

DEMOCRATIZATION SPECIAL ISSUES

Conflicting Objectives in Democracy Promotion

Do All Good Things Go Together?

Edited by
Julia Leininger, Sonja Grimm and
Tina Freyburg

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First published 2014
by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 4RN

Simultaneously published in the USA and Canada
by Routledge
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

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This book is a reproduction of *Democratization*, vol. 19, issue 3. The Publisher requests to those authors who may be citing this book to state, also, the bibliographical details of the special issue on which the book was based.

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN13: 978-0-415-82590-0

Typeset in Times New Roman
by Taylor & Francis

Publisher's Note

The publisher would like to make readers aware that the chapters in this book may be referred to as articles as they are identical to the articles published in the special issue. The publisher accepts responsibility for any inconsistencies that may have arisen in the course of preparing this volume for print.

Conflicting Objectives in Democracy Promotion

The agenda of external actors often includes a number of objectives that do not necessarily go together. Fostering security and stability in semi-authoritarian regimes collides with policies aimed at the support of processes of democratization prone to provoke conflict and destabilization. Meanwhile, the promotion of national self-determination and political empowerment might lead to forms of democracy, partially incompatible with liberal understandings. These conflicting objectives are often problematized as challenges to the effectiveness of international democracy promotion.

This book presents systematic research about the emergence and effects of conflicting objective in democracy promotion. The contributing authors investigate (post-) conflict societies, developing countries, and authoritarian regimes in Southeast Europe, Latin America, Africa, and Asia. They identify the socio-economic and political conditions in the recipient country, the interaction between international and local actors, and the capacity of international and local actors as relevant for explaining the emergence of conflicting objectives. And they empirically show that faced with conflicting objectives donors either use a ‘wait and see’-approach (i.e. not to act to overcome such conflicts), or they prioritize security, state-building and development over democracy, or they compromise democracy promotion with other goals. However, convincing strategies for dealing with such conflicts still need to be devised.

This book was published as a special issue of *Democratization*.

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Democratization Special Issues

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Citation Information

The chapters in this book were originally published in *Democratization*, volume 19, issue 3 (June 2012). When citing this material, please use the original page numbering for each article, as follows:

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Sonja Grimm and Julia Leininger

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The two sides of functional cooperation with authoritarian regimes: a multi-level perspective on the conflict of objectives between political stability and democratic change

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Foreword

In his classic 1968 book *Political Order in Changing Societies*, Samuel Huntington criticized Americans for believing that ‘all good things go together’ in Third World societies attempting modernization. Huntington was referring to a defining belief among US policy-makers and aid practitioners in the 1960s: namely, the idea that the different parts of the modernization package that they were seeking to advance in those countries – political, economic, and social development – would mutually reinforce each other and, in so doing, also advance American security objectives. The shattering of this optimistic idea on the harsh shoals of experience in the second half of the 1960s and first half of the 1970s – when democracy, development, and security often worked at violent cross-purposes to each other – was a painful experience for an entire generation of Western politicians and scholars.

The idea gained new life in the wake of the Cold War. Freed from the pressures of superpower rivalries and conflicting ideologies, a new generation of Western actors saw the exciting potential for democracy and development to move ahead hand in hand and to reinforce core security goals, above all maintaining peace, in the process. The intervening 20 years, however, have not been especially kind to these post-Cold War hopes. No outright shattering of the proposition has occurred, but significant doubts and questions have accumulated. For example, sceptics of international democracy support point to evidence that elections may actually increase the odds of violent civil conflict. They also note that authoritarian developmental states seem to be better at producing prosperity for their citizens than fractious democratic states are.

Although debates over the proper relationship between democracy support and other policy objectives have multiplied, careful and systematic analysis of the issue has not kept pace. Happily, a few capable young scholars, representatives of an encouragingly vital new generation of democracy researchers, took notice of this gap and set about to fill it. They have assembled a set of articles that tackle the issue from multiple perspectives and have provided an overarching conceptual framework for the collection. Their goal is not to bury the ‘all good things...’ theory once and for all, but rather to illuminate how complex the international policy landscape has become with regard to these issues. Common political, economic, and security goals are now widely shared, much more so than in the divided world of the 1960s, yet still refuse to march in a simple line.

CONFLICTING OBJECTIVES IN DEMOCRACY PROMOTION

Thomas Carothers
Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington, DC, USA

Reference

Huntington, Samuel. *Political Order in Changing Societies*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968.

Not all good things go together: conflicting objectives in democracy promotion

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Conflicting objectives are often problematized as challenges to the effectiveness of international democracy promotion. However, systematic research about their emergence and effects is still missing. This special issue addresses this research gap and seeks to provide conceptual and empirical answers in the field of conflicting objectives in international democracy promotion. The authors represented in this special issue investigate (post-) conflict societies, developing countries, and authoritarian regimes, attempting to identify the patterns of conflicting objectives in democracy promotion, the reasons for their emergence, and their consequences. This introduction presents a conceptual framework that pursues four aims: first, it differentiates between two types of conflicting objectives (intrinsic and extrinsic); second, it offers an approach for identification of their phases of emergence; third, it proposes reasons for their emergence; and fourth, it discusses how political actors deal with these conflicting objectives. The empirical findings of the contributions to this special issue illustrate and substantiate the theoretical and conceptual reflections.

