertise aimed at defeating a specific candidate or insuring that a specific election will be held. Indeed, in journalistic accounts and the more “popular” literature on the subject, this sort of foreign intervention is frequently

cited as having produced its greatest “successes,” e.g. Serbia-Montenegro, Slovakia, and Ukraine. Leaving aside the issue of secrecy – i.e. that the source of these funds is usually unknown at the time they are spent and often untraceable afterwards -- one can raise the question whether such episodic activities do contribute to liberalization and democratization in the longer run. Our conception of DPP is focused on (but admittedly not strictly limited to) efforts to instantiate rules or to build institutions. “Invading” a country with clandestine funds and well-intentioned advisors may contribute to this purpose – if, and only if, the candidate benefited subsequently turns out to be a “democrat” and if he or she is not discredited once in power by the decisive role played by foreign intervention in making this possible. Hardly anyone would deny that getting rid of elected leaders such as Meciar, Milosovic or [check names] did open up new possibilities for the democratization of Slovakia, Serbia-Montenegro or Ukraine, but analogous “depositions” of elected leaders (or their preferred successors) with foreign assistance in Central and South America – Arbenz in Guatemala, Allende in Chile, Goulart in Brazil – have had a more ambiguous political heritage. Partly due to the practical difficulties involved and partly due to the theoretical ambiguity, such “successes” are not included in the scope of this study.

The definition adopted also excludes activities decided, supported and implemented exclusively by domestic actors, with either no participation of foreign actors or only their fortuitous or informal collaboration. In addition, it also leaves out a number of aspects of the international context that are “without

agency,” i.e. that could positively influence the outcome of regime change but without any explicit, policy-directed sponsorship. No one doubts that imitation of one country by another, spontaneous contagion effects that transcend national borders and the learning of lessons from “normal” transactions between persons in different countries may make liberalization and/or democratization more or less likely, but they will not (and can not) be monitored by this research effort.

This predominantly “phenotypic” definition of DPP based on stated donor intentions should not always be taken for granted because, first, these actors may have other, less overt priorities - for example, promoting commercially favorable economic reforms, maintaining a compliant foreign policy, or keeping potential migrants at home - that might even conflict with the declared one to promote/protect democracy. Second, and much less likely, external actors may engage in activities that they themselves do not define and consider as DPP but, unexpectedly and unintentionally, might actually do the job.^{iv}

THREE QUALITATIVE DISTINCT PROCESSES

In the studies of changes from autocratic to democratic regimes, three qualitatively different processes have been distinguished: (1) political liberalization; (2) democratization; and (3) the consolidation of democracy.^v

The process of political liberalization is made up of two core elements: (1) increasing quantity and quality of political liberties; and (2) encouraging the destabilization or eventual collapse of autocratic regimes. Democratization is a process in which a minimally democratic regime is established, usually through the holding of ‘free and fair’ elections. The consolidation of democracy is

qualitatively different from the former two processes because it aims at transforming a new and fragile democracy by introducing elements of institutional predictability in an effort to avoid, first of all, a relapse into autocracy.^{vi} Some of the measures that are considered to be useful in consolidating such a regime can also have a negative impact on the collapse of autocracies. For example, reinforcement of the rule of law can stabilize not only a neo-democracy, but also help to stabilize an autocracy.^{vii} It is therefore of strategic importance to distinguish between, on the one hand, the promotion of political liberalization and initial democratization and, on the other hand, the protection or subsequent consolidation of democracy. Thus, the overarching concept of DPP is made up of two qualitatively different elements, which can be defined as follows.