Introduction

This special issue of *Democratization* studies the emergence and consequences of conflicting objectives in democracy promotion. It pursues two aims: (1) to systematize significant conflicts of objectives in democracy promotion (conceptual dimension), and (2) to analyse these conflicts of objectives in order to explore their origins and their consequences for the effectiveness of democracy promotion (empirical dimension). To this end, the authors in this special issue have investigated selected

African, Asian, Middle Eastern, and Latin American processes of political change, seeking to clarify the patterns and consequences of democracy promotion policies. They focus their analyses on possible *intrinsic* trade-offs between various factors in democracy promotion, as well as on *extrinsic* trade-offs between democracy promotion and other relevant areas of external support, such as peace-building, state-building, stabilization, security, and capacity-building.¹

Conflicting objectives are inherent in any kind of policy-making and cooperation between two or more actors. Scholars and practitioners widely acknowledge that conflicting objectives challenge the effectiveness of democracy promotion.² Any target country of democracy promotion will find itself facing a multitude of international actors pursuing divergent interests and goals. Consequently, the objective of democratization is likely to compete with alternative objectives of foreign policy of the various international actors. At times, the same actor can simultaneously attempt to pursue competing objectives. The individual nature of the paths that democratization can follow aggravates this complex situation further. In general, democratization does not follow a universal pattern that could serve as a guideline for facilitation of external support. Accordingly, there is no blueprint for successful democracy promotion. In each individual case, democracy promoters must rethink how, when, and by what means democratization can be supported.

Faced with such complex realities, since the end of the Cold War international actors have often pursued democratization from the point of view that ‘all good things go together’.³ They have integrated into their democracy promotion portfolio a mixture of objectives including peace, stability, freedom, prosperity, good governance, and the rule of law – objectives that, in their perspectives, could all be conducive to democratization. In other cases, international actors have indirectly assumed that policies such as economic assistance or peace- and security-building will positively complement measures to support democratization. Over time, international actors and scholars of democratization and international relations have become increasingly aware of the fact that ‘not all good things do necessarily go together’, learning from experience that ‘good things go together only under certain favourable conditions’.⁴ In order to promote democracy effectively, the conditions and time spans in which good things such as peace, security, and development do indeed go together must be investigated in a detailed and systematic fashion. This special issue seeks to explore this topic and to enrich the empirical foundations of the current debate on the challenges of democracy promotion.

The contributions to this special issue cover a representative range of conflicting objectives, in particular trade-offs between security, stability, peace, and democratization, as well as between the diverging norms, concepts, and instruments applied in democracy promotion. The authors study nine countries and a variety of international actors; the latter range from international and regional organizations (such as the European Union (EU), the United Nations (UN), and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)) to multilateral peace missions like

United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) in Kosovo or United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) in Timor-Leste, to actors exerting influence in bilateral development cooperation (such as the governments of the United States of America (USA) and Germany). Authors describe typical country contexts in which conflicting objectives are likely to emerge: unstable environments and post-conflict settings are the most vulnerable to divergent objectives. One of the countries examined is currently embroiled in a war situation (Afghanistan), another one trapped in a violent conflict (Palestine), and five of the cases are post-conflict countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo under UN Security Council Resolution 1244, and Timor-Leste). The case studies of Bolivia, Morocco, and Zambia illustrate that trade-offs in democracy promotion can also arise in generally peaceful, stable settings.

In this introduction, we establish a conceptual framework for the analysis of conflicting objectives in democracy promotion; we substantiate our theory-driven concepts using evidence from the contributions included in this special issue. Accordingly, each section in this introduction starts with a conceptual outline, followed by empirical findings. In the first section, we briefly review the literature. Given the lack of previous theoretical contributions on conflicting objectives in foreign policy-making we focus on identifying research gaps. In view of these gaps, we formulate four guiding research questions that will be addressed by the contributions to this special issue. In the second section, we present our concept of conflicts of objectives and highlight which are covered in the following contributions. In the third section, we argue that conflicts may equally evolve during the norm-building, strategy-building, and implementation phases of democracy promotion. In the same section, we explore the conditions under which conflicts of objectives may evolve and identify which of these are addressed in this special issue. In the fourth section, we propose a scheme for how the actors involved could theoretically deal with conflicts of objectives and illustrate how domestic and international actors have handled trade-offs in real-world situations. In the fifth section, we theoretically explore the effects of conflicting objectives on democratization and present whether the empirical findings of this issue confirm this correlation. We conclude by summarizing the main challenges of democracy promotion derived from the special issue's contributions.

Setting the stage: what are the most pressing questions, in light of existing research gaps?