Democracy Promotion consists of all overt and voluntary activities adopted, supported, and (directly or indirectly) implemented by (public or private) foreign actors explicitly designed to contribute to the political liberalization of autocratic regimes and the subsequent democratization of autocratic regimes in specific recipient countries

Democracy Protection consists of all overt and voluntary activities adopted, supported, and (directly or indirectly) implemented by (public or private) foreign actors explicitly designed to contribute to consolidation of democracy in specific recipient countries

TWO ADDITIONAL CHANGES AND ONE CROSSTABULATION

Besides the huge increase in the number of activities, at least two additional major changes regarding DPP have taken place over the past two decades. The first involves a shift from coercive threats in the form of external intervention to conditional non-violent sanctions and promised rewards.^{viii} The

second innovation, related to the first, has been the sharp increase of cases in which DPP is not merely imposed or promised from without, but takes place mainly within the target countries in the form of sponsored programs and projects. This development is the result of the existence of minimal agreement (and sometimes even outright enthusiasm) on the part of target countries to politically liberalize and democratize. Sometimes, however, such consent is more apparent than real. Incumbents may calculate that it is better to tolerate DPP activities taking place inside their respective countries in order to avoid potential sanctions or to obtain material and symbolic rewards for themselves. Moreover, such programs and projects may be easier to control or co-opt than the sort of diplomatic and clandestine efforts that used to characterize, for example, attempts to subvert communist regimes from without.

The combination of these two characteristics: (1) **nature and degree of consent** of the authorities of the target country; and (2) **primary location** of DPP implementation gives rise to four different types of DPP which are represented in Figure One.

Place Figure One Here (Democracy Promotion/Protection)

The form of DPP of the First (top left) Cell - *coercion* in the form of military intervention and occupation - was relatively often used historically to unseat autocratic regimes or to prevent relapse of democratic and newly democratized regimes into autocratic regimes. Although its use has diminished, cases such as Grenada, Panama, Haiti, and, more recently, Iraq show that this form of DPP has not been completely abandoned. *Conditionality* - the Second (top right) Cell - in

the form of imposing or threatening to impose sanctions or promising to provide rewards in order to promote or protect democracy, has quantitatively and qualitatively changed since the 1970s. First, a shift took place from bi-lateral to multi-lateral sources of sanctions and, second, there has been a change from imposing sanctions to providing rewards. The latter generally takes the form of (increased) development aid or accession to a prestigious club of international actors. Central and Eastern European states' accession to the European Union is the most powerful example of this instance. In the second cell, one finds also transmissions by radios such as the Voice of America and support for opposition groups in exile since they also have their primary location of activity outside the target country and are implemented without the consent of the authorities of target countries.

Cell number Three (bottom left) includes activities that are implemented in the target countries and which need a minimum of “*consent*” by the authorities of the receiving countries. Leading examples are electoral assistance or financial support for developing civil society. These activities are labeled as **internal democracy assistance**.

Cell number Four (bottom right) comprises activities that need also minimal consent from the authorities of the recipient country, but take place abroad, often in the donor country itself (e.g. judges of the Egyptian Supreme Constitutional Court visiting their counterparts on the US Supreme Court). These activities are labeled as **external democracy assistance**. To underline the fact that external DPP takes place under different conditions than internal DPP, and

is potentially less effective than the latter, I have applied to it the term *contagion*^{ix} as opposed to *consent*.

The analytical distinction between non-consensual and consensual forms is not as empirically neat as it may seem. Hence, I have inserted in a substantial gray area in Table One and labeled it “tolerated” DPP.^x As mentioned above, a target country – even a persistent autocracy – may allow programs of DPP to be developed within its borders because it either fears that otherwise sanctions will be imposed or, alternatively, that it will be able to contain their effect – and even to reap some potential material rewards.

The “package” of DPP activities aimed by donors at a specific recipient can vary considerably. It seems to depend on such variables as: (1) the regime situation in the target country and, especially, the mode of transition that may be emerging; (2) the political will of its incumbents to democratize; (3) the interests of the democracy promoters/protectors; (4) their technical knowledge of regime changes; and (5) the instruments they have at their disposal. For example, in the case of a country that is at an early phase of political liberalization and has an understandably reluctant ruling coalition, external actors can threaten sanctions, promise rewards, and attempt to develop democracy assistance programs - all at the same time. In the case of newly democratized regimes, external actors are likely to lift sanctions immediately and continue to promise greater rewards in exchange for further democratization and consolidation of democracy. The nascent regime is also very likely under current circumstances to welcome an expansion in the scope of “in house” DPP programs and projects.^{xi}