Until now, two branches of research have addressed the question of whether 'all good things go together' in a more or less explicit fashion. The 'older' branch focuses on the relationship between democracy and development, asking whether socio-economic development is best suited for democratization, and vice versa. The 'newer' branch is founded in peace and security studies and

researchers ask to what extent and under what conditions processes of democratization complement, support, or undermine stabilization and peace in a post-conflict society. Both research strands have also served to inform policy-makers in international democracy promotion. In what follows, we briefly summarize the two extant research fields and identify research gaps.

S.M. Lipset (1960) was one of the first to argue that democracy is related to a country's socio-economic development or level of modernization. With a quantitative large-*N* study measuring wealth, extent of industrialization, degree of urbanization, and level of education in selected countries using various indicators, Lipset found that the more democratic countries consistently had higher levels of socio-economic development than the more authoritarian countries.⁵ His concise conclusion – ‘the more well-to-do a nation, the greater the chances that it will sustain democracy’⁶ – inspired the international development community by presenting the prospect of the uncomplicated democratization of developing countries by socio-economic modernization.⁷ However, Lipset did not reflect about possible conflicting objectives for international support to democratization.

Since the early 1990s, in reflecting on the scholarly debate on the causes of democratization, the member states of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation (OECD) have begun to consider democratic rule not as a logical outcome of development, but as a necessary requisite for it.⁸ In consequence, strengthening socio-economic development has evolved into an important objective of democracy promotion. However, democracy promotion and support of socio-economic development have historically belonged to two parallel worlds that have rarely intersected. Only recently have donor countries like the USA and Germany begun to conceptualize programmes that pursue both objectives, seeking to mainstream sectoral programmes and to ensure that they are supportive of democratic governance.⁹ However, to date there has been little evidence that democratization and consequently democracy promotion actually work as a motor of socio-economic development.¹⁰ Given the limited resources of development cooperation, new policy choices are likely to be made at the expense of democracy support.¹¹

Meanwhile, in search of strategies to handle the challenging post-war and post-conflict regime changes in south-eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and sub-Saharan Africa, peace-builders seem to have resurrected the idea that ‘all good things shall go together’ from the development debate.¹² For the sake of stability- and peace-building, they aspire to support domestic actors in removing the root causes of violent conflict and create a pacific atmosphere (1) by reforming the security sector in order to secure public life and provide legitimate means to control the use of force, (2) by developing the rule of law in order to reduce human rights violations, (3) by investing in a market economy free from corruption in order to discourage individuals from believing that the surest path to fortune is by capturing the state, and – last but not least – (4) by supporting democracy in order to reduce the tendency toward arbitrary power and give a voice to all segments of society.¹³ Their conflict-management tools are intended to support the replacement of a

culture of war and violent conflict with a culture of tolerance and respect. However, seldom do peace-builders achieve this comprehensive aim successfully.¹⁴

In fact, the expectations of supporters of development policies, peace-builders, and democracy promoters that the implementation of democratic institutions and practices necessarily strengthens positive characteristics such as peace, stability, prosperity, freedom, good governance, and the rule of law, and vice versa, have not been met in the last two decades.¹⁵ International actors and researchers in the field have acknowledged the potential tension between these objectives in several official concept documents.¹⁶ However, the assessment of their activities leads to the conclusion that conflicting objectives remain inadequately addressed in democracy support.¹⁷

It remains an open question in the literature whether these ‘conflicting objectives’ or in other words ‘challenges’, ‘tensions’, ‘dilemmas’, or ‘paradoxes’ influence the effectiveness of democracy promotion.¹⁸ Some authors argue that divergent goals are always ‘conflicting’; others suggest that diverging objectives might be complementary and are therefore a strength, not a weakness of democracy promotion.¹⁹ However, neither side has systematically investigated the underlying factors that can lead to or prevent conflicts between objectives, or examined how these conflicting objectives may under certain conditions hinder or support effective democracy promotion. Although individual research results are of importance in the understanding and explanation of the effectiveness of democracy promotion policy, no major efforts have hitherto been made to investigate conflicting objectives as an interdisciplinary topic or to draw conclusions on the broader basis of comparative case studies. There is still an overwhelming lack of conceptualization based on theoretical reasoning and systematic empirical research that clarifies the relationship between democratization processes and conflicting objectives in international democracy support.²⁰

In examination of the state-of-the-art, the following research gaps become apparent. First, there is a need for fine-tuning and expansion of the understanding of how other objectives (for instance, stability, security, and socio-economic development) work together with the aim of promoting democracy. Moreover, we need to understand to what extent locally-driven political processes, and externally-driven democracy promotion can come into conflict. Second, we still lack empirically-based evidence of whether objectives actually ‘go together’ in democracy promotion and, if they do, under what conditions which specific objectives can go together. Thus far, research has provided only limited systematic evidence regarding the interplay between different elements of democracy support in certain political contexts. Third, there is a need to learn more about how international actors deal with conflicting objectives, especially the extent to which diverging goals become compromised and what kinds of solutions would be suitable for the resolution of conflicts of objectives. Finally, given the lack of research on conflicting objectives, we still have much to learn about their effects on processes of democratization.

Acknowledging the accomplishments of previous research, we now take the gaps in research as the starting point for our special issue. Accordingly, we