SOME MORE DISTINCTIONS IN THE INDEPENDENT VARIABLE

The major novelty of the 1990s has been the quantitative growth and qualitative diversification of DPP programs and projects that were adopted, supported, and (directly or indirectly) implemented by (public or private) actors predominantly inside recipient countries (Cell Three of Figure One) and to a more limited extent in donor countries (Cell Four of Figure One). By the end of the 1990s DPP consisted up of literally thousands of programs, tens of thousands of projects, adopted and implemented by hundreds or thousands of donors in maybe one hundred countries around the globe, totaling hundreds of millions or even several billions of US dollars *per annum*. The activities involved range from training parliamentarians how to better perform their role, educating individuals to claim their rights and perform their duties as citizens, assisting in the creation of local organizations that monitor elections or government policies, to helping to (re)write electoral laws, regulations for establishing associations or foundations and even national constitutions .

DPP activities, inside and outside recipient countries, has targeted many different kinds of actors: individual citizens, organizations in civil society, organizations in political society, and agencies of the state.

- **Individual citizens** have been exposed to programs funded by DPP that aim specifically and primarily at increasing their knowledge about democratic institutions, changing their cultural values and, eventually, their political behavior. These civic education programs aim at transferring general knowledge about

democratic institutions and practices, socializing individuals to democratic values and teaching them about their human and civic rights. Sometimes, projects are more narrowly focused on training electoral observers and/or informing citizens about why and how to cast their votes. Here, the presumption is that knowledgeable citizens are more likely to participate in the emerging democratic process and to resist when their rights are threatened.

- **Civil society** organizations of different kinds: (1) private and collective service providers; (2) non-governmental organizations (NGOs) advocating human rights, democratic freedoms, environmental standards, as well as other ‘causes;’ and (3) associations promoting the self-interest of particular groups, have received considerable resources. Presumably, these organizations are voluntary in nature and act independently of governments and state agencies – although in actual fact many are at least quasi-compulsory and heavily subsidized with public funds. Projects for assistance typically consist of one or more of the following items: providing financial resources and operating equipment, training members and personnel in organizational skills, inculcating them with democratic values, and diffusing models of collective action from their counterparts in established democracies. Their contribution to democratization hinges both on the provision of

more accurate and specific information on citizen demands and the potential such organizations have to resist a return to autocracy.

- **Political society** organizations, mainly political parties, should be the most privileged interlocutors and recipients of DPP programs and projects. Virtually all theorists of liberal democracy assign to them a unique importance. It is their “free and fair” competition in “regular and rule-ly” elections that is considered by many to be the hallmark of this type of regime. And once this process has taken place, the winning party or parties are supposed to form a government, enjoy a unique legitimacy and accept public responsibility for policies followed. And yet, strangely enough, this has proven a particularly controversial area for DPP. Except for those donors such as the German party foundations that are self-avowedly in the business of promoting their partisan brethren, sponsorship by foreign governments (and the NGOs funded by them) of one or another among competing parties is a delicate matter and often has had to be disguised under other rubriques, such as general funding for the holding of elections, improvement in the means of communication, or training political cadres. All forms of DPP are intrinsically political, but this is the one that most obviously has a differential impact on the competing forces aroused by democratization. Moreover, parties have only rarely played a determinate role in the initiation of political liberalization or regime

transition. Social movements, advocacy organizations and professional associations have been much more important in this regard. Once credible elections of uncertain outcome have been convoked parties move to center stage and DPP programs/projects have been rightly interpreted as an attempt by foreign powers to affect the terms of this contest and to manipulate its outcome.

- **State agencies** have also received considerable DPP funding on the grounds that democracy requires, among other things, a more accountable and transparent set of public authorities and a capacity for elected rulers to implement policies effectively. In generic terms, this usually means supporting the reform of those public institutions that have made democracy work in liberal Western democracies. For example, this usually means such things as equipping parliamentary bodies with computers to create data bases of their own activities and accumulated national legislation; setting up documentation services regarding the legislation and jurisprudence of other countries; paying outside experts to assist in the drafting of framework legislation and even of constitutions; improving the staff of executive offices; training ministerial personnel in order to manage better flows of information and requests for service; and so forth. Judiciary bodies, especially Supreme or Constitutional Courts, and other institutions such as General Accounting Offices, Civil Service Commissions and independent regulatory agencies

have attracted special attention from DPP donors, presumably reflecting the attention being paid to “horizontal accountability” and other mechanisms created to “check and balance” the potential excesses of populist politicians backed by a “tyrannical majority.” Further to the margin of DPP, a good deal of foreign money has been spent to modernize police forces and to train their personnel to be more respectful of human and civic rights. Rarely have the army, navy and air force benefited in the same way and to the same extent, even though in some countries it could be plausibly argued that the need to promote civilian control over the military is even more fundamental for democratization to start and to survive. Finally, territorial de-centralization and functional de-concentration of public authorities has become a major objective of DPP efforts, presumably on the grounds that devolving power to regional, provincial and local institutions serves as an incentive for greater citizen participation, as well as a check on the potential for neo-democracies to relapse into centralized autocracies.

The distinctions between these four categories of recipients are not rigid. For example, in highly restricted political environments, civil society organizations may act more like political movements that seek to mobilize large segments of the population against the incumbents and may even serve as the basis (at least temporarily) of an alternate government. The difference between organizations in civil and political society is an important – if ephemeral – one since it can link

political liberalization to eventual democratization and prove important for the consolidation of a particular type of democracy. Even though the language used by democracy promoters and their recipients often seems neutral, scientific and technical, what they do always has political implications – unless, of course, their efforts are ineffectual.

A second criterion useful for distinguishing the variety of DPP activities is to inquire into the goal of these programs: Is it the **promotion** of nascent democracies? Or the **protection** of newly established democratic regimes? For example, training police personnel to become more effective in suppressing crime and respecting human rights is “protective” and can hardly if ever considered to be “promotional” when an authoritarian regime is still in power. Assisting political parties and social movements to mobilize “non-conventionally” in favor of regime change is a clear instance of democracy promotion and would have a negative impact on democracy protection. This second criterion should also not be interpreted too rigidly. For example, civic education could have a positive effect both on the initiation of democracy and its consolidation. In some cases, supporting trade unions which act as a political force bringing down an autocratic regime would be a form of democracy promotion, while supporting these same organizations in their efforts to become cartels or private interest governments might have a negative effect on a recently consolidated neo-democracy.

In Figure Two, I have combined these two criteria, **target level** and the **goal of DA activities** (i.e. promotion or protection of democracy).

=> Place Figure Two Here (Democracy Assistance) <=

In each Cell of Figure Two, examples of targets of DA are provided. These examples should not be interpreted rigidly. A number of things are implied in Table Two. First, short to medium term activities to promote democracy are more contingent and, hence, are less likely to be effective in protecting newly established democracies. Second, pragmatic support for the judiciary, the police, and the military and incentives for decentralization are much more likely to have an effect on the later processes of consolidation of newly established democracies than on initial political liberalization or the first steps toward democratization of autocratic regimes. Third, the medium to long term democracy promotion activities and the democracy protection activities tend to overlap significantly. Civic education, support for independent media, the professionalization of advocacy groups can have an effect on both undermining autocratic regimes and consolidating democratic ones, but are more likely to affect the latter. Fourth, the Cells of Figure Two that are marked dark gray contain activities that seem to be the most appropriate forms of DA given the specific transition phase. For example, to promote initial political liberalization or democratization, a donor would have potentially more impact by concentrating on the political society than on individual citizens or civil society.

Figure Two is not exclusively descriptive. It can help to throw light on the critical issue of donor strategy, although it should not be read as if it constituted a

ready-made “menu” about what to do under specific circumstances. For the sake of illustration, let us assume a donor wants to contribute to a transition from an autocratic to a minimally democratic regime. The literature has distinguished four distinctive “modes of transition:” by **pact**, **imposition**, **reform**, or **revolution**.^{xii} The first two modes of transition are determined by elites. A **pact** occurs when incumbent and challenging elites agree to forego violence and choose to negotiate a comprehensive agreement on the initial rules of the political game among themselves. **Imposition** involves a mode of transition in which some dominant segment or faction within the autocracy chooses a set of liberalizing or democratizing rules unilaterally and imposes them with the force of the state. The latter two modes of transition are primarily determined by the mobilization of a mass of citizens who have previously been excluded from power. **Reform** occurs when masses succeed in compelling autocratic elites to liberalize or democratize the rules of the political game without having to resort to large scale violence. A **revolutionary** transition would involve the mobilization of a critical mass of previously excluded actors who use violence to defeat the autocratic rulers.

One of the most important factors that a donor must take into account is the mode of transition that is unfolding or has already occurred in the target country. The donor may even wish to encourage a specific mode, although this is usually a matter of “domestic” choice. In a pacted or imposed transition, the most obvious target level will be the institutions of the state since they remain relatively intact and capable of blocking or distorting the outcome. The very

existence of actors able to pact or to impose new rules indicates the presence of organized collectivities that can (or, at least, should be able to) deliver the compliance of key groups – insurgent parties and/or incumbent factions. Presumably, these can be influenced by foreign donors, but the most important contribution of DPP would be to empower those state agents who can ensure that the emerging rules will be obeyed against the resistance of “hard-liners” in the government and “radical” in the opposition. If the donor either favors reform or revolution, he or she should focus primarily on facilitating and assisting the mass mobilization of insurrectionists, and that means targeting political parties or social movements or both. Secondly, in the case of a reformist transition, DPP might targeted those state agencies and agents most likely to be willing to make compromises with party and movement representatives. This abstract and logical analysis also has negative implications, namely, that assistance to civil society and to individual citizens will have little effect on the regime transition process and much more on the consolidation of neo-democracies once they have been tentatively established.

ESTIMATING THE IMPACT OF DPP

In the previous sections of this introductory chapter, I have attempted to map our “compound” independent variable, democracy promotion and protection, in all its complexity. First, I sketched in the historical emergence of the democratization agenda. It is both a very old ambition and a very recent set of programs and projects. I attempted to lay a “skeptical” basis for research, one that starts from the hypothesis (actually 13 of them) that this form of foreign

intervention in the internal politics of countries undergoing or even contemplating regime change is highly problematic. If it does have any net impact at all, it is more likely to be negative. Then, I defined DPP and made explicit the empirical limits of our collective inquiry. Also, I explored some of the most important distinctions within the “export industry” of promoting and protecting democracy. What remains is for me to summarize the purpose of this collection of essays, all generated within the same conceptual framework and empirical data-gathering effort.

Its purpose is **not** to evaluate DPP programs and projects. This has been done almost *ad nauseum* by “inside” agents usually in order to justify donor activities before legislators or tax-payers, or by “outside” analysts with some prior inclination to favor the effort. Needless to say, at this micro-level, the record has not always been uniformly favorable, but the predominant conclusion has been that – on balance – DPP is worth while doing. The implicit counterfactual assumption is that had DPP not been given for a specific program or project, the country’s liberalization or democratization would have suffered.

We are “agnostic to skeptical” about the ultimate value of DPP. What we are interested in is a much simpler and strictly empirical question: Has the aggregate contribution of all DPP programs and projects in each of ?? countries in two quite different regions of the world (Central and Eastern Europe & Middle East and North Africa) been significant. Has it made an appreciable difference at the macro-level? Do countries that have received more DPP tend to make more or less progress toward liberalizing their respective autocracies or consolidating

their respective democracies? Whether this is “good” or not depends first on proving that DPP has made a difference and only then does it make sense to evaluate this performance according to clear and defensible normative criteria.

On the later, we do not take a position, nor has our research been supported by an institution with a vested interest in such an evaluation. It is not difficult to imagine situations in which DPP has indeed made a positive contribution, but the degree of liberalization or type of democracy produced has been negative in the sense that foreign sponsorship has discredited the autonomous efforts of national actors or resulted in a set of entrenched practices that are subsequently so ineffective or restricted in their policies that the emergent regime is de-legitimized. Inversely, those receiving the most DPP over this period () may have been less successful in both outcomes, but that may have laid the basis for a stronger and more autochthonous movement toward political liberalization or a more apposite set of democratic institutions in the future.

Advancing from estimation to evaluation demands two things that we do not have at our disposition: (1) a consensus on the “quality of democracy” that we would like to see emerging in these two world regions; and (2) a plausible counter-factual model of what might have happened had no DPP been supplied. We can (and will) attempt to control for other objective societal, economic and historical conditions that are likely to have contributed to the differential success of liberalization or democratization in making our estimation of impact, but that is not the same as a normatively specified alternative course of development.

ENDNOTES

ⁱ For reasons that are utterly incomprehensible to me, the promoters of “forced democratization” in Iraq have found it convenient to invoke the specter of Thomas Jefferson in order to justify their actions there. If anything, Jefferson opposed the use of unnecessary armed force, both internally and externally, and was an even more persistent opponent of the extension of executive authority. It is not difficult to imagine that he would have been horrified at American actions in Iraq and by the subsequent extension of presidential prerogatives. These self-proclaimed patriots even claim that spreading democracy to the entire world is an objective uniquely rooted in the very fundamental principles of the United States – thereby, conveniently ignoring all of the instances in which the US preferred to support non-democratic governments and all of the long periods during which it did virtually nothing to further this goal. Just as strange is the recent assertion that only the US can do this since established democracies in Europe and Canada are too self-absorbed or timid to play this role. As we shall see below when documenting the details of DPP provision, these governments have contributed more – uni-laterally and multi-laterally – than has the US. Michael Ignatief, “Who are the Americans to think that Freedom is Theirs to Spread?,” New York Times Magazine, 26 June 2005. The article title is not indicative of its content.

ⁱⁱ I had included Nepal on this list. Alas, it has subsequently confirmed the pessimism of “structuralists” and reverted to autocracy in the ensuing period.

ⁱⁱⁱ Our working definition very clearly excludes most of what has subsequently, i.e. after the invasion of Iraq, been proclaimed by the United States and its “Coalition of the Willing” as democracy promotion or assistance. The very idea that foreigners can produce something approximating liberal political democracy “from the barrel of a gun” is antithetic to the approach taking here. The cases and expenditures that we will be examining empirically during the period from 1989 to 19?? all presume a minimum of consent between donors and recipients. Moreover, in the case of Iraq, democratization was only discovered as a motive for action after the originally publicized justification – possession of arms of mass destruction – proved to be unfounded.

^{iv} A relevant example of this consists of foreign aid to strengthen police forces and the military. One could argue (and external providers frequently do argue) that this improves the policy effectiveness of democratic governments in delivering the promised goods to their citizens, as well as their ability to resist non-democratic opponents. Nevertheless, we have excluded such transfers from our data bank.

^v One could add: (4) Improving quality of democracy - understood here as expanding the democratic process beyond its core 'procedural' elements

^{vi} On the fundamental different nature of consolidation of democracy see Philippe C. Schmitter, Nicolas Guilhot, “De la transition a la consolidation. Une lecture retrospective des *democratization studies*”, to be published in the *Revue Française de Science Politique*. Also available in an English version under the title: “From Transition to Consolidation: Extending the Concept of Democratization and the Practice of Democracy”, 1999

^{vii} It might be worthwhile stressing that the “rule of law” is not democratic per se: to become so, it must include equal citizenship rights and not be limited to the securing of property rights or free circulation of capital.

^{viii} Needless to say, this was written before the US invasion of Iraq and its subsequent rhetoric about democracy promotion.

^{ix} The way the term contagion is used here differs from the way I have used it before. See Philippe C. Schmitter, “The Influence of the International Context Upon the Choice of National Institutions and

Policies in Neo-Democracies”, in Whitehead (1996)

^x Similarly the analytical distinction between inside and outside the target for the primary location of activity is not as neat as represented in the table

^{xi} I am presuming that the current emphasis on the “forceful” promotion of democracy in Iraq and elsewhere in MENA does not taint the idea with imperialist and self-serving motives.

^{xii} Karl & Schmitter (1991)